



Media release – 18 August

Tourism West Coast wins bid to host conference

Tourism West Coast has beaten out rival bids from Wanaka and Dunedin to be named the host of next years New Zealand Inbound Tour Operators Council (ITOC) conference.

The conference will see over 250 of New Zealand's top inbound tourism operators spend four days on the West Coast bringing an estimated economic benefit of at least \$110 thousand to the region.

Chair of Tourism West Coast Phillip Barnett says he is delighted at the news.

"This is fantastic news. It will bring the top NZ inbound holiday destination decision makers to the West Coast and give us and every tour operator on the Coast a real vehicle to promote the region," he says.

"When the West Coast last hosted this conference at Franz Josef in the early 90s the region saw a big rise in awareness and tourist numbers surged".

Regional Tourism Offices are the only groups eligible to bid for the conference. Tourism West Coast's Anita Gillespie presented the bid at this years ITOC conference in Tauranga with help from local tourism operators Paul Schramm, Janet Luxton, Jenny Keogan and Anne Bastiaans.

"We've been lobbying to host the conference for 12 months. We pitched it to ITOC delegates telling them what a fantastic visitor experience they will have on the Coast including interacting with the locals," says Anita Gillespie.

Delegates at this years conference were wooed by the West Coast team with each one being given a piece of pounamu and a marshmallow on a stick.

"We told them about pounamu's significance and how they should bring it back to the Coast when they visit in 12 months. The marshmallow's were to signify the sweet taste of success," she says.

ITOC Chief Executive Lesley Immink says Tourism West Coast did some great work promoting the region as a host for the conference.

“The quirky touches like the marshmallow’s and the character and flavour of the bid won over the delegates,” she says.

“Hosting rights are hotly contested as it is such a high profile raising exercise, all the top tour operators, media and Tourism NZ staff will now visit the West Coast”.

The conference will be ITOC’s 41st conference and will be held in Greymouth and Hokitika in August 2012.

ENDS

For more information contact :

Anita Gillespie, Tourism West Coast
Phone : 029 770 3796