

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HAMILTON, WAIKATO, NEW ZEALAND – 31 OCTOBER 2018

New Zealand tour operator takes another sustainability step with compostable water bottles

The Leisure Time Tours Group are excited to announce that for the 2018-19 summer season onwards they will be providing plant-based compostable water bottles on all their New Zealand tours that would previously have used single-use plastic water bottles.

The announcement comes hot on the heels of Leisure Time Tours recently having been awarded a sustainability Gold rating from Tourism New Zealand's quality assurance organisation; Qualmark.

The travel group, based in Hamilton New Zealand, organises nationwide New Zealand tours for clients from around the globe, it also owns and operates its own fleet of motor coaches and earlier this year acquired specialist travel company; AgriTravel International.

Water bottles are a prominent request from many coach tour or walking group clients. Historically many tours have operated with a supply of plastic water bottles for client's comfort and refreshment. While the travel company has always encouraged the recycling of all waste, they recognise that there are flaws in the traditional recycling programmes within New Zealand, and that the manufacture of bottled water uses vast quantities of valuable resources such as oil and water itself.

After investigating alternative options for bottled water the travel group decided to work with a New Zealand company, For the Better Good, who have an exciting new product and supply system.

The water company produces a plant-based, oil-free, water bottle that is certified compostable and has a 78% smaller carbon footprint than traditional plastic bottles. The business is also the first in the world to take responsibility for their water bottles, post-sale, with multiple end of life options and a closed loop collection system.

Jayden Klinac, founder of For The Better Good, said it was great to see Leisure Time Tours taking this step in the tourism industry, "The offering of our bottles allows tourists to come to New Zealand, be given a Better Bottle to reuse during their time here and when they are ready to leave, it can be returned to us to be composted. We can start to promote New Zealand as a forward-thinking country who is shifting towards more circular products and systems".

By switching from single-use plastic water bottles to a plant-made alternative, Leisure Time Tours Group can now be confident they are assisting in reducing the footprint of New Zealand's tourists. This exciting new feature sits well with other standards and practices that the company has in place and which were recognised during their recent Qualmark re-evaluation for Leisure Time Tours transport accreditation.

A Gold Qualmark Sustainable Business Award recognises the best sustainable tourism businesses in New Zealand, with the delivery of exceptional customer experiences an integral part of everything they do. A Gold Sustainable Tourism Award identifies those businesses leading the way in making the New Zealand tourism industry a world class sustainable visitor destination.

Scott Mehrtens, Managing Director of the Leisure Time Tours Group said, “The Qualmark Gold award recognises that our organisation takes customer service, social sustainability and our environmental promise very seriously. We have a longstanding history in New Zealand’s travel industry and the escalation of our silver award to a gold is testament to our clear focus and dedication to excellence.

“We have some very exciting projects underway right now, and while it’s a significant move for us to cease offering single-use plastic water bottles, we recognise that it is vital that we lead the way, operating and planning New Zealand tours in a responsible and sustainable fashion, and encouraging our visitors and travellers to play their part while exploring our beautiful country.”

Tourism Export Council of New Zealand Chief Executive Judy Chen says, “The tourism industry continues to work collaboratively to address what sustainability means for our businesses and how we can all contribute. Sustainability is now at the heart of everything we do in tourism and I would like to commend The Leisure Time Tours Group in adopting this great initiative to reduce their waste.”

For more information: <https://ttnz.co.nz/about-us/our-environmental-promise>
or www.forthethebettergood.com

About the Leisure Time Tours Group

The Leisure Time Tours Group (incorporating Travel Time South Pacific and AgriTravel International) is a family owned and operated company, based in Hamilton New Zealand. They specialise in providing inspiring tours and programmes for a wide range of groups, independent travelers, and business events clients, to explore the delights and attractions of both New Zealand and Australia.

Established in 1987 the independent Inbound Tour Operator and Destination Management Company operates tours with wholesalers and agents from a wide variety of markets including the United Kingdom, Europe, North America, Canada, Australia, South America and more.

Facts about For the Better Good (FTBG) water bottles:

- Made from plants (starch rich vegetables, including corn, cassava and sugar cane)
- 78% lesser carbon footprint in production compared to traditional plastic
- Reusable (not single use) with a network of free refill stations throughout New Zealand
- Certified compostable bottle
- Certifications
 - o Australian Standard 4736-2006 (including a worm toxicity test)
 - o European EN 13432

o Independent Compost test

- FTBG takes responsibility for its bottles from end to end and will collect returned bottles. Better Collection Partners can be found on our online map
- This ensures the bottles can be completely waste free and live in a circular economy
- 90 - 180 days is the time limit the bottle needs to break down within to be certified, becoming a soil nutrient for further plant growth, however our independent result saw the bottle completely gone in under 27 days. The time depends on the conditions and heat of the compost
- Current lid is plastic, we are working on developing a plant-based alternative. We could not find anyone who would recycle these in New Zealand. So we collect them to do it ourselves and are always on the lookout for new product partners wanting to use recycled lids
- Bottles made in New Zealand, and filled with New Zealand mineral water from the Blue Springs

Media Contacts:

Vicki Annison, Marketing Manager
Leisure Time Tours Group
231 Kahikatea Drive, PO Box 6, Hamilton, 3242, New Zealand
+64 7 849 3493
vicki @ltnz.co.nz

Jayden Klinac, Founder
For The Better Good
hello@forthebettergood.com
+6427 318 8998

IMAGES



Leisure Time Tours group ceases to supply single-use plastic water bottles for clients requiring water on New Zealand tours



Leisure Time Tours Group have made the switch to compostable, plant-based, water bottles from kiwi company, For the Better Good