

## TRENZ MEDIA BRIEFING – DEVELOPING A WORLD CLASS VISITOR DESTINATION

### *Slide 1*

- Kia ora tatou, e ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā rangatira o te ao tāpoi - tena rā koutou katoa.
- It's my genuine pleasure as Mayor of Rotorua, to join with Oscar and his staff at Destination Rotorua, fellow Rotorua industry colleagues and leaders in welcoming you on what has by all accounts, been another extremely successful TRENZ week in Rotorua.
- This is the fourth time our city has had the privilege to host this showcase event, and each year we get more and more excited about our opportunity to share with you the diversity and manaakitanga that is our home - Rotorua, New Zealand's Coolest Host Spot.
- As Karl and Bruce have so passionately shared this morning, we are a destination on a mission and through the efforts of sectors such as tourism and others across our community there is a real sense of buoyancy, opportunity and excitement about the future.

- This morning I want to share with you how we in Rotorua have come together to step up to our legacy as a tourism town - and in that our commitment to continually developing ourselves as 'a world class visitor destination'.

### *Slide 2*

- The people who came here in the late 1880's were adventure seekers. They were most frequently overseas tourists or officers from the British forces in New Zealand.
- Their adventure took them to a place that was totally out of the ordinary.
- At that time the Pink and White Terraces were New Zealand's most famous tourist attraction - the Eighth Wonder of the World.
- The journey from Auckland was typically by steamer to Tauranga, the bridle track to Ohinemutu on Lake Rotorua, by coach to Te Wairoa, by canoe across Lake Tarawera, and then on foot over the hill to the swampy shores of Lake Rotomahana and the terraces, to be guided, if they were lucky, by principal guide Sophia Hinerangi -This was adventure tourism, before it had a label!

*Slide 3*

- Early visitors also came to bath in the natural hot springs
- Later, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century visitors would come to the new Bath House - the government's first major investment in product infrastructure, today our beloved Rotorua Museum – Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa and the original home and offices of the NZ Tourism & Publicity Department – today known as Tourism New Zealand.
- Indeed our legacy in tourism is a rich one.

*Slide 4*

- The role that Rotorua has played in New Zealand tourism to a large extent mirrors the people and the environment of this unique place.
- We are our people and as they have been affected by change so has our city.
- With any journey, there is a tipping point - an 'epiphany moment' that takes hold and causes a series of actions to occur where previously there was inaction.
- This epiphany for Rotorua' tourism operators came in the form of a watershed local industry wide meeting in 2012, the result of which was a resolute commitment by operators to see change – and to collectively step up.
- Through the mandate of the Rotorua Tourism Committee and with support of the Rotorua Lakes Council, a dedicated 3 year plan was put into place to revitalise Rotorua's reputation as a world class visitor destination.

- Out of this came the *Famously Rotorua* marketing campaign which was launched in September 2013.

#### Slide 5

- Our local tourism industry took up the challenge and established the *Rotorua Tourism Investment Partnership Programme* which saw just over 100 local operators voluntarily investing annually into the fund to leverage Rotorua Lake Council's investment in Destination Rotorua.
- In 2013 our new council came in with the call for change ringing in our ears.
- Council's answer was *Rotorua's 2030 Vision* a commitment to setting Rotorua on a path to real change for our people.
- The revitalisation of our inner city has come out of *Rotorua 2030* and was a direct response to a call from Rotorua's tourism operators and our whole community to have an inner city that was vibrant, safe and thriving.
- The scene was set.
- Ultimately we all agreed that we wanted Rotorua to be a better place
- To get there though council's vision had to support and compliment the industry's vision.

### Slide 6

- I am so proud of this city. Over the last 4 years in particular so many people inside and outside of our tourism industry have worked incredibly hard.
- Result – we believe we are a world class destination.
- In fact we are even better than that because we have, and always have had a totally unique offering.
  - We are the home of contemporary Māori culture, arts and innovation.
  - We are a gold level status mountain biking destination, and
  - We have a natural environment like no other. We've got geothermal in the middle of our city. Hot springs were the reason people came here 100 years ago and it remains an important part of our cities future.
- We call these our 3 pillars and we own them.
- Culture, dirt and mud is totally what we are about!

