

# Inside Nigel Coventry Tourism

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## Christchurch can expect stronger growth

CHRISTCHURCH may experience stronger visitor arrival growth than that projected by the Tourism Research Council, thanks to increased trans-Tasman capacity by Pacific Blue in the Melbourne-Christchurch and Brisbane-Christchurch sectors.

Horwath Asia Pacific directors Terry Ngan and Stephen Hamilton add: "Other airlines - Korean Air and Singapore airlines - have increased their services to Christchurch on a seasonal basis. "AirNZ will also commence non-stop direct flight connections in November from Christchurch to Los Angeles three times a week."

### Help

And, they say, recent domestic airline developments such as capacity increases and/or the introduction of new services by AirNZ, Qantas and Origin Pacific, will help increase visitor numbers, too.

They say the city can expect strong growth in visitor nights, with an increase to about 2.62 million person nights by 2009, an average

annual gain of 7.5 percent from estimated 2003 levels.

"Christchurch's share of total New Zealand visitor nights is forecast to increase from 8.3 percent in 2002 to 8.7 percent in 2009."

They say that international visitor nights are forecast to increase from about four million in 2002 to roughly 6.5 million in 2009, giving an annual average growth rate of 6.8 percent.

### Domestic

The domestic market is expected to increase from 3.65 million visitor nights in 2003 to 3.98 million nights in 2009, giving an annual average increase of 1.45 percent.

Christchurch International Airport's \$20 million terminal building expansion will help attract more visitors into the South Island, particularly in the trans-Tasman sector.

The city offers a host of conference/meeting facilities.

Messrs Ngan and Hamilton add that the Canterbury hotel market room supply grew by 129,000 rooms between 2000 to 2004, reflecting an annual average growth rate of 2.4 percent.

The region's hotel market average

occupancy rate has grown from 57.7 percent in 2000 to 62.9 percent in 2004, reflecting an average growth rate of 2.2 percent.

\* On Queenstown, they point out its economy is becoming increasingly diversified, with new industries such as wine, filming, language schools and light industry being established. Improved telecommunications and transport links are allowing an increasing number of professionals in service industries, such as financial planners, to be based in the region.

### Retail

Retail is increasingly being developed in Frankton, with the CBD becoming more visitor focused. But tourism is expected to remain the dominant industry for the foreseeable future.

They also note that Wellington has become increasingly diversified with film and TV production playing an important part in the local economy.

### Flying tearooms for sale

**FOR sale: flying tearooms. After 20 years John and Viv Eames have put their Mangaweka petrol station and DC3 tearooms on the market.**

**The aircraft, which is popular with children of all ages, was bought from Fieldair in 1983 for \$4,500.**

**The couple were partners in Rangitikei River Adventures which bought the BP station, then helped set up bungy jumping in the area.**

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## Pages Past...

### TEN years ago in IT...

NZTB (now TNZ) has told the Select Committee looking into its activities that it *does* act in the best interests of the industry and the nation.

This ranges from working with conservation groups to encouraging infrastructural investment, And it adds in a written response to criticism there's strong support from people for responsible growth and an awareness of the benefits this can bring.

The board does not accept claims it fails to consult enough with RTOs. It points out that submissions do not define what adequate consultation is.

NZTB rejects calls for an arrival or "green" tax on visitors because they already contribute enough to the economy. A green tax would also detract from the image presented upon arrival. And, anyway, the idea has been tried in Australia - and rejected.

THE board is committed to domestic tourism and plays a significant role in maintaining and enhancing it. Board papers say that while its main duty is to market the country internationally it must also pay appropriate attention to attractions, facilities and infrastructure. "The domestic tourism industry cannot be treated in isolation from international tourism," it says.

A New Zealand information centre has opened in Paris by a Mark Oremland who is looking for appropriate posters to put up in his office.

KOREANS have become Rotorua's largest overseas market contributing hugely to its \$249 million annual tourism income.

DOC has just released its visitor strategy discussions document. The department spends \$38.6 million providing facilities and services for visitors while generating \$11.26 million from concessions.

JASONS have taken over Carlton Publishing which went into liquidation. Jasons have also become the first industry publisher to attain ISO9002. They have also been licensed to use the New Zealand way brand.

### Top five things to do...

TOP things to see and do in New Zealand are: visiting Rotorua's thermal areas; wine tasting in Hawke's Bay; sailing on or flying over Lake Taupo; exploring the rugged East Cape; visiting White Island "there's nowhere quite like it."

Who says so? The latest *Lonely Planet* book on New Zealand.

### Gay time in Queen's town

**MORE than 300 were attracted to Queenstown's Gay Ski Week, three times the number who attended the inaugural event last year, say organisers.**

**Destination Queenstown CEO David Kennedy says twice weekly flights from Sydney helped. DQ gave event organiser Mike Sanford \$10,000 to market overseas.**

### "Wonder" book is useful, entertaining read

FOR anyone interested in New Zealand tourism, from how it started with the Antipodean equivalent of the Grand Tour by the wealthy and well-to-do to the much more mass market FIT seeking thrills, different cultures and, as at present, the exoticism of *LOTR*, it's all in one reasonably handy volume: *The Wonder Country - Making New Zealand Tourism* by Margaret McClure.

