News release

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New Zealand’s Maori culture takes centre stage at MEETINGS

New Zealand’s unique Maori culture will be front and centre of the country’s leading business events exhibition, CINZ MEETINGS 2017 in Auckland this month.

Conventions and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) Chief Executive Sue Sullivan says Maori culture is infused into every aspect of MEETINGS, from the set-up of the exhibition, through to the welcoming ceremonies.

“Our culture is New Zealand’s point of difference, and it creates a strong sense of place for people attending business events here. There’s nothing quite like it anywhere else.

“Its core values underpin everything we do. They give our visitors a deep connection to the country and its people,” she says.

NZ Maori Tourism Director of Regions, Simon Phillips says it is all about sharing our authentic stories, our people, and our places.

“It’s not a show, or put on – it’s just what we do. It’s about how we make our manuhiri (visitors) feel. We want them to feel welcome here, to feel at home. They may arrive as strangers, but we want them to leave as whanau (family),” he says.

Before MEETINGS 2017 opens on 30 May, CINZ Maori culture advisor Ngahihi o-te-ra Bidois will bless the exhibition space at ASB Showgrounds, and the stands and food served to guests with traditional karakia (prayers). He will do the same at the event’s conclusion on 1 June, and wish safe travels for all visitors.

Ngahi Bidois says CINZ is leading the way when it comes to authenticating indigenous New Zealand Maori culture.

“This has been demonstrated by CINZ ongoing commitment to honouring and incorporating aspects of te reo Maori (language) and tikanga Maori (values) into major events such as MEETINGS. Maori culture is not just something CINZ does, it is who we are,” he says.

Nineteen regions of New Zealand are represented on the show floor, and all of them have something different to offer on a cultural level, with stories, people and places specific to their local region.

For example, multiple global award winning TIME Unlimited Tours, a national luxury tour operator, will be showcasing their bespoke experiences for business visitors. Director Ceillhe Sperath, of Ngapuhi Maori descent, says they specialise in creating two-way dialogue and interactive luxury itineraries with a cultural, seasonal and regional focus. The Winter TIME Collection begins in June with the narrative-built around the Maori New Year (known as Matariki) as one of many seasonal themes to showcase the best of Maori experiences between Auckland and Northland.

“Clients can immerse themselves in quality, bespoke Maori cultural experiences, where we showcase culturally significant locations and attractions between Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland) and Te Rerenga Wairua (Cape Reinga) at the top of New Zealand’s North Island. These unique experiences are further enhanced by a seasonal theme and storyline. Our aim is to engage and excite our visitors using all their senses, but it is the unique sixth sense we have as Maori that is the real point of difference. The focus then goes on the regional and seasonal feel that we believe will gain global appeal,” Ceillhe says.

Maori tourism exhibitors sharing their stories at MEETINGS 2017 include:

[Auckland Museum - Tamaki Paenga Hira](http://meetings.co.nz/auckland/auckland/activities-attractions/x%2C1%2C3734/auckland-museum.html)

[The Face of New Zealand Ngahihi o-te-ra Bidois](http://meetings.co.nz/rotorua/rotorua/professional-speakers/x%2C1%2C3647/the-face-of-new-zealand.html)

[Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa](http://meetings.co.nz/wellington/wellington/conference-and-function-venue/x%2C1%2C3328/museum-of-new-zealand-te-papa-tongarewa.html)

[Tamaki Maori Village](http://meetings.co.nz/rotorua/rotorua/conference-and-function-venue/x%2C1%2C3403/tamaki-maori-village.html)

[Te Puia](http://meetings.co.nz/rotorua/rotorua/cultural-attractions/x%2C1%2C3415/te-puia.html)

[TIME Unlimited Tours](http://meetings.co.nz/auckland/auckland/tour-operators/x%2C1%2C3881/time-unlimited-tours.html)

[Waitomo Glowworm Caves](http://meetings.co.nz/hamilton-waikato/hamilton/activities-attractions/x%2C1%2C3684/waitomo-glowworm-caves.html)

[Wellington Functions](http://meetings.co.nz/wellington/wellington/conference-and-function-venue/x%2C1%2C3689/wellington-functions.html)

ENDS

Click here to access the online [MEETINGS Media Centre](http://meetings.co.nz/media-image-library) to download images and news.

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For further information and images, and to attend MEETINGS please contact:

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**Background information**

* CINZ MEETINGS 2017 is New Zealand’s largest business tourism trade exhibition.
* Conventions & Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) owns and manages the event, which has been run annually since 1997.
* CINZ MEETINGS is New Zealand’s leading platform for connecting influential domestic, Australian and international buyers with key regions, meeting facilities, accommodation, off-site venues and activities.
* Air New Zealand is Principal Sponsor for CINZ MEETINGS 2017, renewing its ongoing commitment to the sector and to the hosted buyer and media programmes.
* Other major sponsors include ASB Showgrounds, Peek Exhibition, Centium Software and Auckland Convention Bureau.
* This year’s event will showcase 198 exhibitors from 19 regions across New Zealand to more than 500 New Zealand, Australian and international buyers. Exhibitors include venues, theming companies, hotels, AV companies, regional bureaux, attractions and activities.
* More than 240 qualified hosted buyers will attend, including over 90 hosted buyers and media from Australia, 40 from international markets, 120 hosted buyers and media from around New Zealand. As well, more than 400 day buyers are set to attend.
* Tourism New Zealand and Air New Zealand are bringing over 35 influential buyers and media from China, South East Asia, India and North America.
* For the first time, Air New Zealand is bringing a group of influential buyers from Argentina to attend MEETINGS.