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Media Release

Tourism industry enthusiastic about Waitaki plan to seek UNESCO status

Tourism Industry Aotearoa is enthusiastically supporting Waitaki District Council's proposal to seek UNESCO recognition for its heritage buildings and unique geological treasures.

The proposal is included in the Council's Draft Long Term Plan, on which TIA has made a submission.

"Attaining UNESCO World Heritage Status for Oamaru's historical precinct and UNESCO Global Geopark status for Waitaki's geological features would be great assets to New Zealand tourism. If Waitaki District manages to get both, it could unlock the region's tourism potential," says TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts.

The Council is also proposing to complete the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail and conduct a feasibility study for a new cycle trail between Oamaru and Palmerston.

Mr Roberts says "cycling is growing in popularity and we support the additional investment, which will build on the current high quality of cycle trails and tracks in the region.

"Advocating for new cycling opportunities is a good way for the Council to turn Waitaki into a year-round tourism destination and to increase visitor numbers, grow jobs, incomes and opportunities."

TIA is urging the Council to strengthen its focus on environmental protection. The Draft Long Term Plan emphasises the need to value and protect areas such as the Mackenzie Basin.

"Our environment is our unique selling point as a tourism destination, and the Mackenzie Basin is a nationally significant landscape for tourism. It attracts many visitors, and is also integral to the experience of those heading to Aoraki Mount Cook National Park and those on the main South Island touring route, which passes through the Basin," says Mr Roberts.

"We encourage the Council to consider taking action as per the recommendations in the MacKenzie Basin Agency Alignment report, and particularly to note that urgent attention is required as the landscape is currently under severe threat of irreversible change."

To read TIA's full submission, go to: <https://tia.org.nz/assets/Uploads/TIA-Submission-LTP-Waitaki-District-Council.pdf>.

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KEY FACTS

- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$99 million per day 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.
- Tourism is New Zealand's biggest export earner, contributing \$14.5 billion or 20.7% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2017).
- 14.5% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand work directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 399,150 people are working in the visitor economy.
- The [Tourism 2025](#) growth framework has a goal of growing total tourism revenue to \$41 billion a year by 2025.

Visit www.tia.org.nz for more information

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