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Eden Park CEO in the running for top stadia award

The Chief Executive of New Zealand's national stadium is amongst the finalists for an international accolade which acknowledges industry excellence of worldwide stadium executives.

Based in the United Kingdom, TheStadiumBusiness Awards have this year named Nick Sautner as one of six contenders in the 'Executive of the Year' category, for the sports venue leader, pioneer or visionary that has over-delivered in the past 12-months.

Amongst the front-runners are leaders from venues in Kentucky, Washington and Georgia in the United States as well as Wolverhampton, Scotland and Germany in Europe.

Executive of the Year finalists:

- Brad Estes, President, Louisville City FC (USL)
- Kim Bedier, Director, Tacoma Venues & Events
- Laurie Dalrymple, Managing Director, Wolverhampton Wanderers FC
- John Sharkey, EVP Europe, SMG
- Nick Sautner, CEO, Eden Park, New Zealand
- Thad Sheely, COO, Atlanta Hawks & State Farm Arena

Over the past three years Sautner has led transformational change at New Zealand's national stadium to modernise its operations whilst securing additional content through non-sporting and community based events.

The Eden Park Trust Board Chairman Doug McKay says "It is very encouraging for both Eden Park and our Chief Executive to be in the upper global echelon of stadium venues and leaders. This underscores the reverence in which Eden Park is held globally and the terrific job Nick and his team do in engaging key stakeholders and strengthening our revenue base."

Chief Executive Nick Sautner says being included amongst the finalists reaffirms that Eden Park is a blank canvas to express creativity through sport, arts, music and entertainment.

"I'm thrilled to be acknowledged internationally for the innovation and continual efforts to increase utilisation whilst adhering to our core function of providing world-class live events.

"New Zealand's national stadium is a strategic asset for Auckland and all of Aotearoa that showcases our city and country on the international stage, in addition to delivering significant economic benefits to the community," says Sautner.

Sautner has 18 years' experience in the sports and entertainment industry which has included roles at Colonial Stadium, Telstra Dome, Etihad Stadium, Domain Stadium and the West Australian Football Commission. He has instigated a continual focus on fostering innovation which has seen the procurement of numerous major sport, entertainment, religious and cultural events and initiatives on both sides of the Tasman.

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Initiatives at Eden Park include the ASB G9 golf experience, the creation of 'The Hood - Eden Park's supporters' club', '4 The Hood' food truck events, an icon partners program, the 'Our Neighbourhood' community photography exhibition and an ambassador program. Several attractions yet to be launched include Staydium Glamping, Rooftop Tours, Zipline and Pianos in the Park.

The Eden Park team looks forward to continuing conversations and collaborating with neighbours, business associations and the local board given the stadium's city fringe location in a semi-residential area.

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About Eden Park

Eden Park is New Zealand's national stadium and a globally-iconic arena, located in central Auckland.

Eden Park Trust operates as a statutory not-for-profit body corporate, registered as a charitable trust with the Charities Commission. Its objectives are to promote, operate and develop Eden Park as a high quality multi-purpose stadium for the use and benefit of rugby and cricket as well as other sporting codes and other recreational, musical, and cultural events for the benefit of the public of the Auckland region.

Its rich history and profile is unmatched by any other stadium in the country. From its beginnings as a cricket ground in 1903, Eden Park became the primary venue for major summer and winter sport in Auckland when in 1913, the owner, Auckland Cricket, leased winter use of the ground to Auckland Rugby.

A Deed of Trust establishing Auckland Cricket and Auckland Rugby as the beneficial owners of Eden Park was signed in 1926 and has since been enshrined in legislation. Most notably remembered for hosting the 1987 and 2011 Rugby World Cup Finals, Eden Park remains the home of both Auckland Cricket and Auckland Rugby as it has been for more than a century.

Each year, more than half a million sports and entertainment fans from around the world visit Eden Park. The stadium successfully hosts sell-out crowds of up to 50,000 on match days and hosts more than 1,000 non-match day functions per year.