

New Caledonian Woodlands Boss named a Social Entrepreneur of the Year

Edinburgh-based entrepreneur, Andy Ross, who founded New Caledonian Woodlands at Inverleith Park, has been named on the shortlist for the prestigious 2014 Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Andy, who set up the mental health and environmental change charity in 2006, is one of five finalists who are in with the chance of winning a £10,000 prize, through a public vote. His nomination is in recognition of his commitment to encouraging people to work in a natural environment to inspire improvement in mental health, physical well-being and employability.

Having spent his early years in Canada, Andy explains that he was exposed to a “positive woodland culture”, having gone on to train in Psychology and work closely with people with mental health concerns; these two strands of his life combined. Andy recognised that by taking mental health outdoors and connecting people with their environment he could make a difference.

New Caledonian Woodlands currently engages with over 1,200 people per year. Activities include planting new woodlands, managing old ones, making furniture from trees felled by hand, pressing hand-picked apples for juice and learning more about our environmental impact and how to reduce it.

Andy explains: “Winning the award would be a fantastic achievement for us and would allow us to develop the business further and maintain careful stewardship as we continue to grow at an exciting pace. In particular, the award will enable us to invest in the development of the Edinburgh ‘green hub’ site that is the new base for New Caledonian Woodlands and

which will underpin much of the development of the organisation.”

Andy is part of the School for Social Entrepreneurs scale-up project, a programme supported by Bank of Scotland and focussed on helping Social Enterprises take ideas already in operation to the next level to help develop it further and maximise social impact.

”Being part of the School for Social Entrepreneurs ‘Scale Up’ programme has helped me focus on developing New Caledonian Woodlands. I feel fortunate to have learned from the fantastic team at SSE and working with other social entrepreneurs, while my Bank of Scotland mentor has been very supportive. The witness sessions gave me an insight into how successful my enterprise could become with the right leadership and guidance and New Caledonian Woodland would most certainly not have come so far without being part of ‘Scale Up’ this last year.”

To vote for Andy Ross and New Caledonian Woodlands visit:
<http://www.the-sse.org/SEYA>.

Voting closes on 31 October 2014. The winner of the Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2014 will be announced on Wednesday 05 November at a ceremony in London.

To find out more about New Caledonian Woodlands, please visit:
<http://www.newcaledonianwoodlands.org>

Submitted by [Stewart Jay](#)