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Media release

Supporting local tourism helps neighbourhoods thrive

Championing small tourism businesses is a great way to support regions and local communities, says Tourism Industry Aotearoa.

With 9 April marking the inaugural Small Business Day, TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says Friday is the perfect opportunity to rethink what it means to support local.

“While many of us have pledged to ‘buy local’ to support our neighbourhoods over the past twelve months, we don’t always consider experiences as part of that,” he says. “Everywhere in New Zealand there will be a local tourism operator who would love to share their activity or product with you. Supporting small tourism businesses means directly protecting local jobs, livelihoods and families.”

Mr Roberts says many New Zealanders depend on the tourism industry for employment, and in regions across Aotearoa tourism is a significant contributor to regional GDP. “The importance of the tourism industry to the wellbeing of communities up and down the country has never been more apparent than now.”

Adventure Capital Founder and Director Jacqui Wilkinson says the lockdowns have also shown us just how important local businesses are to our wellbeing and sense of connection.

“A friendly smile and someone who remembers you and your preferences; a vital lifeline to the things we enjoy in life. Small businesses are not just the backbone of our economy, they are the heartbeat of our communities.”

Kate Norris, co-owner of Fiordland Trips & Tramps, says a focus on people is what has kept their small business going.

“Putting people at the fore has seen us adapt our guided walk packages and successfully welcome Kiwis from around New Zealand. We are getting them into our backyard by offering genuine outdoor experiences on the Fiordland Great Walks, where they can share the wilderness in a safe and fun way.”

Ms Norris says the business, like many others, continues to adapt to the challenges and grow in new and exciting ways.

New Zealand’s tourism industry is largely made up of small, locally owned operators, many of whom have been severely impacted by the closure of New Zealand’s borders. Mr Roberts says that while they will be breathing a sigh of relief at the opening of the trans-Tasman travel bubble on 19 April, we won’t be back to pre-pandemic levels of business overnight. “I encourage everyone to continue supporting local—wherever you may be.”

Here’s how you can help:

TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

Inspire House, 125 Featherston St, Wellington 6011, New Zealand
P +64 4 499 0104 www.tia.org.nz E info@tia.org.nz



Small Business Day

Go small! Shop with small businesses on Friday 9 April. Share a photo (or screenshot) of your purchase from a small business on social by tagging @smallbusinessdaynz and using #choosesmallnz. You could win a share of \$100,000 in instant prizes and much more. [Find out more.](#)

For more information, please contact:
Cheryl Whitfield
Communications and Brand Specialist
021 195 7293
cheryl.whitfield@tia.org.nz

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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