

Canterbury-Westland Branch Midyear Report 2006

The second term general meeting was held at Christchurch Girls High School Careers Centre on Thursday 1 June.

It was a small gathering but very enjoyable as it was the final meeting with Ann Wood who is shifting to a new position at Queen Charlotte College after a very long association with Transition and Careers in Canterbury.

We discussed issues such as STAR, Conference, Work Choice Day, the AACC conference and listened to the Guest Speaker, Craig Banbury of Banbury Tours.

Craig described himself as a Tourism Entrepreneur – someone prepared to give business a go. He gave an outline of his background which included traveling extensively overseas for 10 years and working in ski resorts in Austria and Switzerland. In 1984 he set up SKI EXPRESS, a business taking bus trips to skifields. He ran this business for seven years and during the summer months he worked at Antarctica. After this he ran a Shuttle Service between Christchurch and Queenstown and then he bought the Coker's Hotel, which he set up as a Backpacker Lodge. His recent business has involved him driving and guiding cycling adventure tours. This business is - Mountainbike Adventure Co.

Craig outlined the SKILLS needed for his job in tourism: marketing skills, computer skills, office skills – PAYE, GST; operate and drive buses as well as SAFETY requirements – he is Qualmarked through the Tourism Association to check on standards and is frequently asked by schools for RAMS. Craig's job description has evolved over the years but he has also done courses to up-skill himself – e.g. CDC and CPIT.

He commented on factors affecting his business:

- weather – if weather bad - no hiring of bikes – no income.
- tourism numbers – e.g Asian crisis –less tourists - impact on business
- competition – competing with such places as Antarctic Centre, Queenstown cycle operators for tourist \$\$\$\$
- financial rewards – hard work and fun BUT no quick \$\$\$\$
- longevity – most businesses exist for a period before getting recognition – often 3-5 years before you can progress
- his Mountain Bike Adventure Co – going for 8 years and in 2 more years should grow
- Rail Trail – Little River – another opportunity for business

Student Skills needed by students were identified by Craig as:

- People skills, personality, need to be outgoing – relate to a wide sector – age, ethnic group, nationality – MUST LIKE PEOPLE
- Common sense – making a rational decision – e.g. customer safety
- Work ethic – young people lack it!! Must come to work everyday and on time, AND be prepared to work a FULL day!!

- Flexibility – very important – Craig mentioned that every Xmas day for last 7 years he has worked – BUT worked SMART – up the gondola early – bikes out – lunch with family at home and then back to pick up bikes later in day
- Enjoy the work – important to enjoy what you do – have fun with customers and colleagues and have a SENSE OF HUMOUR
- Communication skills – verbal – not only with customer but with boss and supervisor
- Trust and honesty – trust to do job properly

Craig gave advice for students entering Tourism as a career

- University – employers will look at this first –and also at business, marketing, management, accounting skills
- Tourism schools – some schools could be a good stepping stone for some students, especially those who are not academic
- Hands on – if not academic try to get straight in with work – e.g Franz Josef as a guide

To summarise Craig felt that people did not necessarily have to be brainy in this industry – he felt it was an exciting, challenging, thought-provoking and enjoyable industry to be involved in.

The meeting closed at 6pm and some moved on to celebrate dinner with Ann.

Lyn Turnbull
Regional Executive Representative
Canterbury/Westland Region