
Tourism industry makes strides towards sustainability

New Zealand's tourism industry continued to make important strides towards its sustainability goals in 2019, according to research and analysis by Tourism Industry Aotearoa.

Since the launch of its **Tourism Sustainability Commitment** in 2017, TIA has been tracking progress for each of the TSC's eight economic, host community, visitor and environmental goals. The 2019 assessment is based on a survey of 614 tourism businesses carried out for TIA by Angus & Associates along with various industry data sources.

The TSC has the ambitious vision of *'leading the world in sustainable tourism.'*

In 2019, the overall TSC sustainability rating was 8.2, up from 7.9 the previous year. This represents solid progress towards the goal of 9.5 by 2025.

TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says: "It's great to see the industry tracking in the right direction. We are seeing a genuine commitment to economic, environmental and social sustainability. Being leaders in this space is how we will continue to attract high-value visitors."

At the individual goal level, the ecological restoration goal had the highest gain over the past year, up 6 points on 2018, with 69% of tourism businesses surveyed now actively supporting and championing ecological restoration initiatives.

Visitor-focused goals continued to be where tourism operators were performing best, with 97% of international and domestic visitors having their expectations met or exceeded, already surpassing the 2025 goal of 96%.

Gains were achieved towards the goal of businesses measuring, managing and minimising their environmental footprint, increasing by 2% to 78% of respondents reporting that they are actively working to reduce their footprint.

"There is still a way to go to reach the ambitious 100% target for this goal, but things are moving the right way," says Mr Roberts.

Host community satisfaction with tourism, as measured by the Mood of the Nation survey, was the only goal that slipped back slightly from the previous year – down by 1% to 81% of 'New Zealanders who are happy with the level of tourism activity and support growth'.

Mr Roberts says TIA is already focusing on improving community satisfaction in 2020 through its **Tourism Story project**, which aims to positively influence the discourse on tourism, widening support among New Zealand communities and helping to maintain the industry's social licence.

TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

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To date, 1300 tourism businesses have committed to the TSC. Mr Roberts says TIA will be strengthening the TSC programme over the coming year to ensure that the industry is taking meaningful steps to make their operations more sustainable.

“The TSC is a long-term initiative and we are very pleased with the progress achieved, as a stepping-stone to the greater gains we will achieve over the longer term.

“We’re proud to be an industry that has made such a strong commitment to sustainability, but we must maintain the momentum and see that genuine progress is being made. This year, TIA will be setting some clearer expectations of achievement for TIA signatories, providing more ways to get the specialised support businesses need, and developing some national initiatives. The TSC is the framework to guide meaningful and measurable action.”

Signing up to the TSC is simple and free for any tourism business. It can be done [online](#) on the [TSC website](#). The [Supporters Directory](#) shows which businesses have already signed up.

[Download the 2019 Performance Dashboard.](#)

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KEY FACTS

- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$112 million per day industry. Tourism delivers around \$47 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$65 million in economic activity every day.
- Tourism is 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 work directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 393,279 people are 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 for more information

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