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Media release

Tourism industry holding fast to its sustainability goals: report

With the summer season in full swing, the tourism industry's annual gauge of sustainability has shown a significant rise in tourism businesses measuring their carbon footprint.

Nearly half (41%) of the respondents in the latest annual stock take of the Tourism Sustainability Commitment (TSC) said they were actively measuring carbon emissions in 2023, a substantial jump on the 29% who reported doing so in 2022.

Over 1900 tourism businesses have signed up to the TSC, which was established in 2017 by Tourism Industry Aotearoa

They are annually invited to make a declaration on their progress, which in 2023 drew 565 responses.

The report also showed that industry optimism had greatly improved, Tourism Industry Aotearoa's Chief Executive Rebecca Ingram said.

"As international visitors return in greater numbers, it's great to see most (84.5%) of the tourism business who responded are very or quite confident about their future.

"Tourism is still one of our biggest foreign exchange earners. It's a job creator, a regional growth generator and an important connector to the rest of the world. But it's more than just straight economics and has the drive to lead in best practice."

The TSC takes a wide view of sustainability, looking at economic and visitor sentiment, cultural and community engagement, as well as environmental aspects – reflecting the holistic direction of the tourism industry.

Across all questions, the industry's overall sustainability score was 8.1 out of 10, the same as 2022.

"This highlights that even while the tourism industry was in the midst of its recovery, its commitment towards sustainability remained intact," Ingram said.

Key results include:

- **Community partnership** – This was very important to the majority of respondents, with 96% reporting that they were engaging with their local community for mutual benefit.
- **Environmental commitment**: Most respondents (92%) were contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural environment. This included through guest education, staff involvement, or financially supporting projects.

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- Carbon measurement: A significantly increased number of respondents (41%) are measuring their carbon emissions (up from 29%), and another 40% are investigating their options.
- Waste reduction: 87.9% always or usually work to minimise the waste their business produces.
- Predator control: More than two thirds (68.7%) say they are supporting pest reduction on their own land or supporting other organisations to do so.
- Employer of Choice: In 2023, 53.9% of respondents were paying a living wage. Others said they were offering different benefits (e.g. flexible working or family friendly policies, subsidised meals, accommodation and transport, or professional development).
- Sustainable Supply Chains: In 2023, 95% reported that they always, usually or sometimes looked for the most sustainable products available - the same as 2022.
- Education: 82% of respondents always or usually encourage visitors to be good travellers in New Zealand, such as by sharing the Tiaki Promise, up from 79% in 2022.

Areas where businesses were making good strides were restoring nature, visitor satisfaction, waste elimination, and investment and innovation.

And pleasingly, 43% said they had a sustainability plan (up from 38% the previous year). But only 16% had a dedicated sustainability budget (similar to 2022's 17%).

"We've always said that as our international guests return, we need to manage the industry in a way that aligns with our culture and our communities' values and that respects our environment, and this result is confirmation of the industry's positive efforts in this regard."

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KEY FACTS

- Tourism Industry Aotearoa is New Zealand tourism's peak industry body. We are the only independent association that represents all sectors of New Zealand's large and diverse tourism industry.
- TIA has about 1200 member businesses from across the industry, ranging from small owner/operators to large publicly listed tourism corporates and international hotel chains.
- TIA is deeply involved in discussions on recovery and what the future of tourism in New Zealand will look like.
- TIA leads implementation of the industry's **Tourism Sustainability Commitment** which aims to see every New Zealand tourism business contributing positively to our people and cultures, our environment and our economy
- TIA delivers a comprehensive and diverse range of industry events including TRENZ, New Zealand Tourism Awards, Discussing Tourism regional events and the Tourism Summit Aotearoa.

Visit www.tia.org.nz for more information

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