

Inside Nigel Coventry Tourism

PO Box 100, Taumarunui, New Zealand.

Tel/Fax 64-7-8957-737.

nigel@insidetourism.com

www.insidetourism.com

Subscription rates on application.

ISSN1176-3574

ISSUE 523

November 12th, 2004

Ski areas enjoy record season

NEW Zealand's 14 commercial ski areas sold a record 1,325,800 passes this year. The previous best was 1,252,060 in 2002. In 2003 the industry had 1,204,182.

Recorded open days reached 1,308 - up from 1,263 last year. Revenue was up almost three percent to \$68,529,000.

Ski Areas Association spokesman Miles Davidson, says the industry is thrilled with this result and is confident it can lift the number even higher.

"The 2004 season proved that, with good quality snow in abundance throughout the season, New Zealanders and visitors from overseas will participate more often. "The ski areas were able to open on time and had good snow and weather during the early school holidays (June/July). Snow conditions were good right through the season until after the third term holidays in late September early October." He adds: "In fact Mount Ruapehu is operating until November 21 and may open two lifts for skiing and snowboarding on the Whakapapa side over the Christmas New Year period."

Disturbing trends in China market...

WHILE the China market is "humming along" we will face increasing competition from the European countries recently given ADS, says ITOC China portfolio group chairman Dave Hogan. The NTB Travel MD says that with Europe coming into winter prices are low and airfares are competitive "and we will find it hard to compete with them."

He tells *IT*: "Europe has a little more traction than New Zealand...Europe has the history." Isn't it too cold for Chinese to be holidaying in Europe now? "It's cold. But the price is right. They are very price conscious..."

While Mr Hogan believes the China market will remain beneficial to New Zealand operators, disturbing trends include a resurgence in shopping tours - and tours which are no more than transport, accommodation and a few meals. "These are without entrance fees, which is a disturbing trend." Four days three nights is still in vogue. "There is still a high percentage of groups that are on an

extension of a trip to Australia. We have four days/three nights. But if you look back it was the same with most Asian countries when they first started to develop. It was a few years before they discovered the South Island! Direct services certainly helped things."

Mr Hogan says short haul destinations within Asia are the first choice for holidaying Chinese, followed by the US and Europe. "Little Australia and New Zealand are fourth or fifth...TNZ is doing a good job in China. But it's a massive country with a huge population and to get our message across takes a lot of education." He describes forward bookings as "reasonable."

Does he foresee a dip this summer? "No. It will be fairly even and maybe even a slight increase." He adds: "While NZ has had a lot of hurdles to jump to get people to come here, the future is good. But we do have to try and put more quality and higher standards in the tours."

About 20 ITOC members are involved in the market - with 20-40 non-members also running tours. "Many are one man bands with a coach and office who do everything as cheap as they can. It's nothing new. They come and they go but in the meantime it makes life hard for the rest of us trying to provide a good experience," Mr Hogan says.

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Pages Past...

TEN years ago in IT...

THE Resource Management Act contributes to tourism investment uncertainty, according to a multi-agency report looking into the legislation.

It suggests that local councillors be upskilled in professional conduct, ethics and decision-making.

COACHES may soon be banned from entering central Queenstown. The local council is considering restricting coach movements within the CBD. But the Bus and Coach Association has asked council to defer a decision until its members have been able to give their views. Association executive director John Collins says the council doesn't have a good record of communication. His organisation only heard of the proposal third hand. "And that isn't consultation. Bureaucracy is not listening to its customers."

THERE'LL be a domestic tourism campaign. But RTO chairman Paul Watkins says it's unlikely to be launched this winter. He says it's not worth getting the launch date wrong.

There have been two previous campaigns which have failed and for the sake of a few months it's not worth getting it wrong a third time.

Mr Watkins says the first campaign, *Don't Leave Town* didn't motivate people because there was no call to action. The second had a call to action and was aimed at travel agents. But the agents weren't interested in domestic travel.

PATA'S Strategy Group spokeswoman Ann Pollock says the goal of today's travel marketer is not just to reach the customer. It's to get close to the customer and to stay close - for life.

She believes travel and tourism will face increased competition from outside the industry from the likes of banks and insurance companies who realise their clients would also buy travel and tourism products from them. Communications and media companies will also become more involved because they have large channels for distribution.

TALK of the week: the tour driver who dropped a Korean group at the front door of a restaurant.

By the time he had parked the coach and walked back everyone had eaten and was ready to leave again!

Distribution still baffles some!

THE tourism distribution channel is still baffling many new operators, according to responses received to TNZ's regional seminar programme.

The seminar programme has been running for six months, with 19 RTOs, MRTOs, and DTOs taking the opportunity to host a seminar.

