

## Pandemic offers unique opportunity to shape NZ tourism industry

The COVID-19 pandemic offers New Zealand a unique opportunity to shape a tourism industry that delivers real benefits for New Zealanders, Tourism Industry Aotearoa says.

TIA is urging the Government's **Tourism Futures Taskforce** to take bold steps to address knotty issues that have been holding the industry back. It has today delivered a **major submission** to the Taskforce which sets out 22 potential solutions in 16 crucial areas. The submission is supported by seven in-depth papers setting out TIA's views on a range of topics.

"We acknowledge and are supporting the thousands of tourism businesses that are currently fighting to survive. But by stepping out from the current issues, the Taskforce can look towards the tourism industry we, as a country, want to have in 10, 20 or even 30 years and beyond. This is a unique opportunity and we must not waste it," TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says.

TIA's submission presents the Taskforce with five 'game-changers' – bold initiatives that would make fundamental improvements to New Zealand's tourism industry. These are:

- embed sustainability in the industry through TIA's **Tourism Sustainability Commitment**
- develop sustainable funding mechanisms for industry-good activities such as tourism research and data, workforce development, advocacy and policy
- establish sustainable funding for infrastructure, particularly to support local government investment in infrastructure that is used by both residents and visitors
- improve tourism insight to provide comprehensive and trusted data for the industry
- review conservation legislation as it is not designed to meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenges.

"Our primary interest is that the fundamentals of the industry are well set. If we get these right, we will have the information, capacity and frameworks in place to address issues as they arise," Mr Roberts says.

Unlike New Zealand's primary sectors, tourism suffers from a lack of sustainable funding streams to support industry-wide programmes. Where agriculture has a well-established system of levies on commodities like milk solids, meat or wine, tourism cannot easily adapt a levy system to the services provided to travellers.

TIA has also identified 10 areas where the Taskforce could recommend progressive changes to enable a well-run and cohesive tourism system. These are:

- Te Ao Māori
- Destination management
- Tourism value
- Visitor experience

### TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

Inspire House, 125 Featherston St, Wellington 6011, New Zealand  
P +64 4 499 0104 [www.tia.org.nz](http://www.tia.org.nz) E [info@tia.org.nz](mailto:info@tia.org.nz)



- Social licence
- Responsible camping
- Natural environment
- Carbon and climate change
- Business operating environment
- Workforce planning
- Domestic tourism

“TIA has a progressive and ambitious view of the future of tourism in Aotearoa. We firmly believe New Zealand can lead the world in sustainable tourism. New Zealand is leading the world in our response to the pandemic. We now have the opportunity to use this huge shock to rebuild and revitalise our industry so that it can continue its vital contribution to New Zealand,” Mr Roberts says.

“Right now, with borders closed, we are seeing what the loss of visitor demand actually feels like around the country – to regional economies, to the many thousands of small tourism businesses, and to all those people who have lost their jobs. The onus falls on us all to not only work to revive the industry, but to bring it back better as a world-class and genuinely sustainable tourism industry to enrich New Zealand and New Zealanders.

“An industry that delivers what communities want, that is best for our land and our people, and will be the best it can be for future generations.”

To read TIA’s submission to the Tourism Futures Taskforce, go to <https://tia.org.nz/advocacy/submissions/read-our-recent-submissions/>

A list of the solutions presented to the Taskforce follows:

### **1. Sustainability**

- Integrate the Tourism Sustainability Commitment into its ideal design of the New Zealand tourism system as the sustainability platform for the industry.
- Recommend Government funding support of an industry-developed platform that can be taken to a new level with resourcing put behind it.
- Identify where Government action is needed to advance critical sustainability issues that cannot be wholly addressed by tourism operators themselves, for instance, carbon reduction and waste elimination systems.
- Determine that Research, Science and Innovation is important in driving and achieving sustainability, and that investment is needed for this.

### **2. Sustainable Funding: Industry-good activities**

- Establish a funding stream to enable the industry to own and operate the key functions it needs to do to ensure the industry operates effectively and sustainably. This could be either an assignment from the International Visitor Levy or a new funding stream.

### **3. Sustainable Funding: Infrastructure provision**

- Recommend the establishment of a substantial fund (e.g. \$300 million p.a.) to support local government investment in tourism infrastructure and amenities.

