

Ashburton District

Ashburton, Rakaia, Methven, Mt Somers
New Zealand



Ashburton District Visitor Strategy 2009 - 2019

www.ashburtondistrict.co.nz

CONTENTS

Ashburton District Tourism Foreword	2
Executive Summary	3
Why we need a Strategy	4
Strategy Development Process	4
Tourism in New Zealand	5
Current and Future Challenges	7
Goal One: We provide our visitors with a memorable and unique experience	8
Goal Two: Our visitor industry is prosperous and attracts investment	9
Goal Three: Our visitor industry and community work together for mutual benefit	10
Goal Four: We share our open space and environment in sustainable ways	11
Appendix 1: Tourism in the Ashburton District	12
Appendix 2: Ashburton District Tourism Industry	16
Appendix 3: Ashburton District Visitor Statistics	18
Appendix 4: New Zealand Tourism Industry	20
Appendix 5: Canterbury Tourism Forecasts	22
Appendix 6: Strategy Development	23

ASHBURTON DISTRICT TOURISM FOREWORD

On behalf of the Ashburton District Tourism Development Board we are pleased to present the Ashburton District Visitor Strategy 2009 - 2019.

This is the first time a Visitor Strategy for the Ashburton District has been developed and is the result of many months of industry and working group members input. The Board would like to thank everyone who gave their time, energy and ideas to the development of the Strategy. We trust this document accurately reflects the range of ideas you all brought to the process.

The strategy process has provided an opportunity for the District to look at the big picture, to think critically about the challenges we face and how we can work together to develop a strategy for the future.

The strategy sets out objectives and actions needed to deliver four key goals:

1. We provide our visitors with a memorable and unique experience
2. Our tourism sector is prosperous and attracts investment
3. Our visitor industry and community work together for mutual benefit
4. We share our open space and environment with visitors in sustainable ways

The Ashburton District Council and Ashburton District Tourism Development Board are committed to implementing the Ashburton District Visitor Strategy 2009 - 2019 and are proud to be leading this process. Each of the organisations has a crucial role to play, but to succeed in delivering in the goals, objectives and actions of this strategy we will require support from the entire visitor industry and from the wider community.

We look forward to your involvement with the Strategy implementation to ensure the vision we have for our visitor industry and community becomes a reality.



Kelvin Holmes

Board Chairperson



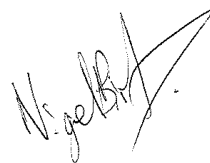
David Wilson

**Board Deputy
Chairperson**



Michelle Bungard

**General Manager
2008**



Nigel Birt

**General Manager
2009**

Ashburton District

Ashburton • Methven/Mt Hutt • Mt Somers & High Country • Rakaia



For further information please contact:

Ashburton District Tourism

211a Wills Street

PO Box 482

Ashburton 7740

New Zealand

Phone +64 3 308 2669

Fax +64 3 308 2665

www.ashburtondistrict.co.nz

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our vision

In 2019, we are the destination of choice for visitors who want to actively engage with our people, landscape and lifestyle.

Our strategic goals

Four strategic goals, each with supporting objectives, have been identified to achieve our vision:

1. We provide our visitors with a memorable and unique experience

- We build a reputation for having “True Kiwi” experiences
- Our operators provide a quality experience
- Ashburton District is a leader in recreational tourism
- Our quality events attract local, regional, national and international visitors to our District

2. Our visitor industry is prosperous and attracts investment

- Our tourism market is developed as a year round destination
- Our tourism sector attracts and retains an appropriately skilled work force
- Ashburton District’s visitor industry is branded in ways that are recognised locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- Opportunities for investment are pro-actively identified and promoted
- Tourism businesses identify and put in place strategies that will consistently increase their returns on investment

3. Our visitor industry and community work together for mutual benefit

- Our tourism attractions are promoted to our local communities
- The visitor industry and the community share our natural assets for mutual benefit
- Our tourism businesses and community work together to promote awareness, and celebrate success
- We have quality community planning processes and infrastructure that support the visitor industry

4. We share our open space and environment with visitors in sustainable ways

- Visitors are able to find and use recycling and waste facilities
- All tourism developments in the district take a sustainable approach
- Environmental and sustainability accreditations are promoted to tourism businesses
- We provide visitors with information on our indigenous flora and fauna
- Identify opportunities to develop and capitalise on our natural assets as spaces to enjoy
- Develop a policy on freedom camping in the Ashburton District

Our values

Manaakitanga

Sharing exceptional and natural hospitality, knowledge and beliefs, on the basis of mutual respect between host and visitor.

Kaitiakitanga

The guardianship and sustainable management of our natural, built and cultural resources for the collective benefit of current and future generations.

WHY WE NEED A STRATEGY

Tourism is an integral part of our District economy

The Ashburton District economy is based on agriculture and on adding value to the things we grow. But along with fertile lands and innovative farming, we have been blessed with a natural landscape that the community and visitors have learned to enjoy.

Tourism has grown in importance in our District as visitors have continued to come and experience what we have to offer. Our attractions and tourism infrastructure has grown along the way, with investment in all sorts of ventures that provide interesting and rewarding employment options for our community and that have made our local economy stronger and more diverse.

A stronger tourism industry means a stronger local economy and a better standard of living for us all.

Tourism enhances our overall lifestyle

We benefit from tourism in ways other than the economy though.

More people to support local facilities and services mean we can have a better overall standard of living. Entertainment, hospitality, retail and core services like roads are all enhanced due to the impact visitors have on our District.

Having people from other countries and cultures visit and stay in our District connects us to the world in ways that wouldn't exist otherwise. We become more aware of opportunities and more in tune with the world. We learn to appreciate and value other cultures and can enjoy the benefits of the global village our world has become. Tourism can lift our spirit.

Tourism is a competitive industry

Ashburton District is competing strongly for the benefits tourism brings. We are a small district facing competition from other South Island destinations like Christchurch and Queenstown. We know we have something different to offer but we need to ensure visitors are aware of what we have.

We need to be able to respond to changes in the global environment to ensure our tourism sector continues to grow and we continue to benefit from that. We need to work hard to ensure we remain a destination of choice to local and international visitors alike.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Ashburton District Tourism Development Board initiated the strategy development process earlier this year.

The Board saw the need to develop a visitor strategy for the District – one that everyone would have ownership of and would work together to achieve. The strategy would cover the years 2009-2019 and would be monitored annually and reviewed every three years to ensure it continues to capture the requirements of the visitor industry and the community.

A Working Group comprising representatives of the tourism sector, Ashburton District Tourism and Ashburton District Council was established to oversee the strategy development and design, approve the process to be used and to develop a draft strategy from information captured in community workshops.

Three community workshops were held with participants from the tourism sector and others in the community with an interest in the development of tourism in the District. These workshops provided the information on which this strategy has been developed.

More detailed information on the strategy development process can be found on pages 23-24.

TOURISM IN NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2015

The New Zealand Tourism Strategy (NZTS) 2015 sets out a clear pathway to make sure that New Zealand gets the best possible value from tourism through to 2015. It updates the New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2010 (released in 2001) and responds to changes in the global and local tourism marketplace.

Vision:

The vision of NZTS 2015 is:

"In 2015, tourism is valued as the leading contributor to a sustainable New Zealand economy".

Values:

NZTS 2015 is underpinned by two key values, **kaitiakitanga** (guardianship) and **manaakitanga** (hospitality). These values provide the foundation for a sustainable approach to the development of our tourism industry.

Outcomes:

To guide the tourism industry towards its vision, NZTS 2015 has four outcomes:

1. New Zealand delivers a world-class visitor experience
2. New Zealand's tourism sector is prosperous and attracts ongoing investment
3. The tourism sector takes a leading role in protecting and enhancing the environment
4. The tourism sector and communities work together for mutual benefit

Economic Benefits of Tourism to New Zealand

Tourism is a large and growing part of New Zealand's economy. The annual "Tourism Satellite Account" 2007 report produced by Statistics NZ highlights the impact tourism has on the national economy. With total tourism expenditure of \$20.1 billion in the year ending March 2007, it is our biggest export sector accounting for 18.3% of all exports.

