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Media Release

Clear vision for improving freshwater needed say tourism leaders

Tourism industry leaders say New Zealand needs a clear vision and a long-term strategy for management of freshwater that reflects the values of New Zealanders.

And they say the importance of quality freshwater to the tourism industry is often overlooked.

Chris Roberts, Chief Executive, Tourism Industry Aotearoa, says clean freshwater is vital to the growth and sustainability of New Zealand's \$30 billion tourism industry which is aspiring to increase annual turnover to \$41 billion by 2025.

"Healthy freshwater ecosystems are fundamental to supporting the natural landscapes that are the primary reason visitors travel to New Zealand. They are also integral to many tourism activities such as rafting, jetboating, swimming and fishing.

"The Government must recognise freshwater as an essential platform for the growth and sustainability of the tourism economy and that this is apparent in freshwater economic management and the resourcing of freshwater protection and improvement.

"We support the implementation of the Land and Water Forum's recommendations of a national freshwater management approach that aligns with New Zealand values of fishing, swimming and mahinga kai/food gathering, with an overall improvement of freshwater over time."

Lesley Immink, Chief Executive, Tourism Export Council NZ (TEC), argues that a national freshwater policy statement that only aspires to 'wadeable' water equates to a marketing disaster for New Zealand.

"Many of New Zealand's largest and high profile export industries, including tourism, agriculture and viticulture, trade on the country's natural environment.

"We need to demonstrate that the aspiration of all New Zealanders, led by the Government, is at the minimum swimmable freshwater, and where we can, it should be drinkable. This must be one of New Zealand's highest priorities – for our communities, the economy and the health and wellbeing of our lakes, rivers and streams."

Earlier this year TEC championed the freshwater discussion on behalf of the tourism industry, supporting the Choose Clean Water campaign.

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Members of that campaign will appear before the Local Government and Environment Select Committee today to recommend that the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management sets the acceptable swimmable standard as the bottom line for New Zealand.

For further information, please contact:

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KEY FACTS

- Tourism in New Zealand is an \$81.6 million per day industry. Tourism delivers around \$32 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$49 million in economic activity every day
- Tourism is one of New Zealand's biggest export industries, earning \$11.8 billion or 17.4% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2015)
- 12.1% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand work directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 295,908 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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