

EVENT REPORT



Honourable guests and judges raise a glass to the successful conclusion of the Hong Kong Insurance Awards 2021, that allowed a return to a true industry-wide gathering unlike that of last year. Photo: SCMP

CITY'S INSURERS MEET TO REWARD THE YEAR'S BEST PERFORMERS

The Hong Kong Insurance Awards 2021 gave away more prizes than ever to the year's most outstanding companies and agents, writes John Cremer



The winners of the Hong Kong Insurance Awards 2021 gather on the stage at this year's gala dinner. More than 110 entries were received for a total of 22 awards, including three new categories. Photo: SCMP

First presented back in 2014, the Hong Kong Insurance Awards have gone from strength to strength and are now widely considered a signature event on the industry's annual calendar.

Even so, this year's edition, marked by a gala dinner held at the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong Hotel on October 28, was something special.

After last year's scaled-back event, it was a chance for the sector to come together in person once again to recognise the achievements of outstanding companies, teams and individual practitioners – and to celebrate their success.

While doing that, though, there was also occasion to reflect on the latest changes and developments affecting the industry and how they are likely to reshape corporate strategy and day-to-day business over the next few years.

For instance, technology is already having a major impact on client interactions, as well as creating new types of risks and new ways of dealing with them.

In other respects, the Covid-19 outbreak obliged Hong Kong insurers to move rapidly to introduce special coronavirus "facilitations" covering travel, medical care, employee compensation, domestic helpers and more. And along with those came a wide range of alleviation measures including the waiving of waiting periods, grace period extensions, and express claims procedures to provide customers with the necessary protection and peace of mind during an unprecedented time.

This shows how vital it is for the industry to keep innovating and raising standards. And that, of course, is something the awards very much seek to encourage by putting the spotlight on top performers and acknowledging their much-valued contributions.

"The Hong Kong insurance

industry has battled through a challenging 2021, with its reputation for quality, trust and professionalism upheld and reinforced," said Edward Moncreiffe, chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers. "In light of this, the Hong Kong Insurance Awards are more essential now than ever, to

recognise the best-in-class performances of companies and individuals, and to highlight how the industry continues to innovate in its mission to meet customer needs faster, more effectively and more sustainably."

This year, more than 110 entries were received for a total of

22 separate awards, including three brand new categories.

The main company contenders were vying for prizes in areas ranging from claims management, customer service and corporate social responsibility, to excellence in digital transformation and most innovative products or services.

For individuals, there were specific awards for agents, young professionals and community intermediaries. And – in their own way – each of the winners stood out for their efforts to keep Hong Kong society more generally protected, secure and in better health.

"It's not giving up and not taking a step back that drives progress," Moncreiffe said. "Pushing the limits is what takes us to new heights."

In congratulating all the nominees, Brian Rhoads, managing editor of the *South China Morning Post*, co-organiser of the awards, highlighted the importance of the insurance industry to Hong Kong, not least as one of the city's major employers.

At the last count, there were more than 126,000 licensed intermediaries, a record high and a number equivalent to 2 per cent of the entire adult population of Hong Kong.

"The sector stands ready to lend the necessary support to all kinds of initiatives expected to drive economic growth in the decades ahead and meet the demands of the digital age," Rhoads said. "More specifically, this year's nominees have helped to set new standards of professionalism within the industry and shown what it takes to capitalise on opportunities even in the face of adversity."

He also drew particular attention to the three new awards. One was for excellence in

ESG and sustainability, an area in which all companies everywhere must now look to improve by taking steps to enhance energy efficiency, offset carbon emissions and adopt greener policies.

The others were for outstanding risk management and for outstanding industry impact.

Each of these awards was designed to recognise strides made to implement current best practices and transform in line with the broader imperatives now changing the expectations of clients, business partners, investors and society at large.

In thanking the panel of close to 40 judges, who generously volunteered their time and expertise to assess nominees and pick the winners, Moncreiffe noted that their independent advice and wisdom had done much to make this year's event such a success.

"Three minutes on stage takes 10 years of hard work," he said. "The winners we will see on stage today embody this proverb. They are the unsung heroes of our industry, whose hard work and professionalism keep our customers, our practitioners, and the insured population of Hong Kong more generally, protected, secure and in good health."

LIST OF WINNERS

- Outstanding Claims Management Award**
FWD Life Insurance Company (Bermuda) Limited
- Outstanding Customer Services Award**
AIA International Limited
- Outstanding Training & Development Award**
Prudential Hong Kong Ltd
- Outstanding Corporate Social Responsibility Award**
Manulife (International) Limited
- Excellence in ESG and Sustainability Award**
HSBC Life (International) Limited
- Outstanding Financial Education Award**
HSBC Life (International) Limited
- Outstanding Initiative on Community Health Crisis Award**
Blue Cross (Asia-Pacific) Insurance Limited
- Outstanding Integrated Marketing Strategies Award**
FWD Life Insurance Company (Bermuda) Limited
- Outstanding Digital Marketing Campaign Award**
FTLife Insurance Company Limited
- Excellence in Digital Transformation Award**
AXA China Region Insurance Company Limited
- Most Innovative Product/Service Award – General Insurance**
SmartStudent Overseas – AXA General Insurance Hong Kong Limited
- Most Innovative Product/Service Award – Life Insurance (Health)**
Crisis OneCover Prime – FWD Life Insurance Company (Bermuda) Limited
- Most Innovative Product/Service Award – Life Insurance (Wealth)**
Wealth Ultra Savings Plan – AXA China Region Insurance Company Limited
- Most Innovative Product/Service Award – Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme**
VHIS Series (vCAnsure/vPrime) – FWD Life Insurance Company (Bermuda) Limited
- Outstanding MPF/Employees' Benefit Product/Service Award**
AIA International Limited
- Outstanding Risk Management Award**
Prudential Hong Kong Ltd
- Outstanding Industry Impact Award**
AXA General Insurance Hong Kong Limited
- Outstanding Reinsurance Scheme Award**
Innovative insurance solutions under COVID-19 – SCOR
- Outstanding Professional of the Year – Corporate**
Joyce Lau – Target Insurance Company, Limited
- Outstanding Agent of the Year**
Lester Lee – FWD Life Insurance Company (Bermuda) Limited
- Outstanding Community Intermediary of the Year**
Steve Lo – FWD Life Insurance Company (Bermuda) Limited
- Outstanding Young Professional of the Year – Intermediary**
Koobee Lau – FWD Life Insurance Company (Bermuda) Limited



Edward Moncreiffe, chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers. Photo: SCMP



Brian Rhoads, managing editor of the South China Morning Post, co-organiser of the awards. Photo: SCMP