Tourism generated a direct contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product of \$7.9 billion in the year to March 2007, employing 108,000 full-time equivalent employees and close to 10% of the national workforce directly or indirectly.

Tourism is a diverse sector, with more than 11,000 individual businesses including hotels, farms, tours, garages, markets, taxis, vineyards, supermarkets, training organisations, dairies, shops, ferries, coaches and airlines.

Domestic tourism makes up just over half of all tourism expenditure and although not forecast to grow at the same rate as international arrivals (1% for domestic overnight travel and 4% for international arrivals by 2012) it remains a major component of the sector.

Economic Benefits of Tourism to Ashburton District

The importance of tourism to a region is determined by the number of people who visit and how much visitors spend. The contribution of tourism to the local economy comes from three sources:

1. Tourism-characteristic industries, such as accommodation, restaurants, transport services, and cultural and recreational services;
2. Tourism-related industries, specifically the retail trade; and
3. All other industries, including everything from police services to builders.

The table below highlights the role of tourism in the Ashburton District economy in terms of its contribution to employment, GDP and business units, and compares this to the national situation. It should be noted that this snapshot of the tourism sector in Ashburton District was undertaken in February, a traditionally peak month for tourism in many areas but a low month for Ashburton District. We are looking to have the figures updated to reflect August, a peak month for Ashburton District.

Contribution of tourism to the District economy

Tourism	FTEs		GDP (\$2007m)		Business units	
		%		%		%
Tourism-characteristic industries	249	1.9%	10.5	0.9%	91	2.0%
Tourism-related industries	134	1.0%	6.8	0.6%	27	0.6%
All non-tourism-related industries	234	1.8%	24.6	2.1%	83	1.8%
Ashburton District	617	4.7%	41.9	3.6%	201	4.5%
New Zealand	117,875	6.4%	8,240	5.0%	25,666	5.1%

source:BERL Regional Database, Statistics NZ, Tourism Satellite Account

The tourism sector in the Ashburton District employed more than 600 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) in 2007, in over 200 businesses. Together, these FTEs produced almost \$42 million in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Around 4.7 percent of all employment in the District was the direct result of tourism, compared with 6.4 percent at a national level. Similarly, GDP and businesses in place as a direct result of tourism accounted for smaller shares of the District economy than at the national level.

Canterbury Visitor Forecasts

Domestic Tourism

1. Domestic tourism in Canterbury is expected to grow by around 1% per year through to 2012.
2. The average length of stay is forecast to stay the same at 2.6 nights for 2012.
3. Expenditure from domestic tourism is forecast to increase by around 3.7% annually to \$654 million by 2012.

International Tourism

1. International tourism in Canterbury is forecast to grow by over 4% annually through to 2012.
2. The average length of stay is forecast to increase from 3.1 nights to 3.2 by 2012.
3. Expenditure from International tourism is forecast to increase by over 6% annually to \$1.639 billion by 2012.

Ashburton District's visitor numbers have not been growing as fast as those for Canterbury as a whole. This strategy is intended to focus the District on improving this figure and bring us back to at least matching the growth levels in the Canterbury visitor market.

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Enhancing our Visitor's Experience

Ashburton District has unique attractions to offer domestic and international visitors alike. Developing and marketing a range of attractions to visitors is important to ensure visitors first of all come to Ashburton District, stay longer, enjoy themselves and then promote our District as a great place to visit.

Delivering a consistently high standard of service is also important in developing as a visitor destination. One bad experience can impact on the view a visitor takes away of the District. Conversely, a consistently high standard of service is likely to result in that all-important word of mouth recommendation.

Participants in workshops held to develop this strategy were keen to point out that the District is unique, does not want to be another Queenstown and has its own "true kiwi" authenticity that visitors like. We need to build on our unique character, continue developing and marketing our outstanding attractions and provide consistently high levels of service and hospitality to truly enhance our visitor's experience.

Connecting with Canterbury

Ashburton District is within a one hour drive from Christchurch, offering incredible opportunities for our tourism sector.

1. Proximity to the South Island's main international airport
2. Proximity to the South Island's main passenger port
3. A potential local market of close to 500,000 people
4. The opportunity to work with the other key Canterbury tourism markets of Christchurch, Hanmer and Akaroa

Ashburton District Tourism and individual operators already work strongly with Christchurch and Canterbury Tourism, Christchurch Airport and other Canterbury based tourism operators and marketing agencies. There remain significant opportunities to grow our regional, national and international tourism markets and further developing our connections with Christchurch and Canterbury will help this to happen.

A changing international economic environment could provide exciting opportunities for the visitor industry in Ashburton District. If New Zealanders look to holiday more at home rather than offshore there could be new markets to explore. Ashburton District's key Australian market may not be as affected as some international markets and again this could offer some opportunities.

Christchurch, like Ashburton District has a seasonal tourism market – but they do not coincide. Tapping into Christchurch's strong summer market could transform Ashburton District's traditionally softer summer market.

Reducing Seasonality

Significant progress has been made in the last five years to strengthen the District's summer tourism market and this has been helped by new events and attractions starting up to tap into this potentially huge market.

Seasonality limits the further development of our tourism sector because investment in attractions and infrastructure to support visitors is underutilised for a large part of the year. It also means a poor ski season has a significant impact to the tourism sector. Reducing seasonality would improve industry profitability, vitality and strength.

As mentioned above Christchurch has its visitor peak in the summer months. If Ashburton District can connect with that market the benefits for the local tourism sector would bring significant benefits to our local visitor industry.



GOAL ONE:

We provide our visitors with a memorable and unique experience

Ashburton District can provide visitors with a memorable and unique experience if we define who we are as a district and package this in a consistent, quality experience that leaves our visitors wanting to come back and pass on the word.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE GOAL

We build a reputation for having "True Kiwi" experiences

1. Our attractions and events focus on "True Kiwi" experiences.
2. We encourage the integration of visitors to the district into our business operations.

Our District provides a quality experience

1. Encourage and inform operators to achieve recognised accreditation.
2. We encourage feedback from guests and operators to help us improve the experience.
3. We develop effective information and marketing material that adds value to the visitor experience.

Ashburton District is a leader in recreational tourism

1. Our visitor industry grows its ability to provide recreation attractions.
2. Promote recreational activities in the district to all visitors.
3. Monitor local tourism product to ensure balance and recognise opportunities.
4. Educate community on benefits derived from tourism.
5. Encourage a welcoming community.
6. Incorporate visitor needs when implementing the Long Term Community Plan.
7. Encourage Ashburton District Council investment in strategic district wide tourism opportunities.

Our quality events attract local, regional, national and international visitors to our District.

1. Develop and implement an Ashburton District Events Strategy.
2. Signature events are identified and promoted.
3. New events that enhance our key strengths are assisted to establish.
4. We have events that enable our District's different cultures and interests to showcase their talents.

Stakeholders who can contribute to helping us achieve our goals & objectives

Ashburton Business Association, Ashburton District Council, Ashburton District tourism operators, Ashburton District Tourism, Ashburton i-SITE Visitor Centre, Ashburton Licensing Trust, ATTTO, Enterprise Ashburton, Green Globe, Methven i-SITE Visitor Centre, Qualmark, Department of Conservation.



GOAL TWO:

Our visitor industry is prosperous and attracts investment

The success of Ashburton District's visitor industry is ultimately dependent on the performance of the businesses within it. If they are successful the sector will keep growing, delivering significant benefits to business owners and our community.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE GOAL

Our tourism market is developed as a year round destination

1. We promote the district as a year round destination.
2. Investment opportunities for summer attractions are promoted to potential investors.
3. Increase the proportion of guest nights the Ashburton District receives within Canterbury.
4. Develop our ability to host conferences and events.
5. We encourage businesses to operate all year round where possible.

Our tourism sector attracts and retains an appropriately skilled work force

1. Linkages are developed with the "Tourism and Hospitality Workforce Strategy".
2. A seasonal "job broker" data base is established.
3. Develop an active partnership with the education and training sector through closer links between businesses, providers of training, and industry-training organisations.

