

Tourism Business Column

Plenty of action and fresh thinking

As I write this column TIA and about 270 of New Zealand's leading tourism operators are gearing up for TRENZ 2010 in Auckland 24-27 May. TRENZ is the biggest and most important annual tourism trade event for our industry, an opportunity to showcase destination New Zealand and write new business for coming seasons.

Nowhere else do New Zealand tourism firms have the opportunity to meet face to face with Buyers who collectively represent about 75% of international tourism business to New Zealand. This year we are expecting more than 250 Buyers from 34 countries, including our traditional visitor markets, but also emerging markets, for example this year we have several Eastern European representatives and a number from South America.

TRENZ, for those who have experienced it, is four days of action-packed business activity and networking. It is also attended by key influencers and 50 plus international and domestic media. We'll also be launching TIA's new-look tourism awards programme at TRENZ. We're very excited about what we have planned for the 2010 and I'm sure you will be too.

New initiatives to generate value

TIA is continually looks for more ways to generate more value for our members. This year we've applied some fresh thinking to come up with several new initiatives that will give operators the information, skills and inspiration to improve their business capability and grow their bottom line.

These include a business mentoring programme run in partnership with Business Mentors New Zealand, and workshops in areas we know operators, in particular small and medium sized businesses, want help. These include how to tap into the social media and online marketing space that is becoming so influential in the world of travel and tourism. Check www.tianz.org.nz for more details.

We are also putting a lot of effort into pan-industry and generational issues and opportunities, such as making sure tourism's voice is heard in areas such as the Land and Water Forum, which involves all the stakeholders who have an interest in how New Zealand's fresh water resource is managed; the structure of the new Auckland Super City, including the debate around a cruise ship terminal; and the Department of Conservation's approach to commercial tourism ventures on conservation land, where they have signalled they want to work more with business and are setting up a new Commercial Business Unit to achieve this.

Upping the ante with local government

This year we are upping the ante with local government, getting louder and bolder to ensure they take tourism into account in their planning and decision-making.

In 2008 we prepared a tourism manifesto for candidates in the central government elections, highlighting priorities for the tourism industry and where we wanted the government to take action. That proved very successful and now we are developing a similar document for candidates standing in the October 2010 local government elections.

Our industry wants (and needs) a much more active and constructive relationship with local government, given the wealth and jobs we generate for regions throughout New Zealand, and the many issues and areas where our interests converge, such as freedom camping, waste management, broadband and visitor marketing. Watch this space!

www.tianz.org.nz