

Waitomo Conference Update

Registrations are building for the 2013 ACKMA Conference and room types at some accommodation providers are filling up fast. There are plenty of rooms available in Waitomo but late bookings may not get their first choice. It is best to send in your registration ahead of payment. Once your accommodation is confirmed (usually 24-48hrs) then payment can be sent through. The Waitomo Tavern burnt down a few weeks ago but now even more bars have sprung up. Apart from that, all is set, and we look forward to seeing you in New Zealand in May.

Common questions

When does the Thursday bus leave Auckland?

There are flights in from Sydney and Melbourne about 5:30pm. After those passengers have come out we'll hit the road south and get to Waitomo about 9pm. Before that we will be able to pick up people from a central location in the CBD, and one or two other points near the motorway. We'll let people know more when we know who is on the bus.

When does the Sunday bus leave Auckland?

2.00pm from the airport, any city pickups will be earlier.

Climate?

Waitomo could well be cool and wet in May. No snow but expect temperature around 5° to 15°C Warm clothing and a good raincoat will be needed.



November 2012. Waitomo heats up for ACKMA Conference. Photo: Celina Yapp

Accommodation Update

Waitomo is a tourist destination, things change and some accommodation options have been taken already.

The Waitomo Caves Hotel has just scheduled a major refurbishment and no more single rooms will be available for the Conference period

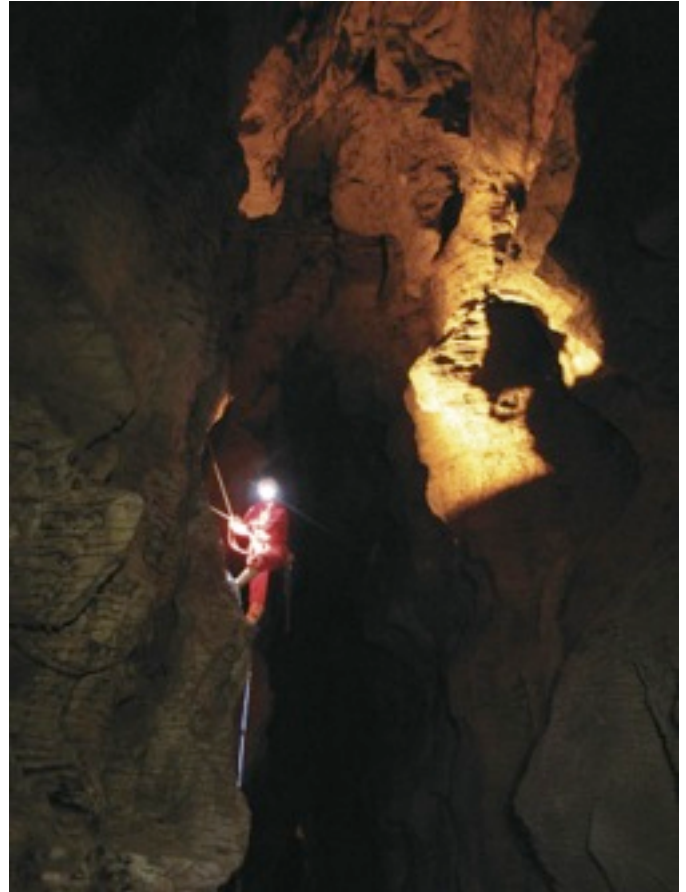
A large bus company has booked out the chalets at the Kiwipaka backpackers for one night in Conference week. So those booking chalet style accommodation may need to move into another room for one night during their stay. Note this is for the chalet options only.

Geothermal field trip

This pre-conference trip leaves from Waitomo at about 9am on the Friday morning. So those getting the Thursday bus will overnight in Waitomo. If you are interested in geodiversity this is a fantastic chance to see some geothermal sites off the beaten track. The tour will be hosted by Harry Keys, the Department of Conservation volcanologist. On Friday the tour will head towards Lake Taupo and the Orakei Korako thermal area (boat across the river), and a geothermal power station. Overnight in Taupo where a full range of accommodation is available. On Saturday, its south to the active volcanoes of Tongariro National Park, across the Desert Rd and around to Tangiwai to look at how to manage lahar flows. Accommodation (several options) that night is at Whakapapa which is gateway to the National Park and a major ski destination in season. Sunday, the group will take the chairlift up Mt Ruapehu if conditions allow, followed by viewing the fresh explosion craters at the north end of the Park. Return to Waitomo in the afternoon. The exact trip schedule is dependent on weather and volcanic activity. Warm clothes, windproof coat and light boots needed for field trips.

Wild caving

A variety of wild cave trips will be available on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday ahead of the conference. There is a lot of interest in this programme already, so we may struggle to offer everyone a guided trip all 3 days. Typical cave temperatures are 13°C, and in May the water will feel much colder. Bring as much caving equipment as you can, at the least thermals (two layers) and helmets/lights. A small number of ratty old gumboots, overalls and helmets will be available locally. When numbers (and local cavers) are sorted closer to the time we'll send out some more info, in particular about any SRT or wetsuit trips that will be happening (BYO SRT gear). The closest Australian style of caving is probably Mole Creek. All these trips will be based from Waitomo with transport provided. Your accommodation will need to cover all these nights. There are a few local dining choices and/or we will arrange a supermarket visit early on.