Ashburton district's tourism industry is branded in ways that are recognised locally, regionally, nationally and internationally

1. Develop and implement a visitor industry marketing and branding strategy.

Opportunities for investment are pro-actively identified and promoted

1. Research is undertaken to identify potential tourism investments and these opportunities are promoted.
2. We encourage Ashburton District Council to be actively involved in developing strategic tourism assets that will provide our visitors with a memorable and unique experience.

Tourism businesses identify and put in place strategies that will consistently increase their returns on investment

1. Encourage our tourism industry to work together on pricing, seasonal campaigns, and packages to increase occupancy rates and profitability.

Stakeholders who can contribute to helping us achieve our goals & objectives

Ashburton District Council, Ashburton District tourism operators, Ashburton District Tourism, Ashburton i-SITE Visitor Centre, Ashburton Licensing Trust, ATTTO, Christchurch & Canterbury Tourism, Enterprise Ashburton, Methven i-SITE Visitor Centre, Qualmark, Training providers, Department of Conservation.



GOAL THREE:

Our visitor industry and community work together for mutual benefit

It is important that our visitor industry engages with the community to understand their needs and develop relationships that benefit them both. The visitor industry relies on a welcoming and well-managed community to provide a positive experience for visitors. The visitor industry in turn can provide improved economic, infrastructure, employment and lifestyle benefits to the community. If we plan the type of tourism we want and successfully manage its impacts we will have a vibrant community with a strong sense of local identity and pride.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE GOAL

Our tourism attractions are promoted to our local communities

1. Our community is aware of the tourism attractions available in the District and experience what we have to offer.
2. Our community is actively engaging in our local tourism attractions on a regular basis.

The visitor industry and the community share our natural assets for mutual benefit

1. Where the tourism sector utilises our natural assets it does so sustainably in partnership with the community and land owners.

Our tourism businesses and community work together to promote awareness, and celebrate success

1. We hold a bi-annual tourism awards function to acknowledge and celebrate innovation and success.
2. Regular tourism business "success stories" are promoted within and outside the District.

We have quality community planning processes and infrastructure that support the tourism sector

1. The tourism sector is included in key community planning processes.
2. The needs of the visitor industry are included in planning infrastructure requirements.
3. Our visitor attractions and facilities are well sign-posted and easy to be found.

Stakeholders who can contribute to helping us achieve our goals & objectives

Ashburton Business Association, Ashburton District Council, Ashburton District tourism operators, Ashburton District Tourism, Ashburton i-SITE Visitor Centre, Enterprise Ashburton, Department of Conservation, Methven i-SITE Visitor Centre.

GOAL FOUR:

We share our open space and environment in sustainable ways

The visitor industry often draws on spectacular natural assets, such as our mountains, rivers, coastlines, parks and reserves. By drawing on these resources tourism can impact on our community. We must make a commitment to respect our environment both for visitors and our community – a commitment to katiakitanga.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE GOAL

Visitors are able to find and use recycling and waste facilities

1. A “Recycling in Public Places” programme is put in place including recycling facilities and information.
2. Signage is developed that enables visitors to easily find refuse and recycling facilities.

All tourism developments in the district take a sustainable approach

1. Our tourism sector is provided with information and education on sustainability and reducing its environmental footprint.
2. The tourism sector within the District takes active steps to audit, reduce and manage its waste.
3. We research and encourage new and innovative ways of reducing our environmental footprint.

Environmental and sustainability accreditations are promoted to tourism businesses

1. Qualmark, GreenGlobe and other recognised accreditations are promoted to all tourism businesses in the District.
2. We encourage and support businesses in attaining and adhering to these accreditations.

We provide visitors with information on our indigenous flora and fauna

1. Information boards highlighting indigenous flora and fauna are placed at strategic sites throughout the district.
2. Information on indigenous flora and fauna is included in District promotional material.

Identify opportunities to develop and capitalise on our natural assets as space to enjoy

1. The Hakatere Conservation Park is developed in ways that enable the Park to be enjoyed while preserving the ecological values of the Park.

Develop a policy on freedom camping in the Ashburton District.

1. Identify problem areas and place consistent and recognisable information signage.

Stakeholders who can contribute to helping us achieve our goals & objectives

Ashburton District Council, Ashburton District tourism operators, Ashburton District Tourism, Ashburton i-SITE Visitor Centre, Department of Conservation, Forest & Bird, Green Globe, Methven i-SITE Visitor Centre, Ministry for the Environment, Qualmark, Tourism Industry Association.

APPENDIX 1:

TOURISM IN THE ASHBURTON DISTRICT

Introduction

Ashburton District - Land of surprising contrasts

This rich agricultural region stretching from the alps to the ocean, and bordered by impressive braided rivers, encompasses the Ashburton, Methven / Mt Hutt, Mt Somers high country and Rakaia areas.

Within an hour from Christchurch International Airport you can be skiing or snowboarding, white-water rafting, skydiving, enjoying a country golf course, visiting gardens of blazing blooms, uncovering relics of aviation and transport history, hiking or mountain biking nature trails or enjoying traditional rural hospitality.

A cluster of high country lakes lure avid fly fishers, a hot air balloon or heli flight provides a bird's eye view of a patchwork landscape, a 4WD adventure can take you on a journey into the high country wilderness to witness the unspoilt beauty that was captured in the Lord of the Rings.

Heritage trails, craft markets, art galleries, country festivals and farm tours will fill your time with memorable New Zealand experiences.



Location

- Centre of South Island
- Located on the Canterbury Plains
- District boundaries are from the Ocean to Alps and between the Rangitata and Rakaia Rivers
- Surrounded by water – ocean, lakes, rivers
- Close to main South Island International Airport
- State Highway One & Inland Scenic Route 72 pass through district
- Main railway line also passes through the district

Key Selling Points

- An outdoor environment, open spaces
- Range of activities and attractions that allow visitors to explore / interact with the outdoors
- Accessibility to the region & the outdoors
- Value for money activities
- Authentic “kiwi” experience
- Conservation Parks
- Central conference / event destination
- Safe destination
- Refreshment / overnight stop on way to other destinations and to / from Christchurch airport
- Relaxing holiday, de-stress from the busy city life
- Dual highways - State Highway One & Inland Scenic Route 72

Key Activities

Skiing & Snowboarding

From Mt Hutt Ski Area - renowned for some of the best snow in Australasia and its long ski season - to the untracked terrain of the Southern Alps, this district has it all.

Mt Hutt Ski Area caters for beginners to advanced skiers and snowboarders offering a range of on and off piste runs as well as a range of fabulous on-field facilities.

If visitors are looking for more action, then heli-skiing/boarding is the answer. Within 10 minutes flying time from Glenfalloch Station, or a short drive to the Lord of the Rings country, Mt Potts Station, they are amongst the best variety of heli-skiing terrain in New Zealand. Full and half day heli-skiing excursions are also available from Mt Hutt.

The District is also uniquely placed for keen skiers and snowboarders to take advantage of the seven other ski fields in neighbouring districts, all within driving distance.

Hiking & Walking

The Ashburton District is an ideal place for enthusiastic hikers and walkers of all fitness levels. Popular tracks for visitors staying in the district include:

1. Ashburton Walkway which follows the north bank of the Ashburton River
2. Awa Awa Rata Reserve, a picnic area based at the bottom of Mt Hutt Forest offering a variety of walks from 1 to 4 hours
3. Methven Walkway, an easy walk mainly following the grass verges beside the Rangitata Diversion Race and private farmland
4. Mt Somers Tracks, a 1-2 day tramp around Mt Somers
5. Rakaia Gorge Walkway, near Methven offers a 5 kilometre walkway following the northern edge of the Rakaia River
6. The newly developed Rakaia Walkway traverses the Rakaia River and provides stunning view of the braided river and surrounding mountains.
7. Sharplin Falls, a 1 hour return walk into twin waterfalls which departs from the Sharplin Falls Scenic Reserve, the start or finish point for the Mt Somers Track
8. Woolshed Creek, a large, grassy sheltered picnic area offering a series of short walks as well as being the start or finish point for the Mt Somers Track

The Ashburton District also offers several moderate to hard tracks for the serious trumper, including Mt Somers Summit, Mt Winterslow, Mt Alford, Mt Harper, Mt Potts, Mt Taylor, Mt Catherine, Cameron Valley, Pudding Hill Range, Mt Hutt Summit, Steepface Hill, Double Hill, and Banfield Hut.

