

NZ Tourism Award

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Major Tourism Award for Waitangi's Jeanette Richardson

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PM John Key and Waitangi National Trust CEO Jeanette Richardson

The New Zealand Tourism 2010 Award for Outstanding Contribution to Tourism has been presented to Waitangi Treaty Grounds Chief Executive and Paihia resident Jeanette Richardson.

Qualities required to be demonstrated in nominations included creativity, foresight, discipline and commitment. Innovation was a "critical ingredient" says the Tourism Industry Association, along with enthusiasm and positivity in difficult situations. These attributes are evident in the way Jeanette

Richardson has driven transformation of the Treaty Grounds into a world-class cultural tourism experience over her tenure of nearly ten years.

Determination and forward focus have seen the Treaty Grounds make major advances in terms of the visitor experience, the preservation of heritage, financial soundness, and administration and governance of daily operations - as well as the ongoing growth of the annual Waitangi Day celebrations. The major national taonga of Waitangi is a tourism magnet for the Bay of Islands and New Zealand, and is well on the way to becoming a world treasure, believes Jeanette Richardson.

The award noted the CEO's close work with iwi and other organisations and her enhancing of the celebration of New Zealand's national day and related festival. "She has overseen the development of infrastructure that has transformed this iconic site into a world class facility. An inspirational leader, Jeanette has brought about a positive change in the way the Treaty Ground staff operate. Under her watch, attendees to the Waitangi celebrations have quadrupled. Jeanette's contribution and commitment has benefitted the Northland economy, with the Trust a significant employer of local people."

Entry for the award also required demonstration of the nominee's collaboration and teamwork motivational skills, and long-term benefit to the tourism industry. Extraordinary customer service and commitment were also required.

Jeanette Richardson says the people and the place have been her drivers at Waitangi Treaty Grounds. "Heritage and humanity abound here. The environment, our loyal staff and guests' evident appreciation and respect for our nation's birthplace – these keep me positive and motivated.

"This award is not about me, it is about the unfolding of our nation's cradle as a tourism destination that is attracting interest from around the world, while remaining true to its values. That comes from the governance of a progressive, voluntary trust board assembled from around New Zealand, and the dedication of staff and managers. We are proud that our tourism environment is positive, authentic and professional."

"It is my honour to accept the award as a person who has the privilege of motivating and fostering excellence in this historic, yet forward-focussed place."

Destination Northland CEO Brian Roberts says "The Northland Visitor industry should be very proud of what the Waitangi Trust and its CEO Jeanette Richardson have achieved over the last few years and

the awards are a great recognition of their efforts. The profile will also assist the region immensely in attracting further visitors in the future".
