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International adventure tourism experts to converge on Queenstown

Queenstown, New Zealand has won a bid to host the 2020 International Adventure Conference, which will bring leading tourism researchers to the Southern Hemisphere for the first time, in December next year.

The winning bid was presented by Dr Susan Houge Mackenzie on behalf of her team from the University of Otago, Queenstown Resort College, and the Otago Polytechnic Institute of Sport and Adventure. Dr Houge Mackenzie is a lecturer in the Department of Tourism at the University of Otago and a member of the World Tourism Forum.

“Queenstown’s global reputation as an adventure tourism hub made it a stand-out choice for the Adventure Tourism Research Association (ATRA),” she says.

“Thanks to the support of Tourism New Zealand’s Conference Assistance Programme, we have been able to bring a landmark event for tourism research to New Zealand. International researchers are excited to be meeting here to exchange ideas and perspectives on adventure tourism,” she says.

“Queenstown is an ideal place for adventure tourism researchers, operators and policy makers to engage. The conference will focus on bringing academics and practitioners together to share their challenges and innovations, foster connections, and identify synergies. Our aim is to ensure symbiotic benefits for the local community and international delegates. We hope local practitioners and

policy makers will benefit from international perspectives and expertise, and our international delegates in turn want to learn about Queenstown's unique approaches to adventure tourism.”

Dr Houge Mackenzie says the conference will have a strong emphasis on sustainable development goals and how adventure tourism can help support and work to meet these at both an international and local level.

Co-founder of ATRA, Professor Peter Varley based in Sogndal, Norway says he is delighted to be collaborating with the conference hosts in New Zealand. “It’s a tremendous opportunity for the adventure tourism community to have this conference in the Southern Hemisphere for the first time. Queenstown has a rightful claim to be the premier adventure tourism destination globally. It is a very fitting setting for our conference, which routinely attracts a diverse international audience to discover and debate the burning issues which shape the industry,” he says.

Delegates, mostly from Europe, the United Kingdom, Scandinavia and North America, are set to arrive from December 7, 2020. Queenstown Resort College welcomes being the local host venue for the academic sessions, as it aligns with and supports QRC's growing research agenda. The event will be supported by students and staff from the Institute of Sport and Adventure, based in Cromwell, and local tourism operators.

Securing the 9th annual International Adventure Conference for Queenstown was the result of a successful collaboration with Queenstown Convention Bureau and Tourism New Zealand Business Events, who helped produce the bid.

“Thanks to the generous support of Tourism New Zealand’s Conference Assistance Programme, we have been able to attract an international tourism research event to New Zealand. International researchers are excited to meet in this globally-recognised adventure tourism destination and Tourism New Zealand have provided excellent support throughout this process,” Dr Houge Mackenzie says.

Queenstown Convention Bureau Business Development Director, Kiran Nambiar says the impact of this event will go beyond the economic value of hosting high-value visitors to the region. “It also fosters and grows the expertise and knowledge within our community and allows us to share insights with our international peers.

“Being selected to host such a significant event in Queenstown, the home of adventure tourism, is a great win for the region and its business events industry. The unique combination of innovative adventure and nature-based activities in Queenstown paralleled with the impressive landscapes is sure to make this an inspirational event for international delegates,” he says.

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Click here to download image of [Paragliding from Bob's Peak, Queenstown NZ](#)

Click here to download image of [Dr Susan Houge Mackenzie](#)

Background information

[ATRA](#) is a membership organisation that seeks to bring together an academic and practitioner community around core areas of interest in adventure tourism and outdoor recreation, from guiding or participating in nature-based tourism to adventure education and therapy. The aim is to create a forum for the dissemination of research into adventure tourism, its key dimension being the dynamic between theorists and practitioners, which is crucial to keeping the research cutting-edge and industry-relevant. Co-ordinated by the Centre for Recreation and Tourism Research in the Highlands of Scotland, ATRA was established at the second International Adventure Conference in 2013. Since then, the conference hosting has rotated to countries as diverse as Norway, Ireland and Spain.

As an international expert in the psychology of adventure tourism, [Dr Susan Houge Mackenzie](#) will give a keynote presentation [‘Beyond risk and thrill: Rethinking](#)

[adventure in terms of psychological well-being'](#) at the ATRA 2019 conference in Scotland this June.

[Tourism New Zealand's Conference Assistance Programme](#) provides funding and support to organisations and associations wishing to host an international conference in New Zealand.

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