

Van Asch and Brodie honoured

HENRY van Asch of AJ Hackett Bungy and New Zealand Fighter Pilots' Museum curator Ian Brodie have been made Officers of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Mr Brodie says he left school to earn money to go through university to be a film director. He loved the travel industry so much he stayed!

Over the years he has worked as a senior consultant with Walkers and Trans Tours Traveland and then as operations manager with Ansett Pioneer.

With AirNZ he worked in reservations on domestic groups and business travel. As well as being with the Wanaka Museum, he is a part time author with three books on *Lord Of The Rings* locations, which have sold a total of 275,000 copies.

Mr van Asch says he is delighted and surprised to have the honour. "It's very satisfying to see tourism recognised and I am very appreciative of my fantastic crew who do an amazing job every day."

Bring on the brands, says Ngan

As hotel room rates rise - and there is evidence of this starting - investment and new hotel chains will follow, according to Horwath Asia Pacific director Terry Ngan.

He says Auckland is missing out on international hotel brands, which will help to establish the city as a sophisticated international destination and gateway.

"You only need to look at the four to five hotel brands operating in Sydney and Melbourne to see the potential for Auckland.

"The Westin, Park and Grand Hyatt, Shangri-La, Marriott, Le Meridien and Radisson brands are some examples."

But, he adds, the key to attracting these brands will be much higher achieved room rates supported by commensurate service levels and room fitout. These are areas in which Auckland and other main centres need to work on. "It is pleasing, therefore, to see the Langham in Auckland become the first in New Zealand to be part of Leading Hotels of the World collection and also announce its proposed \$9 million refurbishment and expansion project. Such re-investment is vital for hotels to support their increases in room rates."

Hickton warns: we must stay ahead of trends

THE world is becoming increasingly aware of what New Zealand has to offer - but so are our competitors, TNZ CEO George Hickton will tell media representatives at TRENZ next week.

"New Zealand continues to win

awards - for its marketing, for its website - for all the tools that we are using to push the New Zealand message. But it is not enough. We must stay ahead of the trends."

Mr Hickton tells *IT* that increasing competition from other countries, and ever-changing technology, is putting the pressure on New Zealand.

"With the period of global uncertainty around safety over, many travellers are beginning to look again at the US, Asia and Europe. With the massive uptake in the use of digital cameras and mobile phones over the last few years, the word on and (over)

Pages Past

TEN years ago in IT...

AN AnsettNZ Dash 8 crashed near Palmerston North killing three of 21 passengers on board.

UNNECESSARILY negative. That's Associate Opposition tourism spokesman Damien O'Connor's opinion of Forest and Bird's submission to DoC.

He disagrees that tourism has nothing to offer the conservation estate.

It is an industry which, if well managed, can contribute greatly to public knowledge, education and awareness of the environment - and as an avenue for funding the protection of natural and scenic values.

NZTB (now TNZ) isn't into mass tourism. Instead, it's targeting the quality visitor, according to PR manager Chris Ryan. He this week announced that the board no longer sees the target of three million visitors by 2000 as a priority.

THE Tongariro World Heritage Trek is a new series of walks to be launched by the Grand Chateau and Ruapehu Alpine Lifts.

FORMER NZTB manager Germany Trevor Hall has been named Tourism Wellington's first CEO.

OPPOSITION tourism spokesman Ross Robertson has attacked AirNZ for its US\$300,000 TV campaign for promoting Australia ahead of New Zealand.

DOC is introducing a booking system on the Routeburn Track for the first time.

THE slowing in the increase in Asian arrivals continues for the fifth month. ITOC president Greig Ritchie says it adds fuel to concerns that a major downturn is on the way.

NZTIA (now TIANZ) has 14 desired outcomes listed in its latest business plan.

They include the desire that no politician or government advisor should advocate a new or changed policy which affects the industry without consulting it first.

Hickton: we must stay ahead of trends

(from pg1) images of New Zealand travel increasingly quickly."

He adds: "We can turn this to our advantage. It is well-recognised that we have a marketing point of difference through the 100%Pure campaign. But we need to continue to work harder and smarter. We need to utilise technology to appeal to our potential visitors. And when they are here, we must have experiences and activities of a high quality to offer to those people, tourism experiences that they will remember, and will recommend to their friends and family when they return home."

TNZ, ITOC to help Chinese agents

TNZ is grabbing the opportunity to talk to 20 buyers from China who are in New Zealand this week. They will meet, together with six ITOC China portfolio members.

The board says it plans to work with ITOC members to expand the group's knowledge of New Zealand. They will help them with itinerary-building, on including a variety of regions in their itineraries, and emphasising the importance of including quality products.

"TNZ is focusing on trade training in the China market as a powerful way of beginning to change the sort of holiday these visitors have in New Zealand," says CEO George Hickton. "We don't often get the opportunity to sit down with a group such as this in NZ. It is especially timely just before TRENZ, and we are hoping it will give them a better understanding of the products that they liaise with at the event."

