**Tauranga City Council Annual Plan 2020-2021 submission of support**

**CONSULTATION 17 JUNE TO 1 JULY 2020**

**MAINTAIN TOURISM BAY OF PLENTY’S EXISTING FUNDING**

**EMAIL** **SUBMISSIONS@TAURANGA.GOVT.NZ** **BY WEDENSDAY 1 JULY**

Kia ora

I support Tauranga City Council’s (TCC) investment in Tourism Bay of Plenty (TBOP) and strongly encourage TCC to maintain its existing funding to support the tourism industry.

TBOP enables the local tourism industry to thrive, driving visitors to the region, working with operators to develop new products, and planning ahead. TBOP’s Destination Management Plan, Te Hā Tāpoi | The Love of Tourism enables TBOP to take the industry from sustainable to regenerative.

To the year-ending January 2020, visitor spend in Te Moananui ā Toi | the Coastal Bay of Plenty reached $1.121 billion. $882 million of that visitor spend was in Tauranga City. Infometrics data to year-end March 2018 shows that tourism employed 7,652 people in Te Moananui ā Toi | the Coastal Bay of Plenty. 6,088 of those people are employed in Tauranga, making up 8.5% of the city’s jobs.

The tourism industry in Te Moananui ā Toi | The Coastal Bay of Plenty is largely built on small or sole enterprises that suffered some of the greatest economic impacts of COVID-19. Investment in their livelihoods is critical to support New Zealand’s largest export earner. Te Moananui ā Toi | The Coastal Bay of Plenty needs to entice our strongest market, domestic visitors, back and rebuild the visitor economy in the right way.

TBOP is a strong contender for up to $700,000 of central Government’s Strategic Tourism Assets Protection Programme, however, its local council funding must be maintained at pre-COVID-19 levels. This additional funding would enable TBOP to accelerate its destination marketing and industry support to help rebuild the tourism economy after the devastation of COVID-19. TCC maintaining its current funding, and access to the central Government fund, are critical deciders in the success of the rebuild of Te Moananui ā Toi | the Coastal Bay of Plenty’s tourism industry.

TBOP’s funding contributes to concrete actions that help our local industry thrive. A number are already underway including local, regional and national marketing campaigns to drive domestic tourism to our region, as well as new business appointments that actively support local operators.

These roles include product development managers that work with local operators to upskill in the wake of COVID and help establish new businesses in line with consumer demand and the vision of Te Hā Tāpoi | The Love of Tourism.

**To enable the rebuild of Te Moananui ā Toi | the Coastal Bay of Plenty’s tourism industry in the wake of COVID-19, I express my strong support for TBOP’s existing funding to remain in TCC’s Annual Plan 2020-2021.**

Ngā mihi nui

[Your Name]