
'Best of the Best' On Show at Inaugural New Zealand NTIA

- **NZ Travel stars shine at the inaugural New Zealand National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) Ceremony in Auckland last night.**
- **AFTA CEO Jayson Westbury congratulates winners, thanks TAANZ and sponsors: Qantas and Air New Zealand**

04 July 2013: As the frontline players in New Zealand's all important domestic and international travel market, travel agents represent a critical economic driver – the four top travel agencies in New Zealand were last night singled out at the first-ever National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA).

The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA), with the support of the Travel Agents Association of New Zealand (TAANZ), expanded the NTIA format this year, to recognise New Zealand's leading agencies during a glittering event at Auckland's SKYCITY Convention Centre, which proved to be a huge success.

Congratulations to the following New Zealand NTIA 2013 winners, recognised tonight for their ongoing contributions, success and support to the New Zealand travel industry:

- **Best Travel Agency Retail, Single Location – House of Travel Lakers**

Tony and Tracey Laker opened House of Travel Lakers in March 1999 and have grown the business into Southland's largest travel company, and also one of the largest in New Zealand. They were awarded the *Best Travel Agency Retail, Single Location* award for their ongoing dedication, outstanding commitment to the industry and customer service excellence.

- **Best Travel Agency Retail, Multi Location – House of Travel**

House of Travel, New Zealand's largest chain of independent travel agents, took out the *Best Travel Agency Retail - Multi Location* for their ongoing high standards at each and every one of their stores across the country. All outlets operate as full members of TAANZ, meaning customers receive competitive travel deals and invaluable advice from some of the most experienced travel consultants in the country.

- **Best Travel Agency Corporate, Single Location - Executive Travel, Auckland**

Executive Travel has been looking after the needs of business travellers since 1975. During that time they've grown to be one of New Zealand's largest business travel specialists, with five divisions across Auckland. They were recognised as the *Best Travel Agency Corporate, Single Location* for offering an unrivalled level of personal service to New Zealand businesses and the people who work in them.

- **Best Travel Agency Corporate, Multi Location – Orbit Corporate Travel**

With more than 22 years in the industry, Orbit's vision is to be the travel service provider of choice for New Zealand business. They were named *Best Travel Agency Corporate, Multi Location* for their continuous focus on value, innovation, personalised service, and delivering effective travel solutions – every time.

"There are a number of initiatives underway to strengthen ties between our industries in Australia and New Zealand and the launch of our NTIA NZ categories reflects this," AFTA CEO Jayson Westbury said.

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“There was an incredibly high standard across all categories, and it was great to see the best of the best recognised for their hard work and contributions to a very competitive, yet dynamic industry.”

“On behalf of AFTA, I would like to congratulate the winners across the four categories, and thank all our sponsors and nominees for their participation and support of the first NTIA held in New Zealand. We look forward to your continued support in 2014.”

Entertainment for the night included a spectacular performance by talented singer/songwriter Lisa Crawley, and the evening was hosted by comedian and television host, Dai Henwood.

Qantas is the major sponsor of the 2013 NTIA, providing much-valued support in recognising and celebrating the industry’s best. Air New Zealand is the local sponsor of the four categories providing exceptional on-ground support and assistance during the evaluation process and the Gala awards night.

Follow The Australian Federation of Travel Agents on Twitter at @AFTAOfficial.

Notes to Editors:

The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) is the peak body in Australia representing the retail travel industry. Founded in 1957, AFTA represents the majority of travel agents in Australia and includes all of the major travel agency groups.

AFTA’s role is to uphold the interests of members in matters relating to the operation of all travel agencies in Australia. In broad terms these issues are ones that are not addressed by agent chain or corporate entities on behalf of their members, and are ones that involve the industry as a whole.

The AFTA National Travel Industry Awards (AFTA NTIA) acknowledge the best of the best in the Australian travel industry – with categories covering travel agencies and individual consultants, as well as the various suppliers which support them and their businesses.

These awards are essential in providing encouragement and recognition to the businesses and personnel who demonstrate outstanding service, marketing excellence and business acumen to the travel industry.

The 2013 AFTA NTIA Gala Dinner will be held on Saturday 20th July at the Hordern Pavilion, Moore Park.

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