New Zealand Future Policy on Tourism in Antarctica

An analysis of options and implications and the consequent role for Antarctica New Zealand

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The topic is the result of consultation with Antarctica New Zealand staff. The report and any opinions stated in it are, however, the author’s. The report forms part of the author’s course requirements for the University of Canterbury’s Inaugural Certificate in Antarctic Studies (1999) and, while it may form part of a discussion document emanating from Antarctica New Zealand for consideration of the issue, it is neither official nor unofficial Antarctica New Zealand policy.
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Introduction

This report addresses the future direction of New Zealand policy on tourism in Antarctica and in particular the Ross Sea region. It highlights a number of policy options and makes recommendations on favoured options. Each option dictates a different level of engagement with the private sector and with that a different role for Antarctica New Zealand.

The topic is a sensitive and controversial one. It is value driven and requires the development of well-considered Officials Antarctic Committee (OAC) policy.

This report builds on previous research, including Tourism Opportunities in the Ross Sea Region - A Report for the Officials Antarctic Committee by Bev Abbott of the New Zealand Tourism Board Report (1997), Antarctic Tourism - Where To? An Analysis of the Future of Antarctic Tourism (1999) prepared by the author and others as part of the University of Canterbury inaugural Certificate in Antarctic Studies and Tim Higham's Antarctica New Zealand internal discussion document, Choices in relation to private sector activity in Antarctica (1999). This report does not intend to repeat their findings except where necessary to provide relevant context.
Management Summary

The current New Zealand Government policy on tourism in Antarctica is reactive. It neither endorses nor discourages tourism but determines each tourism proposal placed before it on its merits. The policy has been described as actively neutral. It is an astute risk averse policy. However, it does not provide clear direction to industry or Antarctica New Zealand on engagement with the private sector. The experience of the pitfalls of leading the way in formulating international Antarctic policy with CRAMRA have dampened the willingness to lead the way in formulating a proposal to manage tourism in Antarctica and the Ross Dependency. However, with Antarctic tourism drawing greater appeal, developments in other parts of Antarctica, especially the Peninsula and the establishment phase of Antarctica New Zealand complete it is time for an analysis of the appropriateness of the existing strategy.

The range of stakeholder opinions on an appropriate future policy is likely to be quite diverse and vocal. Policy options run along a continuum. From discouragement through neutrality to encouragement. Each policy has costs and benefits. These are detailed within this report.

On analysis a cautious well managed encouragement policy is the preferred option. The responsibility is on the Government through Antarctica New Zealand and EARP to manage the process astutely. It must control the level and form of tourist activity in a manner that is consistent with the Government's environmental stewardship role. While politically it is a high risk policy it has significant advantages. If adopted and managed effectively it would continue New Zealand's role as an innovative nation in the Antarctic arena.

Framework

This report is divided into the following areas:

- Current New Zealand Antarctic tourism policy and Antarctica New Zealand's existing role
- Antarctica New Zealand's mandate for involvement in tourism
- Tourism policy options
- Analysis of tourism policy options
- Organisational demands
- Conclusion

These are discussed in detail below.
Current New Zealand Antarctic Tourism Policy and Antarctica New Zealand’s Existing Role

Summary

- The New Zealand Government promotes enhancing economic opportunities for New Zealand in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean within the parameters of the Antarctic Treaty System.

- New Zealand’s current actively neutral Antarctic tourism policy is not well known.

- The current policy assesses each tourist activity proposal on its merits and fit with the Government’s goals.

- The current policy is reactive and risk averse.

- New Zealand Government has not developed or encouraged commercial tourist opportunities or industry in Antarctica.

- Antarctica New Zealand is currently analysing private sector initiatives, including engaging the private sector in tourism and has formulated a charging policy for its resources.

- Antarctica New Zealand and local industry would benefit from clear direction on Government’s tourism policy and the Government’s preferred level of engagement with the private tourism sector.

New Zealand’s current Antarctic tourism policy

As part of the Government’s 1995 review of New Zealand’s Antarctic involvement the Government articulated a macro level policy for involvement in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. This included identifying New Zealand Government’s strategic interests as the conservation of the intrinsic values of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean for the benefit of the world community and for present and future generations of New Zealanders reflected in active and responsible stewardship, that promotes New Zealand’s interests in:

- maintaining its long-term interest in, and commitment to, the Ross Dependency;

- national security, through keeping Antarctica as a neutral and non-aligned neighbour;

- economic well-being, through enhancing New Zealand’s economic opportunities within the parameters of the Antarctic Treaty System;

- international stability, by enhancing New Zealand’s leadership in the governance of Antarctica; and

- promoting New Zealand’s values and ideology by promoting Antarctica as a
natural reserve devoted to peace and science.

While no strategic interest is stated as being above any other, importantly the promotion of New Zealand's economic well-being is mentioned before promoting Antarctica as a natural reserve devoted to peace and science. It is a question of interpretation whether the overriding goal is the conservation of Antarctica's intrinsic values or the promotion of New Zealand's stated interests. Whichever takes precedence, it is significant that increasing New Zealand's economic well-being by enhancing economic opportunities is a core Government strategic objective.

To date, the New Zealand Government has not actively pursued economic well-being by promoting tourism opportunities. It has taken a risk averse strategy in dealing with non-government actors in Antarctica guided initially by the science first principle and more recently by the overriding environmental stewardship principle when determining proposals.

There is no current official published New Zealand policy on tourism in Antarctica, the Southern Ocean and in particular the Ross Sea Region. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) Antarctic Policy Unit former head, Stuart Prior, described the existing policy in February 1999 as "actively neutral". This means the Government has neither actively encouraged or discouraged tourist activity in principle. The policy is to respond to specific tourism proposals on their merits and their fit with the Government's strategic objectives of which developing economic opportunities is only one objective. At an operational level, tourist operators are guided by MFAT's Guidelines and Procedures for Visitors to the Ross Sea Region. The guidelines reflect the environmental reporting requirements contained in the Madrid Protocol and enacted into domestic legislation in the Antarctica (Environmental Protection) Act 1994 (A(EP)A).

The policy label "actively neutral" accurately describes the overriding policy but is misleading at an operational level. For an operator the policy would be neither active nor neutral. The policy towards tourism in general and a non-government tourism proposal in particular is reactive, requiring an initial approach from an operator. The Government may not be neutral depending on the proposal put forward and the degree to which it fulfils the Government’s strategic objectives. For example, the degree of encouragement given to the Iridium Ice Trek compared with the opposition a proposal to build a land based hotel might meet.