It was the scenery, the Pink and White Terraces that provided the climax to the first tours. Over 130 years later it's still the scenery that is providing the tourist impetus - and some of the same questions - who does the controlling and who shares the profits? - still remain. Is it the government, now largely through DoC, Maori or any private entrepreneur?

The book makes clear that while government intervention nurtured and helped the fledgling industry, it wasn't always a beneficent or far-sighted stakeholder, with tourism being the Cinderella of industries, lacking investment in many crucial areas. Some would say not much has changed...

The book is divided into eras, each highlighting a particular aspect of New Zealand tourism - the growth of the Rotorua area as a tourism focus in the early 1900s, the development of Tongariro, Ruapehu and The Chateau between the wars and the growth of tourism with cheaper air travel.

It's not a dry tome, laden with facts and figures, although the facts are there in abundance. But they are slipped in with the sometimes high-handed behaviour of significant players - John Cullen, Commissioner of Police, who introduced heather to Tongariro in an effort to turn it into a game park for grouse and blackcock, or the earlier Camille Malfroy, who worked out how to stimulate geysers into action.

The illustrations, especially of posters throughout the years, provide a pictorial history of what was seen as significant at the time.

All in all, a useful and entertaining read for anyone interested in the subject and a useful guide to more serious students. - **Dick Ward.**

**By New Zealand Tourism  
Online GM Garry Bond**

DO you know exactly where your business is being marketed on the internet?

Do you have a marketing file or at least bookmark sites that you have on-line listings, links or advertising with?

If not, then I'd suggest you start searching the web to see exactly who's sites you are on.

It's good business practice to keep track of on-line marketing together with your off-line advertising. After all, internet marketing is becoming stronger and for many businesses the income generated from their on-line exposure is significant.

**Problem**

The problem with not knowing where you are being marketed on the web is that you can easily lose control. You may be represented in a way you are not happy with or worse, details about your business are no longer correct such as pricing information, services that you provide, or contact details.

Has your site been hijacked? The people at [www.nzti.co.nz](http://www.nzti.co.nz) and

## *Has YOUR site been hijacked?*

[www.nzti.com](http://www.nzti.com) (New Zealand Travel Information Network Ltd) are making near exact copies of tourism operator websites and from numerous accounts this is purely to obtain commissions from bookings.

**Copy**

At first glance it seems to be a basic web directory that lists various operators in areas such as accommodation, and rental cars.

The only difference is that when you click on the listing, it doesn't open up *your* website. Instead it opens a COPY of your website.

You can spot the difference because all of your contact details have been removed and replaced with contact phone numbers and email addresses that all go to New Zealand Travel Information Network (nzti).

This hijacking raises several serious issues: visitors may well believe they are dealing directly with you, the tourism operator; copyright on your site's images and text may have been breached; you may not have authorised them to take bookings on your behalf (wholesale/trade agreement).

Any changes on your website may not be updated. For example, you put your price up but the copy site has the old prices.

Having a complete copy of your website may adversely affect your rankings in search engines.

If someone makes a duplicate copy of your site then that can dramatically affect your Google rankings because Google will usually only list one version or copy of the same page.

I contacted several operators that are represented on the nzti website and none of them were aware of the situation. In fact Heritage and Character Inns now know that 30 of their members are on the nzti site and they want them all removed.

**Suggestions**

If you find you are listed in their directories - and don't want to be - then I suggest you...

- a) ask them to remove you and, failing that...
- b) make a complaint to the Commerce Commission under the Fair Trading Act, or
- c) explore legal remedies.

The internet today is able to profile your business to millions of people worldwide.

But if your business is not represented correctly then tourism in New Zealand will be the loser. A single bad experience by a visitor can spread verbally just about as fast as the internet.

**\* See reply below**

## **Serge denies claims - blames competitors**

NO website has been 'hijacked' by New Zealand Travel Information Network (NZTI), according to director Robert Serge. He described such comments as wrong and defamatory. **(See Speakers' Corner above)**

"You should note that the parties who are driving this issue are my trade competitors and therefore have a vested interest in misrepresenting the activities of NZTI to secure business for themselves.

"Heritage and Character Inns may want 30 of their members removed from our site but we have checked with many of those members directly and found that they do not in fact want to be removed."

Mr Serge says proprietors of all properties on his site were contacted before their information was posted.

"We obtained their consent. When their properties were listed, the proprietors were notified and asked to check the listing so that any adjustment might be made.

Therefore the claim that NZTI has hijacked these websites or has breached copyright cannot be sustained."

He says some of the listed properties may have changed hands and the new owners have not familiarised themselves with the arrangements entered into when the listings were made. "Some of the proprietors who are now complaining have either forgotten or have been persuaded by the hype generated by my competitors during my absence overseas."

Adds Mr Serge: "I reject the claim that visitors to our site may be misled into thinking that they are dealing directly with the tourism operator. The web address of the page which they access is NZTI and any email that the visitor sends is to NZTI. Many of the pages show NZTI's email address details. In the vast majority of cases there is an exchange of information **(over)**

## **Serge denies claims - blames competitors**

(from pg3) and the customer prior to the confirmation of the booking. In all those exchanges - be they by telephone, fax or email, NZTI identifies itself by name." It is implicit in the name and styling of his business that the tourism operator's pages accessed from the home page are part of his network. "We have sought to preserve the character of the tourism operator's page to better inform the customer. However, our styling remains at the bottom of each page accessed by the customer and...our URL address is at the top.

