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Proposed Amendments to Resource Consents and Usage at Viaduct Basin - TIA Submission

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) welcomes the opportunity to submit on Auckland Council's process to renew resource consents for the Viaduct Basin area and to consider usage, including by tourism operators in this important visitor precinct.

TIA is the peak body for the tourism industry in Aotearoa New Zealand. With around 1,200 member businesses, TIA represents a range of tourism-related activities including hospitality, accommodation, adventure activities, attractions, retail, airports and airlines, transport, as well as related-tourism services.

TIA is sharply focused on ensuring the balanced growth of tourism and this is articulated in our key guiding documents and programmes. This includes the tourism industry's strategic framework, *Tourism 2050 – A Blueprint for Impact, He Pae Tukutuku, with the Vision of 'Enriching Aotearoa New Zealand through a flourishing tourism ecosystem'*.¹

With respect to the two applications relating to the Viaduct Basin, TIA makes the following key points:

1. In principle, TIA supports the process for Auckland Council to be granted consents for the two sites in the Viaduct Basin.
2. TIA is concerned that the proposed changes to usage of the sites, particularly the Inner Viaduct Basin, will have major implications for tourism, and for one operator that currently has an extensive operation in the Inner Basin area.

In considering the situation, it is clear that there are many competing interests involved, including commercial tourism operations, pedestrian traffic and bridge operations.

There are also a set of Council goals for the waterfront, including a blue-green waterfront, a public waterfront, a smart working waterfront, a connected waterfront and a liveable waterfront. These goals inherently point to a waterfront that balances a variety of usage, with the management processes involved needing to reflect this.

The Council's waterfront development programme over many years has been successful in enabling the development of the Viaduct Basin precinct to the point that it is a vibrant centrepiece of the Auckland waterfront.

Now, every effort is needed to both protect and enhance this position.

TIA is concerned that the proposed usage changes will heavily impact a major tourism business (and TIA member) that is based in the Viaduct Basin, Explore Group. Explore

¹ <https://www.tia.org.nz/tourism-2050/>

Group operates 11 vessels in the Inner Viaduct Basin, carrying some 100,000 passengers annually. In so doing, it contributes significantly to the position of the Viaduct Basin as a vibrant hub for both locals and international visitors.

Our reading of the Consent material is that the usage aspects are very black and white, and that Explore Group would effectively lose access to the Inner Viaduct and would be required to operate from the Outer Viaduct. Explore Group advises that this will have a material impact on its business operations. The berthing conditions are more exposed in the Outer Viaduct, and the berths are not in the busy centre of the precinct where high visibility is a part of its overall operations.

TIA is of the view that in the interests of the overall precinct, usage decisions of the Viaduct Basin should be undertaken on an iterative and consultative basis in order to take account of the various and changing interests, whether commercial operation, pedestrian access and bridge operation. For instance, how can the operations of Explore Group be optimally established within the framework of these competing, but complimentary interests? Rather than being excluded, how could Explore Group's operation be retained in the Inner Viaduct?

Such questions suggest a long-term approach for managing and developing the Viaduct Basin precinct is needed.

Managing and protecting the space for the future must be enabled by the processes that are established.

Accordingly, TIA provides in-principle support for the resource consent applications, conditional on establishing a process for determining the usage arrangements with commercial operators, such as Explore Group, so that their ability to operate effectively is ensured, even as some usage changes are implemented.

We would be very pleased to support this submission with further information. If so, please contact Bruce Bassett, Chief Advisor, 021 609 674 or bruce.bassett@tia.org.nz.

Ngā mihi,



Greg Thomas
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