With eight modules for selection, 18 of the 19 regions have chosen to include the distribution seminar in their programme. Anecdotal feedback suggests many attendees find this the most challenging, and confusing, aspect of working internationally.

The distribution seminar includes tips on pricing, commissions, working with i-SITEs and the different players in the channel.

TNZ's regional seminar programme includes workshops about the interactive traveller, working with the media, marketing on the internet, regional profiles and getting started in tourism. Contact: Dawn Muir at dawnm@tnz.govt.nz.

Quote, unquote...

SUCCESS starts with attitude. - TNZ chairman Wally Stone.

You may have to eat, if you want to drink

DRINKING alcohol at a pavement table without ordering anything to eat could be banned in Auckland under a proposed change to licensing rules.

Some Auckland City Council officers are concerned that crowds of drinkers will fill up outdoor tables when the government's Smoke-free Environments Amendment Act 2003 makes it illegal to light up inside bars, restaurants, casinos and RSA clubs.

They believe the legislation, which comes into effect on December 10, could result in more noise and anti-social behaviour caused by people congregating outside. And they are investigating whether the bars should be required to serve food to drinkers to avoid hassles.

Whitestone left out in the cold

WHITESTONE Waitaki is one of about 12 districts nationwide which are not included in any RTO. And when TNZ CEO George Hickton was in Oamaru this week Tourism Waitaki and the Waitaki Development Board took the opportunity to discuss the matter.

Board GM Susan Houston said prior to the meeting: "We are aware that TNZ are working to address the issue but we need to reinforce the urgency of that issue."

The Cargo Shed to open

TAURANGA'S The Cargo Shed in Dive Crescent is to be opened by Mayor Stuart Crosby on November 20.

The project is set to transform this rundown part of the CBD into a cultural, heritage centre which local artists and organisations can use as a work location, for training opportunities and to display and sell products. The initiative was instigated by Tourism Bay of Plenty and supported by Tauranga City Council.

PATA provides latest on the China market

THE projected growth in outbound travel from China is expected to lead to a fundamental change in the way receiving countries do business, reports PATA in its latest *Issues and Trends*.

It says tomorrow's growth segment will be the mature householder. "Working Age Empty Nesters" is the sweet spot.

"Growth in numbers is projected at 8.6 percent per annum to 2008 and six percent every year through to 2023. In value, they are growing at over 10 percent per year. No other lifecycle stage offers the same growth potential in China (PRC) over the next two decades." It says the children of mature householders have left home, giving them a higher per capita income and increased discretionary funds.

"They are the first wave of educated adults and already have most of the home durables. Significantly, for travel and tourism, the Chinese mature householder is developing new interests and is now often looking for experiences rather than things."

The new labour force is also an opportunity, PATA advises. "The population engaged in white collar (office and service) occupations is projected to increase from 320 million now to 383 million in 2023. In value, this segment is projected to grow by 5.5 percent per annum to 2013."

Upper class

The upper middle-class household is another high-growth segment. Between 2004 and 2013, the number of urban households earning US\$4,800-US\$9,600 is forecast to grow by 10.2 percent per year; and US\$9,600 or more by 16.1 percent annually. "Targeting just the 18 percent of the population living in provincial capitals reaches nearly half the affluent market of China (PRC)."

Last year the top 10 destinations for Chinese travellers were: Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR, Japan, Russia, Vietnam, Korea (ROK), Thailand, the US, Singapore and Malaysia. Island destinations such as the Maldives are also popular.

The total number of overseas trips amounted to 20.22 million in 2003, up 21.8 percent, including official and business travel (5.41 million) and private travel (14.81 million). The rest comprised of package tours and other forms of travel.

PATA quotes the World Tourism Organisation as saying that by 2010, China is projected to be the fourth largest outbound country, generating an estimated 50 million travellers.

"Chinese outbound is dominated by increasing market competition. Authorised outbound travel services have increased from 68 to 528 (2002). As a result, there are price wars, more emphasis on brand, the growing standardisation of internal business practices and a demand for capital."

It is becoming much easier for Chinese (PRC) citizens to travel. Approved Destination Status (ADS) licenses

had been given to 54 destinations as of September, including many European destinations. Passports are being issued in five working days, down from 20. And there are fewer situations in which registration with the tourism authority is required before one can travel. "This liberalisation, along with external influences such as the Internet and the media, has strengthened the tendency for Chinese to travel at short notice and individually."