"The claim that listing with NZTI affects your Google search engine ranking cannot be substantiated. Google does not disclose its ranking policies. This claim is a scare tactic employed by my competitors. They should not use NZTI as a scapegoat if they have poor search engine rankings."

Mr Serge is voluntarily sending his files to the Commerce Commission, "and I expect to vindicate the position of NZTI." He adds: "I am also sending copies of correspondence to those few clients who have asserted that the company has listed their webpage without their authority. In the few days since my return and dealing with this issue some of my clients have acknowledged that NZTI has acted properly throughout."

## **A sale to watch...**

EBOOKERS, the parent company of UK wholesalers Travelbag and Bridge the World, has announced that it is considering selling the business. Potential purchasers include US giants, Cendant, Sabre (owner of Travelocity) and Interactive Media (owner of Expedia). *IT* is advised this may not be good news for New Zealand operators who distribute through Travelbag and Bridge the World as it will inevitably lead to further business disruption for the pair.

Amadeus has been added to the list of possible buyers for ebookers, although UK newspapers are still looking across the Atlantic for the buyer.

Senior executives at Amadeus say it is not in the running 'at the moment' but does not rule out 'a return to the fray'.

Amadeus already owns 55.4 percent of Opodo and has a number of JVs across the globe giving it a consumer-facing presence in Australia, Latin America, US, Scandinavia, Italy and France. Ebookers has 13 European websites including the UK, and a number of wholly-owned subsidiaries on the Continent. It also owns a business process outsourcing facility in New Delhi, India.

Our UK correspondent says that less than a month ago Amadeus told the Madrid exchange that some of its airline shareholders - Iberia, Lufthansa, Air France - had received unsolicited approaches from financial investors.

Lastminute.com has dropped out of the race. The US travel triumvirate Cendant, InterActive and Sabre are apparently the analysts' bidders of choice...

## **Heritage seminar to highlight Whanganui River's potential**

A heritage tourism seminar is planned for Pipiriki on September 25 to look at the potential of the Whanganui River. Facilitator David Wilson says the event will address the need for co-operation, partnerships, careful planning, education, conservation and entrepreneurship to achieve longterm sustainable benefits.

Presenters will provide the opportunity for river user groups to identify and discuss fresh opportunities. It will help clarify what initiatives are happening and what are planned while showing how other communities are using their heritage for tourism and community economic development. It will also identify new partnerships and marketing opportunities.

Mr Wilson is a skilled heritage project designer, facilitator and public forum presenter. He has more than 18 years' experience. Details: 06-3471863 or david.wilson@ceg.dol.govt.nz.

## **Edwardian pub for sale**

**THAMES'S 110-year-old two-storey Royal Hotel will go to auction on Wednesday next week. The Edwardian building has an Historic Places category two registration. Agents are Bayleys.**

## **Warren to talk on natural areas**

CRESA'S Julie Warren will be talking at Victoria University on Wednesday on the integrated management of natural areas for tourism.

On September 29 the speaker is the university's lecturer in Leisure and Heritage Studies Lee Davidson. She will talk about mountaineering, risk, and the media in New Zealand. Details: Adam Weaver on 04-463-5375 or adam.weaver@vuw.ac.nz.

## **Keats back with ATTO**

**SUE Keats is back with ATTO as industry training manager (aviation and tourism) after leaving in 1998 to work for the hairdressing ITO.**

## **Certificated - at 71**

KERIKERI Airport manager Maurice Plowright, 71, is the first regional airport employee to receive a national certificate in airport operations. He previously worked in the public service and as a private pilot. But to meet all certificate requirements Mr Plowright had to improve his abilities in such things as how to communicate with people from different cultures. ATTO says this skill is needed to provide assistance to the wide range of tourists using airport terminals.

## **Skydiving over Waiheke**

**A new experience on Waiheke Island is tandem skydiving with national champions. Skydive Waiheke offers 35 seconds of freefall from up to 12,000ft. Videos, DVDs, a glass of bubbly and a certificate are available. Details: [www.skydivewaiheke.co.nz](http://www.skydivewaiheke.co.nz).**

## **Pay staff more - so they can pay the rent, says Queenstown councillor**

THE housing problem for young seasonal workers in Queenstown's tourism industry should be solved by the employers not the council.

Queenstown Lakes District councillor and local lawyer Wayne McKeague says the serious affordable housing shortage would lessen considerably if employers pay staff more money.

"Council can't interfere in market forces and that's what it's all about in this town," he says.

People from throughout New Zealand - and from around the world - who flock to Queenstown to work on

the skifields and in hospitality are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain reasonably-priced accommodation.

Many workers are living in caravans and cabins in the camping grounds, Mr McKeague points out. "Employers simply don't pay enough. They'd rather go into the bowels of deepest New Guinea to recruit staff than pay more."

\* One bedroom budget accommodation starts at \$180 a week, rising to \$430 for a four bedroom budget place. Some 22 workers who live 62km away in Lumsden have to leave home at 6.15am and do not return before 6pm. Many also live in Cromwell 62 km away.