Outdoor Adventure

Visitors staying in the Ashburton District enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities from a majestic flight over the Canterbury Plains with views to the Southern Alps in a hot air balloon, to jet boating through the scenic Rakaia Gorge.

Adrenalin junkies head off for a water raft ride on the Rangitata - one of the country's best white water rafting rivers - experience the exhilaration that tandem skydiving a freefall at 200kmph has to offer and mountain bike through the foothills of the Southern Alps.

Visitors looking for something more passive enjoy horse trekking across some of the district's most beautiful landscapes, scenic flights, four wheel drive tours, and even ice skating or curling during the winter months.

For those wanting to familiarise themselves with farming life, farm tours and demonstrations are also available.

Fishing & Hunting

With its boundaries being two of New Zealand's best salmon fishing rivers - the Rangitata and the Rakaia - The Ashburton District offers some of the best fishing in the country.

For trout enthusiasts, the high country lakes play host to large populations of brown and rainbow trout.

Numerous fishing guides in the district are available for river and lake expeditions.

Recreational hunting is also a popular activity for visitors to the Ashburton District. Hunting experiences and tours can be organised by a number of specialised hunting guides in the district. Available species include large and small game varieties, as well as game birds.



Golf

The Ashburton District boasts five challenging country golf courses which cater to all levels of golfers and are open to green fee players. After warming up on one of our country golf courses, many visitors cross the Rakaia Gorge to Terrace Downs, a golf resort which is a key asset to the Methven region over the summer months.

Heritage

Historically, the Ashburton District is young by international standards, but it has a rich and vibrant history built around its long-standing association with agriculture. Ashburton Museum features a range of exhibits depicting local, national and international themes which are regularly updated. Extensive records are available to researchers including genealogical, photographic, and local history information. Museum's located in Methven and Staveley are also open to visitors on demand.

Ashburton also offers a number of heritage attractions including the Ashburton Vintage Car Museum, the Plains Railway and Historical Village which features a working vintage railway, Lynn Historical Woodworking Trust, with one of the biggest collections of lathes in the world, and the Ashburton Aviation Museum, with a great collection of planes from yesteryear and displays of the years it spent as an air force training base during World War II.

Art

Ashburton District has a rich and diverse range of art and culture and the recently released Canterbury Arts Guide showcases the many well known artists that base themselves in the district.

From the Ashburton Art Gallery, which attracts a variety of local, national and international touring exhibitions, to dozens of private art and craft galleries, and vibrant operatic society productions, the district is a region that delights in expressing creativity.

At different times of the year the district becomes a haven for art and craft enthusiasts nationwide, with a number of different festivals taking place within the District and the local Ashburton Society of Arts run an annual exhibition and a series of workshops during the year with nationally recognised tutors.

Gardens & Parks

The Ashburton District is well known for its delightful parks and gardens. Undoubtedly one of the district's highlights is the Ashburton Domain, with its 37.5 hectares of botanic gardens and one of the country's best selections of specimen and exotic trees, planted to maximise the change of season.

However, the Ashburton Domain is but the centre-piece for a number of gardens – public, private and commercial in the district. The district also plays host to a number of festivals centred on a gardening theme.

Ecotourism / Nature

The district's mountains, pristine lakes, endangered birds, vast landscapes, mountain beech forests, waterfalls, braided rivers and alpine plants offer nature enthusiasts many reasons to visit and explore the district.

The newly established Hakatere Conservation Park extends over some 50,000 hectares and will expand further in the future as new areas are added through land tenure review.

Lakes

Lake Hood, situated on the outskirts of Ashburton, is a paradise for water enthusiasts catering for a wide range of water-based activities from swimming to yachting. It also boasts an international eight-lane rowing course, a water-ski park and a residential subdivision.

However, the district's backcountry lakes remain its best kept secret. Within a short drive from Mt Somers you will find yourself surrounded by a series of delightful lakes famous for their fishing, unique wildlife, picnic spots and water activities

Film site Locations

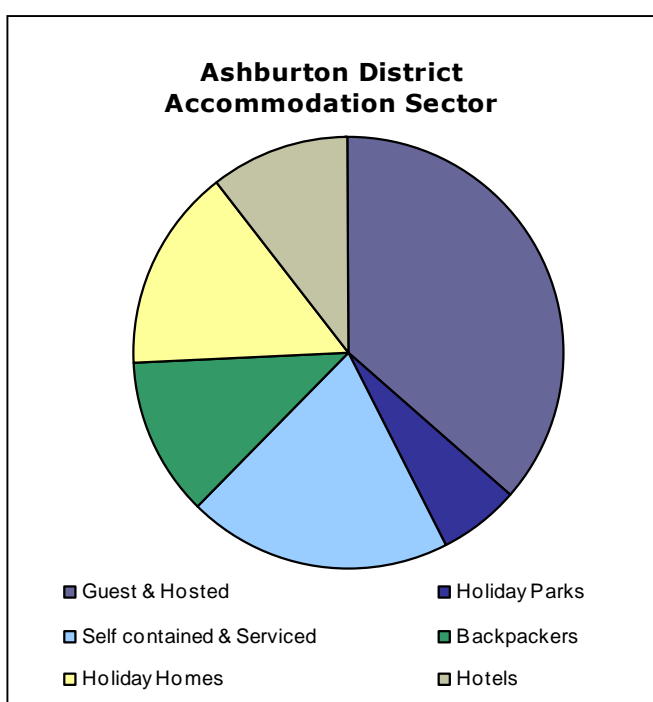
The Ashburton District has some unique natural resources and scenic product, all within short travelling distances and generally easy accessibility. Large forests, towering high country mountain ranges, braided rivers, stunning back country locations and colourful plains, all combine to provide producers with some of the best scenic film opportunities in New Zealand.

The most famous film to include some of Ashburton District's scenery would have to be The Lord of the Rings trilogy. Many television commercials have also been filmed in various locations around the district.

Accommodation

Whether people are visiting the District for a holiday, attending an event, or as their last night's accommodation in the South Island before flying out from Christchurch Airport, the Ashburton District has a wide range of accommodation for all budgets.

Ashburton	26
Methven / Mt Hutt	59
Mt Somers & Highcountry	12
Rakaia	5
Total	102



Wining & Dining

With almost sixty eating establishments listed on Ashburton District Tourism's website, visitors to the Ashburton District can enjoy a wide variety of meals, from the classic kiwi takeaway or New Zealand country pub meal to delicious first-class restaurant fare.

Many restaurants menus are full of fresh vegetables, meat and poultry grown in our District and lamb shanks, wood smoked venison, fillet steak variations and pan-fried Rakaia River salmon are popular choices amongst diners.

Events & Conferences

The Ashburton District is well suited to community / sporting events and conventions with its location within the South Island (and proximity to Christchurch), its range of event venues, accommodation, retail, services and climate.

The potential of this region has been made all the more exciting by the opening of the Ashburton Trust Event Centre, a state of the art theatre and event facility, and a proposed new Art Gallery / Museum and Indoor Stadium / Aquatic Centre.

An Event Development Executive role was established earlier this year to facilitate, co-ordinate, motivate and develop events to ensure maximum economic and community benefit to the Ashburton District.

Annual community and sporting events currently held

in the District include:

Methven Summer School	January
Concert in the Park	February
Mobilehome Extravaganza	February
Rakaia Salmon Fishing Competition	February
Minerals to Art (bi-annual)	March
Mayfield A&P Show	March
Methven A&P Show	March
Mt Somers Classic	April
Wheels Week	April
Harness Jewels	May
Treasures of Mid Canterbury	August
Wastebusters Wearable Arts Awards	August
Boulevard Day	September
Peak to Pub Endurance Race	October
Ashburton A&P Show	October
Methven Rodeo	October
South Island Half Ironman	November
Longbeach MTB Coastal Challenge	November
Arrowsmith Three Ride	December
Teva Big Day at the Office Race	December
New Years Eve Street Party	December

Farmers Markets, Craft Markets, Art Gallery Exhibitions and Trotting Club Meetings are also held on a regular basis throughout the year.

