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Media release

Tourism's summer poised to be a cracker

The tourism industry is feeling positive as all indications point to a solid summer season ahead, the second since New Zealand's borders fully opened.

A recent survey by Tourism Industry Aotearoa shows as international visitors return, 84 per cent of tourism businesses are feeling optimistic about the next few months.

"That's a major turnaround in sentiment from the start of the year. It just shows what a difference a year can make," TIA Chief Executive Rebecca Ingram said.

At the same time, she acknowledged the many New Zealanders who are preparing to head on their summer holiday after a tough year.

"Kiwi visitors are still the backbone of the tourism industry, and continue to underpin our recovery. We thank them and we're looking forward to offering them some well-earned relaxation and the manaakitanga we're famous for," she said.

Feedback from TIA members indicated that the tourism season started picking up early in November for many businesses.

"We know though that the recovery so far has been uneven, and there are some regions that were particularly hard hit by adverse weather last summer, such as Gisborne and the Coromandel, which will be extremely keen to see visitors return," Ms Ingram said.

TIA also recently received the results of its annual Tourism Sustainability Commitment annual declaration.

More than 1900 tourism businesses belong to the TSC, which was created in 2017 to set tourism on a sustainable path.

This year, over 500 businesses made a declaration on their progress, providing a industry-wide approach to measuring tourism's sustainability.

It shows rising optimism among tourism operators, and a big increase in respondents who are measuring their carbon emissions.

"I personally know of many tourism businesses involved in predator control or native planting programmes, reducing waste and taking measures to protect the environment. And many which are giving back to their communities in some other way," Ms Ingram said.

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The TSC views sustainability through a very broad lens: it measures visitor experience, economic sentiment, and community engagement as well as environmental aspects.

Key points include:

- Nearly all respondents (97.5%) said sustainability was important to their tourism business
- Forty-three per cent had a written sustainability plan (up from 38% last year), although only 16% had put aside budget for it
- Forty-one per cent of respondents were measuring their carbon emissions, a significant increase from 29% last year
- Fewer businesses were going through the zero carbon certification process (just 6.5%, from 12.5% last year) but 40% were investigating their options
- Most respondents (84.5%) were feeling positive about their future of their business
- Measuring visitor satisfaction was a standard practice, with about 90% of businesses doing this
- An increasing number of respondents regularly incorporate Māori language and culture in their visitor experience (55%, up from 49% in 2022)
- Most tourism operators (96%) were engaging with their local community for mutual benefit
- And 92% were contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural environment. This can include guest education, staff involvement and pest control on their own land or helping other organisations such as PredatorFree 2050.

ENDS

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KEY FACTS

- 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 1200 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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