

Script of Interview with Ann-Marie via zoom

2 September 2021

Introduction:

Morning, Ann- Marie, it's great to have you with us.

Today I'd like to introduce you all to Ann-Marie Johnson who joined the Board this year. Ann-Marie comes to us with a background in journalism and she is the Communications Manager for Tourism Industry Aotearoa. Her role involves sharing TIA's work with members and promoting the economic and social value of the visitor industry to the wider public. She also leads the New Zealand Tourism Communicators Network and is a member of the Tiaki Promise Governance Group.

Ann-Marie, why did you joined the B&B Association Board and what do you hope to contribute?

The opportunity came up at TIA, as I understand it, that the Board had reached a stage in the organisation's maturity where they decided they wanted some external membership on the Board in addition to B&B owners and they approached TIA asking if we knew of anybody that might be suitable and I thought of me! Partly it seemed to me like it was a good opportunity for me to contribute to the wider tourism industry and the Board was particularly looking for some communications expertise, as I understand it. It was also a really good personal development opportunity for myself to get a bit of experience on the Board - and B&Bers are a nice group of people. So here I am.

It's great you've said that because you have been to one of our Board meetings now up in Tairua – how did you find that?

It was great fun, any opportunity to go to Tairua - can't argue with that. I'm learning a lot about the B&B sector in a quick few months. It is not a sector that I've had as much to do with as some of the other sectors of tourism over the years. It has been really interesting to come in and get to know some of the people a bit better and to hear about some of the particular issues that are facing your sector and finding out how you fit into the overall tourism system.

What do you love about working in tourism?

I've been kicking around tourism for a few years now even before I joined TIA which has been quite some time. In my previous life I was a newspaper reporter and I worked in various newspapers around the country from the Otago Daily Times in Dunedin up to the Rotorua Daily Post. It was probably at Daily Post in Rotorua that I first got really exposed to

the tourism industry for obvious reasons and for covering stories about it and from there I came down to the Evening Post and more recently the Dominion Post in Wellington and wound up one way or another on the tourism round here in Wellington. Again, just really got to know tourism people, attended one or two TRENZ as a media delegate and just really enjoyed the people. Tourism people are people people so they're always keen to talk and to host and to just share their love of New Zealand and that was infectious. Eventually, the job at TIA came up and I took it and have just really enjoyed working with the people of tourism as much as anything. I've worked through the highest of the highs now and the lowest of the lows, so it is always interesting seeing what's coming next.

I think you've really hit on one of the key components of tourism too, and that's the people. And particularly for bed and breakfast operators, we all about hosted accommodation and we're all about the people. It often comes down to so much more than just the property. It's about the people hosting, the stories we have to tell and share with our guests and with everybody and we're all people people.

That's right.

*You are a member of the Tiaki Promise Governance group. I think that is a really important part of tourism in New Zealand at the moment and I'm not sure it's receiving enough attention. I also think it completely encapsulates what hosted accommodation is about. **Could you tell us a bit more about the Tiaki Promise and how B&Bs can contribute?***

The Tiaki Promise was launched in 2018. It seems like ancient history now, everything was pre covid. There was a group of seven national organisations that got together to back this idea of a Tiaki Promise and it was in response to concerns that were being raised around New Zealand about too many visitors coming in and not respecting our environment, our country, our culture. So the Tiaki promise was developed. It is an educational tool that we want to use to educate our visitors on how we expect them to behave while they're are in New Zealand. That's looking after our countryside, respecting our culture and our customs, and there are a couple of other aspects to it like driving safely.

The seven organisations have continued to work together - that's TIA, TNZ, NZ Māori Tourism, THL, Local Government New Zealand and DOC. We have formed a governance group that meets regularly, and we have in fact just appointed a brand manager for Tiaki who is going to be working out of Tourism New Zealand which is very exciting. The goal for that position is really to take Tiaki to the next level to give it much more prominence because the people who are in the governance group - we've all got day jobs so we can only give it so much time and having someone working on it full time is going to make a huge difference in being able to promote it to the industry and also to the visitor. We're doing work at the moment to adapt it to make it relevant to New Zealand travellers as well. For B&B owners it's really an opportunity for them to ask your visitors if they are aware of the Tiaki Promise, talk to them about what it means, what sort of behaviours that we like to see when we're travelling around New Zealand and they are all just good common sense things - keeping our country beautiful and the way we want to hand it down to future generations. I think particularly with the appointment of this new position it is really a matter of watch this space and you'll be seeing a lot more about Tiaki in upcoming months.

Where can people go to download the information?

All the Tiaki assets are freely available from the Tourism New Zealand Image Library. If you google Tourism New Zealand Image Library, you'll have to register for that but it's a very simple straight forward process and then you can have access to download the Tiaki logo which can be used to display around your property or in your compendiums. The website is tiakinewzealand.com. It's got all the information about what Tiakai means on there.

*Just talking about images just before we go, Ann-Marie, you've got a lovely image on your background. Ann-Marie shared with us at our last coffee zoom catchup **how to put images on your background**. Can you just share that quickly again Ann-Marie and just tell us a little bit about the image you have up now.*

This image today is brand new. We've developed a set of TIA backgrounds so that we've always got the organisation front and centre. Very good branding for us especially in these days when we are all doing more and more virtual meetings. Getting your own image is super simple. On zoom you just go down to the bottom left corner where the video icon is and then is a little arrow beside that that you click on and it says something like "choose virtual background" and so you click on choose virtual background and then you have the choice of Zoom has some templated ones or you can upload your own photos like I've done here. You will also find there is the blurry background setting on that virtual background as well. Hours of entertainment.

Thanks so much for your time today, Ann-Marie, it's been great to talk to you. I'm looking forward to working with you over the next coming months and maybe even year or so.

I'm really hoping to get the chance to stay in a lot more B&Bs. I've stayed in a lot in the UK but I must admit I very rarely stayed in a NZ B&B so I'm going to be making an effort to do that.

Ann-Marie Johnson, Board Member with Fiona Rollings, Association Secretary
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