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## Not even NZ is immune from terror attack - tourism security expert

WHERE there is no security tourism will perish. But where security is professionalised and thought through, the industry will continue to flourish.

"The post Paris paradigm for the travel and tourism industry is based on the fact that tourism security is now a major part of a location's marketing strategy," says Waikato University's Prof Chris Ryan, quoting tourism security specialist Dr Peter Tarlow. Get over denial, it can happen in your community, they tell *IT*.

"Recognise that no part of the world today is immune from a terrorist attack. Not even New Zealand.

"Too many parts of the travel and tourism market simply do not believe an attack can happen to them. It can.

"Furthermore, as the media often devotes a great amount of coverage to an attack against a tourism area, the fear factor spreads from one locale to entire regions, nations, and even continents," they say.

Other advice:

**Recognise there is a fundamental political shift in the world. Old assumptions will no longer hold.**

"The tourism industry will need to recognise that ISIS and other terrorist groups are at war with it. From a business perspective, the old assumptions about the world are very dangerous.

"Those parts of the travel and tourism industry that emphasise security will have a good chance of surviving. The venues that provide good security mixed with good customer service will flourish. Those parts of the travel and tourism industry that hold on to the old way of thinking will fade away."

**Develop co-ordinated efforts between security professionals and tourism professionals. Tourism professionals need to see security professionals and tourism police as allies.** "That means that tourism professionals must work to insure well-trained tourism-oriented policing and protection units officers. TOPP units should exist in any city with a major tourism industry or sports stadium.

**Develop a tourism task force. People who should be on this task force are local, tourism and transportation officials.** "The key to this task force is the quality of your facilitator."

**Do not create a false sense of security.** "Gas masks will do nothing in case of a biological or chemical attack, while sealed rooms may be very useful. Much of what is done at airports is a form of 'security theatre' that, as seen in the (to pg3)

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### 20 years ago in *IT*...

WHILE the North Island is benefiting from the visitor boom Mainlanders report little increase in turnover. Business is flat and has been for nine months, says Tourism Dunedin executive officer Greg Campbell. "It's consistent throughout the South Island. According to people such as Fiordland Travel and the Helicopter Line, the whole island is suffering relative to the north. Queenstown is making similar noises."

Leading Auckland hotels have signed a charter agreeing to minimise the use of energy, water and materials while reducing waste. The Environmental Hotels of Auckland (EHOA) is the first organisation in the country to reduce pollution, provide environmental training and monitor and annually review their performance. Tourism Minister John Banks says EHOA will strengthen New Zealand's clean, green image and protect and even enhance the environment.

A measure of the industry is its ability to debate issues frankly and openly without people becoming sensitive about them. "We haven't made the progress we should have here," says Tourism Coromandel's Chris Adams.

NZTB (now TNZ) and Tourism Northland are developing a strategy for the sustainable growth of tourism in the region. It's the board's first study addressing resource management and sustainability issues.

Eco-tourism has grown so quickly that it's becoming hard to tell it from the mass tourism of old, says Lincoln University lecturer Dr David Simmons. "Why should a so-called eco-lodge get away with using vast quantities of fresh water to provide its guests with three times as many towels as they'd use at home? How environmentally aware is a scenic flight over wilderness areas when they're impacting on the experience of a tramp on the ground?"

It's important we identify the threshold of adventure for different cultures. This would prevent visitors from attempting outdoor challenges for which they may be unprepared, he says.

The most moving cultural experience of a lifetime is how visitors are describing a visit to Ngapuhi Marae, Mangamuka, as part of a Fullers Northland tour.

Conservation Minister Denis Marshall opens the DoC Rail Trail in Otago on Sunday.

### 15 year ago in *IT*...

Wellington mayor Mark Blumsky is gaining support for his push for the government to significantly boost TNZ's annual budget and for funds to be indexed to the industry's GST returns. But TIA CEO Glenys Coughlan says he and other mayors are "barking up the wrong tree" because successive governments have always been against what is effectively a tied or indexed tax.

### 10 years ago in *IT*...

MASSIVE oil price increases and airline surcharges have so far had little effective on tourism arrivals, says THL.



**Peter Tarlow**

***"Few police have been trained in good tourism security."***

(from pg1) recent downing of a Russian airliner over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, does not address real problems," they say.

"Do not panic people, but deal with safety and security issues in the most professional manner possible. People begin to panic when you fail to take precautions."

Invite specialists to help train security personnel and tourism officials.

"All too often tourism officials do not attend security training and merely leave security issues in the hands of unpaid and under-funded security specialists.

"People lecturing must be specialists in security and in travel and tourism.

"Remember, terrorism against tourism is not a passing emergency, but now a permanent way of life, with ISIS seeking to undermine the totality of tourism. Travel and tourism industry professionals who are in denial and refuse to accept this new political reality are risking their business' health and making a costly error."

