

NEW ZEALAND Institute of Valuers

PROFILE | NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF VALUERS
JUNE 2026



Sam Robb, from Christchurch-based Ford Baker Valuation, receives the 2026 Graduate of the Year award from New Zealand Institute of Valuers President Claire McLellan.

Ask Questions, Stay Curious

West Coast-raised, Christchurch-trained, and only two years out of Lincoln University, Sam Robb has been named the New Zealand Institute of Valuers (NZIV) Graduate of the Year for 2026 - and his advice to the next wave of valuers is refreshingly simple: ask more questions than you think you should.

"I was pretty stoked to get this award," Robb says. "It is reassuring that I'm moving in the right direction with my career."

That sense of direction has been built on a habit he's leaned on since day one. "It's the best way to learn," he says. "Sometimes valuers have been doing the job for so long

they've got a lot of knowledge they might miss passing on. So ask questions. Always be learning."

Robb joined Ford Baker Valuation in 2024 after database entry work while studying his degree gave him early exposure to the firm. Since then, he's worked across residential valuation, including development land and student accommodation, before moving into commercial assignments.

"I'm enjoying the commercial work, Christchurch is growing massively and seems to be going really well. It's cool seeing the interest in commercial property grow in the city."

That growth mindset extends beyond his own desk. He's a part of the Canterbury Young Guns Committee, organising networking and education events for young valuers in the region and recently helped run a stand at a recent Careers Expo, promoting valuation as a career.

Robb is also helping mentor, alongside his firm's colleagues, a Lincoln University student doing database entry at his firm at the moment, much as he once did. "It's really good to see other students going for a career in valuation," he says.

Staying current extends to technology too. "At the recent NZIV conference, there was an excellent session on AI, which demonstrated how to approach it in a different way," Robb says. "There's a lot to think about, how you implement it into work, but not compromising the quality of your work and profession."

Robb is halfway through the three-year path to full registration, a process capped by a written and oral exam plus a submitted body of work. He credits Ford Baker's mentoring culture and sector events like the NZIV conference for sharpening his focus.

His message for graduates starting out: "Get out there — go and ask people to spend a day with them, get a taste of it, and be prepared to ask questions. A lot of them."

The NZIV award citation on Sam's award stated: "Beyond his technical contribution, Sam is recognised for his professionalism in client interactions and his positive influence within the workplace. He has taken an active role in mentoring and supporting a new graduate within his firm and is an engaged member of the Canterbury Young Guns Committee, helping foster professional connection and peer development. These combined achievements clearly distinguished Sam as an outstanding graduate and a deserving recipient of this award. "

For further information please contact Claire McLellan, President NZIV president@nziv.nz