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Media release

A glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel for tourism operators

Today's announcement that the Auckland boundary restrictions will be eased before Christmas is a first glimmer of light at the end of a long, dark tunnel for tourism operators both in the city and right around the country, Tourism Industry Aotearoa says.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has announced Aucklanders will be able to leave the city from 15 December to 17 January if they are fully vaccinated or have a negative COVID test within 72 hours of travel. It will also be possible to travel into Tamaki Mākaurau Auckland when meeting the same conditions.

That will be a huge relief to accommodation providers, transport operators, tourism activities, attractions and retailers who have been suffering the loss of their largest domestic market, TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says.

"It is also fantastic that family and friends across New Zealand will be able to get together at Christmas and New Year – provided that are double vaccinated.

"The impact on Auckland businesses from being in lockdown is brutal and obvious. But it has also gutted tourism and travel activity right around New Zealand.

"As our largest centre of population, Auckland has a huge influence on domestic travel around the country. Just one example was the immediate and dramatic reduction in the number of visitors in Queenstown when Auckland's borders closed.

Now we have a date, which provides the certainty that business craves. We expect to see an immediate confirmation of travel plans from the 15th December and operators will be cancelling the bookings they have from Aucklanders before that date.

"With the signal that we are open for the summer holidays, it means operators can plan to hire staff, buy supplies and gear up their operations over the busiest time of year," Mr Roberts says.

Auckland's tourism operators, after three months of closure, will also be ready to welcome fully vaccinated visitors to the region, as well as Auckland residents.

The tourism industry is now eagerly awaiting Government decisions on loosening restrictions on Aotearoa New Zealand's international borders, which the Prime Minister said would be announced "in due course".

"The world is opening up and New Zealand risks being ignored and left out if we don't signal to international markets very soon when safe travellers will be welcomed back to our shores," Mr Roberts warns.

TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

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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 committed to sustainability.
- 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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