**Develop security coalitions with all components of your community.** "Make sure your police department is trained and understands tourism, and that your hotel and attraction workers know how to handle a security emergency. This is also a time for regionalisation.

"For example, if your state tourism conference has never had an expert speak on tourism security, ask why not? Rural and urban areas should be thinking about the security of their guests."

**Know what is unsafe in your community and work with local governments to improve these security concerns.** "How safe is your local airport? Are cab drivers' backgrounds investigated? Who has access to a guest's room? Who is working behind the scenes at airports? Are these people vetted? Have their personal backgrounds been checked?"

**Send representatives to tourism security conferences.** "The oldest and most famous one is held each year in Las Vegas. Every major CVB should have a representative at a tourism security conference along with at least one member of its law enforcement agency." (Next year's conference is from April 10-13. Visit: [www.touristsafety.org](http://www.touristsafety.org)).

**Make sure all police and security personnel are aware of how important tourism security is to their community's reputation and economic health.**

Few police have been trained in good tourism security. It is essential to have a person work with your local police, who can "translate" between tourism and security issues.

Security and safety may have different meanings to scholars, but in the world of travel they are one and the same. "In the world of terrorism against tourism any lack of either safety or security may result in the destruction of a tourism industry," Messrs Ryan and Tarlow say.

**The best crisis management is good risk management.** "It is cheaper to stop an attack than it is to recover from an attack.

"In the case of the Russian airliner and the Paris attacks, it appears that tourism officials were taken by surprise. The cost of these surprise attacks cannot only be measured in economic costs but also in the cost of lives destroyed and reputations ruined," he says.

The industry's priority must be to do everything possible and to work with security agencies, to assure the safety and security of its guests and insure the viability of the tourism industry.



**Prof Chris Ryan**

***"People will seek destinations perceived to be safe."***

## Industry has been resilient to global threats in the past, says Ryan

TOURISM has shown in the past a significant resilience to terrorist attacks, disease and natural disasters, says Waikato University's Prof Chris Ryan.

"After varying periods of time tourists begin to again travel to places so affected as the industry responds in conjunction with the various authorities and other stakeholders such as insurance companies and airlines, and the question is not whether 'will tourism again occur?' but rather when will it occur," he tells *IT*.

"Do the ISIS attacks represent something that is significantly different from past events? I have little doubt that in the longer term tourism to France will recover in that any regime or group based on violence will eventually be rejected as it fails to meet many of the needs of humans, namely to live in peace, provide for children and families, and to have lives free from worry.

"Such motives are common amongst people of different ethnicities and cultures. However, in this instance I fear that the continued existence of ISIS will perpetuate for some time a threat to different countries, notably in Europe and North America, and the threat posed by ISIS is not likely to be overcome within the time periods usually associated with crisis in the tourism industry. Globally tourism may continue to grow after some initial hiatus.

"People will seek destinations perceived to be safe, but also places that avoid overly intrusive security arrangements. Tourism to Asia and Latin America may receive a boost as tourism continually presents several alternatives to the tourist in terms of experiences, accommodation and destinations," he says.

"With Europe and North America vigilance will increasingly be more overt with searches, not only for getting on planes but to visit many other places and events. ID cards will increasingly be inspected, and controls will exist on travel that will make it less pleasurable. Travel time may become longer as airlines seek a buffer space between their routes and places under ISIS control.

"ISIS controls more territory than did Al Qaeda. It has a proven ability to resist the authorities in Syria and Iraq and it controls significant funds. But while it may be hedged in by surrounding forces and controls on transactions slowly tightened, its continued ability to launch suicide bombers into the cafes, market places and other public places in the world without regard to the human wants listed above, while inspired by a perverted sense of refighting the crusades under a banner of religion - all this makes it a very different type of threat to those faced before. The time required to overcome ISIS is the key determinant to how much of tourism it will adversely affect in Europe, and no doubt there will be consequences for the tourism industries in other parts of the world, but tourism will grow again - but not for some time in Europe."

New Zealand by reason of its shared values with the democracies that ISIS attacks is not without some risk, he says.

"Its geographical location and position as a group of islands with no land borders offers an extra ability to sustain its growing tourism industry, but this will require an increased vigilance that may mean inconveniences in security checks, transfers of money and business transactions. New Zealand is also fortunate in having the growing markets of China and Indonesia within its global trading patterns - and these markets may hesitate to travel to Europe and North America if those places are perceived as being unsafe. We are in a more fortunate position than most - but that good fortune will require added inconveniences to the tourist."

***"Tougher measures could result in higher security levies."***

***"The refugee crisis has yet to start influencing travel behaviour."***

## **NZ to tighten aviation security?**

NEW Zealand aviation security is likely to be tightened following a review that's been given impetus by the apparent bombing of a Russian plane in Egypt.

Transport Minister Simon Bridges says officials were halfway through a domestic security assessment when the plane crashed.

