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Media Release

Convoy of rental vehicles to leave Kaikoura

Efforts to remove well over 300 rental vehicles and tourist coaches from Kaikoura are due to begin tomorrow with a first convoy of 80 vehicles leaving the quake-hit town.

The campervans, cars and coaches owned by about 15 companies were left behind when visitors were evacuated from Kaikoura in the days following the 14 November earthquake.

Tourism Industry Aotearoa has been working with the operators, the Rental Vehicle Association, Civil Defence and the New Zealand Transport Agency to coordinate removal of the vehicles.

"The needs of the Kaikoura community have been the most important consideration in our planning. Local people are being given priority among those wanting to use the inland route during the hours of access," TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says.

"Many rental vehicle operators provided replacement vehicles so customers could continue their holidays. Now they are keen to get these vehicles out of Kaikoura to meet booking commitments."

A number of Kaikoura locals have volunteered to help drive the vehicles out, along with members of the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association who will travel into Kaikoura to drive the vehicles to Christchurch. Drivers will be given comprehensive health and safety briefings before they join the convoy.

"We're very grateful to the NZMCA for their help in this effort," Mr Roberts says.

"Vehicles are being prioritised on a pro rata basis depending on how many vehicles each operator has in Kaikoura. We're hoping to get all the vehicles out of Kaikoura by the end of next week."

Working together means that all affected operators get a fair go, and TIA has been pleased with the support from operators for a coordinated effort led by *thl* and Jucy, he says.

The number of vehicles left in Kaikoura highlights the importance of tourism to the town, Mr Roberts says. TIA has also convened a working group of industry leaders which met for the first time on Friday to guide the coordination of the industry and government tourism response to the earthquake.

TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

Level 4, 79 Boulcott Street, PO Box 1697, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

P +64 4 499 0104 www.tia.org.nz E info@tia.org.nz

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A decorative graphic consisting of three parallel diagonal stripes in shades of red and pink, extending from the bottom right corner towards the top right of the page.

KE-TAG (Kaikoura Earthquake – Tourism Action Group) will build on the work of the combined government-tourism industry Visitor Sector Emergency Advisory Group (VSEAG) which provided an immediate response to the earthquake. The group will meet regularly over the summer to monitor the actions being undertaken, identify any gaps in the response and act as required.

“Not only Kaikoura, but the surrounding South Island regions of Marlborough, Nelson, Christchurch and the West Coast are seeing impacts from the earthquake itself or from the changes in road access. Wellington has also been affected. TIA is keen to support its members in these regions and around the country to ensure that tourism continues to grow its contribution to our economy,” Mr Roberts says.

For further information, please contact:

Ann-Marie Johnson
Communications Manager
Tourism Industry Aotearoa
Mobile: 027 600 4565
Email: ann-marie.johnson@tia.org.nz
www.tia.org.nz
www.tourism2025.org.nz

KEY FACTS

- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$95 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 \$55 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 2016).
- 13.2% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand work directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 332,322 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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