

10 November 2022  
Media release

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# Small lodge with big heart reigns supreme at New Zealand Tourism Awards

A small Māori-owned tourism business based in Murupara has taken home tourism's most prestigious new award, the Regenerative Tourism Award.

Kohutapu Lodge and Tribal Tours was revealed as the big winner at tonight's New Zealand Tourism Awards 2022 dinner hosted by Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) in Kirikiriroa Hamilton.

TIA Chief Executive Rebecca Ingram says, "It was humbling to hear how Kohutapu Lodge works closely with its community to ensure the business is living and breathing regenerative tourism, from educating visitors about te ao Māori to ensuring the survival of the longfin tuna."

The awards are dedicated to raising the profile of tourism, celebrating business and individual excellence within the industry and highlighting the important contribution tourism makes to New Zealand.

They recognise individuals and organisations that are living the values of the [Tourism Sustainability Commitment](#) and celebrate environmentally sustainable and forward-thinking tourism businesses that embrace kaitiakitanga (guardianship).

The Sir Jack Newman Outstanding Industry Leader Award was awarded posthumously to Jeroen Jongejans. The late Jeroen was described as "a longtime campaigner for Northland tourism and Tutukaka Coast's biggest cheerleader, a trailblazer and an entrepreneur".

The Marsh Tourism Industry Champion Award was won by John Barrett of Kapiti Island Nature Tours, an outstanding individual who has dedicated his career to championing eco-tourism.

Alex Dykman, Founder of Maverick Digital and co-Founder of Grow Tourism, won the PATA New Zealand Trust Emerging Leader Award. Judges said Alex is an inspirational tourism leader who has become the industry's 'go to' person for all things digital.

For the second year in a row, iFLY Indoor Skydiving NZ Ltd in Queenstown took home the Tourism Talent Employer of Choice Award. "Examples abound of an inclusive environment, happy staff, happy customers, and the passion and leadership shown by the owner who puts staff welfare above everything else," said the judges.

Kohutapu Lodge took home a second award on the night, the Tourism Industry New Zealand Trust Community Engagement Award. Despite losing 98% of their business due to COVID, they continued to focus on the community, including opening two new ventures and running life-changing soft skills courses for rangatahi.

## TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

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The Department of Conservation – Conservation Award was won by The Landing, a Bay of Islands coastal property judges described as “extraordinary” following the planting of 1.25 million trees and significant improvements to kiwi habitat and population.

East by West Ferries in Wellington won the Environment Award for launching the Southern Hemisphere’s first zero-emission, fully electric, fast passenger ferry which judges described as “a low intensity operation that screams ‘the future’.”

Regional Tourism New Zealand won the Tourism New Zealand Industry Collaboration Award for its Te Ūnga Mai programme, which is leading work to create a more regenerative tourism system by upskilling Regional Tourism Organisations.

The Hollyford Wilderness Experience won the NZME Visitor Experience Award for its immersive off-grid experience which weaves in tikanga and te reo to provide visitors with a powerful insight into the land.

The Westpac Resilience and Innovation Award was won by Queenstown’s Altitude Tours. Judges noted the excellent work in coordinating with other tourism businesses and called Altitude Tours “a proper tourism company – inspirational”.

Kapiti Island Nature Tours won the He Toa Takitini Māori Tourism Award, with the judges saying: “The whānau involved in this legacy business embodies all that is best in Māori tourism.”

“It was an absolute honour to witness so many incredible leaders and inspirational businesses being recognised for their hard work as we move into more optimistic times,” says Ms Ingram. “These businesses are leading the way and showing how our tourism industry can positively contribute to our communities while giving back more than it takes.”

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

The New Zealand Tourism Awards 2022 are brought to you by TIA, with Award Partner Air New Zealand. The Awards are sponsored by Airbnb, Department of Conservation, Marsh, New Zealand Māori Tourism, PATA New Zealand Trust, Tourism Industry New Zealand Trust, Tourism New Zealand, Tourism Talent, NZME, Westpac, and supported by The Mighty Waikato and H3.

For more information on the New Zealand Tourism Awards, visit [www.nztourismawards.org.nz](http://www.nztourismawards.org.nz).

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- TIA 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 1300 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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