\* There are said to be 3,000 seasonal workers at any one time who stay between three and nine weeks each.

ADVERT

## **TAUPO DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **DESTINATION MARKETING**

### **ONE PLACE HAS IT ALL**

### **LAKE TAUPO**

A large and pristine lake and fishery, rivers, ski fields and forests are just some of the world-class tourist and recreational attractions to be found in the Taupo District. The Taupo district is a quality visitor destination. We wish to enhance this reputation and further grow conventions, events and visitor spend by appointing a

### **GENERAL MANAGER – DESTINATION LAKE TAUPO.**

Destination Lake Taupo is a regional tourism organization that is owned and funded by the Taupo District Council. DLT's functions include:

- \* Domestic and International Tourism Marketing;
- \* Convention Marketing;
- \* Events Marketing;
- \* Management of Visitor Centres;
- \* Branding and Product Development.

The appointee will manage a staff of 10 and report to the Council's Chief Executive Officer.

The appointee will be of the highest calibre, self-motivated and innovate having established a successful track record in marketing, public relations and strategic planning for Destination Marketing. A competitive remuneration package that reflects the importance of the position is being offered.

An information pack including a Job Description may be obtained from Council's Human Resources Manager, Phone [07] 376-0618 [international callers please dial 064 7 376 0618].

Taupo District Council is working towards equal opportunity in employment, providing a smoke free workplace.

Applications close on Friday, 8 October 2004.

Simon Rowbotham  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## Think beyond 100%Pure, advises de Villiers

WHILE TNZ's 100%Pure global campaign is excellent it has a limited shelf life and we must think beyond it, suggests World Tourism Organisation (WTO) deputy secretary general Dawid de Villiers.

"You must be on the cutting edge at all time," he adds. "The industry should be alert, think ahead, plan and work together - and use international forums more effectively."

Mr de Villiers is optimistic that New Zealand will join WTO. "Since Australia has rejoined, you are the only destination in East Asia/Pacific not to be a member. That puts you outside the interaction at an international level, which is not for the longterm good. But I am sure you will come in."

### UNESCO

WTO is now a specialised agency of the UN and an annual fee of \$100,000 is minimal compared to the \$15 million we give to UNESCO each year. "Yet education is not a problem here. So you are getting no benefit from UNESCO..."

Mr de Villiers says New Zealand and Australia are twins whether we like it or not. "You are in partnership. When one grows the other grows. So, if the cake becomes bigger for Australia then New Zealand will benefit. But you are also fierce competitors who go for the same markets."

He says new destinations are opening all the time. New Zealand should ensure it is always ideally placed in the market. "There are now very many places in the world where people can go. Travellers will ask: 'why should I go to New Zealand and not Australia, or South Africa or China?'"

### Impressed

He's impressed with New Zealand product as well as our geography and friendly people. "But you have disadvantages. You are longhaul. You are expensive for Europeans to reach. You also have some very special product. People who have been here will be your best ambassadors as they will go away and talk, and others will come..."

He suggests we look at further product diversification, continuing to improve our quality and ensure reinvestment. "You must not let stock get old. You must renew it all the time." He says partnerships remain important. It's good that we have satellite accounting. Now the industry has to understand trends and plan ahead as an industry. "I think it's time New Zealand looked into the wider world and assessed just where it's position really is..."

## Quad chairlift for Treble Cone

A quad chairlift is to be installed on Treble Cone Ski Area to service the Saddle Basin, Treble Cone Investments Ltd chairman Nat Craig has announced. The lift is one of several improvements to be made by the ski area this summer. Mr Craig says the \$4 million lift will be a fixed quad, which could be upgraded to a high speed lift. It will be 1km long, rising 370m to 1950m.

### Quote, unquote

"It is an excellent way for me to quickly and regularly keep up to date with what is happening within the New Zealand market place." - *Quest Travel MD Dave Simmons, UK.*

## Polson promoted

**DESTINATION Queenstown marketing co-ordinator Brigitte Polson has been appointed communications manager. She is replaced in her previous role by Helen Turner.**

## New CEO for YHA

MARK Wells joins YHA New Zealand as CEO. He has a strong background in the service sector, having extensive senior management experience in community and public sectors. Christchurch's Daniel Shields has also joined YHA New Zealand, as Marketing Manager. Mr Shields comes from Pacific Brands, where he most recently managed the sportswear division with a focus on outdoor and multisport clothing.

## ERB, who needs it?

WHO needs the Employment Relations Bill, wonders HANZ. The organisation believes it is unwanted and unnecessary.

CEO Bruce Robertson says neither employees nor employers are looking for changes proposed in the Bill. "It's not wanted by anyone other than union leaders," he says. He says government should not be wasting its time with a Bill which will only have a positive impact on a small group of people at the expense of the majority. "Confusion, litigation and noncompliance would follow any passage of the Bill into law. It's not wanted, it's bad law, and it should be discharged," he adds.

