

BACKPACKER YOUTH AND ADVENTURE TOURISM ASSOCIATION (BYATA)

STRATEGY 2025-2029



Introduction

BYATA is a voluntary Board consisting of 8-12 Board members from a diverse range of businesses focused on Youth Tourism. Youth tourism being defined as international holiday visitors between the age of 18 and 35.

The nature of a voluntary board with a part time (8hrs per week) administrator means the work output is limited and variable and requires a focused, realistic plan to ensure the Board can achieve the best results with the resources available.

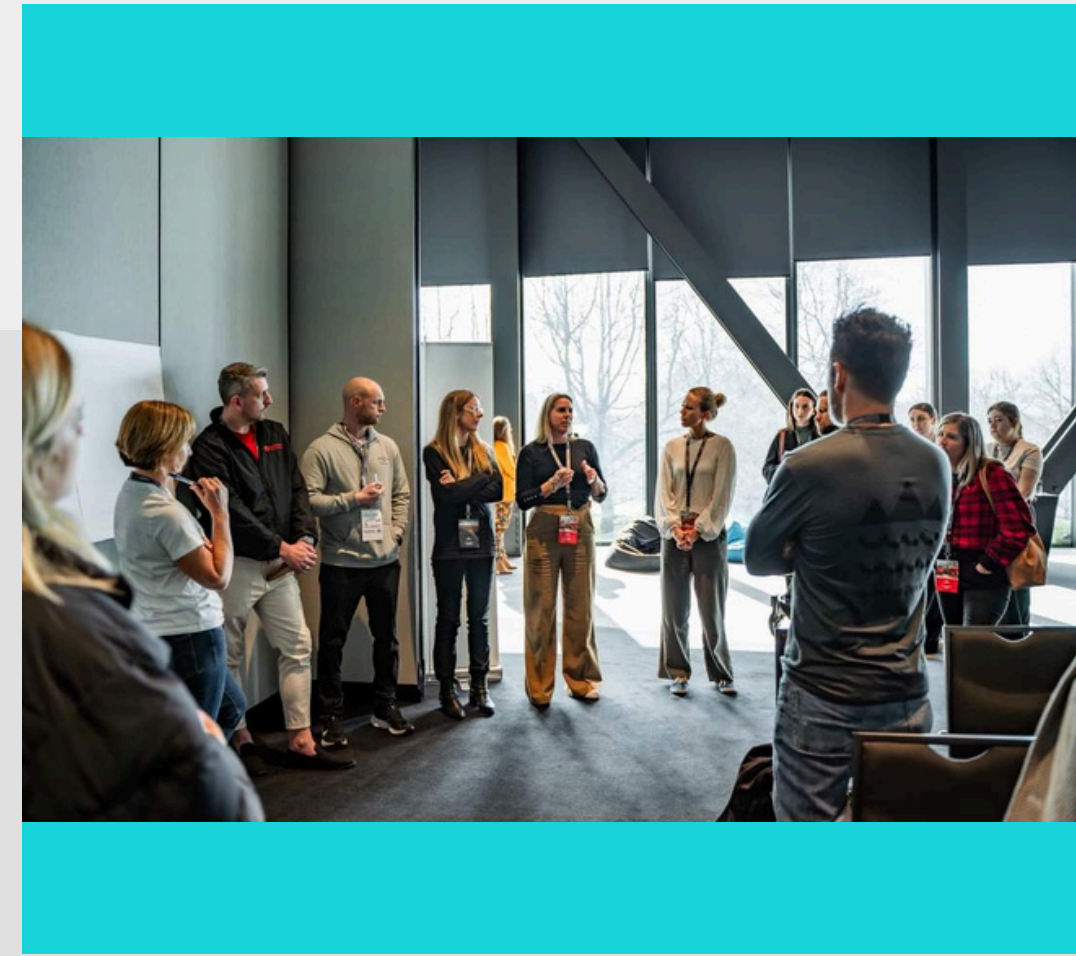
BYATA is also limited with funds, membership fees covering basic administrative costs and appropriate cash flow for its annual conference.