While access to travel has become easier, it has also become more politically sensitive. Travel advisories may become an issue. There is concern about the impact of politics and terrorism and diseases such as SARS and bird flu, which is raising the demand for "safe and sanitary" destinations. **There is also a high degree of sensitivity to discrimination against Chinese travellers, especially in terms of visas. The message is: Don't hurt national pride.**

Conscious

PATA also notes that Chinese consumers are becoming better at defending their rights. They are also becoming conscious of excessive competition and a decline in service quality. This can impair the image of destinations. There is lower tolerance for package tours that may appear to be cheap but which are laden with optional extras and shopping commission schemes. Private travel will soon become part of the Chinese mainstream. "Customers are already shifting from package tours to FIT holidays. Online reservations are growing as knowledge of foreign languages increases, visas become easier, income grows and customer choice becomes more westernised.

"There are also discernible shifts from sightseeing to leisure and culture and from multi-country to single - or dual-country holidays. There is also a lot of repeat travel with flexible timing, largely as a result of increased leisure time, due to the three Golden Week holidays and flexible paid holidays."

Price

Price is important but not dominant in the market. "Suppliers need to maintain quality while bringing down cost. Chinese customers are now more likely to choose a brand name as a promise-guarantee. Two-thirds of customers are choosing the products of reputed travel services. Fashionable products are in vogue."

*** Tips for marketing products in China:** establish a Chinese website; service travel agents; hire Mandarin-speaking staff and tour guides; establish a Chinese representative office; provide detailed itemised quotes; make creative proposals; add value for FIT or organised groups; maintain quality; prove your ability to handle a crisis; provide sales training and familiarisation trips. The comments follow a series of seminars organised by PATA. Speakers on China: Dr Clint R. Laurent, executive director, Asian demographics; Dr Grace Pan, lecturer, Griffith University, Australia; Mr Min Fan, executive VP Ctrip.com.

ADVERT



DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Bus and Coach Association (BCA) is looking for a Deputy Executive Director whose primary task will be to manage the affairs of our alliance partner, the Marine Transport Association (MTA), and to deputize for the Executive Director when s/he is not in the office.

The Deputy Executive Director will also be responsible for the day-to-day management of the BCA's Wellington office and staff activities.

The appointee will be motivated, a self-starter, credible, capable of working without immediate direction, have staff management skills and experience, understand public policy development and ways organisations can influence it, demonstrate a high standard of oral and written communication skills including public speaking, be competent in standard Microsoft Office software including Access, and demonstrate a high degree of interpersonal skills to deal with a broad range of individuals across the government and private sectors.

A tertiary qualification in public policy, communications, public management or a relevant discipline is essential.

Some maritime experience is desirable but not essential.

Remuneration will reflect the successful applicant's skills and experience.

MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

The Membership Officer's two primary tasks are to maintain the database for the BCA, MTA and Rental Vehicle Association, and to undertake financial reporting tasks for each Association to trial balance stage.

As part of the database maintenance, the Membership Officer will also actively canvass for new members for each Association, as well as development new membership benefits in conjunction with the Deputy Executive Director and Executive Director.

The successful applicant will be outgoing, personable, organized, friendly and good with people. S/he should be able to work without close supervision and be a team player. S/he needs to be competent in office accounting systems (the precise system is yet to be decided, but an understanding of systems such as MYOB would be useful) as well as the usual suite of Microsoft office software and Access.

S/he needs to be able to interact with a wide range of members and potential members from the country's largest bus, rental vehicle and maritime operators to owner-operators throughout NZ.

Sales experience is desirable and accounting experience is essential. An ability to communicate effectively is important.

Remuneration will reflect the successful applicant's skills and experience. This may suit a job sharing role.

Job descriptions are available on the BCA's website - www.busandcoach.co.nz.

Send your CV and details to the Executive Director, BCA, P O Box 9336, Wellington, or contact john@busandcoach.co.nz. Applications close on Friday 26 November 2004.

Hickton says co-operation the answer

IT'S important that areas such as Timaru district work co-operatively in order to gain benefits from the tourist market, says TNZ CEO George Hickton.

"People can sometimes get a bit competitive, or parochial about things. But the more there is to see and do, the more likely people are to stay. The thing that tourists are afraid of most is coming to a place they will get bored in."

He says places like Timaru are unlikely to attract more visitors than Queenstown or Rotorua, but those iconic tourist destinations are needed as the drawcard to entice people into the country. Once here they can be attracted to travel to other areas.

"If a person is in the South Island, you've got to get them to want to spend some of that time in your town."

Tent mooted for airport arrivals

ALMOST \$12 million is being spent upgrading Rotorua Airport. But a marquee may have to be used for an arrivals hall - as fears increase that the improvements won't go far enough.

Rotorua District Council strategic planning manager Paul Cooper says such a temporary set-up could be used for trans-Tasman passengers until there is enough money for a permanent facility.

Other airports, such as Queenstown, have had similar arrangements in the past. But airport chairman Neil Oppatt says there are other buildings available including "a hangar that is well and truly big enough."

