

Wagga's respected Lilier Lodge cancer accommodation centre wins national small business award

A vital Wagga cancer accommodation provider has won a national competition.

Lilier Lodge has been named the national champion of the Thank You Small Business competition and will receive a brand new solar system in recognition of its outstanding support for recovering cancer patients.

Thank You Small Business is a worldwide initiative brought to Australia for the first time by Origin.

The competition invited Australians to nominate small businesses and their owners who have demonstrated resilience, determination and creativity to make outstanding contributions to their communities.

Named the grand prize winner from almost 300 nominations, Lilier Lodge will receive a fully installed solar system for their business to a maximum of 10kW and valued at up to \$13,000 in the hope it will help support their business and reduce operating costs in future.

The business was nominated by several people including Leonie James who stayed at the lodge for 28 nights in April last year while undergoing radiotherapy treatment.

"At the worst time in my life, the Lilier Lodge staff went above and beyond to help me in any way they could. Being so careful with COVID, they drove me to shops, pharmacists and the hospital daily," she said.

Local volunteers also delivered donated meals.

"The staff also provided emotional support to help me get through," she said.

Another nominee full of praise for the lodge was Jim Gibson.

"My wife Lyn and I are involved as volunteers at the lodge and I can't think of a more worthy recipient than the lodge for this prize," Mr Gibson said.

Lilier Lodge manager Margaret Dalmau was thrilled to win the award.

"I was amazed and really excited," Ms Dalmau said.

"I didn't expect we would get it," she said.

Ms Dalmau expressed thanks to those who nominated the lodge and to Origin Energy for the prize.

"It was really great we were nominated and that Origin Energy decided to award us the prize. We really thank them for that."

Ms Dalmau said the lodge spends up to \$16,000 per year on electricity, but with this system installed, it could save up to 25 per cent of annual costs.

"The solar system will be a big boost to Lilier Lodge, the money we save on energy will be invested into improving the accommodation for our guests."

It's expected the system will be installed online in time for the coming summer.

Manager of Uranquinty Power Station and Origin Energy representative Paul Olsen said the company was proud to award the prize to such a deserving business.

"Small businesses have done it pretty tough over the past few years and in doing this initiative we're trying to celebrate them, including their effects on the community and further afield," Mr Olsen said.

"Lilier Lodge certainly meets that criteria, servicing not only the local community, but the regional community as well, so they are a very worthy winner."

Origin's head of business Magio Kantzipas also congratulated the lodge.

"We would like to congratulate Margaret and Lilier Lodge on winning the grand prize for their incredible achievements supporting the community," Mr Kantzipas said.

"Some of the stories have blown us away and it's inspiring to see the innovative and creative ways in which Australian business owners are thinking about and contributing to their communities."