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New groundbreaking tourism report profiles Nature Coast's Natural Innovation to New Zealand

The Kapiti Coast's recent *Kapiti Coast Day Out* – a first-of-its-kind lower-carbon tourist pilot – has resulted in Nature Coast being discussed in national tourism circles. The report from the pilot trial will be launched at the national Eco Tourism conference in Nelson on August 5, firmly placing Nature Coast on the national map as tourism innovators and a great place for Kiwis to spend holidays or days out.

Chris Barber, Nature Coast's Tourism Manager says it's fantastic that Kapiti's innovation is now being talked about on a national level in the tourism sector. "We know our region is innovative with things like Kapiti Island, creative Paekakariki, our latest visitor guide for locals, and the introduction of compulsory water tanks. Tourism here is about our people and our natural environment – having these elements co-exist is a real key for us."

The report published results from an OPUS survey done from the *Kapiti Coast Day out* and showed that there is huge potential for train and other lower-carbon transport alternatives to become the basis for attracting more visitors from places like Wellington. The survey showed;

- Seven out of ten people were not against taking the train to Kapiti but they didn't think there would be connecting services once they got here;
- Six out of ten people liked the idea of using bikes once they got to Kapiti;
- Some people who came to Kapiti for the day did so for nostalgic reasons or to visit family and had renewed enthusiasm for visiting the region again. They weren't aware of how many great things there were to do on the Coast and appreciated having the opportunity to explore.
- The lower-carbon side to the day wasn't a factor in participating for most, but those who were already making other choices about positive climate change appreciated being able to combine their interests with taking time away from the city.

Tourist operators involved in the day were Nga Manu Nature Reserve, Southward Car Museum, and Wellington Tramway Museum. As a result of the *Kapiti Coast Day Out* these operators are continuing to work together with KDCD, Nature Coast, and Tranz Rail to create unique opportunities to increase visitor numbers. Bruce Benseman from Nga Manu says engaging in cross-marketing activity is worthwhile. "With projects like the Kapiti Coast Day Out, the savings for individuals is small, but collectively they are huge," he says.

Part of the research that led to *The Kapiti Coast Day Out* showed that 96% of the harmful carbon emissions that domestic tourism is responsible for comes from transport. It is now clear that tourism, particularly, domestic tourism needs to take more responsibility for making positive action towards climate change.

The report from *The Kapiti Coast Day Out* will be launched on Friday August 21, 2.30pm-3.30pm, on a tram in QEII Park, Kapiti, to celebrate its achievements and give stakeholders the opportunity to aim for perfect scenarios for future promotions. RSVP's essential.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Carbon Footprint of Domestic Tourism (part of the research that led to *The Kapiti Coast Day Out*) shows that when compared with international visitors domestic tourism is responsible for more economic activity (\$26 million in economic activity every day versus \$24), more overnight trips (83% of all overnight trips are by domestic tourists) and more “carbon”. Trips by Kiwis are responsible for three quarters of the “carbon footprint” of tourism here (compared with only 25% for international tourists’ travel within New Zealand). Transport determines the bulk of the footprint (96%); much more so than the choices about accommodation. Within transport car trips (59%) and air travel (36%) play the biggest role.

Written by Doctor Susanne Becken from Lincoln University, a world expert on climate change and tourism, the study points out that there is a clear potential to shrink this footprint, help New Zealand comply with international obligations, and secure our “100% Pure” brand. With the majority of domestic tourist flows around the main population centres we need sustainable transport networks that cater for shorter trips. Key tourist destinations such as Coromandel, Rotorua, Taupo, the Kapiti Coast, Hanmer Springs, and Akaroa could form part of alternative and carbon-efficient transport networks.

Following on from the study and catalysed by the Hikurangi Foundation, ***the Kapiti Coast Day Out – a low carbon tourism pilot*** – tells the story of the Kapiti Coast: a region an hour from Wellington and already looking at attracting more “backyard” visitors to the area. It has commuter train access which is usually a lower carbon means of transport than the car. But there is a gap – 20-30% of all visitors who catch the train from Wellington to Kapiti often feel let down when they arrive in Paraparaumu station because it’s hard to get around the various tourist attractions due to a lack of convenient connecting transport.

Overall, using assumptions which were most likely to have over estimated the Kapiti Day Out carbon footprint, the pilot using train and shuttles appears to have saved at least 844 kg CO₂e compared with the usual trip by car; that is, a greater than 60 per cent saving. In practice, a more permanent arrangement which is now being developed by the local community should be able to make more savings as well as boost the long term return from tourism for the area.

The Hikurangi Foundation is a new national charity whose mission is to find solutions and help Kiwis take smart action on climate change. www.hikurangi.org.nz

Emission profile for domestic and international tourism in 2007

	Domestic tourism (t CO2-e)	International tourism (t CO2-e)
Domestic air	657,456	211,490
Car	1,098,675	215,905
Bus/coach	21,774	34,410
Other transport	73,004	54,616
Hotel	10,113	43,855
Motel	486	8,895
Hostel	8,908	9,676
Camping	7,719	-
Hosted/B&B	176	-
Private	1,940	44,853
Other	38,686	14,117
TOTAL	1,918,937	637,820

Summary of carbon emissions related to domestic and international tourism, using a range of metrics

METRIC	DOMESTIC TOURISM	INTERNATIONAL TOURISM
Total CO2-e emissions (tonnes)	1,918,937	637,820
CO2-e emissions per tourist trip (kg)	45.7	258.2
CO2-e emissions per tourist day* (kg)	27.5	13.0

For domestic 27.3 day trips were added to the 42.6 million 'nights' spent; for international tourists 49.0 million nights was used.

The two reports: Kapiti Coast Day Out Technical Report, and Kapiti Coast Day Out Summary Report, can be found online from Aug 3 www.hikurangi.org.nz or available on request at liana.stupples@hikurangi.org.nz