## Terrace Downs takes on top staff

**IN a move that signals the importance of the convention and incentive and domestic corporate markets, Terrace Downs High Country Resort has announced two marketing appointments.**

**Anne Montgomery-Lee becomes sales director. She has spent the past six years representing the Christchurch Convention Centre and Westpac Centre in the Australasian MICE markets.**

**And Leanne Brooks has been appointed business development manager responsible for the South Island corporate market. Ms Brooks has over seven years experience in sales with Millennium Copthorne Kingsgate Hotels and Resorts.**

**The appointments come at a time when extra guest accommodation is being commissioned and further villas are under construction.**

**In addition, work has recently commenced on The Lodge which will feature 250 sq m of meeting space and 22 super-deluxe suites. By late 2005 the resort will be capable of accommodating up to 300 guests.**

**More than 38 000 guests are expected to stay, dine or play golf at this growing visitor destination over the next year.**

## **Discounting doesn't improve yield, but it does build market share - Cornell**

HOTEL discounting will build market share. But the belief that market share will yield higher revenue is not supported by the Cornell Centre for Hospitality research findings.

"Cutting prices means diminished revenue," it adds. "Each manager, owner and chain executive will need to decide how to deal with the challenges of pricing in a difficult market and weigh the revenue versus market share trade-off - keeping in mind that hotels in each market may be at the mercy of the dumbest competitor in a race to the bottom if they follow a path of price discounting.

### **Reward**

"Discounting for the sake of gaining occupancy has not been a revenue-enhancing strategy for the years 2001,2002 and 2003...for those operators who could handle comparatively lower occupancies, the reward was higher RevPAR (revenue per available room) performance than the competitive set," the centre adds.

Its report shows that hotels which held their price equivalent to those of their competitors - that is raised or dropped them by less than two per cent - experienced occupancy and RevPAR gains relative to those competitors. "When hotels dropped their relative prices by more than two percent below their competition, they were rewarded with higher comparative occupancies. But punished with lower relative revenue."

### **Tumbles**

Hotels which charged 50-60 percent higher than their competitors experienced occupancy tumbles but their RevPAR rose almost 12 percent higher than their competitors.

The report notes that relatively more hotels price below their competitors than price above them.

Upper upscale properties which drop prices find it hard to reverse this strategy by raising prices dramatically, since the consumer has developed a new benchmark for the hotel's value proposition.

Mid range hotels with food and beverage - which raised their prices - made more money compared to competitors, although they had lower occupancies.

### **Economy**

The report adds that one might expect that economy class hotels would reap the greatest benefits from price discounting, given that their customers are considered the most price sensitive. But this was not so.

"However, in this segment, we found that modest discounting sometimes boosted revenue along with occupancy."

But, it notes, that of all industry segments economy hotels which raised prices slightly above their competitors, this was the only one which did not gain revenue or occupancy. "We suspect that this market's legendary price sensitivity is, in fact, at work in this finding."

Independent hotels gained substantial occupancy rates when they discounted deeply. "In 2003 independent hotels that maintained a 30 to 40 percent higher average daily rate enjoyed the greatest RevPAR compared to competitors.

### **Strategy**

"In contrast the lowest RevPARs were for hotels that priced 15 to 20 percent lower than did competitors. As was the case for branded hotels, raising prices compared to the competitive set was a revenue enhancing strategy for independent hotels."

The results show that hotels in direct competition make more money when they have comparatively higher prices and do not undercut competitors by discounting rates to fill rooms.

The study suggests that holding rates when competitors are discounting or raising your price even to a small degree above your competition may help solidify revenue.

## **Business up 7%**

HOTELS, motels and hostels enjoyed a seven percent increase in business during July, compared with the same month last year, due largely to a 13 percent jump in international guests. Latest figures from Statistics NZ also show the biggest increase was in visitors from Australia.

## **HANZ awards dinner**

**THE HANZ Awards for Excellence will be presented at a special dinner in Auckland on October 6.**

## **Peters wants \$2.4B loan**

HALF the money collected in petrol tax goes into the Consolidated Fund to be spent on prisoners with hurt feelings or who don't have a fluffy pillow, or Maori TV which no one watches, says New Zealand First leader Winston Peters. He's suggesting we borrow \$2,400 million to address areas of critical roading needs such as Auckland, Tauranga and Wellington and 400 passing bays up and down the country.

## **Back on track**

**MASTERTON'S miniature steam train will be back on track at the reopening of the Masterton miniature train station tomorrow (Saturday).**

## **Gowan threatened**

YOU have until today (Friday) to tell the Ministry for the Environment what you think of a proposal to remove a Water Conservation Order (WCO) on the Gowan River, which flows from Lake Rotoroa. Green Party co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimons says the WCO was only put in place in 2001 after 15 years of negotiation, hearings and scientific research. Now Majac Trust want it varied so it can divert water for a hydro scheme. The WTO only covered the rafting values of the river. But it was felt...its other values including trout fisheries and its wild and scenic value would be protected. "In hindsight this was clearly wrong." Details: [www.mfe.govt.nz](http://www.mfe.govt.nz).

## **RVA “yes” to fine debiting via credit cards**

ABOUT 14,000 drivers each year who attract a fine whilst driving a rental vehicle get away with it.

Now government wants to close the loophole by authorising operators to debit traffic and parking fines from the renter’s credit card.

Rental Vehicle Association (RVA) executive director John Collyns says that at present once the vehicle owner receives the ticket s/he can transfer liability to the hirer by completing a form usually held by the district council or court.

Once liability is transferred, the council or court is responsible for ensuring the fine is paid by the hirer. If the hirer is a New Zealand resident, there is usually no problem.

