

## **AMG Column (Accommodation Management Guide)**

### **Addressing the issues**

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I don't need to tell you that many tourism businesses are finding the current environment challenging, with international visitor arrivals and spend down, dramatically from some markets. A recovery of 2.5% is expected next year according to the latest Ministry of Tourism forecasts, increasing to 6.5% the following year as global economies recover and New Zealand hosts Rugby World Cup 2011. However, it will be uneven across our major markets.

As one of this country's most important foreign exchange earners and a major employer, it is critical the government continues to support our industry to ensure we maintain market share during these turbulent international times, and increase our share as markets begin to recover and consumers decide to start travelling again.

The new National Government has moved on several of the key issues TIA raised in its Election Manifesto – the Prime Minister taking on the Tourism portfolio, increased marketing investment in Australia (with excellent results), a new employment skills training programmes under development for the tourism and services industries, to name a few. It is critical we keep that momentum going.

That is why TIA has launched the NZ Tourism Regional Leadership Series, ten workshops that are being held throughout the country this month. This is an opportunity for tourism businesses to identify and prioritise the most pressing issues facing them and our sector. TIA will then take those issues directly to the Prime Minister at a Leaders Symposium we are holding in Wellington in early October. The workshops will also feature practical ideas and content that can be implemented into businesses immediately.

This is a resilient industry and we are not looking for handouts, but there are areas where we need central and local government backing, such as a more accessible immigration policy, increased international marketing spend and the elimination of unnecessary red tape and compliance costs.

TIA is already addressing many of these issues on behalf of our 1500 members – putting their views forward, in submissions, presentations to select committees and councils, facilitating and advocating on industry's behalf – for our members collectively and for individual businesses where necessary.

One important project we have been working on is the Holidays Act Review. This Act is a key piece of legislation for the tourism industry and the outcome of the review could affect some key processes for how employers manage their staff holiday pay and public holidays.

We know from the excellent response we had to our member surveys that accommodation providers want the Act simplified to make it easier to administer. Other areas that generated a lot of comment were around trading the fourth week of annual leave/holidays for cash, transferring public holidays such as Christmas to another day, and 'Mondayising' Waitangi Day and ANZAC day if they fall on a weekend.

Visit the TIA website ([www.tianz.org.nz](http://www.tianz.org.nz)) to find out more about the regional leadership workshops and to read the TIA submission on the Holidays Act Review.