



Media Release – Embargoed until 3pm 9 Dec 2015

Tourism Export Council Supports “Choose Clean Water Tour”

The Tourism Export Council New Zealand (TECNZ) is pleased to confirm both political and financial support to the tune of \$10,000 to the **Choose Clean Water Tour** in January 2016. A significant motivation for visitors choosing destination New Zealand is our clean & green image and TECNZ want to ensure that reputation lasts for generations to come. We believe water quality to be the single greatest challenge to maintaining New Zealand's environmental promise and see this tour as an opportunity to raise awareness among tour operators and mainstream New Zealand re the quality of our water.

Massey University's Dr Mike Joy recently challenged the tourism industry to stand up and do more to protect the environment. TECNZ surveyed members, received a mandate to do more and invited Joy to speak at their tourism conference to hear some truths about New Zealand waterways. Joy shocked operators with an analysis of our freshwater status, how it is likely to worsen if policy changes are not made and the ways in which water quality have been changed by government to give the appearance we are better than we are.

President of the Tourism Export Council Martin Horgan, says “a range of projects were considered but in the end they agreed the Choose Clean Water Tour project was likely to have the most impact with some clear outcomes. The motivation for New Zealand to live up to our environmental promise is twofold. First from a sustainable point of view for future generations, but also from a commercial perspective. Our clean green image has worked as a marketing promise in the past, but if we don't do more to actively live up to it, in 50-100 years' time, there won't be anything to market.”

Joy who recommended the project says “I commend the Tourism Export Council and their members for choosing to walk the talk, supporting the initiative. I talk at many conferences trying to educate and stimulate actions and it is heartening to have the tourism industry want to share the responsibility re the protection of our waterways. The tourism industry are direct beneficiaries of New Zealand's clean green image and we welcome their contribution politically to the discussion and actions”.

The **Choose Clean Water Tour** will see four young campaigners visit over 25 lakes and rivers around the country to document through short films, how the continuing pollution of waterways is affecting local people and the environment. At a time when freshwater legislation is under review, the group will also provide the public an opportunity to push for stronger protection through a petition calling for the minimum standard for waterways to be raised from 'wadeable' as it is currently to 'swimmable', and to establish that the priority for freshwater legislation must be the health of people and the environment. The tour website allows the public to share their own stories about a local lake, river or stream and contribute to a national picture of the importance of waterways to New Zealanders. Details of the tour and petition may be found at www.chooscleanwater.org.nz.

The Choose Clean Water Tour will begin in Taupo on 10 January and run until 06 February 2016. It is also supported by the Freshwater Foundation and Freshwater for Life.



Tourism Export Council of New Zealand Background:

The Tourism Export Council of New Zealand is a trade association that has represented the interest of inbound/international tourism since 1971. It represents 1300 key tour operators and suppliers throughout the country who package, distribute and market New Zealand tourism products and services internationally.

For further information, please contact

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