

News release  
21 September 2023

## Outstanding Contributor Award for Hawke's Bay Tourism CEO

One of New Zealand's longstanding tourism leaders has been presented with Business Events Industry Aotearoa's (BEIA's) Outstanding Contributor Award for 2023 at the BEIA Conference.

Hamish Saxton, Chief Executive of Hawke's Bay Tourism was celebrated by the industry at a gala dinner at Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre in Marlborough on Wednesday night (20 September).

BEIA Chief Executive Lisa Hopkins says each year one worthy recipient is chosen to be celebrated by the industry.

"We are acknowledging and thanking Hamish who has contributed hugely to our industry over the course of two decades, and continues to do so," she says.

Saxton has been at the helm of Hawke's Bay Tourism for the past four years. Prior to this he spent 13 years at Tourism Dunedin, with six years as its Chief Executive. His international experience includes time as Tourism Dunedin's offshore manager in Australia, and in Toronto, Canada where he established a new cultural visitor experience.

"Hamish embodies his organisation's mission statement 'let's get on with it'. Despite the enormous challenges presented by Cyclone Gabrielle, and the pandemic, he has been instrumental in ensuring Hawke's Bay remains a vibrant business events destination - and that the business events sector is recognised as a valued contributor to the economy and the community," Hopkins says.

"Earlier this year Hawke's Bay received a prestigious honour when it was named the latest Great Wine Capital of the World, taking the total to 12 worldwide. Hamish and his team at Hawke's Bay Tourism were behind this all the way. This global recognition is a crucial factor in the economic recovery of the industry and the wider region," she says.

The BEIA Outstanding Contributor Awards were presented with thanks to long-standing supporters David Hall, and Hunter's Wines.

New Zealand Business Events Week continues until Friday with policy and business forums in Wellington and Auckland, and the Tourism New Zealand National Awards.

Spearheaded by peak industry body BEIA, New Zealand Business Events Week has been developed as a platform to elevate the importance of the sector to New Zealand.

The destination for next year's conference will be New Plymouth, Taranaki. It will lead into the second annual NZ Business Events Week. Dates will be released shortly.