

St Patrick's Day Toast 2004

Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food Liam Aylward, Honorary Consul General Rodney Waishe, Mayor of Manukau City Sir Barry Curtis, Mayor of North Shore City George Wood, Former Governor General of New Zealand Dame Catherine Tizard, ladies and gentlemen...

Good afternoon and kia ora. When I look at such an illustrious group of adults I am always mindful of Yates's line "hearts are not won but hearts are earned by those that are not entirely beautiful" and when I look around this room I find that Yates got all of you lot right.

In the distinguished presence of the Irish Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food Liam Aylward, I humbly and respectfully stand before you to propose a toast to the President of Ireland Mary McAleese: journalist, academic, lawyer and the first woman in history to succeed another woman as an elected head of state. But before I actually do that and before we break bread together I think I should record a few thoughts.

Last year I wandered once again through the streets of Dublin and Galway – I returned to Ireland after 28 years to cement a Sister City relationship with the city of Galway and what a glorious treat it was. The Ireland that I had visited for a month in the 1970's simply to hear the Dubliners live had changed a day since I had been away. How does Ireland do it? You have kept your history intact, your music and your charm and it seems that what you give away so generously you are able to keep as your very own. You have given New Zealand a few things that I would like to remind you of:

It is said there was a time in our colonial past when a third of Aucklanders regarded themselves as Irish. And if you check the phonebook today you will see that it is fair bursting with O'Connell's, O'Connor's, O'Donnell's and O'Sullivan's and there isn't a suburb without an Irish Pub and I should remind this distinguished audience that Captain William Hobson, the organiser or should I said perpetrator of the Treaty of Waitangi was born in Waterford and Thomas Bracken who penned God Defend New Zealand was from Clonee, County Meath.

I could go on, like the great Prime Minister John Balance from Ballypittmave, who led to power, in the 1890s, a government that gave women the vote and took a scrubbing brush to the biggest estates, cutting New Zealand up into small farms and quarter acre sections of pavlova paradise.

You certainly have got a lot to answer for and we could talk about some of our finest writers. Eileen Duggan, Dan Davin and Vincent O'Sullivan and the Jimmy Carter of New Zealand politics Jim Bolger.

If there are not too many women involved in our history you certainly gave us that amazing word "Sheila". Politically incorrect in these troubled times but still used by men over 50.

This occasion marks the centenary of Bloomsday, that extraordinary day in 1904 that started a journey for the James Joyce enthusiasts all over the world. Ulysses is a grand work that I always think is best started half way through, hitting the ground running – you can always read the first half last which I always think is a bit Irish and somewhat appropriate.

Joyce's legacy is undeniable and it's strong wherever words are scribbled on paper. I went to his tower and stood before it on a cold Autumn day, I was tempted, swimmer that I am, to wander down the pathway to the 41st – that renowned swimming spot that he would have known so well.

James Joyce and his legacy is part of this toast also. Barbara and I have been devoted fans of Joyce and his wonderful short story "The Dead". We look at the remarkable film made by John Houston most years and if you come to our house for dinner you are made to watch it. We think it combines all of the passion of Ireland, its people, its food and in some way to enjoy "The Dead" is to enjoy the very spirit and soul of Ireland and the Irish.

I would like to finish by reading the glorious last paragraph, which seems to sum up so eloquently Joyce's prose and the spirit of Ireland...

With aroha and great affection from all of us here on this special day I would like to propose a toast to the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese

**May your glass be ever full
May the roof over your head be always strong
And may you be in heaven
An hour before the devil knows your dead**

HOLDING WATER: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH TO WATER RESOURCE CONFLICTS

Veronica Strang

ABSTRACT

Water has always been the focus of conflicts between groups, and in many parts of the world unsustainable development has placed increasing pressure on limited resources. During the next decade, as supplies fail to keep pace with demand and the ecological effects of over-abstraction become impossible to ignore, tensions about the ownership and control of water are likely to increase. A key to defusing these tensions and encouraging resource conservation lies in understanding the complex social and cultural issues that surround water resource management. An anthropological approach investigates the social, economic and political relationships in which decisions about water are made, and reveals how the powerful cultural meanings encoded in water have led to highly unsustainable patterns of usage. This lecture considers how environmental anthropology can assist efforts to develop forms of resource management that balance human and ecological needs for water.

