

Taking significant steps towards net-zero

Innovation delivers environmental gains for Highlands and Islands on the way to an effective elimination of greenhouse gas emissions by 2045

Low carbon innovation will be vital in helping Scotland achieve its ambitious goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

As a partner in the VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards – Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) supports businesses taking significant steps to improve or reduce environmental impact, including the development of new products, services or systems.

“We’re helping to drive the region’s transition to a low carbon economy in several ways, from developing our world-class renewable energy sector to supporting innovation in infrastructure, utilities and new clean technologies,” says Audrey MacIver, head of energy and low carbon at HIE.

“New solutions to environmental challenges can help businesses boost efficiency, reduce resource use and cut waste – as well as contributing to wider social

and community benefits. So it is vital that we support these innovations through initiatives such as VIBES.”

Previous VIBES winners in the Highlands and Islands include Ross-shire Engineering (RSE), based at Muir of Ord, near Inverness. The firm designs and manufactures market-leading transportable, modular water treatment units that are constructed off-site, driving environmental efficiencies.

“We recently completed our biggest transportable water treatment unit build for Lochmaddy as part of Scottish Water’s £15 million project to improve the water supply to customers in North Uist and Berneray,” says RSE Director Jamie MacGregor.

“By fabricating, assembling, testing and fully commissioning all of the 16 modules before transporting them to site, we shortened the total programme by eight months, reduced costs by more than 30 per cent and delivered significant environmental



Sgoil Lionacleit Pipe Band piping guests to the North Uist treatment works

improvements by removing the need for prolonged site works. This included vehicle, air, ferry travel and material deliveries to sites which are often remote.”

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RSE has also improved its own environmental efficiency through innovations including the installation of solar panels and a biomass boiler.

Safety, environment and engineering consultancy Mabbett is a sponsor of the VIBES Awards and opened a new regional office in Inverness last year to serve clients in the Highlands and Islands.

“The launch of our new Highland

office at Kintail House in Inverness responds to client demand and allows us to continue our expansion geographically across Scotland and the UK,” says Derek McNab, the managing director of the company, which already has bases in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Mabbett success stories include helping Morayshire distiller Gordon & MacPhail, via Resource Efficient Scotland – a programme of Zero Waste Scotland – reduce the carbon footprint of its Benromach Distillery in Forres by 40 per cent, with energy and cost savings of £50,000 a year.

The VIBES Awards are a strategic partnership between the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, The Scottish Government, Energy Saving Trust, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Water and Zero Waste Scotland.

Since their inception 20 years ago, the awards have recognised more than 150 businesses that have taken significant steps to improve or reduce their impact on the environment, often saving money in the process.

Find out more about the VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards at www.vibes.org.uk