

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

-Greg Martin

The yet has started with impacts on the tourism sector in New Zealand, flowing on from the present economic difficulties in the Asian market. A long dry summer is being experienced, attributed to the El Nino weather pattern. River and stream temperatures have risen to a level that is affecting native fish, however the Waitomo Karst region appears to be holding up against these elements so far. Drought has hit the Marlborough area of the South Island and is spreading further south to Canterbury.

TOURISM TRENDS

Numbers at the Waitomo Glowworm Cave have reduced as a result of the reduction in Asian visitors especially from the Korean market. The climate monitoring system in the Glowworm Cave has now been reviewed and is fully operational. There has hardly been two years with the same for visitor numbers in recent times. However, there is a substantial bank of information now available for further analysis and comparison. At this stage the down turn in the arrival of visitors from the Asian market sector has mainly impacted on the coach companies, some service route restaurant trade, accommodation and the Caves. The adventure tourism market continues to thrive on the domestic trade.

RUAKURI CAVE

Following on from my last report, the new joint venture company investigating the re-opening of Ruakuri Cave has made some recent discoveries which will assist alternative access to the former tourist cave. John Ash, who has been involved in the development has written an article detailing progress which you will find in this Journal edition.

The *Wahi Tapu* (burial) site at the traditional tourist entrance has now been surveyed in preparation for declaration of the area as a Maori Reservation. There will be a public consultative process to achieve any change in status for the land.

MANIAPOTO KARST STRATEGY

The plan covering the management of the cave and karst resource in the Maniapoto (Waitomo) area has now been printed and released as a draft for comment. It is planned to officially launch the document with an event at the Waitomo Museum of Caves in the near future.

ACKMA Inc ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The agenda and arrangements for the Annual General Meeting of ACKMA Inc, to be held at Jenolan Caves over the 1998 Australian Queens Birthday weekend, are inserted in this Journal. This meeting will be an opportunity to further advance the work of the Association and to discuss and assist with arrangements for the forthcoming Naracoorte Conference next year. Committee members from both sides of the Tasman will be present, and I hope as many ACKMA members as possible will attend what I am certain will be an enjoyable and memorable event.

WAITOMO CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Almost twelve months later, the final papers are about to be presented enabling the production of the *Waitomo Revisited* Conference Proceedings. The editor has assured me that the Proceedings will be available for distribution by June 1998, at the ACKMA Inc. General Meeting.