

Media release  
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### Industry supports Kiwi first plan

A differential pricing trial on New Zealand's Great Walks will get support from the tourism industry because of its push towards improving track maintenance, TIA says.

Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage has announced that from October, international visitors will pay double for the huts and campsites on the four most popular Great Walks, for a trial period of seven months.

The trial period will provide information on the effectiveness of pricing as a tool to manage visitor pressure. It will also help fund the Department of Conservation's investment in maintaining the Great Walks, as they report maintenance costs exceed the revenue from users' hut fees by up to \$3.8 million each year.

TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says the organisation has been encouraging DOC to introduce differential pricing for some time.

"These are iconic, world-class experiences and our international visitors will still get great value for money. The Great Walks are heavily promoted and it makes no sense that DOC has been losing money on them. The Department needs to set its charges at a level that allows it to maintain the facilities."

TIA also supports the Kiwi Share concept, promoted by Federated Mountain Clubs, of a new DOC booking system to give Kiwis a brief early booking window for the most popular tracks, before opening it up to international visitors.

"We don't want to block our visitors from experiencing our great outdoors, but at the same time we need to ensure that New Zealanders can get reasonable access to our iconic experiences.

"We encourage DOC to further develop the Kiwi Share concept and look at introducing it on a trial basis for the coming summer."

Figures from the Department of Conservation show that in the year ending March 2018, 52% of all international visitors, 1.75 million people, visited a national park. This was an increase of 5% on the previous year's figures.

In 2016/17, the nine Great Walks were walked by 49,000 New Zealanders and 78,000 international visitors.