"I wouldn't want to pre-empt where we get to but I think additional safeguards in security measures at our more significant airports is a likely scenario," he is quoted as saying in the *NZ Herald* prior to the coordinated terrorists' attack in Paris on Friday which saw 129 killed and 352 people wounded.

Workers who had access to aircraft are now vetted by the SIS and have to carry official identification.

Tougher measures could result in higher security levies for passengers, the paper says.

\* The UK is to double its fund to fight cyber crime amid fears that ISIS militants are planning to attack British infrastructure, including air traffic control. The BBC says ISIS is seeking to hack essential infrastructure, such as hospitals, power stations, schools and banks.

## **Europeans will look for safer holiday destinations, say experts**

EUROPEANS will keep travelling abroad in 2016 but could favour safer destinations amid continuing conflicts and attacks around the world, according to tourism experts. But it is too early to assess the potential effects of the current refugee crisis on outbound travel next year. These have been some of the results of the 23rd World Travel Monitor Forum in Pisa, Italy.

This year the number of outbound trips made by Europeans increased 4.5 percent over the first eight months, according to preliminary *World Travel Monitor* results from IPK International.

This again represents good growth following a rise of three percent in 2014 and similar low single-digit growth rates in the past few years. Overall, European outbound travel grew by 13 percent from 2009 to 2014, reaching a total of 444 million outbound trips last year.

But demand for different destinations fluctuated strongly this year, with some countries in southern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East suffering in particular, says Messe Berlin senior VP Dr Martin Buck. "Many destinations have faced problems this year, keeping travellers away, sometime in droves. European tourists are choosing safer destinations, and in some cases they are even shifting from international trips to holidays within their country." One result is stronger demand for destinations in Europe.

Confidence is highest in the UK and Spain (both up six percent), Poland (up four percent) and Germany (up three percent), indicating good growth ahead for those source markets next year. In contrast, French consumers are only slightly more optimistic about their travel intentions for 2016, while confidence is lower in Russia and Italy (both down two percent).

The refugee crisis has yet to start influencing travel behaviour, says IPK International president Rolf Freitag. But one example could serve as a warning for the travel industry. Munich's Oktoberfest had 400,000 fewer visitors this year and tourism receipts were about 60 million Euros lower because the event coincided with the peak of refugee arrivals in the city, he says.



## Visitor boom brings airport hotel

INCREASING passenger numbers through Christchurch Airport and strong tourism growth forecasts are prompting the airport to begin work on a second hotel on the campus to complement the newly upgraded Sudima Hotel.

Chief commercial officer – property and commercial, Blair Forgie says a feasibility study will consider developing a quality airport hotel near the terminal, in response to record growth in international airline seats, increasing passenger numbers and New Zealand's strong tourism growth outlook.

"Christchurch Airport is the gateway to the South Island and our aeronautical growth, including 770,000 more seats added by new and existing airline customers over two years, has led us to think about additional short stay hotel accommodation," he says. "Developing a second hotel at the airport is one way we can set our airport, our city and the South Island up for successfully getting its share of the tourism growth."

The proposed hotel is likely to have 200-300 rooms and will be built in two stages, with the first targeted to open in 2017/18, Mr Forgie says.

"Before the quakes Christchurch had about 4,000 hotel rooms and the airport welcomed around six million passengers a year. Today the city has 2,202 hotel rooms and the airport is on track to welcome around 6.3 million passengers this year, with more growth to come. The major markets driving our growth are Australia, China and the US, and those visitors expect to be able to choose hotel accommodation."

## Virtual driving website to help visitors

A new virtual driving website for visiting motorists is a welcome addition to the range of efforts industry and government are making to improve safety on New Zealand roads, says TIA CEO Chris Roberts. The AA *Visiting Drivers Training Programme* provides real-world examples of New Zealand driving and road conditions.

TIA is delighted by the innovative approach taken by the AA to help keep visitors and New Zealanders safe on the roads. "This new tool will add to the collection of resources available to prepare visitors for New Zealand driving conditions. We are encouraging TIA members to promote the programme to their visitors," he says.

## THE BEST OF TRAVEL

Herald Travel's annual 'Best of Travel' special issue is on sale 1st December.

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# HE TANGATA, HE TANGATA, HE TANGATA



**Tim Hunter**

CHRISTCHURCH and Canterbury Tourism (CCT) CEO **Tim Hunter** has resigned, and will leave in February after more than five years at the helm.

Board chairman **Dave Hawkey** says Mr Hunter has guided the region's tourism industry from crisis to recovery through a time of unprecedented challenges for the sector.

"Tim has steered the regional tourism industry through its toughest five years, and set us on a pathway to recovery to pre-quake numbers, despite the delays in restoring tourism and conference infrastructure," he says.

Mr Hunter started with CCT following a long tourism career and was previously GM Operations for TNZ and chairman of Qualmark.

