

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand
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Shearing sports shine at Aotearoa award

It's been a big night for shearing sports with two major awards at the Aotearoa Maori Sports Awards.

The agri-sport's big winners at the full-house Vodafone Events Centre in Manukau last night were the Team of the Year, the Shearing Sports New Zealand World Champion woolhandling team of Joel Henare and Maryanne Baty, and World shearing and woolhandling championships judge Ronnie King, recognised as the the umpire/referee of the year.

For all three it came after just missing out on major awards earlier in the year, Henare and Baty being finalists for their local Tairāwhiti Team of the Year Award but missing out on the prize at a ceremony in Gisborne a fortnight ago, and Wairarapa and former Northern Hawke's Bay-Gisborne area farmer King having been a finalist in the Ahuwhenua Maori Excellence in beef and cattle farming award but missing out on the trophy at its presentation in June.

There was further recognition of shearing sports last night in the Administrator of the Year award to former Aotearoa awards winner, New Zealand team manager, Golden Shears champion and president Mavis Mullins, who earlier this year became the first woman appointed to the Board of the Hawke's Bay Rugby Union.

Both Henare and Baty spoke to the audience including a few shearing sports and industry friends, Baty saying later: "I always get nervous when I do new things. I haven't won anything (like an award) since I was at school."

In winning the Aotearoa award Henare and Baty, who were also winner and runner-up in the individual event at the World Championship in Invercargill in February, headed off fellow finalists the Maori All Blacks and the Aotearoa Maori International Secondary School Netball team, while King's fellow finalists were rugby referees Glenn Jackson and Ben Keefe.

New World shearing champion and 2017 Hawke's Bay Sportsman of the Year and Supreme Award winner John Kirkpatrick (Ngati Porou), of Napier, was a finalist in the Aotearoa Maori Sportsman of the Year category which was won by new All Blacks rugby star and World rugby breakthrough player of the year Reiko Ioane.

Ioane also shared the supreme Maori Sportsperson of the Year title with World rugby women's player of the year Portia Woodman.

Other success following the World championships came at the Southland Sports Awards where Kirkpatrick's World Teams Champion partner, Nathan Stratford, won the People's Choice Award, and farmer Michael Hogan won the Administrator of the Year Award.

The success of the four-day championships in Invercargill's ILT Stadium Southland was recognised with the International Event at the New Zealand Event Association Awards, where the venue's role was recognised with the Best Industry Supplier for an Event Award.

Shearing Sports New Zealand has nominated the whole New Zealand World Shearing and Woolhandling Championships team for the Teams award at New Zealand sport's biggest night, the Halberg Awards.

The nomination of Kirkpatrick, Stratford, Henare, Baty and Canterbury blade shearers Tony Dobbs and Phil Oldfield recognises the unprecedented achievement of a maximum-possible nine podium (top-three) placings at the World championships, including the individual and teams shearing and woolhandling championships, being four of the six titles.

Kirkpatrick and Henare have each also been nominated for the Halbergs' Sportsman of the Year title.

Being for performances in the calendar year to December 31, the Halbergs finalists will be named early next month ahead of the annual presentation in February.

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For further information

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