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Media release

Tourism industry redoubles sustainability efforts

Tourism Industry Aotearoa has today unveiled a refreshed version of the sustainability platform for the industry – the New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Commitment-He Kupu Taurangi Kia Toitū Ai Te Tāpoitanga.

“Alongside our focus on getting tourism businesses and people through the COVID-19 crisis, it remains important to consider the future and be ambitious for what we can achieve,” says TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts.

“Now more than ever, we need to act to become sustainable – as businesses, as an industry, as a country.

“Increasingly, our communities and visitors have expectations that our industry will act sustainably. We have made good progress in recent years and now is the time to redouble our efforts.”

Mr Roberts says a commitment to sustainability means not only driving excellent environmental practices, but also ensuring benefits to the community, visitors and New Zealand’s economy.

With the tourism industry profoundly impacted by COVID-19 and the closure of our borders, Mr Roberts says TIA is fully committed to ensuring that the momentum towards a sustainable industry is maintained.

“We are firmly of the view that sustainable businesses will be best placed to emerge strongly as and when the industry recovers.”

The refreshed TSC sets out 12 commitments and outlines practical actions so all businesses can play their part. Over 1400 tourism businesses have signed up to the TSC since its launch in November 2017 and the commitment will now be included as part of TIA membership.

“The only way the industry as a whole can be sustainable is if all operators are sustainable themselves. It has to be a bottom-up approach.”

Mr Roberts says the purpose of the refresh is to strengthen the commitments, align them with national and international sustainability frameworks and the New Zealand-Aotearoa Government Tourism Strategy, and identify key objectives to help tourism businesses achieve each commitment.

“Never before have we looked so closely around us at what is truly important. The global pandemic has shown how quickly we can and need to adapt. When we think about our future, resilience and adaptation are absolutely what we need to consider.”

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Mr Roberts says businesses don't need to be already meeting every commitment. "Sustainability is a journey and the important thing is to get started and make progress. But we firmly believe that through our individual actions, collectively New Zealand can lead the world in sustainable tourism."

Key features of the TSC are the tools, resources and other support that sit behind it, including an online sustainability assessment tool.

The 12 Commitments outlined in the TSC make good business sense and many case studies show financial as well as social and environmental benefits.

The TSC refresh has been developed with the support of TIA members, including Ziptrek Ecotours Executive Director Trent Yeo, who says: "The TSC is in my opinion the basis for which our communities will rally around us – and at this time, we need all the support we can get."

The 12 Commitments for tourism businesses in the refreshed TSC are:

Economic. Tourism delivers opportunity and prosperity across the New Zealand economy.

1. Resilience: We focus on long term business performance and resilience.
2. Investment: We invest to create value, opportunities and to drive sustainable practices.
3. Innovation: We innovate to solve problems, create new ways to do things and increase productivity.

Visitor. New Zealand provides world-leading experiences for both international and domestic visitors.

4. Visitor Satisfaction: We strive to always meet or exceed visitor expectations.
5. Culture and Heritage: We embrace Aotearoa New Zealand's culture and heritage as part of delivering a unique and authentic visitor experience.
6. Visitor Engagement: We engage with visitors about how to be great travellers within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Community. New Zealanders understand, support, shape and benefit from tourism operating in their communities.

7. Employer of Choice: We attract, support and develop the workforce we need to flourish and succeed.
8. Community Engagement: We actively and positively engage with the communities in which we operate, taking a leadership role to champion causes that are important to the community.
9. Sustainable Supply Chains: We have socially and environmentally sustainable supply chains.

Environment. Tourism strongly contributes to protecting, restoring and enhancing New Zealand's natural environment and biodiversity.

10. Restoring Nature: We contribute to protecting and enhancing Aotearoa New Zealand's environment, including water, biodiversity, landscapes and clean air.
11. Carbon Reduction: We act urgently to contribute to Aotearoa New Zealand's transition to a net zero carbon economy.
12. Eliminating Waste: We take responsibility for the entire life cycle of products and services we use and ultimately eliminate the waste associated with these.

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KEY FACTS

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Tourism in New Zealand was a \$112 million per day industry. Tourism delivered around \$47 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributed another \$65 million in economic activity every day.
- Tourism was New Zealand's biggest export earner, contributing \$17.2 billion or 20.4% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2019).
- 14.4% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand worked directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 393,279 people were working in the visitor economy.
- The Tourism 2025 & Beyond sustainable growth framework/Kaupapa Whakapakari Tāpoi has a vision of growing a sustainable tourism industry that benefits New Zealanders.

Visit www.tia.org.nz for more information

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