**Queenstown tourism’s economic input surges above $2 billion**

**Queenstown New Zealand (Thursday 1 December 2016)** – Queenstown’s tourism industry has reaffirmed its status as the district’s major economic driver with annual tourism expenditure surpassing $2 billion for the first time.

The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment today released its Monthly Regional Tourism Estimates showing visitor spend in Queenstown reached $2.08 billion in the 12 months to October 2016, a 15% increase on the prior year, while the October month alone was 13.2% higher than the previous October.

Second only to Auckland for international visitor value, Queenstown recorded a significant 19.2% increase in international expenditure to $1.395 billion, representing 13% of the national total. In the same period domestic expenditure was up by 9.1% to $682 million.

Annual expenditure from all international markets grew by double digit percentages with the standout performer being the USA with a growth of 37% for the year.

**Queenstown’s top 5 markets are:**

• Australia up 15% to $450 million

• China up 10% to $234 million

• USA up 37% to $184 million

• Rest of Asia up 24% to$153 million

• UK up 10% to $103 million

Destination Queenstown chief executive Graham Budd says achieving the $2 billion milestone reflects the significant growth the industry has experienced in recent years, and is a testament to the popularity of Queenstown as a visitor destination.

“Alongside sustainable visitor growth during the shoulder seasons of autumn and spring, a major focus of Destination Queenstown has been on developing the value visitors bring to the region. Queenstown businesses and the community remain focused on providing the welcome, hospitality, and experiences to sustain our reputation as a world-class destination,” says Mr Budd.

The Monthly Regional Tourism Estimates are available on the MBIE website: <http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/sectors-industries/tourism/tourism-research-data/monthly-regional-tourism-estimates>

**ENDS**

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