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Media Release

Tourism needs to tackle concerns about impact, says TIA

The New Zealand tourism industry needs to focus more on sustainability, infrastructure investment and high-value visitors, Tourism Industry Aotearoa Chief Executive Chris Roberts told an audience of 100 media and tourism industry leaders in Dunedin today.

“The tourism industry is booming and delivering huge benefits to communities across New Zealand. But rapid growth has its challenges in terms of things like congestion and pressure on infrastructure,” said Mr Roberts. “Then there are the reputational issues – a small number of badly behaving freedom campers can colour the public’s overall perception of visitors.

“As an industry, new thinking is needed on how we can operate smarter and more sustainably going forward so that New Zealand benefits as much as possible from tourism, with our environment and our way of life enhanced by the hosting of visitors.”

Mr Roberts noted that 60% of New Zealand’s total tourism spend comes from domestic visitors, and that New Zealand’s international visitor arrivals numbers are not high by global standards.

“New Zealand’s ratio of annual arrivals to population is 0.8 to 1. That’s relatively low compared to some similar destinations. In Ireland, it’s 2 to 1, Croatia 3.3 to 1, and in Iceland, it’s more than six times our ratio, at 5.1 arrivals for every resident.

“But it is not a numbers game – we must remain firmly focused on value, not volume. Tolerance has to be self-determined by every destination. Tourism is a means to an end; it is not an end in itself. We must use it to deliver social and economic prosperity for communities.

“The New Zealand tourism industry must be committed to addressing the issues raised by New Zealanders – it’s a responsibility we all share.”

Mr Roberts highlighted the areas in which TIA will be leading the charge on over the coming year.

One of these is the [New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Commitment](#), which TIA launched in late 2017.

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"This provides concrete benchmarks and advice to tourism operators about how they can improve their businesses across four elements of sustainability: looking after the environment, thriving as businesses, building welcoming and supportive host communities, and pleasing customers."

TIA is aiming to sign up 1000 businesses to the TSC, with over 220 making the commitment so far.

A second priority is a thorough review of the successful [Tourism 2025 Growth Framework](#), which was launched in early 2014.

"T2025 has been incredibly beneficial in providing alignment across the industry, but we need to ensure it remains fresh, relevant and focused on the important issues."

Tourism telling its stories better is a third priority.

"Tourism businesses are doing amazing things every day across New Zealand, working with their communities, enhancing the environment and delivering incredible experiences. We don't need a glossy PR campaign; we just need to get better at sharing these genuine achievements with the public."

The fourth focus is funding and investment.

"The New Zealand tourism product is highly desired, but to support its ongoing success, we need to reinvest back in the product. The private sector is investing billions of dollars in accommodation, transport, attractions. The public sector also has a role in providing infrastructure that is used by both locals and visitors – and this raises the question of 'who pays?'

"There is a lot of talk about new taxes or levies. TIA is calling for a full and open debate on the tax issue to ensure we get the right answers for New Zealand."

Mr Roberts gave the talk on the first business day of TRENZ 2018, the industry's largest trade show.

"It's fantastic to have the opportunity to outline our vision for the industry and get feedback from operators here at TRENZ," Mr Roberts said.

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About TRENZ www.trenz.co.nz

TRENZ brings together about 300 New Zealand tourism operators (Sellers) with targeted international travel and tourism Buyers and Media from New Zealand's key established and emerging tourism markets. The event directly helps to grow New Zealand's \$36 billion tourism industry. Hosted for the first time by Dunedin in partnership with Waitaki and Southland, TRENZ 2018 is being held at The Edgar Centre, 116 Portsmouth Drive, Dunedin, 7-10 May. Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) manages TRENZ on behalf of the Tourism Industry New Zealand Trust. TRENZ is supported by Tourism New Zealand, Air New Zealand, Enterprise Dunedin in partnership with Tourism Waitaki and Venture Southland, Auckland Airport, Accor Hotels, Scenic Hotel Group, Millennium & Copthorne Hotels, Christchurch Airport, Tranzit Group and The Great Journeys of New Zealand.

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KEY FACTS

- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$99 million per day industry. Tourism delivers around \$40 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$59 million in economic activity every day.
- Tourism is New Zealand's biggest export earner, contributing \$14.5 billion or 20.7% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2017).
- 14.5% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand work directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 399,150 people are working in the visitor economy.
- The [Tourism 2025](#) growth framework has a goal of growing total tourism revenue to \$41 billion a year by 2025.

Visit www.tia.org.nz for more information

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