Aratere investigated 43 times - paper

THE ferry Aratere has been investigated 43 times since its arrival in Wellington six years ago, more than any other passenger or freight ferry operating in Cook Strait. Reports obtained by the *Dominion Post* from the Maritime Safety Authority under the Official Information Act show the inquiries led to 19 full investigations, five of which are still under way.

The most full investigations held into any other Cook Strait ferry in the past 10 years was five, and that was Strait Shipping's freight ferry the Sulven, which was sold earlier this year.

Dubbed "El Lemon" by its crew, the \$106 million Spanish-built Aratere has been plagued with problems since it entered service in 1999.

Current investigations include a collision with a fishing boat while docking, a near grounding in Tory Channel, two close encounters with other ships - and engine failure.

Kilgour joins Jasons

JASONS Travel Media's new marketing manager is Sandy Kilgour. Ms Kilgour has been with Fairfax Magazines for the last five years as head of sales and business development looking after top magazine publishing brands such as *OnHoliday*, *Cuisine* and *NZ House and Garden*.

She was instrumental in the initial research, conception and success of *OnHoliday*. In 2002 she won the MPA Publisher of the Year award. Ms Kilgour has also worked for ACP Media and AC Nielsen.

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INBOUND TOUR CONSULTANT

Inbound Tour Company requires an experienced consultant to work in our Groups and FIT area.

We are looking for a team player who is willing to work outside the square in a stimulating and exciting environment.

This is not for someone looking for a 9 to 5 position, as some weekend and after hours work is involved.

Must be computer literate with a high level of spoken and written English. A knowledge of Tour Plan would be an advantage.

Central Auckland city location.

Please send detailed CV by 29 November to

Bert Queenin.

ID Tours New Zealand

Box 306 279. Auckland

Recruitment: we must be better than the rest

THE industry must be better than other sectors in recruiting and training the right people if it is to fill the 31,450 extra jobs it is expected to generate between now and 2010.

Tourism Minister Mark Burton says the Tourism Workforce and Skills Projection Report (IT522) shows this is because the growth in tourism jobs is forecast to exceed the average growth in jobs across the economy.

“Building a truly sustainable, quality tourism industry for New Zealand, means developing long-term, sustainable, quality jobs - a key challenge for all of us in the sector.

“That’s why it’s so encouraging to see in this report that employers are reporting that off-peak seasonal periods are getting busier - fundamental to achieving a reduction in employment seasonality. And of course, these workforce growth projections mean even more career opportunities ahead in the tourism industry.”

He adds: “Our people are the ones we count on to make that good impression, to be knowledgeable and competent, to go above and beyond in meeting customers’ needs-and to deliver on the promise of a high quality visitor experience. “Tourism is a people industry - this report clearly highlights that. Transferable skills and attributes such as quality customer service, effective communication, cultural awareness, and selling skills remain at the heart of the industry. They are in the highest demand now, and will be even more so in the future.” “The value of this report is that it allows for strategic planning rather than simply being reactive.”

Sector summaries and highlights...

Accommodation

THERE are just over 26,000 people employed in the accommodation sector of which 45 percent work in hotels.

“**House keepers, launderers and cleaners**” is the largest occupation group in this sector with 6,648 people employed. More than two thirds of these are employed on a part-time basis. The other significant group is the “**hotel, motel and lodging managers**” who are mainly full time employed and represent many of the working proprietors and corporate managers in the accommodation sector.

The report identifies considerable employment pressure on this group during the peak period. There is also seasonality in employment for workers - meaning that during off-peak months employment dips to 80 percent of peak times.

Rapid increases in visitor numbers in recent years have seen an expansion of the sector and this has led to some problems in the relocation of senior staff to secondary regions.

The report also notes that it is difficult to attract and retain housekeeping staff due to low remuneration levels. Increasingly major accommodation operators are sourcing senior level qualified chefs from overseas as there is a shortage of skilled and experienced chefs in New Zealand.

Key and emerging skill requirements identified by accommodation providers include technology and computing skills (reflecting the rate of technology uptake in the global accommodation sector).

Computer and software literacy is now an increasingly basic requirement for the recruitment of new employees. Other new skills include financial knowledge and management skills, and personal attributes include travel experience and the ability to anticipate guests’ needs.

Some major accommodation groups are initiating their own in-house training schools to help employees to ‘up-skill’.

Food and Beverage

There are almost 55,000 people employed full or part-time in the food and beverage sector and the largest core occupation in this group is “**bartenders and waiters**” - employing almost 12, 000 people. The largest full-time group is the “**chefs and cooks.**”

These employees are affected by seasonality and not surprisingly the lowest activity in the sector is recorded in June and July.

