



**Submission to
Wellington City Council
on the
Draft Long Term Plan 2018-2028**

Date: 15 May 2018

TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

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Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Long Term Plan 2018-2028 of Wellington City Council. This submission comprises two main parts. Part One provides a general perspective on tourism at a regional level. Part Two provides specific feedback on the draft Long-term Plan.

This submission is filed without prejudice to TIA's future position. Our ability to prepare a comprehensive submission responding to the consultation document relied on the provision by the Council of information relevant to the connection between the consultation document and the benefits that would accrue. If any information is provided at a later date, TIA reserve the right to comment further.

INTRODUCTION

1. Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) is the peak body for the tourism industry in New Zealand. With over 1,500 members, TIA represents a range of tourism-related activities including hospitality, accommodation, adventure and other activities, attractions and retail, airports and airlines, as well as related tourism services.
2. The primary role of TIA is to be the voice of the tourism industry. This includes working for members on advocacy, policy, communication, events, membership and business capability. The team is based in Wellington and is led by Chief Executive, Chris Roberts.
3. Tourism 2025 (www.tourism2025.org.nz), an industry-led, government supported economic growth framework was launched in New Zealand in 2014 and has set an aspirational goal of reaching \$41 billion in annual tourism revenues by 2025. Spend growth has been rapid since 2014 and we are well on target to reach that goal.
4. This year, TIA is working on a Tourism 2025 reset that will include incorporating sustainability principles, articulating a longer-term view of tourism in coordination with Central Government; and identifying new priority actions to be addressed over the next 1-3 years.
5. Any enquiries relating to this paper should in the first instance be referred to Nienke van Dijken, TIA Policy Analyst at nienke.vandijken@tia.org.nz or by phone on 04 494 1842.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

6. In preparing this submission, TIA has engaged with its members in Wellington.

TOURISM'S IMPACT AT A REGIONAL LEVEL

7. The visitor spend from both international and domestic visitors for the Wellington City Council was \$1,800m (YE Mar 2018).
8. The tourism industry makes a significant contribution to regional economic development through the jobs and income it creates. Only a fraction of visitor spending

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actually occurs in places commonly considered visitor specific e.g. accommodation, attractions. The rest takes place in shops, cafes, petrol stations and other local businesses. Local farmers and market gardeners benefit from selling their goods directly or indirectly to visitors.

9. On any day of the year, your community is hosting the visitors, domestic and international, who are helping support local jobs and businesses.
10. One of the keys to a strong regional visitor economy is the quality of the visitor experience. Councils play an important part in that experience with the investment they make in infrastructure e.g. roads, water/waste disposal, broadband, attractions and events in addition to their support for promotional bodies. Councils play a vital role in helping visitors, as well as ratepayers, make the most of their time in the community.
11. Councils' planning need to consider the needs of visitors and residents so that the community can reap the benefits of the visitor economy.
12. In 2016, TIA developed a Local Government Manifesto, outlining eight priority actions for councils to reap greater economic and social rewards from tourism. A copy of this manifesto was sent to all Local Councils, ahead of the Local Council Election. For more details please refer to Appendix 1.

Challenges and opportunities of tourism growth

13. Tourism growth presents both challenges and opportunities. The visitor economy is a major driver of regional prosperity but the costs and benefits of increased tourism do not always fall evenly. However, talk of new visitor taxes and levies must be debated robustly, with all the issues and options considered. Any form of national or local tourism tax or levy must be fair, efficient and ring-fenced for tourism-related investments.
14. We understand that the growth in tourism in your region may bring with it specific issues. The following section explores some of those likely issues, how the industry is responding and what you, as a Council, could do.

15. Infrastructure

Recent tourism growth has placed pressure on some infrastructure used by visitors. In order to better understand and size this issue, TIA undertook a [National Tourism Infrastructure Assessment](#) in 2016/17. The resulting report identified the main infrastructure deficits in both the private and public sectors.

