

MEDIA RELEASE

## Excellence Recognised at Entertainment Venue Awards

Wednesday 28 November 2018

The 2018 Entertainment Venues Association of New Zealand (EVANZ) annual awards dinner took place at Eden Park, Auckland, on Tuesday 27 November, in conjunction with the EVANZ Annual Conference.

Awards were presented in nine award categories and there were two Supreme award winners. Finalists came from throughout New Zealand including Auckland, Hamilton, Taranaki, Porirua, Carterton, Wellington and Nelson. This year's winners came from Auckland, Hamilton, Taranaki and Porirua.

Judging was undertaken by a panel of judges assembled from leading entertainment and events organisations and EVANZ Executive members.

This year the Contribution to Industry Award, recognising dedication and success within the industry, went to Miles Davidson who recently retired as General Manager of EVANZ after 15 years. Eden Park, Auckland took out the Health Promotion Agency Excellence in Host Responsibility award, and security firm Platform 4 Group won the Best Industry Supplier award.

In the Venues section, ASB Waterfront Theatre of Auckland was awarded Small Venue of the Year, Te Rauparaha Arena from Porirua won the Medium Venue of the Year award, and Auckland's Spark Arena won the Large Venue of the Year and Supreme Venue of the Year awards.

In the final section of the awards, the People category, Stacey Donaldson of Auckland Live won the Rising Star award, Ben Slatter from Hamilton's H3 won Operations Manager of the Year, and Nelita Byrne from New Plymouth Event Venues took out the Venue Executive of the Year and Supreme Venue Person of the Year awards.

The EVANZ Award Finalists and Recipients for 2018 are:

### GENERAL CATEGORIES

#### Health Promotion Agency Excellence in Host Responsibility Award

Finalists:

- Eden Park, Auckland
- Montana Group – in partnership with H3, Hamilton
- Hannah Playhouse, Wellington

**WINNER: Eden Park, Auckland**

#### *Judges' comments:*

The judges loved the fact that Eden Park is working in partnership with local bars and businesses to minimise risk not just in the venue but in the wider local community. Eden Park is truly a stadium leading the way in host responsibility.

### **EVANZ Best Industry Supplier Award**

Finalists:

- Platform 4 Group
- Sidekicker
- Red Badge Security

**WINNER: Platform 4 Group**

*Judges' comments:*

The decision was a close one, but the deciding factor was that P4G takes the next step in dedicated education for their clients with knowledge obtained from industry forums.

P4G's 'end client' mentality shows in the feedback received from event attendees. Their security teams seem to understand that it is not just a relationship between them and the venue, but also those attending the events. P4G shows real flexibility and the ability to adapt to the needs of their clients.

### **EVANZ Contribution to Industry Award**

**RECIPIENT: Miles Davidson** (former General Manager, EVANZ) – Miles recently retired after 15 years as General Manager of EVANZ.

### **VENUE AWARD CATEGORIES**

#### **Eventfinda Large Venue of the Year Award (Over 5,000 Seats)**

Finalists:

- FMG Stadium, Hamilton
- Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland
- Spark Arena, Auckland

**WINNER: Spark Arena, Auckland**

*Judges' comments:*

In conjunction with a busy calendar of events, the Arena and Spark rolled out a number of customer focused initiatives as part of the partnership, as well as leading the industry in sustainability.

#### **Sidekicker Medium Venue of the Year (1,001-4,999 Seats)**

Finalists:

- Trafalgar Centre, Nelson
- Te Rauparaha Arena, Porirua

**WINNER: Te Rauparaha Arena, Porirua**

*Judges' comments:*

Our medium size venues serve an important part of our regional footprint and we commend our finalists for the work they are doing within their venues and communities. Te Rauparaha has more than exceeded both income and visitor target numbers consistently and has proven its value to the community and the citywide economy.

#### **Ticketmaster Small Venue of The Year (1-1,000 Seats)**

Finalists:

- Carterton Events Centre
- ASB Waterfront Theatre, Auckland

- Q Theatre, Auckland

**WINNER: ASB Waterfront Theatre**

*Judges' comments:*

It was fantastic to see a wide range of venues submit entries into this category and some new nominations this year from very different venues and resources. Although only recently celebrating its second birthday, ASB Waterfront Theatre is performing strongly across both the performing arts and meetings/corporate markets and delivering exceptional service to customers.