Like the accommodation sector the food and beverage sector is experiencing a shortage of qualified chefs. There is also an identified shortage of waiters, bar staff, and floor managers among others.

The largest projected increases in employment numbers expected to occur in this sector are in the “bartenders and waiters” area, the “**restaurant, tavern and catering managers**” area, and in the “chefs and cooks” sector.

Feedback from the consultations carried out in the development of the report suggests a number of skills are lacking in front-of-house staff in the food and beverage sector. These include customer service skills, communication skills, selling skills and cultural awareness and sensitivity. **(More next issue)**

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

Greenstone balloting

*By Professional Fishing Guides' Association
president Frank Murphy*

OUR executive committee has been following with interest the debate on Fish and Game's pilot management regime to ballot the fishing on the Greenstone and Caples rivers for this coming season, as have many others from all angling persuasions. It has already been featured in *IT*, on TV, in newspapers and radio.

As your excellent publication is in many ways an information sheet to the tourism industry I would like to clarify the association's position to those with an interest in the tourist sports fishery and address the remarks made by Niall Watson, Manager, Fish and Game Otago (*IT521*)

Sustainability

The NZ Professional Fishing Guides Association is the only national body representing fishing guides in New Zealand. We have a financial membership of 164, comprising fishing lodges, charter boat operators and individual fishing guides. While always having the sustainability of the resource at heart, we cannot really give an informed comment on the merits or otherwise of this strange management decision re the Greenstone River. Despite what may have been alluded to the Minister to get him to sign off on it, we have never been consulted to get this proposal in to regulations. And at this stage we have not heard of any other tourism body that has been consulted, or for that matter any national angling body such as the Federation of Fresh Water Anglers.

It is not about over-fishing of the rivers or the fact the resource is at risk. It is about managing the international angler under the guise of protecting the experience.

Future

Our worry is the future. Where next? And what next? To bring in regulations that have the potential to restrict not only international anglers but also the average New Zealand resident angler from fishing anywhere that the trout fishing is clearly not at risk is "Not the NZ way." In fact it will actually affect the average resident angler more than the international angler, "they are all clients of Fish and Game."

If Otago Fish and Game sincerely believes it needs to virtually close off the upper reaches of a whole river system because "back country anglers were encountering other anglers in the area" our association feels it's time for the Minister of Conservation - or certainly the Minister of Tourism - to intervene.

No understanding

What Otago Fish and Game is proposing illustrates no real understanding of what is happening on the river.

Of course anglers will see other people on the Greenstone. That is the nature of the river.

The commercial venture operating the Greenstone Walk for instance sends 8,000 guided trampers up the river each year, and in addition there are the freedom walkers.

Our international angling clients are really only interested in catching trout and actually enjoy dialogue, exchange trout flies etc with resident New Zealanders be they anglers or otherwise. It is part of the total New Zealand experience.

The NZ Professional Fishing Guides Association has always had an interest in the long-term sustainability of the tourist sport fishery and will certainly work constructively with any realistic proposals to ensure the long term sustainability of this high yield tourism asset. This is not the case in this Greenstone balloting scenario.

Speaker was in praise of NZMACI

"I have been battered by your headlines (*IT521*) regarding 'plastic tourism'," writes Group Events MD Keith Weber,

"I did not say NZMACI is 'plastic'. What I did say was, "Use NZMACI as a total showcase of a fine race with an undeniably colourful culture. Show the world you are the hub of Maori cultural experiences'." "As a guest speaker at the Maori in Tourism Conference, my brief was to speak on what tour operators require from product suppliers in New Zealand.

Draft

"My draft speech was sent to and approved by the Maori in Tourism Conference organising committee, and unfortunately included as a handout for attendees.

"I did say 'Get rid of those stupid people movers and get some wakas or something more aesthetically correct'. That has already happened, but I didn't know on the day."

He adds that NZMACI is on the brink of a multi-million dollar redevelopment, with an emphasis on enhancing the authentic experiences for tourists visiting Rotorua.

Wakas

"Wakas will indeed create journeys of discovery and add great value to thermal wonderland and the story of Maori through the ages.

"Put me down for words I never spoke, call me an Aussie but don't add to the situation by spoiling the image of tourism in Rotorua."

* We quoted Mr Weber as saying:

"Step up and fix the people problem before you show the world any more plastic-style tourism." It was taken word-for-word from comprehensive notes supplied by conference organisers. The story was sent to them for checking and came back with no amendment.

Court decision due

A High Court decision on the prosecution of the Polynesian Spa, Rotorua, could be given any day, according to media reports. Wanganui artist Joanna Paul, 58, was found face down in the Priest's Pool in May last year.