The priority infrastructure types identified were:

- Visitor accommodation
- Telecommunications
- Airport facilities
- Road transport
- Car parking
- Public toilets
- Water and sewerage systems

Much of the infrastructure identified as a priority for investment is local and mixed use (used by both residents and visitors) and has often seen long-term under-investment.

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To optimise the benefits of tourism for host communities, coordination between Central and Local Government agencies and industry partners is needed for projects to proceed.

What the Industry is doing:

- TIA successfully advocated for the Tourism Infrastructure Fund resulting in a \$100m fund for local and mixed-use infrastructure.
- Tourism sectors able to scale-up quickly are doing so, e.g. the road transport sector has been able to respond quickly with increased fleet size.
- Operators making significant private investment into infrastructure, e.g. Skyline Queenstown's \$100m redevelopment.
- TIA is undertaking work to identify and address the key barriers to infrastructure investment.

What you as a Local Council could do in regards to infrastructure:

- Apply to the Tourism Infrastructure Fund for projects like new carparks, toilets and visitor facilities.
- Coordinate with Central Government and industry partners on infrastructure projects submitted to the Regional Growth Fund.
- Ensure the Long-term Plan accurately reflects the infrastructure needs of tourism.

16. Social Licence to Operate

The fast growth of visitor economy has caused unease in some host communities, with locals worried about the number of visitors and the impact. This places pressure on the social licence the industry has to operate within these communities.

What the Industry is doing:

- TIA in conjunction with Tourism New Zealand undertakes six-monthly 'Mood of the Nation' research to assess New Zealanders' views of tourism.
- TIA in conjunction with Tourism New Zealand is developing a 'Tourism Narrative' project, which includes helping local businesses tell their stories.
- TIA is a key partner in NZTA's Visiting Drivers project to reduce the number of accidents by visiting drivers.
- TIA leads the Responsible Camping Forum, a group of 40 organisations representing rental operators, industry associations, Local and Central Government working together to manage freedom camping.
- A number of infrastructure initiatives will contribute to addressing social licence issues such as over-crowding.

What you as a Local Council could do in regards to social licence concerns:

- Ensure freedom camping is effectively managed in your region
- Promote the benefits of tourism in your region to the local community

17. Sustainable tourism

With the rapid growth achieved in the past few years, the tourism industry is facing the challenges of managing and sustaining growth, rather than generating growth. There needs to be purposeful effort to actively manage the industry for its long term sustainable success.

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What the Industry is doing:

- TIA has worked with industry and with Government agencies' support to develop a Tourism [Sustainability Commitment](#) (TSC). The Commitment establishes a set of aspirational goals at both an industry and business level across the areas of economic, environmental, host communities and visitor sustainability. Tourism operators are signing up to the TSC and working towards implementing the sustainability commitments within their businesses.



What you as a Local Council could do to support tourism sustainability:

- Support the tourism sustainability goal through positive policy and regulatory settings, and funding.
- Sign up the Council or your appropriate agency to the TSC and actively promote the TSC to your local tourism operators.

18. Protecting and restoring the environment

Tourism is a highly competitive global industry. New Zealand's environment is our unique selling point, it underpins our 100% Pure New Zealand tourism position and supports many of our iconic adventure and outdoor activities. Data from the International Visitor Survey conducted for the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) shows that the top factor for influencing visitors to choose New Zealand is our natural landscape and scenery.

New Zealand's natural environmental assets are under threat, including many of our native species, our freshwater rivers and lakes, and our unique landscapes.

What the Industry is doing:

- The environment is one of the four pillars of the Tourism Sustainability Commitment. The TSC asks that Tourism businesses actively support and champion

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ecological restoration initiatives, and that they are measuring, managing and minimising their environmental footprint.

- TIA is a member of the Land and Water Forum and advocates with central government to protect our natural environment.

What you as a Local Council could do to support our valuable environment:

- Recognise the economic value of your environmental assets to tourism
- Ensure the Long-term Plan accurately reflects the environmental needs of tourism
- Action the requirements of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management as quickly as possible

Funding

18. Tourism funding in this context relates to financial contributions provided through Central and Local government. There are two components to tourism funding – the source of funds and distribution of funds.

