

Waitangi wins best museum project

By [Lindy Laird](#)

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It's founded on a priceless 176 year old nation-building treaty, cost \$14 million in bricks and mortar, took a year to build, has been open less than six months – and has just been named the country's Best Museum Project.

It is Te Kongahu, the Museum of Waitangi, a treasure house built in the famous Waitangi Treaty Grounds to enhance New Zealand's most important historic site and story.

Te Kongahu–Museum of Waitangi was jointly named the best project winner in the Service IQ 2016 New Zealand Museum Awards this week

– sharing the title with Kaiapoi Museum – for its refit designed with Pearson & Associates Architects.

The \$14 million dollar Waitangi museum opened its doors to the public on February 7.

Waitangi Treaty Grounds CEO Greg McManus said he is thrilled the new museum has won the Best Museum Project award.

"It is recognition of all the hard work by so many people to bring the museum to reality and we are delighted to be the joint winner."

The museum exterior features stonework by artist Carin Wilson, depicting a native forest landscape representing trees removed for the building, with figures behind some of the trees representing the ancestors of local iwi. Seven bronze pou at the entranceway, also designed by Carin Wilson, symbolise seven core values – atanoho, kinga, taonga, rangatiratanga, whakapono, rongo, and whenua.

The museum's ground floor houses a permanent exhibition called Ko Waitangi T"nei –This is Waitangi.

The Waitangi National Trust wanted the museum to have a traditional feel but still deliver the cutting-edge technology that visitors expect. On the museum's second level is a learning centre and modern exhibition space for temporary exhibitions and programmes.

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Te Kongahu, the Museum of Waitangi, is co-winner of a prestigious New Zealand Museums award. Photo / Waitangi Trust