

SCULPTURE AT SCENIC WORLD DELIVERS WELCOME BOOST TO NSW VISITOR ECONOMY

Scenic World's annual art exhibition, Sculpture at Scenic World, has cemented its position as Australia's premier regional outdoor art exhibition, attracting record visitor numbers to the Blue Mountains in a welcome boost for the NSW visitor economy.

Drawing to a close on May 12, the four-week exhibition brought visitors from across the globe to the Blue Mountains for day trips and overnight stays to experience world class artworks set among the ancient rainforest.

The exhibition was well received for the eighth year running, with Sculpture at Scenic World visitation increasing more than 6% on the previous year.

Domestic visitation was the stand out performer, with impressive gains from Victoria and Queensland, which increased by 133% and 83% respectively. Visitor numbers from the ACT also jumped 24% during the exhibition as visitors from the nation's capital travelled to the Blue Mountains region.

International visitation from Hong Kong, China, the UK and the US also increased significantly during the exhibition, up 132%, 45%, 36% and 19% respectively*.

Sculpture at Scenic World was one of the main reasons which prompted more than 43% of survey respondents to visit the Blue Mountains between April 12 – May 12, while 44% of respondents experienced the exhibition as part of an overnight stay in the region**.

Scenic World's Chief Experience Officer, Amanda Byrne, said the results highlighted the exhibition's proven success in attracting visitors to the Blue Mountains for day trips and overnight stays.

"Sculpture at Scenic World provides a compelling reason to visit the Blue Mountains, but the benefits extend far and wide, delivering significant economic benefits for our region while increasing destination awareness and visitors' intention to travel," she said.

Recognised as a major tourism event under Destination NSW's Flagship Event Fund, Sculpture at Scenic World also provides a valuable contribution to the Blue Mountains' creative industries which employs eight percent of the local population; almost twice the state average.

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“It’s a privilege to contribute to our thriving creatives industries by employing local artists and partnering with local community groups who contribute so much to our vibrant community,” added Sculpture at Scenic World Exhibition Curator, Justin Morrissey.

In line with previous years, visitors took to social media to share their experiences, with more than 500 guests entering Scenic World’s #ScenicSculpture competition to go in the running to win an Apple Watch Series 4.

Visitors also enjoyed nominating their favourite artworks for the \$1,000 Carrington Hotel People’s Choice Award which was awarded to Blue Mountains artist Kayo Yokoyama for her work, *Kitsunebi/Foxfires*, which was inspired by the ancient Japanese folktale of fox fires.

Finnish duo, Elin & Keino, also received the \$5,000 Artist Peer Award for their work, *Blue blue Mountains*, which invited viewers to experience nature through a different lens.

Sculpture at Scenic World will return to Scenic World from April 10 to May 10, 2020. Visit www.sculptureatscenicworld.com.au for more.

ENDS.

**Including Free and Independent Travellers (FIT) only (excluding all group travel).*

***Based on Destination NSW survey data provided by 562 survey respondents. All participants viewed the Sculpture at Scenic World exhibition.*