BIOGRAPHY

Before embarking upon an academic career Veronica worked as an environmental writer/researcher in the Caribbean, Australia and Canada, contributing, in the latter case, to Canada's submission to the influential *Brundtland Report* of 1987. After completing her Doctorate at Oxford she worked for several years at the University's Environmental Change Institute, providing advice to policy makers and conservationists about energy and water use in the UK. In 1997 she joined the University of Wales in Lampeter to help establish a new Department of Anthropology, and became the Director of the Centre for Australian Studies in Wales. In 2000 she was awarded a Royal Anthropological Institute Fellowship at Goldsmiths University, for research exploring the way in which indigenous groups represent Aboriginal identity. In the UK Veronica has worked closely with the water industry, policy makers and regulators on water issues, and her book *The Meaning of Water*, was published by Berg in 2004. She was recently awarded an Australian Research Council 'Discovery' grant to fund a collaborative research project on water issues in Australia. Veronica joined AUT in October 2002 as Head of the School of Social Sciences.

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SUMMARY OF LECTURE NOTES

DEFINING ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology is one of the original social sciences, and one of the most diverse. It has useful overlaps with human geography, archaeology, history, sociology, theology and political science. It has generated many outgrowths, such as museum studies, gender studies, cultural studies, media studies and other specialised fields. There are many sub-disciplines within anthropology, such as economic anthropology, political anthropology, visual anthropology, biological anthropology, cognitive anthropology and environmental anthropology.

The primary goal of anthropology, in any and every context, is to try to get under the surface and analyse the complex dynamics that direct human behaviour. It is an international, cross-cultural discussion about how human societies work; how they engage with each other, and interact with their environments. Anthropologists conduct research with all kinds of cultural groups and, increasingly, in collaboration with other disciplines.

Anthropological research is founded upon two complementary areas of activity. One is a systematic and rigorous process of empirical research that involves long-term ethnographic fieldwork. The objective is – in collaboration with the group participating in the research – to create an ethnography that accurately represents that particular cultural context and elucidates the issues being researched.

The other main contribution of anthropology, which has been generally foundational to the social sciences, is the development of major theoretical frameworks that enable the coherent analysis of the range of data collected in the field. As in other subjects, this theoretical debate is international and, because anthropology actively engages with many different systems of knowledge, it also incorporates a range of cultural perspectives. Such a comprehensive approach has the potential to provide an analytic context for more specialised types of research, bridging the gap between the social and natural sciences.

Environmental anthropology uses anthropological theory and method to analyse the interaction between human groups and their environments – or between social systems and ecosystems. Much research in this area focuses on conflicts over land and water. It considers particular cultural relationships with shared landscapes and resources: how these relationships reflect different beliefs and values; how this affects each group's use and management of resources; and how this leads to various ecological outcomes.

WATER

Water resources are of increasing international concern, and water has often been the cause of intense conflicts between groups. In recent years, with growing populations and consequent water shortages, the potential for conflict has greatly increased. Industrialisation and intensive farming have created urgent water quality and pollution issues, and there are many broader environmental problems arising from the overuse of finite water resources.

Issues about water – its ownership, control, access and management - recur in many parts of the world, and there are useful cross-cultural comparisons to be drawn. A summary, drawn

from various anthropological research projects, illustrates some of the major water problems that recur.

In the Caribbean, fresh water is a very scarce resource, and increasing tourism has put considerable strain on supplies. There are limited options for development, and all carry some social and ecological costs. For example, developers of beachside resorts have razed the mangroves that were both vital aquatic breeding grounds and a buffer against hurricanes. Marine parks, and the tourism income that they generate, vie with pressures to exploit potential oil resources or develop industries such as aquaculture, both of which bring considerable risk to delicate marine ecologies. The task of researchers in the region has therefore been to encourage a fuller critique of development issues and to assist communities in considering the social and ecological aspects of their decision-making.

