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Media release

New residence pathway a relief to tourism businesses and their staff

Tourism employers and their valuable workers from overseas will be delighted by the announcement today of a simplified pathway to residence, says Tourism Industry Aotearoa.

The new one-off residence pathway will be available to around 165,000 migrants currently in New Zealand. About 17,000 workers in the accommodation and food sectors plus other overseas workers currently employed across tourism and hospitality are likely to be eligible.

They will qualify to apply if they have been in New Zealand for three years or more, or they are being paid more than \$27 an hour.

"This is a much broader and promises to be a far simpler pathway to residency for overseas workers," says TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts. "With our borders shut, the overseas workers on temporary work visas who have stayed in New Zealand have been invaluable contributors. Now many can apply to stay here permanently."

A shortage of skilled and experienced workers is a major concern for tourism employers. In May, 22% of TIA members reported they were not confident that they could meet their staffing needs when international travellers return and demand picks up. Businesses in Queenstown, Canterbury and Auckland in particular are finding it hard to fill vacancies.

The expected 100,000 plus applications will test Immigration New Zealand's processing abilities. However, TIA has been told that anyone waiting for a resident application to be processed will be able to get their temporary work visa extended.

"The policy won't necessarily ease demand for seasonal staff this summer, as it is not adding more people to the pool," says Mr Roberts. "However, employers will be delighted to know they can hang on to valued staff, and those employees will be excited that they and their families can have a long-term future in New Zealand."

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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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