



EVENT BRIEFING

Meeting with Tourism Industry Aotearoa, 31 July 2025

Date:	28 July 2025	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0017164

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon James Meager Minister for the South Island	Meet with representatives from Tourism Industry Aotearoa.	31 July 2025

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Karl Woodhead	General Manager Strategy, Planning and Performance, Kānoa – Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit (Kānoa)	Privacy of natural persons	
Cory Hagenaaars	South Island Lead Advisor, Kānoa	Privacy of natural persons	✓

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Minister's office to complete:

☐ Approved

☐ Declined

☐ Noted

☐ Needs change

☐ Seen

☐ Overtaken by Events

☐ See Minister's Notes

☐ Withdrawn

Comments



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Purpose

To provide you with background and supporting information for your meeting with representatives from Tourism Industry Aotearoa on Thursday, 31 July 2025.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) recommend you:

- a **Note** the information in this briefing to support your meeting with representatives from Tourism Industry Aotearoa.

Noted

Hon James Meager
Minister for the South Island

Karl Woodhead
General Manager Strategy, Planning and Performance
Kānoa – Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit, MBIE

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24 / 07 / 2025

Summary

1. On Thursday, 31 July 2025, from 12.30pm to 1.00pm, you are meeting with Dame Kerry Prendergast (Chair) and Rebecca Ingram (Chief Executive) from Tourism Industry Aotearoa. The meeting will be in your office.
2. This is an introductory meeting to discuss tourism topics related your portfolio including:
 - Tourism 2050: A Blueprint for Impact.
 - Tourism Growth Roadmap.
 - Milford Opportunities Project.
 - Conservation Reform.
 - Aviation Connectivity.

Background

Tourism Industry Aotearoa

3. Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) is an independent, not-for-profit membership organisation representing New Zealand's tourism industry. There are approximately 1,300 members, ranging from small and medium sized enterprises to large corporates. Membership also includes other associations such as Hospitality New Zealand and Regional Tourism New Zealand. Its operations are funded through membership fees, voluntary contributions, partnerships, and sponsorships.
4. TIA maintains strong relationships with central and local government, including advocating for policies that support the tourism sector, for example:
 - Freedom Camping regulations.
 - *Fair Pay Agreements Bill*.
 - Emissions Trading Scheme.
 - Resource Management Act reforms.
 - National Climate Adaptation Plan.
 - *Customs and Excise Amendment Bill*.
5. They also organise major events, such as the Tourism Rendezvous New Zealand (TRENZ) international tourism event and the annual Tourism Summit Aotearoa to connect stakeholders and showcase industry policy.

Tourism in New Zealand

6. Tourism plays an integral role in New Zealand's economy, environment, and cultural identity. The Tourism Satellite Account data released in February 2025 by Statistics New Zealand ranks tourism as New Zealand's second largest export earner.
7. In the year ending March 2024, total tourism expenditure was \$44.40 billion, an increase of 14.60 percent from the previous year.
8. The South Island accounts for approximately 40 per cent of New Zealand's international tourism spend, 30 per cent of domestic spend, and around 42 per cent of total guest nights.
9. The international visitors arriving in the South Island took up 25.9 per cent of the total international arrivals, in the year ending March 2025.

10. Information on region specific tourism in the South Island has been provided to you previously (briefing REQ-0015306 refers).

Information on key topics to be discussed

Tourism 2050: A Blueprint for Impact

11. On 7 November 2023, TIA launched its long-term tourism industry strategy, Tourism 2050: A Blueprint for Impact (the Blueprint).
12. The Blueprint outlines a vision for tourism that benefits New Zealand's people and communities, strengthens the economy, and protects the environment. This vision is based on an objective of 'balanced growth', ensuring that economic gain from tourism is balanced with the management of its environmental impact.
13. The three key focus areas for the Blueprint are:
- Reset system design and management – reforming the structure of the tourism system, how tourism is funded, and how tourism-related decisions are made.
 - Action on carbon emissions and biodiversity – reducing the industry's greenhouse gas emissions, lifting tourism's contributions to the Predator Free New Zealand 2050 initiative and biodiversity restoration, and reviewing tourism's engagement with public conservation land and waterways.
 - Equip tourism businesses – building the capability of tourism businesses to thrive and operate sustainably, developing a resilient and future-focused tourism workforce, and embedding the Tiaki Promise¹ values across industry.
14. The Blueprint aligns with the Government's priorities by emphasising balanced growth, sustainability, workforce development, and data driven decision making. TIA's Tourism Sustainability Commitment (TSC)² supports carbon elimination and climate adaptation, and aligns with the Government's National Climate Adaptation plan, in which the Government is investing in low carbon tourism and regenerative practices.

