



**Submission to the**



**AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT  
TOURISM STRATEGY**

**February 2019**

## **INTRODUCTION**

- [1] This submission has been prepared by Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi.
- [2] Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi is the mandated organisation representing over 120,000 people who identify as Ngāpuhi. Ngāpuhi is the largest Iwi in New Zealand. Te Whare Tapu O Ngāpuhi, i.e. the tribal lands and shores of Ngāpuhi, are generally described as being from Takou Bay through to Whangārei, across to Maungakaramea, then northward to the Hokianga, across to Mangamuka and arriving back at Takou Bay.
- [3] As affirmed in Te Tiriti O Waitangi, Ngāpuhi is the guardian of the natural resources which includes land, coastal areas, sea, waterways and other resources within our tribal region. This includes the foreshores and sea beds extending out from the coast and harbours of Te Whare Tapu O Ngāpuhi and the subject of the current debate over ownership and management of such.
- [4] Ngā Hapū O Ngāpuhi actively exercise their customary rights and responsibilities of Kaitiakitanga throughout our district. Traditional cultural practices closely tie Ngāpuhi to our forests, coastal shores, waters and whenua.
- [5] Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi welcomes the opportunity to comment on Aotearoa New Zealand Government Tourism Strategy.

## **THE NEED FOR CHANGE**

- [6] Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi acknowledge that tourism is recognised as an important driver of economic growth by increasing living standards and providing employment and business opportunities for local communities. It is one of the biggest growing sectors here in Te Tai Tokerau with its many natural environments, scenic attractions, coastal and lakeside settings and our unique Māori culture and environmental values.
- [7] We accept the need for improving the way we manage the tourism sector and it is critical to New Zealand's future growth, environmental integrity and cultural well-being.
- [8] Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi value the unlimited benefits Tikanga and Mātauranga Māori bring to inform the complex multi-dimensional issues of environmental management and performance.
- [9] Although we support many of the proposed outcomes and priority work areas in principle, we are concerned that there must be an integrated and coordinated

approach across all agencies, Iwi, sectors, policy and local, regional and national objectives for the strategy to be effective.

- [10] Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi have an important and invested role in the direction and shape of tourism growth in the region and we look forward to further participating in shaping and designing this Strategy.

#### **OUTCOME 1: NEW ZEALAND BENEFITS FROM MORE PRODUCTIVE TOURISM GROWTH**

- [11] Generally, negative impacts from tourism occurs when the level of visitor use and the high volume of visitor numbers is far greater than the infrastructure and the environment's ability to cope. The damage caused by uncontrolled conventional tourism poses enormous pressure on areas that lead to impacts such as increased pollution, natural habitat loss, the spread of pests and diseases and in some cases soil erosion.

- [12] Therefore we recognise the importance of lifting tourism productivity and directing that towards higher-end products and experiences rather than focusing on increasing visitor numbers.

- [13] We also recognise the gains that have occurred in Te Tai Tokerau in the last year through innovative marketing strategies and its contribution to mitigate the uneven seasonal growth patterns that occurs within the industry. However, consideration for year-round tourism has the potential to present serious problems to the environment and ecology with no respite from tourists and therefore pose certain risks to breeding patterns, re-growth or restoration and recovery from over-use.

- [14] To expand the productive capacity of the tourism industry and to drive value through outstanding visitor experience, Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi believe that any investment in people and skills will need to have an equitable distribution that levels the playing field for Māori operators including mechanisms and support systems in place to assist with building capacity and capability within local communities.

#### **OUTCOME 2: EXCEPTIONAL VISITOR EXPERIENCE ENSURE THE SECTOR'S FUTURE SUCCESS**

- [15] A growing concern between economic development and environmental care highlights the increasing necessity of careful planning for the future success of the tourism sector.

- [16] Whilst, Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi support appropriate long term planning techniques that are a necessary precaution against undesirable levels of development, use and consumption. We support inclusive participation and meaningful engagements with iwi and their local communities which are essential components in the development of any regional tourism planning.
- [17] Furthermore, we would like to advocate that to support both spatial planning and a community approach to tourism development planning, it is essential that up-to date tourism data is available for Iwi and those with a vested interest in its outcomes to enable key decision making.
- [18] Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi acknowledges that providing quality visitor experiences needs the necessary support of infrastructure, amenities and services. Sustainable and flexible funding arrangements need to be designed to adapt to significant and changing visitor demand.

### **OUTCOME 3: TOURISM PROTECTS AND ENHANCES NEW ZEALAND'S NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORIC HERITAGE AND PROMOTES NEW ZEALAND CULTURE**

- [19] Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi further acknowledges that there is an increasing rich variety of Māori tourism businesses that with support, provide great opportunities to engage visitors and help them understand our world view through the sharing of stories, the intrinsic value of places and sharing our unique culture and customary practices.
- [20] We would like to see targeted support to enhance and uplift Māori tourism operators and businesses. As it is widely accepted, through the sharing of these unique experiences, visitors will gain a deeper understanding of our environment, the conservation efforts and the importance of restoring, protecting and enhancing our natural environment.

### **OUTCOME 4: NEW ZEALANDERS' LIVES ARE IMPROVED BY TOURISM**

- [21] Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi supports a targeted response to ensure that the sector can access local communities and residents to employ and train before accessing migrant labour. Priority needs to focus on up lifting and building local capacity and capability to ensure local benefits are realised.

[22] In reducing youth unemployment, we encourage the sector to focus on strengthening pathways for youth from education into employment to ensure local community lives are improved by tourism.

**OUTCOME 5: REGIONS AND COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM TOURISM**

[23] The potential for successful higher value specialist/niche markets that include Māori tourism product development, will depend on various policy and funding support mechanisms including a skilled work force and access to forward thinking technology.

[24] According to research, around 90% of international visitors choose New Zealand as a holiday destination to experience the scenery and natural landscape. Among other motivators 40% desire to engage in the culture and history of the country.

[25] Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi would like to see targeted funding and support systems aimed towards developing eco-cultural tourism products with iwi and their communities which provides local capacity building. The aim here is to develop sustainable, quality tourism away from the main tourist routes to cater to the 'interactive travellers' who seek to interact more with natural, social and cultural environments outside the main tourist hubs.

[26] Finally, Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi thanks the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment for providing the opportunity for our feedback on the Draft Document: Aotearoa New Zealand Government Tourism Strategy.

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15 February 2019

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