

30 September 2025

Tertiary Education Strategy Consultation  
Ministry of Education  
PO Box 1666  
WELLINGTON 6140

By email: [tertiary.strategy@education.govt.nz](mailto:tertiary.strategy@education.govt.nz)

## Targeted Consultation on Tertiary Education Strategy - TIA Submission

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Ministry of Education targeted consultation on the draft Tertiary Education Strategy.

### Tourism Industry Aotearoa

---

TIA is the peak body for the tourism industry in Aotearoa New Zealand. With around 1,200 member businesses, TIA represents a range of tourism-related activities including hospitality, accommodation, adventure activities, attractions, retail, airports and airlines, transport, as well as related-tourism services.

Together, these sectors directly and indirectly employ 303,420 people, or 10.7% of the New Zealand workforce.<sup>1</sup>

TIA is sharply focused on ensuring the balanced growth of tourism and this is articulated in our key guiding documents and programmes. This includes the tourism industry's strategic framework, *Tourism 2050 – A Blueprint for Impact, He Pae Tukutuku, with the Vision of 'Enriching Aotearoa New Zealand through a flourishing tourism ecosystem'*.<sup>2</sup>

Tourism 2050 has ten Actions covering the most important strategic workstreams, with one focussed on the tourism workforce. This being:

- **Grow the Tourism Workforce.** To establish a concerted focus on ensuring the tourism industry has the people it needs to operate effectively in providing quality experiences to our visitors. Areas of focus include training, education, pipelines into the industry, seasonality, population distribution and being great employers.

TIA has been advancing this Action in several ways, including ensuring tourism operators are 'Employers of Choice' as part of TIA's Tourism Sustainability Commitment, engaging with Government education and workforce-related policies, supporting the development of tourism workforce forecasts; and improving career pathways of people in the industry.

As part of this work, TIA has contributed to the Vocational Education and Training reform process<sup>3</sup>, the NCEA reforms<sup>4</sup> and now on the Draft Tertiary Education Strategy. Together, these submissions set out TIA's position on the workforce pipeline, the changing nature of tourism jobs in the AI environment, the ongoing professionalisation of the industry and the essential role of vocational jobs. TIA encourages the Ministry to read these submissions as adjuncts to this submission.

---

<sup>1</sup> Stats NZ, Tourism Satellite Account, Year-ended March 2024.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tia.org.nz/tourism-2050/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tia.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Submission-on-VET-Bill-18-June-2025.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tia.org.nz/assets/Submission-on-Proposed-changes-to-NCEA-15-September-2025.pdf>

## Government Growth Agenda

---

In February 2025, the Government established its 'Going for Growth' agenda as a comprehensive approach to lifting living standards and stimulating faster economic growth.

TIA supports this agenda and recognises that tourism, as our #2 export industry and with capacity to quickly grow, will have a vital role to play in driving growth across the wider economy.

TIA welcomed the June 2025 launch of the Tourism Growth Roadmap by the Hon. Louise Upston, the Minister of Tourism and Hospitality, to grow the tourism industry, with the target to double international visitor expenditure by 2034.

In setting this agenda for tourism growth, seven supply-side workstreams have been identified, including one directly on the tourism workforce:

- **Workforce.** An increased skilled domestic tourism and hospitality workforce is set up for the future.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment is advancing the Roadmap at present, with wide engagement across the tourism industry, including TIA. The workforce stream is underway with Ringa Hora engaged by MBIE to run a process to assess industry workforce needs and to set out the steps needed to ensure the tourism workforce under the Government's doubling of international tourism expenditure target.

The strategic objectives for industry and government are highly aligned around the need to develop the tourism workforce to support and enable growth.

## Tourism Industry

---

Tourism is a major part of the New Zealand economy. It makes up 7.5% of GDP, 10.7% of employment and 17.2% of exports. Total visitor expenditure in the year to March 2024 was \$44.4b, comprising \$17b of international tourism and \$27.5b of domestic tourism. Government receives an average of \$542 of GST income from each of our international visitors.<sup>5</sup>

At one fifth of our export economy and one in ten jobs, tourism matters, and the systems we set up to support and enable tourism matter equally.

## Key Submission Points

---

TIA's responses to the consultation questions are set out in Attachment 1.

Overall, TIA supports the strategic direction of the draft Tertiary Education Strategy. However, we are concerned at the lack of important information or pointers within it that create space for the education and research requirements of important wealth-generating industries such as tourism. TIA's two key points:

1. It is unstated how and where the needs of the tourism industry will sit in the Tertiary Education Strategy. We see tourism within the Economic Impact and Innovation priority, but we are not sure that the Strategy itself intends this. From TIA's perspective, tourism is one-fifth of our export economy and one job in ten and is a key part of the Government's 'Going for Growth' agenda. Ensuring a skilled and trained tourism workforce across all the levels from entry to highly trained professional roles to senior management roles is a prerequisite for the industry meeting this target.

