

## Funds earmarked for tourism 'observatory'

Waiheke Local Board has endorsed in principle a proposal for the impacts of tourism on Waiheke to be monitored by Otago University academics and students.

However, it is seeking further details before committing to funding of about \$9000 a year for the first three years.

The monitoring would provide data useful to agencies such as Auckland Council charged with keeping the impacts of tourism sustainable.

The proposal to establish a United Nations World Tourism Organisation Monitoring Observatory on Waiheke comes from local environmentalists and academics. The Waiheke Island Tourism Forum has expressed formal support.

The UN programme involves regular monitoring of tourism impacts and one of the first projects would be a draft sustainable tourism strategy for Waiheke.

The local group includes members of Kaitiaki of Newton Reserve, Waiheke Resources Trust and Hauraki Gulf Islands Forest and Bird. Its proposal document highlights negative impacts from tourism



Campaigners say the impacts of tourism include traffic problems and erratic bus and ferry services. Photo Emma Haas

growth in the last few years including roading damage by large buses, erratic ferry and bus services, pressure on amenities, parking problems, infrastructure costs and a "rapid decrease" in affordable rentals due to houses being converted

into short-term visitor accommodation.

It highlights the damage to native trees, danger to road users and "loss of domestic privacy" associated with Fullers' introduction of double-decker buses for its Explorer service.

Other impacts include significant increases in E coli levels at popular beaches over summer, damage to native flora and fauna caused by illegal fires and fireworks at New Year and noise and light pollution.

At last week's meeting, local board member Shirin Brown questioned the value of the proposed monitoring programme, given the data the board already had on tourism. She argued the board should instead be focusing on addressing its impacts.

However fellow member John Meeuwesen said it was important to monitor trends with academic rigour.

Deputy chairwoman Cath Handley said the concept had her full support in principle but "I don't think the business case is sufficiently robust as it stands. We need to be very clear about what the local board's ownership in this process is."

The board voted to prioritise finalising the business case, including governance accountabilities, before its next meeting and to set aside funding of no less than \$9000 for the first year of the programme.

• Geoff Cumming

# INSECT SCREENS & DOORS TOP QUALITY

*All types available*

•minimum orders apply

WARMER IN WINTER

COOLER IN SUMMER

RETRO DOUBLE GLAZE YOUR HOME

**We fit real double glazing  
into your existing Joinery.**

- Warmer drier environment
- Reduced condensation
- Reduced noise intrusion
- Energy saving
- Reduced UV damage



**IPM  
GLASS**

*Professional Service • Workmanship Guaranteed*

Call Russell on 0800 444 789 or text 021 444 848  
russell@ipmltd.co.nz www.ipmltd.co.nz