Tamaki to open luxury travel show

THE inaugural New Zealand Luxury Travel Show opens at Huntley House, Christchurch, tomorrow (Saturday) and closes next day.

There are 24 exhibitors and 20 buyers. Among the sellers are Air National, Boutique Hotels and Lodges, Clearwater Charters, Eichardts, Helipro, Hermitage Mount Cook Hotel, The Hilton Hotel, Peppers Lodges of Rotorua and Martinborough, Select Hotels, Solitaire Lodge, The Lodge At Paratiho Farms, The Spire and New World Safaris. Buyers are from the US, Australia, Germany and the UK.

The event is to be opened by Tamaki Heritage director Mike Tamaki.

Organiser Neil Pollett says the show is filling a strong demand to offer a luxury focused product preview to overseas buyers. Details: 021-21572432 or enquiry@luxurytravelshow.co.nz.

Only 1% of resource consents declined

THE number of resource consents processed to a decision last year increased 11.5 percent to 54,658. Less than one percent was declined, according to Ministry of the Environment GM Sue Powell.



Legally speaking - with Brookfields Lawyers

OUR coastline is a key resource for tourism and is increasingly being recognised as a fragile one. In response to that, a Bill amending the Marine Reserves Act 1971 is before Parliament.

It will bring significant changes to the law relating to marine reserves. DoC, which administers this Act, has stated that it has a vision to “create a network of marine reserves where the habitats and their life are left natural and undisturbed by people.”

The new Bill will allow greater flexibility in establishing marine reserves and greater powers in controlling the activities that occur within them.

As currently drafted it aims to allow the creation of marine reserves for both “rare” and “typical” marine ecosystems, while retaining the fundamental principle that people are free to enter and enjoy protected areas. This is a significant change from the current regime, which essentially only allowed marine reserves to be created for the purposes of scientific study. The process for creating new reserves is also to be streamlined.

Changes

There are two other significant changes from the 1971 legislation. The first is an increase in the outer limit for setting up marine reserves from the current 12-mile limit to the 200-mile outer limit of the exclusive economic zone. This proposal may well have an effect on commercial operators who have in the past used these areas.

Secondly, there will be no fishing within marine reserves. Under the current legislation, non-commercial fishing within limits and conditions may be permitted. Significant new “teeth” are proposed in that regard with penalties of up to six months imprisonment or up to \$250,000 for commercial purposes and up to three months imprisonment or up to \$100,000 otherwise. This compares with a recent fine of \$800 issued against a man on May 27 in the district court for illegally taking shellfish and crayfish from a marine reserve.

We can expect many more marine reserves to be established over the next 10 years, and a far stronger approach to enforcement adopted. This will have significant ramifications for the tourism industry, potentially both beneficial and adverse. Details: Nicholas Wright, Partner, Brookfields.

Passengers say driver asleep at wheel

POLICE, Land Transport New Zealand and his boss want to talk to a bus driver who reportedly fell asleep at the wheel with 12 passengers on board as he drove from Dunedin to Christchurch one night last week. He was woken by one passenger after what was described as “a trip from hell.”

Matiu Tamati says: “His head was down and his eyes were shut. He was asleep.”

Mr Tamati was roused from a snooze about midnight when he sensed the vehicle slowing down, and then speeding up. The coach is said to have drifted into the opposite lane several times. Mr Tamati called police. The coach company’s owner arrived and took over from the driver.

De Jong advises airports on service

AIRPORTS must embrace customer service, too, says PATA president and CEO Peter de Jong.

He has reminded Airport Council International members of some of the inconveniences travellers face as they experience the process of checking in and boarding aircraft. “The elimination of these small irritants can be the difference between an OK airport experience and a great one.”

He added: “An airport is often our first and last impression of a destination and that carries a big responsibility.”

If they want “a boarding pass to profitability and success” they must join all travel and tourism stakeholders in embracing a commitment to service excellence.

Zooming in on zoo animals

ZOOM is a new range of tours at Auckland Zoo, which allow groups of five to 10 visitors to get up close with the animals.

Participants are able to join zoo keepers as they enter a tiger’s den and then meet the tiger up close, help a keeper wash down an elephant, or hand-feed Madagascan ring-tailed lemurs and South American cotton-topped tamarins.

The zoo is involved in conservation programmes and plays a key role in breeding recovery projects for threatened and endangered species. A big portion of Zoom profits go to the conservation fund to help continue the projects.

Zoom is run every day and there are a range of tours. Details: www.aucklandzoo.co.nz or 09-3604700.

DoC calls for whale watch

DOC wants anyone who sees southern right whales to let it know immediately. It is also issuing suggestions of how to identify the beasts of the deep and how to approach them. Call: 0800-362468.

