



All the Canberra Region Tourism Award winners for 2022



By [Megan Doherty](#)
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Cockington Green general manager Mark Sarah is a giant of the Canberra tourism industry. Picture by Sithixay Ditthavong

The Canberra Region Tourism Awards this year honoured Cockington Green general manager Mark Sarah with the Outstanding Contribution by an Individual Award.

The awards were recently presented at a gala dinner at Parliament House, with winners including the National Arboretum, Handmade Market Canberra and Jamala Wildlife Lodge.

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Other businesses honoured included Dynamic Motivation Mountain



Events ACT won the Major Events and Festivals category for Enlighten.

Mark Sarah is the son of Doug and Brenda Sarah who opened Cockington Green Gardens in 1979, turning dusty paddocks in Canberra's north to a whimsical village of meticulous miniature buildings.

Mr Sarah was just 17 on the opening day and has remained there ever since, developing it into a Canberra tourism icon. His award was recognition also of the many behind-the-scenes efforts he makes for the local industry.

"It was a big shock. I didn't expect that accolade to come my way really," he said.

"I've been in the industry 42 years now and I've only known one job and it completely blew me away to get that. And the kind words from many people after as well has been really wonderful."



Handmade Canberra Market owner Julie Nichols receiving its award. Picture supplied

The Handmade Canberra Market won the Innovation and Resilience Award, getting through COVID by going online and then seeing crowds return in droves to the face-to-face markets, with the big December one on next weekend.

Market founder and owner Julie Nichols said winning the award had been a "great confidence booster" for her whole team.

"Being in business, especially over the last few years, has been hard



"Going through the awards submission process is really beneficial and is a great reminder of everything we have achieved this year."



Mic and Michelle Longhurst from Dynamic Motivation Mountain Biking. Picture supplied

2022 Canberra Region Tourism Award Winners

- **Major Tourist Attractions:** National Zoo and Aquarium
- **Tourist Attraction:** National Arboretum
- **Major Festival and Events:** Enlighten (Events ACT)
- **Cultural Tourism:** Royal Australian Mint
- **Visitor Information Services:** Canberra and Region Visitors Centre
- **Adventure Tourism:** Dynamic Motivation Mountain Biking
- **Tourism Restaurants & Catering Services:** Jamala Wildlife Lodge
- **Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries:** Tallagandra Hill Winery
- **Caravan and Holiday Parks:** Alivio Tourist Park
- **Unique Accommodation:** Jamala Wildlife Lodge
- **4-4.5 Star Deluxe Accommodation:** Little National Hotel
- **Excellence in Food Tourism:** Pialligo Estate
- **Outstanding Contribution by an Individual:** Mark Sarah, Cockington Green Gardens
- **Markus Gibson-Huck Young Achiever Award:** Tiina Mustonen from the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
- **Canberra Region Innovation and Resilience Award:** Canberra Handmade Market



- **Festival and Events:** National Folk Festival
- **Tourism Retail and Hire Services:** Gallery of Small Things
- **Tour and Transport Operators:** Van Du Vin
- **3-3.5 Star Accommodation:** Mercure Canberra
- **Markus Gibson-Huck Young Achiever Award:** Michaela Catelin, Hotel Kurrajong
- **Canberra Region Innovation & Resilience Award:** Pialligo Estate

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Megan Doherty

Journalist



I like telling local stories with integrity. My greatest hope is that someone will read my story and turn to someone in a cafe or in the next cubicle or across the breakfast table and say, "Did you hear about this?" Email: megan.doherty@canberratimes.com.au

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