He has worked in tourism for more than 25 years. Before joining TNZ in 1998, Mr Hunter spent 13 years in senior operations and marketing roles with the former Christchurch-based Mount Cook Group. Before that, he was a commercial pilot for Aspiring Air and a fleet and route planner for AirNZ. He holds an honours degree in economics from the University of Otago.

Southern Discoveries has announced the retirement of GM **John Robson** after 20 years to spend time in Australia with his grandchildren, focus on art, and explore more of New Zealand.

Mr Robson says he and wife **Stephonie Quenau** have had a "wonderful" time in Te Anau so their plans also mean a move from the town they've called home for the past two decades.

"We came down from Auckland never thinking we'd be here this long, but just as the house and gardens on our five-acre property are looking magnificent, and the kids have left home, we're off on our adventures.

"This will give us time to focus on our art and selling in galleries again which was what we did a lot of previously, and who knows where we'll end up.

"Under the Skeggs' ownership we've created Southern Discoveries from the shell of Milford Sound Red Boats, started a hugely-successful kayaking operation, purchased Go Milford, commissioned our stunning catamaran Spirit of Queenstown and launched the Mt Nicholas operation," he says. "We also now have two sales offices in Queenstown, and we've done all of this since 2009."

Adventure South has appointed **Mike Smith** GM, taking over from company founder **Geoff Gabites**.

Mr Smith has been the GM of Visit Ruapehu for the past four years and marketing manager for Ruapehu Alpine Lifts for the previous 10 years.

"Mike brings a passion for cycling from his work in the Central North Island and we look forward to his marketing expertise to further grow Adventure South," says Mr Gabites, who takes over the management of start up sister companies, Cycle Journeys and The Cook Connection.

These companies are based on the Alps2Ocean trail and provides for the rapidly growing business as part of the national cycleway network.



**John Robson**



**Mike Smith**



by  
**Cas Carter**

# Photography company all smiles about international growth

QUEENSTOWN-based international tourism photography company Magic Memories is smiling as much as its guests these days.

In the past three years the 20-year-old company has been making big in-roads into international markets exceeding 50 percent revenue growth a year for the past four years with a focus on winning world-class attraction partners in the heavyweight UK/ Europe and US markets.

Founded in 1995 by John Wikstrom and Stuart Norris, Magic Memories aims to “make every guest smile”. The company is well known to the tourism industry in New Zealand, enjoying long-term, established partnerships with most of the premier attraction operators. In 2011, it implemented a strategy to seriously compete in new well-defined high value international markets. It aimed to be the recognised company that quality attractions and theme parks around the world aspire to partner with.

Magic Memories provides the photographic memories for guests in more than 100 attractions. Its strategy has been to partner with large world-class attractions, designing and delivering quality products and experiences that drive guest engagement, extend partners brands as a marketing channel and drive sector-leading revenues.

Mr Wikstrom says considering the guest first has always set them apart from their competitors.

“Our recent partnership with Merlin Entertainments plc at Shrek’s Adventure! London is a great example. We painstakingly designed every element around the guest from the application of technology, physical photography areas, co-designing scripted actor-led experiences, and really pushing quality and design around the end products.”

The company uses actors to train staff to engage with guests, has created “themed-screen” areas for the Magic Memory photographs and specially designed interactive photo books that are mysteriously “locked away” where that wrist-band technology immediately opens the correct drawer, all delivered in a fun and relevant script to each smiling guest.

The relationship with Merlin Entertainments Group has been a successful part of the company’s international growth strategy to build long-term contractual relationships with significant operators. Merlin Entertainments Group is the second-largest attraction operator in the world with more than 65 million guests a year.

It also partners with Village Road show Australia’s largest theme park operator and a company with an ambitious international growth strategy of its own.

Magic Memories now enjoys partnerships with many of Australia’s leading operators.

Mr Wikstrom says the New Zealand market is still important, with more than 40 partnerships in Queenstown, Christchurch, Hokitika, Auckland, the Bay of Islands, Rotorua, Taupo, Te Anau, Waitomo and Wellington.

“What we have learnt from working with our New Zealand partners has stood us in good stead for expanding internationally and New Zealand and our base in Sydney are where we work with partners on new innovations.”

(to pg9)



## FOCUS ON . . . Magic Memories



*Magic Memories staff members pose in the San Francisco Dungeons, one of the company's many overseas partnerships. Staff are trained by actors so that they appear to be part of the guest experience*

(from pg8) An example of that is the latest innovation developed and adopted at Shotover Jet with Ngai Tahu Tourism, where it had to overcome the challenge of taking videos on a boat travelling at high speeds and getting the edited video in the hands of each guest quickly.

Magic Memories designed and built a wireless transfer system that moves the high-definition footage to the on site production facility where it is edited and transferred to USB, or made available online for each guest all within a four-minute turnaround time.

This proven system and approach is transferable to any high-speed ride attraction and is also used at NZOne, Shotover Jet and Hukafalls Jet.