In Canada one of the major environmental issues is the acid rain constantly carried northwards from the industrial heartlands of America. This has devastated large areas of forest and left many lakes bereft of all but the most robust forms of life.

Water resources – and pollution - flow across political boundaries, making countries or regions subject to actions beyond their control. Thus wealth creation in industrial Ohio and Pennsylvania decimates forests in Ontario, and there are many similar examples: the destruction of the Black Forest in **Europe**; the damage to the Florida everglades from industrial pollution carried northwards from **Mexico**, and in **Aotearoa/New Zealand**, the hole in the ozone, which reflects a much wider international problem.

Air pollution is not the only transboundary issue: rivers flow without regard to national or international borders, and all downriver communities are subject to the actions of their neighbours upstream. Just recently, **Botswana** has been threatened with the destruction of the Okovanga Delta, one of the last relatively undamaged major wetlands in the world (and the source of much of its national income) because of plans to dam the upstream rivers. Conflicts about dams or the upstream abstraction of water resources rage on in **India, China, Turkey** and many other countries, in which the demands for water of larger or more powerful groups have resulted in the loss of homelands or livelihoods for others.

Canada has another potential water problem in that, possessing vast reserves of fresh water in its Great Lakes, it is conscious of an increasingly thirsty neighbour to the South. Although the pressure is more likely to be economic than military, the history of water wars tells us that 'where there are enough humans and not enough water, hydrosquabbles spew forth' (Warshall, 2001).¹ Or as Mark Twain put it, 'whisky is for drinking, and water is for fighting over'.

In Australia, as elsewhere, colonisation has inevitably resulted in the appropriation of water resources. For example, Cape York, prior to European settlement, was densely populated by Aboriginal language groups whose ancestral story tracks ran along water courses, defining clan lands and organising people and resources. Aboriginal sacred sites were – and still are - mostly water places, containing both ancestral and human spiritual being. Hunting and gathering, sustained for many thousands of years, centres upon the rich resources of flora and fauna on rivers, swamps and shorelines.

¹ Warshall, P. 2001. 'Watershed Governance: checklists to encourage respect for waterflows and people' in D. Rothenberg and M. Ulvaeus, (eds) *Writing on Water*, Cambridge Mass, London: MIT Press. pp40-56.

Pushed by the colonists to the Gulf of Carpentaria coast, the traditional owners of the land are deeply concerned about the damage to many sacred places, and the environmental degradation to the river and wetlands that is caused by mining, pastoralism and farming upstream.

Ethnographic analyses of this area provide a detailed history and comparison of the different engagements with the landscape of indigenous Australians, and the European pastoralists, miners, fishers and other local land users. This research has therefore become part of a wider debate about management and sustainability in northern Australia. Such debates are lively: conservationists argue that – despite its iconic status – pastoralism has been devastating to the fragile local soils and aquatic ecosystems. Cane farmers and coffee growers are demanding more dams and water for irrigation, and lobbying for inter-basin water transfers that may spread noxious fish and weeds from previously unconnected catchment areas. Irrigation threatens the security of downriver water supplies, and there are other ecological problems created by farmland run-off containing pesticides and fertilisers, that threaten both recreational and commercial fishing.

Other groups are pushing for more water to be directed to the expanding urban areas in Australia, a demand that will compromise many small water courses and their dependent ecologies. Urban development and the intensification of farming has also led to severe problems with polluted water streaming off the land and out to sea, which is degrading coastal aquatic systems and destabilising the delicate ecological balance of the Great Barrier Reef.

Such conflicts benefit from cross-cultural translation and an appreciation of different cultural and sub-cultural beliefs and values. This can enable the groups involved to understand the worldviews that other people bring to bear on the issues, and thus to negotiate more sustainable and equitable solutions.