Routeburn in National Geo's top 10

THE Routeburn Track has been named as one of the top 10 hikes in the world by *National Geographic Adventure Magazine*.

Also on the list are the Mount Everest Base Camp Trek in Nepal and the trek up Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro. Author Peter Potterfield says the 32-km three-day tramp is an epic trip through and over some of "New Zealand's conservation jewels."

In the magazine, which has a readership of almost three million people worldwide, he adds: "The Routeburn...is less crowded than its world-famous neighbour, the Milford Track, and the scenic payoffs along the Routeburn's alpine stretches far surpass those of the lower, often cloudier Milford," he writes.

DoC area manager Greg Lind says it is welcome recognition for a track that lives in the shadow of the

Milford, although staff encounter many visitors who travel to New Zealand just to walk the Routeburn. About 13,000 to it each year.

Lodge closes in protest at DoC poison

TE Mahoerangi, the only backpacker lodge on the two day Nydia Track, Marlborough, has closed for six months - because DoC is placing the poison 1080 in the area this month.

Lodge director Steve McClellan is angry that efforts to keep the area toxin-free have been thwarted.

But DoC programme manager Pete Brady says the bait isn't being laid on the track.

"People would need to go off the track to encounter the 1080, and even if they pick it up they are in no danger. For an adult to die from it they'd need to eat about 20 pellets."

ADVERT

Leadership Role in Tourism



AREA MANAGER – STEWART ISLAND / BLUFF

We are seeking a business leader for an exceptional management opportunity in the tourism industry. Owned by Fiordland Travel Ltd (Real Journeys), this significant role offers a fantastic opportunity to build the business of Stewart Island Experience.

We operate a range of tourism services, from ferry transport between Bluff and Stewart Island, to coach transfers, land based tours, Paterson Inlet cruises, semi-sub cruises, and rental vehicle hire.

As the Area Manager, you will be responsible for:

- * Developing new and existing business
- * Making contributions to product development and strategy
- * Directing and controlling all operational activities
- * Providing strong leadership and development of staff
- * Effective financial management

Reporting to the Chief Executive, this executive role would suit a dynamic and highly motivated individual looking to make an impact within the tourism industry. As a demanding, semi-autonomous role, you will also need to provide an innovative approach and look for ways to enhance and develop our customers' experience. Your sound leadership, financial management, and operational skills will be complemented by a strong customer service ethic. An affinity with Stewart Island and previous experience in the tourism industry is preferred. This position offers the opportunity to live locally or in Invercargill.

For a position description and application form, please visit www.realjourneys.co.nz or phone Kerry Hood, Human Resources Manager, on (03) 442 4823.

Applications close 23 June 2005.

Jasons in \$3.6M share float

JASONS Travel Media is seeking to raise \$3,600,000 through the offer of 7,200,000 new ordinary shares at 50 cents a share - and aims to list on the NZAX.

The company has more than 5,800 tourism firms as its customers and reaches more than 12 million travellers a year with its print and web information. Jasons has built a position as a market critical media channel between domestic and overseas travellers, and tourism businesses.

The company describes itself as an innovator throughout its history. "Jasons has carefully planned and implemented an aggressive growth strategy. This has included a very significant investment in staff, new products, technology and distribution channels." It adds: "The company has emerged as a leading edge, dual media publisher."

Jasons Travel Media was started in 1967 by its current publisher and CEO John Sandford.

The Sandford family is retaining a significant shareholding and will continue its involvement in Jasons' strategic direction.

Adds the company: "This share offer is a unique opportunity to participate in the future growth and development of a New Zealand media company

operating in a dynamic industry. At 50 cents the shares are selling at an EBITDA multiple of six, a normalised price earning multiple of 12 and offer investors a nine percent gross dividend yield."

China seminar to visit four centres

A seminar on China is being organised by the Asia New Zealand Foundation and Export New Zealand. It's at the Copthorne Central Hotel, Christchurch on June 20, the Intercontinental Hotel, Wellington, on June 21, the Hotel on Devonport, Tauranga, on the Wednesday and the following day at the Hyatt Auckland. Details: wellington@exportnewzealand.org.nz.

McIntyre broadens Walter campaign

DESTINATION Rotorua Tourism Marketing assistant GM Ruth McIntyre has taken control of this year's domestic "Walter" promotion and broadened the scope to include families, couples, adventure seekers and short break weekenders.

She is hopeful that industry buy-in will enable the campaign to be extended to include billboards, internet, radio and magazine advertising rather than just print and TV as last year.

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Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in Tourism Management Victoria Management School, Victoria University of Wellington

The Victoria Management School invites applications for a position in the Tourism Management Group led by Professor Douglas Pearce. Candidates should have well-developed teaching and research interests in tourism or a related discipline. The appointee will undertake undergraduate and postgraduate teaching on the Bachelor and Master of Tourism Management programmes, postgraduate research supervision, and develop a strong research programme.