APPENDIX 2: ASHBURTON DISTRICT TOURISM INDUSTRY

Ashburton District Tourism

Ashburton District Tourism Development Board is a Council funded agency comprising of representatives from the tourism industry, business community, and Ashburton District Council.



Ashburton District Tourism Development Board oversees the operation of Ashburton District Tourism, Ashburton District Event Development Co-ordinator, Ashburton i-SITE Visitor Centre and the Methven i-SITE Visitor Centre. The board also administers Ashburton District Council's Community Events Funding Grant.

Ashburton District Tourism is predominately Council funded with other income being received from administration contracts and tourism operator partnerships.

Ashburton District Tourism activity includes: Collation & distribution of district statistics; production of district promotional collateral (i.e. Visitor Guides, Maps, Website, DVD, Product Directory); attendance at major tourism trade shows; organisation of district tourism awards; destination marketing; co-ordination and hosting of media and trade; promotion of industry standards, training and seminars; administration of the Mt Hutt Marketing Group; and building industry communications and relationships.

The Ashburton District Event Development Executive is a newly established position - a joint venture between Ashburton District Council, Ashburton District Tourism and the Ashburton Trust. The role will facilitate, co-ordinate, motivate and develop events to ensure maximum economic and community benefit to the Ashburton District.

The Ashburton & Methven i-SITE Visitor Centre's are predominately funded through a Council grant, booking commissions and brochure display charges. As well as providing information and a booking service to visitors, they also provide many community services.

The Ashburton District Tourism Board administers the "Community Events Funding Grants" scheme on behalf of the Council. The purpose of the grant is to support events that clearly demonstrate economic and community benefit to the Ashburton District. These events should provide a national profile and/or attract significant numbers of visitors to the Ashburton District and have wide public appeal.

Mt Hutt Marketing Group

The Mt Hutt Marketing Group is a co-operative marketing venture promoting the Mt Hutt, Methven, Christchurch & Canterbury region with a primary focus on the winter ski season. Membership funds are pooled together to maximise the marketing impact of small to medium sized businesses in an industry that has strong competition. Membership has many benefits which are set recognising the different levels of investment from members. Administration of the Group is contracted to Ashburton District Tourism.

Mt Hutt Marketing Group activity includes: wholesaler relationships, attendance at ski trade and consumer shows, destination marketing, involvement with the Ski Tourism Marketing Network, market visits, co-ordination and hosting of media, frontline staff functions, and joint ventures with key industry partners.



District Promotions Associations

Several promotions associations currently operate in Ashburton District including: Methven/Mt Hutt Promotions, Rakaia Business & Tourism and Mt Somers & Highcountry Promotions.

These associations are a group of businesses including tourism operators, retail shops and trade services which exist to promote the region domestically (mainly within the Canterbury region) and operate on a voluntary basis. Funding is predominately received from subscriptions and event income.

Promotion Association's activity includes: running events, producing regional brochures and maps, frontline staff training, Christchurch i-SITE Visitor Centre displays and supporting local walkways.



Enterprise Ashburton

Enterprise Ashburton is the first point of contact for business people interested in setting up in the Ashburton District, and offers a range of resources, local contacts and business consultancy for new businesses and local enterprises wanting to expand.

Enterprise Ashburton staff work closely with those from other business development organisations, including New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, the Economic Development Association of NZ, Small Business Enterprise Centres, Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce and the Aoraki Development Trust, providing free advice to business owners and exporters on funding options, grants and business assistance schemes relevant to their operations.

Enterprise Ashburton is funded by Ashburton District Council and income generated from consultancy.



APPENDIX 3: ASHBURTON DISTRICT VISITOR STATISTICS

Accommodation Monitor

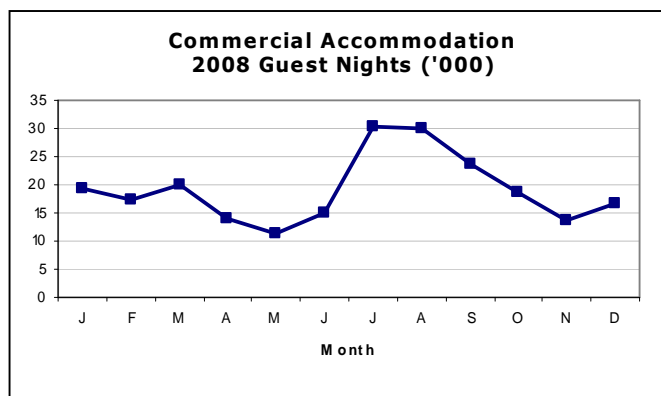
The Commercial Accommodation Monitor (CAM) produced by Statistics New Zealand measures the capacity and utilisation of commercial accommodation in New Zealand. The survey provides monthly data on capacity, occupancy rates, employee count and guest nights for each month, plus guest nights by usual region of residence every third month.

All accommodation businesses with a turnover of \$30,000 or more per annum are required to complete the CAM survey. Whilst this data does not include Visiting Friends & Relative (VFR) or small establishments such as B&B's, it does capture a large majority of "guest nights" and clearly shows trends year on year.

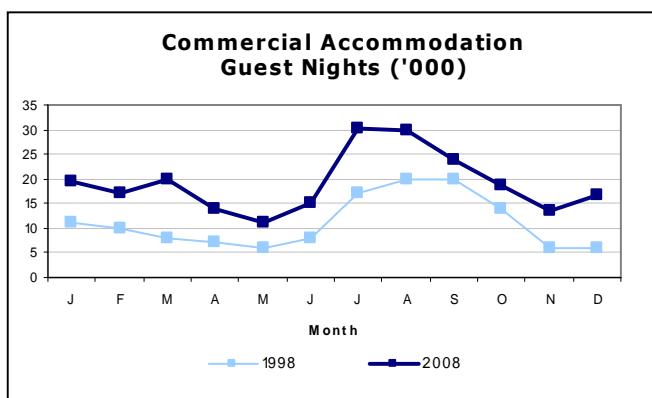
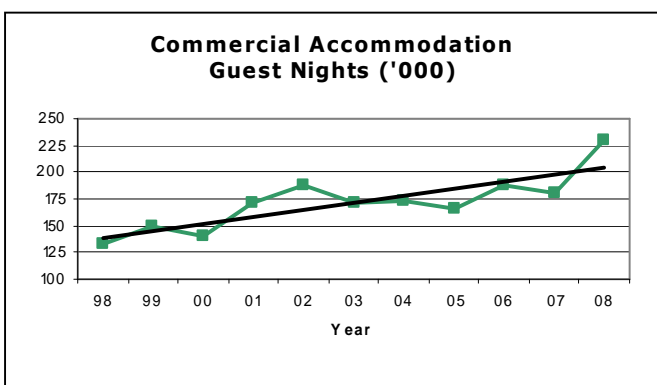
During 2008 an average of 44 District establishments contributed to the CAM with a total average daily capacity of 1,266. Note: 102 accommodation establishments are currently listed on Ashburton District Tourism's database.

Guest Nights

The total number of guest nights recorded in the District during 2008 was 229,710. Guest nights peaked during the month of July with 30,383 guest nights, May only recorded 11,206.

