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Challenges ahead - but it's all cyclical, says Yeo

WE all forget that tourism is a cyclical business, says ITOC CEO Paul Yeo. "Recently we're forgotten this because the wheels have been on a longer revolution than normal and we have just reached a plateau. The difference is that we are at a higher elevation than before."

He adds: "We have done darned well, but the competition is hot. I don't think we are necessarily doing anything wrong. It's just that the moon's not in our quarter - but we will get through. I see lots of positives long-term. Short term is something we can tactically work through but mid to long-term is still as positive."

Mr Yeo says the words "challenging" and "soft" are the ones he most hears from the industry for the coming season.

Strong dollar for another year?

TOURISM will remain comparatively weak until mid 2006 when the value of the New Zealand dollar will start to decline, believes National Bank's Cameron Bagrie.

Industry ready to host World Cup

WINNING the right to host the 2011 Rugby World Cup will provide a boost for operators all over New Zealand - not only where games are held.

Tourism Minister Damien O'Connor says: "We saw with the Lions series that visitors really spread themselves over the country...they really got out there and explored. With that many more people coming for the Rugby World Cup this effect will be even more pronounced."

TNZ CEO George Hickton adds: "What impressed me with the Lions' series was the way that New Zealanders really got behind it, welcoming the visitors and ensuring that they went home really happy with their experience here.

"We now have to make sure we do it again, by preparing well so that we can provide the rugby fans with a memorable, quality experience."

Now Te Puia can invest with confidence

WITH the Rugby World Cup expected to bring three-times as many fans to New Zealand as this year's Lions tour, Rotorua's Te Puia can now invest with confidence.

Scots plot flu scenarios...

A five percent increase in domestic trips, but a 20 percent reduction in US arrivals. A 10 percent drop in the Australian market, and reductions in others. These are the likely effects on Scottish tourism of an avian flu pandemic starting somewhere in the world.

Visit Scotland believes there would be a 0.2 percent reduction in employment overall and a 15.2 percent drop in international earnings, offset by a five percent increase in domestic earnings. These figures have been given to us by Waikato University tourism professor Chris Ryan, who has returned from giving a series of workshops in the UK and Dubai.

"We must continue to monitor risks"

IT is essential that we continue to monitor risks to international tourism flows and the industry generally, and be in a position to respond, Tourism Minister Damien O'Connor has been told in Tourism Ministry briefing papers.

Short and medium term risks include: changes in the value of the New Zealand dollar; the activities of competitors such as Australia, which has recently increased its investment in off-shore marketing; natural disasters, terrorism and national security; international health scares; the impact of escalating energy costs on airfares; airline route capacity issues.

Issues in tourism research have been identified as including the need for long-term funding levels to support the applied research programme, the fact that costs for the core datasets are subject to price movement and so funding increments are needed to ensure the scope and quality of data is maintained.

Keeping you in the picture...

THE US Department of Homeland Security says New Zealanders issued with passports after October 26 must have digital photographs if they wish to enter America under the Visa Waiver Programme.

TNZ wants to talk to operator opposed to Qualmark

INDUSTRY maverick John Davies, has rebelled against the Qualmark rating system. But TNZ says staff will talk to Mr Davies “to work through some of the issues and clarify some of the facts.”

Mr Davies runs the guided walks on the Milford and Routeburn tracks - and the Hermitage Hotel at Mount Cook.

He is upset because he believes his firms’ standards are to be set “by some marketing person”.

With about 1,500 firms now paying for accreditation, TNZ’s foreign promotions will only feature Qualmark accredited businesses from 2007.

He says officials would either ask to be paid to go on walks for four or five days or flown in by chopper, “and then if the soup was not hot enough, or there was another problem, they would have to do this again.” In addition, doing it annually would mean an enormous cost.

Draft Milford plan gets re-think

ABOUT 60 attended Friday’s meeting between DoC and Milford aircraft operators to discuss the controversial management plan for Milford, according to departmental community relations manager Martin Rodd.

Students caught freedom camping

FIVE campers - four overseas and one New Zealand student, all from Christchurch - have been found by DoC rangers to be in breach of Fiordland National Park bylaws.

The five were stopped the next morning descending MacKinnon Pass. They admitted to spending the night camped in an alpine shelter.

Ranger Hamish Angus says: “These bylaws exist for good reason - to ensure the impact of trampers on the environment is minimised, and we go to great efforts to build huts in areas safe from avalanche, floods and exposed weather conditions.”

Rowdy, but they still want alfresco

DRUNKEN fights, obscene behaviour and racial abuse are costing some night-time Queenstown businesses thousands of dollars in security and forcing others to close early, according to media reports. But residents have told Queenstown Lakes District Council to make alfresco dining as easy as possible.

DoC to intensify monitoring of operators

DOC has for some time been preparing to monitor tourism operators who are working on Crown land. By law they require a concession which allows them to operate within agreed parameters.

“Operators who don’t hold a concession to undertake an activity within a particular area or a concession at all are breaking the law,” says Otago Conservancy lawyer Martin Kessick.

TNZ reflective on numbers’ decrease

TNZ says a decrease in visitor numbers to New Zealand in October reflects ongoing issues with tourism from our key markets.

Visitor arrival figures released by Statistics New Zealand show that there were 5,155 fewer international tourists in October 2005, a decrease of 2.8 percent.

Citibus buys Wanaka ConneXions

TRANSPORT company Wanaka ConneXions has been sold to Dunedin’s Citibus, effective December 1.

Greet NZ training programme launched

A customer service training programme, which recognises and enhances New Zealand’s style of customer service, is being launched to hospitality employers.

Greet NZ has been designed and implemented by the Hospitality Standards Institute (HSI).

Beauty before the booty

CENTRAL Otago’s leaders are putting the natural beauty of their region before the tourist dollar, and will seek value rather than volume from visitors. District mayor Malcolm Macpherson has revealed a new philosophy which is part of a brand for the region: Central Otago - a World of Difference.

TNZ puts legs on 100%Pure campaign

TNZ is turning visitors into ‘walking billboards’ for the 100% Pure campaign.

A new range of clothing is being launched on December 2 will allow New Zealanders, and visitors, to wear the official New Zealand marketing brand for the first time. “The idea is to create walking billboards for the campaign,” says CEO George Hickton.

Muslims harrassed?

MUSLIMS say they are being harassed when they enter New Zealand because of global fears about terrorism.

Focus on - ANZ Nature Tours

ANZ Nature Tours is now in a joint venture with Hunsruck-Media-House, Boppard, Germany, producing the New Zealand Card, founded last year.

ANZ Nature Tours director Frank Hildebrandt says it is a discount card for FIT travellers mainly from Europe.

Interislander at airport!

THOUSANDS of visitors to New Zealand are being welcomed by *Interislander* - as they arrive at Auckland International Airport!

Big effort to buy winning garden

FRIENDS of the Lake Taupo Museum and Art Gallery are embarking on a major fund-raising drive to help buy the New Zealand garden that won gold at last year’s Chelsea Flower Show.