Legally speaking - with Brookfields Lawyers

A badly run event may have significant legal consequences as well as negative marketing implications for those involved in 'event management'. The recent well-known Astrid Andersen case highlighted one of these legal issues. This case was finally resolved in Ms Andersen's favour in the Court of Appeal, but not without enormous emotional and financial cost to her, and added distress for the family of the cyclist who died. And it isn't the end of the story.

Le Race

Astrid Andersen runs an event management company. Every year her company organises 'Le Race' - a cycle race between Christchurch and Akaroa. During the 2001 Le Race, one of the participating cyclists crossed the centre line while overtaking another cyclist and collided with an oncoming car. The cyclist died shortly after the accident and Ms Andersen was charged with criminal nuisance under section 145 of the Crimes Act 1961.

The prosecution argued that Ms

Andersen had negligently provided ambiguous or inadequate information to participants, so that many were not aware that the road was still open to traffic coming in the opposite direction. A jury in the District Court found her guilty and she was fined \$10,000.

Recklessness

On 22 September 2004 the Court of Appeal quashed her conviction. The court said that section 145 of the Crimes Act 1961 "should be regarded as creating an offence of recklessness" and not an offence of negligence (as the District Court judge had wrongly told the jury). In order to establish recklessness, the Crown would have had to prove that Ms Andersen actually knew that she had provided the race participants with ambiguous information and that this had the potential to endanger the lives and safety of the participants.

The court found that Ms Andersen did not actually know that her information had created confusion amongst the participants regarding the status of the roads (whether the roads were closed or open) and that it could not be said that she knew that her information could endanger the lives and safety of the participants.

Recklessness is a higher test than negligence and means that event

organisers are unlikely to face criminal prosecution under s145 without proof that they were aware of the effects of their actions and continued with their plans nonetheless. However, organisers should be aware of the possibility that negligent actions can lead to civil claims for exemplary damages (notwithstanding the Accident Compensation scheme). In the event that employees are injured, there is a possibility that there may be a subsequent prosecution under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 2002. In addition, local councils that organise events have obligations under the Local Government legislation.

Decision

The Court of Appeal decision has been helpful for those involved in event management in that it raises the bar in terms of a successful prosecution. It should alleviate the widespread concern that followed Ms Andersen's conviction, including cancellation of events such as school camps and Santa parades. Anyone involved in running these events should of course exercise reasonable care and plan properly. Keep a paper trail showing the planning and the steps taken to protect those who are involved. **Details: Vanessa Bruton at bruton@brookfields.co.nz**

Aussies envy our luxury lodges

AUSTRALIA needs five times as many luxury lodges as it has if it is to compete against New Zealand in the top end market, warns Tourism Australia MD Ken Boundy. "I would much rather we have 20 more lodges such as Longitude 131 [at Uluru] than another five-star hotel in Sydney."

New director of marketing services Ian Macfarlane says it's important that Australia is able to attract the world's biggest-spending travellers.

Treetops features at top eco gathering

TREETOPS Lodge and Estate creator John Sax is giving a presentation at the world's largest eco gathering - Greenbuild in Portland, Oregon - with 5,000 delegates from around the world in attendance. Treetops is said to be our only top end lodge to be created in an eco-park. This has become internationally recognised.

Mr Sax says it was an honour that some of the world's leading architects have selected "the Treetops story" as a contribution to the conference.

Clean, green "far from the truth"

MASSEY University Professor Anton Meister says the warnings in Parliamentary Environment Commissioner Morgan Williams' controversial report on farming are based on information that has been known for 20 years. "It has taken that long to act on it. And in the meantime we have been trading on this clean, green image which clearly we are not." He adds: "The report confirms that the clean green image used by New Zealand to market products overseas is far from the truth. Few of Canterbury's lowland lakes, rivers and streams are fit to swim in let alone drink out of, while some groundwater sources used for drinking supplies have been polluted by nitrates."

Tourism worth \$30M to Banks Peninsula

THE visitor industry is big business for Banks Peninsula, injecting more than \$30 million into the local economy each year.

The development of the sector there is also far outstripping national averages, with commercial guest nights and local daytrips predicted to almost double over the next four years.

Tasked with managing that growth, and the wider economic development of the region, is new tourism and economic development officer Jo Naish, just appointed by Banks Peninsula District Council.

Ms Naish says her appointment is timely, as the council looks to implement its new tourism strategy during the next 12 months. "The visitor industry is very important to the region."

She adds: "In Akaroa, for example, where the industry is responsible for almost 50 percent of all jobs, visitor spending contributed \$3.8 million directly to household income in 2002."

Her first priority is to work with existing promotional groups to establish a Banks Peninsula tourism website.

Holiday parks have much to smile about!