**Antarctica New Zealand’s existing role**

Antarctica New Zealand through its initial establishment phase has to a large extent, consciously or not, reflected this policy. Without actively promoting or deterring private operators in the Ross Dependency Antarctica New Zealand has provided primarily an information role. Where a proposal coincides with its objectives it has encouraged a private initiative, eg, the Iridium Ice Trek expedition. Antarctica New Zealand has formulated a charging policy contemplating third party non-strategic activity in Antarctica (eg: commercial tourism) and is increasingly commercial in its outlook. It is

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1 The most recent published Government policy is Government Policy in Relation to Non-Governmental Activity in Antarctica (early 1990’s)

2 As relayed to the author by Tim Higham of Antarctica New Zealand following a personal conversation between Higham and Prior.
now taking a proactive role in analysing possible policy for private sector activity including tourism in Antarctica.

A review of the current policy which is in existence, effectively by default, is timely. An "actively neutral" policy may or may not continue to be the most appropriate policy. What is important is that the analysis takes place. In articulating the policy it creates clear direction for commercial operators and for Antarctica New Zealand in its dealings with the commercial sector. It would help guide Antarctica New Zealand in determining if and how to engage the private sector in tourism as part of fulfilling the Government's strategic objective of increasing economic well-being within the parameters of the Antarctic Treaty System. By formulating a well-reasoned policy the OAC may shape the future of tourism in general in Antarctica and, in particular, the Ross Sea Region before commercial events force a hasty Government response.
Antarctica New Zealand’s Mandate for Involvement in Tourism

Summary

- Antarctica New Zealand has the mandate to encourage, develop or participate in tourism in Antarctica provided its engagement strategy is consistent with its statutory functions, overriding Government policy and specific OAC policy on tourism.

- Antarctica New Zealand’s empowering legislation is silent on whether Antarctica New Zealand has the statutory power to develop economic opportunities, including tourism, in Antarctica. Interpreting the legislation, Antarctica New Zealand has the statutory mandate subject to the Minister’s discretion (presumably on EARP’s advice) to operate, develop, manage or execute tourism activities in Antarctica.

- The highest level New Zealand Government policy encourages the enhancement of economic opportunities but is silent on tourism.

- Antarctica New Zealand has a statutory mandate to charge for the use of its resources from tourist activities.

Statutory Mandate

Antarctica New Zealand is the operating name chosen by the New Zealand Antarctic Institute. The New Zealand Antarctic Institute was established under section 4 of the New Zealand Antarctic Institute Act 1996 (NZAlA). Its statutory functions are prescribed by section 5 of the NZAlA. They are:

(a) To develop, manage, and execute New Zealand activities in respect of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, in particular in the Ross Dependency;

(b) To maintain and enhance the quality of New Zealand Antarctic scientific research;

(c) To co-operate with other institutions and organisations both within and outside New Zealand having objectives similar to those of the Institute.

Promoting economic well being or fulfilling the government’s strategic objectives is not a statutory function. However, section 5(a) provides a mandate to develop, manage and execute New Zealand’s activities.

The NZAlA does not identify the activities to be developed or make a distinction between government and non-government activities. Subject to the overriding principles of the NZAlA, Antarctica New Zealand can determine what activities are developed and whether it develops an activity or encourages the development of that activity by non-government players.

The overriding principles guiding Antarctica New Zealand in its statutory functions are
contained in section 6 of the NZAIA. It provides that in performing its functions, the Institute shall act in a manner that is consistent with:

(a) The need to conserve the intrinsic values of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean;

(b) Active and responsible stewardship of the Ross Dependency for the benefit of present and future generations of New Zealanders;

(c) New Zealand’s international obligations;

(d) The provisions of the Antarctica Act 1960 and the Antarctica (Environmental Protection) Act 1994; and

(e) The risks to personnel being minimised as far as is reasonable.

The development, management or execution of tourism activities must be consistent with these principles. Looking at each in turn:

(a) The intrinsic values of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean are not specified in the NZAIA. While subject to interpretation it is reasonable to assume they relate to the unique value of the Antarctic environment, ecosystems and its value as a place of global importance for science.

(b) Active and responsible stewardship of the Ross Dependency for the benefit of present and future generations of New Zealanders reasonably implies that any activity, including development, must occur in an environmentally responsible manner retaining the pristine nature of the place and preserving the intrinsic values of the area. However, it does not require the development of only science activities. Stewardship embodies the idea of sustainability of activity or development. The sustainability of tourism has been considered by Glenys Coughlan at the New Zealand 1998 Antarctic Futures Workshop as encompassing all of the following components:

- meeting the needs of consumers
- minimising the impact of tourism on the environment
- growing the economic contribution of tourism to the provider
- delivering adequate returns to investors
- working with those shaping policy

(c) Acting in accordance with New Zealand’s international obligations encompasses primarily acting in accordance with the Antarctic Treaty principles, the Madrid Protocol and CCAMLR. Article 3(1) of the Madrid Protocol is the fundamental guiding principle in this respect. It provides the governing principle for the planning and conduct of all activity in the Antarctic Treaty area. That principle is the protection of the Antarctic environment and dependent and associated ecosystems and the intrinsic value of Antarctica, including its wilderness and aesthetic values and its value as an area for the conduct of scientific research, in particular research essential to understanding the global environment.
Likewise acting in accordance with the provisions of the Antarctica Act 1960 and the A(EP)A requires adherence to the Antarctic Treaty System principles embodied in New Zealand’s domestic legislation. In this respect, the development of tourism by Antarctica New Zealand can be regulated through section 10 of the A(EP)A because as a Crown Entity Antarctica New Zealand is subject to the A(EP)A. Section 10 of the A(EP)A provides:

(1) The Minister may direct any person carrying out, or proposing to carry out, any activity in Antarctica--

(a) To refrain from carrying out an activity in Antarctica if the Minister is not satisfied that the effects of the activity on the Antarctic environment will be consistent with the purpose and principles in section 9 of this Act:

(b) To abide by such conditions as the Minister considers appropriate in order to avoid or minimise the effects of the activity on the Antarctic environment:

(c) To establish such procedures as the Minister considers appropriate to monitor, assess, and verify the effect of the activity on the Antarctic environment:

(d) To provide such reports as the Minister considers appropriate on the effects of the activity on the Antarctic environment and of any changes to the activity, or on procedures established for monitoring the activity:

(e) To modify, suspend, or cancel the activity in order to avoid effects on the Antarctic environment which are inconsistent with the purpose and principles in section 9 of this Act:

(f) To pay any bond that the Minister considers appropriate in order to ensure that the activity is carried out in accordance with an environmental evaluation or with any directions made by the Minister under this section...

