



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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### ***thl* INVESTS FOR REGIONAL GROWTH**

***thl*** – one of New Zealand’s leading tourism operators is pleased to announce the purchase of a retail, food and beverage centre in the Waitomo region.

The Big Apple restaurant facility, which is located on State Highway 3 prior to the Waitomo turn off, is widely known in the area for its café, retail and conference facilities – offering passing tourists and visitors to Waitomo the opportunity to stop, relax and enjoy a range of food options.

Grant Webster, CEO of ***thl***, says: “Our connection to Waitomo already includes The Legendary Black Water Rafting Co, Waitomo Glowworm Caves, Ruakuri Caves and Aranui Caves. The new acquisition signifies the continued commitment ***thl*** has to the development of tourism in the Waitomo and Otorohanga districts.”

Over the last decade throughout the economic cycle ***thl*** has completed multi-million dollar investments in both the Waitomo Glowworm Caves Visitor Centre and Ruakuri Cave, ***thl*** will also be investing several million into this establishment, refurbishing it to help offer tourists a high quality facility that will encourage them to stay in the region for longer.

Grant continues: “New Zealand tourism needs ongoing investment in infrastructure for growth and we believe in this regional New Zealand opportunity.”

“This acquisition will help to deliver great quality food and beverages in the region, something customers have grown to enjoy and expect from our award winning Waitomo Caves Restaurant,” says Gordon Hewston, Operations Manager, Discover Waitomo Group.

“The Waitomo Glowworm Caves are a beacon with thousands visiting from all over the world to see the spectacular and impressive sights. From boat rides through glowworm studded caves and remarkable guided walks through Ruakuri and Aranui Caves, to thrilling Black Water Rafting adventures, we expect the new establishment will provide another reason to experience Waitomo this summer,” says Gordon.

The Big Apple Restaurant is due to close on 30 September for refurbishment and will reopen on 1 December 2015.

[www.waitomo.com](http://www.waitomo.com)



**ENDS**

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