



ENVIRONMENT

Education

Commitment 14: Businesses actively engage with their visitors and communities on the importance of restoring, protecting and enhancing New Zealand's natural environment

What does this mean?

- New Zealand's natural environment is the key attraction drawing visitors to our country, and is an important driver for New Zealanders travelling domestically.
- The tourism industry enjoys the privilege of using these natural resources for business purposes. This must be done in a responsible manner.
- This creates the tourism industry's 'duty of care' for these environmental resources as a core responsibility.
- This Commitment focusses on the need to be active in educating our visitors and communities of this responsibility and our actions in sustaining these natural resources for future generations.

How does this benefit me?

- By playing your part in restoring, protecting and enhancing New Zealand's natural environment you are protecting the core asset of our industry and your part within it.
- By engaging with visitors and your communities on how important it is to you to look after New Zealand's nature, the challenges faced and what you are doing about it, you can accomplish three important things:
 1. You are creating a story that will be of interest to your visitors and which will contribute strongly to the authentic and interactive experience they have with your business. This is a value-add for your visitors and for your business. You can actually get your visitors involved in your projects.
 2. You are positioning yourself and the wider industry as a positive contributor to nature in the eyes of the communities in which you operate. This is really important for maintaining and building community support for your business and for tourism generally – also described as 'social licence to operate'.
 3. You are positioning yourself to inspire others within tourism and more broadly about your values and actions, and that they should get on board also.
- By bringing your visitors and communities on board with your work to support the natural environment, you can both enhance your business's commercial position and generate meaningful gains for the environment.

Actions for your business

- Decide what your story or point of difference is – what is the narrative that you want to take to your visitors and to your communities.

- Choose how you engage and be clear what you want to achieve. You could aim to comprehensively inform your visitors and create awareness, but you could also aspire to make your visitors active contributors and let them take part in your efforts.
- Take on board the values of the Tourism Sustainability Commitment: Kaitiakitanga, Manaakitanga and Whanaungatanga. They contain a holistic perspective on looking after nature, visitors and the people in tourism.
- Start with explaining the concept of Kaitiakitanga - guardianship for the environment - how it originates from Maori culture and is ingrained in our country's values, and how it aligns to your business' efforts. Details like this will make your sharing of information more interesting and credible to your visitors. You are telling a story that inspires your audience.
- Know your 'green space' and become its social voice. Familiarise yourself with the flora and fauna in your area (your 'green space'), its vulnerability and the on-going protection or restoration efforts so you can convincingly share your knowledge with your visitors.
- Inspire your visitors to emulate your appreciation for the environment by sharing your knowledge of the local fauna and flora, what the dangers are, and what efforts are being taken to protect them. Creating such awareness will lead your visitors to appreciate the environment in your area and motivate them to act responsibly.
- Familiarise yourself with the conservation programmes of the Department of Conservation. It will provide you with valuable insights that you can include in the narrative for your visitors, enriching their experience.
- Think outside of the box and make protection or restoration of your 'green space' part of your products and visitors' experience. Visitors increasingly enjoy participating in activities that connect them with nature in a meaningful manner, and seek to feel 'good and right' as part of an authentic and interactive holiday experience.
- Lead by example - share what you do. Nothing adds more credibility to your sharing of information and efforts to inspire your visitors than your business's own commitment and successes (see Commitment 11: Ecological Restoration).

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**