Despite these limitations, BYATA performs well above expectations and has a good reputation within the industry. A reputation for being close to the ground, responsive to industry feedback, appropriately vocal on key issues and a positive advocate for Youth Tourism.

BYATA has a membership of 140 members that includes national tourism operators with multiple brands as well as single owner operator businesses. This diversity adds strength and opportunity to the ongoing performance of BYATA.

The Board itself is made up of talented and committed individuals with a passion for the sector as well as an aptitude for the critical thinking necessary act as effective advocates. This is the context within which the 2029 strategy is developed.

A strategy that is both ambitious yet realistic, honest about addressing weaknesses and shoring up its strengths and driven towards improved member outcomes and cross industry collaboration for the benefits of everyone. This strategy should be read in conjunction with the 2025 Briefing for Incoming Ministers.



Purpose & Vision



PURPOSE

The purpose of BYATA was reviewed and adopted in the 2024 BYATA Constitution:

To enhance the commercial viability of members by advocating for the backpacker, youth and adventure sectors in New Zealand.



VISION

The 2025 -2029 Strategic vision

New Zealand has a successful youth tourism sector with a strong voice, represented by a 200 member strong industry association. Youth tourism will contribute 35% of the total value of international holiday arrivals by 2029.



BYATA's Strategic Outcomes



Tourism New Zealand and Regional Tourism Organisations are engaged in ongoing focused Youth Tourism Marketing.



BYATA is effectively advocating for an industry and public sector ecosystem that delivers sustainable growth.



There are engaging and effective networking opportunities for BYATA members.



Key relevant and timely insights are delivered to industry and sector influencers.



BYATA Collaborates closely with key associations and agencies to further our vision.



BYATA is financially robust with adequate resources to achieve our strategic goals.



Backpacker Youth and Adventure Tourism Association (BYATA)

Strategy 2025-2029

A successful youth tourism sector with a strong voice

2025

Market

Youth = 32% share of the value of total holiday arrivals - \$2.3bn (2024)
Arriving WHV are 40,000pa and declining
There is no youth marketing focus

BYATA

Good relationship with TNZ
Moderate collaboration with associations
Moderate relationship with MBIE
No relationship with most RTOs
Low finances \$20K in bank
Limited Insights
Moderate networking activity
Poor IP management

