



Forbes magazine praises NZ as investment destination

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United States business magazine Forbes has praised New Zealand as an investment destination, arguing against Kiwis' opinion of their country as small and isolated.

In an opinion piece, Barclay Partners Asset Management president William Buechler said he was surprised at a pervasive lack of optimism and confidence among New Zealanders, despite the "unfailingly bright and motivated" business men and women he met on a recent visit.

The country was a democratic, largely self-reliant, law-abiding society, with an investor- and business-friendly legal environment, and a high-yielding but undervalued, under-owned and under-appreciated stock market, Mr Buechler said.

New Zealand was not small compared with Ireland or Israel, examples of strong economies built out of the technology revolution, nor isolated in a technology-driven world.

Downsides include the currency risk, and concern that political leaders "may misunderstand the needs of maintaining efficient capital markets while failing to grasp that strong economies generally go hand-in-hand with strong capital markets".

"As for leadership and vision, the Kiwis have it, although getting everyone to share that vision will be the next progressive step for them," he said.

While it was not easy for an outsider to grasp the nuances of investing in New Zealand, Mr Buechler said returns from Telecom and the NZ stock exchange's index-related funds were good.

From around the world realize the opportunities and advantages of investing in New Zealand, new money from these outside investors - both retail and institutional - will flow to New Zealand in amounts well beyond anything experienced in the past and will serve as the catalyst that jumpstarts an economic boom in New Zealand that will simply defy current expectations," he wrote.

Only three New Zealanders feature in the magazine's list of worldwide billionaires - brothers Richard and Christopher Chandler at 382 with a net worth of \$US2 billion (\$NZ3.05 billion), and Graeme Hart at 451 on \$US1.7 billion.