Cooperation between groups is vital if environmental management is to move towards sustainability. As in other arid regions of the world, large areas of land in Australia are becoming saline and degraded because of the overuse of water for irrigation. The country also experiences frequent and severe droughts. With a growing population and rising *per capita* levels of water use, there are some urgent problems: maintaining the reliability of supplies; resolving the tensions between the needs of farmers and the urban populations; ensuring balanced access to resources for all groups, and alleviating the environmental effects of current patterns of water use.

The Australian Research Council is funding new research is to provide an ethnographic analysis of the various interest groups in four river catchment areas, and their particular engagements with water, to assist in the development of more effective policies and more sustainable forms of management and use. This will involve interdisciplinary collaborations with environmental scientists, hydrologists and other researchers, for example at the Centre for Water Research in Perth, and at the University of Queensland.

In Europe water issues have become increasingly problematic. The region is densely populated and water usage has climbed unstoppably for many years. There are droughts, rivers running dry in the summer, crumbling Victorian infrastructures, and increasingly unreliable supplies. It is estimated that within the next decade 60% of the cities in Europe will have difficulty in meeting their inhabitants' demands for water. Conversely, the UK – and parts of Europe – also suffer winter floods that, with so much housing located on flood plains,

has been devastating to many communities. Like the droughts, this is the outcome of a series of social, political and economic choices about land and water management that need to be clearly articulated and considered.

In England, recent ethnographic research in Dorset attempted to get under the surface of how people think about water, and the meanings that they attach to it. Symbolic meanings have a powerful effect on how people evaluate water quality; how they use and manage water resources; how they react to events such as flood and drought; and how they respond to policy instruments and pleas to conserve water. The research tackled a number of questions: why - even in a conservative part of the UK such as rural Dorset - are many people still so about upset water privatisation that they described it as *'the worst thing that ever happened to us'*? Why is the commodification of water so controversial? Why are people distrustful about drinking water quality despite all the improvements that have been made? Why - despite widespread environmental concern, and an array of demand side management instruments - do domestic levels of water usage continue to rise unremittingly? How are differing needs and priorities about water negotiated? And how might people be encouraged to adopt more sustainable patterns of water use?

The Dorset research revealed a deep dissonance between the cultural meanings encoded in water and the privatisation of resources, and pointed to some of the social and ecological outcomes of this dissonance. It generated a lot of interest from the various stakeholders: the water users in Dorset, the industry and its regulators, conservationists and a range of other groups.

In Aotearoa/New Zealand the provision of sufficient, good quality water supply is not entirely unproblematic, and a number of areas have had difficulties in dealing with the disposal of waste water. There are increasingly tense disagreements about water allocations for hydro-power generation and for irrigation. Recently we have seen growing concerns about lake water quality, and the effects of nitrates on aquatic ecosystems. Droughts have led to restrictions on domestic water supplies, and floods have pointed to problems in storm water management. As well as a range of ecological issues, there are some deeply felt controversies about ownership, control and access, and as in any context, different groups have their own priorities and values, and very different ways of engaging with water.

Anthropology obviously can't offer any magical solutions, but it can illuminate some of these issues, bringing to the foreground the social and cultural aspects of water use and management. By providing translatable bridges, it can contribute to the resolution of conflicts over water, and, offering a comprehensive analysis, it can perhaps also help to bring together some of the more specialised disciplinary approaches to this area.

<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/PrintDocument.cfm?DocumentID=19129>

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Hon John Tamihere

11 March 2004

Hollywood goes to Waitakere

Speech to Waitakere Small Business Day, Lincoln Green Hotel, Henderson, Thursday March 11, 5.45pm

First I'd like to extend a warm welcome to you all, and say it is great to be here as a Westie on my home turf of West Auckland.

Small-medium enterprises – those with less than 20 employees – dominate the Waitakere business community, and as a combined force you are the heart of Waitakere's economy.

Waitakere is a really exciting, inspiring place to live and to do business. And one of the most exciting industries in Waitakere that I would like to celebrate today is the film industry.