19. Sources of tourism funding

International visitors pay taxes and are more than paying their way. TIA believes these taxes, including the border clearance levy and \$1.5 billion a year in GST, need to be taken into account when additional charges on visitors are contemplated.

Tourism businesses support regional tourism activity through general and targeted rates, regional marketing alliances and their own marketing efforts.

There are infrastructure funding issues at a Local government level, especially in regions with small ratepayer bases. Central government assistance is desirable in some cases and there are opportunities for greater user pays and better use of council balance sheets.

Any new funding models contemplated need to be fair and applied nationally. A strength of the New Zealand tax system is its simplicity. Ad hoc taxes on visitors or tourism businesses at a local level are undesirable.

20. Distribution of tourism funding

Central government funding support for local mixed-use infrastructure provided by Local government requires a robust governance and allocation process.

Any form of tourism tax, such as the existing border clearance levy, must be ring-fenced for tourism-related investments, not siphoned off for other purposes.

Regional expenditure on tourism marketing and destination management by local authorities should be consistent with the tourism aspirations of the community and cognisant of the impact that visitor spend has on the wider community including employees and suppliers.

21. New visitor taxes and levies must be debated robustly, with all the issues and options considered. Any form of national or local tourism tax or levy must be fair, efficient and ring-fenced for tourism-related investments. TIA will vigorously resist any poorly designed tax or levy proposals that could tarnish New Zealand's reputation as a country that welcomes visitors.

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Part Two - Specific feedback on your LTP

22. In the following section, we provide feedback on the tourism components within your LTP. We understand that Long Term Plans set out a local authority's priorities in the medium to long term.

23. We understand that Wellington City Council's priorities are:

- Resilience and environment
- Housing
- Transport
- Sustainable growth
- Arts and culture

24. We note that the draft LTP includes comment that Wellington City Council wants to unlock more potential in tourism.

Wellington City's Visions

Eco city

25. We understand that one of the long-term goals of Wellington City Council is to become an ecocity. The LTP says *'it is important that Wellington takes an environmental leadership role, as the capital city of clean and green New Zealand. Our many natural assets give the city a head-start and opportunities as part of a green economy.'*

26. As noted earlier in the submission, there are several things a Council can do to support the Tourism Sustainability Commitment, such as supporting tourism sustainability goals through positive policy and regulatory settings, funding, and actively promoting the Commitment to local tourism operators. WREDA has taken a lead role by signing up to the Commitment and we encourage the Council to support them in this.

People-centred city

27. We agree with the Council that people are the city's greatest asset and Wellington's shape and character will continue to reflect the people who live in, work in, and visit the city.

28. The global Deutsche Bank study showing that Wellington is the best city to live in of 47 cities provides a useful international benchmark. We commend the Council and WREDA for the significant part they play in this. Such an accolade is a great tourism asset as well and will assist in attracting more visitors to the city.

Connected city

29. It is pleasing to see that the Council understands how important it is for Wellington to be a connected city, with easy access to regional, national and global networks.

30. Connectivity with markets is crucial to any tourism strategy. In 2016, we wrote a Letter of Support for consents to be sought for a possible extension of the runway at Wellington Airport, recognising that significant investment in infrastructure is required to cater for strong tourism growth. We support major infrastructure developments (e.g.

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airports) where the investment decisions are made with due diligence and clear evidence of tangible benefits to the visitor economy.

31. Understanding where leisure visitors will travel to on arrival in Wellington and what travel routes are likely (e.g. arrive Wellington – upper South Island, arrive Wellington – lower North Island, and combinations of these) would be valuable. This would assist in improving regional dispersal and maximising our tourism potential.

