

TIANZ, DoC concerned at illegal groups on top tracks

ALL tourism businesses operating in national parks must have a concession, and must always operate in accordance with that concession, says TIANZ CEO Fiona Luhrs. "That is the bottom line." She was commenting after DoC announced it is considering taking legal action against a foreign businessman operating large guided tours on Fiordland's Great Walk tracks.

Pressure

Ms Luhrs adds: "We do not condone any tourism business operating illegally in a national park. Illegal operations damage the reputation of our industry, can lead to increased pressure on our environment, and deny legitimate visitors space in huts and on tracks."

Ms Luhrs says TIANZ was concerned to learn of organised businesses operating on the Milford Track last week without concessions.

"We were also surprised that in the audits DoC conducted on the Milford Track before Christmas a

number of legitimate operators were found breaching their concessions." The industry has a strong role to play in ensuring the integrity of the concessions system.

Communicate

"We intend to work with organisations such as ITOC and TNZ to communicate the importance of overseas visitors choosing quality and bona fide guiding operators. We also intend to continue to strongly promote the importance of tourism businesses holding concessions, strictly adhering to the conditions of their concessions," she adds.

"The issue of businesses operating completely without concessions deeply concerns us. We will be encouraging legitimate tourism businesses to report any illegal operations to DoC if they become aware of them."

DoC says a party of 19 Korean trampers were met and their guide interviewed by DoC staff when they walked out from the Routeburn Track. They had been booked into

department huts as if they were independent walkers. But it wasn't until they arrived on the track that it was clear, due to their guide and the group's equipment, that they were one large guided party.

It has also been identified that another group of 18 Koreans are booked on the track this week - in the same manner.

DoC spokesman Martin Rodd says: "It is extremely disappointing to find this type of activity occurring. We have legal concessionaires authorised to provide guided opportunities on these tracks in the off season and a specialist company offered guided walks in their own facilities during the walking season. These companies have special conditions to ensure that the activity can be undertaken without impacting on the national parks or other visitors."

Condition

One condition is that groups should not exceed 12 people plus a guide, which reduces congestion and crowding along the track. DoC says that groups of 18 or 19 people can dominate huts, affecting the experiences of other trampers. During DoC's checks in December, it says two breaches were considered serious. The companies concerned were at first suspended but later reinstated to fulfil bookings due to the many innocent third party clients that were affected by the suspensions.

An outcome is expected by the end of February.

Pages Past...

TEN years ago in IT...

MORE than 540 yachts are in New Zealand waters. And their skippers will spend \$22 million, according to Marex New Zealand executive director Peter Rachtman.

But of 65 at Opuia, Bay of Islands, most say they will not return here since the introduction of compulsory inspection of departing vessels. Customs want \$75 per clearance. The first skipper to refuse inspection has been banned from leaving. But his tourist visa expires this week. "One government branch tells him he must leave - the other says he can't!"

I TOC president Greig Ritchie says we are being penalised by Australia's visa policy. While eliminating visas for visitors coming here has helped increase arrivals and speeded up processing, the policy that everyone should have a visa is losing both countries potential visitors. Asians book only a short time ahead. If it takes weeks to obtain a visa they might give up.

MORE than \$2,000 million is being invested in accommodation, transport and sightseeing, with much of the money coming from overseas. Biggest project is the \$440 million Auckland casino and hotel attached.

OUR government is approaching its British counterpart in a bid for AirNZ to increase its services between the UK and here.

GREAT Barrier Island is enjoying a mini boom with arrivals up 40 percent in some areas. Operators, who've seen a drop in numbers since 1990, report that business is back to the levels of five years ago. A tourism strategy report suggests that the 60,000 annual total could be increased to 90,000 by 2000.

WHALE Watch Kaikoura has won one of the most prestigious awards in international ecotourism, the Tourism For Tomorrow Award given by British Airways.

MUSEUM of New Zealand chairman Sir Wallace Rowling is refusing to comment on Wellington Maori desires to open a casino in its Buckle Street building.

THE Western Bay of Plenty has an identity problem. But Visitor Promotion Organisation manager Doug Burton intends doing something about it. Locals call it the Bay. But this is not recognised outside the area. The region needs a central focus.

NOT amused. That's the opinion of visitors staying at the Te Araroa Holiday Park on recent earthquakes. One was 7 on the Richter scale.

New campaign for Christchurch

A major domestic advertising campaign for Christchurch is being launched today (Friday). It is aimed at convincing North Islanders in particular that the city is a vibrant, sophisticated and relaxed place to visit.

The campaign is designed to commence the process of positioning Christchurch as a desirable place to live, work, play, invest and visit. More next issue...

Be aware of "Eric", warns Ratcliffe

WHO is Owusu Eric? Gina Ratcliffe of NZ Encounters is intrigued to know! She says he may be legitimate. But..."the way this just played out this week makes us want to warn others."

She says Mr Eric [kwabrane20@yahoo.com] contacted her company asking for urgent help for a group of 16 passengers requiring a seven day trip to New Zealand arriving on February 21.

"We asked for information on his company (since he was using a yahoo address) and details about the group. The travel company name he used was Nards Travel Centre and the group was from the Cyprus Islands. He said that there was no internet presence of the company but that he could post a brochure.

"All correspondence was a bit vague - so it seemed suspect from the beginning."

