



**THE TRAVEL AGENTS' ASSOCIATION  
OF NEW ZEALAND**

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**News Release**

**18 April 2008**

**TRAVEL AGENTS UNITE UNDER GLOBAL BANNER**

The World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) has a membership comprising the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA); The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA); the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA); the Association of South African Travel Agents (ASATA); the European Travel Agents and Tour Operators Associations (ECTAA); the Travel Agents Association of New Zealand (TAANZ); and the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI). WTAAA member associations represent almost 70% of global airline BSP billings.

WTAAA held a formal General Assembly in Lyon, France today and voted unanimously to incorporate WTAAA as a not for profit organisation. Incorporation will take place in Belgium under Belgian law, and it is expected that this process will be complete by June 30, 2008. The General Assembly also unanimously approved Articles of Association for the incorporated entity; approved the WTAAA web site; and adopted a business plan and an operating budget for the period ending March 31, 2009. The WTAAA secretariat will be hosted by the ECTAA office in Belgium at the address at the foot of this News Release.

The General Assembly also elected a Board of Directors for WTAAA comprising Mr Bill Maloney, CEO – ASTA; Mr Mike Hatton, CEO – AFTA; Ms Christiane Theberge, CEO – ACTA; Ms Robyn Christie, CEO – ASATA; Mr Michel de Blust, Secretary General – ECTAA; Mr Lars Thykkier, Secretary General - DKV Denmark; Mr Ajay Prakash, Secretary General – TAFI; and Mr Peter Barlow, President – TAANZ.

Immediately following the General Assembly the Board of Directors met and elected office bearers as follows:

Chairman	-	Mr Mike Hatton (AFTA)
Vice Chairman	-	Mr Bill Maloney (ASTA)
Treasurer	-	Ms Christiane Theberge (ACTA)
Secretary	-	Mr Michel de Blust (ECTAA)

The Travel Agents' Association of NZ was founded in 1962. It represents over 475 travel agencies throughout the country who employ 3,400 staff and who carry out over \$3 billion worth of travel business annually.

*“Without a travel agent  
you’re on your own”.*

Commenting on the successful outcome of the meeting, inaugural Chairman Mike Hatton said: "In many forums globally travel agents have not been present or actively involved in matters which directly affect their ongoing business activities and viability. Travel agents work in a global environment and are a key necessary component of world tourism and the distribution of tourism product. Hence this action today of incorporating WTAAA is an essential step forward to ensure that travel agents are actively involved in all forums and all matters affecting their business activity and their massive contribution to world tourism and the global economy"

Peter Barlow of the Travel Agents' Association of New Zealand commented: "Our association is proud to be a founding member of WTAAA. Given the global community in which we live and work, the forum created by WTAAA to address issues vital to our business interests and the tourism of our nation we believe is essential so that New Zealand be a part of the information exchange and actively participate for the benefit of our membership"

Action has been taken to lodge all necessary documentation with the relevant authorities in Belgium to complete the incorporation process in the shortest possible time frame.

For More Information: Mike Hatton – WTAAA Chair - +61 414 973 951

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