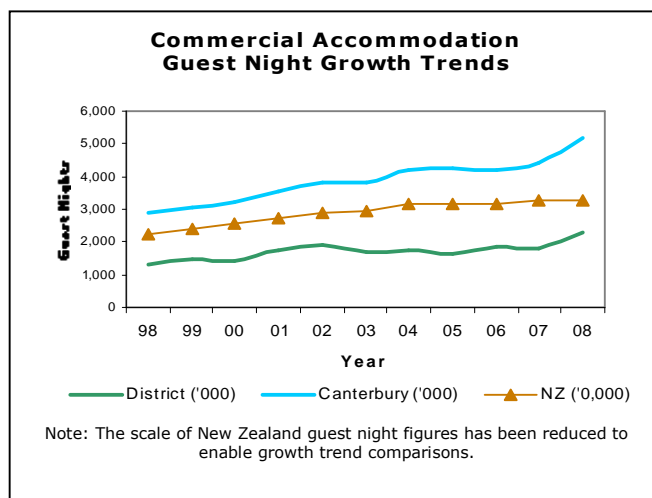


Guest nights in 2008 show a 73% increase from 1998 where guest nights totalled 133,300.



If visitors to the Ashburton District in 2008 spent \$120.00 per day that's a direct contribution to Ashburton District's economy of \$27,565,200.00

Positive growth is evident in guest nights for both Ashburton District (73%) and Canterbury (80%) over the past ten years, with strong growth against national trends in the past 24 months.



During the 2008 year Canterbury received 5,158,638 guest nights, equating to a 15.7% share of New Zealand's guest nights.

District	% Guest Nights	District	% Guest Nights
Christchurch	62.49%	Ashburton	4.45%
Mackenzie	7.62%	Banks Peninsula	3.79%
Kaikoura	6.38%	Waimakariri	2.98%
Hurunui	6.25%	Selwyn	1.51%
Timaru	5.21%	Waimate	0.44%

Length of Stay

The average length of stay in the Ashburton District during 2007 was 2.0 nights, with Canterbury recording 1.8 nights and New Zealand 1.89 nights.

If the length of stay in 2007 had been increased to 2.5 nights then the direct contribution to Ashburton District's economy would have been \$27,058,950.00

Visitor Origin

The District's visitor origin changes throughout the year and is most noticeable when comparing the district's summer and winter figures.

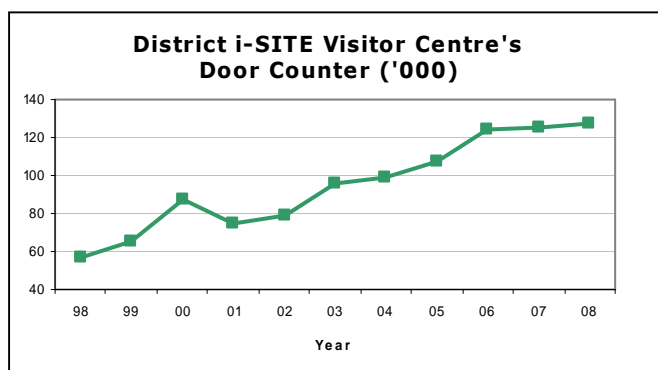
	January 07	July 07
New Zealand	61%	46%
Australia	10%	31%
Asia	4%	6%
North America	4%	7%
Europe	20%	9%
Other	2%	1%

The increase in the Australian, Asia and North American markets during winter in the above graph shows the effect the ski season has on the region.

District i-SITE Visitor Centres

The Ashburton and Methven i-SITE Visitor Centre's record the number of visitors to the centre and their country of origin.

The total number of visitors to the centres during 2008 was 127,462, a 124% increase from 1998 where visitors totalled 56,817.



The below table shows the difference in visitor origin between the two centres. The difference once again shows how the ski season (and supporting infrastructure) affects the region.

District i-SITE Visitor Centre's 2008 Visitor Origin

	Ashburton	Methven
Local	35%	13%
New Zealand	29%	30%
International	36%	57%

Flow-on effects of Tourism

The flow-on effect from tourism can be felt through many industries via various products:

1. Food and beverage (consumption on premises)
2. Road, rail, water & air passenger transport
3. Travel agencies
4. Motor vehicle hire or rental
5. Fuel and other automotive products
6. Alcohol (consumption off site)
7. Clothing and footwear
8. Food, beverages, tobacco and other groceries
9. Retail medicines, toiletries
10. Tourism consumer durables (i.e. tents, sleeping bags, skiing equipment)
11. Rental on holiday homes
12. Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural services
13. Other sport & recreation services (i.e. horse racing, golf courses, swimming pools)
14. Financial services (foreign cash)
15. General insurance
16. Social and health-related services
17. Gambling services
18. Education services (international students)
19. Other tourism-related services (i.e. telecommunications, postal services)
20. Other personal services (i.e. laundry, film processing, hairdressing)

If visitors to the District in 2007 spent \$3.00 each on a cup of coffee, then in coffee sales alone that a direct contribution to our economy of \$541,179.00

Employment

Tourism supports 108,600 direct and 74,500 indirect (183,100 total) full-time equivalent jobs (9.9% of the total workforce in New Zealand).

It is estimated that 7.5% of the total workforce in the Ashburton District is employed through the tourism sector.

APPENDIX 4: NEW ZEALAND TOURISM INDUSTRY



Benefits of Tourism

Tourism is a large and growing part of New Zealand's economy. With total tourism expenditure of \$20.1 billion in the year ending March 2007, it is our biggest export sector accounting for 18.3% of all exports.

It contributes 9% to national Gross Domestic Product, employing 1 in every 10 people in the national workforce.

Tourism is a big and diverse sector, with more than 11,000 individual enterprises and linkages to almost all parts of New Zealand's economy.

Directly or indirectly, tourism encompasses a multitude of businesses including hotels, farms, tours, garages, markets, taxis, vineyards, supermarkets, training organisations, dairies, shops, ferries, coaches and airlines.

Domestic tourism makes up just over half of all tourism expenditure and although it is not forecast to grow at the same rate as international arrivals (1% for domestic overnight travel and 4% for international arrivals by 2012) it remains a major component of the sector.

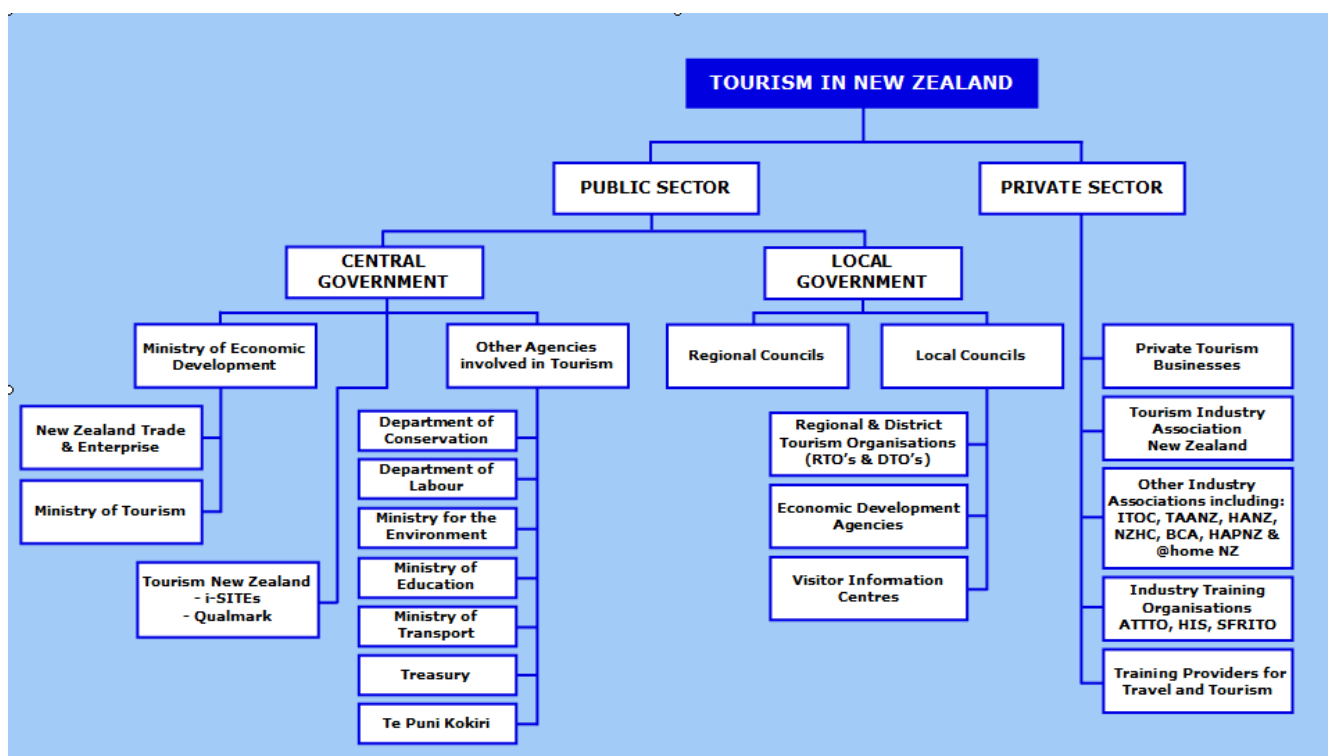
The viability of many tourism businesses depends on income from both international and domestic visitors. Domestic travel is particularly important in the low season, and product development for the domestic market often provides a springboard for international growth opportunities.

