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Media Release

RMA changes would support tourism boom

Changes to the Resource Management Act must balance care for the environment with the pressing need for new infrastructure to cope with New Zealand's tourism boom, Tourism Industry Aotearoa says.

TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts today told the Local Government and Environment Select Committee that many tourism operators felt the RMA often hindered development. RMA requirements could be difficult, expensive and time-consuming.

The total annual value of tourism has increased by about \$6.5 billion in the last three years and is now worth about \$32.5 billion a year to New Zealand's economy.

New Zealand welcomed 3 million international visitors last year, and is forecast to reach 4 million by 2019 and 4.5 million by 2022.

"This growth requires a response in terms of infrastructure – more public facilities, more accommodation options, good roads for visitors, a wider choice of attractions and activities. This infrastructure response needs to happen very quickly, or New Zealand will fail to deliver a quality visitor experience," Mr Roberts says.

The proposed changes to the legislation are a step in the right direction, he says.

"Local government needs to be a significant facilitator in providing the tourism infrastructure that is needed, but currently it is often a significant inhibitor and that often impacts on how the RMA is applied.

"Greater national guidance for councils, better processes and faster decision making will all be welcomed by tourism businesses."

It is not the intent of the RMA that tourism businesses object to, he says. The tourism industry recognises that the RMA is a key tool for protecting our environment, which is crucial for our '100% Pure New Zealand' tourism promise.

However, the RMA needs to facilitate – not hinder and discourage – sensible development.

"The tourism industry is very mindful of the need to look after New Zealand's natural environment, which is our main drawcard as a destination. We believe that the proposed amendments will help support economic growth including the

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ongoing expansion of the tourism industry, while retaining the necessary environmental protections.”

[Click here](#) to read TIA’s submission on the Resource Legislation Amendment Bill.

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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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