

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL BUSINESSES HONOURED FOR ENDING WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

Master Instruments receives award, commended by Sir Bob Geldof

AUSTRALIA, 14 November 2008: Manufacturer, assembler and distributor of batteries Master Instruments has won a 2008 Diversity@Work award in recognition of their commitment to employing people with a disability.

Master Instruments took out the disability category for small and medium businesses at a gala dinner attended by Sir Bob Geldof, World Vision Australia Chief Executive Reverend Tim Costello and Minister for Employment Participation Brendan O'Connor.

The 8th annual awards recognise employers who create a business that is inclusive for all its workers, clients and the broader community.

"Diversity is as critical to man as biodiversity is to nature... there is no option. Different systems of thought and behaviour add to the dynamism of any company.

"A country can't grow without using all the cultures, all the talent, all the dynamism of the people of Australia - their abilities, and disabilities," said Sir Bob Geldof.

"To increase employment opportunities for people with a disability, Master Instruments worked with CRS Australia to adopt an on-the-job training program, allowing trainees with a disability to gain skills, experience, and improved confidence and self esteem to manage paid employment," Employment Services Consultant Steriani Perri said.

"Since 1999, Master Instruments has trained more than 30 people with a disability, and has employed 16 people with a range of physical and psychological disabilities such as back and shoulder injuries, depression, lupus, cancer and arthritis.

"Master Instruments is a strong advocate of both the on-the-job training program and employing people with a disability and is always keen to promote the benefits of both to other businesses."

Diversity@Work CEO Mark Heaysman says employers across Australia must do more to give people with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds a fair go and these awards recognised businesses which are making a real difference.

"It is disappointing that 76 per cent of businesses across Australia do not have a strategy in place to employ people with disabilities. These awards show what is possible and should be an example for others.

“There’s no reason Australia shouldn’t be the world leader when it comes to workplace diversity. We have a wide population of mature-aged workers, people with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds, indigenous workers, as well as return to work parents.

“These awards are a reminder to every organisation throughout the country to step up. I congratulate Master Instruments on setting such a fine example,” says Heaysman.

Perri adds: “As well as having a positive impact on Master Instruments’ workplace culture, performance and productivity, employing people with a disability has proven to be an extremely successful recruitment strategy for Master Instruments, whereby 13 out of 16 staff with a disability employed from 1999 onwards are still working for the company today.”

“Businesses which celebrate and embrace diversity can make a real difference in the community,” Mr Heaysman said.

“This year we had 110 nominees and I thank and congratulate both the winners and the businesses which entered the awards for their ongoing efforts.”

Media enquiries:

For interviews with Mark Heaysman contact:

Melissa Devine: mdevine@ppr.com.au, 02 9818 0950

About the Diversity@Work

Diversity@Work is Australia’s leading provider of consultancy services, resources and training for organisations engaged in strategic diversity management, workforce planning and cultural transformation.

Since 1994, it has advised government and business at the local, national and international level, and assisted organisations to move toward authentic diversity and social cohesion.

Diversity@Work assists Australian organisations to overcome barriers to inclusion and ensure that organisations are compliant with all relevant legislations. We play a fundamental role in the establishment and implementation of diversity initiatives.

Diversity@Work Awards

The Diversity@Work Awards recognise and reward the efforts of individuals, teams and organisations who encourage diversity and inclusion in their workplace. The Awards often assist organisation to benchmark their journey, however more importantly the Awards provide an opportunity to showcase their initiatives and learn from other organisations which have made the decision to increase their capacity to have a diverse and inclusive workplace or community.

Sir Bob Geldof

Sir Bob Geldof appears by arrangement with Saxton Speakers Bureau.