

WELLINGTON CABLE CAR MUSEUM

Museum on track with second tourism win August 31 2007



Jennie Ryan from Telecom (section sponsor)
Ann Cunninghame, Museum Marketing and
John Gilberthorpe, Trust Chief Executive
celebrate their success..

An authentic visitor experience, a great location (at the top of the cable car route) and a passion for service has paid off for the Wellington Cable Car Museum, which has just won a prestigious New Zealand Tourism Industry Award for the second year in a row.

The museum tells the story of Wellington's iconic cable car system and was one of two Wellingtonians to succeed at the awards, which were announced in Auckland last night. The museum won the category of visitor activities and attractions: culture and heritage tourism. Sports Impact won an award for its organising of the mountain bike and trials world championships, while the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary and Interislander were finalists in other categories.

The Wellington Cable Car Museum, which only opened in late 2000, is managed by the Wellington Museums Trust and has grown rapidly to become the city's second busiest after the national facility Te Papa Tongarewa. It currently attracts more than 200,000 visitors a year and is a key contributor to the region's tourism, with at least 70% of its visitors being international tourists over the summer season.

Wellington Museums Trust chief executive John Gilberthorpe says he is absolutely delighted with the museum's win.

"The fact that we won an award last year on our first-ever entry and have now won again validates all the hard work we've put into developing this museum over a relatively short space of time," John says.

"With previous winners of this category including Otago Museum and Rotorua Museum, we're obviously thrilled that a boutique museum like ours can cut it with the big guns."

John says the entry process for these awards is extremely rigorous, as all entrants making it past the first stage have to submit a very detailed plan documenting all aspects of their business from leadership and strategic planning through to organisational effectiveness and financial results.

“However, we’ve found that subjecting our operation to this degree of external scrutiny has brought real benefits not just to this museum but across all our other facilities.”

Since opening, the Wellington Cable Car Museum has doubled its size with an award-winning extension to the original historic building; it has completed a nationally significant conservation and restoration project that has seen another rare grip cable car (1904) put on display; commissioned a short film on Wellington’s distinctive private cable cars; and is currently planning gallery upgrades and a high-impact exhibition to incorporate more social history and to provide appeal to a wider audience.

“These changes and improvements have all been in direct response to visitor feedback, which we survey constantly, so it’s great to achieve this result.”

About the Wellington Cable Car Museum

The Wellington Cable Car Museum is located next to the cable car’s upper terminus, in a prime tourist precinct with spectacular views over the city and at the upper entrance to the Wellington Botanic Garden. The museum carries a Qualmark™ rating and is virtually self-funding in spite of providing free admission, thanks to a highly successful retail operation.

The Museum is distinctive as it:

- Is located **next to New Zealand’s only working cable car system** used for public transport. It supports a system that was not only an engineering landmark in its day but is now a city-wide and a national icon.
- Interprets an **important part of New Zealand’s early social history**, as early entrepreneurs developed the cable car system to promote their new suburb of Kelburn and provide a transport link to surrounding suburbs.
- Is an active player in the development of the Cable Car Precinct as a **premier tourism site**. In recognition of its prime location, the museum now acts as a hub for the Cable Car Precinct by providing information on the Botanic Garden and other surrounding attractions.
- Provides an **authentic visitor experience**, as the historic cable cars in its collection are displayed in the very building (the winding house c1902, a listed historic building) where they were originally housed and serviced (until the switch was made in the 1970s to the present funicular system). The winding machinery used to haul the cars up the incline can also be seen in situ and has been restored to working order.

- Is the only museum in country to focus exclusively on rail-mounted, cable-hauled public passenger transport. It houses a ***nationally significant collection*** of exhibits including two of the three original cable cars used on the line.

The Wellington Cable Car Museum is a business unit of the Wellington Museums Trust, a Wellington City Council controlled organisation which also manages the Museum of Wellington City & Sea, City Gallery Wellington, Capital E, Colonial Cottage Museum and the New Zealand Cricket Museum (jointly with the NZ Cricket Museum Trust).

For more information

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For a full list of award winners:

www.tourismawards.co.nz