Appointment at a senior level will also require a willingness and an ability to undertake administrative and leadership responsibilities. Preference may be given to applicants with expertise in one or more of the following areas: tourism management, tourism marketing, tourism policy and planning, quantitative methods. A relevant PhD and/or industry experience and evidence of administrative ability and academic leadership would be an advantage.

Applications close 22 July 2005.

Please quote ref FCA 0531.

For further information, please visit www.jobs.vuw.ac.nz or contact Jan Hectors, Human Resources Administrator, tel: 0-4-463 5738 or email: jan.ectors@vuw.ac.nz

Victoria University of Wellington is an EEO employer and actively seeks to meet its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi

Farmers' market attracts national attention - but retailers indifferent

KERIKERI'S farmers' market is attracting national attention with stories on the weekly event appearing in three national magazines.

But while some cafes and retail businesses are taking advantage of the new flow of people, there is a reluctance among some to open their shops at the weekend.

Kerikeri District Business Association president Trixie Newton says owner operators need to decide how many days a week they wish to work.

Bay of Islands Food Group chairperson Lyn Barnes says it is vital the market builds on its achievements and remains authentic. "This means only locally (Northland) grown food, produce and value-added goods can be sold at the market; stallholders must sell only their own produce - there is no retailing. Only the grower or producer or an appropriate representative can sell from behind their stalls."

* Ms Barnes is involved in setting up a national association and network of farmers' markets which will be launched in Hawke's Bay on June 20.

AirNZ puts on extra flights

AIRNZ is putting on 84 extra domestic flights - or 9,167 seats - for the duration of the Lions tour.

Southland promotes tourism at Fieldays

SOUTHLAND'S attractions, opportunities, lifestyle and rural strengths will feature at the New Zealand National Agricultural Fieldays at Mystery Creek from next Wednesday. Venture Southland is joining local company Farming in Southland to attend the four-day event, which is the biggest agricultural trade show in the southern hemisphere.

Venture Southland strategic/enterprise projects co-ordinator Rachael Hoffman-Spence says the combined site will incorporate display material that focused on Southland's professional services, farming conditions, rural real estate, climate, migration - and tourism.

Minister to open bigger, better Chateau

THE \$7 million, 39-room Bay View Chateau Tongariro extension has been completed just in time for the ski season. It's to be opened by Tourism Minister Mark Burton on July 8.

GM Kathy Guy says: "We are pleased to be able to have a facility that has blended and kept with the historical integrity of the original building. Many people that have visited the hotel recently have asked when the new wing is to be built, not realising that it is completed."

Bayview International, owners since 1991, have recognised the importance of owning a national icon and are committed to reinvesting in the Chateau. They have invested \$15 million in the property.

ADVERT

EVENTS MANAGER **Tourism Eastland**

**Tourism Eastland is seeking an innovative,
Qualified professional for a new role as
Events Manager.**

Tourism Eastland Society Inc is the official regional tourism organization for Gisborne and the Eastland Region. It is a membership based organization that has a contract with the Gisborne District Council to undertake a number of services.

Your focus will be to manage and promote a number of key events throughout the year. You will also assist with other smaller events and co-ordinate the annual events calendar. The role will include management of the event budget and to seek funding assistance where applicable.

We are looking for a highly motivated and organised individual with proven event management experience. You must have excellent communication and relationship management and be able to work well in a team environment.

To apply please send your resume with covering letter to:

**Tourism Eastland
PO Box 170, 209 Grey Street
Gisborne
Applications close:
June 17, 2005
www.gisbornenz.com**

History for sale

CORSTORPHINE House - Dunedin's luxury home away from home for the rich and famous - is for sale. The private hotel has been on the market for more than a year, but has not been advertised locally, confirms owner Irina Francken.

"There are some people in New Zealand who might be interested, but we think our buyers will be from overseas." She believes the property is worth more than \$2 million.

It has seven themed suites, including Egyptian, Moroccan, French, art deco and Japanese.

The hotel has been home to movie star Gwyneth

Paltrow, the Prince of Wales and Governor-General Dame Silvia Cartwright.

...and in need of protection

SKIPPERS Canyon, Queenstown, could become a protected area as part of the Historical Places Trust's 50th anniversary.

Trust Queenstown spokeswoman Jackie Gillies says the national body had asked all regions throughout New Zealand to help celebrate the year with a new registration in their area.

"We chose Skippers Canyon because it needs the most attention and because it's one of the most important historical spots in New Zealand."

ADVERT

Policy Analyst

Ministry of Tourism, Wellington

- * **Are you interested in economic development issues relating to the tourism sector?**
- * **Can you conceptualise and develop creative solutions for complex problems?**
- * **Do you have a passion for tourism policy?**

The Ministry of Tourism is the Government's lead advisor on tourism policy. We provide policy advice, deliver tourism research and statistics, and manage and monitor the Government's investments in tourism. Our current research and policy frameworks are focused on implementing the New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2010, which sets out a strategic vision for the development of the tourism sector. We also play a fundamental role in encouraging the incorporation of tourism perspectives across the public sector.