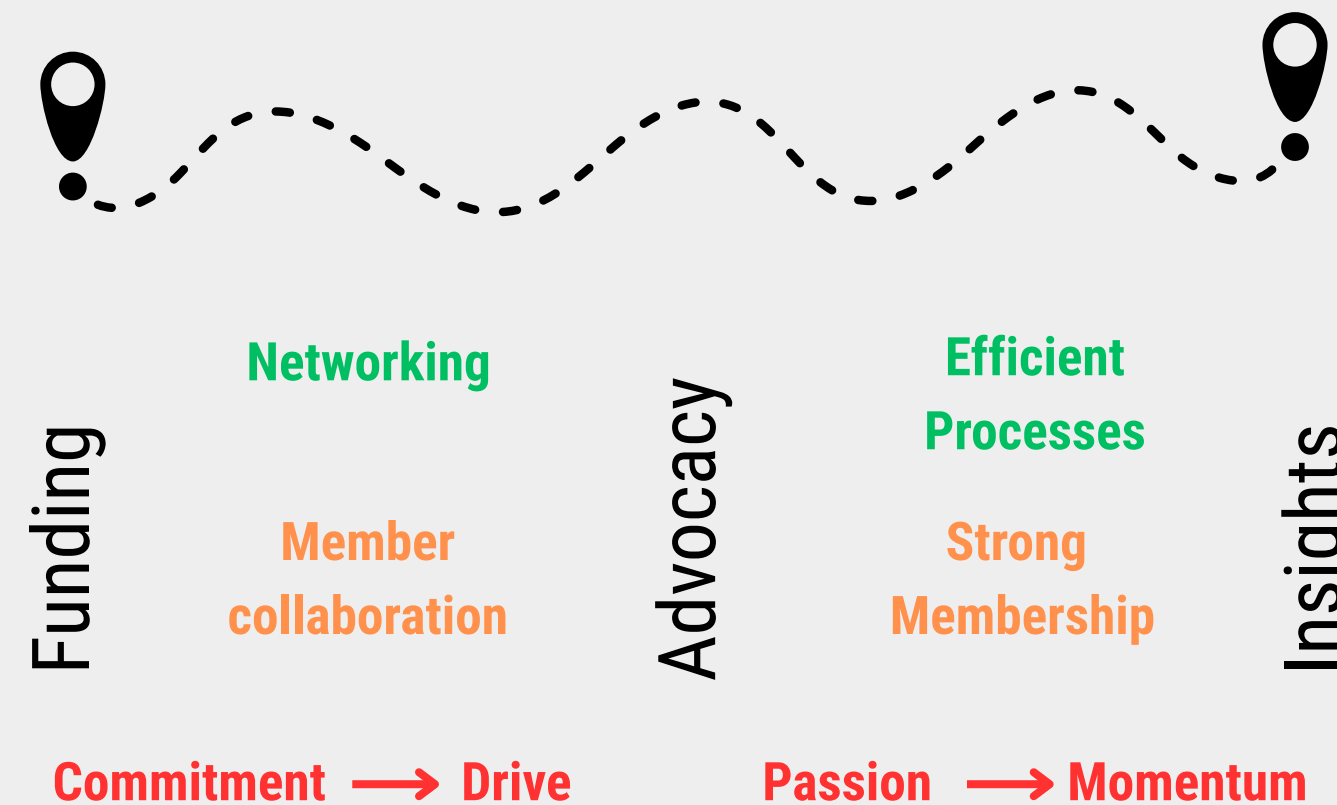
2029

Market

Youth = 35% share of the value of total holiday arrivals (\$2.5bn at 2024 levels)
Arriving WHV are 65,000pa and stable
Youth marketing focus exists at a national and regional level.

BYATA

Strong engaged relationship with TNZ
Strong collaboration with TIA, HNZ and RTONZ
Engaged relationship with MBIE
Good working relationship with most RTOs
Adequate finances \$45K in bank
Good relevant and timely insights
Effective networking activity
Active retention of IP
Well established internal systems
Strong internal admin



Underpinning BYATA's strategy is an awareness of the ongoing future risks presented by climate change.

Tourism is susceptible to significant weather events and the youth traveller in particular is influenced by climate change activism.

BYATA does not have the resources to implement it's own action but will proactively incorporate climate change thinking into its advocacy work.

Advocacy

Advocacy is core to BYATA's purpose. No one, other than the industry itself will speak out to the numerous policies and regulations that impact the operational efficiency of our members. It is BYATA's role to be that voice.

Actions

BYATA will focus on, but is not limited to, the following core issues;

- Focused Youth tourism marketing by TNZ and RTOs
- Focused marketing of working holiday visas
- Improved visa settings in favour of WHV uptake

BYATA will improve its engagement with TIA, TEC and Hospitality New Zealand to support their advocacy work as well as enhance BYATA's position on issues that BYATA is working on.

Position papers will be created and published to set out BYATA's position on various topics.

Insights will be developed to ensure advocacy is fact based not emotionally driven.

Members will be surveyed to understand their economic value in order to establish the collective economic value of BYATA to help give our voice more meaning.

Outcomes

- BYATA's voice is stronger, more consistent and trusted. BYATA will be sought after for youth tourism sector advice by a wider range of industry influencers including central and local government, key industry associations, and media.
- BYATA's position on various topics will be well understood, easy to find and easy for members to leverage from and utilise.
- BYATA's advocacy activity will have a positive influence on the youth tourism sector.
- BYATA members actively participate in advocacy activity when requested.



Insights

Advocacy without insight is just opinion, and emotion has little effect on those who make the decisions impacting our industry.