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#### **4. Insight**

- Identify a future-proofed and enduring system for the provision of comprehensive, trusted and independent data as an essential baseline component for the future tourism system.
- Set out the requirements for the future Tourism Data System with specification of the actions needed to ensure its successful implementation.
- Recommend that a portion of the International Visitor Levy (IVL) or some other industry-good funding is used to establish an industry-led capability for managing and undertaking research, and for leveraging wider funding sources to build an ongoing research programme.
- Recommend that the public Science and Innovation system is configured to better allow the development of tourism science and innovation programmes.

#### **5. Tourism/Conservation Interface**

- Acknowledge that the conservation/tourism interface is becoming increasingly dysfunctional and that the current legislative framework governing conservation and tourism is failing, and that this can be rectified by:
  - Reviewing and updating the Conservation and National Parks Acts
  - Reviewing DOC's management planning and concessions functions
  - Requiring DOC to enable businesses to deliver conservation outcomes
  - Increasing DOC's core funding to enable it to deliver on its role in the tourism system.

#### **6. Te Ao Māori**

- Ensure that the future tourism system is imbued in the values and Tikanga of Māori as tangata whenua and as integral participants in the tourism industry.

#### **7. Destination Management**

- Ensure that all the current destination planning initiatives are adequately resourced and integrated into the future tourism system.

#### **8. Tourism Value**

- Ensure the future tourism system has the capability to undertake multi-dimensional analysis of what constitutes value in tourism and uses this insight to systematically increase the tourism value proposition. We need to identify the available levers and know how to use them.

#### **9. Visitor Experience**

- Ensure that the future tourism system is visitor-centric so that the mutual needs of the visitor, tourism industry and host communities can be most optimally achieved.

#### **10. Social Licence**

- Consider the social licence impact of every recommendation it makes and adopt the principle that New Zealanders should understand, support, shape and benefit from tourism operating in their communities.

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### **11. Responsible Camping**

- Identify bold, decisive action to be taken by central and local government, working with industry, to create a properly managed camping market in New Zealand. Three proposals for consideration:
  - Freedom camping is restricted to self-contained vehicles which meet NZS5465
  - Prohibit any freedom camping within an agreed perimeter of all holiday parks
  - Prohibit free camping in urban areas.

### **12. Natural Environment**

- Elevate the importance of the environment in the future tourism system and identify how policy and research settings can be configured to support and enable a positive restorative relationship between the environment and tourism.

### **13. Carbon and Climate Change**

- Call on the Government and its agencies to work with industry to achieve a carbon neutral tourism industry by an agreed date, which is significantly sooner than the Carbon Zero Act's 2050 target for the full economy.

### **14. Business Operating Environment**

- Consider how the commercial sector in the future tourism system can most effectively operate and thrive, recognising that the tourism industry has a very wide array of sectors and business types.

### **15. Workforce Planning**

- Recognise the tourism workforce as an important aspect of destination New Zealand and that the industry must be seen as an employer of choice with training support that creates clear career pathways. Four proposals for consideration:
  - Support the development of a Workforce Development Strategy for the tourism and hospitality workforce
  - Ensure Government policy settings support workforce needs, including educational and immigration policy
  - Endorse the Tourism Sustainability Commitment (TSC) goal for employers to become Employers of Choice
  - Ensure that the Go With Tourism (GWT) programme has a sustainable funding stream through to at least 2025 to support the recovery of the tourism and hospitality workforce.

### **16. Domestic Tourism**

- Determine the desired future role of domestic tourism, and the nature of the policy, insight and marketing support it needs to deliver sustainable social, cultural and economic benefits.

For more information, please contact:

Ann-Marie Johnson

Communications Manager

0276 004 565

[ann-marie.johnson@tia.org.nz](mailto:ann-marie.johnson@tia.org.nz)

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## KEY FACTS

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Tourism in New Zealand was a \$112 million per day industry. Tourism delivered around \$47 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributed another \$65 million in economic activity every day.
- Tourism was New Zealand's biggest export earner, contributing \$17.2 billion or 20.4% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2019).
- 14.4% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand worked directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 393,279 people were working in the visitor economy.
- The **Tourism 2025 & Beyond** sustainable growth framework/Kaupapa Whakapakari Tāpoi has a vision of growing a sustainable tourism industry that benefits New Zealanders.

Visit [www.tia.org.nz](http://www.tia.org.nz) for more information

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