By joining our dynamic and diverse team, you will be working at the leading edge of tourism policy, and you will have the opportunity to make a major contribution to the development of the tourism sector.

Policy issues we currently work on include:

- * Addressing economic development challenges faced by the tourism sector, including skill shortages and labour market issues
- * Assessing tourism infrastructure gaps and advising the government on how to address these
- * Addressing public land management issues including the use of the conservation estate and tourism's interaction with the environment
- * Working with local government on tourism management capability, and with industry on cultural tourism product development
- * Increasing the quality of Maori involvement in the tourism industry
- * Assessing the nature of the Crown's investment in tourism marketing and reporting on Tourism New Zealand's performance

We are looking for a person with proven policy analysis skills, New Zealand government experience, local or central, and the ability to build and maintain effective relationships with tourism stakeholders, industry representatives, Ministers and peers. You will have a tertiary qualification in economics or another relevant discipline, and appropriate experience within the tourism sector.

The Ministry of Tourism is a semi-autonomous body within the Ministry of Economic Development.

For a job description and application form please refer to our website:

www.med.govt.nz/about/jobs Applications and CV, quoting vacancy number 05/72 should be emailed to helen.wilson@med.govt.nz no later than 17 June 2005.

Coach ban could see Wanaka bypassed

WANAKA could be left off the itinerary of hundreds of coach trips a year if the Queenstown Lakes District Council bans heavy vehicles from using the Crown Range road.

Bus and Coach Association (BCA) executive officer Mark Stockdale says his members want coaches exempt, or at least, permitted to travel the route during the peak season when the likelihood of road damage occurring is low. If they're not, most say they may simply stop visiting Wanaka.

Mr Stockdale says 313 coaches travel to Wanaka in the peak September to May season, taking about 11,550 passengers.

"This will have an economic impact on Wanaka that will outweigh the possible savings on road maintenance the council will make."

The sealing of the road was important in opening access between the two resorts, he points out.

It allows people to stay in Queenstown but travel to Treble Cone and Cardrona to ski.

Cr Chris Blackford says he does not want the road becoming a regular route for long-distance tour buses. Companies that want to take the route could get lighter, two-axle vehicles.

But Mr Stockdale says most coaches, although three-

axle, are fitted with air suspension that is kinder on the roads.

The size of the Queenstown tourism market along with New Zealand's strict axle weight limits means that few tour companies can sensibly operate smaller two-axle coaches.

Kawau Kat adds another service

KAWAU Kat Cruises' Auckland - Orapiu - Coromandel service is adding Friday evening to existing Wednesday and Sunday day trips.

Previously a weekender or short stay in Coromandel without a car was not a conceivable option.

But Tourism Coromandel and local operators like Strongmans Coachlines, Driving Creek Railway and Waiiau Waterworks are working with the ferry company to make this service a long-term reality.

The company says its Sunday and Wednesday services have been building interest. Now accommodation providers can hope for a piece of the action with weekends, short and long stay options a practical option. Details: 0800-888006 or www.kawaukat.co.nz.

* Kawau Kat Cruises has been operating 12 years offering services around the Hauraki Gulf and beyond. It has four catamarans.

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guide
Know before you go!

AREA MANAGER – CHRISTCHURCH & CANTERBURY

The exciting position of Area Manager has become available for the right person to champion the iTAG Visitor Guide to its full potential in the Christchurch & Canterbury area. iTAG is no ordinary tourism publishing business with a progressive attitude to be the best visitor guide in New Zealand.

To succeed in this role you will:

- * Take responsibility for a busy operation.
- * Have excellent and proven sales skills and abilities.
- * Understand the dynamics of tourism marketing.
- * Be able to communicate well at all management levels.
- * Be self motivated and want to make a difference in the company.
- * Take an interest in our clients and their businesses.
- * Be very organised with an excellent eye for detail.
- * Have a confident, outgoing personality.
- * Have a hands on approach and be prepared to put in extra effort for extra reward.

iTAG offers a competitive remuneration package with bonus rewards and use of a company vehicle.

To apply please reply to: Area Manager Position , iTAG Visitor Guides, PO Box 1235 Queenstown or email slakes@itag.co.nz Applications close 5pm, June 15th 2005 with employment to start early in July 2005

On the move...

SHOTOVER Jet CEO and Ngai Tahu Tourism boss Adrian Januskiewicz has resigned after four years in the job. He's leaving in three months to start his own business locally. He'd like to remain at the helm of Destination Queenstown.

B.K.Chiu has been appointed MD of CDL Hotels. He was previously VP and MD for Asia with Merisant, a global company which makes and sells low calorie tabletop sweeteners. Mr Chui studied at Massey University and worked for the BNZ before joining Monsanto in Singapore.