Strong arguments require insights, good data, industry feedback and objectivity.

Affordable insights are difficult to come by and collate but remain important assets that BYATA needs to invest in.

Actions

Develop and publish a core set of metrics relative to youth tourism.

Build relationships with international associations to gain insights on international destinations for comparative analysis

Invest in memberships that can assist with youth tourism research such as WYSE

Interrogate existing data sets and work with TIA, HNZ, MBIE, TNZ, Immigration NZ, TEC and RTOs to understand and utilise any insights they have.

Maximise our channels to gain timely on the ground insight from members into current business levels.

Ensure data is well referenced, and easily accessible to all members.

Outcomes

- BYATA has a dedicated insights section on its website with up-to-date insights drawn from multiple resources
- Insights are meaningful to a broad range of users and members actively contribute to surveys and insight requests



Membership & Networking

BYATA is its membership! It is important to remember BYATA is not the Board but the entire collective.

As such the Board has an obligation to include the membership in as many activities as possible, communicate effectively and design a membership structure that is fair to both large and small businesses.

BYATA has for some time held membership levels at 120-140 members with some members dropping in and out depending on management changes. It has also had a one price fits all model (in the main).

Actions

Review the membership structure as a matter of urgency.

A value proposition will be developed specifically for regional tourism organisations.

Membership will be sought from more regional businesses.

Members will be profiled more effectively between each other.

Members will maximise the profile of BYATA work within their organisation's to ensure continuity of support at an organisational level.

Networking structures will be developed including ongoing regional events, online webinars and the BYATA conference.

Outcomes

- BYATA will have a minimum of 200 members by 2029.
- Members will be well connected via a range of networking and digital tools.
- The annual conference will be the core member networking event.
- Membership will have broader regional representation.



Communication

In a crowded and noisy environment, BYATA needs to cut through, even to our members.

The communication strategy needs specific development and goes beyond membership communications extending out to how BYATA speaks, with whom and with what tools.

BYATA needs to have a strong, consistent, engaging, trustworthy and informative voice.

Actions

The website will be revised and updated to meet the needs of the needs 2029 strategic outcomes.

Board members will collate relevant contacts which will be held in a central repository.

A communications plan will be developed with short and medium-term objectives.

Investment will be made to ensure communications are able to be efficiently managed.

Position papers and core messages will be developed and reviewed to ensure all board members are consistent with the BYATA position.

Feedback mechanisms will be developed to ensure members have the capacity to easily contribute to and inform the Board.

Outcomes

- BYATA voice is seen to be strong, consistent, engaging, trustworthy and informative.
- BYATA's key advocacy messages are well understood
- Members are engaged and understand the work of BYATA
- Transitions between boards are efficient and communication assets including contacts are not lost during transitions

Finances & Administration

BYATA operates on the goodwill and drive of the board members with many of them contributing their own resources to attend meetings. They all undertake project work over and above their normal employment and this is done without charge.

Despite this, BYATA still has ongoing operating costs and employs a part-time manager to ensure BYATA operates efficiently.

Actions

An annual budget is developed and reviewed on a regular basis.

Funding will be sought from various government sources, either project based or as part of new funding streams such as the IVL.

Investigations will be made into other sources of funding utilizing the services of funding strategists.

Administrative templates are developed to ensure communication and outputs remain consistent from each board member.

A policy framework will be established to ensure correct policies and procedures are guiding BYATA's decision making and practices.

Improved internal communication will be adopted to allow for greater delegation of workload, sharing of information and provision of assistance across the Board.

A new BYATA administrator, community manager will be employed to implement and execute these systems.

Outcomes

- BYATA has a minimum base cash assets of \$45,000 by 2029.
- Conference remains a cost neutral/cash positive event with strong participation from members.
- Membership has grown to sustain a cash flow of \$40,000pa.
- Administrative systems are efficient and suitably open to enable workload to be shared among board members.
- Board members have their own delegated tasks and are fully engaged in those tasks.
- Every board member has a clear picture of the full scope of BYATA's current work.