Thousands of internet hits as tourism campaign gains traction

A $100,000 West Coast tourism campaign funded by Development West Coast attracted over 3,000 combined website hits in just the first day of its launch. The campaign features two advertisements screening on national television that highlight the wide variety of activities available on the Coast and will remind visitors that they want more fun “just add water”, something the West Coast has in abundance.

DWC CEO John Chang says given the global economic downturn, Christchurch earthquake, Pike River disaster and overall decline in the mining industry it is a good time to embark on a campaign like this.

“We have had some recent set-backs we wanted to show our confidence in the Coast and the strength of its economy. This tourism initiative will remind the rest of the country we are still open for business and how fantastic and dynamic the West Coast is,” says Dr Chang.

“Water isn’t just about rain, although it is very important. The campaign will show how much Coasters enjoy our water and what fun and excitement we get from it,” he says.

The four-week television campaign began on TV One on 18 October. It is complemented by an online presence, outdoor billboards in Christchurch and Wellington and an upgrade of Tourism West Coast’s website.

In the first 24 hours of the campaign there were 4,000 hits on the website - 3,700 of these were from visitors from overseas.

Tourism West Coast CEO Jim Little says the campaign specifically targets domestic tourists and offers a unique lens on the Coast. He says: “The West Coast was the perfect choice, “ says Nelia.

In 2011 she began working for DWC as the project manager for Regional Business Network. Her role involves helping businesses access support and funding to grow and innovate.

“The family got permanent residency six months before moving to New Zealand and are now citizens. Initially they were looking up to live in Greymouth or Auckland. Initially they were tossing up whether to live on the Coast but as anything we read about the high rainfall but we felt we couldn’t find the real Kiwi culture in Auckland. Tjaarlong tonged the Kiwis back had been here when he flew into Hokitika a taxi driver asked him: “how are you mate?” and he immediately felt at home,” she says.

In 2007 Tjaar began working at Pike River Mine and he is now one of a handful still working there. Nelia started off attending community courses at West Reap to get a grip on the culture but ended up teaching computer literacy there. She then worked part time for Kip McGrath before teaching at Karoro Learning.

“We wanted a better lifestyle and New Zealand was the choice,” says Nelia.

The majority are a good way of informing the business community about what some of the bigger and more influential companies on the Coast are up to in terms of investment and initiatives.

For further information, contact:
John Sturgeon ONZM, MBE
Chairman
For more information, contact:
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(03) 768 0140 or 0800 768 0140
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Up Close and Personal with Nelia Heersink - Project Manager for Regional Business Partner Network

If Nelia Heersink’s husband had not gone into the water in the South African bush with his children, Berndt and Imke, were born and after some years the family moved back to South Africa where Nelia worked as a teacher.

While in Namibia the couple’s children, Berndt and Imke, were born and after some years the family moved back to South Africa where Nelia worked as a teacher.

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With the international investment market permanently stuck in second gear and the softening of the global commodity prices we are all becoming acutely conscious of the state of our local economy on the West Coast. This situation has been amplified by the proposed closure of the Spring Creek Mine.

In terms of difficulty and uncertainty people have been quick to point to DWC to do something, ‘spend the money’, do what DWC was set to do, etc. As the Chair of the West Coast Business Partner Network it is my duty to assure you all that your Trust has been working hard behind the scenes to do the right thing and what our community is expecting of DWC. In regards to the concerns over the proposed Spring Creek closure, DWC CEO and I have met with the Prime Minister to discuss everything on his recent visit to the Coast.

To date DWC has given $37 million cash to the local councils and to various community groups on the West Coast. A further $12 million has been committed to the district councils for the remainder of the Major District Initiative funding. As a trust we have been working hard to stimulate the local economy and foster diversification of West Coast industries. Case in point is our latest production in partnership with Tourism West Coast and the $100k funding of the ‘Just Add Water’ tourism campaign to promote a positive image of the West Coast to domestic tourists getting ready for the summer holiday. Early indications are that people are taking notice of the marketing TV ads.

I am delighted to learn that a number of local cranberry growers are working hard to promote and develop value-added cranberry products for export and domestic sales. These pioneers are making preservatives, condiments and jams out of cranberries grown on the West Coast. Horticulture is one of the targeted growth opportunities on the West Coast especially the high value crops such as cranberries.

In addition, DWC staff have been working quietly behind the scenes with a number of West Coast businesses that have been struggling in the difficult economic climate. In recognition of our contribution to assisting businesses, a series of business awards event hosted by the Auckland University of Technology Business Faculty.

Finally I would like to publicly thank the Mayors of the three district councils and the Chair of the regional council for their vote of confidence in me through the reappointment of my DWC board tenure for another three years. We are living through exceptionally challenging times and more than ever DWC has a critical role to play on the West Coast. I have no doubt whatsoever that my fellow Trustees and I, with the support of our capable management and staff at DWC, will meet the challenge head on with the aim of advancing the region’s well-being.

John Sturgeon ONZM, MBE
Chairman

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Business networking breakfasts popular

Business networking breakfasts organised by DWC are proving popular with up to 60 people attending a recent breakfast in Westport.

The breakfasts are the brainchild of Peter Jones from CMP Kokiri. He came to DWC last year asking the Trust to organise the breakfasts as a way for business people to get together informally.

The breakfasts have run every six to eight weeks in Greymouth and Westport as guest speakers from companies like Bathurst Resources Ltd, the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce and Westpower attracting between 25 and 60 people a session.

DWC’s COO Warren Gilbertson says the breakfasts are a good way of informing the business community about what some of the bigger and more influential companies on the Coast are up to in terms of investment and initiatives.

To register for business networking events or to be included on DWC’s email list to receive information contact info@dwc.org.nz