



MEDIA RELEASE

Ruapehu District Council

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RUAPEHU DISTRICT COUNCIL TAKES OUT TOP 'EXCELLENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARD' FOR TE KAHUI TUPUA REGIONAL TOURISM INITIATIVE

Ruapehu District Council (RDC) has taken out the top prize for 'excellence in local government' in the 2010 New Zealand Post 'Local Government Excellence Awards' at the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM) conference in Queenstown over the weekend for their leadership of the Te Kahui Tupua (Sacred Peaks) tourism major regional initiative (MRI).

Te Kahui Tupua (Sacred Peaks) was the winner of the 'Joined-Up Local Government Category' of this year's awards that recognised projects that involved a local authority working together with one or more agencies or organisations to advance a common goal as well as the overall 'Supreme Award' winner.

RDC Chief Executive, David Hammond, accepted the awards on behalf of the Ruapehu District Council and Ruapehu's MRI partners of Whanganui and Rangitikei District Councils, 12 Iwi, central government, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise and the region's tourism industry.

"The Te Kahui Tupua initiative has been an amazing step forward for the region and an outstanding example of what can be achieved when local authorities, government and its agencies, tangata whenua, and local people and their businesses share a common vision and passion," he said.

"From a Ruapehu District Council perspective the awards recognise that although Ruapehu is one of the smallest Territorial Authorities in New Zealand, that as an organisation we are 'punching well above our weight', and are delivering outcomes for our district, communities and region that are on par or exceeding what anyone else in the country is doing."

Mr Hammond said that he was "delighted with the awards" and it was an "outstanding example" of what can be achieved through blending determined leadership with collaboration.

"Te Kahui Tupua – the Major Regional Initiative tourism project that this award recognises has been five years in the making having been launched 'way back' in August 2005," he said.

“It was the first time in the region’s history that leaders from local and central government, government agencies and Iwi, had come together to identify and overcome barriers to growth, and work collaboratively to make the most of the opportunities that we had.”

Whanganui Regional Maori Tourism Organisation (Maori RTO) Chairman, Soraya Peke-Mason, one of the founding organisations of Te Kahui Tupua, said that Maori were “really chuffed” with the awards and saw them as a reflection of the hard work and commitment of all the Te Kahui Tupua stakeholders who “stuck with the programme” through some very testing times to gain the ultimate success we are enjoying now.

“The Whanganui Maori RTO hope that other iwi groups see this success as an example of the type of collaborative tourism model that they should consider,” she said.

“Te Kahui Tupua has provided a platform for bringing Maori into the regional tourism market and growing employment opportunities for Maori people.”

Mrs Peke-Mason said that the Whanganui Maori RTO and tourism operators were now looking forward to seeing further recognition for Te Kahui Tupua at the highly prestigious Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand (TIANZ) Awards in October where it is a finalist in the local government category.

DAVID HAMMOND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CJH : PRW