

Media Release

Record season for KiwiRail tourism services

KiwiRail celebrating a record tourism season fuelled by growing visitor numbers to New Zealand and a global rail renaissance.

“This summer peak season produced a number of records for our Great Journeys of New Zealand services,” says KiwiRail Chief Executive Peter Reidy.

“February and March were the biggest months ever on TranzAlpine and Northern Explorer, with business up more than 10% on any prior year. On average our services were at least 95% full during that period.

“Interislander has had one of its best summers ever, with record vehicle numbers crossing the Cook Strait. The expert way our teams managed that demand is reflected in spectacular on-time performance scores.

“Overall, our TranzAlpine passenger business has grown by 90% over the past five years, and the Northern Explorer is up 71%.

“We’ve seen growth across both domestic and international markets, and our peak seasons have started to spread into our shoulder seasons.

“At the same time our customer service scores are some of the best we have seen, and last year we moved from Qualmark Silver status to Gold on all of our services.”

The growth in KiwiRail’s tourism business reflects the overall growth in visitors to New Zealand, including the on-going recovery in Canterbury.

“We’re also benefitting from a global ‘rail renaissance’, which has seen increased demand for a return to slower travel where the journey itself becomes part of the adventure,” says Mr Reidy.

“This is why we are putting the focus even more strongly on customer experience.

“We see tourism as a key part of KiwiRail’s future, and we’re looking at how we can continue to develop and grow our services.

“We are developing packages and experiences that encourage our passengers to more deeply experience the regions they visit.

“We’re fully committed to driving regional growth, and we know how important our services are to the regions. We deliver tourists to out-of-the-way destinations and bring much-needed tourism dollars to small towns.”

This includes in the South Island, where KiwiRail teams are continuing to work on the massive task of restoring the Main North Line following the destructive November 2016 Kaikoura earthquake.

“While we are making steady progress with the repairs there is still a way to go before the line is restored so we can resume our pre-earthquake services. We are working towards resuming our Pacific service later this year,” says Mr Reidy.

Notes to media:

Great Journeys of New Zealand will be a key exhibitor at TRENZ, New Zealand’s biggest annual business-to-business travel and trade event, on 7-10 May. Visit us at booth number 3049.

For Great Journeys of New Zealand footage and images, please visit <https://media.greatjourneysfnz.co.nz/>

For more information, contact:
Faith Thumath
KiwiRail Communications Advisor
+64 27 548 0797