



tourism
INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION NEW ZEALAND

**Submission to the
Ministry of Transport
on the
Safer Journeys Discussion Document**

2 October 2009

Introduction

1. This submission is from the Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIA), located in Wellington. If you wish to contact us regarding this submission, please telephone Simon Wallace, TIA Policy Manager on 04 494 1842 or 0272 489 375 or e-mail him at simon.wallace@tianza.org.nz
2. This paper begins with background about the tourism industry and TIA. The Association provides comment on the sections of the Discussion Document it feels are of most relevance to the sector. It then makes some recommendations on some of the outcomes it would like to see from the introduction of a Safer Journeys strategy.
3. TIA supports the submissions that the Ministry of Transport will have received from the Bus and Coach Association of New Zealand (BCA) and the Rental Vehicle Association of New Zealand (RVA). Both the BCA and RVA are the peak industry bodies for the bus and coach sector and rental vehicle sector respectively and are well positioned to provide expert comment on the Safer Journeys strategy.

Background on the Tourism Industry

A bedrock of New Zealand's economy

4. Tourism is a major contributor to the New Zealand economy that will always be here – and won't easily go offshore. Tourism takes the lead in promoting New Zealand to the world. Thanks to our 100% Pure positioning, New Zealand is recognised as one of the most beautiful, unspoiled and scenic places on earth. 100% Pure signifies pride in our country, pride in our people and culture, and pride in the unique environment and experiences that New Zealand offers.
5. The brand positioning built by a vibrant tourism industry has become an important source of national confidence and identity and a front window for "Brand New Zealand". Indeed, the clean, green, pure offer that is synonymous with New Zealand tourism has been widely adopted and used to promote New Zealand exports in a range of other industries as well.
6. If New Zealand Inc. is to continue to prosper, to attract investment and to raise its position in OECD rankings, then it is vital that the tourism industry, and the positive image it projects, remain strong.

Delivering Value

7. Below is a snapshot of the economic value provided by tourism to the New Zealand economy.

- Tourism contributes close to 10% of gross domestic product (GDP) as well as directly and indirectly employing nearly one in ten New Zealanders.
- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$50 million per day industry. The New Zealand tourism industry delivers \$24 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$26 million in economic activity every day.
- Tourism expenditure reached \$20.1 billion for the year ended March 2007. This represents 18.3% of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings.
- Importantly, and despite more challenging times in the past 12 months, tourism remains one of New Zealand's largest foreign exchange earners and its contribution is felt at national, regional and local levels.

About Us

8. TIA has been the lead association that represents the interests of about 1700 tourism businesses in NZ since the Association was first established in 1955. The businesses TIA represent cover a range of tourism-related activities – hospitality, transport, accommodation, adventure and activities, attractions and retail as well as related tourism services.
9. The primary role of TIA is to be the voice of the tourism industry. This includes working for members on advocacy, policy, communication, events and membership and business services. The TIA team is based in Wellington and led by Chief Executive, Tim Cossar.

Tourism Forecasts 2009-2015

International visitors

10. The tourism forecasts (international visitors) for the period from now until 2015 have been largely influenced by the global economic recession while the outbreak of influenza A (H1N1 or swine flu) has created extra uncertainty for the short-term outlook. The forecast for the next 6-12 months shows falls in most major markets, although this is partially offset by short-haul growth out of the Australia market. The outlook for New Zealand to 2015 includes:
 - A fall in visitor arrivals of 4.2% in 2009 and a slight recovery in 2010 with growth of 2.5%.
 - A strong rebound in 2011 with visitor arrivals up 6.5% driven by global economic recovery and the Rugby World Cup in the latter part of 2011.
 - A gradual return to growth out to 2015 with annual growth of about 3.5%.

Domestic visitors

11. The recession continues to influence the travel patterns of domestic visitors as well. With less New Zealanders travelling overseas, there has been a temporary

increase in domestic travel activity in 2009-10 and this has been positive for the tourism industry in the short-term.