She adds: "Client names were given, a proposal and pricing accepted and then he said a senior staff member was flying to Fiji to get a bank draft to pay us. Bizarre but true!"

Emails over the following four days were always prompt and kept progress moving but were just a bit vague. "He always said enough to make it feel legit but still there was an element of doubt."

Since Ms Ratcliffe's company would be up for late cancellation payments with the hotels, a strongly worded letter was sent to Mr Eric demanding flight details, correct names - and details on the "senior staff member" arriving from Fiji. Without this information all bookings would be cancelled.

"Our normal three to four prompt emails a day turned to silence. We believe, should we have gone ahead, the next request from him would have been to ask for our bank details so they could deposit this 'bank draft bought in Fiji'. If anyone knows of the person or this company please let us know. Considering our experience of this person/company we would recommend you stay clear."

Children get the picture

A children's picture book, called *Albert Magpie and Timothy Rabbit in Clarry's Lost Pony Tail*, has background scenery based on New Zealand flora and fauna. And author Shirley Todd reckons it'll be an ideal gift for overseas children holidaying here. She wrote, illustrated and designed the book which retails for \$18.95. Ms Todd will give trade discounts. Contact: 09-8321725, younglings.books@ihug.co.nz or www.younglingsbooks.co.nz.

CAPA predicts high growth and profitability for airlines

THE aviation sector in Asia Pacific - and the Middle East - will continue to defy global industry trends in 2005, maintaining high growth and profitability after a record 2004.

Releasing its annual report on the regional outlook for aviation and tourism, Sydney-based Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) predicts a more subdued, but still robust performance for airlines and airports in the year ahead.

"While operators in Europe and North America licked their wounds, the region's carriers moved rapidly from recovery to robust growth and profitability," the report adds.

"That growth should consolidate in 2005, barring further upsets, and establish the Asia Pacific as a key target for major investment in service expansion and new operations."

Benefits

The report notes that: "this snowballing development and intensifying competition should deliver substantial benefits to airports, regional economies, and tourism and consumers.

"However, for the airlines, the prospect of high growth is overshadowed by likely manpower shortages and a further depletion of yields, raising the potential for a profitless - or less profitable - volume scenario for some."

CAPA predicts: lower but robust economic growth; airline profitability unlikely to meet 2004 levels, although it remains positive overall; passenger traffic growth will be above long-term trend rates, spurred by further liberalisation and investment in new entrant carriers.

Fuel

It says fuel prices will likely remain volatile and may plateau at US\$40 a barrel - but the industry is generally better prepared.

There will likely be improvement in share prices, especially for more competitive, restructured operators. CAPA also has a positive operating outlook for airports as privatisation and construction programmes gather momentum.

And there will be more tourism growth, albeit at lower levels.

Projections prepared by the centre indicate a requirement for 94,200 extra airline employees in Asia Pacific over the next five years - almost 19,000 a year. This includes 10,000 extra pilots, 21,000 flight attendants and 15,700 maintenance workers.

But in Oceania - Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific - demand is relatively low and offset in the flight crew area by the present surplus of former Ansett pilots, it notes.

National airline role will dwindle

QANTAS'S role as Australia's national airline will dwindle over the next five years as it joins more international partnerships and domestic routes are taken over by cut-price airlines, predicts CAPA.

The Australian government has signalled it will soon allow Singapore Airlines to fly the lucrative Sydney-Los Angeles route in competition with Qantas.

In return, Qantas hopes to set up its cut-price airline Jetstar to fly the internal Asian market, using Singapore as a base.

CAPA MD Peter Harbison adds: "Qantas is very profitable in the domestic market, but it will grow only three to four percent a year. But the Asian internal market will grow more than 10 per cent and Qantas has to be in it."

Tackle Tasman losses, QF advised

DESPITE its overall robust position, Qantas needs to address the loss-making Tasman and New Zealand markets, falling domestic yields - albeit at a more moderate rate - and excess capacity on interstate routes," the CAPA report says. "Its pursuit of further operating economies, especially through the devolvement of operations to cheaper overseas markets, also threatens to immerse the airline in industrial strife.

"One almost immediate issue for Qantas in 2005 is the potentially daunting prospect of SIA realising its plans to gain entry to the South Pacific route to the US via Australia, and additional growth from Emirates to Australia and New Zealand."

Qantas wins two top awards

QANTAS won a Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation's (CAPA) Award.

The carrier was named as the airline having the greatest impact on the development of Asia Pacific aviation in 2004.

It has also been awarded the "Best Airline to the Pacific, New Zealand or Australia" at the annual *Travel Weekly* Globe Awards ceremony in London. It is the fourth time the airline has won the award.

Another record profit?

QANTAS has reassured the market that it will achieve another record profit in 2004/05 despite last week's downgrade from fellow aviator Virgin Blue. Qantas reaffirmed its forecast that pre-tax profit for 2004/05 will exceed that for 2003/04.

"Qantas...continues to believe that its 2005 full year profit will exceed its 2004 profit before tax of \$964.6 million," the company says. The 2004 result was a record.

DoC limits seal watching trips

DOC is placing a limit on seal watching trips at two Abel Tasman National Park breeding colonies - with no extra trips allowed for at least eight years. In 2003, the department declared a 10-year moratorium on new permits for swimming with seals along the Abel Tasman coast.

