

22 June 2018

Sahinde Pala
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By email - Sahinde.Pala@enz.govt.nz

Re: Consultation on the International Education Strategy 2018-2030

Tēnā koe Sahinde,
Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the International Education Strategy 2018-2030.

TIA is the peak body for the tourism industry in New Zealand. With nearly 1600 members, TIA represents a range of tourism-related activities including accommodation, transport, hospitality, adventure & other activities, attractions, retail, airports & airlines, as well as related tourism services.

Tourism 2025

Tourism 2025 (www.tourism2025.org.nz), an industry-led, government supported economic growth framework was launched in New Zealand in 2014 and set an aspirational goal of reaching \$41 billion in annual tourism revenues by 2025. The industry is well on its way to achieving that goal with revenue of \$36 billion in 2016-2017 (YE March).

The growth framework was reviewed in 2016. While the five themes of the framework remain unchanged, the emphasis in some areas of focus has shifted. One of the priorities that arose from the 2016 review is Leveraging Tourism and Education. The aim of a stronger focus in this area is to develop the relationship between the tourism and export education sectors to leverage reciprocal benefits for each sector.

Previous consultation

In 2013, Education New Zealand's Chief Executive played an active role in the development of the Tourism 2025 growth framework. More latterly, in December 2016 TIA provided feedback to Education New Zealand on the first round of consultation on the International Education Strategy and in August 2017 submitted on the draft International Education Strategy for New Zealand.

TIA is supportive in principle of the International Education Strategy 2018-2030.

Alignment with other government portfolios

We are pleased to see that the strategy acknowledges the alignment between international education and tourism. The strategy notes the connection between international education and a range of government portfolios, particularly education, immigration, tourism, trade and foreign affairs.

The document notes that the Government will explore ways to strengthen connections between the international education sector and other industries such as tourism. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this in more detail with the Government.

International students' contribution to tourism

As noted in our previous feedback, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) specifies that international students staying for less than one year should be seen as a subset of travellers and their activity should be perceived as tourism activity.

The latest New Zealand Tourism Satellite Accounts show that in the year ended March 2017 expenditure by international students studying for less than 12 months in New Zealand (comprising of course fees, living costs, and airfares on resident airlines) was \$2.9 billion, an increase of 2.7% compared to YE March 2016. The number of short-term arrivals for education purposes (studying for less than 12 months) increased by 5.5%.

International students play an important part in attracting friends and relatives to visit New Zealand while they are studying here. We are pleased to see this recognised in the consultation document. However, we do think there is a role for Education New Zealand to play in promoting visits by friends and relatives to New Zealand at the time international students are signed up to study here. Education New Zealand could, together with the tourism industry, be far more proactive in providing visitor information, encouraging visitors and offering special deals. This could even extend to Immigration New Zealand offering immediate family a pre-approved visitor visa so that the family can visit the student at any time during their study in New Zealand.

Goal 1 - Delivering excellent education and student experience

International students are welcome and safe

One of the sub-themes of Goal 1 is that international students are welcome and safe. In previous feedback, TIA indicated there is a role for the tertiary sector in providing information to international students on what is different about driving in New Zealand. Safe driving by visitors is a priority area for the tourism industry and it would be appropriate for the strategy to acknowledge a role in managing this risk. It is disappointing to see that the draft strategy does not acknowledge the importance of this and we strongly encourage for a focus on safe travel to be part of the delivery planning.

New Zealand delivers an overall excellent international student experience

The tourism industry has a commitment to deliver outstanding, high quality visitor experiences. It is pleasing to see that the consultation document acknowledges that international students should also be seen as visitors to New Zealand and the importance of providing students with new perspectives and truly authentic New Zealand experiences while they are here. This again demonstrates the strong connection between international education and tourism.

Goal 2 - Achieving sustainable growth

Sustainability is a key priority of the tourism industry, and one the industry is heavily invested in. TIA launched the [Tourism Sustainability Commitment](#) (TSC) in November 2017. The four elements of tourism sustainability are economic, environmental, host communities, and visitors. Each element is supported by a set of sustainability commitments for operators to aspire to. We welcome the strategy's goal of sustainable growth.

Regions throughout New Zealand increasingly share the benefits of international education
Regional dispersal is strategically attractive for both tourism and international education. We are pleased to see the proposed strategic regional development approach for international education.

We encourage Education New Zealand to also consider ways to support seasonality within this theme of sustainable growth. One of the benefits of international education is that when courses commence outside the peak season and/or run over a longer period, this helps to address regional issues of seasonality when there are traditionally less visitors.

International education can help to meet our skill needs

One of the key actions to achieve success for Goal 2 is to help attract international students and retain graduates with the skills and qualifications New Zealand needs. There are already acute labour shortages in many popular visitor destinations at peak times of the year. Labour shortages are often filled by migrants on study and temporary work visas when New Zealanders are not available or may be lacking in required skills or attributes. We anticipate there will be continuing labour shortages in the next 10 years. Having appropriately skilled and qualified students who can help fill these shortages is important to the tourism industry. We welcome the focus in this area.

Goal 3 - Developing global citizens

The focus of Goal 3 - Developing global citizens is an interesting area and one we support. We agree with the statement *New Zealanders benefit from enhanced knowledge and understanding of other cultures and languages. Internationally-capable people are more*

likely than others to interact and form positive connections with international students, migrants and tourists to New Zealand.


Our view is this enhanced global citizenship will be an important lever for New Zealand to deliver an outstanding visitor experience. Global citizenship will also be helpful in delivering an overall excellent international student experience and providing students with new perspectives and truly authentic New Zealand experiences while they are here.

Conclusion

Overall, TIA is supportive of the International Education Strategy 2018-2030. A strong international education sector is an important component of a successful tourism sector in New Zealand and vice-versa - when the tourism sector is operating well international education will benefit.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Ngā mihi



Steve Hanrahan
Advocacy Manager - Tourism Industry Aotearoa