

Earth & Sky 'Window to the Universe' Astronomy Centre

Earth & Sky Limited Partnership

Earth & Sky Limited Partnership, a joint venture between Earth & Sky and Ngāi Tahu Tourism, is building an International Astronomy Centre on the shores of Lake Tekapo. The centre will be accessible to the thousands of visitors who transit through the region daily. This will be a building of significance. Earth & Sky is globally-recognised for astro-tourism, with the region being the world's largest International Dark Sky Reserve. The facility will add to the existing astro-tourism attraction, providing an exciting new day-time astronomy experience.

The project is aligned to the Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) Tourism 2025 growth framework of enhancing the visitor experience.

The Challenge

- The Tekapo region is experiencing increased visitor numbers and huge volumes of traffic transiting through the township.
- Tekapo lacked a centre where visitors could explore the Dark Sky Reserve status during the daytime.
- This project will add value to the strong growth in the Mackenzie region projected by Tourism New Zealand.
- The night sky holds special value to many cultures including Māori who used the stars for navigation.

The Project

- The Centre will offer a unique year-round, day/night attraction to capture this market. It will support local tourism and also increased visitor attendance.
- The 'Window to the Universe' Centre will provide visitors with a compelling reason to stop in Lake Tekapo and to visit the Mackenzie region.
- The visitor experience will include virtual-reality and an interactive science and education area, it will also showcase a functioning 125-year-old Brashear Telescope.
- Visitors can learn about the founders of Astronomy in New Zealand, and discover how early Polynesian and Māori people used celestial navigation.

Key facts

Programme start: October 2016

Length of TGP Funding: 2 years

TGP funding: \$3m

Industry funding: \$7m

