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Media release

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BUNGY PIONEER UNVEILS WORLD FIRST CATAPULT EXPERIENCE

AJ Hackett Bungy New Zealand co-founder Henry van Asch today revealed a new world-first adventure tourism experience - the Nevis Catapult - in the remote Nevis Valley near Queenstown, New Zealand.

The Catapult sees thrill seekers experience up to 3Gs of force and speeds of almost 100km per hour in 1.5 seconds, as they are propelled 150m out across a ravine before dropping suddenly towards the valley floor and experiencing a series of jaw dropping bounces.

The official opening of this experience brings to fruition three decades of planning and development by Mr van Asch and the AJ Hackett Bungy New Zealand team.

"It's hugely exciting to be here today, revealing the Catapult to the world, following years of playing around with the idea," he says.

Mr van Asch officially opened the Catapult experience by being launched - quite literally - across the Nevis Valley at 9.30am (NZT) with special guests and media watching on.

"It's a pretty unique feeling, surprising even. There's nothing else quite like it," he says.

Housed in a pod and between a series of cables, alongside the infamous Nevis Swing, the catapult is a unique combination of height, flight and speed using a bespoke high-speed winch system developed over years of research.

Mr van Asch says he first came up with the idea when travelling around France during the 1980s with friend and (later) Bungy co-founder, AJ Hackett.

"I played around with the idea by riding my mountain bike with a Bungy cord attached, off bridges. It may have been legal," he says.

Mr van Asch says it's significant to be unveiling the new experience in the company's 30th year.

"In 1988 we took Bungy to the world, and put New Zealand on the world adventure tourism map. Thirty years on it's wonderful to still be pushing the boundaries globally."

Specialist new technology for the multi-million-dollar Catapult - partly funded by a \$500,000 Government grant - was developed with the company's research team before being built in an accredited testing facility in Christchurch and then brought to site for full scale installation, testing and commissioning. Testing has been conducted out-of-sight over the past nine months - beginning with weighted barrels, before moving on to a test dummy phase and finally human testing.

The Catapult is developed to internationally recognised safety standards and regulated under New Zealand adventure tourism and amusement device standards.

The world's first commercial Bungy jump operation was established at the Kawarau Bridge 'original home of Bungy' in 1988. The company - which now offers ziprides, swings, a bridge climb, tower walk and Bungys across five sites in Queenstown and Auckland - is set to reach one million jumps from the Kawarau Bridge Bungy Centre next month (September).

ENDS

Footage and imagery from launch day is available at: <http://bit.ly/NevisCatapult>

Note to editors:

Media wishing to experience the Nevis Catapult and any other AJ Hackett Bungy New Zealand attractions should email wendy@prdept.co.nz with a media famil request.

Or for more information or additional assets, contact:

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