

Showcasing our industry

Contributed by Bruce Gadd



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Bruce Gadd is NZTE's Project Director for Rugby World Cup 2011, responsible for leading NZTE's work to leverage the Rugby World Cup 2011 for New Zealand export businesses.

THE RUGBY World Cup couldn't come at

a better time for New Zealand's aviation sector. For business, the tournament is a chance to undertake international marketing in our own back yard and that's just what the aviation industry needs.

The recent New Horizons Aviation Report, commissioned by NZTE, shows how healthy the aviation sector is – currently worth almost \$10 billion and growing fast. Internationally, however, the sector has been under the radar. With the Rugby World Cup expected to attract around 85,000 visitors to New Zealand's shores, it's an ideal platform to showcase how smart and innovative our industry has become.

Don't underestimate how impressed some of those visitors will be. US entrepreneur Jim McCoy, an experienced pilot who has founded and grown multi-billion dollar US international companies, went home fizzing after a first-hand look. He describes New Zealand's aviation capabilities as world-class and believes we have what it takes to be on a global short list of industry players within five to 10 years. Other entrepreneurs and aviation industry executives from around the world will be among those coming here in September and October 2011. Watching great rugby and enjoying the sights and tastes of New Zealand will be high on their agenda but many will also be interested in seeing what New Zealand's aviation sector has to offer.

It's not just our own research that convinces us the Cup is a great opportunity for the aviation industry. There is plenty of evidence that people passionate about rugby in overseas countries are well educated, affluent and involved in business, which explains why over a third of the world's 50 largest companies have sponsored or supported rugby. Sports business industry experts like Deloitte have also researched and clearly demonstrated a link between major sporting events, business activity and potential inward investment.

New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) has been laying the foundations for Kiwi businesses to capitalise on the Cup. We're working with NZ 2011 to showcase New Zealand capability during the festival and aviation is key among the sectors to be highlighted. The Flair New Zealand Aviation Expo in the Waikato from 12-16 October will be a fantastic forum for showing the breadth and depth of our capability. There are also regional events with an aviation theme or component for the thousands of visitors who will be taking the long way round New Zealand. That includes the Knights of the Sky exhibition in Blenheim (9 September – 23 October) and Wairarapa Vintage Wings and Wine (7 - 10 October).

Getting involved in those national and regional events is a good start but it's not all you can do. Talk to your local economic development agencies and other aviation suppliers in your area and see if you can collaborate to offer something special. It also makes sense to organise one-on-one get togethers with your clients or potential clients. In many places, each team will be playing just one rugby game a week and supporters following them will have time for other things. We're not suggesting you go in to hard sell mode and we don't anticipate deals being made on the spot. But sharing New Zealand food and wine with visitors, taking them sightseeing or for a flight to enjoy stunning landscapes from the air is a superb chance to tell them what you do and build relationships that will pay dividends down the track.

The first step to getting on board with the campaign is joining the online NZ2011 Business Club which will be connecting New Zealand business people with overseas counterparts coming to the tournament. It's free and being a member means you have the chance to host people in your field. Visit www.nz2011.govt.nz/cms/get-involved/register-your-interest to sign on. To find out more about the industry showcase programme, visit www.nz2011.govt.nz or email shaun@nzflair.com

The Rugby World Cup is the aviation industry's chance to present a united front and work together to show the world just what we can do. Make the most of it.

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Feb/Mar issue deadline is 31 January

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