



Press Release
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Reel Earth looks like the Real Deal

Whichever way you look at it Reel Earth's recently completed 5th Festival Season in Palmerston North has been a winner.

Chief Executive of Destination Manawatu, Lance Bickford, comments "the organisers took a huge leap of faith this year by moving the gala awards night to the Regent and by getting movie makers to come to Palmerston North from overseas for the Festival. The response from overseas filmmakers has been phenomenal with excellent coverage in the United States, in particular. Locals have been wowed too, with more than 3,500 watching screenings of films in this year's Festival." He adds "our research indicates that we should hold onto Reel Earth at all costs and help grow the event for Manawatu. Reel Earth really can be the Real Deal if it's given full support over the next 2 – 3 years. It's home-grown, it's put together by a group of talented local filmmakers, it's got the public really engaged – now let's help make it something we can hold up to the world as proudly ours."

A detailed survey of Reel Earth Awards participants revealed that:

- 97% agreed that Reel Earth was important for Palmerston North
- 90% agreed that Reel Earth was important for Manawatu
- 93% said we should hold onto Reel Earth at all costs and help grow the event for Manawatu
- 98% said that major events are important to Manawatu
- 86% said we should invest public money into attracting and keeping major events
- 95 % said the private sector should invest money into attracting and keeping major events

The Reel Earth Festival that commenced with a spectacular gala awards night on Saturday 16th May 2009 came to an end on the 30th of May 2009.

204 entries were received from filmmakers from 33 countries. These films had a combined production value in excess of NZ\$50,000,000. There were 25 feature film premieres and a range of short and animated films nominated for awards. Organisers are expecting more than 300 films to be entered for Reel Earth 2010

14 of the filmmakers attended the Festival, including for first time ever, participants from Europe, UK and USA. Each left with highly favourable impressions of the Manawatu region, our community spirit, and of Reel Earth. The Festival and Region has received excellent press coverage in USA and New Zealand media, and throughout the blogosphere. We expect to host 30 filmmakers for Reel Earth 2010.

A selection of films that entered Reel Earth 2009 was screened over a two week period at Downtown Cinemas. Over 1000 seats were sold to screenings this year compared to 350 last year.

In addition to the commercial screenings, more than 2000 students participated through student session screenings at the Regent on Broadway. The "Filmmakers in Schools" programme received very positive feedback from Reel Earth 2009. In total more than 3,500 people saw Reel Earth films this year; organisers expect to involve more than 5,000 participants in Reel Earth 2010.

"Reel Earth is bringing a global creative culture to the Manawatu" according to Brent Barrett, Director of Reel Earth 2009. "Reel Earth is where the earth gets seen, gets heard, and gets attention. The organisers, a group of dedicated volunteers, greatly appreciate the community and sponsor support that makes Reel Earth a reality"

"Reel Earth is a high impact event of international significance, unique in Australasia and based in the Manawatu. 2010 will be another great year for Reel Earth, with a continued firm focus on the environment and film"

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