

A note from the Chairman

By Grant Lilly, Chairman, TIA

It was a big summer and very strong autumn for our tourism industry – but you ain't seen nothing yet!

I expect that some TIA members outside of the ski holiday spots are recharging their batteries during these winter months. But with the arrival of spring not too far off, this is the ideal opportunity to be preparing your operation for next season.

Now is the time to make sure you have enough staff and their training is up-to-date. Recruit new staff as soon as possible – visitors will start arriving earlier in the year as we build up the shoulder season.

Do your repairs and maintenance, and get to work on any new developments and new product you have planned. There is every reason to expect that our industry will be busier than ever when the warmer weather returns.

At our June meeting, your TIA Board discussed the implications of the growth our industry is enjoying and the consensus was that there will be record growth over the next 12 months.

With this in mind, our discussions at the meeting focused strongly on the infrastructure needed to support our soaring visitor numbers.

It's not just about public toilets and hotels – it's also about water, roading, signage, cruise ship facilities, tramping tracks and huts.

Earlier this year, the Board identified infrastructure as TIA's key strategic priority for 2016-17. We know that Central Government is already doing work on this, including NZTE's Project Palace and the four-year, \$12 million tourism infrastructure fund announced by Prime Minister John Key at TRENZ.

Private sector-led research is also underway that is looking at how tourism infrastructure can be funded.

Your Board believes TIA can also make a valuable contribution. We have directed TIA management to undertake an Infrastructure Assessment that will identify what priority infrastructure is needed to support the tourism industry over the short, medium and long-term.

This Infrastructure Assessment will complement the other work going on in this area and will help guide TIA's advocacy on behalf of the industry into the future. It will inform central and local government on national and regional

tourism infrastructure priorities, and will assist in informing investors of the opportunities available.

Another project with direct benefits to members is TIA's planned domestic visitor market segmentation research. With support from a range of industry organisations, operators and RTOs, this research will centre on understanding the domestic visitor market, ultimately providing regions and operators with tools to identify opportunities to grow this market. This work is due to start in June and be completed by October.

The Board also discussed the upcoming local body elections. TIA will be producing a Manifesto that we encourage all members to use in the run-up to the elections, to highlight the benefits of tourism to council candidates. It will suggest how communities can capitalise on the growth of tourism, and we will continue to use it to inform the newly-elected councillors after the elections.

You will be able to find out more about our plans for local government at the upcoming Discussing Tourism events, being held at six locations around the country through July and August. Registrations are open now, so go to www.discussing.org.nz to find out more.

And speaking of elections, the annual TIA Board elections are coming up. Four directorships are available for election this year, representing these sectors:

- Attractions, Conferences and Events
- Regional Tourism Organisations
- Motels, Other Accommodation and Hospitality, and
- A General Industry seat.

I encourage you to think about whether you would like to join our Board. Nominations open on 25 July, with the AGM due to take place on 8 September.

It's been a very successful few months for TIA, with an excellent TRENZ 2016 and New Zealand Hotel Industry Conference. We are now looking forward to seeing many of you at our Discussing Tourism events and at the upcoming New Zealand Tourism Awards. This will be a wonderful chance to celebrate the success of our industry so I do hope you think about entering your business. Find out more at <http://nztourismawards.org.nz/>