Dynamic central city

32. It is pleasing to see that the Council values having a vibrant and creative city. This benefits the local community and also assists with attracting more international and domestic visitors to Wellington City and increasing their length of stay. This will help deliver growth in jobs, incomes and opportunities of Wellington's community.
33. Wellington is a vibrant city home to many museums, theatres and arts festivals, including Te Papa Tongarewa, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the Royal New Zealand Ballet and the biennial Festival of the Arts. Large international fashion retailers and department stores continue to show an interest in opening stores in Wellington. The city is being perceived as unique, dynamic, vibrant and diverse place. Retaining these qualities will depend on the city's ability to support its commercial, residential and recreational activities.
34. Developments like these are equally as important as developments in infrastructure for the Wellington tourism industry. These developments complement each other and are equally needed to grow and retain the city's vibrancy that will attract visitors to Wellington.

Predator free Wellington

35. As noted, New Zealand's environment is our unique selling point and our natural environmental assets are under threat, including many of our native species.
36. We applaud the Council's aim of creating the world's first predator-free capital city, and as such we are supportive for the Council to gradually eradicate predators across the city and to increase its support for community groups active in predator control.

Sustainable growth

37. We understand that the Council aims to invest in sustainable growth: investing in economic projects that stimulate growth and diversification, and planning for population growth in ways that recognise the city's special character.

Movie museum and convention centre

38. In 2014, TIA wrote a submission in support of the proposed convention centre on the basis that such a centre will provide lasting economic benefits to the country, by improving New Zealand's capability to host medium to large-scale international conferences and exhibitions.
39. Capital cities by their nature have an advantage in attracting international conferences and exhibitions. Investing in the Convention Centre provides the capability for Wellington to effectively compete for a growing international MICE (Meetings Incentives

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Conferences Events) market. We maintain our view that the investment into the convention centre is a key priority for the Council and for Wellington.

40. Wellington already has a very strong and vibrant museums and film sector that will be further stimulated by this proposal, strengthening Wellington's position on the global stage and nationally as a leader in the Culture and Heritage sector. This will further complement existing attractions such as Te Papa and Weta Workshop. The Movie Museum should encourage visitors to stay longer in the Wellington and surrounding regions, further stimulating regional dispersal aspirations as identified in the Tourism 2025 framework.

41. We are supportive of the Council's preferred option 1 of continuing with the proposal to develop a Movie Museum and Convention Centre.

Indoor arena

42. TIA supports the development of an indoor arena, acknowledging that it is currently at feasibility study stage. A quality indoor venue of appropriate capacity places Wellington in a prime position to attract the right performers and performances. As well as a major plus for those living in Wellington, it also attracts many spenders from outside the region.

Conservation attractions – Wellington Zoo upgrades

43. As noted in the LTP, Wellington Zoo is an important tourism and conservation attraction that has more than 200,000 visitors per year. We are supportive of the Council's proposal to fund the upgrading of the facilities at Wellington Zoo to accommodate new attractions.

Funding of economic and tourism initiatives

44. It is pleasing to see that the LTP includes a number of investments that are focused on the tourist economy.

45. As noted earlier the tourism industry makes a significant contribution to regional economic development through the jobs and income it creates. There has long been a promotions levy on central city businesses and the Partnership Wellington contribution, supporting the activities of Positively Wellington Tourism and more recently WREDA. This has worked well. Some tourism operators, such as the Wellington hotel sector, also make an additional significant financial contribution by having to pay the BEW partnership contribution.

46. We note that the Council plans to explore options around how the Wellington visitor industry might further assist or contribute from Year 3 of this plan to fund activities that support the visitor economy. We have seen no evidence that the current approach is not working. It is important that TIA and industry operators have the opportunity to contribute to these discussions and request that Council engages openly and early with industry representatives including TIA when this work begins.

47. TIA is undertaking a project in 2018/19 investigating the different models of tourism funding and investment. The outcomes of this research will assist in informing discussions on regional tourism funding.

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Decade of Culture

48. We understand that the Council proposes to expand the reach of major festivals and events by redirecting existing economic grant funding towards cultural events and festivals to boost the city's profile as a cultural destination.
49. We are supportive of this and agree with the Council that it will complement the City's existing cultural activities by amplifying the unique strengths that make Wellington one of the world's most liveable cities and attract more visitors.
50. Because of the economic benefits that events bring, many regions in New Zealand are focussing on building and attracting events. Events also bring communities together and create vibrancy. Wellington's reputation as the "Events Capital of New Zealand" is under constant challenge by other centres. For WREDA, having sufficient funds to attract and run these events will be essential.