Now the association has given a qualified “yes” to the government’s proposal to allow operators to debit fines to renters’ credit cards.

### **Voluntary**

Mr Collyns adds: “The decision to debit the credit card must remain voluntary. In some cases the operator may find themselves out-of-pocket - if they failed to transfer liability within the stipulated time limit and have to pay the fine themselves. Debiting the card restores the situation. “We are concerned that sometime down the track the government may make the collection compulsory - and that has negative implications for customer relations.”

Mr Collyns says credit card company contracts will have to be changed to allow debits to be made “after the event” and without having to get the cardholder’s permission. “Since the contracts are drawn up in New York and London, I’m not very confident that a NZ situation will hold a lot of sway.”

### **Redraft**

He adds: “We’ll have to redraft our own hire agreements to allow for this to occur. The same Bill repeals the current prescriptive regulations about what must be in the hire agreement and the RVA will develop a new model agreement which we’ll make available to our members.”

Operators who decide to debit must be able to recover the cost - usually the merchant fee, which is a percentage of the total debit - from the customer. “We’ve suggested an admin fee of 20 percent might be a sweetener for operators who elect to debit the cards,” Mr Collyns tells *IT*. “We have a philosophical problem with becoming defacto fine collectors and whether this is an appropriate activity for commercial businesses to engage in.”

## **Pacific Blue hauls in the holidaymakers**

PACIFIC Blue is launching direct flights between Christchurch and the Gold Coast and Wellington and Brisbane from November.

Head of strategy and communications David Huttner says a growing number of Queenslanders see New Zealand as an exciting and convenient holiday option.

“More and more Australians are taking short breaks to different regions of New Zealand, with the Wellington region offering a great choice of cultural offerings, award-winning wineries and the nearby Abel Tasman National Park. Further south, Christchurch is proving to be the ideal gateway for the stunning scenery of the South Island. We are confident the expansion of Pacific Blue routes will stimulate more people to travel more often, for less.” Pacific Blue currently operates services from Christchurch to Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne as well as between Wellington and Sydney.

The airline identified the need for direct flights from the Gold Coast to Christchurch due to the large number of people taking advantage of Pacific Blue’s existing Brisbane-Christchurch flight and then driving to and from the Gold Coast. The new services will operate twice a week.

## **Lake Te Anau is the destination**

RIVERSTONE Holdings CEO Bob Robertson says his proposed monorail will deliver many more visitors to Te Anau.

The Fiordland Link Experience - a trip from Queenstown by catamaran, all-terrain vehicle and monorail to Te Anau Downs, 26km west of town - will help promote the whole of Fiordland. A shuttle service will be provided to Te Anau. Mr Robertson says that while many people will travel on to Milford, it’s Lake Te Anau which is the destination.

From the Te Anau Downs “hub” visitors will also be able to visit Manapouri or take a scenic cruise to Lake Te Anau’s Middle Arm, where the scenery is similar to Milford.

## **Toll road also mooted**

FORMER Lakes County Council chairman Tommy Thomson is pushing for a one-way toll road from Glenorchy to Milford Sound - an idea he first mooted 30 years ago.

His \$200 million idea includes a bridge or causeway between Glenorchy and Kinloch, the road going through the Greenstone Valley and featuring a tunnel through the Darran Mountains into the Tutuko River valley.

Mr Thomson, a former surveyor, says the 130km-road will cut 175km off the trip between Queenstown and Te Anau. He wants government to build the road and make SH94 one-way. Mr Thomson points out this will complete the Southern Scenic Route.

“Tourism to Milford is growing at eight or nine percent a year. The Government is spending money on promotion bringing these tourists in, but not on making the experience good for them.” He has worked the toll out at \$34 per person. Vehicles could be restricted to 1,000 a day.

## **Garden brochure out**

**SOUTHLAND’S new brochure on gardens has just been published.**

**Contact: 03-2111424 or [ruth@venturesouthland.co.nz](mailto:ruth@venturesouthland.co.nz)**

## **Aucklanders ARE discovering Queenstown**

QUEENSTOWN'S appeal to Aucklanders is no flash in the pan, according to Queenstown CEO David Kennedy. He says the continued growth in the market - up 8.6 percent to 22,580 in July - proves that the region continues to be a premier destination choice for many living north of the Bombay hills.

"Much of the decrease in the domestic market (it was down half a percent) can be attributed to the huge increase in the number of New Zealanders travelling overseas for winter vacations and taking advantage of the excellent air fares and winter travel packages on offer to Australia and the Pacific."

Mr Kennedy says that many of the explanations for the increased number of Aucklanders visiting Queenstown are applicable to the Australian market - with the number of Aussies visiting the region climbing to 101,030 in July, an increase of 10.3 percent.

### **Festival**

"Another incredibly successful Lindauer Queenstown Winter Festival, along with one of the best starts to the ski season for many years, has also drawn Aucklanders and Australians alike to the region. Trans Tasman airline competition and cheaper domestic fares have also continued to have a significant impact on these markets.

"It is also encouraging to see that the German market - traditionally a strong one for Queenstown - is on the rise with an increase of 37.4 percent from July 2003 to 2,570 in July 2004."