Comment

12. Along with the BCA and RVA, the Association generally supports initiatives where there is clear evidence that their introduction will improve road safety. Keeping visitors safe in New Zealand is an important focus for the tourism sector whether those visitors are driving a rental vehicle or being transported by a tourism operator.
13. In 2007 the tourism industry collaborated with a number of government agencies to produce a visitor safety guide aimed at international tourists to the country. This guide, available at airports, i-SITES and visitor information centres, includes specific tips for keeping safe on New Zealand roads and is detailed as follows

Section 1 – Keeping Safe on New Zealand Roads

New Zealand has a good roading system, but weather extremes, changes in terrain, and narrow secondary roads and bridges can make driving hazardous.

Although New Zealand is a small country, it can take many hours to drive between cities and other destinations of interest.

You should always be well rested before starting a long road trip. There have been serious crashes in New Zealand when people have attempted to drive while tired after a long-haul flight.

During long journeys, take regular rest and refreshment breaks.
Remember: a fatigued driver is an unsafe driver.

The following general information is provided for your road safety:

- Drive on the left-hand-side of the road and give way to your right.
- Keep within the speed limits. Speed limits are rigorously enforced by Police.
- Drive carefully according to the weather conditions.
- Fixed and mobile speed cameras operate throughout New Zealand.
- You are required by law to carry your driver licence with you at all times.
- All vehicle drivers and passengers must wear a safety belt or approved child restraint at all times.
- If you are cycling or motorcycling, cycle helmets and motorcycle helmets are compulsory.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is a crime. Police actively enforce it. Penalties are severe and your vehicle could be impounded in certain circumstances.
- If you are driving a campervan, you will generally drive more slowly than other vehicles. Where it is safe, please pull over to let other vehicles pass.
- For your own safety, hitch-hiking is not recommended.

14. It is important to note that the number of free and independent travellers who travel in rental cars and campervans is steadily increasing even though visitor growth has slowed. Given that many of these visitors are not familiar with driving on the left hand side of the road, it is critical for the tourism sector that road safety priorities and in particular this review consider the best ways of educating foreign drivers using New Zealand roads.

New Zealand's Progress in Improving Road Safety (p.3-5)

15. It is acknowledged the progress made in New Zealand over the past three decades resulting in a relative drop in the annual road toll. However, the predicted blowout in the road toll and injury numbers for 2010 is a cause for concern. As the Discussion Document notes, New Zealand compares poorly internationally and in spite of the fact that the country is highly motorised, more effort needs to be made to reduce the toll.
16. TIA believes the most effective way to improve road safety and bring the road toll down is to reduce use. A better public transport system that is both affordable and accessible would contribute to this outcome. This is especially the case in Auckland where most of New Zealand's population increase will come over the next few decades.
17. There is also a pressing need to reduce the amount of freight carried by heavy vehicles on New Zealand roads. One way of doing this is rail. An increasing use of rail would not only reduce the loads on the roads but would have the added benefit of a reduction in carbon emissions.

Proposed Vision (p.6)

"A safe road system that is increasingly free of road deaths and serious injuries".

18. The Association supports this vision and in particular the focus on not only reducing road deaths but also reducing serious injuries which have a long term and profound effect on families and communities.

Proposed Policy Approach – The Safe System (p.7)

19. TIA supports the *Safe System* as a proposed policy approach, but believes that enforcement will be the most important aspect in ensuring that the *Safe System* approach is met. The only way that this proposed policy approach will be successful is through active and visible enforcement by police and traffic authorities.

Road Safety Priorities (p8-9)

20. The Association believes the right priorities have been identified, although we believe the strategy lacks safety messages and education for international visitors

who hire vehicles to drive on New Zealand roads. Road safety priorities should also be backed up by an appropriate level of enforcement.

Reducing the Impact of Alcohol/Drug Impaired Driving (p.11-15)

21. As the Discussion Document indicates, alcohol and drug impaired driving is having a serious impact on New Zealand society. With greater emphasis on education through schools, universities and sports clubs for example, there is more likelihood that the messages about mixing drinking and drugs with driving will get through. The problem, however, is wider than just transport and a collaborative effort is needed across the health, social services and transport sectors to drive a culture change around alcohol.
22. While TIA supports sound initiatives that will reduce the incidence of drug and alcohol impaired driving, without wider consultation with its Members and industry, it is not ready to take a position on matters relating to a reduction legal blood alcohol limits, severity of penalties or the use of alcohol interlocks. While the evidence from overseas suggests that these measures have reduced accidents caused by alcohol, the Association would want to have the mandate of its Members in reaching a position.
23. In terms of the proposal of zero BAC tolerance for commercial drivers, TIA supports the position adopted by BCA in its submission.