Follow up process

18. TIA wishes to have the opportunity to participate further in any follow-up process, including any formal meetings, to ensure that the potential impacts on tourism are adequately represented.

BACKGROUND

51. Tourism for New Zealand is big business as the country's largest export sector. It is a major contributor to the New Zealand economy that will always be here and won't easily go offshore. Tourism takes the lead in promoting New Zealand to the world. The brand positioning built by a vibrant tourism industry has become an important source of national confidence and identity and a front window for "Brand New Zealand". Indeed, the clean and pure offer that is synonymous with New Zealand tourism has been widely adopted and used to promote New Zealand exports in a range of other industries as well.


52. The tourism industry delivers the following value to New Zealand's economy:

- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$99 million per day and \$36 billion a year industry. Tourism delivers around \$40 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$59 million in economic activity every day.
- The tourism industry directly and indirectly supports 14.5% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand. That means 399,150 people are working in the visitor economy.
- Tourism is New Zealand's biggest export industry, earning \$14.5 billion or 20.7% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2017).

End.

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Appendix 1: TIA Local Government Manifesto 2016

The following Tourism 2025 actions are the priorities for a stronger local government/tourism partnership. The industry's eight priorities we would like to see from Local Government are:

Destination Management

This is the most important thing councils can do – look after and invest in the quality of your region as a destination.

- Facilitate and enable communities to meet the needs of growing numbers of visitors, as well as residents.
- Identify your unique selling points as a destination and promote them.
- Work with neighbouring communities to attract visitors to the wider region.

Infrastructure Facilitation

With the rapid growth in visitor numbers, we have to invest in essential infrastructure and enable the private sector to develop its infrastructure by delivering efficient planning and approval services.

- Define and plan for the priority infrastructure that meets the needs of visitors as well as residents.
- Examine the regulatory environment applied to tourism operators and other businesses serving visitors, and assess where the compliance burden can be reduced to support increased productivity

Events programming

Events are one of the best tools for encouraging people to visit your community. Use them to your advantage.

- Schedule events (meetings, conferences, sports events and festivals) outside of the peak season to foster off-peak travel activity.
- Attract high value business visitors through the availability of quality facilities, such as convention centres where appropriate.

Measuring Visitor Satisfaction

It is important to understand what your visitors think of your community. If they are happy, businesses can grow. If you know there are areas of low satisfaction, you can address the problems. Without this insight, you can't increase value.

- Track the satisfaction of international and domestic visitors, whether by direct customer feedback or social media, and use this information to address areas of dissatisfaction and deliver ever higher satisfaction levels.


Off-peak Marketing

Help your community to prosper by attracting people to visit throughout the year. This will develop a sustainable tourism industry with more permanent jobs.

- Council-owned or supported marketing agencies (e.g. RTOs, EDAs) build a stronger focus on promoting off-peak travel activity to high value visitors.

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Regional Development and Tourism

Every region wants to grow and tourism can and does support this goal. Tourism complements your community's other industries like wine, horticulture and farming.

- Encourage and incentivise tourism as part of your regional development strategies.

Enabling Airport and Port Facility Development

Great air and cruise links are vital to growing tourism. If your airport or port is council-owned, make sure long-term plans are aligned with industry forecasts. There are long lead times, so you have to think ahead.

- Councils work with local airports to establish and implement long-term and sustainable development strategies.
- Councils work with their port company to ensure cruise tourism is enabled.

Sustainable Tourism Positioning

Every region needs to demonstrate its commitment to look after its economic future and the resources it uses to operate.

- Identify the regional priorities required to develop a sustainable tourism industry across economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations.

By actively pursuing these opportunities, your Council can enable real economic and social gains for their communities.

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