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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The Brick and Blocklayers Federation of New Zealand (BBFNZ), the Industry body for Brick Veneer and Structural Masonry building systems announced that Calley Gibbons of Mandron Masonry Ltd has been awarded the Brick and Blocklaying Industry 'Silver Trowel' (Apprentice of the Year) Award for 2016.

The Silver Trowel was recently relaunched at this year's BBFNZ AGM/Conference at the Ascot Park Hotel in Invercargill over the weekend of 12-14 August 2016 following a review of the award by BBFNZ, Firth Industries Ltd as its Silver Trowel partner and principle award sponsor, BCITO.

"Firth Industries are happy to see the award back and believe the quality of entrants reflects that we have set the bar for this award at a high but achievable level" says Christy Thompson from Firth Industries. "We would like to congratulate Calley, the other Silver Trowel finalists and all of the competition entrants for participating and helping to set a high industry standard for an award that Firth have been proud to be part of".

BBFNZ would also like to acknowledge the following individuals:

- Firth Industries and BCITO for supporting the development and relaunch of the Silver Trowel including providing assistance with judging;
- Craig Finalyson, BCITO Training advisor for all three Silver Trowel finalists;
- Mark Ulrich, Silver Trowel 1<sup>st</sup> runner up – CF King Contracting Ltd;
- Veitacini Savou, Silver Trowel 2<sup>nd</sup> runner up – CF King Contracting Ltd;

BBFNZ would like to make a special mention of Ian Lawlor of Western Bay Bricklayers Ltd who placed a close fourth in the competition.

Like most trades within the construction sector, the Brick and Blocklaying Industry is calling for young men and women predominantly in the Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Central Otago regions to train as Brick and Blocklaying apprentices. "We are an industry that places a great value on our apprentices because they are our trades future" states Melanie McIver, BBFNZ CEO.

"We are proud of our building systems and believe there are many reasons why masonry has been a preferred building material for thousands of years" Ms McIver continues to state "without our youth training to provide our craft in the future we will put at risk our ability to provide our customers the healthy, affordable buildings our industry creates".

Information on the Silver Trowel award competition, including the criteria and process can be found on our website here:

<http://www.bbfnz.co.nz/about-us/our-industry-awards/the-silver-trowel-award-brick-and-blocklaying-apprentice-of-the-year/>