



GROWING REPUTATION: Staff and executives from ACT Chief Minister's Exporter of the Year Award winner Aspen Medical, from left, chairman Andrew Walker, managing director Glenn Keys, Cailin Dacy, Tareq Rahman, Matt Hughes, Lin Zhang and Trudi Maunder, at the National Convention Centre. Picture: KARLEEN WILLIAMS

Aspen rates as healthy export choice

By Marika Dobbin

Canberra-based health service provider Aspen Medical has been named the ACT's Exporter of the Year at the first function to be held in the revamped National Convention Centre.

Temporary fences around the centre came down a week early for the awards event, but were re-erected again afterwards, ahead of the official opening.

Chief Minister Jon Stanhope gave the award to Aspen for its exporting of health-care service delivery, health consulting and e-health to government and private-sector organisations overseas.

The company started exporting in 2003 and experienced significant growth last year, with total revenue increasing from \$19.4 million to \$44.34 million over 12 months.

The growth caused *Business Review Weekly* to rate Aspen Medical as the second-fastest growing company in Australia on its Fast 100 Companies list for 2007.

Mr Stanhope said the award recognised the company's export

THE WINNERS

- **ACT Exporter of the Year:** Aspen Medical
- **Agribusiness:** Lark Hill Wine
- **Arts, Entertainment and Design:** BigWorld
- **Education:** Research School of Physical Sciences and Engineering
- **Emerging Exporter:** Noetic Group
- **Information and Communication Technology:** ContentKeeper Technologies
- **Services Award:** Aspen Medical
- **Small-to-medium Manufacturer Award:** Australian Scientific Instruments
- **Small Business Award:** Sentinel
- **Hall of Fame Induction:** Inland Trading

achievements and expertise in a niche market.

"This local Canberra company has a reputation for delivery of innovative health-care solutions in Australia, South-East Asia and Europe," Mr Stanhope said.

Aspen also won the services award category for the second successive year.

Managing director Glenn Keys said he was proud of the recognition, especially because the business was unusual.

"It's a testament to the terrific staff

we have," he said. "Our headquarters have been in the ACT since we started. Being in the capital does resonate overseas and it also means we're close to all the departments, ministers and Sydney and Melbourne if we need to be there. That's why we'll always stay in the ACT."

Other winners yesterday included wine exporter Inland Trading, which was inducted to the hall of fame.

Mr Stanhope said Inland Trading was not only a strong local business committed to the Canberra community, but a role model for local

exporters. Inland Trading is the only ACT business to win five ACT export awards, and in consecutive years.

It grew from a company of one person working out of a bedroom a decade ago, to now having employees in Canberra, Adelaide, Queensland, Japan, Hong Kong and Britain.

The company has recently made inroads into the Quebec market in Canada, and Japan, placing more than 20 wine brands on the Japanese market.

Managing director Greg Corra said his company represented 35 Australian, eight New Zealand and five South African brands. "Forget about the exchange rate, demand for good Australian wines is still booming and it's onwards and upwards from here," Mr Corra said. "The ACT is a fantastic and supportive environment for exporting."

Mr Stanhope said Canberra had the highest rate of new business initiatives of any Australian jurisdiction.

Category winners go on to compete at the National Export Award Gala in Brisbane on November 22.