

Sunday, 8 November 2009

FLINDERS RANGES & OUTBACK SA WINS THREE TOURISM AWARDS

Tourism businesses in the Flinders Ranges and Outback SA took home **three** category wins at Saturday night's awards.

For the third consecutive year, **Bookabee Tours Australia** was named South Australia's best Indigenous Tourism operator and **Adventure Tours Australia Group** was named the State's best Major Tour &/or Transport Operator, with both being inducted into the State Tourism Hall of Fame.

In addition, **Bendleby Ranges** was successful in winning an award for the Adventure Tourism category.

Almost 600 people from the tourism industry attended the black tie event, which saw winners crowned during a gala dinner at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

Overall, 27 awards were presented to tourism businesses and individuals judged to be the most outstanding in each category.

Professor of Tourism at Flinders University, Jane James, was also honoured for her role in tourism, receiving the award for an Outstanding Contribution by an Individual.

Over the years, Jane has been involved on a number of educational boards to help shape the future of tourism education for this State and is also widely recognised for her research projects in regional South Australia and is extensively published in a number of fields.

In addition, another **ten** gold, silver or bronze medals were awarded to Flinders Ranges & Outback SA tourism operators for their high standard of entries in their respective categories. (List attached.)

Tourism Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says a record 141 entries were received this year, highlighting the value of tourism in the State.

"The standard of entries was extremely high, which underlines the commitment our operators have towards this important industry," Minister Lomax-Smith says.

"Tourism is big business in South Australia, and the awards recognise the contribution our tourism achievers make to strengthening the economy and creating employment."

South Australian Tourism Industry Council Chief Executive Ward Tilbrook says it has been inspiring to see the commitment that tourism businesses have given to reviewing their goals and achievements through the awards process and showcasing their success to the industry.

“The Tourism Industry Council aims to present the South Australian tourism industry as professional and high quality, and tonight we have seen some of the State’s finest tourism businesses rewarded for excellence,” Mr Tilbrook says.

The awards are judged in accordance with a strict set of rules and criteria, and winners will represent the State at the ***Australian Tourism Awards*** in February 2010, to be held in Hobart.

**2009 South Australian Tourism Awards – Flinders Ranges & Outback SA
award & medal recipients:**

WINNERS:

Category 7 – Indigenous Tourism *supported by the Department for Environment & Heritage*
Winner & Hall of Fame - Bookabee Tours Australia* Ph: (08) 8235 9954

Category 11 – Major Tour &/or Transport Operator
Winner & Hall of Fame – Adventure Tours Australia Group* Ph (08) 8132 8280

Category 13 – Adventure Tourism *supported by Austbrokers Terrace*
Winner - Bendleby Ranges Ph: (08) 8658 9064

MEDALLISTS:

Category 2 – Tourist Attractions *supported by TAFESA Tourism, Events & Languages*
Silver – Old Timer’s Mine

Category 5 – Ecotourism *supported by the Department for Environment & Heritage*
Gold – Rawnsley Park Station Eco-Villas
Silver – Bendleby Ranges
Silver – Top End Eco Cruise

Category 6 – Heritage & Cultural Tourism *supported by the Department for Environment & Heritage*
Silver – Old Timers Mine
Bronze – Innamincka Hotel

Category 12 – Tour &/or Transport Operator
Bronze – Gulf Getaways

Category 16 – Tourism Restaurants & Catering Services *supported by Rymill Coonawarra*
Silver – John’s Pizza Bar & Restaurant
Silver – The Woolshed Restaurant at Rawnsley Park

Category 24 – Luxury Accommodation
Silver – Rawnsley Park Station Eco-Villas

For images of winners, contact Bianca Borrett on telephone 0401 998 247.