



tourism
INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION NEW ZEALAND

Submission to

Department of Conservation (DOC)

on the

**Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve – Draft
Management Plan**

8 August 2011

Executive Summary

1. This submission by the Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIA) comments on the Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve draft management plan of June 2011. TIA attended a meeting in Motueka in July 2011 with members who operate tourism businesses in and around Abel Tasman National Park.
2. TIA endorses the vision statement of this plan that “*the Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve is revered and safeguarded for all those who come after us*”.
3. TIA understands the primary objectives (sourced from page 11 of consultation document) for the Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve are:
 - a) *Effect given to achieving the Vision and the outcomes for the Foreshore Adjacent to Private Land and the Foreshore Adjacent to National Park places.*
 - b) *Preservation of the natural ecosystems and landscapes, the indigenous species of flora and fauna in their natural communities and habitats, and the natural character of the coastal environment, of the reserve.*
 - c) *Preservation of public access to and along the Abel Tasman Coast, and its bays and inlets and offshore islands (except Tonga and Pinnacle Islands).*
 - d) *Protection and preservation or enhancement, for the benefit, enjoyment and use of the public, of the intrinsic values of the reserve as an area possessing great beauty, natural features and landscapes.*
 - e) *Management and protection of the historical, archaeological, biological and other scientific features of the reserve to the extent compatible with the other Primary Objectives.*
 - f) *Regard given to the collective multi-cultural values of the reserve.*
 - g) *Effect given to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, to the extent that they are consistent with the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977.*
 - h) *Integrated management and use compatible with that of adjacent lands and waters (including Abel Tasman National Park, Tonga Island Marine Reserve, the adjacent coastal marine area and privately owned land), to the extent that it is consistent with the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977.*
4. TIA understands the need to preserve the ecological and societal values of the park, however, we are concerned that the nature of the draft will unnecessarily constrain commercial users with overly prescriptive rules.
5. TIA is concerned that, if commercial operations are widely restricted – as proposed in this draft, visitors to the park may chose to visit without utilising the services of professional tourism operators and the increased levels of safety and management offered.
6. If the perception of the visitor to Abel Tasman is that that non-guided activities are more flexible than those offered by commercial operators, we see potential for the reversal of recent trends towards well managed commercial tourism.

7. In developing this draft, DOC and the Tasman District Council (TDC) missed the opportunity to utilise advisory groups. There was a lack of consultation with commercial operators that have contributed significant data to the Department. There is a feeling that DOC is letting the environment degrade to enable controls being enacted in this plan, with some comments that the Department is paying lip service towards working with commercial operators. Local actions do not seem to be in accordance with Statement of Intent or wider DOC policy.
8. There appears to be a lack of definitive information or the qualification of numbers and costs in this plan. The plan generalises in referring to large numbers and high costs. Local operators have repeatedly offered to support DOC in meeting increased costs imposed by increasing the numbers of toilets and waste removal associated with this.
9. The impacts of channelling and restricting visitors to a limited number of access points and times will inevitably increase numbers at these locations, increasing the perception of overcrowding and decreased visitor satisfaction.
10. Enquiries regarding this paper should, in the first instance, be directed to Evan Freshwater, TIA Industry Advocate, by telephone on 04 494 1849 by e-mail at evan.freshwater@tianza.org.nz. The Association would like the opportunity to appear in person if and when oral hearings are held.

Specific Comments

11. TIA has the following comments with regard to specific clauses within the plan.

Part A

6.1 Planning and management for people's benefit and enjoyment (sourced from page 39 of consultation document).

12. *"Scenic reserves are areas possessing scenic interest, beauty, natural features or landscapes that are protected and preserved in perpetuity for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, enjoyment and use of the public. People of all ages and backgrounds visit Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve for a variety of reasons: to be inspired by the scenery, unique features, sights and sounds of wild nature; to enjoy relatively undeveloped beach environments; to undertake activities such as swimming, sunbathing, boating and picnicking; to experience solitude, remoteness, peace and natural quiet; to experience nature on nature's terms; to experience the challenge of being self-reliant and adventurous; to explore, enjoy and learn about nature; to share experiences; to gain access to areas on adjoining lands, such as Abel Tasman National Park and privately-owned land; to maintain active, healthy lifestyles; and to 'get away from it all."*

However, visitors can have an adverse impact on the very qualities that attract them to the reserve in the first place and the enjoyment of some can be at the expense of others. A range of activities, behaviours, facilities, services, and large groups, can erode enjoyment of the reserve in its natural state and as a place of refuge from commercialism and urbanisation".

National Context

13. TIA would like to see it reflected in the National Context statement of the plan that visitors to the park value not only "easy access, clean and undeveloped golden beaches, blue sea..." but also value opportunities for safe, suitable options for a

wide and varied visitor demographic. Future trends are towards an ageing visitor demographic, who by definition will increasingly value safe, easy access the Abel Tasman coastline.

