



The Directors Award

The Directors Award was established in 2022 and is named after the founding Directors of OptiBlocks, the education arm of the ADONZ.

In 1999 OptiBlocks was incorporated as an independent company with Steve Stenersen and Mike Firmston as Directors, and until 2021 they gave of their own time to diligently guide the development, improvement, and education of Dispensing Opticians in New Zealand. They epitomize dedication and exemplary service to the industry.

*Recipients of **The Directors Award** are recognised for their contribution to the advancement of Dispensing Opticians through service to education, improving awareness of the profession, representation in the optical industry or outstanding service to the Association and its members.*



Recipients

2022	Steve Stenersen and Mike Firmston		
2023	Hayley Bendall		

2023

Hayley Bendall

ADONZ Administrator

The 2023 Directors Award was presented at the ADONZ Conference Gala Dinner by Angela Mitchell, ADONZ President.



Tonight's very special award is The Directors Award. This is named for Steve Stenersen and Mike Firmston, directors of OptiBlocks for 22 years, from 1999 until 2021, who gave of their own time to diligently guide the development, improvement, and education of Dispensing in New Zealand.

Recipients of the Award are recognised for their contribution to the advancement of Dispensing Opticians through service to education, improving awareness of the profession, representation in the optical industry or outstanding service to the Association and its members.

I can promise you that tonight's recipient is going to fall off her chair. Hayley Bendall, our beloved administrator, please come forward to accept The Directors Award for 2023.

Last year when we established the Directors Award and presented it to Steve and Mike, Mike was very quick to tell me that he thought Hayley would be a very deserving recipient, so you can definitely blame him, Hayley, for being up here tonight!

Hayley first started working for ADONZ one day a week on 17 November 2004, employed by then president Mary-Sue Hopper. By 2007 she was working 20 hours a week, as she was responsible for the oversight of maintaining the CPD for DOs.

Beside Hayley all the way, and probably keeping her sane dealing with all the changes every two years when the Executive team roll over, has been her husband, Chris.

For those of us who have had a few more rotations around the sun than some of our newer members, we think we have a pretty good idea of how much Hayley contributes to the smooth running of the Association. However, much like my iceberg costume here, there is so much more she does that goes unnoticed that you only find out about when you are part of the Executive!

These are some of the words that Mike wrote when I asked him to share a few thoughts about Hayley: During my business and professional life, I have had the pleasure to meet and work alongside many excellent people, totally dedicated to achieving the best performance in whatever category they are expected to deliver. And just occasionally I have met an individual who stands out from the many others, who is exceptional. The few, in my opinion, are almost always very humble people who achieve their status with dignity, honesty and integrity. They are the original NIKE t-shirt wearers... they "Just do it"!

I have known Hayley for a very long time. Steve and I as Directors of OptiBlocks worked "with" Hayley, she was an equal in every sense, we both trusted her actions and judgement implicitly. Our business relationship was one of camaraderie with someone we respected over almost all those years Steve and I were involved with OptiBlocks. On a personal level, my interaction with Hayley was the same through trust, honesty, and respect... and for me admiration for someone who has achieved so much.

I don't know if some Administrators / Organisers / Managers are "born for the job" but I do know that they can be developed, and Hayley is a classic example. Hayley has always been courtesy personified in her demeanour with me, end of week emails would always finish with a "take care and have a great weekend." I could almost 'feel' the infectious, friendly, beaming smile down there in the Waikato.

From an ADONZ perspective I know that the many Executives Hayley has served would have appreciated her Top Shelf Administration skills as much as I have. Thank you, Hayley, for all the memories, your humility defines you, and your actions in my opinion transcend best practice and make you exceptional.

Steve Stenersen had this to say:

In my opinion Hayley is by far the most deserving person for this award. I have worked with her since she began this role and have relied on her to help, guide and advise. She has always been extremely professional and extremely efficient in her role. Her manner for working with people is amazing. Without her skills and dedication, I am sure that the Association and OptiBlocks would not run as smoothly. We change our executive regularly, but Hayley is always there to help and advise those in the position. Congratulations Hayley, so very deserving!!

Here are some snippets of reflections from a couple of our Past Presidents:

From Peggy Savage:

I found Hayley to be the most patient, humble, and obliging administrator any time members or Executives have asked questions or required information. Hayley is always cheerful and serene and gives herself fully to the tasks required.

From Vanessa Cumming:

I think the world of Hayley. She has my deepest respect for all she does. It can't be easy working with a revolving team that all want to leave their individual mark and process in place. She has an amazing memory and recall for the history of the Association. I always thought of her as the "glue" of our association. Without Hayley, there would be chaos and mayhem!

From Angela Mitchell:

For me, Hayley has been a constant source of wisdom and reassurance. To use a bit of a nautical analogy, although the captain of the good ship HMS ADONZ might change every two years, Hayley is the dependable First Mate who knows all its intricacies, knows all the people along for the ride, knows what the upcoming ports of call are, and is someone whom the captain can rely on.

Thank you, Hayley, for all you have done for those who have gone before us and all that you do for everyone in this room. You are indeed, the most deserving person.