Increasing the Safety of Young Drivers (p.16-19)

24. In addition to supporting the position adopted by the RVA, TIA thinks consideration should be given to a range of options including raising the driving age, strengthening the test and increasing road safety education. If, as the evidence suggests, these initiatives will save lives and reduce injuries, then they are worthy measures. The Association does not support young drivers in rural areas being excluded from such measures. As the Discussion Document states, it is rural communities that have a disproportional number of crashes meaning exempting these areas would run counter to the overall road safety strategy.

Safer Roads and Roadsides (p.20-23)

25. As listed on page 21 of the Discussion Document, TIA supports the proposed initiatives in this area.

Safer Speeds (p.24-27)

26. As listed on page 25 of the Discussion Document, TIA supports the proposed initiatives in this area.

Increasing the Safety of Motorcycling (p.28-30)

27. TIA does not have enough information to offer informed comment on this area.

Improving the Safety of the Light Vehicle Fleet (p.32-34)

28. TIA supports the comments made by the RVA in its submission.

Safer Walking and Cycling (p.35-37)

29. With the government's initiative to develop a network of cycleways all around New Zealand well advanced, TIA believes measures in this area must consider how to make these cycleways safe for users especially where they might intersect with major roads. As many overseas visitors will be using cycleways it is important this strategy thinks carefully about getting safe cycling messages across to visitors and cycle tourism operators.

30. Given the increased number of accidents involving motorists and cyclists in recent months, there is definitely a need for an education campaign in this area such as 'share the road' as suggested in the Discussion Document.

Improving the Safety of Heavy Vehicles (p.38-39)

31. TIA supports the comments made by the BCA in its submission, on this aspect of the Discussion Document.

Reducing the Impact of Fatigue (p.40-41)

32. Once again TIA supports the comments made by both the BCA and the RVA in their submissions. In particular, the Association is concerned at the apparent lack of any safety messages in this document warning overseas drivers of fatigue. Regrettably, there are too many accidents involving fatigued visitors who arrive in the country after long flights who then step immediately into a rental car for a long drive. The Association would like to see safety messages about driver fatigue of the type published in the visitor guide (paragraph 3 above) included in these resources.

Addressing Distraction (p.42-43)

33. TIA supports the comments made by the BCA in its submission.

Increasing the Level of Restraint Use (p.45-46)

34. As listed on page 45 of the Discussion Document, TIA supports the proposed initiatives in this area.

Reducing the Impact of High-Risk Drivers (p.47)

35. The Association limits its comments in this area to the illegal street racing legislation which in some regions of the country, especially Christchurch, has

become a source of real annoyance for accommodation business and moteliors in particular. The high risk drivers pose not only a risk to the safety of other people, the vehicles they drive create unacceptable noise levels at all hours of the night. TIA would like to see the police and traffic authorities more actively enforce the illegal street racing legislation.

Increasing Road Safety for Older New Zealanders (p.48-49)

36. As listed on page 48 of the Discussion Document, TIA supports the proposed initiatives in this area.

Road Safety Education (p.50)

37. As noted throughout this submission, TIA strongly believes that road safety education must be the key plank to the *Safer Journeys* strategy. More regulation on its own is not going to solve the challenges New Zealand faces in reducing death and injuries and making our roads safer. A package that includes education, enforcement, regulation and physical improvements to New Zealand's road network will lead to safer journeys.

Conclusion

38. Along with the BCA and the RVA, TIA reaffirms its overall support for the *Safer Journeys* strategy, albeit with the qualifications it has noted above. From a tourism perspective, it will be important that this strategy includes information on how best to inform visitors, especially overseas drivers about how to drive safely on New Zealand roads. A thorough cost benefit analysis of the initiatives listed will also be needed to ensure value for money is returned. Finally, TIA welcomes any opportunity there is to meet to talk with the Ministry of Transport on implications of this work for the tourism industry.

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