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Media release

Bold ideas and a clear vision for Milford Sound Piopiotahi

The Milford Opportunities Project's masterplan has innovative, bold and challenging ideas that could radically change the way we look after one of the jewels in New Zealand's tourism crown, Tourism Industry Aotearoa says.

"The Milford corridor from Te Anau to the Sound is a key tourism asset for New Zealand and as such demands special attention," TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says.

"The Project was asked to be innovative and challenging and that has been achieved. TIA supports the overall vision of the new masterplan. Many of the details will need to be closely examined and discussed, but the debate is necessary as the way Milford Sound Piopiotahi has been operating is not sustainable."

The Milford Opportunities Project began in late 2017 and TIA was one of many parties consulted during development of the masterplan, which was released in Te Anau today.

"The outcomes of this process must ensure Te Anau, Milford Sound Piopiotahi and the wider region are sustainably managed, with greater environmental protection, an improved visitor experience and increased benefits to local communities and their tourism operators."

TIA expects some of the recommendations in the masterplan will attract widespread support from the tourism industry, such as weaving in mana whenua values, and improving the walking and cycling opportunities along the corridor to Milford Sound Piopiotahi, encouraging visitors to slow down and spend more time in the region.

Park and ride opportunities would help manage congestion, while having one body to manage Milford Sound Piopiotahi would potentially remove frustrating layers of bureaucracy.

However, proposals to restrict access by cruise ships and to close the airstrip will be unpopular with the directly affected businesses, Mr Roberts says.

"If these recommendations are picked up by the Government, it will need to work with businesses to mitigate the impacts."

The tourism industry will also be taking a close look at the recommendation to charge international visitors to access Milford Sound Piopiotahi.

"At this time, we do not know what international visitor itineraries are going to look like when our borders reopen nor how much demand there will be," Mr Roberts says.

"We must ensure the outcomes of this project support sustainable tourism, and do not inadvertently create barriers to recovery. It must also complement the work that is being

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done at the national level on the future of tourism in Aotearoa, such as the proposed Tourism Industry Transformation Plan that was announced by Tourism Minister Stuart Nash in May.

“There’s a lot of work still to be done, but if government, iwi, community and business can work together and find common ground, something very special can be created.”

To read TIA’s December 2020 feedback on the shortlist of ideas for the Milford Opportunities Project masterplan, go to:
<https://www.tia.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Milford-Opportunities-Project-TIA-Feedback.pdf>

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KEY FACTS

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Tourism in New Zealand was a \$114.8 million per day industry. Tourism delivered more than \$48 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributed another \$66.7 million in economic activity every day.
- Tourism was New Zealand’s biggest export earner, contributing \$17.5 billion or 20.1% of New Zealand’s foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2020).
- 13.6% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand worked directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 384,186 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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