MILLBROOK GM Rob House is leaving to become CEO of Terrace Downs, Christchurch. Mr House has been with Millbrook for the past two years and he leaves next month.

AFTER seven years as GM of Hawke's Bay Tourism Hamish Lowry leaves at the end of the month. "It has been a very enjoyable and rewarding role but it is time to move on to new challenges."

He adds: "Hawke's Bay has begun to establish itself in the international marketplace in recent years and this has built on our traditional domestic visitor base."

Factors which have contributed to this success include a unified regional marketing push, ongoing council funding support and the development of outstanding attractions and accommodation. It had been a collaborative effort.

"The product offering has been critical to our regional growth and Hawke's Bay has been able to maintain that 'wow' factor with visiting trade, media and consumers alike" Mr Lowry adds. "The future looks extremely bright for Hawke's Bay," he says "The recent establishment of the Hawke's Bay Inc umbrella agency will help drive improved strategic alignment between tourism and economic development."

BLAIR Deasy is to become manager of Skyline Gondola Restaurant and Luge, Queenstown, from July 11. He has a background in hotel management in Australia and New Zealand and is moving from Melbourne, where he is operations manager at the 220-room St Kilda Road Parkview Hotel.

\$120M whale watching business under threat?

WHALE watching off Kaikoura may be under threat if a decision allowing Japan to increase its whaling is made on June 20.

The International Fund for Animal Welfare highlights the importance of whale and dolphin watching in New Zealand, with 425,000 visits nationally a year, which are worth \$120 million to the economy.

Kaikoura electorate Green Party candidate Steffan Browning has called on Kaikoura to protest against Japan's intention to include humpback whaling in its "scientific" harvest.

"People are scathing of the Japanese Government's farcical 'scientific' culling of whales for the Japanese supermarkets."

Whale watching is a money earner all over the world and is a major drawcard for visitors to Kaikoura and Picton.

A scientific committee of the International Whaling Commission meets in Korea on June 20 to decide on Japan's request for an increase in whaling. It has applied to extend its whaling in the Ross Sea for 80 each of humpback and fin whales, and to almost double the number of minke whales to 850.

* Norway has continually defied the ban, whaling commercially since 1993 and is now also using the loophole of "scientific" hunting.

* Whale watching is worth \$120 million to New Zealand with 425,000 people going either whale or dolphin watching last year, double the number in 1988, according to the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

\$5M chairlift working at Treble Cone

TREBLE Cone says its new \$ 5 million Saddle Chairlift is now working.

It is a fixed grip quad and positioned from the bottom of the existing double chairlift to an area known as Tim's Table (1958m) just short of the summit. The chairlift is 930 metres in length, and transports 1,800 people an hour. It has a vertical elevation of 370 metres, one of the highest in New Zealand.

Area manager Jackie Van der Voort says it is the biggest opening of new ski terrain in over 15 years in New Zealand.

Guests can now enjoy access to 45 hectares of intermediate cruising advanced terrain. The planned opening is June 23.

Mainland RTOs unite

FOR the first time all 10 South Island RTOs have co-operated to produce a comprehensive brochure and website:

www.visitsouthisland.co.nz.

The 24-page brochure is aimed at the long-haul interactive traveller market.

Christchurch and Canterbury Marketing initiated the idea and drove the co-operative campaign. GM marketing Jason Hill says:

"At a number of levels, this brochure represents real progress. Our research tells us that prospective visitors focus on New Zealand first, North or South Island second, with individual regions a distant third."

He adds: "There are huge advantages to this level of co-operation between local tourism bodies - consistency of message is one, shared costs is another. It also ensures that those smaller tourism regions, who don't have significant funding for international promotion but who have a lot to offer international visitors, gain international profile".

CCM international marketing manager Blair Hartland says the brochure answers a long-held demand from consumers and travel trade around the world.

Mixed opinion on government's tourism efforts

THERE'S mixed opinion on whether the present government has "put its money where its mouth is" when it comes to tourism, according to a straw poll we conducted with *IT* readers. About 34 percent of those who replied agreed with this, although 25 percent disagreed.

Labour is considered to be the most beneficial party for tourism, with National a close second.

And if an election were called today 31.25 percent of respondents indicated they would vote National, 16.6 percent Labour, and six percent NZ First.

As to who, in an ideal world, should be Minister of Tourism current incumbent Mark Burton was first choice followed equally by former minister Murray McCully, former National tourism spokeswoman Katherine Rich and former Labour tourism spokesman Damien O'Connor.

Comments on whether the current government has "put its money where its mouth is" include:

* "No. It's put my money where its mouth is."

* "It's more 'put its mouth where it's money is' i.e. devouring the taxation proceeds from tourism and not reinvesting it to maintain the momentum. It has an attitude contrary to the principles of sustainability."

* "The government has put its money in the piggy bank and its greatest achievement has been to do nothing."