HOLIDAY parks are on a winning streak! Ohiwa Holiday Park, near Opotiki, was judged the most sustainable small business in the country in the Sustainable Business Awards.

Waihi Beach Top 10 Holiday Park won the Holiday Parks and Backpacker Accommodation Award in the Bay of Plenty Tourism Awards. In the same awards Athenree Hot Springs was highly commended.

And Papamoa Beach Top 10 Holiday Resort won the Westpac Tauranga Regional Business Awards in the Hospitality/Visitor Industry category.

Northland thanks AirNZ

ENTERPRISE Northland has applauded AirNZ's decision to increase its services to two Northland airports.

The airline has announced that on weekdays from December 12, two of the six daily services between Kerikeri and Auckland will be upgraded from the current 19-seat Beech aircraft to 33-seat Saab planes.

The Saabs will also be used for one service to Kerikeri on Saturdays and Sundays. New Beechcraft flights are being added to the Whangarei-Auckland service.

The changes represent a combined 18 percent increase in capacity, providing more than 620 new seats each week on flights between Northland and Auckland.

Enterprise Northland CEO Brian Roberts says: "This is excellent news for tourism and commerce in Northland and results from a number of years of lobbying by Enterprise Northland for an increase in capacity to all three regional airports."

Couples crash - both lucky to escape

A Singaporean couple escaped injury on Sunday when their car plunged off SH94 and 100m down a bank near Milford Sound.

Constable Andy Grant, of Te Anau, says that while they were unhurt, the car was a write-off. "If I was them, I'd be buying a Lotto ticket."

It was the same advice Mr Grant gave to a Taiwanese couple who also escaped injury after a spectacular accident on the same road the day before.

Accor signs first Christchurch hotel

ACCOR has announced its first hotel in Christchurch following the signing of an agreement with owners of the new hotel, Off The Square, to join its network.

Campervanners want city carparks

MOTOR Caravan Association Nelson president Peter Gordon wants members to be allowed to use inner-city carparks overnight.

"In Wellington we can park in the carpark behind Te Papa, and we can go into the museum and town. I would like to see a facility for independent travellers in Nelson." he says.

Lost mountaineer calls 111

A Rumanian climber who couldn't find a hut on Aoraki-Mount Cook at the weekend did what any Kiwi joker would do: he called 111 on his cellphone! Police say he missed a track which he had expected to be signposted.

New to Real Journeys

REAL Journeys has appointed Julia Savill as the company's international sales manager for western markets and Christine Hartley has been appointed marketing communications manager. Ms Savill has wide-ranging experience in the tourism sector, with Accor Hotels in Auckland and Tourism Auckland. She returns to Queenstown after eight-years.

Ms Hartley has worked in marketing communications in London and Auckland, most recently with Kerrigan PR.

Roberts is new manager DOC'S Southland Conservancy has appointed Andy Roberts as the new area manager for Southern Islands, replacing Greg Lind who is moving to Queenstown to become area manager for Wakatipu, Otago Conservancy.

500 in Jason's directory

MORE than 500 properties are listed in the Jason's Holiday Parks and Campgrounds Accommodation Directory 2005.

It's described as an excellent resource for independent travellers choosing to travel by rental cars and campervans over the summer.

Nature Coast gets it together...

NATURE Coast - that's Kapiti and Horowhenua - is considering a domestic tourism campaign targeting the 750,000 people living in Wellington and Palmerston North. The organisation's first draft regional marketing plan says that "getting it right" domestically is a priority.

"Once established the bigger fish - international numbers - can be chased. However, getting it right domestically is likely to lead to an increase in international numbers, anyway. It is organic. If we are promoting ourselves in Wellington the word will spread!"

The organisation says in its draft plan that traditional constraints such as parochialism, lack of industry understanding and ad hoc and isolated planning have inhibited growth.

Themes to be considered are: Gourmet Coast based around regional produce, "slow food" and eating out experiences; Creative/Cultural Coast; Nature Coast which is eco and nature based tourism and soft adventure involving walking/tramping, cycling, riding, fishing, gardens and bird watching.

Features

"One of the region's key features is its natural and rustic feel. However, there is a need to clarify the identity of the region. Once refined the diversity of product and unique experiences can be marketed efficiently."

The plan notes that although much of the industry is made up of small operators marketing is not just for councils or Nature Coast. Everyone must support it.

There is a low level of awareness in Wellington and Palmerston North about the region and its attractions.

"It is acknowledged that we need to build awareness and understanding of our tourism industry throughout the community, businesses and councils. If the region is to develop and prosper resources need to be sufficiently allocated to address these issues."

The plan suggests targeting families for short breaks, specially during school holidays; urban couples and singles; groups, particularly for education and sport opportunities; FITs, particularly from overseas; special interest visitors, specially for such things as events, birdwatching and diving.

