

Canterbury firms well represented

Canterbury firms feature significantly in the finalists for 2012 New Zealand International Business Awards.

Tom Thomson, of Bromley manufacturer Elastomer Products, a top polymer and rubber extrusion company, has been nominated as one of the outstanding emerging leaders in international business.

He is competing with technology entrepreneur and investor Neville Jordan, of Wellington, who founded technology success Marine Air Systems and sold it to American buyers and then founded Endeavour Capital to invest in promising companies. The other rival is Sir Graeme Douglas, of Auckland, founder of Douglas Pharmaceuticals.

Local business owner Bryn Thompson, of Metalcraft Engineering, is a finalist in the emerging leader in international business category,



Westland Milk's Rod Quin

up against four others for the title.

Both Thomson and Thompson have helped steer their companies and the Canterbury region through the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquakes.

Three large Canterbury companies and one from the West Coast are among nine vying for the title of Best

Business Operating Internationally with revenue over \$50 million.

They are Tait Radio Communications, a designer and manufacturer of mobile radio communications systems and one of Christchurch's largest technology companies, Skope Industries, founded by Robert Stewart, an exporter of commercial refrigeration, The Christchurch Engine Centre, an aviation maintenance and overhaul firm, and Westland Milk Products, an independent milk processor and exporter headquartered in Hokitika.

New local player, energy-efficient light-bulb company Energy Mad is a finalist in four of the 10 categories, including Best Business Operating Internationally in the under \$50m category and the most innovative business model category.

The awards are run by New Zealand Trade and

Enterprise and partner ANZ Bank. The winners will be announced on March 21.

NZTE chief executive Peter Crisp said the 27 finalists were using New Zealand's world class technology and skills to develop high value brands and push into new markets.

ANZ executive David Green said the finalists demonstrated New Zealand's progressive move away from traditional markets. Historically 80 per cent of exports went to the United Kingdom, Europe and the Americas.

Now two-thirds went to Australia, Asia and the Pacific, opening up new opportunities for growth.

Westland Milk Products chief executive Rod Quin says the announcement that Westland was a finalist in three categories "demonstrates that as an exporter Westland can foot it with the best New Zealand has to offer".