

Media Statement



Tourism Spend Holds in Challenging Time

Friday 8 May 2009 – For immediate release

Spending by international visitors was \$6.1 billion in the year to March 2009, according to data released today by the Ministry of Tourism. The result was virtually unchanged (down 0.1%) compared with the same period last year.

“This is a positive result, as international tourism is facing a challenging time,” said Bruce Bassett, Ministry of Tourism Research Manager. “Total tourism spend held steady in a year when the number of international travellers to New Zealand actually fell by 3.9%.”

A more favourable exchange rate for international visitors contributed to this result. As the New Zealand dollar falls in value, particularly against the US and Asian currencies, visitor spending power increases.

Holiday expenditure was up 3.3% while spend by those visiting friends and relatives (VFR) was down 5.3%. “The VFR drop is related to the higher proportion of these visitors from Australia, who typically spend less than VFR travellers from elsewhere in the world.”

The top three markets recorded moderate decreases – Australia down 4.1% to \$1.6 billion, UK down 3.8% to \$916 million and the US down 2.2% to \$612 million. Japan recorded an increase of 12.3% to \$471 million.

Mr Bassett added that while it is unclear how international visitor demand will continue over the short term, the sector is demonstrating resilience and a real ability to adapt to the challenging conditions.

For further information on the release of International Visitor Survey data please visit the Ministry of Tourism research website (www.tourismresearch.govt.nz/ivs) or contact Bruce Bassett – telephone 021 609 674 or email bruce.bassett@tourism.govt.nz.

ENDS