That has been amended to include prohibiting new permits for commercial seal viewing at Tonga and Pinnacle islands. The moratorium does not apply to permits for seal viewing at other sites, however.

DoC's Nelson/Marlborough marine specialist Andrew Baxter says the moratorium is for the protection of the seals.

Capped

"The levels of visitation to the Tonga and Pinnacle seal breeding colonies have now reached the point where the number of commercial trips needs to be capped to limit disturbance to seals and protect their wellbeing."

He adds: "The conservation and protection of the seals has priority and mothers and pups at breeding colonies are particularly vulnerable to being disturbed by tourist activity. Disturbance can cause mothers to abandon their pups."

Tonga Island receives the highest number of visits, largely by kayaks and water taxis, but visitation has also been increasing at Pinnacle, a newer breeding colony. The peak period is summer - when seals are breeding. The 2003 moratorium resulted from a DoC review of seal watching off the Abel Tasman and Kaikoura coasts. The review also led to a new minimum distance of 20 metres for people and vessels from seals on shore.

Changes

The review followed a Landcare Research study into the effects of seal watching activity on fur seals on the Abel Tasman and Kaikoura coasts. The research found seal watching activity caused changes in seal behaviour. Researchers observed that 63 per cent of mother and pup interactions at Tonga Island were disturbed by tourist activity. Seals also spent less time resting and more time actively swimming.

"At the conclusion of the 2003 review we stated that consideration would probably need to be given in the near future to a moratorium on new permits for commercial seal watching on the Abel Tasman coast," says Mr Baxter. "That time has now come in relation to the breeding colonies." Details: 03-546933

New accommodation concept removes the hassles

A new concept combining luxurious villa accommodation with superior guest services has been launched in Queenstown.

The Villas in Queenstown is the brainchild of Queenstown Project Management director Wayne Foley and Queenstown Destination Management director Vickie Hill. The new company exclusively manages villas developed by Queenstown Project Management and makes them available for executive holiday and business rental complete with full room and concierge services.

The Villas offers 10 privately owned villas for nightly rental. They are furnished and maintained to the highest standards for walk in/walk out visitor convenience.

Mrs Hill set up Queenstown Destination Management in 1995 to provide a high level of personal service and creativity to the conference and incentive market.

Mr Foley is a Queenstown construction project manager who has been responsible for the delivery of several high profile and high budget projects in the Queenstown region, including the restoration of Eichardt's Hotel. The pair believes the timing is perfect to launch stylish accommodation packaged with a wide range of services. "We believe there is a market niche for the provision of sophisticated, high quality villa style accommodation matched with services that take all the hassle out of a holiday or a meeting," says Mrs Hill. Details: www.thevillasinqueenstown.com.

Weekes now with Interislander

MARTIN Weekes has been appointed GM Passenger Services and Hospitality for Interislander. Mr Weekes has had more than 15 years' management experience in consumer retailing and marketing. He has been CEO for Eden Park and the Auckland Bridge Climb. In his new role Mr Weekes will oversee Interislander's customer service and marketing initiatives, and lead the Onboard Services, Catering, Marketing and Sales teams.

* Marketing and sales manager Peter Monk has just left the company to join Loyalty NZ as GM Fly Buys.

Bayleys selling Baylys!

BAYLYS Beach Holiday Park has just come on the market. And who are agents? Bayleys, of course! Agent Michael Miles says the leasehold land is owned by DoC. It's selling as a going concern and is expected to go for \$350,000 - \$550,000.

Also for sale: Whangarei Falls Holiday Park, Whangarei (freehold) \$795,000; Kiwi Park Motels and Holiday Park, Murchison (freehold) \$1.3 million; All Seasons Holiday Park, Rotorua (leasehold) \$395,000; Ohakune Top 10 Holiday Park (leasehold) POA. Details: 03-5469455 or 027-2238875.

Police target hotels

DUNEDIN Hospitality Association president Lindsay McKinney says hoteliers are reporting increasing visits by police who claim to be ensuring patrons are not intoxicated. But emergency response group manager Inspector Don Boyd makes no apology for what he describes as efforts to keep patrons and public safe. "The public is concerned about safety on the streets and the pressure is on us."

He adds: "Most assaults happen within 200m of licensed premises and, instead of being the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, we are trying to be proactive and stand at the top."

First research scholarships go to magnificent seven...

In an industry first, seven Tourism Research Scholarships have been awarded to postgraduate researchers throughout New Zealand.

Tourism Minister Mark Burton says: "They are high calibre masters level students whose applications were strongly supported by the tourism industry and their respective university departments.

"It is also my pleasure to welcome Visa International as a partner with the Ministry of Tourism in the tourism scholarships programme. Visa International's support has allowed the programme to be extended and has underscored the prestige of the scholarship programme."

The aim of the scholarships is to encourage a research culture in tourism, particularly that which is applicable and accessible to the industry.

The scholarships are worth \$15,000 each. Recipients are:

* **Clara Leung**, from the University of Auckland, who will be researching the application of location-based information and communication technology services in the industry. This is an emerging field with obvious potential.

* **Fiona MacDonald**, from the University of Otago, who will be investigating the nature and extent of strategic planning undertaken by small to medium sized tourism businesses with a view to assisting them to undertake more effective planning.

* **David Purdie**, from the University of Otago, who will study the effectiveness and impact of visitor education practices used by ecotourism businesses. His research will seek to highlight effective visitor education practices.

