

ProGuides Newsletter

23 August 2026

From the Chair



Kia ora stars,

We have started the countdown to the Conference in Oamaru on 19 Sep, I can't wait to catch up with you again in that gorgeous little town. I for one am all geared up to see the "East of Eden" series on Netflix when it comes out on 1 October. What a great event and global exposure for Oamaru and regional New Zealand in general to have our natural

heritage displayed for the whole world to see. To know we will be there just a few days before makes it even more exciting!

The deadline for registering, submitting a motion and sending **nominations is 29 August**. If you have topics you would like to discuss as general business during the AGM, they also need to be sent in advance. There will be an open discussion session at the close of the AGM, but important matters must be voted upon and need to be notified.

[Click here for the full AGM programme](#) and hurry to register.

See you soon! Ka kite ano

Angela

From the Committee



Offers around the AGM

Please contact [Sharron Hickman](#) if you are interested in taking part in the organised transfers before and after the AGM. The created itinerary takes you from Christchurch to Oamaru on **Friday, September 18 and back on Sunday, September 21**. There are a lot of interesting stops on the way. Please get in touch with Sharron as soon as possible as time is running out.

Another offer is a guided walk through the [Christchurch Art Gallery](#) with its substantial art collection. Belinda Callaway is happy to share her knowledge with ProGuides. If you are interested, please be at 312

Montreal Street in Christchurch at 2.50 pm on **Thursday, September 17**.
The guided tour starts at 3pm.



Liability Matters

Public Liability Insurance is designed to protect your business if you are held legally responsible for causing damage to someone else's property, or for causing financial loss to a third party while carrying out your activities as a guide or tour operator. Having the right liability protections in place provides peace of mind and allows guides to focus on what they do best, knowing they have support should something go wrong. Corne Scheepers is Senior Broker at ICIB in Hamilton and has **compiled a lot of information about liability**. She has also offered to assist ProGuide members with obligation-free quotations for Public Liability, Statutory Liability and Carriers Liability insurance. If you are interested, please get **directly in touch** with her.

Everything DOC



Protecting the Kōkako

More than \$1 million in Government funding will help restore some of Taranaki's rarest coastal habitat and protect kōkako in the region's north-east, according to Conservation Minister Tama Potaka. The kōkako belongs to the endemic New Zealand wattlebirds, an ancient family of birds which includes the North and South Island saddleback and the extinct huia. The Iwi-led project will carry out restoration planting and involve local communities in the [long-term protection of this rare habitat](#).

New Life for Whakapapa

There's a new feel at Whakapapa Holiday Park lodge following a major refresh, and it's signalling a new era of investment into Whakapapa Village and Tongariro National Park. The facelift for the lodge should help to work towards the goal that every visitor has "a positive and memorable experience" according to DOC Tongariro Operations Manager Libby O'Brien. [Read more here](#).

From our Industry



Celebrating Tourism

The Tourism Export Council New Zealand (TECNZ) has celebrated the winners of the 2026 Tourism Export Awards and YoungTEC Awards at a gala celebration held in Christchurch in August. Among the winners are Southern World, Auckland & Beyond Tours, Abel Tasman Sailing Adventures. [Click here to check out the winners](#). Lynda Keene, TECNZ Chief Executive is "incredibly proud to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of our award winners and finalists. Their dedication and innovation are a testament to the strength and resilience of our industry". TECNZ's annual conference took place on at the beginning of this month in Christchurch.

Focus on Small Groups

AAT Kings has launched its 2027-2028 Australia and New Zealand season featuring new Small Group journeys and immersive itineraries designed to help travellers discover more than the destination itself. The tour operator is placing the spotlight on local stories, regional communities and deeper connections with the people and places that define Australia and New Zealand. [Read more here](#).

Promising Performances

International visitor arrivals grew by 8.9 percent over the year, with strong growth in holiday arrivals (plus 15.3 percent), while conference arrivals grew by 16.7 percent. The arrival growth rate has almost doubled from a year ago. Tourism New Zealand Chief Executive René de Monchy says achieving the arrival goal is a significant moment for Aotearoa New Zealand and reflects the strength of international demand for the destination. [Read more here](#).

Teaching Tourism

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) has welcomed the announcement that Tourism is one of nine new industry-led subjects in the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum for years 12 and 13. TIA-Chief Executive Rebecca Ingram says confirming Tourism as a subject recognizes the important role tourism plays in our future, but also the breadth and depth of careers. [Read more here.](#)

Notes from the Road

Milford Sound Projects

The suspension bridge at the start of Lake Marian Track is due to open in September as part of the upgrades along the Milford corridor. The chasm walk still remains closed, but work remains on track.



Farmers of the South

The Guyton's of Riverton are the New Zealand apple experts and share some fascinating information about the industry. [Read more here.](#)



Sheep in Demand

New Zealand's once-famous wool industry is showing signs of a comeback, after the mounting costs of producing synthetic fabric triggered global demand for natural fibres. [Read more here.](#)



Hanging on to Heritage

Dunedin Mayor Sophie Barker is on a walking tour through Dunedin's heritage buildings, from the Octagon to the heart of the business district. [Check out the Frank Film video here.](#)



Membership News

We are happy to welcome **4 new Full members** and a returning one **who re-joined as Affiliate.**

Full Members

Georgi Pander - Christchurch

He is the son of our long-time member Colin, and ready to take on more responsibilities with their business "Smylies Tours", focusing on Educational Tours around the South Island. He spent some time in Japan working for a snowmobile company and can speak Japanese fluently.

Scotty Bamford - Amberley

He grew up on a hill country sheep and cattle station "Hurunui Hills", which also operates farm experiences and accommodation. He has been guiding since 2012, now offering private tours, including shore excursions. He also worked on the "Rural New Zealand" television show.

Shirui (Sherry) Shu - Queenstown

From China originally, she also speaks fluent English and Spanish. She is a private South Island tour guide and photographer.

Joerg Klenert - Whitianga

Originally from Germany, with over 25 years experience in tourism, he now runs his own company Whitianga Tours & Taxi, providing privately guided tours. He is multilingual, and in addition to German and English, he can also communicate in Japanese, French and Spanish.

Yvonne Lendrum - Tauranga

She is rejoining as an **Affiliate member** after a break. She used to be a primary school teacher, worked in television making New Zealand documentaries, was involved in event management, and has been guiding in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji for the past 20 years.

We also welcome a new **Industry Partner**

The Goldrush Tour

Owner-operated business the Goldrush Tour was launched in 2025 to create Queenstown's most detailed historical experience. The tour was developed following extensive research into the history of the gold gush and the communities around Skippers Canyon. Goldrush Tour offers small-group experiences for up to 11 guests, travelling along the historic Skippers Road. To make the tour accessible to international visitors, documentary-style stories are available in eight languages, allowing guests from around the world to experience the researched history in their own language.