

# THE NEW HOBBIT TO REVIVE TOURISM IN NEW ZEALAND



The New Zealand tourism authorities eagerly anticipate the filming of Peter Jackson's film version of the famous Tolkien classic The Hobbit. His Lord of the Rings trilogy resulted in a major increase in foreign visits and many believe the new film will have the same effect.

Sir Peter Jackson made an official announcement at the beginning of February to confirm he would start filming the film version of J.R.R. Tolkien's story of the Hobbit on 21st March. This effectively means that once again, **the village of Hobbiton will come alive and part of the New Zealand countryside shall once again transform into Middle Earth.** Mr Jackson announced that filming will take place at Stone Street Studios in the capital of Wellington, as well as an area near Matamata in the North Islands.

Tourism is a very valuable source of income for local economy, bringing some \$9.5 billion every year, and **after the Lord of the Rings trilogy was released, thousands of eager fans came to explore the Tongariro National Park**, i.e. Eryn Muil and Mordor, Mount Sunday and Mount Potts in the Rangitata Valley which became Edoras of Rohan, or Mount Ruapehu - or Mount Doom.

**Official statistics show that while the trilogy was being released, tourism increased by 7% a year between 2000 and 2004**, and expenditure related to these themed visits reached \$32.8 million. That is why local government is very keen to welcome Peter Jackson and his crew once again for the making of a two-part Hobbit and hopes its release will once again attract Tolkien devotees from all over the globe.

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