

SPOTLIGHT ON THE: TRC SUSTAINABLE TRAILS CONFERENCE



Lake Dunstan Field Trip

CASE STUDY

THE FACTS:

EVENT NAME:

TRC Sustainable Trails Conference

DATES: 19-21 March 2024

DESTINATION: Cromwell, Central Otago

VENUES:

Conference: The Harvest Hotel - Main Conference Centre

Dinner: Gala Dinner - The Stoker Room, Cromwell

Field Trip venues: Carrick Winery, Te Kano Estate, Bike Glendhu

ACCOMMODATION: The Harvest Hotel – main accommodation centre

Many delegates also stayed in accommodation around Cromwell including Lake Dunstan Motel, Colonial Manor Motel, Asure Central Gold Motel, Cromwell Escape, Central Park Apartments, Harvest Park Studios

NO OF DELEGATES: 75

DELEGATE ORIGINS: New Zealand (North and South Islands), Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Australia (all states)

INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS: Jake Taoi – Talanoa Treks, Fiji / Carl Solomon – Destination Marketing Store / Gerard McHugh – World Trail / Chris Rose & Janet MacKay – TRC Tourism

ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION:

TRC Tourism is a respected global leader in delivering solutions for tourism, recreation, and conservation. We have earned this respect through our delivery of more than 800 projects over almost 25 years of business. Our expert team has a reputation for honest, adaptable, resilient, and creative yet practical approaches. Our strength lies in our shared passion, our respect for all people and environments and our commitment to achievable and sustainable tourism. We are united by our philosophy in developing tourism solutions for good – good for people, good for places.

ABOUT TRC SUSTAINABLE TRAILS CONFERENCE:

Australia and New Zealand's premier event for professionals in the business of recreation and tourism trails. Launched in 2017 in Thredbo Australia, 2024 marked the 5th Sustainable Trails Conference and it continues to grow and bring together leading experts including trail users, designers, planners, land managers, volunteers, club members and construction specialists.

DESTINATION FIELD TRIP EXPERIENCES:

The 2024 conference programme focused on marketing and positioning great destinations, governance and funding, maintenance and construction innovations, the importance of community, storytelling, and accessibility along with regenerative tourism. Central Otago, being a great

trail destination, gave delegates a better understanding of the conference topics and to learn about the expanding trail network and trail-related businesses that are a major driver of the region's sustainable growth.

The field trips included the Lake Dunstan Trail, a purpose built 55km cycling and walking trail that traverses some of Central Otago's most dramatic landscapes and scenery. The trail features impressive construction innovations like cantilevered trail bluff bridges and hand stacked rock walls.

On a walk to Bannockburn Sluicings delegates experienced a former goldfield tour with a guide. It culminated with a local produce picnic and tasting at the inspiring Te Kano Estate cellar door.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE DESTINATION?

The choice of destination for the Sustainable Trails Conference is important as it must:

- Be an upcoming or existing trail destination
- Be within two hours' drive of a major airport
- Offer a casual style conference venue able to host up to 100 plus delegates
- Have ample accommodation within 10kms of the main conference venue
- Offer alternative venues for social function events
- Provide local on ground support during the conference organisation
- Be committed to giving back to its community and the trail sector and
- Be able to showcase unique field trip experiences within an hour of the conference centre for delegates to learn about recreation trails management and the associated tourism offerings that are in the area.

The Central Otago region was a perfect fit for the 5th Sustainable Trails Conference



Gala dinner feast, The Stoker House Cromwell

being home to four Great NZ Rides starting with NZ's 'original', the Otago Central Rail Trail representing NZ's hero trail of sustainability and economic viability. The destination offered a chance to unwind with breathtaking mountain views surrounding, a host of cellar doors, local produce, and many activities for pre and post stays.

The destination was proposed by Central Otago Business Events and backed by Tourism Central Otago.

WHAT YOU LOVED ABOUT THE VENUES:

The Harvest Hotel was a fantastic venue. The team understood the needs of the conference and were professional whilst providing relaxed and friendly hospitality and nothing was a problem. The hotel facilities catered well to the three-day programme.

The gala dinner was held at The Stoker Room, an experience where all the food is smoked and steamed in transformed wine barrels.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF A GREAT EVENT?

A robust programme, an inspiring destination, delegate satisfaction, and seamless execution to create a transformative experience for attendees,

fostering knowledge exchange, collaboration, and a deeper appreciation for sustainable trail management.

WHAT IS YOUR BEST PIECE OF ADVICE?

Build a connection with your host destination and learn who the local contacts are and get to know them. They are your best source of information when planning unique and inspiring events.

WHEN IS YOUR NEXT EVENT?

The TRC Sustainable Trails Conference is held every 18/24 months with the next event anticipated to be between late September – mid November 2025.

WHERE IS YOUR NEXT EVENT?

There are many destinations who reach out to host the conference due to the popularity of recreational trails and the opportunity for destinations to have leading experts in their region gaining perspective and sharing knowledge locally. TRC is committed to alternating between New Zealand and Australia as host countries for the Sustainable Trails Conference. TRC will be seeking expressions of interest from destinations for the 2025 conference



Welcome drinks day one



STC2024 Photo: credit Geoff Marks



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