

City growing as tourism destination

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of visitors — 80 per cent of them, in fact — were classified as “domestic”, meaning they were New Zealanders.

She said the impressive result was due to the visitor strategy developed with Visit Whanganui — Wanganui District Council’s regional tourism organisation — and the positive results could be sheeted back to targeted advertising in the lower North Island.

“For over a year now the trend has shown increasing number of visitors to Wanga-

nui, both through the commercial accommodation monitor and figures collated by the city’s i-Site on Taupo Quay,” she said. “In December last year the percentage increase in commercial guest nights for Wanganui was the highest in the North Island at 32 per cent. And the highest numbers of visitors and revenue were recorded for January at the i-Site since 2010.

“The same ‘top of the table’ results for the North Island also occurred in February this year,” Ms Cheyne said.

There had been an 18 per cent increase in total guest

nights this March compared to March last year which was double the overall result across the country, she said.

“People are realising just how much there is to do in Wanganui, how easily accessible a location we are and there is a sense of discovery of a new place to visit or see again.

“Working within a wider economic development strategy and Whanganui and Partners, we’re seeing a lot of Kiwis taking a new look.

“International visitors are travelling more independently, our events are building bigger profiles and we’re a

great spot to have a conference,” she said.

Adrian Dixon, manager of Whanganui Partners, said it needed to be remembered that tourism contributed \$87 million annually to the district.

“The benefits from this income flow through the entire community helping raise the prosperity levels across the board,” Mr Dixon said.

The Visit Whanganui board and Whanganui and Partners continued to work with the local tourism industry and others to improve the visitor experience and create more reasons to come to the region.