Section 9 in turn states the purpose of the A(EP)A is to promote the comprehensive protection of the Antarctic environment and the value of Antarctica as an area for scientific research. It requires that in achieving the purpose of this Act, persons exercising functions under this Act, and persons planning or carrying out activities in Antarctica, shall act in a manner consistent with the environmental principles set out in Article 3 of the Madrid Protocol.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures reviewed by the Environmental Assessment and Review Panel (EARP) coupled with the Minister’s discretion can regulate any proposed tourism activity by a New Zealand operator.

(e) The risks to personnel being minimised as far as is reasonable remains a question of judgment. The use of the word “personnel” suggests it is a reference only to employed or official programme personnel.

Subject to complying with these statutory constraints Antarctica New Zealand has the statutory authority to develop, manage and execute tourism in Antarctica.
Policy Mandate

The NZAIA provides for Government directions, including Government policy, to be included in Antarctica New Zealand's statement of intent. Section 9(1)(b) allows:

(1) The Minister ... from time to time, by written notice to the Board [of the Institute to], direct the Board to include in the statement of intent such provision as the Minister considers necessary--

... (b) To implement (in whole or in part) any policy of the Government of New Zealand in respect of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, ...

and the Board shall comply with the notice.

This gives the Government the power to include amongst other things New Zealand's Government's strategic interests including the promotion of New Zealand's economic well-being, by enhancing New Zealand's economic opportunities within the parameters of the Antarctic Treaty System as part of the goals of Antarctica New Zealand.

Funding Mandate

Does Antarctica New Zealand have a mandate to charge tourists for activities or services it provides in relation to Antarctica and the Ross Sea region?

In short it does if the activity fulfils its statutory functions or uses its real and personal property. The funding base for Antarctica New Zealand is outlined in the First Schedule to the NZAIA. Provision 18 provides:

The funds of the Institute shall consist of--

(a) All money appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of the Institute, and paid to the Institute for its purposes:

(b) All money lawfully contributed, donated, or bequeathed to the Institute or otherwise lawfully payable to it:

(c) All money received by the Institute by way of fees, rent, or otherwise in respect of any real or personal property vested in or controlled by the Institute, or in respect of the performance of its functions:

(d) All money received by the Institute from the sale or other disposal of any of its real or personal property:

(e) All accumulations of income derived from any such money.

The key provision is 18(c). It provides a mandate for the receipt of funds from tourist activities in two ways. Firstly, from either rent or fees from the use of real and personal property effectively in either New Zealand or the Ross Dependency. Secondly, from the performance of any of its statutory functions. As discussed these statutory functions include the development, management and execution of New Zealand activities in respect of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, in particular the Ross
Dependency. Importantly, there is no requirement that those activities be Government activities and hence no requirement that Antarctica New Zealand draws income only from Government or "official" related activities. This allows for a move away from a fixed Government funding stream to a mixed revenue stream.

Antarctica New Zealand has formulated a charging policy for logistic services allowing it to charge tourist operations for its resources depending on whether it considers tourism:

(a) a core activity (a non science event supported by Antarctica New Zealand in the achievement of its operational and strategic goals);

(b) a non-core activity relating to Government strategic interests; or

(c) a non core third party business.

The policy provides for charging third parties involved in non-core business on a full cost recovery basis with an appropriate margin to reflect an adequate financial return. It plainly contemplates charging for leasing excess bed space at Scott Base to commercial tourist operators:

Antarctica New Zealand and the New Zealand Government have a significant investment in assets in Antarctica. Where compatible with its principles, it is deemed appropriate to generate a financial return on these assets where there is a short term excess of capacity⁵.

⁵ Extracted from Antarctica New Zealand’s charging policy in B. Abbott’s report p. 70
Tourism Policy Options

Summary

- The primary decision is whether to retain the current policy.
- If the current policy is not retained the likely policies are either an encouragement policy, neutrality policy or discouragement policy.

Tourism Policy Options

The primary decision is whether to retain the current policy. A new policy on tourism in Antarctica could take several forms. The most likely are:

- an encouragement policy;
- a neutrality policy;
- a discouragement policy.

Each policy is distinct but there are a continuum of positions within each policy. For example, a discouragement policy could result in a legislative prohibition on New Zealand tourism in Antarctica or a permissive regime with reluctant and minimal Government involvement with the private sector eg: search and rescue and medical evacuation functions. Likewise, an encouragement policy could result in the Government’s softening of the relationship with the private sector through to collaboration or direct competition in the tourism market.

The role Antarctica New Zealand plays in the future of tourism in Antarctica, primarily in the Ross Sea region, will be determined by the over-riding policy and the way Antarctica New Zealand interprets that policy.
Analysis of Tourism Policy Options

Summary

- The current policy is an astute risk averse policy. However, it does not provide clear direction to industry or Antarctica New Zealand on engagement with the private sector.

- A discouragement policy while having initial conservation appeal does not sit well with New Zealand's stated Antarctic objectives or current tourism activity.

- A neutral strategy is more conservative than the status quo and doesn't offer justifiable benefits to warrant a change in current policy.

- A cautious well managed encouragement policy can be consistent with the Government's environmental stewardship role. It is the preferred option. While it is a politically high risk policy it has significant advantages, if adopted and managed effectively it would continue New Zealand's role as an innovative nation in the Antarctic arena.

Each alternative Government policy on tourism would have significant impacts. These impacts can be categorised as political, economic, environmental and structural.

The costs and benefits of each policy are detailed below under those categories. In the current political environment the most likely options are either retaining the current policy or adopting a cautious encouragement policy overridden by environmental stewardship principles and strict environmental monitoring.
Encouragement Policy

Benefits

Political

Further fulfils statutory function and stated Government strategic interests

Encouraging environmentally responsible tourism is consistent with each of the highest stated Government strategic interests of maintaining its long-term interest in, and commitment to, the Ross Dependency, enhancing national security, through keeping Antarctica as a neutral and non-aligned neighbour, promoting economic well-being, through enhancing New Zealand’s economic opportunities within the parameters of the Antarctic Treaty System, promoting international stability, by enhancing New Zealand’s leadership in the governance of Antarctica and promoting New Zealand’s values and ideology by promoting Antarctica as a natural reserve devoted to peace and science. It also fulfils Antarctica New Zealand’s statutory function in section 5(a) of the NZAIA of “developing” activities in Antarctica.

