

## Trainee of the Year Award 2009

The Trainee of the year examination was held on December 15 in Auckland. The three finalists once again sat papers made up of three components; 1 x written, 1 x practical and 1 x multi-choice which has been successfully used over the last 14 years. Power Turf New Zealand has been proud sponsors and supporters of this award for all of that time and has pledged their commitment for the award to continue.

The three finalists were Paul Benjamin, Phil Marra and Wendy Horneman.

The written exam was based on resolving a drainage and levels issue on nine men's tees and 6 ladies tees on a medium sized golf course. A sum of \$100,000 was available for this project and the panel had to formulate a report to the Board of Management showing a method and time line to achieve the desired result. There was a list of expectations and guide lines provided to the trainees and the reports that were produced were accurate and well thought out.

Peter Munro from NZSTI once again supported this process and formulated the multi-choice and practical papers. The practical consisted of grass, disease and insect identification as well as some interesting multi-choice questions.

After the marks were totalled, Wendy Horneman from Pakuranga Golf Club was adjudicated the winner. Congratulations to Wendy. She will be off to the Australian Turfgrass Conference courtesy of Power Turf. Paul and Phil also deserve congratulations for their efforts - as the final result went down to the wire.

Following consultation with previous entrants, judging panellists, the board of NZGCSA and our partner with this award, Power Turf, it has been decided the current format needs to be revised. It was agreed that the effort required writing a new paper each year and the negativity by eligible applicants by promoting themselves to sit another exam has held back a lot of good applicants because of the fear of failure or being judged poorly.

In future, marks gained through all stages of the traineeship and final block course results will be used to streamline the award, along with input from national moderators and NZSTI staff.

The NZGCSA is truly indebted to Power Turf New Zealand and Terry Sullivan for his ongoing passion, commitment and drive for this Award to succeed. We look forward to their ongoing partnership in rewarding excellence in our industry.