Technology has been a key way to help the company's strategy focus on the guest experience. Magic Memories recently acquired a new technology platform MeTag, enabling a more personalised and relevant guest experience through the capture, collation, transmission and distribution of relevant and useful content delivered directly to guests to engage when and how it suits them.

Mr Wikstrom has recently moved his family to the US to lead the business through what he considers the most exciting few years of the past 20.

"We continue to focus on developing our high-value proposition to international markets while continuing to deliver increasing returns to our current partners." Watch this space.

## SPEAKER'S CORNER



by

**Alala International business development manager**

**Bevan Chuang**

## Migration and New Zealand tourism – trends, impacts and opportunities

THE focus on supporting New Zealand businesses engaging with the migrant community has decreased over recent years. The focus has been more on supporting migrants as communities.

According to Statistics New Zealand, the net migration in June for New Zealand was 4,800. The annual gain in migrants has been setting new records for the past 11 months. This was also the third month in a row there has been a seasonally adjusted net gain of 100 migrants from Australia. Before April 2015, there had not been a net gain in migrants from Australia in more than 20 years, since 1991.

However, many businesses in New Zealand are still reluctant to hire migrants and even expatriate New Zealanders, despite our employment legislation providing for this.

While employers should hire the best person for the job, diversity of employees can help grow their businesses.

A report by Deloitte titled *Fast Forward: Leading in a Brave New World of Diversity* highlighted that globalisation, hyper-connectivity and digital innovation have reshaped businesses and have pushed innovation to the top of the corporate agenda. Within that is a workforce that needs to address diversity, ethnicity, age, gender, and other expectations of equal opportunity at work.

The tourism industry would benefit from and understand the importance of hiring ethnic staff. Migrants are also important drivers of tourism. According to Statistics New Zealand, visitor arrivals in June 2015 were up nine percent from the June 2014 year, with the biggest increase from Australia (up 8,500) particularly for holidays (up 6,800). However, the biggest increase overall is from China, (to pg10)

## SPEAKER'S CORNER

***"Migration increase is not be feared but seen as an opportunity to thrive."***

(from pg9) up 72,900 for the year ending June 2015, compared to Australia up 49,900 and the US up 21,600.

Most Chinese visitors are here for holidays/vacation (234,720), followed by VFR (38,816) and business (12,608) for the year ending June. According to the Chinese travel agencies at TRENZ conference this year, Chinese tourists no longer see New Zealand as a drop-by place on their way to Australia but as worth repeated visits. Chinese tourists are also now shifting from packaged tours to free independent travelling and more in-depth experiences.

Increasingly tourists are also seeking tailored packaged tours and the ability to drive around. There are also increasing demands of businesses in China wanting to visit New Zealand under business visas and who are requesting companies to assist with drafting invitation letters to help with their visa applications. These requests often come through Chinese-speaking staff members who would understand their needs.

At a recent Institute of Management New Zealand (IMNZ) Open House in Auckland, many speakers presented the use of social media in recruitment, engagement and sales. However, most of them failed to recognise the massive market of non-English social media platforms. New Zealand businesses are missing out on the huge market of Chinese social media and mobile apps that could provide them with growth and opportunities.

While New Zealand is still learning how to build the use of social media and commerce online, in Asia where internet and wifi is much more advanced, businesses have already moved on to the development of mobile apps and e-commerce opportunities. For example WeChat, a Chinese communication mobile app, has close to 400 million active users worldwide. Providing verified business accounts and e-commerce options, it is a platform only used by a small number of New Zealand businesses such as Tourism New Zealand, Air New Zealand, Destination Rotorua, Auckland Transport, and travel agents such as China Travel Service, Worldwide Holidays, STA Travel, AA Travel and CNNZ. Many of these companies, of course, have Chinese-speaking staff members who help manage their social media platforms.

These platforms allow users to communicate and share information publicly through their "moments" timeline, while providing a platform for businesses to promote themselves and share information, provide online transactions and allow users to share their views to their friends by directing them to the articles and platforms created by the businesses. WeChat is one of the most used mobile apps by Chinese of all ages and is slowly being taken up by non-Chinese speakers.

Such platforms are not known to New Zealand businesses unless they work with people with diverse backgrounds. If recruitment is restricted, increasingly businesses are set up by migrants to help New Zealanders to break into another country, using their knowledge, skills and connections.

Net migration increase is not be feared but seen as an opportunity to thrive. Migrants can help your business speak the same language as your customers, particularly if you work in the tourism industry,

\* Ms Chuang focuses on e-commerce, tourism and events management for Chinese and New Zealand clientele.

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## Another hostel joins YHA

YHA New Zealand welcomes Finlay Jack's to its network of 45 hostels. Manager Finlay Smith has lived in the town since he was 10 and his family moved from Reporoa.