You're probably suffering Hollywood fatigue by now in the wake of the Lord of the Rings' incredible haul of Oscars, but the contribution of the film industry to Waitakere's economic success, and its potential for the future, is still very exciting.

We've heard a lot about Wellington (aka Wellywood) being overrun by Hobbits as a central focus for the creation of the Lord of the Rings films, and the filming of The Last Samurai in Taranaki, but Waitakere has a film industry to rival those perhaps better-known film locations. And behind the glitz and glamour of the film and showbiz world, there are very real economic benefits to be gained from Hollywood coming to Waitakere.

The film industry in Waitakere has developed over the last 20 years, but has really taken off in the last decade off the back of Xena and Hercules, and developments such as the council's purchase of the Henderson Valley Studio and the relocation of South Pacific Pictures to Waitakere City from the North Shore a few years ago.

Film locations in Waitakere include black sand and surf beaches, harbours, subtropical forests, vineyards, farms and orchards. Waitakere has become a backdrop for feature films, television series, fashion shoots, TV ads and music videos. And helping to bring Waitakere to a screen near you is the fact that Waitakere is a recognised leader in film-friendly regulations. Enterprise Waitakere provides a "one-stop shop" filming application service for filming in public space in Waitakere, including parks, roads, beaches and bush. As with small business in general, the ethos is: why make anything more difficult than it has to be?

The success stories coming out of the film industry in Waitakere include:

- Xena and Hercules – in addition to the direct financial benefits, more than 800 supplier relationships were established, most involving small businesses
- The filming of Power Rangers by Studio West in Waitakere, and the toy merchandising associated with it (also produced by Studio West). Power Rangers are the largest-selling toy in the United States, with one in five households having a Power Rangers toy.
- The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, now being set up to be 100 per cent filmed in Waitakere. The annual financial benefits of this film are forecast to be three or four times as much as that generated by Xena and Hercules.

We have seen how much global publicity the film industry can generate for New Zealand through our recent Oscar triumphs. but the benefits here at home for small businesses and

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communities are also huge. The flow-on effects of filming in Waitakere will be felt throughout a variety of local industries – from accommodation and restaurants to electricians and plumbers.

But the film industry isn't the only sector where Waitakere has huge potential for success. The organics industry, too, offers much opportunity for Waitakere. About 18 months ago a joint Waitakere/Rodney organics industry cluster comprising 85 small businesses was formed to provide greater strength in numbers and planning for the industry in this area, and early indications are that the organics industry has already grown by 20 per cent in the last 18 months.

Among the organics industry's many success stories in Waitakere, one that really stands out is organic food and drink company Phoenix Organics, named Supreme Winner in last year's BNZ Waitakere Eco-city Business Awards.

Phoenix Organics started out from humble beginnings brewing ginger beer out of a back room in a small flat 17 years ago, growing to become a modern, innovative company operating out of a purpose-built factory in Henderson. As someone who brewed rather more intoxicating but less financially successful beverages in my student flatting days, I am personally in awe of Phoenix's success.

Phoenix has achieved the number one spot in supplying the café market, distributes its products nationwide and is building a lucrative export trade – and through its growth has never lost sight of its commitment to eco-principles and environmental management. So I'd just like to say to Phoenix, and other great Westie companies like it, good on ya. We need to celebrate and applaud businesses like yours more often than we do, and acknowledge the contribution they make to our economy and our community.

Celebrating small business is a big part of the Small Business Day series – it is something I think we don't do often enough. I want to see us celebrate and recognise the achievements of our businesses as widely as we celebrate our sporting heroes. And there is much to celebrate in Waitakere.

One of the facts of life as Statistics Minister is that you have access to more statistics than you know what to do with, so I'll just unload a few on you regarding Waitakere.

Waitakere is an ethnically diverse community, with about 40 per cent of its population identifying as non-European, and it is a youthful community, with a third of its residents under the age of 20 – so your continued success in small business is vital for the continued wellbeing of our growing, dynamic community for the future.