* **James Whittome**, from the University of Auckland, who will take an in-depth look at co-branding, in particular, measuring the value of positioning tourism brands alongside each other within marketing campaigns.

* **Chengcheng Zhao** from the Auckland University of Technology, who is focusing on the different perceptions and experiences of Chinese visitors who come to New Zealand from the North of China in comparison with those from the South.

* **Mark Walter**, from Victoria University, will undertake research to develop guidelines for minimising the ecological impact of commercial sea kayaking operations.

* **Gregory Willson**, from the University of Waikato, is focusing his research on the Hawke's Bay region, where he'll measure the value tourists place on historic places.

...and travel college awards nine

NINE students have gained International Travel College Scholarships for 2005. Students who were or had studied travel and tourism or geography in year 12 or year 13 were eligible to apply. They were asked to submit an essay outlining why they would like to work in the industry, and were then interviewed.

"The high level of the applicants never ceases to amaze me," says schools and recruitment manager Michelle Chatfield.

"This is my sixth year being involved in the selection process and each year the scholarship students continue to be role models for others in the college. Our industry needs young trained people with a passion for customer service and a can do attitude. Our 2005 recipients definitely have these qualities!"

Rainbow to open again

RAINBOW Ski Field will open this winter despite weather and mechanical problems last year and a profit of only \$30,000. The field had 12,000 skier visits in 2004. Beyond Rainbow Sports Inc bought the field in April. Its owners decided to sell after several poor seasons.

Scrap the Act, says Mapp

NATIONAL'S industrial relations spokesman Wayne Mapp is calling for the Holidays Act to be abolished, saying it is causing widespread confusion in the hospitality industry.

He says a third of all cafes and restaurants closed over Christmas/New Year to avoid the extra costs imposed by the Act.

Others introduced a public holiday surcharge of up to 15 per cent to cover the cost of opening.

This means labour costs are 250 per cent higher on a public holiday than on a normal working day.

The Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union national secretary Andrew Little says Dr Mapp's move to scrap the act is a bad idea.

"Thousands and thousands of people who have to work when most New Zealanders are enjoying time with family and friends are, at last, being fairly compensated, thanks to the Holidays Act. They will not take kindly to moves to take it off them again."

Concern over seabed

UNLESS the seabed near the Paihia wharf, Bay of Islands, is dredged King's Dolphin Cruises and Tours CEO Gary Crapper says there is a risk of a catamaran getting stuck with 200 people on board, or of staff being unable to take the catamarans out altogether at low tide.

InterCity just the ticket

INTERCITY'S bus passes are ideal for young visitors on working holidays, the company points out. It notes that the number of visitors allowed here on working holidays is to increase from 31,000 to at least 40,000 within two years.

InterCity Coachlines operates the only national land transport network with 120 services a day to 600 towns and cities up and down New Zealand.

So Travelpass, New Zealand's only multi transport pass, and Flexi-Pass are ideal for those touring and working their way around the country.

F and B welcomes marine reserve proposal

FOREST and Bird welcomes the proposal by the Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society for a Marine Reserve south of New Plymouth.

“This marine area and surrounding islands is a biologically rich area”, says Forest and Bird’s senior researcher, Barry Weeber. “It’s great to hear about this latest proposal for protection of Taranaki’s unique coastal ecosystems.” The proposal covers 1547 ha and includes the southern-most Sugar Loaf Islands of Seal Rocks/Waikaranga, Mataora/Round Rock, Pararaki/Seagull Rock and Motuotamatea/Snapper Rock.

New flag campaign gains momentum

NEW Zealanders wanting to support a change to the New Zealand flag can now sign up for a referendum. The campaign officially took to the streets this week.

Former Governor General Dame Cath Tizard, world champion squash player Dame Susan Devoy, sports broadcaster Keith Quinn, New Zealand Stock Exchange CEO Mark Weldon, former All Black captain Graham Mourie, world champion triathlete Erin Baker and writer, director and actor Ian Mune were among the first to sign.

NZFlag.com Trust spokeswoman Jo Coughlan says that by May they hope to have 300,000 signatures in favour of a referendum to look at changing the flag. Contact: Jo Coughlan 021-522142 or www.nzflag.com.

Big jump in i-SITE visitors

PICTON i-SITE recorded a 39 percent increase in visitor numbers for 2004 over the previous year to just under 200,000.

Manager Bill Mannix attributes the increase in part to the effective marketing of New Zealand and the region by TNZ, Destination Marlborough, and operators.

During 2004 the combined visitor numbers to the Picton and Blenheim i-SITES were a record 485,000.

He says that local operators and organisations contribute by providing a range of accommodation options, activities and events which appeal to all visitors. While it is true that regional icons are the wineries and the Marlborough Sounds there are many other operations and activities which contribute to the diversity and increasing popularity of Marlborough.

TNZ relaunches website

FOLLOWING a year of upgrading, TNZ has re-launched its corporate website. The site, www.tourismnewzealand.com, replaces www.tourisminfo.govt.nz as the home of TNZ’s research, publications, news, staff contact details and job vacancies.

New features include market guides covering our 14 main inbound markets - including interactive traveller profiles, visitor behaviour and a snapshot of the travel trade environment.

