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Media release

## Wellington 'icon' takes top honour at New Zealand Tourism Awards

Wellington wildlife sanctuary Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne has been crowned the top tourism operation in the country for 2023.

Zealandia was presented with the Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award at the New Zealand Tourism Awards this evening in its hometown of Te Whanganui-a-Tāra Wellington.

Judges said Zealandia was a local icon and a "worthy exemplar" for others to follow, consistently demonstrating the qualities that the tourism industry held dear.

Receiving their award, Zealandia's Chief Executive Dr Danielle Shanahan said the award really was "one for the birds".

"Zealandia has absolutely transformed what tourism means in Aotearoa New Zealand, and it's because of some incredible people – volunteers, staff members, trustees. These are the people who make this place hum, who make Wellington thrive."

Tourism Industry Aotearoa Chief Executive Rebecca Ingram said she was delighted with the judges' choice.

"Zealandia is everything we love about tourism: protecting our wildlife, telling our unique story, thrilling visitors and beloved by its community."

Organised by Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA), the Tourism Awards provide a benchmark of excellence in the industry and highlight its contribution to New Zealand.

As well as the Supreme Award, Zealandia took home the Airbnb Tourism Excellence Award (Small-Medium Business). Judges said the attraction had strong metrics and values, a truly impressive masterplan and its 500-plus band of volunteers who no doubt agreed.

Overall, there were more than 120 entries in this year's awards and Ms Ingram said she wanted to warmly congratulate everyone who entered.

"It's been an honour to hear the stories of these companies and the ways they've found, sometimes against tough odds, to thrive and widely contribute to their communities," she said.

### TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

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“The values that are shining through a lot of these entries are very affirming, qualities that no doubt win them much support from their host communities and visitors alike.”

## **About the New Zealand Tourism Awards**

The New Zealand Tourism Awards recognise businesses, organisations and individuals who are demonstrating business success, living the values of the New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Commitment and embracing kaitiakitanga (guardianship).

They are hosted by Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) with Award Partner Air New Zealand, and sponsored by: Tourism New Zealand, Airbnb, Marsh, New Zealand Māori Tourism, Eudora+, Tourism Industry New Zealand Trust, Tourism Talent, Westpac, KiwiRail Tourism, NZME, and BDO. TIA thanks our valued partners and sponsors for their support.

### New Zealand Tourism Awards 2023

#### **Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award**

- Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne

#### **Airbnb Tourism Excellence Award (Small-Medium Business) 2023**

- Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne

#### **BDO Tourism Excellence Award (Large Business) 2023**

- Skyline Queenstown

#### **KiwiRail Tourism Environment Award 2023**

- Christchurch Airport

#### **NZME Visitor Experience Award 2023**

- Altitude Tours

#### **Toroa ā-uta, Toroa ā-tai Māori Tourism Award 2023**

- Tauhara North Tourism - Te Pā Tū

#### **Tourism Industry New Zealand Trust Community Engagement Award 2023**

- EcoZip Adventures

#### **Tourism New Zealand Industry Collaboration and Alignment Award 2023**

- Kohutapu Lodge & Tribal Tours Ltd

#### **Tourism Talent Employer of Choice Award 2023**

- GO Rentals

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## **Westpac Resilience and Innovation Award 2023**

- Tauhara North Tourism - Te Pā Tū

## **INDIVIDUAL AWARDS**

### **Eudora+ Emerging Tourism Leader Award 2023**

- Heidi Farren, Altitude Tours

### **Marsh Tourism Industry Champion Award 2023**

- Margaret Davidson, Mitchell Corp

### **Sir Jack Newman Outstanding Industry Leader Award 2023**

- Malcolm Johns

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#### **KEY FACTS**

- Tourism Industry Aotearoa is New Zealand tourism's peak industry body. We are the only independent association that represents all sectors of New Zealand's large and diverse tourism industry.
- TIA has about 1200 member businesses from across the industry, ranging from small owner/operators to large publicly listed tourism corporates and international hotel chains.
- TIA is deeply involved in discussions on recovery and what the future of tourism in New Zealand will look like.
- TIA leads implementation of the industry's **Tourism Sustainability Commitment** which aims to see every New Zealand tourism business contributing positively to our people and cultures, our environment and our economy
- TIA delivers a comprehensive and diverse range of industry events including TRENZ, New Zealand Tourism Awards, Discussing Tourism regional events and the Tourism Summit Aotearoa.

Visit [www.tia.org.nz](http://www.tia.org.nz) for more information

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