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Media Release

Who's going to cook & serve your meal?

The Government's immigration changes have made it harder for hotels, restaurants and cafes around New Zealand to maintain a quality customer experience, warns the tourism industry.

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) Chief Executive Chris Roberts says raising the points threshold for the skilled migrant category from 140 to 160 is making existing skills shortages worse.

"It is disappointing the Government went ahead with this change, despite advice from officials that two of the most affected occupations would be chef and café or restaurant manager."

Officials reportedly advised that 90% of the chefs approved for residency in New Zealand last year would miss out under the new rules, along with 81% of café and restaurant managers.

"Where are these essential workers now supposed to come from?" Mr Roberts asks.

"We agree that New Zealanders should be first in line for jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors, but there simply isn't an adequate supply in many parts of the country."

Mr Roberts says the shortage of trained chefs in New Zealand is well recognised and research commissioned by TIA shows this problem is only going to get worse.

"By 2025 the number of chefs working in New Zealand needs to increase by at least 6200. If the Government is going to reduce the supply of trained chefs from overseas, it needs to do more to encourage young New Zealanders into the vocation."

Mr Roberts says this starts at secondary school level.

"Tourism and hospitality courses at school are not UE accredited and unfortunately are often used as a 'dumping ground' for less academically able students.

"The status and importance of courses which prepare young people for careers in the service industry needs to be raised – especially if the Government is going to cut off much of the supplementary supply from overseas.

"Otherwise the quality of the customer experience in our restaurants and cafes is going to suffer".

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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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