



MEDIA RELEASE

1<sup>st</sup> December 2021

**Backpacking Industry demanding sweeping changes as industry teeters on the edge of total collapse.**

The Backpacking Youth Travel Association of New Zealand (BYATA) is demanding sweeping changes to the governments recently announced plans to reopen New Zealand to the world, calling the plans impotent in revitalising the youth sector, pointing to the recent collapse of the YHA chain of hostels after 89 years in operation as indicator of things to come if dramatic changes aren't made.

"The hostel and youth sector is at real risk of complete erosion and the ripple effect and impact of these losses will be felt far and wide. Not least by the regions that depend so heavily on these properties for environmental, community and social prosperity" states BYATA sector lead Brett Duncan.

Amongst those changes recommended by BYATA are the following:

- Open processing of Working Holiday Visas immediately.
- Allow students and working holiday makers to return from February 14, 2022. This will allow a workforce to arrive prior to tourists returning later in 2022 bolstering hostel occupancy and addressing the worker shortages faced by so many industries.
- Remove the 7-day self-isolation period for all arrivals that are double vaccinated with a negative pre-departure PRC test.
- Require a rapid antigen test on arrival and allow them into the community.

"If we continue to lose this sector, it will be devastating for all New Zealand, We would see the erosion of youth travellers all together and the \$1.5 billion they spend, plus the 1.2 jobs that each working holiday visa maker creates, will be near impossible to replace in the early years of recovery" argues Duncan.

The New Zealand Hostels Association (part of BYATA) has prepared a campaign document (attached) highlighting the devastating shape of the industry. The aim is to highlight the harsh reality of the situation far and wide, and at pace to media, lobby groups, government to bring due attention to how perilously close to collapse we are if we are required to survive another 12 months without meaningful international tourism.

ENDS

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**About Backpacker Youth and Adventure Tourism Association - BYATA**

BYATA is a not-for-profit association acting as the independent voice of the backpacker and adventure tourism sector of New Zealand. With a growing member base of 130+ members nationwide, BYATA advocates on behalf of our members with relevant stakeholders including Tourism New Zealand, Immigration, Hospitality New Zealand, and more. BYATA empowers our members to make informed business decisions by sharing specific industry related data with our members. New Zealand Hostel Association (NZHA) is a sub-group of BYATA and specialises in offering support and advocating on behalf of New Zealand hostels. Visit BYATA's [website](#) for more information and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).