**PEOPLE AWARD CATEGORIES**

**Ticketek Venue Executive of the Year Award**

Finalists:

- Nick Sautner, Eden Park, Auckland
- Jason Wade, Clarence Street Theatre, Hamilton
- Nelita Byrne, New Plymouth Event Venues, Taranaki

**WINNER: Nelita Byrne, New Plymouth Event Venues, Taranaki**

*Judges' comments:*

A strong leader herself, Nelita is always looking for ways to provide development and leadership opportunities to her staff. She has led her team in consistently delivering outstanding results this year during a period of challenges, including the unexpected partial closure of Yarrow Stadium. Judges were impressed by her well-laid-out submission which provided excellent examples relating to the award criteria.

The winner of the Ticketek Venue Executive of the Year award receives complimentary registration to the Venue Management Association (VMA) Asia-Pacific Venue Industry Congress for 2019.

**Simpson Grierson Operations Manager of the Year Award**

Finalists:

- Blair Christiansen, Eden Park Auckland
- Chynna Phelan, Eden Park Auckland
- Ben Slatter, H3 Group Hamilton

**WINNER: Ben Slatter, H3 Group Hamilton**

*Judges' comments:*

With his cool and calm demeanour, strategic mind and passion for events, Ben is a rising star of both H3 and the event industry. Ben has a great motivation to improve the venue and events they deliver, as well as to make sure his team is able to have their own opportunity to grow within the organisation.

The winner of the Simpson Grierson Operations Manager of the Year award receives complimentary registration to the 2019 EVANZ Conference.

**Ungerboeck Rising Star of the Year Award**

Finalists:

- Mark Mekalick, Trafalgar Centre & Trafalgar Park, Nelson
- Megan Bloomfield, Napier Venues
- Stacey Donaldson, Auckland Live

**WINNER: Stacey Donaldson, Auckland Live**

*Judges' comments:*

Despite juggling two busy roles as Production Manager and Event Coordinator, Stacey has been instrumental in getting Auckland Live's various teams working together smoothly. One of her most notable contributions was overseeing the rollout of a new event management software (Ungerboeck) in 2017. Stacey understands first-hand the pressures on a client and can focus on their needs matching the operational requirements to ensure a positive outcome. She has a natural knack for making each client feel that nothing but their show matters.

The winner of the Ungerboeck Rising Star award receives a \$5,000 scholarship to VMS – the Venue Management School in Australia. This scholarship covers years 1 and 2.

**SUPREME AWARDS**

**VIDCOM Supreme Venue of the Year Award** (highest scoring nomination across the 3 venue awards - large, medium and small)

**WINNER: Spark Arena, Auckland**

*Judges' comments:*

Spark Arena is a shining example of a highly successful New Zealand venue. It continues to exceed the expectations of its stakeholders while engaging with the community and leading by example with sustainability initiatives. A world-class arena well on its way to achieving its goal of being the best Arena in Australasia and regarded as one of the leading venues in the world, Spark Arena is a deserving recipient of this award.

**EVANZ Supreme Person of the Year Award** (highest scoring nomination across the 3 people awards)

**WINNER: Nelita Byrne, New Plymouth Event Venues, Taranaki**

*Judges' comments:*

Nelita is the Venues Manager for New Plymouth District Council. Her team manage and deliver events at the TSB Bowl of Brooklands, TSB Showplace, Yarrow Stadium and TSB Stadium. She has led the team to consistently strive for excellence, continuously aiming to improve processes and deliver a sensational service to clients and customers. Nelita was EVANZ President for 2 years, stepping down at the 2017 conference. She has devoted a lot of time and energy into the development of the industry and is a truly worthy recipient of this award.

-ENDS-

*Images available on request*

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**About EVANZ**



EVANZ is the peak body representing the venue industry in New Zealand with a membership of 120 venues nationally. This includes theatres, event centres, outdoor stadia and convention centres. EVANZ aims to provide leadership and builds excellence for entertainment venues and their teams. EVANZ facilitates the collective sharing of information, enhancement of skills and development of best practice in the entertainment venues industry.  
[www.evanz.co.nz](http://www.evanz.co.nz)