## Listen to customers and keep changing, says *TripAdvisor*



**Brian Payea**

**"Page views by New Zealanders are growing 17 percent a year."**

ONE thing we can all count on is that everything will keep changing. "Where we are now is not where we thought we would be a few years ago," *TripAdvisor* head of industry relations Brian Payea told the PATA Global Insights Conference. "We have to keep listening to the traveller. We have to watch what they are doing, see what they like and don't like, and throw out the things that aren't working.

"We constantly change and change and change."

Mr Payea held up a sign with "*speed wins*" on it. "This is an old piece of paper that has been for years taped to the CEO's door, and is always about staying on top for what travellers are looking for; staying a little bit ahead if you can and changing, changing, changing the business and always making sure you are taking the pain out of the traveller's experience and giving them the opportunity to have a fantastic vacation."

*TripAdvisor* (TA) was founded 15 years ago and is now the world's largest online travel company. More than 375 million people visit the site every month and last year there were more than 2,000 million unique users.

"Every one, while searching, trying to plan and looking for inspiration provides information we can use to help them have a better experience and connect them with you," he told delegates. "So all that information gives us a unique insight with such a lot of background."

Page views by New Zealanders are growing 17 percent a year, and nearly half of Kiwi businesses have a registered owner/manager on TA. Some 83 percent of New Zealand accommodation have ratings of 3.5 or higher, compared to 67 percent for US accommodation. Interestingly, 52 percent of New Zealand reviews are domestic.

"So it is not just about luring those travellers in from around the world. It is also about having great experiences for your neighbours and friends and the community here."

Travel buyers who use TA are far more active during their path to purchase with 42 visits on average, 261 page views and taking 186 minutes involving 24 searches over an average 44 days. "So the type of traveller using these resources is very invested and involved," Mr Payea said.

TA receives 20,000 responses from travellers when it produces its *TripAdvisor Barometer* every six months, together with a similar response from its partner companies.

"It is very interesting looking at travel budgets when you look at countries where they are going to spend more versus less. New Zealand is fifth out of 25 countries, even ahead of Australia.

The pull factors are: I/the family deserves it, I'm going somewhere on my wish list, I have been saving for it, I'm planning more trips of five days or more and I'm planning long haul. Push factors include: it's too expensive and prices have gone up.

New Zealand is also high up the stakes when it comes to the mean annual travel budget, being third out of 25 with an estimated spend this year of US\$9,500. Only Australia (US\$11,700) and Switzerland (US\$17,100) anticipate spending more.

Mr Payea said when it comes to the top things to spend money on for a treat, 54 percent of New Zealanders said taking part in activities, and this makes them the most active of the holidaymakers.

(to pg12)

***"If you have 83 percent occupancy, I don't know if there is a place for everyone to stay."***

(from pg11) For sightseeing and shopping Indonesians are top, for meals and restaurants it's the UK on top, for accommodation and nightlife/drinks the Thais are first, while Turks want travel memorabilia.

New Zealand is the fourth most-popular destination out of the 25 countries, beaten only by Australia, the US and Italy.

"I'm not surprised," Mr Payea said, "having taken 40 hours to fly here myself." He lives on the US eastern coast.

"The difference is the US and Italy are more approachable. Australia, the US and Italy are dream locations with Australia and New Zealand more dream than reality destinations. Your challenge is to make people ready to pay off that dream and follow it.

"But another challenge is, if you have 83 percent occupancy, and if all those people suddenly tried to come here, I don't know if there is a place for everyone to stay."

New Zealand is a dream destination for 32 percent of millennials, making it less attractive than Australia and Italy for 24 percent of families, with Australia, Italy and US also more popular.

About 20 percent of retirees would also prefer to go to Australia, Italy or the US. But that is from a list of 25 global destinations.

Mr Payea also said hotels that are highly engaged with customer reviews do better than those that aren't. Promoting every guest to post a review of their stay works wonders.

"It is not just reviews on TA. There is a lot of different information and we are continually evolving the company to make sure we are satisfying travellers, no matter what they are looking for."

Mobile users must have the right information quickly or they will leave the site.

"They will not sit and wait for information to become relevant. Because of that we are changing the way we deliver information with a lot of new personalisation.

"With big data we have more information that helps us put the right information in front of the right traveller, so the budget traveller is not seeing 5-star hotels and the luxury traveller is not seeing hostels at the top of the short list. This is the type of evolution you are going to see at TA and all big partners."

TA now has a vacation rentals site and an expanding restaurant offering, so there are more ways for it to join in the conversation. It recently bought Dimmi, with 2.7 million on its site. Attractions are also becoming a bigger part of the TA experience.

"It comes down to travellers having a very different demand behaviour when searching and we want to make sure we have every answer they are looking for.

"No matter how they are choosing to look we want to make sure we have all the information they need.

"It is all about taking the friction out and making it simpler for the traveller so you don't lose them and end up with someone abandoning the whole process and going somewhere else."

