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Media release

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## Healthy waterways debate must include tourism

Urgent work needs to be done to understand the value of healthy waterways to the New Zealand tourism industry, says Tourism Industry Aotearoa.

The Ministry for the Environment has released a draft plan to tackle New Zealand's ongoing freshwater management issues. The importance of healthy waterways to the tourism industry has been largely left out of the debate, which TIA is calling a serious oversight.

In its submission to the Ministry for the Environment, TIA says it is supportive of the direction and urgency of the plans, but is calling for the tourism-freshwater relationship to be given a higher priority.

"Our visitors, be they international or domestic, expect healthy waterways and associated environments," says TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts. "If visitors perceive New Zealand as having a poor quality of freshwater, then over time this will have a significant detrimental impact on the visitor experience – and on New Zealand's reputation as a high-value destination."

TIA believes a lack of freshwater management has already had negative impacts on tourism's value proposition, asserting that this is unacceptable for an industry of such importance to the economy.

Tourism in New Zealand is a \$39.1 billion a year industry. It delivers \$44 million in foreign exchange each day of the year, with domestic tourism contributing another \$63 million in economic activity every day.

Freshwater and healthy ecosystems are fundamental to supporting many of New Zealand's iconic tourism landscapes, says TIA. How regions manage their landscape-related resources for tourism is important and should be integral to planning and resource management decisions.

"Freshwater management decisions are currently being made with either no, or at best an ad-hoc regard to the impact on tourism," says Mr Roberts. "The current lack of information makes it difficult to appropriately consider the tourism industry when making freshwater-related resourcing and planning decisions."

Mr Roberts believes a contributing factor to the oversight is the lack of tourism representation in the stakeholder groups convened by the Ministry during the proposal development stage.

TIA has been a consistent advocate for improving freshwater quality in New Zealand and is a long-standing member of the Land and Water Forum. It also responded to the Ministry for the Environment's freshwater consultation documents in 2016 and 2017.

### TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

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“We recognise the importance of healthy waterways, and the vital role they play in promoting and supporting human health and healthy freshwater ecosystems,” says Mr Roberts. “We mustn’t overlook the added value of those waterways to New Zealand’s biggest export industry.”

To read TIA’s submission in full, go to the [Advocacy](#) section of the TIA website.

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#### KEY FACTS

- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$107 million per day industry. Tourism delivers around \$44 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$63 million in economic activity every day.
- Tourism is New Zealand’s biggest export earner, contributing \$16.2 billion or 20.6% of New Zealand’s foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2018).
- 13.5% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand work directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 365,316 people are working in the visitor economy.
- The [Tourism 2025 & Beyond](#) sustainable growth framework/Kaupapa Whakapakari Tāpoi has a vision of growing a sustainable tourism industry that benefits New Zealanders.

Visit [www.tia.org.nz](http://www.tia.org.nz) for more information

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