An extended industry resources section provides detailed information about TNZ’s programmes and the international tourism environment. A glossary section has been added to help new operators navigate through the acronym-filled tourism world. Applications for all TNZ organised trade events will now only be accepted online.

Still places for Kiwi Link USA

WE were correct about the unprecedented demand for Kiwi Link USA. But we were wrong about TNZ receiving 50 percent more applications than there are places.

In fact, what we should have said is that half the places have already gone! So, if you’re interested in the US market - go for it. Applications close on February 4. Details: www.tourismnewzealand.com.

Bisignani to keynote at PATA conference

IATA director-general and CEO Giovanni Bisignani will give the opening keynote address at the PATA 54th annual conference in Macau on April 18. His theme is: Connecting Tourism’s Stakeholders. This will be followed by sessions on new market dynamics in aviation and how the region is supporting these; tapping opportunities in sustainable tourism; windows on China; the changing face and expectations of youth travel; growing the relationship between tourism and media; health in tourism; the relationship of arts, culture and tourism; financing tourism infrastructure and growth; maximising mega events and the power of the film industry in tourism. Details: www.pata.org.

Penguins dying - *don't worry!*

PENGUINS and shags around Oamaru are dying through a lack of the right food. But people are being asked not to intervene. Waitaki Development Board has contacted experts from around the Pacific. And the consensus is: let nature take its course.

Chicks which survive through human intervention will die as they go to sea and inexpertly forage for food that is scarce. “This has occurred with the yellow eyed penguins in times gone by and attempts to force feed the chicks have been singularly unsuccessful with death following regardless, says board GM Susan Houston. The good news is that blue penguins in particular are robust and have survived similar phenomena before - and will do so again.

Group still eyes Hilton

WELLINGTON based St Lawrence Group is still trying to buy the 166-room Hilton Hotel, Auckland. It is offering fixed interest bonds paying 10.5 percent a year, for three years, in a bid to raise \$9.5 million. A further \$15 million will be made up of equity and \$28 million will be a mortgage, to pay \$51 million for the property.

Editorial says Mount Eden visitors should walk - from new information centre

FEW places in Auckland rival Mount Eden, which attract 1.2 million sightseers a year, says the *New Zealand Herald* in an editorial.

A review of Auckland City Council's management plan offers the opportunity to not only recognise its importance but to incorporate it in an ordered, well-balanced blueprint that will enhance the mountain's appeal. "The review comes amid rumblings around the impact of tourism. Heavy buses are blamed for cracks in the summit road and an overly congested, polluted and noisy summit.

"The increasing pressure has called for a ban on buses. This would have been largely the situation today had a 1986 management plan, which limits access to the summit road to small buses...ever been enforced. Nonetheless that has not stopped some bus companies warning of a virtual tourism bypass of Auckland...That clearly is an over reaction...fortunately, the ambitions of tour operators and conservationists should be able to be reconciled relatively easily."

It calls for a visitor centre which can educate visitors about Mount Eden's rich Maori history and about Auckland's volcanoes. The centre should be the base from which tourists would be able to visit the summit.

"Tourists would not jib at this enforced stroll, or complain if they were charged a dollar or two for the view from the summit. Such practices are common at under-pressure attractions overseas."

The paper says the council review offers the chance to acknowledge the change and the pressure this has created, to recognise the mountain's make-up and history, and to understand that it has more to offer than just a view.

"This should be a great opportunity, not the trigger for bickering between tour operators and conservationists," it added.

Golf course "eighth wonder of world"

THE Cape Kidnappers' Golf Course has been named the best new golf course in the world by *Travel and Leisure Golf Magazine*. Writer Brian McCollan says it is "not only the golf course of the year. It's now the eighth wonder of the world."

Glaciers march further downwards...

FRANZ Josef glacier is moving forward at up to three metres a day. It is now wedged against a lump of bedrock which in 1990 was the site of a DoC viewing platform. It is not known how long the river of ice will continue its downward march. Fox Glacier is also advancing. But, being in a wider valley, its progress is slower.

HeliPro now largest

HELIPRO now has the largest fleet of helicopters in New Zealand, with 16 aircraft. And the company is also proud of its new gyro-stabilised Wescam digital and widescreen-capable filming unit on the side of one HeliPro machine. It also has a new 66x zoom.

Jetboating to lunch

KAWARAU Jet Rotorua's latest package is a trip across Lake Rotorua to Hamurana Springs, a walk through the giant redwood forest to admire the clear springs and an optional picnic lunch, followed by a sprint back across the water. Other combos include rafting, tandem skydiving and floatplane trips. The company bought a second jetboat in August, thus increasing the carrying capacity to 35 and making it a more attractive option for tour operators. Details: Ross Kelly 07-3437600 or kjetrotorua@xtra.co.nz.

Buried Village's new tour

ROTORUA'S Buried Village has a new personalised morning tour steeped in culture, history and nature. It provides a complete package including shuttle pickup/return to accommodation, scenic drive, guided tour of the village and a picnic lunch in the park. Details: Sue Gunn 07-3768787 or marketing@buriedvillage.co.nz.

Wilson leaves THL

AFTER 13 years with Mount Cook Line and then THL Richard Wilson is now working for Gough, Gough and Hammer in Christchurch. Mr Wilson's last job was as GM of THL's Experiences division, which saw him commuting to Auckland from his Christchurch home.

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ADVERT

MCK opens first Taranaki property

COPTHORNE Hotel Grand Central, New Plymouth, opens on Tuesday! MCK COO Gordon Wilson says the property will help the company satisfy the many requests it receives for accommodation "in this incredibly vibrant area of New Zealand."

Mr Wilson adds: "We are particularly pleased to be able to provide a solution for our international markets especially given Taranaki's rapidly expanding international reputation as a high quality destination." Additions to the hotel will be announced at a later date.

The Copthorne Hotel Grand Central, New Plymouth, brings the total number of Copthorne Hotels & Resorts in New Zealand to 10.

Kauri Museum happy to have this problem

NEXT major project to be constructed at Northland's Kauri Museum is a replica of an old two-storeyed boarding house. This is to be built inside the existing Steam Sawmill Hall: a building within a building!

Architect Ian Butt who designed the Whangarei Town Basin Village has developed the plan based on photos of the many old boarding houses that graced each hamlet on the the Kaipara.

The \$400,000 display will show the visitors who stayed at the boarding house. It may have been the gum buyer, the dentist, the banker, timber buyer, land developer, new settlers, doctor, barber, or even a travelling haberdashery salesman.

The structure will add 360 sq m of display space to the already 3,000 sq m of undercover exhibits currently housed in the museum.

The museum is run by a charitable trust with any surplus from trading being put back into preservation of the local history through continued development of the museum.

Within the last year \$140,000 was committed to upgrading the sewerage system to meet the projected 150,000 visitors per annum expected over the next 10 years.

Already The Kauri Museum is nudging 100,000 visitors a year with most being international visitors. "If the domestic market realises what the international market already know facilities may need to expand even faster than planned" says CEO Albert Lovell. "A good problem to have!"

Tour drivers could end up in hot water...

COACH drivers or tour leaders are still cooking eggs in thermal hot pools in Government Gardens and Kuirau Park, Rotorua.

Rotorua District Council says: "While this in itself may not be an illegal practice, it is considered to be unsafe due to the unpredictable nature of geothermal activity.

"Although the areas surrounding the pools have been well fenced, it is still felt that to continue this practise is unwise as accidents or geothermal eruptions can happen. It is therefore requested due to safety concerns that the cooking of eggs in the geothermal pools...cease immediately."

Holiday - and save the world!

GO on holiday - and save the planet! That's what vacationers to a new Portuguese resort will soon be saying. Although it has 30,000 beds the \$1,900 million Mata de Sesimbra Resort - being build by WWF and British environmental group Bioregional - will emit little waste and no pollution which is blamed for global warning.

Limo service popular

SOUTHERN Lakes Limousine Services of Cromwell has only been going four months. Yet already it's done: wine tours, birthday outings, restaurant and airport transfers, and weddings. Director Michael Misikin says that next month they will also be acting as a back-up for a US couple who intend cycling down the West Coast.

The company has a limousine and a "people mover."

"My biggest challenge - with advertising - has been to inform folk that I do not just have a limo and do not just do weddings."

Contact: 03-4454501, 027-4374425, korax@xtra.co.nz or www.limosineservices.co.nz.

Gardeners' delight

SEVEN of the country's 24 gardens of national significance are from Taranaki. Until last week, the region had only Pukeiti, Pukekura Park, and the Hollard and Jury gardens. Now, following the latest New Zealand Garden Trust (NZGT) assessments, Te Popo Gardens east of Stratford, Ngamamaku at Oakura and Te Kainga Marire in New Plymouth are among the best.

February's issue of New Zealand Events Update is just out ! It contains probably the most comprehensive list of New Zealand events anywhere to be found. About 500 are listed of which 76 are new. Do YOU know about them?

*Subscriptions are only \$125 a year including GST.
Contact: nigel@insidetourism.com*

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Record numbers do the Napier walk

UP to 20,600 Napier visitors are expected to have taken an art deco walking tour in 2004/5, up from 17,000 the previous year. The Art Deco Trust wonders what other city offers an historic walking tour that attracts so many. The trust is 20 on February 8 when the first "art deco group" met and agreed that it should be a long-term organisation with the aim of supporting the preservation of art deco.

Oldies are younger and more educated

TODAY'S retirees and seniors are younger and better educated than their predecessors. They have leisure activities on their mind - but often want to return to school to build new skills and expand their minds. US-based Senior Summer School now offers education vacations. School president Seth Wirshba says seniors are more adventurous than ever and have a quest for lifelong education. Details: www.seniorsummerschool.com

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GRAND CIRCLE TRAVEL **OVERSEAS ADVENTURE TRAVEL**

Grand Circle Corporation incorporating Grand Circle Travel and Overseas Adventure Travel is the leading Tour Operator in the world focusing upon direct marketing to senior American Travellers. Grand Circle Corporation has a key strategic focus on growing and developing its extensive range of innovative touring programmes throughout the South Pacific Region.

PRODUCT MANAGER - SOUTH PACIFIC REGION

This position is based in the regional office in Sydney and will be responsible for the on-going management and coordination of our South Pacific & Bali Products. The role requires that the successful applicant has a sound understanding of and practical experience in tour product design, inventory and contract management, tour product administration, all with a dedicated focus upon the financial control and financial processes associated with the entire product management function.

Key Responsibilities:

- * Managing and organising the product management process from a South Pacific perspective and in coordination with the Grand Circle head office in Boston, USA
- * Financial control and processing of South Pacific Products including rate loading, cost forecasting and contract analysis
- * Co-coordinating and administration of the set up and on-going operation of South Pacific touring programs
- * Support Boston Marketing Department by ensuring the on-going integrity and accuracy of promotional materials
- * General product management administration functions
- * Provide high level support to the regional leadership in relation to the product administrative functions

Essential Requirements:

- * Solid understanding of the travel industry
- * High Intermediate to advanced level Excel skills
- * Must be highly organized and meticulous with detail
- * Able to meet tight timelines and strict deadlines
- * Very much a self starter and motivator
- * Be effective and confident in owning to completion specific projects and tasks
- * Be happy to work in a small, highly performance orientated team environment
- * An effective, confident communicator in both written and verbal form

This position attracts a competitive salary dependent on experience.

Applications due 5 PM Monday 31 January.

Please email a detailed CV and covering letter directly addressing the applicants fit to each of the responsibility and essential requirements noted in this advertisement, to ssheedy@gct.com (fax 02 93269985)

More on Stewart Island boom...

STEEP price rises for property on Stewart Island can be attributed to the island's popularity as a tourism/visitor destination AND as a holiday/recreational haven, according to David Hicks, of tourism consultancy firm TMEI Ltd, himself a fourth-generation member of the Stewart Island Hicks family.

"Increases in visitor numbers over the past five years have helped put a premium on properties suitable for accommodation - particularly in the backpacker, B and B and homestay categories," he says.

"Both Brett Hamilton and Furhana Ahmad (*IT* 529 & 530) make very valid points, without excluding each other's rationale! DoC's announcement of Rakiura National Park effectively put Stewart Island on the global ecotourism/sustainable tourism map and served to fuel property price rises. As a result, when the Stewart Island kakapo say 'boom', they really mean it!"

Holiday bookings via search engines?

WE use them to find web pages and recipes and to hunt for music and lyrics, but next year the search engine could also become our first port of call for finding and booking our holidays.

Amid recent reports that demand for independently

booked travel is set to soar by 80 percent in the next five years, both Yahoo! and AOL have announced they are ramping-up their travel offerings and setting up shop as online travel agents.

Both companies are developing specialised travel search engines that will allow users to compare prices from a range of different agents, airlines, hotel groups, resorts and hire car companies.

The sites will be in competition with each other and existing "price-comparison" sites, like Travelocity, Expedia and Lastminute.com.

Tips from Qualmark

ENSURE TV channels are tuned in and the numbers correspond with information provided for guests.

Qualmark also suggests that accommodation providers should consider having a list of local and national radio stations available in the compendium or near the radio.

Many guests enjoy plunger coffee but as there may be two in a room, ensure that a two person plunger is provided.

And when asking clients for payment details when making a reservation, especially if it's via the internet, ensure that the room rate amount is clearly stated.

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Tekapo next to develop: spa and wellness centre planned as part of \$40M resort

LAKE Tekapo's new \$40 million 4.5 star Bluewater Resort is to include a spa and wellness centre in its development plans for completion at the end of 2006.

Project marketing consultant Chris Herbert says there has been big growth in the establishment of spa and wellness centres in resorts - right around the globe.

"We looked at what Lake Tekapo has to offer with its alpine setting, crystal clear skies and beautiful lake and thought that a spa and wellness centre seemed so appropriate. We will build the shell of the centre ready for an operator to put their individual touches to the facility."

He adds: "All the research we have undertaken points to the spa and wellness centre as being an extremely important asset to the resort."

Mackenzie Tourism chairman Graeme Murray says people have been visiting Lake Tekapo for its healthy climate for many years. "The town has amazing potential for tourism and this is just another step in Tekapo becoming a destination in its own right."

Explosion

The Mackenzie Basin is undergoing an "explosion" in visitor numbers. CAM figures for the year ending September show guest nights up 8.9 per cent, nearly double the national average.

With the continued development of Roundhill Skifield and the Mount John Observatory, and the proposed construction of a new Heritage Centre, growth trends are destined to continue.

Adds Mr Hebert: "There are 800,000 cars passing through Tekapo annually, but the town needs to develop facilities and accommodation of Bluewater's standard to tap into the growth the Mackenzie District is experiencing at present. Tekapo is being squeezed as investors move north from the heady values now being experienced in Queenstown and Wanaka and similarly south from Christchurch as the market appreciates that Bluewater is only 2.5hrs drive and offers such spectacular scenery and outdoor activities."

Maritime cluster launches first initiative

TOURISM Auckland has set up a Maritime Tourism Cluster Group, which has 90 members ranging from tourism operators of sailing yachts and fishing charters, to marine industry associations including the Maritime Safety Authority. The group's first initiative is in offering special deals for the coming Anniversary Weekend.

Tourism Auckland CEO Graeme Osborne says the cluster has been established in recognition of the vital importance of Auckland's maritime heritage.

"Auckland's rich maritime heritage contributes significantly to the identity of the region and is a key draw card for visitors. We want to ensure that the sector works together, and quality experiences are offered to locals and visitors alike."

Other caterers may now be able to tender

THE Invercargill City Council has thrown a lifeline to caterers denied the chance to tender for sole catering rights at the revamped Civic Theatre, deciding it didn't like being accused of cronyism and underground deals. The Civic Theatre steering committee decided at its December meeting to offer sole catering rights to the Invercargill Licensing Trust, without putting the contract out to tender.

