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More Kiwis see community benefits of tourism

Around 95 percent of New Zealanders agree international tourism is good for New Zealand, according to the latest Mood of the Nation research released today – up three points on last year’s results.

The Mood of the Nation research is undertaken by Kantar TNS on behalf of Tourism New Zealand and Tourism Industry Aotearoa twice a year (November and March) to measure New Zealanders’ perceptions of international tourism.

“As we head into our peak visitor season Kiwis are telling us they can see the wider benefits tourism brings to their communities through local employment, local amenities and services as well as stronger businesses and economic growth,” say Tourism New Zealand Chief Executive Stephen England-Hall.

The survey shows that public concerns about the number of visitors have stabilised. Just 21 percent of respondents felt there are too many international visitors, the lowest percentage since November 2016.

Tourism pressure on infrastructure continues to be the top concern for New Zealanders (44%) followed by road congestion and safety (37-41%) and impacts on the environment (31%).

“The results show us that while Kiwis agree tourism is good for the country they also worry about the impact it can have in some areas,” says Mr England-Hall.

“It’s no secret that some regions are feeling pressure and need support to ensure that tourism enriches their environment, community and the people who live there. On the flipside we also have regions that are keen to attract more international visitors.

“This is something Government and tourism industry are working hard to address to ensure we continue to offer positive tourism experiences for visitors and local communities well into the future.”

This year alone, millions of dollars have been invested via the Provincial Growth Fund and Tourism Infrastructure Fund, along with investment to improve the management of the camping system, significant investment to support Department of Conservation work, and the introduction of the International Visitor Levy.

“Some of these initiatives are already having results like increases in regional spend because of new product development in those regions and marketing campaigns encouraging visitor dispersal. Other initiatives, such as infrastructure investment and the International Visitor Levy, will inevitably take time to build and have effect,” Mr England-Hall says.

“It’s important that this package of activity is designed to manage tourism well now and in the future, so that the sector adds more to New Zealand than it takes away, thereby enriching our people and place.”

Tourism Industry Aotearoa Chief Executive, Chris Roberts says the Government investment is complementing a wide range of private sector-led efforts to manage the growth and impacts of tourism, to maximise its benefits to New Zealanders and Aotearoa.

“Tourism is our largest export earner, a significant employer and is continuing to drive economic growth, presenting both challenges and opportunities for New Zealand communities,” Mr Roberts says.

The tourism industry recognises that growth has to be carefully managed and it has a responsibility to balance the needs of visitors, communities and the environment, he says. The industry’s growth framework, [Tourism 2025](#), is being revised in order to guide the sustainable development of New Zealand’s tourism industry.

“Our industry has a growing focus on sustainability in its broadest sense, including economic, environmental, host community and visitor sustainability. This was recognised with the release a year ago of the [New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Commitment](#), which more than 700 tourism businesses have now signed up to.”

Both Tourism Industry Aotearoa and Tourism New Zealand were part of the group of organisations that joined forces to develop [Tiaki – Care for New Zealand](#), an initiative that actively encourages international and domestic travellers to act as guardians of Aotearoa. Launched in November, Tiaki encourages Kiwis and visitors alike to experience New Zealand in a way that keeps everyone safe, protects our environment, respects our culture and protects the country for future generations.

“The initiative has attracted enormous support from the wider tourism industry and we are expecting to see it widely adopted by tourism operators who are keen to help visitors understand the importance of caring for our country,” Mr Roberts says.

Key facts:

- 58% of New Zealanders believe tourism creates growth opportunities for businesses.
- 58% of New Zealanders believe tourism creates employment opportunities for residents.
- 57% of New Zealanders believe tourism creates economic growth for the regions.
- Just 10% of New Zealanders know tourism was the country’s top export earner.
- In the past year international tourism contributed \$16.2 billion to New Zealand’s economy.
- [Tiaki: Care for New Zealand](#) launched on 1 November, an initiative actively encouraging international and domestic travellers to act as guardians of Aotearoa.
- The new [responsible camping campaign](#) launched on 1 December, encouraging people to plan their journeys, use facilities and leave no trace.
- Total international visitor arrivals YE Oct 2018: 3.8 million
- Total visitor arrival growth YOY: 3.6%
- Total visitor spend growth YOY: 6.3%
- Top six visitor markets: Australia, China, USA, UK, Germany, Japan

Note: YOY = Year on year

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