

Hon Damien O'Connor

Minister of Tourism

Minister of Corrections

Minister for Rural Affairs

Associate Minister of Health



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Media Statement

International visitor spend increases by nearly \$1 billion to \$7 billion

Tourism Minister Damien O'Connor has welcomed the latest figures showing international visitors spent a record \$7 billion in New Zealand in the year to June 2006.

This represents a huge jump of 16.4 per cent on the previous year, or close to \$1 billion.

The increase will greatly encourage the tourism industry, which is about to head into its peak season, Mr O'Connor said.

"This is fantastic news, and will put tourism operators, cafes, restaurants, hotel and transport operators and other businesses in good heart.

"The challenge now is to maintain growth in visitor spend by continuing to position New Zealand as a quality destination – and to exceed the expectations of our visitors when they get here."

The result was driven by a number of factors, Mr O'Connor said. These include the low New Zealand dollar over the period increasing visitors' purchasing power, and the 2005 Lion's Tour, which helped lift spending by the United Kingdom market by \$181 million.

Highlights of key markets:

- Australia - up 14.6% to \$1.6b
- USA – up 5.4% to \$652m
- Germany - up 13.1% to \$239m
- Japan – down 17.1% to \$476m
- China – down 17.2% to \$324m

Mr O'Connor said the result also provides a boost to the national tourism strategy update, which industry leaders and the government have been jointly working on for six months.

The aim of the strategy update is to ensure tourism grows to its full potential in a sustainable way – by protecting operators' profits, communities, the environment and visitors' experiences, Mr O'Connor said.

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