* "No. They have had very cunning ways to get around spending and putting things off until after the elections."

* "Yes. Seeing sense over border charges."

* "Yes. But not always to the benefit of tourism."

* "Yes. But its government agencies have not implemented."

* "Only because it is election year. Despite having a

Ministry of Tourism, their piecemeal approach to marketing for the largest forex earner is insulting to the private enterprises that make up our most dynamic industry."

* "Yes. The continuation of funding for TNZ and the latest increase must help." "Perhaps more effort into speeding up airport processing times would be a tangible improvement...the doubling of working holiday visas is greater..."

* "Yes. The doubling of working holiday visas is great."

To the question: "**what is the current government's greatest achievements and why**" replies include:

* "Pulling the wool over people's eyes that they are doing something positive but are actually creating a very government-dependent society which cannot think for itself."

* "Putting money into research."

* "Instigating initiatives such as cultural tourism development and environmental tourism development, but not enough resources or regions covered."

* "Expenditure and emphasis on the arts."

Which political party is the most beneficial to the industry?

* "National's policies are the most likely to benefit the industry because they encourage private enterprise."

* "Greens because they support the things that bring people to New Zealand."

* "National because they understand the cost of running a business."

* "Act because they support lower taxes and less bureaucracy."

* "National because it benefits SMEs."

* "Labour because others talk. Labour does it."

CCM launches packages for Mount Hutt

CHRISTCHURCH and Canterbury Marketing has launched two winter ski, car hire and accommodation packages for Mount Hutt.

A city package is also being promoted for the Applaud Arts Festival in July. The deals are available in conjunction with the Andrew Mehrtens "Mehrts Visit Christchurch Now" campaign at www.visitchristchurchnow.co.nz.

* A \$7.5 million investment at Mount Hutt has added new lifts, runs and trails to the mountain known for the best snow and longest, most consistent season. Mehrtens' ski packages including accommodation and the city, two-day ski passes and three days' Europcar hire are \$379 per person twin-share, staying two nights at Methven Resort Hotel and one at Rydges, in central Christchurch; or \$570 staying at Terrace Downs High Country Resort, and Crowne Plaza in the city.

The Applaud Arts Festival package includes two nights at the Crowne Plaza, a performance ticket, car hire and a punt on the Avon for \$267 per person.

Breakfasts, use of hotel facilities and late checkouts are included. Extra ski days can be added for \$144 per person, or \$220 per person.

"With a huge investment in new lifts and new runs Mount Hutt is looking great," says CCM New Zealand marketing manager Chris Griffin.

Key features are a new express six-seater high-speed chairlift that accesses the top of the field, opening up a 672 metre vertical drop, a new 140 metre magic carpet for easy gliding onto the slopes, and a new 1.2km novice trail.

Canterbury boasts 14 ski areas - reputedly more than anywhere in the southern hemisphere. Some 10 are within two and a half hours' drive of Christchurch International Airport.

Student volunteers for Barmy Army

THE International Travel College of New Zealand (ITC) is providing up to 50 students to work with Backpackers World Travel, Base Backpackers, Auckland City Backpacker and Travel Zone, who are handling the inbound travel arrangements for Barmy Army supporters.

ITC students were selected as a result of their involvement with the America's Cup challenge in 2000 and 2003.

Backpackers World Travel product and operations manager Cath Atkinson says: "ITC was my first choice for student volunteers for the 2005 Lions tour. I have full confidence in the ability and passion of the ITC staff and students. With their help I am sure that the upcoming Barmy Army supporters programme will be a huge success."

The ITC Barmy Army Volunteers aroused media interest as soon as they arrived in Rotorua.

The students enjoyed many of the fun tourism activities from black water rafting and skydiving to the hot pools.

Northland comes up with 90 winter packages!

NINETY special offers and winter packages are being offered by Northland operators on the region's website: www.northlandnz.com.

The site was launched in December and has the same web designers as the award-winning TNZ site.

The "Winter Specials" section has everything from accommodation in cosy seaside cottages and B and Bs to gourmet food and spa packages in Kaipara and Whangarei districts, 90 Mile Beach, Hokianga and the Bay of Islands.

Destination Northland manager Robyn Bolton says the operators were offered the chance to be part of the promotion free of charge. This has meant the appearance of small, hidden away treasures that might not normally have the chance to promote themselves nationally.

She adds: "We are delighted with the new www.northlandnz.com website, and the opportunities it provides to promote Northland as a year-round destination. It's a win-win. The site, which receives around 250 visitors a day, provides Northland operators with the vehicle to promote their packages over the shoulder/low season, while New Zealanders can access great deals for a winter getaway to New Zealand's warmest region."

It's even more relaxing at Waiwera!

