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Business Leader of the Year: FRANCES DIVER

Frances Diver began her career as a midwife and nurse, building her reputation through a variety of other leadership roles in the health sector and government departments. This experience has provided Frances with a passion for making a difference in the community and has shaped her leadership skills considerably.

Appointed as Chief Executive of Barwon Health in April 2019, Frances has demonstrated strong, extensive leadership skills throughout her various roles, most notably in times of crisis. Frances was welcomed as CEO at Barwon Health with a major cyber security incident, cutting off access to ICT systems across the board for an extended period of time.

Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed challenges for Frances and Barwon Health, however under her leadership, recent achievements have included large scale testing, the development of local contact tracing services and monitoring capability and, finally, the rollout of the Barwon South West region's vaccination program.

Frances has confidently led Barwon Health through tough times while also ensuring the execution of its strategy to deliver on its vision for the future. Judges were impressed with her authentic leadership and ability to navigate turbulent times, both as an individual and chief executive, particularly through her natural ability to deal with governmental politics, strategic business operations and staff engagement at all levels.

The dedication and effort shown by Frances has been a real credit to her, and has greatly assisted Barwon Health to become a jewel in the crown of Victorian Health Services.

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Young Entrepreneur of the Year: GIOVANNI SIANO

Italian-born Giovanni Siano has professional experience in a wide range of industries, from IT and logistics to manufacturing and healthcare, and has worked across a variety of countries including Italy, Norway, the United States, Algeria and the United Kingdom.

Having moved to Australia in 2011, Giovanni's story here began with him working as a door-to-door salesman, and then progressing to work as an IT consultant. The judges were impressed with Giovanni's forward-thinking approach and impressive growth seen in his aged and disability care franchise, Home Instead Geelong, which he purchased in 2018.

The judges were especially impressed with Giovanni's self-teaching and self-learning abilities, allowing him to run his business Home Instead Geelong, now employing more than 200 staff to assist over 650 clients in excess of 12,000 hours of care every month.

Following his move to Australia, Giovanni completed a health informatics certification and Master in Business Administration at Deakin University. Giovanni's business experience and focus on innovation has now led him to work with Deakin University on artificial intelligence robots, with the aim of providing assistance to care patients in his business and other accommodation service providers.

Giovanni is currently expanding his care services across Victoria, working on developing partnerships with more providers of accommodation care services.

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