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Media Release

Tourism industry solution focused on freedom camping

A new body to consider freedom camping must create a broad consensus on the solutions that will address community concerns, says Tourism Industry Aotearoa.

Tourism Minister Kelvin Davis has announced the members of the Government's working group on freedom camping, including TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts.

"The industry has done a lot of thoughtful research and policy development on this issue already, and we are looking forward to working further with the Government and the local council representatives through the working group. We hope to reach agreement on solutions that will put a full stop to the debate on how to manage freedom camping," Mr Roberts says.

"The issues are complex. Some regions welcome freedom campers and would love more while others want to restrict the activity. There is a role for Government to play in providing some national guidance but every community needs to determine what works best for them."

TIA convenes the New Zealand Responsible Camping Forum, which brings together about 30 representatives from the public and private sectors, including rental vehicle operators, tourism associations, camping app developers, local councils and government agencies. The Forum has agreed on some key approaches for managing camping issues, which include a mix of good information, appropriate infrastructure and enforcement measures.

Over the last two summers, the Forum has run a very successful social media campaign, sharing information on camping that has reached more than 605,000 people via Facebook.

"Not all free campers are the same – they are made up of various groups including young international and domestic travellers, 'grey nomads', seasonal workers and the homeless. The majority of campers act responsibly and obey the rules. It's only a small number who create problems," Mr Roberts says.

"We know that many New Zealanders enjoy the privilege of free camping so we must be mindful of their rights in this debate."

While acknowledging the 'right to roam' that some groups hold dear, the Forum's central message to campers is that they should always check local camping rules and, in the interests of personal safety, protecting the environment and having a positive visitor experience, stay at holiday parks, Department of Conservation

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campsites or other designated camping areas. Those not using certified self-contained vehicles must stay at campsites with toilet facilities.

“Where issues are arising, there are responses that will meet the needs of both local communities and visitors. TIA will bring all the knowledge built up through the Responsible Camping Forum to the new working group.”

The other tourism industry and campers’ representatives on the working group are Grant Webster of Tourism Holdings Limited and Bruce Lochore of the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association.

For more information on the New Zealand Responsible Camping Forum, go to <http://www.tia.org.nz/advocacy/tia-projects/responsible-camping>.

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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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