

Media Release

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For immediate release

NIBA Announces Ron Smith as the 2025 Lex McKeown Trophy Recipient

The National Insurance Brokers Association (NIBA) is thrilled to announce that Ron Smith, Chairman of BJS Insurance Group, has been presented with the 2025 Lex McKeown Trophy at the NIBA Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony during the 2025 NIBA Gala Dinner and Awards Night.

The Lex McKeown Trophy is presented by the NIBA President, in consultation with the NIBA Board and CEO, to a long-standing NIBA member who has provided outstanding service to NIBA and made a significant contribution to the broking profession.

"Ron's story is the story of our profession at its best. From a 16-year-old mail boy learning the business from the ground up, to a builder of enterprises and opportunities for others, he has consistently turned effort into excellence and leadership into service. His commitment to people, professionalism and community has strengthened brokers, clients and communities across Australia," said NIBA President Nick Cook.

Ron began his insurance journey at just 16, taking a role as a mail boy at Dalgetys (now Wesfarmers). That ground-level start quickly evolved into roles in processing for the Fire Department, specialising in hail and crop insurance, before moving into the Accident Insurance Division, working in liability.

By 20, Ron had joined Stenhouse Insurance Brokers as an Assistant Account Manager. His natural leadership saw him progress to Section Administration Manager of "Section B", responsible for all clients whose names began with the letter B, and soon after to Junior Account Executive in the same team.

At 27, Ron became State Manager for Underwriting Management Services (UMS), later advancing to General Manager of the Group. In those formative 15 years, he built a reputation for lifting standards, learning relentlessly and investing in relationships.

At 31, invited by Federation Insurance to represent them, Ron founded Concord Underwriting. Concord became known for its integrity, strong relationships and a people-focused culture that celebrated mutual success. Under his leadership, Concord grew to become one of the largest underwriting agencies in the Southern Hemisphere.

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A passionate advocate for the profession, Ron initiated high-level industry leader lunches at Parliament with then Federal Treasurer Peter Costello and senior executives, tackling key issues over many years. He also played a close role in planning the Austbrokers (now AUB Group) float, helping lay foundations for what has become a major force in the market.

Following Concord, Ron joined BJS Insurance Brokers, where he became Chairman, a role he continues to hold with distinction. His guidance has been pivotal to BJS's growth and national footprint.

Equally significant is Ron's long-standing commitment to mentoring. He has given his time generously, sharing knowledge, opening doors and supporting younger professionals. That commitment has strengthened individual careers and, collectively, the resilience of our profession. Ron's support for NIBA has been unwavering, encouraging colleagues and team members to volunteer on committees and champion NIBA initiatives. Along the way, he has built relationships grounded in respect and trust.

"On behalf of the NIBA Board, I extend my warmest congratulations to Ron on being the 2025 Lex McKeown Trophy recipient. Ron exemplifies what this honour stands for: service to the Association, service to the profession and service to people. We are proud to recognise his lifetime of leadership and the example he sets for all of us," Nick concluded.

Media Enquiries

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About NIBA

NIBA is the peak representative body for the general intermediated insurance profession. It serves as the collective voice of approximately 380 member firms and more than 14,000 individual brokers. Our membership encompasses a diverse range of entities, including large multinational insurance brokers, Australian broker networks, and small and medium-sized businesses located in cities and regional areas around Australia.

NIBA advocates for the interests of general insurance brokers and their clients, ensuring that the general industry operates with integrity and professionalism. Guided by our core pillars: Community, Representation, and Professionalism, NIBA's mission is to enhance the professional standing of insurance brokers through robust advocacy, education, and ethical standards. By fostering a collaborative and innovative environment, NIBA aims to elevate the quality of service provided to consumers and strengthen trust and confidence in the insurance broking profession.

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