Unlike most other export sectors that produce a product and deliver it to markets, tourism's product is almost anywhere visitors choose or are able to go - our outstanding landscapes, marae, sporting and cultural events, museums, historic buildings, parks and gardens, forests, national parks, coastal areas, cities and indeed entire communities.

Tourism is anything that visitors do, or consume. In one way or another, all New Zealanders are involved in the sector either as visitors or as hosts.

Organisations involved in Tourism

The below diagram shows the relationships between various organisations within New Zealand's tourism industry.



Role of Tourism Organisations

The Ministry of Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism provides tourism policy advice to the Minister of Tourism and works with other government departments on key policy issues and tourism research and statistics. The Ministry of Tourism advises and evaluates government investments in tourism and assists with international bids for major events.

Tourism New Zealand

Tourism New Zealand is the Central Government entity responsible for marketing New Zealand internationally as a tourism destination. Tourism New Zealand operates 15 international marketing offices in 12 countries. The majority of their budget is spent offshore working with the travel trade and media in a wide range of ways.

Tourism Industry Association New Zealand

The Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIA) is a membership-based organisation representing more than 2000 businesses. The organisation champions the interests of its members with government and other decision makers. It builds partnerships between the tourism industry and government, and works with all organisations involved in tourism. TIA also provides tools and information to help members run successful businesses. TIA manages three national industry events each year: TRENZ, Tourism Industry Conference and New Zealand Tourism Industry Awards.

Regional and District Tourism Organisations

Regional and District Tourism Organisations (RTOs / DTOs) play a leading role in the New Zealand tourism sector. They act as a bridge between tourism operators, national tourism bodies and local and central government. They are also responsible for destination marketing - the promotion of their regions to potential domestic and international visitors.

The Canterbury region is made up of nine local government districts, each with a tourism organisation promoting their region.

1. Kaikoura
2. Hurunui
3. Waimakariri
4. Christchurch & Banks Peninsula
5. Selwyn
6. Ashburton
7. Timaru
8. Mackenzie
9. Waimate

Some operate as a Regional Tourism Organisation while others as a District Tourism Organisation. The difference between regional and district tourism organisations across New Zealand tends to be the

size of the area the organisation promotes, the structure of the organisation and the funding it receives.

Canterbury Districts sit under the umbrella organisation of Christchurch & Canterbury Tourism (RTO) and work collectively to promote the region.

i-SITE Visitor Centres

i-SITE is New Zealand's official network of visitor centres dedicated to providing visitors with free, friendly and objective information on local attractions, transport and accommodation. With over 80 i-SITE Visitor Centres nationwide their professionally trained staff can answer questions, give advice, book holiday requirements and share a few local secrets to help make a visitors experience one they will never forget.

The Ashburton District has two i-SITE Visitor Centres, one in Ashburton and one in Methven.



APPENDIX 5: CANTERBURY TOURISM FORECASTS

Total visitor nights in Canterbury are forecast to rise from 13.26m in 2006 to 15.57m in 2013 – an increase of 17.4% (2.31m) or 2.3% per annum.

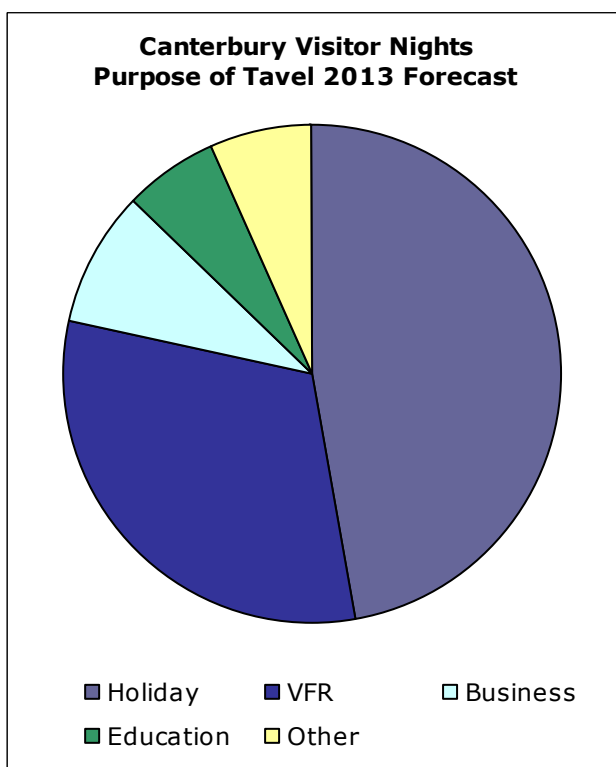
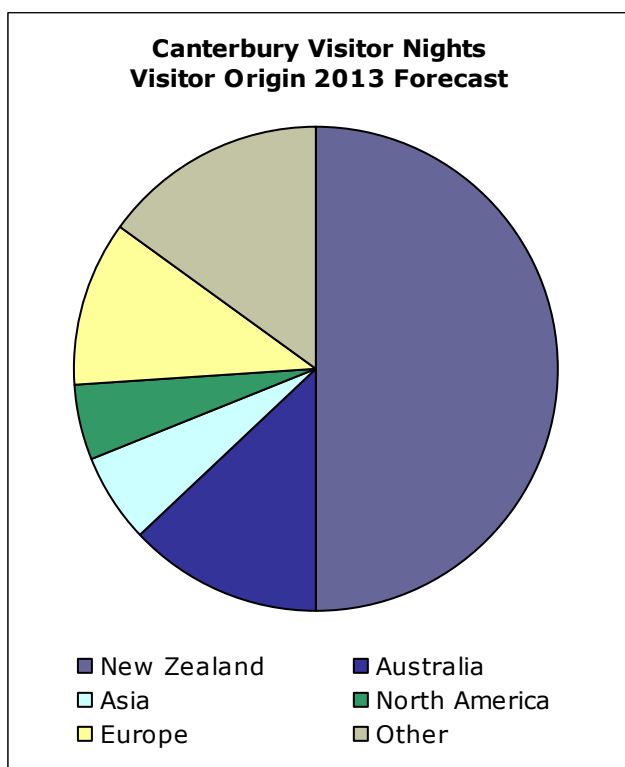
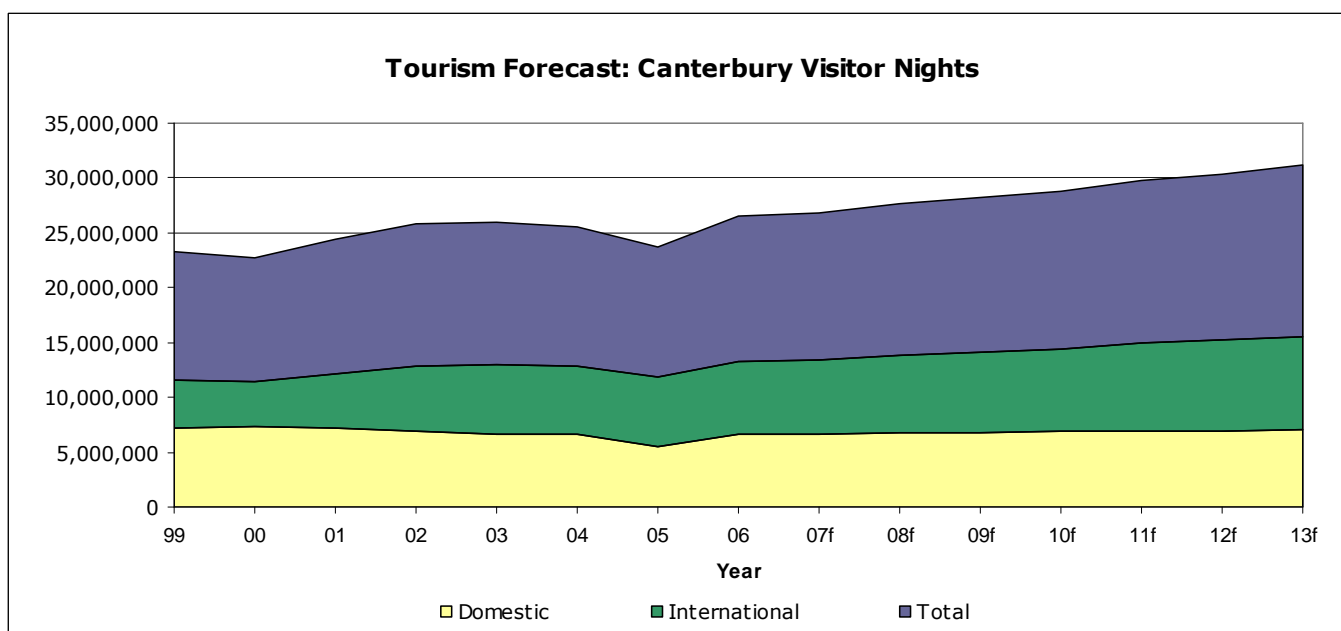
International visitor nights are expected to increase from 6.59m in 2006 to 8.56m in 2013, representing growth of 1.97m or 29.8%. The share of total visitor nights generated by international visitors is expected to increase from 49.7% to 55.0%.

