

MEDIA RELEASE

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WORLD-FIRST IDEA GIVES TOURISTS CHANCE TO 'RAVE' ABOUT THE NATURE COAST

Tourists visiting the Nature Coast will have the chance to send home a video message from Tourism New Zealand's mobile recording studio when it visits the region this month

The world-first idea is giving international visitors around the country the opportunity to record a 'rave' about their time in New Zealand – and it's attracting attention around the world.

Nature Coast Enterprise Regional Tourism Manager Chris Barber said today:

"This is a fantastic opportunity for the Nature Coast region to be part of Tourism New Zealand's 100% Pure campaign and send out personal messages about our region to a huge global audience. We have a very proud community and I'm sure that locals as well as visitors will use this opportunity to tell the world why our region is such a great part of New Zealand and why people should come and visit," says Chris.

So far, the mobile studio has recorded just over 1,200 video diaries by travellers from 45 different countries. These 'raves', which are broadcast on YouTube and emailed out to visitors' friends and families back home, have attracted almost 90,000 views to date.

Tourism New Zealand Chief Executive George Hickton says the campaign is a cost-effect way to reach consumers and capture the value of personal recommendations.

"These days people from all walks of life are using social media to connect with people back home while they are travelling, making it a very effective way of communicating with a wide audience."

He says the success and reach of the campaign has been beyond initial expectations.

"When we started out on the road we expected each video to be watched by around 10 people, but the average number of views per video is actually up to around 80. That's a huge number of messages about New Zealand going out to our target markets."

The mobile studio – a converted shipping container on the back of a flat-bed truck – contains a fully-equipped mobile recording studio, which allows visitors to enter and film video postcards. These videos diaries, or

postcards, are posted immediately to YouTube to be viewed by friends and family back home.

The 'Have Your Say' mobile studio will be at McLean Park, Paraparaumu Beach on Thursday April 16th from 10am till 4 pm

To view video 'raves' go to <http://nz.youtube.com/PureNZHaveYourSay>

For more information and pictures about the 100% Pure New Zealand mobile studio go to www.tourismnewzealand.com

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Background

The mobile studio is the second phase of Tourism New Zealand's 'What Do You Say UK?' campaign, which launched in the UK last September.

The campaign is based on research that shows word-of-mouth recommendations are among the strongest motivators for British travellers when they are thinking about a holiday in New Zealand.

The campaign is believed to be the first time a national tourism organisation has used real traveller testimonials in its advertising.

A recent poll in the UK found that the 'What Do You Say UK?' campaign ranked 9th for unprompted recall among viewers alongside Kellogg's and Tesco supermarket advertisements.

The mobile studio has been created in a converted shipping container and will be transported around New Zealand on a 10-tonne flat-bed truck.

The mobile studio will be touring the country between December 12 and 30 April 2009, making around 40 stops.

Visitors' video diary messages are hosted on a specially-created Tourism New Zealand YouTube channel, where friends and family can view them. Visitors with their own Facebook profile can opt to have the video diary hosted on that site as well.

The whole process, from filming the video diary to posting, takes about 20 minutes, meaning Tourism New Zealand can film 20 tourists per day.

Any video diaries that stand out will be used by Tourism New Zealand for future 'What Do You Say UK?' television commercials.

While the initiative is targeting travellers from the UK, all international visitors are welcome to record a 'rave'. So far, videos have been recorded by visitors from the US, UK, Canada, Australia, Japan, Germany, Eastern Europe and South America.

Tourism New Zealand has been using YouTube to host video content since August 2007 when the organisation took over YouTube's home page for 24-hours worldwide to launch its new 100% Pure New Zealand campaign. The television commercial has since been viewed more than 1 million times.