## Desktop still important but trend towards mobile



**Kate Palmer**

WHILE New Zealand companies still design “experiences” for the desktop, more potential visitors are turning to mobile devices to access information on what to see, do and book.

ComScore account director Australasia Kate Palmer told the PATA Global Insights Conference that time spent by people on desktop computers increased 16 percent in 2013, while those using mobile apps jumped 90 percent and those using mobile browsers were up 53 percent.

“Desktop is still important and time accessing the net is growing, but people are spending time within mobile applications.

“Mobile is growing the digital media pie, while the average monthly audience in the US using desktop is basically flat year on year, so it is not necessarily bringing new people online. But mobile had 41 percent year-on-year growth. So mobile is bringing fresh audiences.”

It is different in developing countries and China because mobile eclipsed desktop ages ago. “For New Zealand this is a trend to look out for.

“But so often in New Zealand, Australia and other developed markets I see a backwards strategy where we are still designing experiences for the desktop. Yet more and more customers may only engage your brands on a mobile device. You may want to start there in terms of design experience,” she said. “How are people going to be interacting with your brands on mobile devices?”

Ms Palmer said browser access using a mobile device increased 42 percent in the year to June, while from mobile apps it was up 21 percent.

“People searching for your brand or visiting your mobile site on a browser will continue to be a very important part of how audiences interact with your brand.” But apps dominate mobile time, with 87 percent growth in the past June year.

Access from smartphones was up 85 percent, and from a tablet the increase was 83 percent.

“Favourite apps tend to get the most attention with people spending 50 percent of their time with one app. Getting on that home screen is extremely important. As implications for your strategy you might need a dedicated app if customers are interacting with you on a sporadic basis. It may be a case of how you partner or integrate with apps already built.”

Ms Palmer listed the 25 most popular apps in the US across a range of categories, showing *Facebook* is the most popular, followed by *YouTube*, *Facebook Messenger*, *Google Search*, *Google Play* and *Google Maps*. Apps for entertainment and music are also popular. “This will vary for markets such as China but it will be consistent for New Zealand.

“There is a huge opportunity to grow engagement with mobile travel experiences, with the average time spent on mobile social networking sites or apps at 24 hours, compared with 22 minutes on travel sites or apps over the same period.

E-commerce is growing consistently year after year, with US figures showing 11 percent growth in 2014 totalling US\$359,000 million of which US\$237,000 is spent on travel. Yet m-commerce is outpacing e-commerce when m-commerce is business done on a mobile device. In the year to 2015 m-commerce growth was 53 percent ( to pg14)



***"Your challenge is how to make that buying experiences seamless and frictionless."***

(from pg13) and for e-commerce, or that done on other devices such as desktops, was nine percent. "It is a growing industry," she said.

The added awareness of a product advertised on a desktop was 1.2 in the US last year, while it was 2.5 for mobile ads. For favourability and likelihood to recommend it was 1.4 versus 3 and 4.3 respectively. For purchase intent it was 1.3 for desktop and 4.3 for mobile ads.

There was still a big gap in "monetisation",. "If you look at the time people are spending between mobile and desktop you see people are happy to research, visit travel brands and give reviews but when it comes to booking tickets they are tending to move back to laptops and desktops. Why? Because only a small percentage feel the mobile buying experience is better.

"Your challenge as you start to think about how you enable your businesses for mobile commerce is how to make that buying experiences seamless and frictionless."

Ms Palmer identified friction points as a feeling of financial insecurity and in giving payment details online on a mobile.

"Another is they can't see sufficient product detail. This is something to think about from a user experience point of view. Can people assess that rich information they are after through your app or m-site? Another friction is navigating between screens and putting in mobile payment information.

"There are some things you can look to in m-commerce that will remove some of the barriers and propel m-commerce over the next couple of years. One is payment technology." She cited Apple Pay with the iPhone 6.

China Wechat started as a messaging free calling tool similar to Whatsapp and has evolved with different layers of service.

Ms Palmer ended with a word of caution: Qantas was ahead of its time with an app which was supposed to have enabled customers to use their iWatches to manage boarding passes, except they wouldn't go under the readers.

"The cautionary thing, if you start to develop these mobile experiences whether in-app purchases or whether designing for wearable technology, is to invest in user research to make sure of a great experience for the customer."

ComScore Inc is a digital analytics company that uses a panel of two million people around the world who have agreed to have their computers metered to see how many websites they visit, for how long and how much time they spend. Over time this becomes more complex when people start using mobile devices.

Marketers are also increasingly asking the company to understand smart TV usage and how it compares to smartphones and desktop usage. "Finally there is a push towards wearable technology. So our job as a measurement company is becoming more complex, but so is your job, because you have to understand how your customers want to engage with your brand across all these different channels," she said.

## **New air safety app thanks to funding**

**FUNDING** from an aviation safety scholarship is vital to the development of a new app being trialed in the South Island to help improve safety in the air. The tablet-based app has been created to reduce controllers' workload at peak times and is the brainchild of Hadley Cave, Airways' chief controller at Dunedin Tower. Mr Cave received the 2015 Jilly Murphy Memorial Aviation Safety Scholarship.

