



HOST COMMUNITY

Community Engagement

Commitment 9: Businesses actively engage with the communities in which they operate

What does this mean?

- Tourism takes place in the backyards of New Zealanders. This makes it essential that tourism operates to ensure communities continue to be welcoming hosts to our visitors.
- Host communities contribute to tourism in many important ways, including as friendly hosts to our visitors and as providers of many of the amenities that visitors use on their travels.
- In turn, tourism benefits host communities through providing employment and business opportunities, higher levels of locally-provided goods and services (cafés, petrol stations and the like), and more interesting and vibrant places for locals to enjoy.
- This Commitment highlights the need for tourism to acknowledge the importance of host communities to our industry and for operators to act in a range of ways to engage with host communities to engender ongoing support.

How does this benefit me?

- Having a welcoming and friendly host community creates a positive environment for your business to operate.
- Having happy visitors is essential to creating value in tourism. The interface between visitors and locals is a key part of the complex dynamic that influences the visitor experience. Visitors often come to New Zealand for the environment and scenery, but leave talking about the great people they have met.
- Without community support, many tourism businesses will be more difficult to operate and may face barriers to development, including less local government support and more stringent planning processes, etc.
- By engaging with your communities and sharing the benefits of tourism activity, you can create a positive relationship that will enhance your 'social licence to operate' and contribute to the wider industry's standing in the eyes of the New Zealand public.

Actions for your business

- Acknowledge your host community as a key business asset - as you do with your other business assets such as your staff, property, and equipment. Make community engagement an integral part of your planning and decision-making processes.

- Identify those areas of your business that rely on your host community and select the most appropriate ways to engage with them on these areas.
- Use approaches to engaging with your host communities that can vary from low to high intensity, for instance:
 - **Inform** your host communities of what you are doing and why
 - **Consult** with your host community to obtain their views and feedback on the things you are planning or doing that may impact your community
 - **Involve** your host community to make them active contributors to the things you are doing and where you need your community's contribution, support or agreement
 - **Collaborate** with your host community, particularly when community-based or destination-related matters are involved.
- Work to establish and strengthen trust and shared values with your communities. Focus on an effective exchange of information to keep your host community informed of your plans and ambitions. Regular and reliable communications, initiated by you, will be key to achieve this.
- Be an active and positive member of your community and get involved in wider activities within your community – sports clubs, restoration initiatives, community groups, etc.
- Be prepared to provide sponsorships in cash or kind or person-hours to community activities.
- Get involved with your local community boards or council so that these essential functions are well informed of tourism-related matters. Make submissions to your council's plans and strategies that concern tourism and become an advocate for sustainability.
- Give preference to local recruits when you employ new staff, and buy local goods and services where you can.

Become an inspiration for others!

We would love to share your contribution to creating a sustainable New Zealand tourism industry. Email us at info@tia.org.nz with your sustainability success stories and inspire others across the industry.

**Additional information, resources and useful links can be found on
www.sustainabletourism.nz**