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/tourism-satellite-account-year-ended-march-2024/>

**Recommendation:** Include reference in the Tertiary Education Strategy that the scope of the document includes the tourism industry as a significant component of the New Zealand economy and society with distinct and evolving workforce and research needs.

2. We submit that the other related government documents must align with the Tertiary Education Strategy. For instance, the Tertiary Education Commission's Plan Guidance for providers submitting investment plans for funding from 1 January 2026 sets out the sector-specific higher education targeted priorities (page 26), but this does not include reference to tourism.

**Recommendation:** Ensure the references to tourism as set out above are mapped across the other key strategic documents that shape the tertiary education and research environments.

### **Conclusion**

We would be very pleased to support this submission with further information. If so, please contact Bruce Bassett, Chief Advisor, 021 609 674 or [bruce.bassett@tia.org.nz](mailto:bruce.bassett@tia.org.nz).

Many thanks for your consideration of this submission.

Ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Ingram', followed by a period.

Rebecca Ingram  
Chief Executive

## Attachment 1: TIA Response to Consultation Questions

Question	TIA Response
<b>Priorities</b>	<p>TIA supports a tertiary education system that drives economic growth which we see as the focus of the Strategy.</p> <p>With tourism comprising one fifth of New Zealand's export economy and with the Government establishing its Tourism Growth Roadmap, it is essential that tourism forms a clear and obvious component of the Strategy.</p> <p>With tourism making up 10.7% of jobs in New Zealand, it is also essential that the education system is contributing to the quality and productivity of these jobs.</p> <p>As an industry that is becoming increasingly reliant on innovation, technology uptake and 'new' jobs in the AI environment, having a workforce that is ready and able to think critically and make changes will be important.</p> <p>TIA considers the five priorities to be sound and reflective of the intent of Government from the tertiary education system. The critical factor is that tourism must be clearly included within the ambit of the Strategy.</p>
<b>Priority 1: Achievement</b>	TIA supports the direction of this priority.
<b>Priority 2: Economic Impact and Innovation</b>	<p>As the industry association for New Zealand's second largest export sector, TIA supports the focus on economic impact and innovation.</p> <p>Tourism can see itself in this priority, but it is not clear that others will draw the same conclusion. As such, TIA calls for more direct articulation that tourism is included within this Economic Impact and Innovation priority.</p>
<b>Priority 2: Access and Participation</b>	<p>TIA supports the direction of this priority.</p> <p>A critical aspect for tourism is the overall education pathway, from school to tertiary education (university and vocational education).</p> <p>It is for this reason the TIA has submitted extensively to the NCEA and vocational education and training reforms, and now on the tertiary education system.</p> <p>These three parts of the education system must be well aligned and complementary.</p>
<b>Priority 4: Integration and Collaboration</b>	<p>TIA supports the direction of this priority.</p> <p>In terms of tourism university programmes, they each have distinctive strengths and as the peak industry association, we value what they inject into the overall tourism system.</p> <p>Our wish that there would be more industry-relevant university-provided research, we look to this Strategy as well as the wider science and innovation programmes of Government to drive shifts in this area.</p> <p>Again, clearly stating the place of tourism is important.</p>
<b>Priority 5: International Education</b>	<p>TIA supports the direction of this priority.</p> <p>It is important to recognise that university-level tourism programmes have been well supported by international students prior to the pandemic, but that these numbers have not yet fully recovered.</p>

	TIA supports the intent of this priority to boost the international education aspect of the tertiary education system. In this, TIA encourages the Strategy to set out the competitiveness of the system, including costs in what is a highly competitive sector internationally.
<b>Delivering the Strategy</b>	<p>TIA notes that there are a lot of changes underway in the education system and these need to be progressively implemented. For instance, the Industry Skills Board will be a vital part of both the secondary school and vocational pathway, and these need to be established and operational.</p> <p>TIA is concerned that the overall tenor of the changes across the education and training system will not serve tourism well, and we are equally concerned that we will not establish whether this is the case until many years down the track. If this is the case, the costs for tourism will be serious and consequential. The implications will include lower industry growth, lower levels of value add, lower productivity, and continuation of low quality tourism jobs, rather than a switch to increased highly skilled professional roles.</p>
<b>Monitoring Outcomes</b>	<p>TIA supports the direction of this priority.</p> <p>The key success measures for each of the five priorities appear to be good and reasonable.</p> <p>TIA notes the measure to double the value of international education to \$7.2 billion by 2034, which mirrors the tourism industry target of Government to double tourism exports to \$19.8 b by 2034.</p> <p>The tourism and export education sectors will need to work closely together to achieve these targets, again reinforcing the need to clearly state the place of tourism within the Strategy.</p>