Mr Kennedy says he is not alarmed at the drop in the North American market - with a decrease of 19.3 percent to 7,880 in July.

"Americans are renowned for staying close to home in an election year and this American election year is no different and is simply following a well established trend within the US market. We are very confident that post election this market will once again emerge as a strong one for the Queenstown region."

## **Travelpass available for as little as three days now**

**NEW Zealand Travelpass has introduced a lower entry level for it's range of multi-transport pass products. Travelpasses can now be bought for as little as three travel days.**

**Other features include reduced prices for it's four-in-one Travelpass, which includes a domestic flight, but with even better flight availability and flexibility than before - up to the day of travel. Domestic air is with Qantas.**

## **CCM Aussie roadshow was great success**

CHRISTCHURCH and Canterbury have returned from a week long roadshow down the east coast of Australia, seeing 320 agents during four evening shows.

Australia and New Zealand marketing manager Chris Griffin says they made the evenings interactive forums, including fun focused training sessions, Canterbury wines and beer as well as holiday and hamper prizes.

"Initial feedback from the audience, and the 12 operators attending, has been outstandingly positive, with comments that this show format is the best yet from visiting regional roadshows to the Australian Market.

"Naturally we're not stopping there. We've already got a few ideas on how the shows can go even better next year. But we'll keep those to ourselves for the time being."

## **Events are key motivators, says Yeo**

**EVENTS are key motivators for the domestic market as they offer a 'reason to travel' to a specific region for a specific purpose on a specific date, says Regional Tourism Organisations of New Zealand (RTONZ) chairman Paul Yeo.**

## **Treetop walks**

FRANZ Josef Glacier Guides are planning a "canopy walkway" through treetops behind Franz Josef village. It could be open next year. Spokesman Mark Mellsop says he intends to complete the DoC concession and resource consent applications once the design detail is finished in November.

The proposed development does not impinge on Westland National Park.

\* Further north, Air Walks Ltd is proposing an aerial walkway in Hokitika Gorge.

## **Talking you through NZ**

ANYONE hiring a Maui motorhome or Britz campervan or rental car can now tune into commentary about the scenic landmarks, history, legends, culture, flora and fauna of the area of the country they are driving through.

The innovative virtual tour guide, called Kruse and developed by the Auckland based Kruse-IT company, uses global positioning system technology to recognise the vehicle's location and play the relevant audio commentary through its sound system.

## **Taking a fresh look**

**DOMESTIC holiday-makers are taking a fresh look at Rotorua - and its appeal as a getaway destination is on the rise. Total visitor arrivals to the city grew 11.04 percent to 63,874 in June. Domestic visitor nights are up 6.68 percent while international visitor nights increased 19.03 percent.**

**Tourism Rotorua GM Don Gunn, says the region's popularity is increasing.**

**The nationwide advertising campaign launched in May featuring a five-year-old boy named Walter is having a noticeable effect on tourist numbers. The advertising campaign coincided with an increase of investment by several operators in their accommodation and attractions, making Rotorua even more appealing.**

## The organisation behind Telecom People's Choice...

THE first internet company nominated for a New Zealand Tourism Award was the winner of the Telecom People's Choice for 2004.

New Zealand Tourism Online is a Christchurch-based internet company specialising in New Zealand tourism and in its six years, has grown to become the country's largest directory of online tourism operators. It lists over 10,000 of the estimated 15,000 tourism companies.

Www.tourism.net.nz connects an average 35,000 visitors a week with a range of accommodation suppliers, visitor attractions, tours and transport options. Among its 28,000 web pages, the site also features general tourist information, maps, links and special features.

### Important

"The Telecom People's Choice Tourism Award recognises how important the internet has become to our country's tourism industry," says director Cambel Ferguson.

"We provide the platform for tourism companies to promote themselves - most of them have an internet presence. But many are unsuccessful at getting traffic to their websites. Tourism.net.nz acts as the conduit between the visitor and the operator."

The commercial success of the site is derived from the companies that pay to enhance their individual listing. Over 85 percent of paying clients renew each year.

### Unusual

GM Garry Bond, says it's unusual for a totally web-driven company to be so successful. He attributes this to the site's consistently high search engine ranking. Some 80 percent of people find a web site using search engines and 75 percent of visitors to his site are offshore.

"If you're searching using google.com for 'New Zealand tourism' or 'New Zealand travel', we come up as number two or three after TNZ's newzealand.com site. You'll also find us near the top for New Zealand attractions, accommodation or visitor information'."

### Growth

New Zealand Tourism Online has enjoyed spectacular growth since it was established in 1997 - 285 percent growth in 2003 secured it 22nd place in the New Zealand Deloitte Fast 50 that year. At the same time, New Zealand Tourism Online ranked 65th in the Asia Pacific region in Deloitte's Technology Fast 500.

"Setting goals and achieving milestones are integral to our business," says Mr Ferguson. "There's still a lot more potential and we have plenty of exciting developments in the pipeline. Contact: Gary Bond 03-9635037 or garry@tourism.net.nz."