*Top: Black Odyssey, Waitomo's newest adventure tour, opened in 2012. Photo: Tourism Holdings Limited
Bottom: Dave Smith in Puketiti Flower Cave. Photo: Peter Bosted*

Bank details

For payments by electronic transfer, different banks want different information:

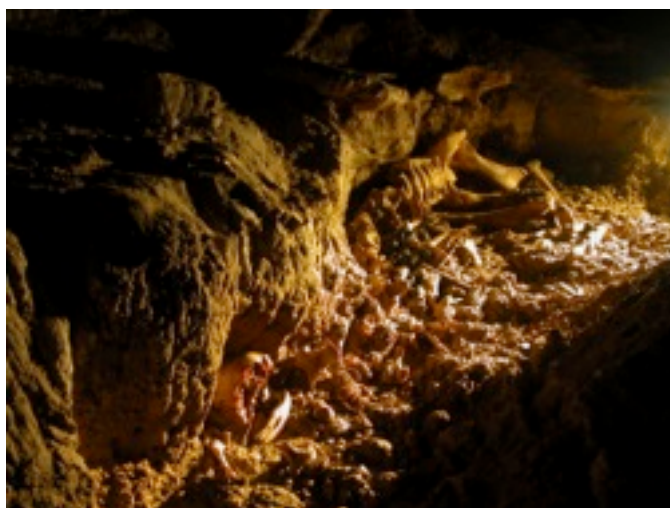
Bank name:	Westpac
Account Name:	Australasian Cave & Karst Management
Account Number/IBAN:	03 0449 0118375 000 (In Australian: BSB = 030449 and account number = 0118375)
Swift/BIC Number:	WPACNZ2W
Bank's physical address:	18 King St East, Te Kuiti 3910, NZ, (Branch = Te Kuiti)
ACKMA's physical address:	277 Te Anga Rd, Waitomo Caves, 3988, NZ
ACKMA's postal address:	P.O. Box 4, Waitomo Caves, 3943, NZ

The 000 account suffix may be questioned by Australian banks, if so leave it off and we should still get it.

Post conference karst

From Waitomo to Auckland, in the western hill country are a number of caves and karst surface features spread through a discontinuous karst landscape. Amongst the features this tour visits will be one of New Zealand's largest polje (Lake Disappear), Nikau Cave at Waikaretu and Bridal Veil Falls. Several large drowned valley harbours push inland in this remote part of NZ and we will tour one of them by boat. Spectacular karst crops out along the road from time to time.

Leaving Waitomo on the Saturday after the conference, the first day will feature lots of windy roads and coastal scenery, ending up in the harbour town of Raglan where there will be several accommodation options. Heading north from Raglan, Sunday will be hosted by Philip and Anne Woodward of Nikau Cave - a beach walk with limestone and basalt outcrops, Nikau adventure cave tour, and dinner at their café. Accommodation on Sunday night will be a variety of options at the Nikau Cave or in nearby towns. On Monday, we will head for Auckland and meet up with cave expert Peter Crossley to tour a selection of lava caves and features in the city. For those with Tuesday free, there will be a chance to visit the beautiful lava island of Rangitoto and check out a cave or two and walk to the summit.



Left. Puketiti. Photo: Dave Smith
Right top. Aranui Cave. Photo: Steve Bourne
Right bottom. Moa skeleton in Mangawhitikau Cave.
Photo: Steve Bourne

Conference guests and keynote speakers

Dave Bamford

Dave is a founding partner of Tourism Resource Consultants. They are regarded as one of Asia Pacific's top nature tourism consultants, and have worked for or with a number of ACKMA members on cave projects in recent years. Dave's particular interest, after 35 years in the sector, is planning and development projects focused on sustainable development and region scale development.

Grant Webster

Grant is CEO of Tourism Holdings Ltd, New Zealand's largest listed tourism operator. Prior to joining THL in 2005, Grant held a variety of senior roles in the hospitality and tourism sectors. THL have New Zealand's largest fleet of campervans, and are the operators of the Waitomo Glowworm Cave, Ruakuri and Aranui Caves, and the Legendary Black Water Rafting range of tours.

Jim Werker & Val Hildreth-Werker

Jim and Val are well known names in cave conservation and we are delighted to have them join us in New Zealand. For over 30 years they have developed conservation methods in gluing speleothems, photomonitoring and cave restoration. In 2006 they

published the remarkable book Cave Conservation and Restoration, 600 pages that have become the standard reference in cave conservation.

Richard Jones

Richard is Chief Executive of the Poutama Trust, one of New Zealand's main incubators and business advisors for Maori organisations entering the tourism sector. Richard's whakapapa is to Ngati Maniapoto, Ngati Whakaue and Ngati Pikiao. For a number of years he was the executive officer for the Ruapuha Uekaha Hapu Trust, majority owner of the Waitomo Glowworm Cave. Building relationships across businesses and internationally is one of Richard's key roles.

Andy Spate

Andy is one of the most respected names in cave management in Australasia and around the world. We are pleased to have him attend and present at the Waitomo Conference. He needs no more introduction to ACKMA members.

Andy Spate (left) has provided expert advice in many countries. Here he is with Barry Richard. The exact location can be determined by triangulation from the signposted distances. Photo: Steve Bourne