Local Context

14. TIA notes that there appears to be limited input to this draft from the Tasman District Council. Tourism operators within TDC would have appreciated the opportunity to consult with their Council on this matter.

6.1.3.1 Coastal Access Points

15. TIA is concerned with the inflexible nature of these Coastal Access Points, limited access times and the overall caps on visitor numbers.
16. It is noted that currently, operators face operational restrictions within their concessions. This draft plan gives further restrictions on top of these without acknowledging significant improvements since 2000, in overall visitor perception of the Abel Tasman experience – problems with perceived overcrowding, with the majority of visits tramping and multi-day, along with issues with the poor hut booking system. Commercial operators are currently restricting themselves to servicing seven access points. The draft plan further defines and restricts what is currently actual practice in the park.
17. As the Coastal Access Points are affected by environmental conditions, we feel that they need to be indicated as preferred access points and leeway allowed for operators to make operational decisions encompassing suitability and safety on the day. An example of this is at Torrent Bay – the southern access point is inflexible and needs to be able to move with the sand bar to allow beach access.

Map 2d Onetahuti Coastal Access Point

18. TIA feels DOC could reduce impacts from camping at locations such as Medlands, by imposing a one-night maximum stay.
19. We feel DOC should mitigate for large numbers of visitors by providing for another containment toilet at Tonga Quarry.

Map 2E Bird roosting area

20. This roosting area restricts access to the beach and relies heavily on continued access through private land. This limits the access and usability of Awaroa, limits vehicle access to the beach and the ability to transport heavy items via cost effective scheduled transport. We question the relevance of this as the birds generally roost above the high tide mark and, therefore, are outside of the mandate of the draft.
21. The plan needs to have a general statement and flexibility in regards private land title changes.

6.1.3.2 Awaroa vehicle access corridor. Map 2G

There needs to be flexibility of location of this corridor to allow for given conditions on the day.

6.1.3.3 South Coast

22. TIA feels the plan should allow for both pick-up and drop-offs at Coquille.

6.1.8 Human waste and litter

23. Historically there have been differences in the management and requirements of public conservation land (PCL) as well as land administered by TDC. An example of this is the availability of toilets, Awaroa (TDC land), one toilet to 500 passenger movements; Anchorage (PCL), eight toilets to 450 passenger movements. The approach by land managers seems to focus on access point toilets with no focus on inter-access point toileting (e.g. Falls River could have a toilet and barge access to transport waste). Improved track signage indicating travel times to toilet facilities could decrease the impacts of trailside toileting.
24. We are supportive of the building of toilet facilities on Adele Island and feel construction should commence as soon as possible.

9.1.5 Unformed legal roads. Accreted lands and other additions

25. We are concerned that any move to remove status of legal roads restricts future opportunities for well managed tourism in Abel Tasman National Park.

Part B

11.7.1. Activities requiring specific authorisation

26. TIA affirms the commitment of concessionaires to the concept of well managed tourism. These operators have committed significant time and effort in their businesses and are reliant on the continued favourable impression of visitors to Abel Tasman National Park.
27. TIA would like to see the plan allow for regular review of any restrictions on commercial operations in the park, primarily those of maximum numbers and peak times.

12.5.5 Vessels

28. Because limited numbers of freedom kayakers paddle as far as Awaroa inlet, we believe that motorised vessels should be allowed in this area. Due to its nature, this inlet is ideal for family enjoyment in motorised vessels – any motorised vessels in the inlet would be obliged to travel at or below 5 knots within 200m of the shore.

12.7.1 Table 6, South Coast & Awaroa VAC

29. Correction: (iii) should read Apple Tree, not *Bark Bay/Wairinga*.

Background

Who is the Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIA)?

30. TIA has been the lead association that represents the interests of about 1,700 tourism businesses in New Zealand. The Association was first established in 1955 and the businesses TIA represent cover a range of tourism-related activities – hospitality, transport, accommodation, adventure and activities, attractions and retail as well as related tourism services.
31. The primary role of TIA is to be the voice of the tourism industry. This includes working for members on advocacy, policy, communication, events and membership

and business services. The TIA team is based in Wellington and led by Chief Executive Tim Cossar.

Value of Tourism

32. As New Zealand's single largest export industry, tourism provides valuable export dollars with much of this money spent in the country's more rural and remote regions. Below is a snapshot of the economic value provided by tourism to the New Zealand economy:

- Tourism contributes more than 8.7% of gross domestic product (GDP) for New Zealand as well as directly and indirectly employing one in ten New Zealanders.
- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$61 million per day industry. The New Zealand tourism industry delivers \$26 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$35 million in economic activity every day.
- Tourism expenditure reached \$22.4 billion for the year ended March 2010. International visitor expenditure accounted for \$9.5 billion or 18.2% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings.
- Importantly, and despite more challenging times in the past three years, tourism is again New Zealand's largest foreign exchange earner with its contribution felt at national, regional and local levels.

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Tourism Industry Association New Zealand
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