

## **German Tourists worth attracting**

**Auckland, August 14, 2009 – Tourism spending and visitor numbers might be on the decline in some of New Zealand’s major markets. Yet there are countries worth having a closer look at from a tourist point of view, Germany for example**

Recession-driven Germany is not only making an economic impact with spending of \$285 million, the numbers of tourists arriving on New Zealand’s shores are steadily growing. In 2007 Statistics New Zealand recorded 59,080 arrivals from Germany, two years later the number has risen to 62,837.

Like New Zealanders, Germans are enthusiastic travellers. They stay longer in New Zealand (23 days median and 43 days on average), travel more widely and spend more money here than any other tourist group, except the Japanese who only stay for 6 days.

The average expenditure of a German tourist was \$4,536 last year, compared to Australians, who spent only \$1,681 and stayed 10 days, while the Chinese stayed for just 3.

Europe is and has been New Zealand’s most important visitor market by tourist spend, Continental Europe being almost half of that spend. In the last 12 months Continental Europe has been the star performer with almost every other key market suffering significant downturns.

“Germany is one of the key markets for New Zealand to concentrate on”, says Monique Surges, CEO of the New Zealand German Business Association. Surges has been organizing the New Zealand stand at the ITB Berlin, the worlds leading trade fair for the international tourism industry, since Tourism New Zealand decided to pull out. 2 years ago. More market players than ever before visited the ITB Berlin this year in March. The results for the participating New Zealand companies have been outstanding.

“There was a huge number of visitors on our stand at the ITB Berlin”, says Frank Hildebrandt from ANZ Nature Tours, an inbound tour operator based in Wellington. German visitors are very interested in what the New Zealand tourist industry has to offer.

“It is time that the New Zealand government focuses support on promotion to tourists who bring in the biggest dollar spend – stop focusing on the visitor number!”, says Surges, who is currently working on NZ’s participation at the upcoming ITB Berlin in 2010. She recognizes an increasing demand from Kiwi tourism operators to take part in this important trade fair and has already had to book more stand space.

“It is a bit disappointing to see that the government is spending a lot of money in other markets, but does not have a penny to spend on a NZ presence at the world’s leading tourism trade fair, which just happens to take place in the country New Zealand should put a major priority on – Germany!” she argues.

The tourism industry is a major contributor to the New Zealand economy. Data released by the Ministry of Tourism shows visitors to New Zealand spent \$6 billion in the year to June 2009.

Visitor numbers and spending plummeted for British, Australian and American visitors. British tourists spent 18.6 per cent less than the year before and reached the lowest level in the past five years, spending only \$826 million.