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Media release

New data highlights the economic importance of tourism to New Zealand and to households

New figures confirm the tourism industry is recovering strongly and making a major contribution to the New Zealand economy.

Statistics NZ's annual Tourism Satellite Account shows that for the year to March 2023, tourism was generating \$37.7 billion from visitor spending, even though this period was still in the early stages of Covid recovery.

"These figures are historic but what they show is that tourism operators did an amazing job to get up and running after our borders fully opened and as international visitors returned, they were contributing billions of dollars to our economy," Tourism Industry Aotearoa Chief Executive Rebecca Ingram says.

By March 2023, tourism - directly and indirectly - was contributing 6.2 per cent of New Zealand's GDP.

International visitors spent \$10.8b, an increase of \$8.8b from the previous year which was a strong result given the time frame and the significant rebuild underway by operators.

"While this data gives us a read on last summer, anecdotal feedback from tourism operators this summer is very positive, tourism businesses are buoyant, and the signs are that we can look forward to contributing even more strongly to the country's economic wellbeing when this data is published again."

She also acknowledged the underpinning support of domestic tourism, which spent \$26.9b in the year to March 2023 - above pre-Covid levels.

"This reinforces the importance of our New Zealand visitors, who continued to do something new after borders opened," she said.

According to the Satellite Account, tourism is one of the country's largest employers. Directly and indirectly, tourism supported 317,514 jobs in March 2023, "which means even at that time, tourism was supporting 11.3 per cent of the country's entire jobs market," Ms Ingram said.

Ms Ingram noted that the Satellite Account was normally published in December and urged the Government to prioritise this and other core tourism data.

"For tourism in New Zealand to develop sustainably, we need fundamental information about our performance, this ensures we can manage our industry well," she said.

"The TSA's data is vital for understanding tourism. It informs both the public and private sectors and underpins decision-making. The data available for tourism must be improved so we understand the current state of the industry much more deeply than we are currently do."

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KEY FACTS

- TIA is 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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