

29 September 2016

Media Release

Wellington winners at NZ Tourism Awards

The tourism industry honoured George Hickton at its annual awards presentation this evening, recognising the man who drove the development of the globally successful and enduring 100% Pure New Zealand international marketing brand.

Mr Hickton won the tourism industry's most prestigious individual award - the Sir Jack Newman Award for an Outstanding Tourism Leader, supported by Crowe Horwath International. The award was announced at the New Zealand Tourism Awards dinner in Auckland attended by more than 300 industry leaders and supporters.

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 judges said the use and evolution of the 100% Pure New Zealand international marketing brand was one of Mr Hickton's most outstanding achievements during his successful 10 years as Chief Executive of Tourism New Zealand from 1999 to 2009. Seventeen years on it remains the envy of tourism organisations worldwide.

The tourism industry continues to benefit from George's inspirational leadership. He is Chair of the Hawke's Bay Tourism Board, a Weta Workshop and Hobbiton Director and has carved out a niche in the film tourism space, most recently as the Project Director of Wellington's new Movie Museum.

Angus & Associates, an independent marketing, research and strategic planning consultancy specialising in New Zealand's tourism industry, won the Tourism 2025 Enabler Award for the second consecutive year.

The Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award was won by Rotorua Canopy Tours, a business that has rocketed to success in just four years. The judges said this business is an excellent combination of people, culture, environment and a fantastic activity for all ages to enjoy. Rotorua Canopy Tours also won the Visitor Experience Award, supported by ServiceIQ, and the Environmental Tourism Award supported by Mercury.

TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says this year's Awards were extremely competitive, a reflection of a buoyant industry that is pumping billions of dollars into communities up and down the country and supporting several hundred thousand jobs.

He says the awards programme is closely aligned to the tourism industry's Tourism 2025 growth framework which aspires to grow annual tourism revenue to \$41 billion by 2025.

"We had entries from big corporates to small businesses, ranging from one operator that has been in business for over 100 years to our Supreme Award winner, an exciting young company that has an outstanding visitor experience at the heart of its success.

"It was fantastic to see winners from across the regions, including Wellington."

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Wellington winners:

George Hickton, winner of the: Sir Jack Newman Award (outstanding industry leader) supported by Crowe Horwath International

TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says George Hickton is famous in New Zealand's tourism industry for being the man who drove the development of the 100% Pure New Zealand international marketing brand.

It was George's most outstanding achievement during his 10 years as Chief Executive of Tourism New Zealand from 1999 to 2009.

"Seventeen years on 100% Pure remains the envy of tourism organisations worldwide. It is recognised globally as the leading visitor destination brand that tells the story of how this country's unique combination of landscapes, people and activities can't be found anywhere else in the world – it is a 100% Pure New Zealand visitor experience."

Mr Roberts says George Hickton demonstrated his skills as a tourism industry leader and marketer during his time at the helm of TNZ.

"He saw the value of events in raising New Zealand's international profile. Highlights included two award winning New Zealand gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show and the giant inflatable rugby ball projects in Paris, London and Tokyo.

"Over the 10 years he led TNZ, annual visitor arrivals increased from 1.6 million to more than 2.4 million and international visitor expenditure grew from \$4.5 billion to over \$7 billion.

"One of his most impressive legacies was his success in gaining the support of the New Zealand tourism industry for the activities of TNZ."

New Zealand's tourism industry was lucky to retain Mr Hickton's skills when he left TNZ, says Mr Roberts.

"We are still benefitting from his inspirational leadership and marketing nous, including his role as Chair of the Hawke's Bay Tourism Board and a director of both Weta Workshop and Hobbiton. He's carved out a real niche in the tourism film space, including most recently as the Project Director of Wellington's exciting new movie museum."

Angus & Associates, winner of the: Tourism 2025 Enabler Award, supported by Auckland Airport

Angus & Associates is an independent market, research and strategic planning consultancy. It develops insight solutions for tourism organisations and sectors, including holiday parks, regional tourism operators, cycle trails and the backpacker, youth and adventure tourism sector.

A syndicated approach enables research to occur that individual organisations would often be unable to conduct on their own.

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The judges said Angus & Associates understands the complexities of the tourism industry and has successfully developed insight initiatives for a wide range of organisations and groups.

They have produced effective and user-friendly sector information where there was nothing to start with!

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.

For more information go to www.tourismawards.org.nz

For more information and photos from the winners or the Awards presentation contact:

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New Zealand Tourism Awards 2016 Winners

- **Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Industry Award, and Environmental Tourism Award, supported by Mercury, and Visitor Experience Award, supported by ServiceIQ**
Rotorua Canopy Tours
- **Sir Jack Newman Award (outstanding industry leader) supported by Crowe Horwath International**
George Hickton, Wellington
- **Emerging Tourism Leader Award, supported by PATA New Zealand Trust**
Bradley Garnett, SKYCITY Entertainment Group, Auckland
- **Tourism Industry Champion Award, supported by Sudima Hotels & Resorts**
Graeme Abbot, Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools & Spa
- **Business Excellence Award – annual turnover less than \$6 million, supported by Westpac**
Black Cat Cruises, Canterbury

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- **Business Excellence Award – annual turnover more than \$6 million, supported by JLT & AIG**
Hobbiton Movie Set & Farm Tours, Waikato
- **Industry Alignment Award, supported by the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment**
Destination Rotorua
- **Maori Cultural Tourism Award, supported by Auckland Tourism, Events & Economic Development**
Waitangi Treaty Grounds
- **People’s Choice Award, supported by NZME.**
Hobbiton Movie Set & Farm Tours, Waikato
- **Tourism 2025 Enabler Award, supported by Auckland Airport**
Angus & Associates Ltd
- **Tourism Marketing Campaign Award, supported by Spark**
Hobbiton Movie Set & Farm Tours

Thanks

TIA thanks key New Zealand Tourism Awards 2016 Partners & Supporters:

Award Partners: Air New Zealand and the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

Award Supporters: PATA New Zealand Trust, Sudima Hotels & Resorts, Westpac, JLT & AIG, Mercury, Auckland Tourism, Events & Economic Development, Auckland Airport, Spark, and ServiceIQ

Event Supporters: Department of Conservation, Mission Estate Winery, Black Market, Monteiths, Epay, PATA International & Official Media Partner, NZME.

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KEY FACTS

- Tourism in New Zealand is an \$81.6 million per day industry. Tourism delivers around \$32 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$49 million in economic activity every day
- Tourism is one of New Zealand's biggest export industries, earning \$11.8 billion or 17.4% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2015)
- 12.1% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand work directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 295,908 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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