WAIWERA Infinity Thermal Spa Resort has added another relaxing dimension to Auckland's most visited water destination. Reputedly New Zealand's oldest spa, long renowned for its rejuvenating and restorative pools, on-site café, and international-standard wellness spa, it has now opened accommodation, giving visitors the opportunity to stay overnight. New luxury self-catering units are adjacent to the resort and offer double and single bedrooms with beds featuring state-of-the-art therapeutic sleep systems. Overnight costs \$175 plus GST.

Resort GM Suzanne Booth says: "Guests can relax in their private accommodation, having enjoyed a leisurely soak or swim in our 26 hot mineral water pools, watched their children play on the numerous water slides, taken-in a movie from the comfort of our purpose-built movie pool or simply been pampered and indulged at our wellness spa.

"Our wellness spa offers everything from beauty treatments to his and her, mother and daughter and bridal packages. State-of-the-art health technology is also available including infrared saunas which are twice as effective as standard saunas, and APS therapy which has been used to successfully treat conditions ranging from rheumatoid and osteo arthritis to chronic backache and migraines." Conference or wedding facilities can cater for up to 80 people. Details: www.waiwera.co.nz.

Skyline makes yet another record profit

SKYLINE Enterprises made a record \$17 million profit in the last March year, up 20 percent on the previous 12 months. This was on operating revenue of \$34.2 million, up 9.2 percent.

Skyline has delivered an increased result for seven of the past eight years. Last year dividends were cut during a battle for control of Christchurch Casino.

Chairman Barry Thomas says the result is "outstanding" due in part to strong tourism numbers and a good economy.

Results for the Christchurch Casino were disappointing which Mr Thomas puts down to management disruption and anti-smoking legislation. A downturn at the Leisure Lodge, Dunedin, was due to increased competition.

Gondola passenger numbers were up in Queenstown and Rotorua at 540,000 and 425,000 respectively. The Crowne Plaza, Christchurch, and Queenstown's Blue Peaks Lodge enjoyed high occupancies. Skyline interests in the Dunedin and SkyCity Queenstown casinos were "pegged back a little" and "steady" respectively.

Concern over cableways

IN DoC's new rules for national parks cableways are no longer allowed to "provide a suitable form of access in special circumstances" but may only be installed and used in "amenity" areas.

The Queenstown-Milford gondola proposal could therefore be stymied if it is not allowed such an area in Fiordland National Park.

Skyline Enterprises plans a \$100 million gondola system from the head of Lake Wakatipu to the Milford road. It is working on the project with Ngai Tahu Developments under the name Skytrail.

It will know in six weeks if DoC is agreeable to such a designation. DoC Southland spokesman Martin Rodd says granting it would be a major change and would represent a "very permissive" move in favour of development.

“Astonishing” drop in Japanese arrivals hits business

SOUTHERN Travel Holdings warns it is unlikely to meet its prospectus forecasts because of an “astonishing” drop in Japanese arrivals. Chairman Ross Keenan says numbers have slowed significantly since October. While overall numbers are still up on a year-by-year basis the latest decrease has been “quite astonishing.”

“When we went to market we were seeing growth of up to 70 percent. Overall growth since the new year has been more like less than five percent.”

Wholesalers are pointing to increased travel to China and South East Asia -and the strength of our dollar.

“It shows that tourism is a very perishable thing,” Mr Keenan is quoted as saying.

Field trips planned for heritage confab
WORKSHOP sessions and field trips at the National Heritage Conference in Napier and Hastings from October 3-6 will focus on Maori heritage, planning and resource management, economic development and conservation, giving practical opportunities to share knowledge, discuss trends and build partnerships. Details: Julie Ellis 04-4708066, jellis@historic.org.nz or www.heritageconference.co.nz.

\$1M wanted for surf reef

WELLINGTON City Council is being asked to provide \$1 million towards the cost of building an artificial surf reef at Lyall Bay. This is despite the Lyall Bay Trust securing a \$500,000 funding deal four weeks ago. The reef, which has been planned for the last five years, is expected to cost \$1.55 million.

Mana takes over Hamill

MANA Adventures, a company which has been offering Rotorua visitors guided kayak and waka trips for the past year, has taken over Hamill Adventures at the Rotorua lakefront.

The range of options will now include carrying up to 25 passengers in a 7.8m tri-hull, U-drive pontoons, fishing charter, pedal boats, scooters and bikes.

Joint venture could see 3,000 working holidaymakers

NEW Zealand Job Search (NZJS) - a specialist traveller's employment agency - and IEP (International Exchange Programmes) have announced a joint venture which will potentially see over 3,000 working holiday travellers placed in the workforce here.

IEP provides a worldwide network of support for working holidaymakers. This offshore presence coupled with NZJS's experience in the New Zealand employment market, and the joint venture's latest initiative which guarantees working holiday travellers a job offer, will help to position New Zealand as a favourable destination for an extended work experience.

There will be two editions of IT 550 next week. The first will be out on Monday night followed by a second on Friday.

See you at TRENZ!



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