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Media release

Business support welcome but open borders still the game changer

Tourism Industry Aotearoa says tourism operators acknowledge the Government has recognised the challenges they are facing but the industry's priority is for our borders to be reopened without self-isolation requirements.

"Today's announcement of the new targeted COVID Support Payment and changes to the Small Business Cashflow Loans Scheme will help smaller tourism businesses to survive the next six weeks. Along with the Short Term Absence Payment and the Leave Support Scheme, the new support payment will provide them with some oxygen to help them survive over the next six weeks or so. But it will have little benefit for larger businesses with high overheads and more than 50 employees who are also facing a wholesale loss of customers while New Zealand remains at the Red setting," TIA Communications Manager Ann-Marie Johnson says.

TIA is looking forward to getting more detail on the support that will be available to seasonal businesses.

TIA has also asked Tourism Minister Stuart Nash for an immediate package of support including relief from government fees and levies such as Department of Conservation concession fees to reduce costs.

"The tourism industry is not seeking long-term government support. The need for support will likely disappear when we can once again welcome international visitors with no self-isolation requirement. We are pressing Government to act with urgency on the removal of self-isolation as soon as possible."

With Australia reopening its borders to international visitors today, New Zealand's tourism industry is being left behind, delaying its recovery even longer, she says.

TIA has been working with a network of tourism sector associations to survey industry operators. The survey closed today and has found that respondents expect their revenues will be down on average by 59% compared to the same period the previous year. This in turn was half that of pre-COVID levels due to the loss of revenues from international visitors.

66% of respondents classified the current operating environment as extremely difficult.

The survey results are being analysed and more detail will be available shortly.

"Almost every day we are hearing of more tourism business closures. Operators who have survived for the last two years are now facing their greatest challenges at a time when they expected to be looking forward to recovery," Ms Johnson says.

TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

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“Further loss of New Zealand’s tourism businesses runs the very real risk that the DNA of the tourism industry will be destroyed, severely limiting the industry’s ability to build back better with the high quality, regenerative tourism economy that we are all aspiring to,” Ms Johnson says.

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KEY FACTS

- TIA 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 1300 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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