Strengthens New Zealand’s sovereignty claims

An encouragement policy would strengthen New Zealand’s sovereignty claims both directly and indirectly. Directly by increasing the presence of New Zealand operators in the Ross Dependency and indirectly by New Zealanders growing identification of Antarctica as part of our identity and our “backyard”. Increased New Zealand based tourism would build on the identity and legacy of our nation’s long association with the Ross Sea region.

Raises New Zealand’s reputation as an innovative Antarctic nation if tourism well managed

If astutely managed and based on environmentally sound principles, tourism in Antarctica emanating from New Zealand could provide a model for the rest of tourist activity in Antarctica. It is a question of whether New Zealand is willing to lead the way and more importantly to be seen to be leading the way by openly encouraging tourism under strict environmental parameters.

Economic

Supports New Zealand industry and stimulates economic growth

Tourism in Antarctica is potentially a huge market and with it the economic benefits for New Zealand. Accurate projections for tourist numbers or revenue are near impossible. IAATO projections for 2002 are approximately 15,000 tourists⁴. Back of the envelope projections for 2010 have ranged from 1.5 million to 15 million tourists⁵. Current costs for travelling to the interior of Antarctica next season start at $US14,000⁶. The major constraints to large

⁴ IAATO published projections from website, www.iatto.org
⁵ Coughlan G. in Tettey G. (ed) p.10
⁶ Adventure Network International website, www.adventure-network.com
scale development are firstly, with the exception of Antarctic Network International, the lack of commercial air access and secondly the high cost of access. If air access is opened up in the Ross Sea region to commercial operators and costs are reduced the market demand could be huge.

What is the cost of air access from New Zealand? Previous predicted cost scenarios for flights suggest $US1200 return and range from $US3700 to $US8700 for travel and accommodation in Antarctica for a 10 day stay depending on the standard of accommodation and food provided. At say $US4000-$US5000 the market would be accessible to the general travelling world population. Its appeal would need to be tested but it would doubt hinge on the frontier experience. The attraction of overflights from Australia currently costing approximately $US1200 could be extensively channelled into this market.

If the pricing was commercially viable what numbers could be expected? If say 1000 people per season visited Antarctica per 20 week season gross revenue, on the above figures for tourist operations, would be $US4-$5 million per season. If 100,000 people per season visited Antarctica, which is a figure well below projected tourism numbers for Antarctica 10 years from now, gross revenue for tourist operations would be $US400-$500 million per season. The question of whether these tourist numbers could be managed effectively and sustainably while retaining the environmental integrity of the region and the frontier appeal for tourists are separate issues considered later. Undoubtedly the size of the market involved means there would, subject to commercial viability, be strong initial private sector interest.

Alongside this would be the direct benefits to industries supporting ship and/or aircraft based tourism including air and port charges and services, provisioning, clothing and equipment, merchandising, logistics, communications and the high-tech industries.

Running alongside the direct economic return of any Antarctic industry are the indirect economic benefits an encouragement policy would bring including employment for New Zealanders not only in the Antarctic tourism industry utilising the extensive and unique skills of New Zealand Antarctic experienced personnel, adventurers, mountaineers, guides, sailors and helicopter pilots but also in the supporting industries. The indirect benefits may well exceed the gross revenue generated in the tourist industry.

Enhances New Zealand as a tourist destination

Visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the year ended June 1998 numbered 1,458,393 and total expenditure was estimated at $3.068 billion. A prime motivation for tourists travelling to New Zealand is the perception of New Zealand as the "adventure capital" of the world. The range of outdoor activities and eco-tourism ventures throughout the country is booming. It is one of New Zealand’s unique selling points. The same images of adventure, lack of people, clean air, isolation, environmental integrity and wilderness that

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7 Abbott B. p.43,49,51. Note that the figures have been converted into US$.

8 Figures provided to the author by New Zealand Tourism Board, 1999.
attract tourists to New Zealand are a reality in Antarctica. The attraction of New Zealand as a destination would be hugely boosted if there was an existing Antarctic eco-tourism/adventure industry accessible to tourists from New Zealand as a add-on to a New Zealand trip. The key requirement is pricing at an affordable level.

The spin-offs to the New Zealand tourist industry are increased stays in New Zealand beyond the current median of ten days at the start and finish of any Antarctic trip. This would increase the average spent per visitor from $2,315 at the current average of NZ$132 spent per tourist per day in New Zealand\(^9\).

*Enhances Christchurch’s gateway city status*

Current estimates put the Christchurch Antarctic industry at between SNZ30 and $60 million. The question has already been floated by Canterbury Development Corporation’s Chris Pickrill “what do we have to do in the context of the environmental sustainability umbrella to lift the revenue potential to $NZ150-200 million mark?\(^10\) An encouragement policy for tourism, coupled with engagement with the private sector in other Antarctic commercial ventures such as R&D, education and supply industries can create this scale of economic benefits for New Zealand industry and Christchurch in particular as the gateway city.

*Increases tax base*

This may be a result of direct and indirect taxation from new and evolving industries and the spins off for New Zealand outlined above. This would include company tax, income tax, ACC payments and GST payments (the later on current IRD interpretation would apply only in New Zealand and its sub Antarctic islands).

*Increases Antarctica New Zealand’s revenue*

Increased tourism under an encouragement policy would, if managed astutely, mean increased revenue for Antarctica New Zealand. The size of the return would depend on the degree of Antarctica New Zealand’s involvement in the market. This increased revenue in turn could be used for other Antarctic New Zealand science and education programmes and a fulfillment of it statutory function prescribed in section 5(b) of the NZAIA of maintaining and enhancing the quality of New Zealand Antarctic scientific research, as well as promoting the other overriding Government’s strategic interests.

*Diversifies Antarctica New Zealand’s funding base*

An encouragement policy would diversify Antarctica New Zealand’s funding base either from raising revenue from private operators purchasing services from Antarctica New Zealand or from active involvement by Antarctica New Zealand in providing tourist activities.

\(^9\) ibid

\(^10\) Pickrill C. in Tetley G. (ed) p.31
Environmental

Creates a constituency of greater awareness of Antarctic issues including environmental concerns

With increased tourism to Antarctica from New Zealand this inevitably raises the public awareness of Antarctic issues and opens up awareness of all Antarctic issues including the imperatives of environmental stewardship.

