

Tourism pushes NZ to 12th strongest nation brand

New Zealand is the 12th strongest nation brand in the world, according to the latest report from brand valuation consultancy Brand Finance. The Nation Brands report measures a nation's reputation and image of foreign consumers and investors. Brand Finance's representative in New Zealand Jai Basrur, says New Zealand is one of the fastest rising countries, having lifted its brand strength by 36%.

The research looks at nations across the four segments of investment, tourism, products and services and people and skills.

It uses GDP and competitiveness index data to rank countries according to brand strength.

This year Switzerland edged ahead of Singapore to become the world's strongest nation brand.

In the segments, New Zealand is the fifth best performer in tourism for 2013, but does not rate on the investment, goods & services or people & skills top 10 lists.

However, Mr Basrur is confident the new "NZ Story" branding tools will aid this.

He says a strong focus on goods and services will likely push forward the other categories.

Interbrand managing director James Bickford says it is surprising that Singa-



JAMES BICKFORD: Brands need to be in government



JAI BASRUR: NZ Story will help grow brand

environment as our brand."

However, Mr Bickford says nation branding goes beyond what ad agencies can do to create tangible materials and is reflected in the policies of governments.

"Brands have to look to the future and look at humans and as global citizens too.

"I've been saying that brand has to

pore is second on the table, given that its brand is difficult to describe.

"Whereas with New Zealand anyone in the world would describe the

be in the boardroom but it actually has to be in government too because people are ultimately looking at brands whether they are a country or a shoe."

He says the report shows New Zealand is too reliant on tourism as it is an easy category.

Mr Bickford says the government's decision to create an integrated tourism, education and export toolkit known as "NZ Story" is risky.

"It's wait and see. There is a danger in trying to get a whole nation's brand into one story or one video. But as with any brand it's the million little things which matter."

Branding more generally has changed – it isn't about one interaction, or one video, it is about flexibility and being able to change, Mr Bickford says.

– Victoria Young

Five strongest nation brands

Switzerland
Singapore
US
Germany
UK