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Media release

Visa and infrastructure announcements welcome news

Many tourism employers around New Zealand and their highly valued employees on work visas will be delighted and relieved by today's announcement extending Essential Skills Visas.

Immigration Minister Kris Faafoi has announced that two-year Essential Skills visas are available from Monday. For someone already in a fulltime role and wishing to stay with that employer, the application process will be greatly simplified. A work visa holder can also move to a new employer, if a Labour Market test shows there are no suitable New Zealanders available for that role.

"Tourism businesses from accommodation and hospitality to transport and activity operators are facing real challenges in filling vacancies," Tourism Industry Aotearoa Chief Executive Chris Roberts says.

"Employers don't want to lose the great people they already have. And today's announcement gives skilled and trained migrant workers who have chosen New Zealand as their temporary home some security.

"TIA applauds the Government for listening to business concerns."

Mr Roberts says the decision to delay the introduction of the new accredited employer work visa scheme from 1 November until the middle of next year is sensible.

"TIA has long supported this change to the system but giving employers more time to get accredited is helpful."

TIA also welcomes the Government's support for local council infrastructure projects, with Tourism Minister Stuart Nash's announcement this morning of the recipients of the latest round of Tourism Infrastructure Fund grants.

Mr Roberts is a member of the TIF assessment panel which made recommendations to the Minister and says dozens of communities across Aotearoa will be delighted that local amenities will be upgraded and supplemented with the support of the TIF.

"These improved amenities will serve locals, domestic visitors and when borders do reopen, international visitors.

"The tourism industry is still a long way from recovery but with Government support we look forward to once again making a strong contribution to the economy and wellbeing of Aotearoa."

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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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