

To: Department of Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

BYATA's Submission on The Government's Fuel Plan Proposal

Submitted by: Backpacker Youth and Adventure Travel Association (BYATA)

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BYATA's Position on The Government's Fuel Plan Proposal

BYATA welcomes the opportunity to provide input on the Government's Fuel Plan. We recognise the importance of ensuring national fuel security and support efforts to strengthen resilience across critical sectors.

In doing so, we urge the Government not to overlook tourism's vital role within the New Zealand economy. As one of the country's leading export earners and a major employer, tourism must be considered an essential sector within any fuel allocation or prioritisation framework.

From an international visitor perspective, New Zealand continues to actively attract travellers, including through joint campaign activity between BYATA and Tourism New Zealand targeting international backpackers currently in Australia, many of whom are expected to arrive over the next three months. There is a clear risk to New Zealand's reputation and brand if these visitors arrive and encounter constraints that limit their ability to travel through regions or access core tourism experiences. This includes reliance on fuel for transport networks, rental vehicles, inter-island connectivity via Cook Strait, and key tourism products such as aviation-based activities (e.g. skydiving) and jet boat operations.

We also highlight two critical issues that emerged during COVID-19 and remain relevant. First, the importance of maintaining connectivity between the North and South Islands for the movement of people, not just freight. Second, the role of regional backpacker accommodation providers in supporting essential industries, particularly agriculture and horticulture, by hosting seasonal workers. Disruptions to fuel supply risk undermining both workforce mobility and regional economic activity.

BYATA supports a "business as usual" approach, to the greatest extent possible, during any period of fuel constraint. Maintaining normal levels of service and access is critical to safeguarding visitor experience, supporting our members, and protecting the wider economy.

New Zealand's reputation as a safe, accessible, and well-functioning destination must be protected. We therefore recommend that tourism be explicitly recognised within fuel prioritisation settings, ensuring that visitor movement, regional connectivity, and access to key tourism experiences can be maintained.

Who We Are

The Backpacker Youth Adventure Travel Association represents over 120 tourism businesses that rely on international youth travellers aged 18–35.

BYATA advocates, collaborates, and communicates on behalf of the youth travel sector to ensure its long-term sustainability and contribution to New Zealand's economy. Youth travellers are "customers for life," often returning as higher-value visitors and contributing across the four capitals — economic, social, cultural, and environmental.

As an independent industry voice, BYATA is focused on defining and advocating the true value of youth travel and ensuring New Zealand remains globally competitive in attracting this highly active market.

Please contact Haydn Marriner, BYATA Chair for further information with regards this submission on 0272454861 or info@byata.org.nz

Alignment with Government Direction

The Government's forthcoming National Policy Statement, alongside the work completed as part of the Tourism Growth Roadmap and its ambition to significantly grow tourism export value, signals a clear and coordinated national direction for the sector. Together, these initiatives provide an important opportunity to align policy settings, investment signals, and operational frameworks across central government, local government, and industry.

To realise this ambition, it is critical that supporting policy, such as the Fuel Resilience Plan enables, rather than constrains, the delivery of these objectives. Ensuring tourism is recognised within fuel prioritisation settings is consistent with the intent of both the National Policy Statement and the Growth Roadmap, particularly in supporting visitor access, regional dispersal, and sector productivity.

BYATA supports the related submission of Tourism Industry Aotearoa.



Haydn Marriner

Chair, Backpacker Youth & Adventure Travel Association.



Chris Sperring

Advocacy, Backpacker, Youth and Adventure Travel Association