Tourism's night of nights a big hit

A rainbow of fairy lights, an outback landscape unique to the Red Centre and dinner under the stars set the scene for Friday night’s Tourism Central Australia Awards.

Guests dressed to impress for the industry’s biggest night of the year, with boots and Akubras looking classier than ever.

But it was the smiles of pride and gratitude on the winners’ faces that really made the night one to remember.

Kings Creek Station owner Ian Conway gave an inspiring speech after he and his wife Lyn won the prestigious Barry Bucholtz Award for Excellence at the end of the night, leaving everyone in good spirits.

The DoubleTree by Hilton’s Casey Smith took out the Australian Transit Group Downunder Young Achiever Award, while Tailormade Tours’ Harry Ramm received the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Driver of the Year Award.

The Centralian Advocate Festivals and Events Award was presented to the Henley-on-Todd Regatta, and the Alice Springs Airport New Innovation Award was given to the pet-friendly rooms of Alice on Todd Apartments.

Justine and Clarke Petrick of Outback Cycling received the Voyages Ayers Rock Industry Achiever Award.

The Gemtree Tourist Caravan Park was awarded the Imparja Small Tourism Operator Award, while Voyages Ayers Rock Resort took out the Yubu Napa Large Tourism Operator Award.

Tourism Centralia Australia general manager Jaclyn Thorne said she was incredibly pleased with how the event turned out.

"Tonight was a fantastic celebration showcasing the best of the best, including local musical talent and fantastic food from the Convention Centre, all hosted in the beautiful surrounds of one of Alice’s most iconic attractions, the Telegraph Station," she said.

"We’ve seen a 20 per cent increase in attendance to the TCA Awards and 30 per cent increase in nominations from previous years.

“Coupled with recently reported positive growth in tourism visitation to the region, this indicates to us that the industry is feeling good about the future of tourism in Central Australia.

“As the region’s peak tourism body, we are proud to promote the achievements and hard work of the leaders in the industry.”

The Tourism Central Australia team congratulated the 2014 winners for their achievements throughout the past 12 months. This is the eighth TCA Awards ceremony – an annual celebration of the successes and hard work of tourism operators and personnel in Central Australia.