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Media release

Tourism's bright future shines at New Zealand Tourism Awards

Outstanding tourism businesses and individuals who are leading the way in creating the future of New Zealand's tourism industry have been recognised in the industry's most respected annual awards.

Award winners were finally revealed at an online event after a three-month postponement due to COVID-19 disruption.

Six leading individuals and 23 businesses were in the running for 11 prestigious tourism awards, which showcase and celebrate the tourism industry's individual and business successes.

TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says it was an absolute pleasure to finally acknowledge the winners. "Anticipation has been building for even longer than expected, so it was a joy to finally get the industry together online to celebrate these incredible finalists and award winners."

The Sir Jack Newman Award for Outstanding Industry Leader was awarded to prominent tourism consultant Dave Bamford, who has spent a lifetime creating sustainable tourism solutions to benefit economies, individuals and business.

Loren Heaphy, General Manager of Destination & Attraction at ChristchurchNZ, was named tourism's Emerging Leader. Judges were excited by Ms Heaphy's entry, noting that she stood out as 'the full package' and that they were 'blown away by her story'.

"Loren has already shifted mindsets in the way that you present an organisation. She will continue to do extraordinary things on behalf of the industry."

Ceillhe Sperath, TIME Unlimited Tours, was commended for her commitment to growing a business for the sake of the community, winning her the Tourism Industry Champion Award.

Wellington Zoo took home the Environment Award. Judges were particularly impressed by the extended reach the zoo achieves by focusing on its supply chains. "The fact they have worked with suppliers down to the toys in the gift shop shows a genuine deep commitment to the environment."

"It is not only the fact that the zoo has been doing good things for a long time, but that they continue to innovate."

The Dark Sky Project was celebrated as "a fantastic project which truly delivers the Māori message and embraces everything the tourism industry is about". The team took home the He Kai Kei Aku Ringa Māori Tourism Award.

TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

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Judges were impressed with the metrics National Kiwi Hatchery Aotearoa were able to report, with proven results winning them the Conservation Award.

Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari—a finalist in two categories—was awarded the Community Engagement Award for its “true community engagement programme, which could become a legacy initiative for the wider community and Aotearoa”.

Rotorua’s Redwoods Treewalk & Nightlights won the Visitor Experience Award, an “absolute standout” in the eyes of the judges.

The Industry Collaboration Award went to Nelson Regional Development Agency, due to their strong results and the legacy of their Zero Carbon Itinerary project’s impact. “They are pushing the sector forward and there was genuine collaboration in creating the itinerary. This initiative has the potential to change the way the sector organises itself going forward, and the way tourism is seen.”

An “absolute commitment to people”, combined with a forward-thinking and strategic focus, won iFLY Indoor Skydiving NZ Ltd the Employer of Choice Award.

Finally, an inspiring story from the West Coast took home the much-coveted Resilience and Innovation Award, beating 38 other entrants to the top spot. Judges said this was one of the most difficult categories to judge, as the quality and quantity of entries was ‘outstanding’. Ultimately, Waiho Hot Tubs’ pioneering spirit and investment on behalf of the town and community won the judges over.

The awards recognised individuals and organisations that are living the values of the [Tourism Sustainability Commitment](#). The full list of winners and award sponsors is below.

About the New Zealand Tourism Awards

The New Zealand Tourism Awards 2021 are run by TIA, with Award Partner Air New Zealand. The Awards are sponsored by the Department of Conservation, Marsh, New Zealand Māori Tourism, PATA New Zealand Trust, Tourism Industry New Zealand Trust, Tourism New Zealand, Tourism Talent, Toitū Envirocare, NZME and Westpac.

For more information on the New Zealand Tourism Awards, visit www.nztourismawards.org.nz.

New Zealand Tourism Awards 2021 Winners

Tourism Industry New Zealand Trust Community Engagement Award

[Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari \(Waikato\)](#)

Department of Conservation - Conservation Award

[The National Kiwi Hatchery \(Rotorua\)](#)

Tourism Talent Employer of Choice Award

[iFLY Indoor Skydiving NZ Ltd \(Queenstown\)](#)

Toitū EnviroCare Environment Award

[Wellington Zoo Trust](#)

Tourism New Zealand Industry Collaboration Award

[Nelson Regional Development Agency](#)

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He Kai Kei Aku Ringa Māori Tourism Award
Dark Sky Project (Tekapo)

Westpac Resilience and Innovation Award
Waiho Hot Tubs (Franz Josef Glacier)

NZME Visitor Experience Award
Redwoods Treewalk & Nightlights (Rotorua)

PATA New Zealand Trust Emerging Tourism Leader Award
Loren Heaphy, ChristchurchNZ

Marsh Tourism Industry Champion Award
Ceillhe Sperath, TIME Unlimited Tours

Sir Jack Newman Award - Outstanding Industry Leader
Dave Bamford

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KEY FACTS

- 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 committed to sustainability.
- 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 for more information

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