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## **TRANZIT'S NEW DARK SKY TOURS OFFER UNIQUE EXPERIENCES FOR VISITORS TO WAIRARAPA**

With Wairarapa set to become an internationally recognised Dark Sky Reserve in New Zealand - one of only a handful in the world - Tranzit Group is creating a suite of group tours that will provide visitors with a unique experience.



*Figure 1: Stonehenge Aotearoa, Wairarapa*

Extending across all sectors in the Wairarapa, the Dark Sky Reserve will encompass all three Wairarapa districts (approx. 6000 square kilometres) and provide visitors with an all-year round experience.

Robin Corbett is Tours Manager for Tranzit Tours and Hammonds Wellington Tours. She says Tranzit is working with Destination Wairarapa, the regional tourism organisation, existing tour operators and new attractions – such as Star Field Tours Martinborough who already have

giant telescopes onsite and plans to open a new Visitor Centre this spring – to develop a suite of Dark Sky products for different markets.

“Tranzit is working on a number of bespoke group tours that will offer visitors unique experiences in New Zealand and meet the demands of different markets,” she says.

“This could include a small group tour that enables visitors to star gaze and meet experienced astronomy guides at the new Star Field Tours Martinborough on the outskirts of the boutique wine village; a dinner and Dark Sky experience at a vineyard as well as large group experiences that visit existing attractions such as Stonehenge Aotearoa.”

“Tranzit is the glue that will bring more visitors to the Wairarapa and safely transport them within it.”

Most importantly, says Robin, the new Dark Sky tours will be an all year-round proposition meaning visitors will come in the shoulder seasons, winter and summer. Visitors will also be able to do these tours out of Wellington or Wairarapa and a tour is being specifically developed for Chinese visitors.

David Hancock, General Manager of Destination Wairarapa, says it is great to see operators, like Tranzit, developing new products across the region that will bring international visitors to Wairarapa.

“Wairarapa already has a diverse product offering with rugged coasts, boutique villages, wine, food and cycling,” he says. “The new Dark Sky reserve products currently being developed will integrate really well with our existing tourism infrastructure and help shallow the lower occupancy winter season.”

Mr Hancock says Wairarapa’s proximity to Wellington makes it an excellent addition to the capital city experience.

“These experiences have the potential to attract a new demographic of visitor to our region, increase guest nights and spend. The Dark Sky product line up will help attract special interest groups and provide conference organisers with another option for off-site activities for delegates.”

Tranzit will launch its suite of new Dark Sky tours this spring.

## **ENDS**

Note to editors:

- Tranzit is an award-winning, fourth-generation family owned business founded in Masterton in 1924. The transport and tourism company now operates over 1500 vehicles and employs a team of 1490 nationwide. Tranzit also operates Hammonds Wellington Tours which brings visitors from Wellington to Wairarapa on day trips.
- The Wairarapa is just over an hour’s drive from Wellington International Airport and inter-Island ferry connections, while Palmerston North airport is just 90 minutes from Masterton.
- The Wairarapa is made up of the five towns: Martinborough, Featherston, Greytown, Carterton and Masterton. Wairarapa is one of New Zealand’s top food and wine destinations and lies at the heart of The Classic New Zealand Wine Trail.

### **For more information please contact:**

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