Tourism Growth Roadmap

15. The Tourism Growth Roadmap (the TGR) outlines the Government's strategic vision and plan to boost tourism, drive economic growth and enhance the visitor experience in New Zealand. Key objectives include:
- Increasing the number of international visitors to at least 2019 levels by 2026 (up to 3.89 million).
 - Doubling the value of 2023 tourism exports by 2034 (from \$9.9 billion to \$19.8 billion).
 - Growing the number of kiwis in tourism and hospitality jobs.
16. The TGR includes a \$35.00 million investment for the 2025/26 financial year, primarily aimed at increasing international visitor numbers and supporting tourism infrastructure. This is an addition to the \$20.00 million Tourism Boost Package. Key areas of investment include:
- \$19.50 million for international marketing in core and emerging markets.

¹ The Tiaki promise is a tool to encourage visitor behaviour while travelling in and around New Zealand. By following the promise, one makes a commitment to protect and preserve New Zealand. See: https://www.tiakinewzealand.com/en_NZ/.

² TIA leads the TSC, a nationwide initiative that aims to ensure every New Zealand tourism business is committed to sustainability by 2025, with a focus on making tourism a positive force for Aotearoa.

- \$3.00 million to support Tourism New Zealand's Conference Assistance Programme to attract business events to New Zealand.
 - \$5.00 million to support major events through boosting the Major Events Fund.
 - \$4.00 million for Milford Road Corridor Improvements.
 - \$3.40 million of contingency funding and for other projects yet to be announced
17. The TGR will be updated annually, with an initial focus on stimulating tourism demand. Over time, the focus will shift toward strengthening the supply side to support the increase in visitors.

Milford Opportunities Project

18. The Milford Opportunities Project (MOP) is a multi-agency initiative focused on reimagining tourism at Piopiotahi / Milford Sound. It aims to protect and enhance Milford Sound while supporting sustainable tourism growth.
19. TIA has actively supported the MOP, advocating on behalf of its members and facilitating their involvement throughout the consultation phase.
20. The next tranche of work will involve Ngāi Tahu, local government, and tourism stakeholders such as TIA to develop a multi-year investment plan and explore the designation of a Special Amenities Area within Fiordland National Park.
21. Information on MOP has been provided to you previously (briefing REQ-0016726 refers).

Aviation connectivity

22. Aviation connectivity is a component of the TGR to double tourism exports by 2034. The Ministry of Transport and MBIE are addressing barriers and reviewing aviation settings to ensure that New Zealand's aviation settings are fit for purpose.
23. Strengthening air links to remote destinations like Fiordland, Queenstown, and the West Coast supports local businesses, enables access to high value tourism experiences and helps distribute visitor flow beyond major hubs.
24. TIA is likely to advocate for ongoing coordination with Air New Zealand and investment in airport infrastructure to support tourism.
25. [IN CONFIDENCE] Confidential advice to Government

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Conservation reform

26. The Department of Conservation (DOC) is progressing work related to modernising New Zealand's conservation management system to protect relevant natural areas while supporting sustainable growth in tourism and regional economies. As part of this work, DOC is:
- exploring charging for access to some public conservation land
 - streamlining concessions and planning processes and enabling more flexibility around land exchange and disposals.

27. These proposals align with the Government's conservation priorities, which include generating new revenue streams, recalibrating conservation related costs, targeting investment into high-value outcomes, strengthening relationships with iwi, and fixing the concessions process.
28. TIA is broadly supportive of the conservation reform, recognising its potential to enable and enhance visitor-related activities on conservation land and waters. While supporting the overall direction of the reforms, TIA has identified three key considerations and offered to work with DOC on these issues:
- TIA seeks to embed tourism within the conservation regulatory framework to provide clear industry guidance.
 - TIA considers the most important issue with the concession system is uncertainty around the tenure of the concessions held by operators, the incentives to invest and the competitive allocation of concessions.
 - TIA is concerned with the cumulative costs incurred by visitors but considers it appropriate that DOC is provided with the ability to charge visitors for access to selected parts of the conservation estate.
29. [IN CONFIDENCE] Confidential advice to Government
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

About the audience

30. Biographies of attendees are provided below:

	Dame Kerry Prendergast, Chair, TIA Dame Kerry was appointed Chair in June 2023. She is a director and trustee across several organisations, including Oceania Healthcare, Fish Serve, the Wellington International Arts Foundation, and the New Zealand Community Trust. In January 2019, she was appointed to be a Dame Companion of The New Zealand Order of Merit (DNZM) for services to governance and the community.
	Rebecca Ingram, Chief Executive, TIA Rebecca was appointed Chief Executive in March 2022. Prior to this, she was General Manager of New Zealand and Government Relations at Tourism New Zealand. Rebecca has also held leading roles at Spark and Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand.