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Sky bumps up rates - by 150%!

SKY TV is to increase its rental rates for some accommodation providers by up to 150 percent. Business manager Grant McKenzie confirms: "Yes its true. But only for a small number of our motel/hotel customers." He adds: "For some time we've been questioned by many in the accommodation sector as to why there are some anomalies in Sky rates. We have situations where an independent hotel is paying a far higher Sky rate than a similar size property in a group/chain hotel..."

* SKY TV's subscription model is based on a higher discount for larger hotels than for smaller properties, says New Zealand Hotel Council (NZHC) CEO Jennie Langley. And that's why they are now the most affected by the proposed new rate card.

"It's all very well the company saying that these increases - well over 150 percent for some hotels - are being arbitrarily introduced to ensure there is a fair and equitable rate for all accommodation providers, but frankly, the theory doesn't wash."

NZHC members are outraged by the size of the increases as well as the fact that there has been no room for negotiation or recognition for the increasing number of subscriptions larger hotels have been taking out.

* MANZ CEO Michael Baines says it is good to see Sky TV simplifying its rate structure. "We would have preferred them to move the prices down to a lower structure rather than moving them up."

Overnight crafts packages

PACKAGES where visitors can take part in Maori wood and bone carving or weaving while overnighing in traditional-looking whare are being developed at Wairakei Terraces, Taupo.

Frontliners' day will be popular

FRONTLINERS passionate about tourism should attend the TRENZ Industry Showcase - a special two hour event on the Monday. To apply for a free ticket and for further information visit: www.trenz.co.nz.

* There are 18 new exhibitors at TRENZ this year. Nine are detailed in the full issue of *IT*.

Industry leaders to debate space travel

WHICH new innovations will change the face of travel and tourism? At the fifth Global Travel and Tourism Summit in New Delhi from April 8-10, Dr Michael Frenzel, Chairman of TUI AG, will outline key trends.

Pubs and restaurants closed over Easter?

MORE than 65 percent of pubs and restaurants probably closed during Easter, HANZ believes.

RTOs in sustainable tourism project

RTOs from Bay of Plenty, Nelson, Wanaka and Southland/Fiordland have been selected to take part in the government's \$1.2 million Environmentally Sustainable Tourism project. Tourism Minister Mark Burton and Environment Minister Marian Hobbs announced this on Wednesday.

The three-year project is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry for the Environment.

Fishing ballot a mockery?

SHREWD anglers have turned Fish and Game's controversial ballot system into a lucrative black market that only rich visitors can afford.

Stewart Island has great potential

ABOUT 475,000 people are thought to have visited Stewart Island last year, according to Venture Southland. Tourism and events manager Kate Watkinson says research indicates that 25 percent of the 1.9 million visitors to Southland went to Stewart Island.

She says there's potential for the group market as well as extending the FIT market with inclusive packages that feature transport, lunch, and activities.

Zero waste conference

MORE than 130 experts from Australia, South Africa, Botswana, Canada, the US and the UK, plus New Zealand, will converge on Kaikoura next week for the international zero waste conference - to discuss how to rid the planet of growing waste mountains.

Zero Waste New Zealand CEO Jo Knight says New Zealand has failed to deliver on reducing waste goals.

Trendwest opens Auckland office

TRENDWEST South Pacific, one of the region's leading timeshare developers, is celebrating its first five years in business by officially opening its first sales office in New Zealand.

It follows the recent launch of the company's first timeshare resort location in New Zealand, WorldMark Rotorua, and being awarded the management rights for The Residence development of luxury condominiums at Lake Tekapo.

Latham writes first dedicated textbook

THE first New Zealand focused tourism and hospitality textbook has just been written by Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) head of school, Elizabeth Latham.

Brash promises to build 25 campgrounds

NATIONAL Party leader Don Brash says the next National government will establish 25 new camping grounds on DoC land "to ensure future generations of New Zealanders continue to enjoy the classic Kiwi camping holiday."

Dr Brash made the announcement at Tropicana campground at Whangarei Heads. Tropicana is to close on April 15, after 33 years. Another 19 campgrounds have been closed in the past three years - as coastal and scenic properties are developed into apartment accommodation and holiday homes.

If National is serious about ensuring New Zealand families have somewhere to pitch a tent on holiday, it should support efforts to oppose the foreign buy-up of New Zealand's great outdoors, the Green Party says.

Code "won't save dolphins"

CLAIMS by Conservation Minister Chris Carter that DoC is setting up a code of conduct is cold comfort for Maui's dolphins, says Green co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimons. "It is absurd to suggest that large-scale dredging of the seafloor - with associated disruption of its food sources and pollution of its habitat and breeding grounds - could ever proceed, without sending Maui's dolphin on its way to extinction."

Businesses say Act has increased costs

ALMOST three quarters of 1,500 businesses contacted by Business NZ Survey say the Holidays Act has increased their costs.

Now Aussies are onto growing trees

AN Australian company has developed a programme that allows "carbon-neutral" travelling. Greenfleet's programme allows people to pay for trees to be planted to compensate for the carbon emissions that result from their travel. For \$40, Greenfleet, a non-profit environmental organisation, plants 17 native trees on the motorist's behalf as, when they grow, they will absorb the greenhouse gases that the average car produces in one year.

Minister gives i-SITES \$405,000

VISITOR satisfaction with their New Zealand experience is set to increase with extra funding for i-SITES.

The network has been given an extra \$405,000 over three years by Tourism Minister Mark Burton, to research visitor satisfaction and how visitor quality expectations are being met.

More than 500,000 international visitors use the centres every year. TNZ research shows they deliver more satisfaction to international visitors than any other information source. They are third in line as the most-used information source - behind only travel and guide books.

Aviation chief wants Co2 reductions

IS the aviation industry becoming more environmentally conscious? British Airways outgoing CEO Rod Eddington, has made a plea for the industry to collaborate on reducing carbon dioxide emissions and cut the impact that aircraft have on climate change.

Mr Eddington says it is in the industry's best interests to unite to develop an effective strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as promote its past environmental achievements.

If it does not, he warns, governments will view the industry as an easy target for taxes to fund environment projects.

Tips for TRENZ...

EXHIBITING at trade and consumer shows can be extremely rewarding - or very costly.

Best of Show MD and principal trainer Colin Green says that exhibitors must write their objectives down. Surprisingly, that is where the first hurdle lies...

"Everyone knows that having clear goals and objectives are keys to success in most things that we do. Yet studies show that less than 50 percent of exhibitors actually have appropriate objectives - and of those that do, 25 percent forget them on the show floor!"

He adds: "Verify this for yourself at any show you visit. Consider many of the activities you see and ask yourself just what is achieved?" He suggests trying this at TRENZ.

PM shoots down plans for Whenuapai

PM Helen Clark is pouring cold water on moves to reignite government interest in turning Whenuapai airbase into a commercial airport. The issue is just "not on our agenda."

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