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Media Release

Supreme Tourism Award winner an entrepreneurial success story

The brainchild of the entrepreneurial Ryan Sanders and a business that has achieved exceptional growth over the past 10 years, Haka Tourism Group has won the tourism industry's highest accolade, the Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award.

The Awards Programme is owned and organised by Tourism Industry Aotearoa with the Awards night put on with the assistance of partners Air New Zealand and the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. The winners were announced at a black-tie dinner in Christchurch this evening (Thursday 7 September) attended by more than 350 industry leaders and supporters.

The Awards judges congratulated Ryan and his team for creating a tourism business that is excelling on every level.

In just over 10 years, Haka Tourism Group has expanded to include small group, adventure, snow and mountain bike tours, upmarket hostels, a specialist educational brand and high end snow tours. This year it is opening its first two hotels to support the tourism industry's strong visitor growth.

TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says Haka Tourism Group is an inspirational tourism success story that has strong links with the industry's Tourism 2025 growth framework. Driven by cutting edge digital marketing and brand positioning, the business is growing at an average of 80% year on year, with revenues for the next 12 months on track to exceed \$17 million.

As part of their Supreme Award prize, Haka Tourism Group receives international air travel to any Air New Zealand destination valued at \$10,000 (+GST) to help them grow their tourism business.

Air New Zealand Chief Executive Officer Christopher Luxon says the airline is delighted to support the New Zealand Tourism Awards' Supreme Tourism Award for a third year.

"As our tourism industry continues to grow, it's great to celebrate those who are building excellent and innovative tourism businesses and delivering outstanding experiences for our visitors to New Zealand and who are committed to contributing to our country's reputation overseas."

Haka Tourism Group also won the JLT & AIG Business Excellence Award – more than \$6 million annual turnover, and the epy NZ Tourism Marketing Award.

Founder and sole shareholder Ryan Sanders was recognised for his visionary and influential leadership, winning the Auckland Airport Tourism Industry Champion Award.

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Tourism's most prestigious individual award, the Crowe Horwath International Sir Jack Newman Award, went to the late Earl Hagaman for his outstanding contribution to the industry.

Mr Hagaman co-founded Scenic Circle Hotels in the 1980s. The business rebranded as Scenic Hotel Group in 2009. At the time of Mr Hagaman's death in May this year, he'd built a portfolio of 18 accommodation properties worth around \$200 million.

Chris Roberts says this year's Awards were extremely competitive, a reflection of a thriving industry that is contributing almost \$35 billion annually to the New Zealand economy and supporting communities throughout the country.

He thanked the Awards Partners, Air New Zealand and the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment for their generous support.

MBIE Chief Executive Carolyn Tremain says the Ministry's tourism policy team works to support the industry to make the biggest contribution it can to New Zealand's economic success.

"We are really proud to sponsor the awards and celebrate the achievements of the industry. I congratulate all the winners and finalists on their innovative ideas and hard work."

The New Zealand Tourism Award 2017 winners:

Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award

JLT & AIG Business Excellence Award – more than \$6 million annual turnover **epay NZ Tourism Marketing Award**

- Haka Tourism Group

Auckland Airport Tourism Industry Champion Award

- Ryan Sanders - Haka Tourism Group

Crowe Horwath International Sir Jack Newman Award (outstanding industry leader)

- Earl Hagaman

PATA New Zealand Trust Emerging Tourism Leader Award

- Shayne Forrest – Hobbiton Movie Set & Farm Tours, Matamata

Sudima Hotels & Resorts Tourism 2025 Enabler Award

- Queenstown Resort College

Westpac Business Excellence Award – less than \$6 million annual turnover

- Auckland Seaplanes

Department of Conservation Environmental Tourism Award

- Sudima Hotels & Resorts

Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment Industry Alignment Award

- Tourism West Coast

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He kai kei aku ringa Māori Tourism Award

- Kapiti Island Nature Tours

ServiceIQ Visitor Experience Award

- Waitangi Treaty Grounds

NZME People's Choice Award

- Real Journeys

About the Awards

These are the New Zealand tourism industry's most prestigious annual awards. Managed by TIA, they set a benchmark of excellence and celebrate outstanding success. Three individual and nine business awards are presented. The awards are closely aligned to the industry's Tourism 2025 growth framework which aims to grow annual tourism revenue to \$41 billion by 2025. Thanks to Awards Partners Air New Zealand and MBIE, and supporters. www.tourismawards.org.nz

For more information & photos of the winners contact:

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KEY FACTS

- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$95 million per day industry. Tourism delivers around \$40 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$55 million in economic activity every day.
- Tourism is New Zealand's biggest export earner, contributing \$14.5 billion or 20.7% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2016).
- 13.2% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand work directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 332,322 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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