Media Statement

Shifting Easter Affects April Tourism Numbers

Thursday 21 May 2009 – For immediate release

Data released by Statistics New Zealand today shows that international visitor arrival numbers increased by 9.2% to reach 195,883 in the month of April 2009.

Bruce Bassett, Ministry of Tourism Research Manager, said the timing of Easter affected the arrival statistics over the past two months, given that Easter occurred in April this year and in March last year.

“It is estimated that 7.9% of the April increase is attributable to the ‘Easter effect’, making the underlying change in international arrivals up 1.3% for April.”

For March data, 6% of the 9.7% decline in arrivals was due to the ‘Easter effect’.

When the two months of March and April are combined to fully account for the Easter effect, arrivals were down 1.8%.

“When looking at how tourism is tracking, it is important to focus on the underlying performance, rather than on results that are heavily influenced by irregular events such as Easter falling in different months.”

The key results are:

- Month of April 2009 195,883 arrivals, up 9.2%
  (up 1.3% underlying rate seasonally adjusted for Easter)
- Months of March and April 2009 combined 422,344 down 1.8%
- Year ended April 2009 2,417,214 arrivals, down 2.7%

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