

Media Statement



Forecast Tourism Growth Slows in short-term

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International visitor arrivals are forecast to grow by an average of 2.5% per annum over the next seven years, forecasts released by the Ministry of Tourism show.

By 2015 international visitor numbers are forecast to reach 2.9 million, up by 18.6% or 455,000 more visitors than we get now.

Ministry of Tourism Research Manager, Bruce Bassett, said that given the substantial impacts of the global recession and more recently the Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic, the forecasts for tourism have been revised back from forecasts made last year (an annual average growth rate of 4%).

“So, while the current forecasts are lower, the overall outlook for tourism remains very positive.

“Over the balance of 2009, we expect to see a drop of arrivals of around 4.2%, but after that we expect to see growth re-emerging.

“With a slow and uneven recovery from the global recession, we expect to see growth of around 2.5% in 2010. This will be followed by a solid rebound in arrivals of 6.5% in 2011 as the global economy further recovers and with a boost from New Zealand’s hosting of the Rugby World Cup.

“For the remainder of the forecast period a sound growth level of 3.5% per year is expected.

The strongest markets over the forecast period are expected to be Australia and China, which are forecast to provide two-thirds of the total growth. Other markets are expected to generate more modest growth.

“The forecasts provide the tourism industry with a realistic outlook of the sector’s longer term prospects. The short term is clearly challenging, but recovery is on the horizon, even if it may be slow and uneven across our various markets.

“Armed with this information, the challenge is now for the industry to work towards exceeding these forecasts.

The New Zealand tourism forecasts have been prepared annually by the Ministry of Tourism since 1999. Statistical modelling and expert industry input is used to determine the forecasts.

For further information on the latest forecasts and publication please visit the Ministry of Tourism research website (www.tourismresearch.govt.nz/forecasts) or contact Bruce Bassett – telephone (04) 498 7448, or 021 609 674, or email bruce.bassett@tourism.govt.nz.

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