

Refocusing TIA's priorities

By Chris Roberts, TIA Chief Executive – 1 April 2016

The remarkable growth our industry has experienced over the past two years has required TIA to refocus our priorities. For 2016/17 our focus is very much on the big strategic imperatives that will ensure sustainable progress towards the goals of Tourism 2025.

TIA's financial year starts on 1 April and for the year ahead we have a new Board-approved Business Plan and Budget to deliver against.

The 2016/17 TIA Business Plan deliberately ranks one issue above all others – infrastructure and investment.

Over the coming year TIA will be looking to lead, co-ordinate and contribute to a significant body of work that identifies:

- The key tourism infrastructure needs in the short, medium and long-term
- The scale of those infrastructure needs
- The location and timing of those key infrastructure needs
- Barriers to investment and options for removing those barriers
- New funding models and policy settings

Our objective in taking on this work is that the key tourism needs are prioritised and solutions are identified that can deliver the investment needed to support ongoing growth of the visitor economy.

If we are successful, the outcome will be that tourism operators, central and local government are better able to make well informed decisions to invest in new tourism infrastructure, supported by the removal of unnecessary red tape and greater facilitation of new projects.

Other priorities areas identified in TIA's Business Plan are:

Tourism 2025 Alignment: It is important that Tourism 2025 continues to be used as a framework for strategic planning by large industry players, SMEs, RTOs and relevant government agencies. At TRENZ we will be publishing a progress report on Tourism 2025.

Local Government: It's election year for councils. It's vital that tourism operators have supportive local government partners who are working with them to attract visitors and manage the impacts of growth. TIA will be issuing a Local Government Manifesto and we will be encouraging our members to engage with local candidates and ensure that they understand the value of tourism.

Domestic Tourism: Our aim is that the value and nature of domestic tourism is well understood and is contributing strongly to industry growth, supporting regional development and providing an effective hedge against fluctuations in international markets. TIA leads a Domestic Travel Working Group which is identifying priority actions for stimulating domestic tourism.

People and Skills: Tourism operators must be able to meet their labour and skills needs so that they can deliver high quality visitor experiences in a profitable way. In the coming year we will be addressing priorities identified in TIA's People and Skills 2025 report.

Social Licence to Operate: To retain the support of our communities, tourism operators must recognise the importance of growing their businesses in a way which balances the economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts. TIA will take a leading role in monitoring and

responding to key social licence issues, such as visiting drivers, freedom camping, overcrowding and environmental impacts.

Of course, in addition to these strategic priorities, TIA will continue to deliver all of its core functions, such as advocacy for members, regular communications, industry sector forums, the New Zealand Tourism Industry Awards, regional events, the National Tourism Summit and TRENZ.

TRENZ is now only a matter of weeks away and I look forward to catching up with many of you in Rotorua.