

16/05/19

Media release

New awards and new focus: 2019 New Zealand Tourism Awards open for entries

Entries are now open for the 2019 New Zealand Tourism Awards, and with three new awards and a spotlight on sustainability, it's expected there will be some very impressive entries to choose from.

The New Zealand Tourism Awards celebrate individual and business success across the dynamic \$39.1 billion tourism industry, providing a benchmark of excellence and inspiration to other tourism businesses.

"Tourism is New Zealand's largest export industry. Its crucial contribution to New Zealand is being supported by outstanding performances from operators across the country. We want to celebrate those efforts and we encourage operators to enter," says Chris Roberts, Chief Executive of Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) which runs the Awards.

"These are the industry's premier awards and there are many benefits to entering, including a generous package of prizes and recognition from your customers and industry peers."

The 2019 Awards have been updated in alignment with **the Tourism Sustainability Commitment (TSC)**, recognising environmentally sustainable and financially successful tourism businesses that embrace kaitiakitanga. Three new awards have been introduced – the Community Engagement Award, the Employer of Choice Award, and the Economic Success Award.

Given the importance of the environment to the New Zealand tourism industry, the Environmental Award has been split, with a complementary Conservation Award introduced. Both awards recognise an environmentally sustainable and financially successful tourism business that embraces kaitiakitanga, with the Environmental Award recognising a business that actively supports and champions environmental initiatives that reduce carbon emissions, minimise waste, and contribute to improving New Zealand's environment. The Conservation Award recognises a business that actively protects, restores and enhances New Zealand's natural environment and biodiversity.

"We recognised that tourism operators are taking huge strides to reduce their plastic usage, waste and carbon emissions to protect our environment, but also they're focusing on helping conservation efforts in their communities," says Mr Roberts.

"We felt it was important that the Awards properly celebrate the different ways our members have embraced the TSC and incorporated the commitments into their businesses."

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The winner of the Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award for 2018 was multinational recreation and vehicle business Tourism Holdings Ltd (*thl*).

“Winning the Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award created an enormous sense of pride and achievement,” says Grant Webster, Chief Executive Officer of *thl*.

“We have a team across the world who work incredibly hard for our purpose of creating unforgettable holidays. To be recognised by industry colleagues in this manner was a fantastic way to celebrate the achievements of our staff.”

The New Zealand Tourism Awards will culminate in a gala dinner in Christchurch on 24 October 2019, a prestigious black tie event where finalists will be recognised, winners announced, and the recipient of the coveted Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award revealed.

There are some incredible prizes to be won, including a prize for the Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award winner valued at over \$20,000 which includes \$10,000 in air travel and a full-page advertisement in Kia Ora magazine.

Entries close on 27 June 2019, and finalists will be announced on 3 September. For more information on the New Zealand Tourism Awards categories, criteria and key dates, visit www.nztourismawards.org.nz.

About the New Zealand Tourism Awards

The New Zealand Tourism Awards 2019 are run by TIA, with Award Partners Air New Zealand and the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment.

The Awards are also supported by the Auckland Airport, Angus & Associates, Department of Conservation, Enviro-Mark Solutions, He kai kei aku ringa, Horwath HTL, the PATA New Zealand Trust, NZME, The Great Journeys of New Zealand, Tourism Talent, Westpac, and Vbase as an Event partner.

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- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$107 million per day industry. Tourism delivers around \$44 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$63 million in economic activity every day.
- Tourism is New Zealand's biggest export earner, contributing \$16.2 billion or 20.6% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2018).
- 13.5% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand work directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 365,316 people are working in the visitor economy.
- The [Tourism 2025](#) growth framework has a goal of growing total tourism revenue to \$41 billion a year by 2025.

Visit www.tia.org.nz for more information

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