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Media release

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## Warm welcome awaits Australian visitors to NZ

Tourism operators around the country are breathing a sigh of relief at the opening of the trans-Tasman travel bubble on 19 April.

Tourism Industry Aotearoa Chief Executive Chris Roberts says the industry was desperately keen to be given a date today and clear details on the conditions for travel.

“Tourism operators can now take bookings with confidence and scale up their staffing. It also means marketing campaigns to the Aussies can go ahead.”

The timing means that ski regions in particular will receive a boost in the coming months, he says. In normal times more than 70% of overseas visitors who ski in New Zealand are from Australia.

However, Mr Roberts cautions that the speed at which Australian travellers will return to New Zealand is unknown.

“Surveys have shown there is pent up demand for travel and Australians have no other options for international travel at present. But we anticipate that there will be some initial caution on both sides of the Tasman. We expect that people reuniting with family and friends will lead the way, followed by business people and holidaymakers.”

Before COVID-19, Australia was our biggest overseas market, making up about 40% of international visitors or 1.5 million out of 3.9 million annual arrivals. About a third of the arrivals coming across the Tasman were New Zealanders now living in Australia and many of the visits were to see friends and family.

Arrivals from Australia tend to stay for a shorter period and spend less while here than visitors from New Zealand’s other major international markets. Excluding airfares and some other pre-travel costs, Australian arrivals spent almost \$3b a year in New Zealand, around 25% of the total international visitor spend in Aotearoa.

If the trans-Tasman travel bubble remains open for the remainder of 2021, Australian visitors are expected to collectively spend at least \$1 billion in New Zealand this year, and potentially a lot more.

More broadly, a successful trans-Tasman travel bubble will be an important first step in reconnecting with the world.

“The procedures and protocols that are being put in place will be a blueprint for opening up travel from other countries as soon as it is safe to do so,” Mr Roberts says.

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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](http://www.tia.org.nz) for more information

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