

NEW ZEALAND: TOURISM VALUE INCREASES AFTER RUGBY WORLD CUP



A few weeks have passed since the Rugby World Cup finished in New Zealand. Its impact on tourism numbers was immense and the country plans to use its present rugby glamour to improve the overall state of the tourist industry.

New Zealand - home to the proud Maori folk and the Hobbit; this fascinating country proudly presents local breathtaking nature as well as unique cultural heritage. **Tourism has been for decades one of the most important sources of income for the economy;** however, recent years have brought some bad news.

Financial crisis affected many countries, especially markets which traditionally bring in the biggest tourist numbers (UK, USA) have been hit severely. 2011 alone has been a devastating year in terms of natural catastrophes. In February, Christchurch had to deal with a massive earthquake and only a few days ago, the Rena oil spill occurred.

On the other hand, the Rugby World Cup lured thousands of hard-core rugby fans from UK, France, and Australia; visitor arrivals increased by 26% compared to September 2010 which is great news. The Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIA) has commented on this great achievement, yet concluded this is not enough. New Zealand needs to keep momentum going and TIA is encouraging the incoming government to provide the means to ensure further development of the sector.

Ideally, the new government will play a key role in the Tourism Future Statement 2011-2014: The Visitor Economy - Creating Wealth. TIA and several industry partners and operators stand behind this project and hopefully the incoming politicians will realize its value. **Developing regional tourism as well as encouraging targeted education and receiving basic funding for Tourism New Zealand is a key priority** in order to increase the contributions to local economy and TIA hopes to gain the necessary political backing.

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