

Otago Museum



Top of the class

The Otago Museum's honour roll includes:

2006: Unlimited/JRA Best Places to Work – Special Award Winner

2005: New Zealand Tourism Awards – Distinction Award, Best Visitor Activity and Attraction, Best Culture and Heritage Attraction

2004: Westpac/Otago Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards – Supreme Award Winner

2004: New Zealand Tourism Awards – Best Culture and Heritage Attraction, Qualmark 'Tourism Mark of Quality' Award



What's what

One of the most popular areas of the Museum today is *Discovery World*, a science centre packed full of interactive exhibits and science shows, designed to challenge and excite. First opened in 1991, *Discovery World* has recently seen the very exciting addition of the lush, living *Tropical Forest*, complete with butterflies, birds, turtles and tarantulas.



Stat attack

Over 360,000 people visited the Otago Museum last year!

The Museum has over 2,000,000 items in its collection.

For over 130 years, the Otago Museum has been a place for the people of Otago to immerse themselves in the heritage and stories of the world.

The Museum's own story, however, began way back in the 1860s, at the height of the Otago goldrush. A suggestion arose at this time for a place to display the region's diverse natural rocks and minerals. After 5,000 such specimens were showcased at the New Zealand Exhibition in Dunedin in 1865, the concept of a permanent natural history museum to be built in the city gathered strength.

In 1868 the Otago Museum, situated within rooms at the Post Office in the Exchange, was first opened to the public. It didn't take long for the Museum's founders to realise that a bigger space would be needed to house the growing collections. Thus, a new building at the present Great King Street site was officially opened on 11 August 1877. With thanks to a small group of very generous benefactors in the early days, including businessman Willi Fels who donated an incredible 80,000 items and a new wing to house them, the Museum has gone from strength to strength, growing well beyond the scale and status expected for a region this size.

Successive redevelopments and a contemporary, visitor-focused approach have ensured that the Museum is a place where Otago people can come to discover culture, nature and science, through world-class exhibitions and exciting programmes with a welcoming, friendly team on hand to help. Truly one of the best museums in the world – right here in Otago.



A young visitor enjoys having her face painted



One of the icons of the Otago Museum: the Overlander greets visitors to *Southern Land, Southern People*



Photo: Stephen Ingleby