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Distinctive by Design: TIA announces Tourism Summit Aotearoa theme

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) is pleased to announce the theme for Tourism Summit Aotearoa 2026, **Tourism Inc: Distinctive by Design**.

Rebecca Ingram, TIA Chief Executive says the event will explore what it means to be distinctive by design, both for individual tourism operators and the New Zealand tourism sector as a collective.

"Each year Tourism Summit Aotearoa gives us the opportunity to bring the industry together, through a mix of international and local perspectives, looking at how tourism can continue to grow across all regions - and at all levels of business," says Ingram.

"This year we'll examine how purposeful decisions can help create competitive advantage, drive innovation, strengthen global competitiveness and shape experiences that could only come from Aotearoa New Zealand."

In collaboration with Tourism New Zealand, TIA can also announce the Summit's first keynote speaker as George Cao; co-founder and CEO of Dragon Trail International.

Dragon Trail is a strategic China-market intelligence and marketing partner, providing consumer and trade insights, digital marketing expertise and guidance on emerging travel and technology trends to help convert demand from China, says Tourism New Zealand General Manager International Angela Blair.

"As New Zealand's tourism sector continues to grow and focus on increasing value in the near-term, Asia presents a growth opportunity from a diverse range of source markets where travellers are looking for genuine and thrilling experiences.

"George's insights into how New Zealand can harness emerging travel trends alongside quickly evolving technology and distribution patterns, will be invaluable for Summit attendees," says Blair.

Registrations are now open for this year's Tourism Summit Aotearoa, with an Early Bird registration available until 30 July.

Widely regarded as tourism's must-attend thought leadership event - and a key annual event on the tourism calendar - this year's Tourism Summit Aotearoa and New Zealand Tourism Awards will be held on Wednesday 4

November 2026 at Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre in Ōtautahi Christchurch.

Find out more about the Tourism Summit Aotearoa website [here](#).

For more information, please contact TIA Communications Manager James Crow – james.craw@tia.org.nz or 021 224 8056.

KEY FACTS

- Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) is Aotearoa New Zealand tourism's peak industry body. We are the only independent association that represents all sectors of the country's large and diverse tourism industry.
- TIA has about 1,200 member businesses from across the industry, ranging from small owner/operators to large publicly listed tourism corporates and international hotel chains.
- TIA leads implementation of the industry's Tourism Sustainability Commitment, which aims to see every tourism business in Aotearoa New Zealand contributing positively to our people and cultures, our environment and our economy.
- TIA delivers a comprehensive range of industry events including TRENZ, New Zealand Tourism Awards, Discussing Tourism regional events and Tourism Summit Aotearoa.
- Visit www.tia.org.nz for more information.