Opportunity to influence public perception and values for Antarctica and the Southern Ocean

By astutely managing tourism the New Zealand Government and its agencies can impart their desired values for Antarctica by influencing public perception and promoting the conservation and appreciation values at the core of New Zealand's involvement in Antarctica. A broad based advocacy for the values of Antarctica will, as David Lange outlined in his speech to the 1998 Antarctic Futures Workshop, be far more effective than Antarctic experts combined skill, knowledge and experience.

Opportunity to shape tourist development to fit desired environmental management framework

By adopting an encouragement policy to tourism the Government has the ability to shape the development of tourism. It has, through the EIA process embodied in domestic legislation and the EARP, the final say in whether activities, including tourist activities, promoted by New Zealand citizens and entities may proceed. By articulating a clear policy on the overriding considerations for tourism in Antarctica it would shape tourist development to fit a desired environmental management framework. The guiding principles for Antarctica New Zealand in section 6 of the NZAIA provide a neat match. This encompasses the concepts of conservation, active and responsible stewardship, compliance with international and domestic law and minimising human risk. Inherent in this is the concept of sustainability. Coupled with the overriding principles of Antarctica New Zealand of conservation, appreciation and knowledge the encouragement of tourism within such a framework may be more acceptable.

Structural

Maximises Antarctica New Zealand's and Scott Base resources

Increased tourism resulting from an encouragement policy maximises Antarctica New Zealand's and Scott Base resources at a number of levels. It would require more extensive utilisation of the organisation's existing expertise, information, technical resources and equipment both in Christchurch and at Scott Base and the development of new commercial skills.

Widens, strengthens and raises public profile of Antarctica New Zealand

Increased tourist activity and with it increased profile of Antarctica in the public's mind raises the public profile of Antarctica New Zealand both as a
steward of the Antarctic environment. By managing a tourism industry effectively and astutely Antarctica New Zealand would become a pivotal player in any future development and would broaden its reason d'être.

Costs

Political

Damaging the perception of New Zealand as an environmental protector

One of the major risks in the encouragement policy is to bring the Government and Antarctica New Zealand's credibility into disrepute domestically and internationally. At a domestic level, this may involve Parliament, the media and stakeholders questioning the key function of New Zealand's involvement in Antarctica and the possibility of altering the public perception of the Government as a protector, not a developer, of Antarctica. An encouragement policy would be likely to create negative publicity and lobbying from the traditional science sector and environmental pressure groups.

At the international level it may raise doubts as to whether the New Zealand Government is fulfilling its stated environmental stewardship role and commitment to science and the Antarctic environment by actively encouraging tourism. In doing so, New Zealand may jeopardize the moral high ground in other Antarctic environmental issues such as campaigning on the exportation of Antarctic fisheries.

Risk of damaging the US relationship

There is a risk of damaging the sensitive nature of the US relationship and with it the implications for air access, which are currently part of the NZ/US Government programmes in the Ross Sea region. This is a major consideration and needs an objective assessment of the degree of New Zealand's dependence on this relationship. If attempts made to broker air access for tourist purposes are unsuccessful, New Zealand may need to look at blue ice runways and the need to develop innovative air access solutions if this is a preferred option of access to the Continent. Given the current restrictions on carriage of civilians on non-civilian aircraft and the present US policy on tourism, these are major issues which need confronting. In Higham's opinion "there is currently nothing to stop Antarctica New Zealand contracting air support from a private operator. And as long as this was supporting a government sanctioned activity it is highly unlikely that the US would withdraw landing support (unless it required much greater resourcing than currently employed)".\textsuperscript{11}

Repeating the CRAMRA experience

The other cost internationally is the risk of repeating the CRAMRA experience of leading the world in a proposed regulatory regime this time in the effective and sustainable management of tourism only to be faced with a change in

\textsuperscript{11} Higham, p.11
general public opinion.

Economic

Cost of impairing the US relationship

The economic costs of damaging the sensitive nature of the US relationship and with that the air access arrangements need to be carefully analysed.

Exposure to commercial risk

An encouragement policy under which Antarctica New Zealand operates as an active player has inherent financial risks, including the possibility of a financial loss.

Cost of insuring against liability

A major financial risk is the insurance costs to be met downstream once the proposed liability regime annex under the Madrid Protocol is enacted. This annex once enacted into domestic legislation will very likely have a major impact on commercial operators in Antarctica.

Politics of Funding

A separate issue is the political implications for Antarctica New Zealand should it wish to borrow funds for its own tourist venture as it is required to approach Government for consent to raise finance.

Environmental

Physical impacts of tourism

The major risk of an encouragement policy is the level of environmental impact that increased tourism numbers would have on the Continent's physical and biological ecosystem and historic sites. The threats include physical damage and increased waste and pollution to fragile ecosystems. What is needed is a clear analysis of the risks to the physical and biological ecosystems as a result of tourist activity. Several studies have been conducted in this area. A review of the relevant literature is contained in Downer's unpublished paper *The Impacts of Tourism* with the conclusion that the majority of the recent studies findings are that scientific programmes are causing by far the majority of the damage, not tourists. This is consistent with the types of activities and the length of time each group is spending on the Continent. A continuation of the current tourist activity pattern represents only a minimal threat to the environment compared to existing science and Government programmes. This may not be the case if there is a discontinuity in tourist activity. For example, by brokering air access and tourist numbers rising to 1,000 or even 100,000 per season. The question of infrastructure to support increasing levels of tourism creates its own environmental demands. What is critical in assessing the impacts of the tourist industry on the Continent is the length of stay, the type and intensity of the activity on-shore and the waste disposal techniques employed. The baseline for any credible tourist encouragement regime needs to be sustainability. Sustainability, as
Glenys Coughlin highlighted comprises a number of factors, the key component of which is minimising environmental damage. Environmentally responsible tourism initiatives can be consistent with overriding guiding principles of conservation and educational appreciation of the Antarctic environment. The key is to ensure that Antarctic tourism gives priority to the principles of sustainability of the physical, biological and aesthetic aspects of the environment, that tourism is properly managed and the appropriate environmental monitoring and reporting systems are in place and are effective.

*Physical risks of operating in Antarctica*

The physical risks of operating in the Antarctic environment need to objectively assessed for tourist activity. The possibility of loss of life or physical harm to paying tourists is an inherent consideration together with defining an acceptable public level of risk. This needs to acknowledge that the national psyche of Antarctica is still influenced to a certain extent by the Erebus disaster.

