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Media release

Welcome back Aussies, we've missed you – exciting times for tourism

New Zealand tourism operators are ready with open arms to welcome back Australian visitors tonight, says Tourism Industry Aotearoa Chief Executive Rebecca Ingram.

Australians can travel here quarantine free from 11.59pm. They will be followed on 1 May by manuiri from visa waiver countries, including the USA, UK, Europe, Japan, Korea and Singapore – bringing to an end two years of border restrictions.

"This is an exciting day for tourism businesses around the motu as they step back onto the front foot, setting their sights on a successful ski season, then summer 2022-23," Ms Ingram says.

"The industry is reporting forward bookings are gaining momentum, and there's definitely a more positive feeling about the future and the opportunities to rebuild businesses."

Christchurch Airport Manager Communications Yvonne Densem says both Air New Zealand and Qantas have added additional services into Christchurch this week, and almost all 16 flights are full, with more to come.

"Our view is the attractions of the South Island are all still here and ready for visitors. We are looking forward to saying 'welcome back cobber!' more often."

GO Rentals is experiencing good bookings for the upcoming school holidays in April and also for the ski season in July, especially out of the Queenstown office, says Chief Operating Officer James Daglish.

"Internationally, we are seeing great business from Australia, with solid business already coming through from Europe. Other international markets are still a little reserved at this stage."

Accor Pacific Chief Executive Officer Sarah Derry says people love to travel, and the hotel provider has seen a steady increase in bookings since the 16 March announcement that Australians can visit New Zealand again.

"The increase is driven by Queenstown and Auckland destinations. Bookings in April reflect a desire for Australians to reconnect with family and friends as soon as possible, and we are seeing booking trends which suggest Australians want to make the most of the upcoming winter ski season in Queenstown."

Ms Ingram says the opening of the borders will breathe life into New Zealand's cities and communities.

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"Tourism is not an island – it's connected to so many parts of our economy and our communities and the return of visitors will make a positive difference to many people."

As tourism gears up to reconnect with the world, she thanked New Zealanders who have helped keep many businesses across the motu afloat over the past two years by trying new experiences and exploring destinations they hadn't visited previously.

"Kiwis are such an important part of our tourism industry, not just as domestic travellers, but because of the manaakitanga and warm welcome they extend to international visitors."

Ms Ingram say TIA anticipates a slow and steady return of visitors, with people visiting friends and family first following by Australian and US visitors.

"We know there people around the world have continued to dream about a holiday in New Zealand, however TIA's **Recovery Roadmap** suggests it could be 2-3 years before we find our 'new normal', meaning new levels of demand and travel patterns."

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KEY FACTS

- TIA is New Zealand tourism's peak industry body. We are the only independent association that represents all sectors of New Zealand's large and diverse tourism industry.
- TIA has about 1300 member businesses from across the industry, ranging from small owner/operators to large publicly listed tourism corporates and international hotel chains.
- TIA is deeply involved in discussions on recovery and what the future of tourism in New Zealand will look like.
- TIA leads implementation of the industry's **Tourism Sustainability Commitment** which aims to see every New Zealand tourism business contributing positively to our people and cultures, our environment and our economy
- TIA delivers a comprehensive and diverse range of industry events including TRENZ, New Zealand Tourism Awards, Discussing Tourism regional events and the Tourism Summit Aotearoa.

Visit www.tia.org.nz for more information

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