

Tourism industry continues to need people

While thousands of tourism jobs have been lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we must guard against future labour and skill shortages, Tourism Industry Aotearoa says.

“As tourism revives, job and career opportunities will re-emerge. But will we get our people back? There is a risk of labour and skill shortages if we permanently lose staff displaced by COVID-19,” TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says.

TIA has made ‘People’ one of the six priority areas for action from the incoming Government in TIA’s [Tourism Election 2020 Action Plan](#).

The Association has also submitted an in-depth Position Paper setting out its ideas on [Rebuilding the Tourism Workforce](#) to the Tourism Futures Taskforce.

Prior to the pandemic, 230,000 people were directly employed in tourism, with another 164,000 indirectly employed, accounting for 14.4% of New Zealand’s workforce. Forecasts of the short-term tourism job losses range from 40,000 to 92,000 – but those roles will need to be taken up again as tourism rebounds.

Skill and labour shortages are an enduring issue for tourism, Mr Roberts says. The nature of tourism means that many jobs are not 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday roles. They are also often in remote parts of New Zealand and offer only seasonal employment.

New Zealanders have traditionally viewed tourism and hospitality as fun to work in but they have little knowledge of the excellent career paths or job opportunities that exist.

“We need ongoing efforts to attract New Zealanders to work in tourism. We also need recognition from the Government elected on 17 October that workers from overseas must continue to be part of the mix, filling tourism jobs when suitable New Zealanders can’t be found. Tourism has roles that by nature of their location and duration will always be a struggle to fill,” Mr Roberts says.

“Tourism is a people-focused industry. Our visitors want an authentic, memorable experience, and quality staff can make all the difference. Yes, we have seen a lot of job losses because of COVID-19 but those roles will need to be filled again, with people ready and able to deliver a world-class visitor experience.”

TIA is calling on the incoming Government to:

- Accept the need to attract Kiwis to work in tourism including ongoing support for the **Go With Tourism** programme
- Invest in workforce development by supporting TIA’s ‘Rebuilding the Tourism Workforce’ programme
- Ensure immigration settings allow tourism employers to secure quality staff when no suitable New Zealanders are available
- Foster the participation of Māori in the tourism industry
- Support tertiary education initiatives to provide fees-free training and qualifications to current and displaced tourism employees

TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

Inspire House, 125 Featherston St, Wellington 6011, New Zealand
P +64 4 499 0104 www.tia.org.nz E info@tia.org.nz



- Upgrade the status of tourism at secondary school by restoring tourism achievement standards.

For more details, read Mr Roberts' [blog](#) on this topic.

About the Tourism Election 2020 Action Plan

To support the revival and revitalisation of the tourism industry, the Tourism Election 2020 Action Plan identifies 37 specific actions required from the incoming Government, in six categories – Vision, Partnership, Regions, Natural Resources, Knowledge and People.

TIA has sent the Action Plan to all the major political parties, encouraging them to incorporate the action points into their tourism policies.

The association is also encouraging tourism operators around the country to get involved and highlight the importance of tourism to their local election candidates. They can use the Tourism Election 2020 Action Plan to lobby MPs and raise tourism issues at election meetings.

To read the Tourism Election 2020 Action Plan, go to <https://tia.org.nz/advocacy/tia-projects/tia-election-2020-action-plan/>

For more information, please contact:

Ann-Marie Johnson
 Communications Manager
 0276 004 565
ann-marie.johnson@tia.org.nz

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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