*Structural*

*Re-evaluation of Antarctica New Zealand’s role*

As far as Antarctica New Zealand is concerned, an encouragement policy would require an internal re-evaluation of the compatibility of its stewardship and commercial role. Couched within guiding principles of conservation, knowledge and appreciation the organisation may accept the compatibility of the roles.

*Need to develop skill base*

The policy also raises the need for commercial, legal, planning and management skills within the organisation to deal with the private sector.

*Consequent Role for Antarctica New Zealand*

This could vary depending on the degree of engagement Antarctica New Zealand adopts under an encouragement policy. Options include:

(a) engaging with the private sector as an advisory body only,

(b) collaboration with the private sector,

(c) operating a stand alone commercial tourist venture.

*Advisory Function*

Under an advisory function Antarctica New Zealand would refrain from participating in any commercial tourist operation. Its role would be to provide information and advice to assist private tourism ventures within overriding environmental stewardship principles. The major benefits are that:
there is no commercial financial exposure to Antarctica New Zealand.

- it can still diversify its funding base by raising revenue from charging commercial operators for its information resources.

- it is not open to claims from commercial operators that it is interfering in the marketplace.

- by adopting an on the ground watchdog role in conjunction with the EARP and the EIA processes it can monitor the environmental impacts of tourist activities.

The major cost would be:

- Antarctica New Zealand is not maximising its resources in Antarctica, financial or other opportunities under the policy.

**Stand alone Government commercial tourist venture**

Under this option Antarctica New Zealand would manage and deliver a stand alone commercial tourist operation. The specific benefits would be:

- Antarctica New Zealand retains total management and operational control.

- sovereignty and title considerations which would concern private land based operators are avoided.

- Antarctica New Zealand retains all profits for pursuing its other strategic objectives and statutory functions.

- it allows for constant and accurate self-monitoring and review of environmental impacts.

The major costs would be:

- it creates a potential conflict of interest by being both an independent operator and being the point of Government contact for other commercial operators.

- it would lead to claims by current New Zealand operators of unfair interference in the marketplace.

**Collaborating with the Private Sector**

This contemplates any form of joint venture arrangement or leasing or licensing arrangement where Antarctica New Zealand supports or participates with a private sector operator in a tourist venture. The recent Ministerial on Ice and University of Canterbury course visits have highlighted the ability of Antarctica New Zealand to manage larger than usual numbers of people at Scott Base and operate effectively with them in the field. The excess capacity at Scott Base at certain times of the summer season, coupled with the new facilities block and recent upgrades in accommodation facilities have raised the standard of
accommodation able to be offered. Collaboration could, for example, include Antarctica New Zealand leasing bedspace at Scott Base, providing field and logistical support, information resources, specialist or communication capabilities, licensing a commercial operator to run tours from Scott Base or leasing Cape Roberts facilities to compliment a commercial tourist venture.

The specific benefits would be that it:

- allows Antarctica New Zealand to choose its level of risk depending on what activity or level of collaboration it wants to establish with a commercial operator.

- allows Antarctica New Zealand to co-opt tourist industry management and commercial expertise.

- directly assists New Zealand industry.

- gets New Zealand tourism industry 'on-side' with Government policy.

The major costs would be:

- depending on the nature of the collaboration a loss of degree of management control and direction of the venture.

- a sharing of financial gains from tourist ventures utilising Antarctica New Zealand’s resources.

- the potential problems of sovereignty and title if land bases are developed by commercial interests.

- having to rely to a large extent on the environmental integrity of a business partner to adhere to Antarctica New Zealand’s conservation and stewardship principles.

- that it creates a potential conflict of interest by being a party to a commercial operation and being the point of Government contact for other commercial operators.

- it may lead to claims by current independent New Zealand operators of unfair interference in the marketplace.

**Attractiveness of Encouragement Strategy**

Government direct involvement is feasible with minimal financial outlay through leasing arrangements of accommodation and under-utilised facilities at Scott Base. An encouragement policy can fit within New Zealand’s environmental stewardship principles and concepts of conservation, appreciation and education espoused by Antarctica New Zealand. A conservative encouragement policy would be to simply allow leasing or licensing rights to non-government operators of government facilities and retain a back seat regulatory role as opposed to embarking on a standalone tourist venture. The unresolved issue is whether this can be achieved without the need to get secure new air access
rights for non-government players and if not, the implications of contracting air services from a commercial operator.

By adopting an encouragement policy the New Zealand Government can enact a detailed management framework backed by international obligations and reporting requirements. It is an opportunity to pro-actively shape and manage the future of non-government activity and create a desired environmental management framework in the Ross Sea region. Developments in the Antarctic Peninsula show tourism will be a major factor to contend with as science and government programs are no longer the dominant player, numerically, in that geographic area.

That said an encouragement policy is a high risk / high reward policy. It has political risks at both a domestic and international level. It raises the key issue of whether the environmental impacts of tourism justify encouraging it. Current research shows tourism's impacts are minor. If air access is brokered, the results may be different, although Antarctic Network International has shown this need not be so, having led the way in environmental best practice for all operators in Antarctica. Their approach is a useful model for environmentally responsible commercial operators. Paradoxically the environment may benefit from increasing tourism by increased awareness and advocacy from returning visitors.

**Recommendation**

Adopt this policy. An innovative bold policy which is recommended provided strict environmental conditions are attached and Antarctica New Zealand and EARP manage the process astutely to control the level and form of tourist activity.

This is a high risk and high reward policy. However, in the author's opinion it is possible that this is too politically risky to be seen to be stated New Zealand Government tourism policy.
Neutral Policy

This is different from the current Government policy. A neutral policy would not consider proposals on a case by case basis. It would be totally neutral on any tourist initiative without actively promoting or deterring private tourism operators in the Ross Dependency. At an operational level Antarctica New Zealand would provide primarily an information and advice role.

Benefits

Political

The major benefit is that there are no international or domestic political repercussions in adopting such a policy. It is more conservative than the current policy. It would not jeopardize the existing relationship with the United States and the current air access arrangements or create negative publicity and lobbying from the traditional science sector or environmental pressure groups in the way an open encouragement policy would.

Economic

There are no commercial and financial risks for New Zealand under such a policy. Nor does it threaten the existing air access arrangements with the United States and the economic implications of altering those arrangements.