## AWB still here, taking photographs

**AWB White Weddings has closed its offices on Queensland's Gold Coast as well as in Christchurch, according to subscribers (IT512/2). But the company is still in business - taking photographs.**

**AWB is described as being "pre-eminent in the Japanese wedding business here for many years, owning two churches, and Rolls-Royces." IT understands the weddings sector has become too competitive.**

## 13 graduate from new programme

SOME 13 students from South Auckland schools have graduated from a new programme that is a joint initiative between Accor Hotels and Resorts and the Hospitality Standards Institute. The Student Hospitality Experience (SHE) programme is offered to Gateway schools in the local communities of Accor Hotels. To be eligible, students must be studying hospitality at school or be interested in hospitality as a future career, and are required to attend an interview prior to admittance to the 10 week programme. During this time the students receive training and "hands-on" opportunities. Several students graduated earlier this month from a similar programme run at Novotel Tainui Hamilton.

## Big airport development

**MAJOR airport developments taking place globally are costing upwards of US\$5,000 million each. Total airport developments by 2015 will exceed US\$400,000 million, according to the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation. And it's largely due to the explosion of low cost airlines.**

## Fans may travel by train

MANY of the Lions rugby fans who travel to matches in campervans will be encouraged to stay in Palmerston North for the mid week gem against Wellington on June 15 and the All Blacks test on July 2 next year. Destination Manawatu CEO Kathy Gibson says the vans can be parked in the city while fans are taken to Wellington by train. Manawatu is the only second division team to play the Lions, on June 28.

ADVERT

## Visiting Stewart Island?

**There's plenty of accommodation at Beach House and Kereru House. Bookings: Brenda and Roger Hicks on phone/fax 03-2191348**

## Misbehaving guests - and what they do!

THEY throw their towels on the floor. They eat in bed and they leave the TV blaring when they're not in the room. They sneak things into - and out of - their rooms, and they don't always tip. No, they're not rude houseguests. They're Americans on vacation, as revealed in a survey by travel website Orbitz on what they do in hotels when no one's looking.

"People vacationing in a hotel want to escape from every-day responsibilities whether they're staying in a five star hotel or a motor inn," says Orbitz Executive VP John Samuel.

As for sneaking things out of hotel rooms, it's no surprise that 61 percent of people nab the toiletries, but almost 20 percent of respondents have or have considered taking the toiletries off the housekeeping cart when the housekeeper isn't looking.

It seems as though males ages 18 - 35 confuse the housekeeping cart with the shopping cart, as 32 percent of them admit taking or consider taking toiletries off it. Other "souvenirs" include towels (18 percent), ashtrays (14 percent), bathrobes (two percent) and bathmats (two percent).

The survey also reveals what Americans have snuck into hotel rooms, including extra people (29 percent), cigarettes in a non-smoking room (12 percent) and pets (11 percent).

How many people can you fit in one bed? Ask the 52 percent of 18 - 34 year olds who have snuck extra people into their hotel rooms. Some hotel guests are less likely to pull the sheets over the check-in desk's eyes - such as married people; only 19 percent of whom have

smuggled extra people in as compared to 48 percent of singles.

Other findings: 68 percent of respondents never touch the minibar; a third take their own alarm clocks because they don't trust the wake-up call will get them out of bed; a third lock themselves out of their room.

## Clients drive the product

**"THE client drives the product. If people want an environmentally-sound holiday, operators will respond. But this topic has been flavour of the month for over 12 years and it still hasn't become a mass movement. If you want to change things, change the consumer,"** according to European Tour Operators' Association (ETOA) executive director Tom Jenkins. **Mr Jenkins, who was speaking at an industry conference in the UK, said people do not generally "behave better" on holiday. "Going on holiday is not a virtuous pursuit," he added.**

**"People aren't ever going to go into a travel agent and ask for a responsible holiday,"** added Responsibletravel.com co-founder Justin Francis.

**"But what they are increasingly asking for is a local guide or to eat in a local restaurant, which is more sustainable."**

**His company is "marketing sustainability by stealth" to encourage consumers to embrace local cultures without necessarily realising they are travelling more responsibly.**

**Mr Francis said that his company offers consumers details on its website of how each holiday benefits the destination. He would like to see this one day from all tour operators.**

ADVERT

## Tourism & Lifestyle Opportunities

MARTINBOROUGH - Aylstone boutique hotel. Wine country retreat. Six rooms, restaurant, an extensive wine cellar, conference facilities and owner's accommodation. Selling FHGC. Tenders close Wednesday, 20 October 2004. John Welch 025 434 800 or Hugo Sandall 021 646 450

WATERS EDGE - A one off 6495m2 freehold site on the edge of gin clear Lake Rotoma. Operating camp site with large owner's home. Excellent development potential. Magnificent views from all of the property. Sharéne Temple 027 224 6045.

HARBOUR VIEW LODGE - Tairua. Purpose built B&B consisting of 3 guest rooms with ensuite, a guest lounge, owner's accommodation, tastefully decorated. Pacific coast highway location, stunning views and pool, impressive returns. Enjoy Coromandel lifestyle and beautiful beaches. Garry Paterson 021 341 447

ROTORUA HOLIDAY PARK - 2.747 hectares of parkland, includes 36 bed lodge for school, sport, group bookings. Self contained units, tourist flats /cabins, power, tent sites, playground, swimming pool and more. Visit [www.bayleys.co.nz](http://www.bayleys.co.nz) ID 25764 Mark Slade 0274 988 911 or 07 349 3210.

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