



## Going Dutch. Op z'n Nederlands!

### On Tour: Barry de Geest and the Dutch Connection

You can find Dutch migrants – and their children and grandchildren – living everywhere in New Zealand. We don't stand out much, but we've kept 'a touch of Dutch' alive. We're members of a Dutch society, live in Dutch retirement villages, or participate in Dutch choirs and dance clubs. Or we watch *het Nederlands Eftal* together, whenever the football is on, or buy delicacies in Dutch shops.

*Als Nederlanders* we have an identity of our own! There's something that binds us together. And that's what the Speaking Tour by Barry de Geest and the Dutch Connection is all about. We're here to tell our story – *ons verhaal*.

In Michael King's bestselling 'History of New Zealand', all migrant groups are mentioned, except us. The larger Dutch community consists of almost 4% of the population, so we'd better make sure we don't remain missing from the pages of history!

### Barry de Geest – Motivational Speaker, Comedian, Business Man

Barry was born without arms and with short legs. After his mother took the drug Thalidomide while she was pregnant (Softenon - 1,000s of victims worldwide). But his handicap never held him back. When he travelled to the Netherlands, to follow the tracks of his Dutch father, he learned about the Dutch attitude towards people with disabilities. He was blown away that they were encouraged and enabled to live independent lives in the community.

Barry returned to New Zealand to have a car produced that he drives using his mouth, according to a Dutch design. And after that he co-founded Renaissance Group, which has grown into a multimillion dollar organisation – the largest provider of Supported Living Services in the Auckland Region – employing some 70 people to assist people with disabilities.

Barry aims to change mainstream attitudes towards disabilities. He wants to show how people with disabilities can live a full life. Using his personally designed campervan, his dog and his wheelchair, Barry has speaking engagements throughout the country as a Motivational Speaker, creating awareness about disabilities – in a fun way, with good doses of *Nederlandse humor*.



Barry – Today,  
with Bentley his  
dog

And growing up...



## Celebrating Dutch Connections!

Barry has a typically Dutch story to tell: You're a proud individual in charge of your own life; Upfront and honest; You don't give up; And when people don't listen, you go ahead and make things happen anyway. With true Dutch entrepreneurial spirit!

The Dutch Connection is all about celebrating Dutch achievement in New Zealand, and telling the stories of the *Nederlanders* here. That's why we're going on tour with Barry. His life is hugely influenced by his links to the Netherlands. He is a living example of what we stand for.

Together, the Dutch Connection and Barry can tell a captivating story and create positive awareness!

## Samen Staan We Sterk – Joining Forces

*Ons Museum en Cultureel Centrum* will tell the inspirational success story of the Dutch in New Zealand: from Abel Tasman's first contact with the Maori, to today's achievements in farming, sports, business, science and the arts. We'll also provide a place to enrich and enhance social and cultural exchanges between Nederland and New Zealand. *Voor de kinderen en kleinkinderen.*

We've joined forces with Horowhenua District Council, Tangata Whenua and others to be a key part of a multi-purpose cultural facility called *Te Awahou – Nieuwe Stroom*. The centre will be built right next to *De Molen*, the 30 metre high replica 17<sup>th</sup> century windmill in Foxton.

***Dit wordt Onze Plek, om samen een kopje koffie te drinken, and to be inspired and informed.***

Please contact us to find out more. We'll put you on our mailing list and send you updates and info!

### The Dutch Connection

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**The Dutch Connection would like to thank Bridge to Enablement Trust for their generous support. They have enabled us to organise this Speaking Tour with Barry.**

*(Indicative plans for the Te Awahou – Nieuwe Stroom. Designed by Pete Bossley Architects)*