Environmental

By not promoting increased numbers of tourists in Antarctica, the direct environmental impact of tourism on the Continent is not increased. The policy means more funding may be put into science and other activities.

Structural

As far as Antarctica New Zealand in concerned there is no need to adapt it's organisational skill base to obtain commercial expertise to liaise with the private tourism sector.

Costs

Political

By adopting an openly neutral policy the Government is not pursuing its highest level strategic objectives of enhancing economic opportunities within the parameters of the Antarctic Treaty System or maintaining, to the best of its ability, its commitment to the Ross Dependency given that New Zealand operators in the Ross Dependency contribute to the sense of identity with the area.

Economic

A neutral policy does not contribute to the economic well-being of New Zealand. It fails to support the development of New Zealand industry, does not increase
The tax take, enhance the gateway status of Christchurch or provide employment opportunities for New Zealanders in general.

Environmental

By not encouraging more tourists, tourism's impact on the Continent in general is not increased. However, the policy means more funding can be put into science and other activities. This will yield greater benefits but as current research indicates science creates more environmental damage on the physical and biological ecosystems in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean than the current patterns of tourist activity.

A neutrality policy fails to provide the public with hands-on experience in the unique values and power of Antarctica or create a wider informed constituency on Antarctic and Southern Ocean and environmental related issues.

Structural

The policy does not maximise Antarctica New Zealand's or Scott Base's resources, diversify its funding base or widen Antarctica New Zealand's role.

Consequent Role for Antarctica New Zealand

Antarctica New Zealand's role in tourism would be more restrictive than it is now. It would not have the opportunity to engage the private sector in instances where private tourist ventures could enhance the Government objectives eg: the Iridium Ice Trek expedition. It would perform more of an information and advice role and be reactive to commercial operators requests.

The major implication for Antarctica New Zealand is that the policy would not allow Antarctica New Zealand to maximise its real and intellectual property resources and diversify its funding base by engaging with the tourism sector where compatible to pursue the Government's strategic objectives. By not increasing its funding through developing opportunities Antarctica New Zealand cannot maximise the opportunities to develop its science and other programmes.

Attractiveness of Strategy

A neutrality policy is more conservative than the current policy. It offers very few advantages that New Zealand does not enjoy under its current policy. The drop in current tourism numbers and reduced environmental effects as a result of implementing the policy would, under current tourism patterns, be minimal. It also is at odds with one of the highest Government strategic objectives of encouraging economic well-being.

Recommendation

Do not adopt. A more conservative strategy that the status quo which doesn't offer justifiable benefits to warrant a change in current policy.
Discouragement Policy

A policy discouraging tourism is the current UK 'on the ground' policy in Antarctica and at least until recently has been the prevailing US policy.

Benefits

**Political**

An open discouragement policy would enhance New Zealand's relationship with the existing traditional Antarctic international government players and non-government pressure groups (eg: Greenpeace) as well as New Zealand's traditional science community.

It would allow New Zealand to retain the moral high ground in campaigning on other Antarctic and Southern Ocean environmental protection issues eg: fisheries.

Such a policy would shape public perception of the Government as protector not developer of Antarctica and retain science not environmental stewardship as the key function of New Zealand's involvement in Antarctica

**Economic**

No commercial or financial risks need be taken and Antarctica New Zealand's funding from its traditional sources are retained for science and logistic activities.

**Environmental**

The policy minimises environment impacts from tourism to the Continent and historic sites particularly in the Ross Sea region by discouraging increased numbers of people on the ice and the associated issues of physical damage, increase waste and pollution.

**Structural**

Under a discouragement policy no change in paradigm is required in the mindset of Antarctic New Zealand staff. No new staffing demands are required to manage commercial tourism interaction.

Costs

**Political**

An open discouragement policy portrays the Government and Antarctica New Zealand as a conservative Antarctic player. It would be open to the challenge that it is not recognising the role non-government actors play in Antarctica in the present and will continue to play in the future.

It 'misses the boat' in securing an opportunity to pro-actively shape and manage the future of non Government activity including shaping desired environmental
management frameworks in Antarctica and the Ross Sea region. It denigrates from the concept of an innovative Antarctic nation.

Such a policy is a retreat from an evolving environmental stewardship role to a pure Government through science role. In some ways its is a head in the sand approach reasoning that by discouraging tourism it won’t happen. Tourism activity in the Antarctic Peninsula shows tourism is a reality and can’t be ignored.

The other political failings are that the policy doesn’t strengthen New Zealand’s underlying sovereignty claims by increasing New Zealand presence in the Ross Dependency or fulfil the stated Government strategic interests.

Economic

A discouragement policy has major economic implications. It doesn’t support New Zealand industry, increase the tax base, enhance Christchurch’s gateway city status or increase employment opportunities for New Zealanders. Neither does it increase Antarctica New Zealand’s revenue or diversify its funding stream allowing it to pursue more ambitious science programmes.

Environmental

While discouraging tourism involvement with the environment the policy doesn’t foster a widening of the domestic stakeholders or create a constituency of greater awareness of Antarctica issues and environmental concerns in general.

Structural

A discouragement policy doesn’t maximise Antarctica New Zealand’s and Scott Base resources or widen, strengthen or raise the public profile of Antarctica New Zealand.

Consequent Role for Antarctica New Zealand

Under this role Antarctica New Zealand would be likely to have no involvement with tourists. It would need to take a stance in relation to providing assistance in search and rescue and medical evacuation situations.

As with the neutrality policy it would not allow Antarctica New Zealand to maximise its real and intellectual property resources and diversify its funding base by engaging with the tourism sector where compatible to pursue the Government’s strategic objectives.

Attractiveness of Strategy

The policy while initially appealing from an environmental conservation aspect is not a well considered policy. It is short-sighted given the development of tourist activities in the Antarctic Peninsula and the fact that the Ross Sea region also has considerable appeal for tourist operators.

Rejecting tourism is a retreat from the current policy. It misses the opportunity to
pro-actively shape and manage the future of non-government tourism in the region. The policy fails to fulfil the Government's strategic objectives and does not enhance New Zealand's reputation as an innovative Antarctic nation.

Recommendation

Do not adopt. The policy while having conservation appeal does not sit well with New Zealand's stated Antarctic objectives or current activity.
Continuation of Current Policy

This involves continuing the current actively neutral policy described earlier of responding to tourism proposals on their merits while neither encouraging of discouraging tourism in general.