The council yesterday tried to distance itself from the decision, saying that although the steering committee was a sub-committee of the council works and services committee, most of the members who had backed the move were community representatives. The end result might be an invitation for expressions of interest in the catering contract.

Workers want rewards, satisfaction and education more than \$\$

INTRINSIC rewards such as challenging work and learning ranked higher than compensation in a survey of potential employees by Cornell University.

The report, *Retaining Management Talent: What Hospitality Professionals Want From Their Job*, was co-written by Cornell Professor Kate Walsh and Masako Taylor, doctoral candidate. The study sampled over 2,800 graduates of the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.

They found that: managers are looking for challenging jobs that offer growth opportunities, competent leadership, and fair compensation; foremost among retention factors is the chance to gain career growth through increasingly challenging assignments.

Most respondents said their greatest motivation is personal and career growth, as well as the opportunity to make contributions to the organisation.

Other observations: to the degree those desired jobs features are in place, hospitality managers' commitment to their companies and the industry will rise.

Money ranked high, as did quality-of-life issues such as flexible scheduling and reasonable work hours. But these factors were less critical than the intrinsic rewards.

Helistar doubles aircraft numbers in four years

BRUCE and Nicole Lilburn have owned and operated Helistar in Taupo for more than four years.

During that time they have doubled the number of aircraft and staff and developed a range of flights in response to passengers' requirements.

The company recently had an open day for b and b providers. Refreshments were provided as were flights. "Everyone hopped off the helicopter with huge grins; they were very impressed," Mr Lilburn tells us.

Spine-tingling times at Waitangi

VISITORS seeking an authentic cultural performance in a unique setting are finding it this summer at Waitangi Treaty Grounds, thanks to an extension of the entertainment programme.

The extensive coastal estate is considered a spine-tingling environment for the kapa haka and sound-and-light shows that have just restarted.

GM Jeanette Richardson says it is the reality of the location that adds a dimension no other show-place can offer.

“When you look out to the bay, past the performers, the beauty that was the backdrop to the signing of the Treaty is still intact and almost tangible.”

Contemporary

A panel completed auditions for the daily performances, and has since been working with performers to develop a showcase that honours tradition, but also displays strong, contemporary Maori culture.

Adds Mr Richardson: “For the last few years, we’ve had excellent reaction to the dramatic evening shows by Culture North that use modern staging to tell the story of New Zealand’s birthplace.

“These draw crowds to the grounds at sunset on four nights a week. Last year we began having our own group perform during the day, to make the Treaty Grounds a full, interactive, attraction every day of the week.

“The group has developed original dance and song to tell stories of Waitangi and the Bay of Islands.”

* The Culture North show runs in the Whare Runanga from 8pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

* The half-hour daytime cultural performances take place in the Waitangi Visitors’ Centre theatre, at 11.30am, 1.30pm and 2.30pm daily. Details: 021-658866, 09-4027437 or entmanager@waitangi.net.nz.

REINZ may sue QLDC

THE Real Estate Institute (REINZ) is reportedly seeking a court injunction to stop enforcement of a controversial Queenstown Lakes District Council rule that will potentially cost many short-term home renters thousands of dollars.

Under the district plan, houses rented for less than three months to groups of more than four should be subject to resource consents and-or higher mixed use or commercial rates.

Scenic tours, by Hoki

HOKITIKA Scenic Tours offer visitors drives through the Kokatahi/Kowhitirangi Valley farmlands providing clients with the opportunity to view the scenery lying between the Tasman Sea and Southern Alps.

Tours last three to three and a half hours and include historic commentary and local lore. There are also tours to crafts people, a modern dairy farm and gardens.

Refreshment stop at the Kokatahi Hotel, bush walks and tramps are available by arrangement. Flat rate tour is \$35 per person. Contact: Rachel Wright 025-2995238 or hoki_scenictours@yahoo.co.nz.

Jackon’s life on Film Archive screen

VISITORS seeking a glimpse into the mind of Wellington’s most famous son, Peter Jackson, can now watch his entire life’s work in one sitting...time permitting.

The Film Archive, formerly in the Film Centre on the corner of Jervois Quay and Taranaki St, has just set up shop in a new space designed with the public in mind. And with *Lord of the Rings* fever still fresh, staff are expecting an influx of international visitors with a penchant for Peter.

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Tourism & Lifestyle Opportunities

KERIKERI- leasehold opportunity, 9 self contained units, swimming pool, spa pool, citrus grove. 300 metres to shopping centre, affordable proposition. Good separate owners accomm. Rex Kempthorne 027 6015233.

BRISTOL MOTEL - 11 unit motel in Upper Hutt, ripe for refurbishment with further development potential. Lease expires 31 March 2005. John Welch 025 434 800

DEVELOPERS DREAM - prime central Paihia location, 1733sqm, excellent redevelopment site, 7 spacious units, plus owners accom. Auction 9th March, Auckland. Nicki Kempthorne 0274 541175.

COROMANDEL PENINSULA - Nine well presented motel units, comfortable owner's accommodation with great water views. Sloping landscaped site. Attractive seaside town offering white sandy beaches, boutique cafes and of course great fishing and diving. FHGC. Garry Paterson 021 341 447.

0800 BAYLEYS

www.bayleys.co.nz/tourism

