

Tourism Research Scholarships Awarded

Thursday 4 March 2010

Associate Minister of Tourism, Dr Jonathan Coleman today announced the award of five Master's research scholarships valued at \$15,000 each.

The scholarships, which were established in 2004, are designed to build research capacity in tourism, increase research applicable to the industry, increase the profile of tourism research, and create stronger links between researchers, industry and the public sector.

“Given the importance of tourism to the present and future health of the New Zealand economy, it is heartening to see such insightful, broad and high calibre research work being undertaken by our Masters students,” Dr Coleman said.

Recipients of this year's scholarships are:

- Otago University Master of Tourism graduate Jane Godfrey, whose research is focused on the motivations and expectations of backpackers travelling to New Zealand. Ms Godfrey's research has been backed by her recent employer, tour operator Kiwi Experience.
- Otago University Master of Planning student Paul Spurdle, who is studying the environmental impacts of temporary events on outstanding natural features and landscapes, work he is well placed to undertake given his summer position as a planner at the Rotorua District Council. Mr Spurdle's research has already received recognition from Rotorua District Council, Environment Bay of Plenty and Qualmark.
- Master of Environmental Studies student at Victoria University Richard Singleton, who is studying waste minimisation practices in New Zealand tourism and has posed the question: what are the barriers to separating organic waste in large hotels? Richard's past environmental studies have helped him in his position as a hotel sustainability coordinator. He plans to take this experience and knowledge further with his Masters research.
- Paul Singh, a Master of Philosophy student at the University of Queensland, is researching “absorbing knowledge in regional tourism organisations” – how absorptive capacity (knowledge sensing, searching and seizing) creates flexibility, innovation, performance and competitive advantage in regional tourism organisations. Mr Singh has a strong background in tourism, including teaching and the manager of Nature Coast Regional Tourism Organisation.
- Waikato University Master of Management (Tourism) student Hamish Jenkin, who is studying the impact of social networking mediums, such as weblogs, on the decision-making process of tourists; including an analysis

of the promotion of Stray Travel and Spaceships New Zealand. Hamish's research will provide valuable insights into an increasingly important part of tourism marketing, and his research is strongly supported by Stray Travel and Spaceships.

"This year's five recipients have focused on issues that span environmental impacts, new media, industry capability and the motivations and expectations of those who travel here – all of which have specific application to the industry today," Dr Coleman said.

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For further details on the Scholarship Programme contact Fiona Macdonald, Fiona.macdonald@tourism.govt.nz .