Benefits

Political

The key feature and benefit of the current policy is it is politically expedient. The policy can adapt to the Government’s changing agendas, strategic objectives and interests. If public opinion changes or pressure is exerted internationally then the policy is flexible enough to factor in these events to guide in dealing with a particular tourism proposal.

The policy fulfils the government’s strategic objectives and Antarctica New Zealand’s statutory functions although not as vigorously as a policy of publicly encouraging tourism.

Economic

Once again the policy fulfils the Government’s objectives of developing economic opportunities but does so through encouraging tourism only where it is consistent with the government’s principles. It can, depending on the way proposals are dealt with, stimulate New Zealand and Christchurch industry, economic growth, employment, the tax base and Antarctica New Zealand’s revenue.

Environmental

The policy’s flexibility means it is committed to environmental integrity and conservation because it only permits tourism activities where they coincide with the Government’s strategic interests and environmental stewardship principles.

Structural

It allows Antarctica New Zealand the flexibility to interpret its own meaning as to what constitutes active neutrality. It creates flexibility for the organisation to deal with each tourist activity approach as it perceives the proposal fits within the parameters of the Government policy subject to EIA approval from EARP.

Costs

Political

The major benefit of the policy, its flexibility, is also its major weakness. The policy does not provide clear direction to the private sector or to Antarctica New Zealand as to how to engage the private tourism sector.

It does not engender the need for a debate on the appropriate policy. Under the policy it is too simple to avoid the responsibility of developing a proactive regime
to manage tourism and instead simply continue to respond reactively on a case-
by-case basis to individual tourism proposals.

Economic

The current policy does not promise the same degree of economic return an
open encouragement policy would through promoting opportunities for New
Zealand’s private tourism sector.

Environmental

The reactive nature of the policy means that there is no incentive to put in place
a proactive tourism environment or management regime or develop a tourism
regime to fit an environmental framework. Likewise, it does not create an
incentive to develop and research environmental baseline data, which would be
invaluable if controlled tourism is encouraged in the future.

Structural

While it does not maximise Antarctica New Zealand’s and Scott Base’s
resources, it utilises them more than a negative or neutral policy would.

Consequent role for Antarctica New Zealand

Antarctica New Zealand would continue to operate in the manner it currently
does in dealing with tourism. A continuation of the policy will hinder Antarctica
New Zealand engaging the private tourism sector proactively and openly. The
policy does not give Antarctica New Zealand a clear mandate to openly
collaborate in the encouragement of environmentally sustainable tourism if it
wishes to pursue that strategy as part of fulfilling its statutory function and
achieving the government’s strategic objectives. Antarctica New Zealand would
be hard pushed to justify proactive steps, such as leasing facilities or entering
into joint venture arrangements, are appropriate under the current policy.

Attractiveness of strategy

The current policy is a risk-averse strategy. It has the key advantage of flexibility
according to the perceived fit of a tourism proposal with the Government’s
strategic interests. The Government can alter the criteria and strategic
objectives without altering the policy. It is an astute policy in this respect.

While it is astute, it does not encourage New Zealand to develop an innovative
tourism regime and has failed to provide clear direction to industry on tourism. It
has also left Antarctica New Zealand without guidance as to whether proactively
engaging the private sector in tourism is appropriate under the current policy.
Despite the fact that the current policy could approve, for example, the leasing
of Scott Base facilities, as being consistent with Government strategic interests
and therefore acceptable under an actively neutral policy, the reality is that such
an action would be perceived as an encouragement policy in the domestic and
international environment. The policy should therefore be maintained if the
Government wishes to exclude tourism from Antarctica New Zealand’s possible
engagement strategy with the private sector.
Continuing the actively neutral policy is the simplest policy option because it does not require a change in mindset or the taking of risks associated with changing policy. Even if the policy is retained previous works have identified the desirability of placing the current policy "on the table" to give direction to the private sector and Antarctica New Zealand when engaging with the private sector.

**Recommendation**

Abandon this policy in favour of a cautious and well managed encouragement policy to allow Antarctica New Zealand to engage the private tourism sector in a way that ensures environmental integrity is the paramount consideration.

**Conclusion**

Retaining the current policy has the key advantage of flexibility according to the perceived fit of a tourism proposal with Government's strategic interests. However, a continuation of the policy will hinder Antarctica New Zealand engaging the private tourism sector pro-actively and openly and it may be hard for Antarctica New Zealand to justify that leasing facilities or entering joint venture arrangements is in line with the current "neutrality" policy.

The advantages of any new policy on tourism are that it will provide clear direction to the private sector on the Government's stance and with that will provide some predictability to assist planning. An encouragement policy does however have significant political risks.

A strictly controlled encouragement policy has significant benefits and is the preferred option. However, it may be seen as to politically risky to be held up as stated New Zealand government tourism policy.
Organisational Demands

If tourism is encouraged and Antarctica New Zealand takes an active involvement in some capacity this will place various financial, resourcing and logistical demands on the organisation. Antarctica New Zealand would therefore need to address issues such as:

- can it finance its involvement in tourist operations (whatever that role may be) in the Ross Sea region off balance sheet?
- should it deliver or contract out any logistics involvement it may have of tourist activities in the Ross Sea region?
- should it contract to provide air access in conjunction with NZDF or contract this to a commercial air operator?
- does it have the right commercial skill base within the organisation to manage tourism and interface with commercial operators?

These are just some of the preliminary questions which would need addressing by Antarctica New Zealand if it takes an active involvement under an encouragement policy.
Conclusion

There is no "right" policy. Every policy can be justified on its merits dependant on one's viewpoint. A change to an encouragement policy would be in line with the trend towards liberalisation of access to Antarctica to the non-traditional sector.

There are costs, both environmental and otherwise, in changing the current policy and encouraging tourism. As with all human activity in Antarctica it is often viewed as a trade-off of environmental integrity against the benefits of increased human presence. Commercial development including tourism can be achieved in a manner consistent with environmental stewardship principles provided it is managed astutely. The key advantage Government has if it encourages or participates in tourism is its role through the EIA process, EARP and the legislative process as both gatekeeper and policeman of all New Zealand activity in Antarctica.

Developments in other areas of Antarctica and initiatives being investigated from Australia by tourism operators highlight the reality of tourism in Antarctica. It is here now, it won't disappear and is potentially the biggest factor in the Ross Sea region in the medium term yet it has remained too politically difficult to address. Leading the careful management of tourism may secure New Zealand's position in the future of emerging Antarctic issues despite the risks involved with altering the current policy.
References