Packages

Possible opportunities for packaging include: day trips ex-Wellington for cruise ship passengers; pre and post conference tours from Wellington and Palmerston North; luxury short breaks from the two cities; walking and cycling trails; golfing; sports; education; food trails; transport museums and historical trails; art and culture.

Nature Coast's vision is that by 2009 the region will become a recognised tourism region with "must do" experiences, providing sustainable economic benefits, whilst preserving the integrity of products, people and environment.

TNZ to brief ITOC members

TNZ is to brief ITOC members on how it plans to increase emphasis on trade marketing and development to encourage potential visitors to convert awareness of New Zealand into a trip here.

It will also give an update on how we are doing against our competitors and give examples of how quality is becoming increasingly important. The presentation will be at the ITOC forum at Sheraton Auckland on December 2. Details: secretariat@itoc.org.nz.

Disney eyes Bay kids' holidays

THE Disney Channel - the top family show across Australia and New Zealand and broadcast to over one million homes - was due to film in the Bay of Plenty yesterday (Thursday). A group of 11 to 14-year-olds were to be used for the theme 'school holiday adventures'.

2004 a strong year for tourism - WTO

WITH still two months to go, it is already clear that 2004 will go into history as a strong year for tourism. WTO deputy secretary General Dawid de Villiers says that according to an initial projection, the number of international tourist arrivals is heading for a new all-time record, as growth for the entire year is estimated to reach around 10 percent.

After three subdued years with an accumulated growth of less than one percent, international tourism is firmly on its way to convincingly bounce back this year.

Moderate

For 2005 WTO expectations are more moderate. The first challenge will be to consolidate this year's bumper results.

One of the major questions is how much pent-up demand is still in the pipeline.

Leisure tourism is expected to sustain its growth, while business tourism will recover further. The economic conditions are favourable. Healthy economic growth is anticipated for both established and emerging source markets, inflation is contained and interest rates have not yet risen much. High oil prices are a factor of concern, but so far, they have not greatly affected the economy at large or tourism in particular.

International

For international tourism, worldwide growth is anticipated to meet or just slightly undershoot the WTO long-term forecast of four percent a year.

Dr de Villiers adds: "It appears that tourism business is very much back to normal and we expect to see that trend reinforced in the year to come.

"An interesting finding from the last survey of the WTO Panel of Tourism Experts is that a clear shift could be observed from a focus on external factors and crisis management back to a renewed focus on the internal competitive factors of destinations and products such as product development, training and promotion."

TIANZ tells local authorities about importance of our industry

TIANZ is using roadshows and briefing papers to educate recently elected local councillors and mayors on the benefits of tourism to their regions.

CEO Fiona Luhrs says Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) now realises its members have to be serious about tourism and the implications that growth in the industry will have on their planning and spend.

LGNZ, helped by TIANZ, has developed a toolkit which lays out the issues local authorities have to face as the visitor industry develops up and down the country.

Council planners and regional stakeholders are being invited to the roadshows that explain why tourism is important, how its impacts can be managed and how visitors should be taken into account during budget rounds and planning capital expenditure.

Adds Ms Luhrs: "Communicating all this to local government will be ongoing as councillors and their executives learn to appreciate their roles are vital to the delivery of a quality visitor experience.

"Tourism can't be successful and sustainable if we don't have an accord with local communities.

"We do need to start having the tough discussions about issues that are sensitive at regional level."

She says: "Examples like that are starting to happen where there have been meetings with advocacy groups such as Fish and Game, and Forest and Bird, along with

local community groups, where some of the issues are starting to be addressed."

"We have DoC in Milford Sound doing work on noise created by the planes. All of these sorts of things are out there to be addressed. As an industry association we want to be able to ensure they are addressed in a managed, thoughtful and considered way."

She says TIANZ wants to create a greater understanding of its role and what it does for its members and the industry in general.

"Because we are independent and have a cross-agency perspective and have good relationships and industry knowledge we are able to facilitate these sorts of initiatives. But not everyone realises how useful we can be!"

CVIU to blitz pirates

UNLICENSED tour operators who take small groups of people around in hire vans, or similar, are to be blitzed by the Commercial Vehicle Investigation Unit. The Bus and Coach Association (BCA) says the CVIU is also targeting coach drivers who do not hold the correct licence and/or P endorsement.

And it suggests that BCA members help the CVIU by having drivers record the registration details, location and time if they spot a vehicle, a driver or operator they are unsure of. Another option is to take a digital photograph of the "dodgy" vehicle and email this to: ian.james@police.govt.nz.

Tourism Roadshow 2004

**Coming to a Destination Near You!
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