The \$5,000 scholarship is open for applications from people, such as Mr Cave, who are passionate about making a difference to aviation safety.

## First the Americas, then Vietnam and next the Philippines?

AIRNZ is considering flying to Manila after confirming it will launch services to Vietnam next year as part of its 15 percent growth strategy.

More air service agreements with a range of countries on a variety of airlines are being negotiated and will go to Cabinet for approval early next year, says the *NZ Herald*.

Philippine Airlines begins Auckland services from December via Cairns. But AirNZ will fly direct.

Transport Minister Simon Bridges says there is a growth surge in air links to New Zealand. New agreements were negotiated recently at inter-governmental talks in Turkey and are mainly with Pacific Rim countries.

"We're increasingly in the most exciting part of the world, the Pacific Rim, with dynamic countries around us and they're increasingly getting prosperous and wanting to travel," Mr Bridges says.

Auckland Airport GM aeronautical commercial Norris Carter says the new four-month Vietnam service will add 23,500 seats and contribute \$9.5 million to the New Zealand economy.

More than 3,000 visitors from Vietnam visit New Zealand each year and this new service will hopefully encourage more visitors to come, says PM and Tourism Minister John Key.

Selecting Ho Chi Minh City is in line with the airline's Pacific Rim focus, says CEO Christopher Luxon. It is the carrier's 30th international destination.

About 100,000 South Islanders have travelled to Southeast Asia on Singapore Airlines flights out of Christchurch in the past decade.

"Travellers out of Christchurch Airport have had one-stop services daily and year-round to five points in Vietnam for more than 20 years with Singapore Airlines," IT is told.

### On yer bike BASIL!

SERVICEIQ takes a cue from the Basil Fawltz school of customer service, with a short film featuring an unsuspecting couple on a cycling adventure in the hands of a scary tour guide.

The cautionary tale is part of its new 90-minute online training course, an Introduction to Visitor Experience, designed to help tourism businesses get staff up to speed quickly in tourism knowledge and excellent customer service skills. It covers a range of topics including the different stages of visitor experience, how to deliver on your business promise to visitors, vital communications skills, planning and visitor profiles.

Successful tourism businesses and well-trained employees are crucial to creating a sustainable industry that is now the country's top export earner, says ServiceIQ CEO Dean Minchington.

"To people all over the world New Zealand is a must-visit destination- Tourists can travel enormous distances to experience what we have to offer.

"For our part, we owe them an outstanding time when they're here, and must show them that it's more than worth the journey. A great visitor experience translates into great reviews, recommendations and increased business for the region and New Zealand tourism as a whole." Visit: [www.serviceiqskillsonline.org.nz](http://www.serviceiqskillsonline.org.nz).



# Memorial to be held for popular hotel personality



Richard Hudson

A memorial for Richard Hudson, key account manager at IHG for the past nine years, will be held at Crowne Plaza Auckland on Saturday, starting at 1pm. Mr Hudson, also known as Huddo, Huddy, Rich and The Rock, died earlier this week.

For more than 12 years he had been a much-loved and pivotal part of the IHG Australasia team commencing his career at InterContinental Wellington in 2003 as assistant manager.

Colleagues describe Mr Hudson as a “larger-than-life character, bringing humour, compassion, warmth and love to colleagues and clients alike, a leader and a true gentleman.”

He leaves his wife Meripa and daughter Natasha. For those that wish to leave a message and share a memory of him please visit: <http://richard-hudson.forevermissed.com/>.

## Industry conference date announced

NEXT year's New Zealand Hotel Industry Conference will be at The Langham Auckland from June 1- 2.

## Council unaware of Man Cave B&B until Gav tries to sell

AUCKLANDER Gavin Westacott, who has reportedly been running a B&B for truck drivers is selling his business. The only problem, according to *stuff.co.nz*, is that Auckland Council wasn't told. Gav's Place - Man Cave is listed on *Trade Me* for \$35,000, but the council says the business doesn't comply with regulations. The council was not aware the business was running from the address. But Mr Westacott - a previous bankrupt on home detention - says there is nothing illegal about his arrangement. The B&B is a GST-registered business and he is a sole trader. The website says Mr Westacott has been earning \$1,000 a day.

## Wanganui gains an “h”

THE spelling of Wanganui district is to be changed to “Whanganui district” reflecting the views of the Wanganui District Council (WDC), local iwi and public submitters, Land Information Minister Louise Upston says.

## New backpackers has most beds in Christchurch

THE All Stars Inn \$8 million backpacker lodge and budget hotel just opened in the Christchurch CBD and is now the city's biggest accommodation provider. It has 300 beds in a mix of dormitories and individual rooms. GM Phil Leslie says they have bookings through to April.

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