Strong Support for New Tourism Industry Education Programme

Tourism Industry Aotearoa has announced that 120 users have signed up to the industry's new education programme, Akiaki, in just two days.

"Having this significant number of sign-ups to Akiaki in just two days demonstrates the drive of tourism businesses to implement sustainable practices into their operations. This shows the industry is ready and raring to further build their sustainability programmes and customer experience and we're delighted to be able to support them", says Rebecca Ingram, Chief Executive of TIA.

Akiaki - Advancing Tourism, a new educational initiative designed by experts to prepare and equip the tourism industry in Aotearoa New Zealand for the future, was launched by TIA in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland last week. The online programme aims to strengthen tourism businesses' capability and sustainable practices so they can continue to deliver a tourism industry that continues to positively impact Aotearoa New Zealand - our people, economy, and environment.

Recent research by Tourism New Zealand and MBIE demonstrated the growing sustainability demands from customers, with 81 percent of those actively considering New Zealand for a holiday holding strong sustainability beliefs, compared to 52 percent of the general New Zealand population.

"Most of our tourism industry is made up of small to medium-sized businesses that do not always have the resources to invest in training and development. We know from our own research that while some businesses are doing fantastic work in some areas, other businesses often don't know where to start when it comes to sustainability," continues Rebecca Ingram.

Akiaki addresses these concerns directly, offering clear, actionable guidance and practical tools to help businesses with sustainability, business capability, and growth.

The Akiaki programme aligns with the vision of the national strategy, Tourism 2050, for the tourism industry to be prosperous and successful over the long term, and contributes broadly to the betterment of Aotearoa New Zealand and its people.

Akiaki takes a holistic approach to sustainability, supporting businesses with visitor engagement, connecting with local community and encouraging positive business practices including investment and innovation.

The programme will be released across three phases, with each course including a mix of reading materials, video presentations, interactive activities, and case studies, allowing participants to learn at their own pace.

The development of Akiaki has been made possible with funding from Te Pūkenga and is delivered in partnership with Grow Tourism. Akiaki is available to TIA members for free and to non-members for $590 for individuals and reduced rates for groups from the same organisation.

For more information, please contact:

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About TIA

- 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 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. Tourism 2050 – A Blueprint for Impact articulates the industry's strategy for the next decades.
- TIA leads the 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. The TSC was launched in 2017.
- 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

About Akiaki – Advancing Tourism

Akiaki courses are aligned with the growth opportunities and needs of the industry. A large focus of the programme is on strengthening sustainability outcomes, embedding Tiaki and follows Tourism Industry Aotearoa's Tourism Sustainability Commitments - Ōhanga (Economic), Manuhiri (Visitor), Hapori (Community), and Te Taiao (Environment). This is critical for safeguarding the future of our industry and natural environment.

The courses will be delivered across three phases. Each course will consist of video presentations, interactive activities, case studies, and reflections on how to integrate the content into a business.

1. The first phase is focused on environmental sustainability, with courses on carbon measurement and reduction, waste elimination, and restoring nature.
2. The second phase is around enhancing engagement with visitors and their experience. Courses include visitor engagement, resilience, and storytelling.

3. The last phase focuses on economic, cultural, and community sustainability. Courses include investment and innovation, culture and heritage, and employer of choice and community engagement.

The first phase was launched on 17 July. Further courses will be rolled out in coming months, and there will be a complete programme of 10 courses available by the end of the year.

Each course will take 1-2 hours to complete. Participants are encouraged to download a template for a sustainability action plan and complete this as they go.

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