

Company: Green Door Co, Sydney, NSW

Company Description: We are a PR firm entering for multiple clients as per your Awards Tips

Nomination Category: Entrepreneur Categories

Nomination Sub Category: Best Entrepreneur - Hospitality & Leisure

Nomination Title: Winson Tan - Founder of the WA Group

1. Which will you submit for this nomination, a video of up to five (5) minutes in length or a written essay of up to 650 words? Choose one:

Essay of up to 650 words

2. If you are submitting a video of up to five (5) minutes in length, provide the URL of the nominated video here, OR attach it to your entry via the "Add Attachments, Videos, or Links to This Entry" link above, through which you may also upload a copy of your video:

3. If you are providing a written essay for this nomination, submit in this space an essay of up to 650 words describing the achievements of the nominated entrepreneur since 1 January 2023:

Total 615 words used.

After moving from Malaysia to Australia to study business, WA Group's founder Winson Tan found the corporate world unfulfilling, especially during the isolating days of the pandemic. Craving real-world impact, hands-on leadership, and genuine community, he bought a \$7,000 hole-in-the-wall café in 2020 and taught himself the ropes by doing it all. Within two years, he'd grown to three cafes, surviving Melbourne's lockdowns and learning invaluable lessons in resilience. Though nearly ready to walk away, Winson chose instead to double down with a bold new vision to create businesses that do more than just turn a profit.

Multi-award-winning WA Group lives by our mission of "Connecting People, Enriching Communities". Over the last two years, we've grown to become a mainstay of Melbourne's dining and community landscape, expanding from one café to a portfolio of five hospitality venues, an early learning centre, and a multiuse development in Blackburn.

People and leadership are Winson's passion, and he is pursuing a PhD in leadership to further deepen his understanding. In 2024, Winson was a finalist in the Melbourne Business Network Awards for Young Entrepreneur and Entrepreneur of the Year and has been shortlisted in the 2025 Small Business Champion Awards for Young Small Business Entrepreneur and Specialised Small Business with winners yet to be announced.

WA Group's growth to date has far exceeded any expectation. Our annual turnover is on a strong upwards trajectory with an average YOY growth rate of 121% 2022-2024 and on track to hit \$7M in 2025. Long term projections place us at \$60M annual revenue by 2028.

Our distinctive edge is our hyper-local focus. Since taking over our four cafes and one restaurant we've transformed them from lagging local venues on the verge of closure to vibrant hubs of the community. This is demonstrated by our outstanding sales growth, for example, Little Tienda grew from \$358,000 in 2021 to \$500,000 in 2024, and Jerry Joy \$15,400 in 2021 to \$838,000 in 2024. In under two years, we've improved Google ratings by 0.1 to 0.3 points per venue, now averaging 4.5 stars across all locations.

We've also been recognised in the Restaurant & Catering Hostplus Awards for Excellence VIC & TAS 2024:

Winner

- Casual Dining of the Year – Jerry Joy
- Café Dining – Jerry Joy
- Breakfast Café – Jerry Joy & Finders Keepers

Finalist

- Café Dining – Finders Keepers
- Italian Restaurant – Prefisso 3088
- Pizza Restaurant – Prefisso 3088

Our expansion into early childhood education through Nexus Early Learning reflects our commitment to the community by nurturing future generations in a supportive and inspiring environment. Within just one month we raised our early learning centre's occupancy rate from 70% to 91%, within six months we achieved 100% occupancy across several days per week and >92% for the remainder through implementing a hands-on, inclusive leadership style.

Each step forward is a calculated decision to broaden our impact on Melbourne's communities. In each new venture, we've prioritised flexibility and community-building. For example, our hospitality businesses focus on creating spaces where regulars feel at home and staff know their names and coffee orders. In childcare, we offer a 30% discount to employees across the company, reinforcing our commitment to a supportive, family-first environment.

Soon to be unveiled, the JWT Whitehorse Project in Blackburn is forecasted to add \$27M annually to our turnover. The property development combines luxury residential spaces with thoughtfully integrated retail, anchored by a café, an early learning centre, and other services designed to weave community connections into daily life. Through each of our initiatives, WA Group is building not just businesses but spaces that create a sense of belonging and shared experiences, enriching Melbourne's community.

4. In bullet-list form (up to 150 words), provide a brief summary of up to ten (10) of the chief achievements of the nominated entrepreneur since 1 January 2023:

Total 148 words used.

- 2023: Acquired Prefisso 3088, Finders Keepers Café, and began mixed-use property development.
- 2024: Commenced PhD in Leadership, acquired Docasa, Nexus Early Learning and Little Tienda.
- 2025: Developing a 128-place childcare facility in Bulleen.
- Turnover grew 121% YOY on average in 2022-2024, on track to hit \$7M in 2025, projected \$60M by 2028.
- Grew Little Tienda from \$358,000 (2021) to \$500,000 (2024) and Jerry Joy from \$15,400 (2021) to \$838,000 (2024).
- Improved Google ratings by 0.1 to 0.3 points per venue, now averaging 4.5 stars across all locations.
- Hostplus Awards for Excellence 2024: Winner Casual Dining of the Year, Café Dining and Breakfast Café.
- Finalist 2024 Melbourne Business Network Awards for Young Entrepreneur and Entrepreneur of the Year and shortlisted (winners TBA) 2025 Small Business Champion Awards.
- Raised our ELC's occupancy rate from 70% to 91%, within six months achieved 100% occupancy.

Attachments/Videos/Links:

[Winson Tan - Founder of the WA Group](#)

[REDACTED FOR PUBLICATION]