Over the last decade or so, Waitakere, along with the other cities in the Auckland area, has recorded above average population increases, with Waitakere's population growing by 8.5 per cent from 1996–2001. In the next 20 years Waitakere's population is predicted to increase by another 35 per cent, and is expected to include a greater proportion of young and ethnically diverse people – demographic trends that bring both challenges and opportunities for you in business.

Waitakere is home to more than 11,000 businesses, employing the equivalent of nearly 43,000 fulltime employees. If you average that out, it works out to four employees per business, placing most Waitakere businesses firmly in the category of "small business".

Waitakere's economic growth rate has edged up to more than two per cent on the back of strengthening population growth and a more active real estate market. In particular manufacturing (boat-building, wood and paper) and service industries (film and television, business and property, education, health and personal services) have been the drivers of Waitakere's economic performance.

Waitakere, even more than New Zealand as a whole, is currently enjoying low unemployment. Unemployment in the Auckland region for December last year was just 3.9 per cent, and the number of people receiving an unemployment benefit in Waitakere fell by

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five per cent over 2002.

Record lows in unemployment have obvious benefit for our communities, though of course may present challenges to you as businesspeople and employers if skills shortages begin to have an impact on your ability to hire and retain the people with the skills and abilities you need.

However collaborative initiatives such as the Waitakere Employment and Skills Project will help identify skills shortages and harness labour market supply to meet the skills demands of local businesses.

The problem is partly one of being a victim of your own success, and the strong performance of Auckland as a whole has introduced some pressures along with the good news.

According to the National Bank Regional Trends Report in September last year, nearly all the economic indicators for the Auckland region improved:

- Employment in Auckland increased at a rate three times higher than that for the nation overall
- Auckland topped the consumer confidence survey, with household sentiment rising to a seven-year high
- New dwelling approvals grew twice as fast as the national increase
- Auckland's economic activity recorded its strongest quarterly increase in more than three years

We need to ensure that the flow-on benefits of that growth are realised to their full potential in Waitakere, and that is an issue for local government as much as central government. The Economic Development Strategy developed by Waitakere City Council and Enterprise Waitakere makes economic vitality a primary objective for Waitakere, and one that I would thoroughly endorse. I'd also like to congratulate Enterprise Waitakere for the very good work it is doing to support business, including business start-up and support, professional development, business mentoring, marketing and funding support.

While there are plenty of good things to report regarding business success and growth in Waitakere, I think we should acknowledge that in some areas Waitakere has not progressed as well as other cities on the Auckland isthmus. However Waitakere is a young city with latent potential and it is ready to go. We just need to ensure we do everything we can to ensure that potential is fulfilled.

This is the fifth of a series of 24 Small Business Days around the country, and the response and feedback so far has been very encouraging. While it has been very useful to hear about specific issues of most relevant to particular areas, I am also developing a clearer picture of the issues and concerns that small businesses have in common around the country, and I will be reporting back to my colleagues in Government about what specific action and policy should flow on as a result of what you are telling us.

So I would really like to hear from you today about what drives you as people involved in small business, what works for you, and what you see as obstacles to your success. This isn't about you just listening to me telling you what the Government is going to do for you – or to you – whether you like it or not. The Small Business Days are an opportunity for us to hear directly from you about what you want as small businesses, and I am here to hear what you have to say.

Another tool that will help us to hear more clearly and directly the needs of small business is the Small Business Advisory Group that I set up last year. The nine people on the group come from a diverse range of sectors and regions, but the main thing they have in common is a wealth of talent and experience in running small businesses. They know the challenges and difficulties of setting up and running small businesses, and they know the disappointments as well as the successes small business can bring. In short, they are champions of small business.

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I'm finding out exactly what I hoped of the group – they're giving me very direct, very straight-up advice on what small business would like us to be doing on their behalf. Already the advisory group has made a number of recommendations, and right now we're working on those recommendations.

