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SA Business

Guide Dogs SA/NT chief executive officer Kate Thiele wins national title in the 2015 Telstra Australian Business Women's Awards

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AFTER leading Guide Dogs SA/NT through extraordinary growth, Kate Thiele has capped off a glittering year by taking out a national title in the 2015 Telstra Australian Business Women's Awards last night.

Ms Thiele was the only South Australian to win top honours after being acknowledged for her hands-on, grassroots approach to the not-for-profit sector and named the Social Enterprise Award category winner.

After joining the organisation as chief executive officer six years ago, Ms Thiele was recognised for tripling turnover, growing donors and clearly articulating the issues facing the sector.

Her organisation was the first in Australia to run a program for children with autism and has developed South Australia's first "five star" luxury pet hotel, with all profits raised going back into funding the organisation's work.

"The disability sector has been in the shadows for too long, but I'm now proud to lead Guide Dogs SA/NT with a dedicated team of people who want to change lives and do more for the people we support. I am each and every day inspired by our clients and how they live with dignity and purpose," she said.

Ms Thiele has seen active donors to the guide dogs charity in SA and NT grow from 5000 to 50,000 and regular donors rose from 450 a year to a massive 21,000.



📷 Captain Mona Shindy was announced as the overall national winner. Picture: Toby Zerna

A trailblazer in the Royal Australian Navy, Captain Mona Shindy from New South Wales, was announced as the overall national winner.

Captain Shindy was one of the first women to join an active Australian warship when she was aged 23. Armed with a university degree in the blokey domain of weapons engineering, she also happens to be Muslim and has been a mother for most of her naval career.

Now Director Littoral Warfare and Maritime Support, Captain Shindy advises the government on the best way to spend billions of dollars on replacement tankers and patrol boats.

“I love making a difference solving problems and conflicts to develop a more productive, better and more cohesive world. I enjoy creating, driving and observing shifts in human behaviour, knowledge and attitudes,” she said.

In 2013, Captain Shindy also became the Chief of Navy's Strategic Adviser on Islamic Cultural Affairs, receiving a Conspicuous Service Cross for this work on Australia Day 2015.