Domestic visitor nights are expected to increase from 6.67m in 2006 to 7.01m in 2013, representing growth of 342,300 or 5.1%. The share of total visitor

nights generated by domestic visitors is expected to decrease from 50.3% to 45.0%.

Due to recent global economic downturn, the Ministry of Tourism 2008-14 forecasts are overstating actual level of tourism activity in New Zealand over 2008 and 2009. It is considered, however, that the forecasts set out a fair representation of the total long-term outlook for tourism in New Zealand, although there have been shifts between markets that need to be taken into account.

Revised forecasts will be released by the Ministry by mid 2009.



APPENDIX 6: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Ashburton District Tourism Development Board initiated the strategy document process earlier this year.

The board saw the need to develop a visitor strategy for the District – one that everyone would have ownership of and would work together to achieve.

The strategy would cover the years 2009 - 2019 and would be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure it continues to capture the requirements of the visitor industry and the community.

This strategy includes an actions section that will guide project development and implementation over the duration of the strategy. It is anticipated that many projects will be collaborative efforts that will see agencies working together to achieve common goals.

A Working Group comprising representatives of the tourism sector, Ashburton District Tourism and Ashburton District Council was established to oversee the strategy development and design, approve the process to be used and to develop a draft strategy from information captured in community workshops.

Three community workshops were held with participants from the tourism sector and others in the community with an interest in the development of tourism in the District. These workshops provided the information on which this strategy has been developed.

Steering Group

The Ashburton District Tourism Development Board has also been the Strategy Steering Group. Key responsibilities of the Board have been to:

1. Decide on the guiding principles to be used in the Strategy development
2. Decide on the strategy development process to be used
3. Ensure processes are carried out in ways that promote the principles
4. Ensure processes are carried out effectively and within agreed timelines

Working Group

A Working Group was formed to undertake the hands-on development of the Strategy and to ensure community views were included throughout the process and that community buy-in to the Strategy was achieved from the outset.

The Visitor Strategy Working Group is made up of a cross-section representative group covering the key areas of the Ashburton District tourism sector.

Stakeholder Group	Representative
Ashburton Region	Gavin Snowball
Methven Region	James Urquhart
Mount Somers Region	Warren Jowett
Rakaia Region	Robyn Jackson / Neil Pluck
Event / Sporting Sector	Jan Cochrane
Mt Hutt Marketing Group	David Wilson
Enterprise Ashburton	Rob Brawley
Ashburton Business Assn	Janine Sundberg
Ashburton District Tourism	Michelle Bungard
Ashburton District Council	John Rollinson Judy Kingsbury

Strategy Development Principles

The following principles were agreed to be used to guide the Ashburton District Tourism Strategy development process:

1. The Strategy will be owned by the community, and Ashburton District Tourism will be its overall lead agency.
2. Ashburton District Council will champion the strategy (formally adopting it) to provide political profile and accountability, and to ensure a whole-of-community focus.
3. The strategy development process will be as inclusive as possible.
4. The strategy will be founded on a commitment to sustainable tourism as described in the NZ Tourism Strategy 2005 - 2015.
5. The strategy will link with the Christchurch Visitor Strategy and the New Zealand Tourism Strategy where appropriate.
6. The strategy will have a 10 year focus, with at least the first 3 years in detail.
7. The strategy will be monitored and reported on annually (the monitoring and reporting will be structured in such a way that it forms the basis of other reporting requirements to avoid unnecessary duplication).
8. The strategy will be reviewed early in the 2011/12 year and every three years thereafter.

Links to Other Planning Processes

Community Outcomes

A successful and vibrant visitor and tourism sector in Ashburton District will contribute to achieving some of Ashburton District's community outcomes. The outcomes were developed in 2006 through extensive community involvement and consultation. They are included in the Council's Long Term Council

Community Plan 2006 - 2016 but are owned by the community and are goals for the whole community to work towards.

The community outcomes a successful visitor and tourism sector will contribute to are:

- A thriving and diverse local economy that provides the foundation for a quality lifestyle
- Natural and developed environments are sustained for the enjoyment of current and future generations
- Healthy, active people enjoying a good quality of life in a caring and safe community
- A community with access to a variety of cultural, recreational and heritage experiences and facilities that enrich our quality of life

Ashburton District Council LTCCP

Council produces a long term council community plan (LTCCP) every three years. This document is Council's response to community outcomes and details Council's priorities, work programme and budgets for the coming 10 years.

Council is a key organisation in providing facilities and services, funding and support to many parts of the visitor sector. Council's 2009 - 2019 LTCCP will detail its approach. In particular these are likely to be:

- Funding of Ashburton District Tourism
- Funding of Enterprise Ashburton
- Provision and maintenance of core infrastructure such as roads, water, wastewater, stormwater, footpaths
- Provision of reserves and camping grounds
- Provision and / or funding of community facilities such as the Ashburton Trust Event Centre, parks and playgrounds and public conveniences.
- Beautification of public spaces such as downtown areas, road corridors, reserves.

This strategy will inform decision-making associated with the LTCCP 2009 - 2019.

Ashburton District Council District Plan

Council's District Plan details its approach to environmental management and to land use in particular. This has a direct impact on the visitor industry through zoning rules that prescribe the types of activities that can be undertaken across all parts of the District.

The District Plan is currently being reviewed, a process that will continue through to 2009 / 2010. This strategy will inform that review process and the visitor industry sector will be encouraged to present views to the review team.

Physical Activity Strategy

In 2006 Ashburton District Council adopted a Physical Activity Strategy, developed using a cross-sectoral working group and extensive community consultation. The overall aim of this strategy is to

have "More People, More Active, More of the Time". The attractions, facilities and services offered in the District for visitors and tourists contribute to the opportunities residents in the District have to enjoy physical activity.

Walking and Cycling Strategy

In 2008 Ashburton District Council adopted a Walking and Cycling Strategy that identifies actions that will improve the ability of residents and visitors alike to walk and cycle throughout the District. Active tourism is becoming increasingly popular and Ashburton district has unlimited opportunities to develop cycling and walking options for visitors to enjoy our wonderful scenery.