

30th of August 2022

Start

Backpacker Youth Adventure Tourism Association (BYATA) welcomes new Board for 2022/23

BYATA is delighted to welcome their new Board for 2022/23. Chris Sperring has been re-elected as Chair and is supported by Te Pā Tū & Rapids Jet Sales Manager Sarah Christie as Vice Chair, and Debbie Guptill of Velocity Valley, as Treasurer.

This year's AGM marked some big changes on the BYATA Board. Existing Board Members: Brett Duncan Adventure Hostels, Laura Crowther Tourism Adventure Group, Haydn Marriner RotoruaNZ and Eve Lawrence Haka Tourism Group will be joined by five new members:

Ceri Jenkins - Key Stakeholder Manager at the International Travel College of New Zealand

Sharyn Hight - NZ AUS Divisional Manager at BUNAC

Heidi Gillingham - Programme Director at Go with Tourism

Jason Goodson - Founder at Backyard Roadies

Sarah Meadows - Owner at Pacific Coast Lodge and Backpackers

Craig Colquhoun – Operations Manager at Tourism Holding Limited

Also ratified by the BYATA membership at this year's conference was the new office of the BYATA President – which was confirmed as tourism marketing guru Brian Westwood. This newly created advocacy role will help spearhead some of the grittier issues facing the youth tourism sector.

Sperring is the Destination Management Project Manager with WellingtonNZ based in Wellington and leads BYATA's advocacy working group. Having served over twenty-four years with YHA here in NZ, in the UK and in Australia, Sperring is well equipped to lead BYATA and its members through the recovery of the NZ travel Industry.

"We are excited as an exec to get back to fighting for fair on behalf of our passionate and vocal membership who still need a leg up this summer with the challenges that lie ahead, not only in advocacy for our sector, but also in educating wider Aotearoa on the value youth visitors bring over their lifetime to our entire society" says BYATA Chair Chris Sperring.

Christie is Sales Manager at Te Pā Tū & Rapids Jet and has worked in the tourism industry for 25 years. She has held management roles across a range of backpacker and youth tourism operations, including NZONE Skydive, Kaitiaki Adventures and MAD Travel.

BYATA is the organisation and advocacy voice of the Youth Tourism industry, bringing together over 130 members, members from the accommodation, transport, attractions and activities sectors. International youth travellers represent a quarter of all holiday arrivals and pre-Covid generated \$1.5 billion in foreign exchange earnings, higher than any other age demographic.
Ends

For more information, please contact

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