### Slide 7

- Living in Rotorua, where Maori culture and protocol is so much a part of our lives, it is always so amazing to see the reactions of visitors when they experience a traditional welcome for the first time.
- *Your experience of Maori culture – Tarawera Ultra-marathon*

- Te Arawa have been hosting and sharing their Māori culture with visitors since travellers first visited this place.
- Today, Rotorua continues to lead innovation in Māori tourism development.
- There are exciting developments in the pipe line in a whole range of areas.
- For instance at Te Puia, directly after this briefing I will be attending a special ceremony that triggers the start of their new multi-million dollar wananga and whare kai developments.
- These developments will honour the legacy and statute of that place while also meeting the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century visitor.

#### *Slide 8*

- With mountain biking our community has turned a fledgling, grassroots pursuit into a passionate, vibrant, world famous industry and destination.
- This group of enthusiasts built our tracks and campaigned to bring events here which resulted in a destination where mountain biking is a major drawcard and economic driver for our district and our country.
- The International Mountain Biking Association knows how good our tracks are and have given us gold level status.

- We host a leg of the world's best mountain biking festival – the Crankworx World Tour.
- I have to say that as the Mayor of a tourism city there is nothing like walking into the media tent at Crankworx and seeing 100 national and international media organisations rolling out images of the event and your city.
- And knowing that, because the event is also held at Whistler in Canada and Les Gets in France, these images will keep rolling throughout the year.
- In 2015 the global audience viewership reached 1.8M. At present the 2016 viewership as of May was 4.8M, with further IMG distribution results yet to come in from the over 26 countries with broadcast rights.
- And now, biking is moving beyond the forest as urban cycle ways appear in our inner city and suburbs.
- Dirt has become a new commodity in Rotorua and it's a 24/7 days a week, 52 weeks a year offering.

*Slide 9*

- Rotorua has always been famous for its mud.
- For us to extend our claim to be a world class destination we are working towards re-establishing our place as the Spa City of the South Pacific.
- We have some great products and offerings that are constantly being modernised.
- But essentially, this natural resource comes from the same source that drew Maori to live here and travellers to visit many years ago.
- Geothermal and hot springs and wellness products and services are still our greatest untapped potential because we know more can be done and more will be done in this space – As we take Rotorua and our people to the place we want to be in the future.

*Slide 10 (Stats slide)*

- Tourism is a big part of our economic base.
- We have a 1 Billion dollar target to reach by 2030 and as you can see we are more than on track.
- To hit this target is hugely important as it sustains our businesses and our community.



- Right now visitors are flocking to New Zealand and particularly to our tourist cities.
- This is great, but to host the huge numbers expected, Rotorua and our other tourist towns need significant funding invested in our infrastructure.
- We are a city of just over 65,000 people accommodating 3.5 million visitor nights per annum.
- This puts pressure on our people and our environment – the very things that people come to Rotorua to see.
- For us to keep making our very significant contribution to New Zealand's largest export industry requires more investment in our infrastructure than our community can sustain.
- Tourism has once again taken off in Rotorua, central government investment in our infrastructure will enable this to continue.

*Slide 11 (Terry Stevens slide)*

- We're not about sitting back anymore, we are going to excel.
  - We will continue to grow and own our 3 pillars:
    - Contemporary Maori Culture
    - Mountain Biking
    - Natural Hot Springs and Wellness

- We are positioning ourselves as leaders for indigenous, adventure and spa conferencing.
- We are continuing to develop a broad based visitor strategy, beyond marketing to entice investment and build confidence in the destination.
- And we are working with global leaders in destination development like Terry Stevens.

*Slide 12 (tatau tatau)*

- In our community it's all about tatau tatau -we together.
- We know that we won't get there without working in partnership.
- Our tourism operators, who you have got to meet and know through this week, are working together collectively for the good of Rotorua and I am here to support that.

*Slide 13 Imagine slide*

- As a mayor of a unique tourist destination, I have travelled to conferences in Morocco, Australia and Japan to understand international drivers of success.
- I have seen what is available out there and I know that Rotorua's tourism product is world class.
- In a couple of weeks I will be in Zhengzhou, China at the invitation of the Secretariat of International Mayor's Forum on Tourism.
- As a keynote speaker, I will be proudly sharing Rotorua's story.
- This last image pretty much says it all – our culture and our history stand proudly and strongly behind us as we, Rotorua's people imagine even greater things for our city.