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Media Release

Tourism industry aims to maintain record growth

New Zealand was just 61 visitors away from reaching the milestone of 3.5 million international visitors for 2016, with those visitors making a vital contribution to New Zealand's economy.

"Our challenge now is to maintain the growth trajectory in a sustainable way," Tourism Industry Aotearoa Chief Executive Chris Roberts says.

There were 3,499,939 short-term arrivals for 2016, up 12% or an additional 368,000 visitors on the previous year. This was the biggest ever increase in international visitors for a single year.

"Around half the growth is coming from New Zealand's biggest three visitor markets – Australia, China and the USA. But all source markets are growing, which provides resilience to any market shocks," Mr Roberts says.

There was impressive growth from some of the Asian markets, with South Korea up 27%, Malaysia 51% and the Philippines up 45% on 2015.

The number of visitors from Argentina has almost trebled, showing the value of new air services like Air New Zealand's Buenos Aires–Auckland service.

New air routes also help the tourism industry grow a range of strong visitor markets, cushioning it against future economic slowdowns in any single country, Mr Roberts says.

The growth means the industry is well on its way to achieving its **Tourism 2025** aspirational goal of growing annual tourism revenue to \$41 billion by 2025.

"Our challenge now is to encourage international visitors to disperse to all parts of the country, and to come to New Zealand in autumn, spring and winter so we can avoid capacity constraints and improve productivity.

"However, we do need to invest for success. We need well targeted investment in infrastructure so we can sustainably manage future growth."

TIA is conducting a National Tourism Infrastructure Assessment, examining the full range of infrastructure challenges and where the priorities for development might lie. The research is due to be completed in a few weeks.

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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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