Clearly one of the issues that concerns small business is the compliance burden they face. However I would like to point out that New Zealand does pretty well on business compliance compared to other nations. The World Bank has just released its Doing Business 2004 report, which reports on the ease (or difficulty) of starting a business, hiring and firing staff, enforcing contracts, getting credit and closing a business in more than 130 countries. The report shows that New Zealand is the least regulated country in the world, and one of the easiest places to start a business.

Judged across five criteria, New Zealand was judged to be the least regulated country, followed by Australia, Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Singapore. According to the report, it costs just US\$28 to register a company in New Zealand and it takes just three days. By comparison it cost US\$402 and two days in Australia, US\$264 and 18 days in the United Kingdom, and a massive US\$3228 and 20 days in Switzerland.

But while compliance costs are relatively low in New Zealand, it is my job as Minister for Small Business to see that we are constantly vigilant against the encroachment of unnecessary or excessive compliance costs, and I can assure you I will continue to be diligent in stamping out unnecessary additions to the compliance burden, wherever I see them. Naturally people involved in running small businesses want to spend less time dealing with red tape, and more time getting on with business, and I support that view 100 per cent.

We have introduced a raft of measures to provide practical assistance in easing the compliance burden on small business. For example, we have just set up the Employment Agreement Builder, an on-line tool that lets employers easily set up employment contracts that comply with all legal and regulatory requirements. It's simple: using the template, employers can just tick which clauses they want to include, and delete those they don't.

Another very pragmatic initiative we have just announced is a 6.7 per cent discount for self-employed people who choose to pay tax in their first year of businesses. That initiative has been welcomed by small businesses around the country as a valuable means of assistance in that crucial and vulnerable start-up phase.

However we must ensure that we don't become so focused on the compliance cost issues to the extent that we neglect the really important debate we need to have about the real factors driving this country's economic success.

We must not focus all our energy on compliance costs, rather than focus on how we achieve greater growth, wealth, productivity and savings to secure economic growth that is truly sustainable.

I'd like to hear more of your ideas on how we can make it easier for you to get on with doing business – or any other issues which relate to the prosperity of Waitakere. For example I know that the future of Whenuapai is an issue that will play a major role in the future of Waitakere over the next 20 years. So I would now like to thank you again for taking part in Waitakere Small Business Day and welcome your questions, suggestions and comments.

For more information and the full programme of the Small Business Day series go to www.smallbusiness.med.govt.nz

San Francisco Chronicle

Rainforest retreat outside Auckland

My husband and I discovered a wonderful B&B in Auckland, New Zealand. The Ferns is in Titirangi, a stylish village about 30 minutes from the city center. Titirangi has a wonderful selection of upscale cafes and is an easy drive to spectacular beaches.

The Ferns is run by Kate Mora, who went above and beyond to ensure our needs were met. She served the best homemade fruit salad we've ever had as part of the self-serve continental breakfast included in the reasonable rates. The rooms in the main house were beautifully furnished and comfortable. We awoke to the sound of native birdsong each morning.

The Ferns also has a two-bedroom, self-contained chalet. Nestled in the ferns, the chalet would make a perfect honeymoon destination or romantic getaway. The Jacuzzi tub, surrounded by windows looking out into the rainforest, is simply spectacular. Our stay at The Ferns gave us a taste of what is uniquely New Zealand and was the highlight of our trip.

Contact: The Ferns Bed and Breakfast and Chalet, 81 Park Road, Titirangi, Auckland, New Zealand. 011-64-9-817-1956,

www.theferns.co.nz

Rates in the main house are \$145 to \$165 N.Z. (about \$99-\$113 U.S.), double occupancy; for the chalet, \$210 to \$280 N.Z. (\$143-\$191 U.S.). Weekly rates are also available.

BRIAN and AMY SMITH
Fort Bragg

Weird WORLD



Dog's Hitler salute is very paw form

BERLIN: A man who taught his dog Adolf to deliver a Hitler salute by raising his right paw has been charged under Germany's anti-Nazi laws. While police decided not to pursue charges relating to Adolf's salute, they will prosecute the 54-year-old for allegedly shouting "Heil Hitler!" in public.

