

From: Spellbound Waitomo <info@glowworm.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 16 May 2024 11:14 am
To: haveyoursay
Subject: Spellbound Glowworm and Cave Tours submission LTP

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

[Block sender](#)

To the Waitomo District Council

We want to express our concern that Waitomo District Council proposes to cut support to Hamilton Waikato Tourism down to \$30 000 pa. We are asking the council to continue to support our R.T.O. to at least the level they have been, \$72k pa.

One of the roles of the R.T.O is to market and network in overseas regions where smaller operators such as ours could never afford to go. Through their size, expertise and reputation they can effectively promote our region. Our own business is happy to support them in return by subscribing to a silver membership and by attending our regional trade show, attending seminars and supporting publications. Our relationship with Hamilton Waikato Tourism has been very beneficial. They were especially supportive during the covid pandemic and have definitely contributed to the rebound of tourism in our area since the borders reopened. We are very appreciative of all they have done to support our business and our industry.

Hamilton Waikato Tourism reports that the Waikato Region attracts \$1.9 billion per year in tourism spend, \$56 million is directly attributable to their activities. Indirectly their contribution will be much greater as marketing has flow on effects which can not be measured. Waitomo is a very significant destination within the region and we directly benefit through visitor money spent right here. Successful tourism depends entirely on networking and marketing, our region has to compete hard for customers with the South Island and the rest of the Pacific. It would be naive to think our success will continue at the same level without the continued work of Hamilton Waikato Tourism.

The Waitomo District has a growing number of small tourism operators. The tourism rebound from covid is almost complete and there is improved confidence among operators, accommodation providers and restaurants. We are hearing of a burgeoning number of small accommodation enterprises setting up or expanding. All individually promote their own businesses and also benefit significantly from the activities of our R.T.O.

Our business has been in operation long enough to remember the loss of Tourism Waikato, (H.W.T.'s predecessor) They had to close completely because of loss of funding in 2007. The GFC followed soon after and this was a double blow to Waitomo's tourism businesses. Our income fell by 40%. This implies the wider district's tourism dollar probably also fell by around 40%. We were very relieved to see Hamilton Waikato Tourism established in 2011, tourism grew steadily again until covid closed borders to international visitors.

We do understand that New Zealand's economy is facing turbulent times with many sectors experiencing downturns in current markets. Waitomo District will be feeling the effects as it depends so much on primary industry. It seems very counter productive to withdraw support from **our** primary industry which is back in business and contributing well.

We advise Waitomo District Council to continue its support of Hamilton Waikato Tourism to at least at current levels. We want to reassure the council that Hamilton Waikato Tourism makes a valuable contribution to our industry. We advise that \$72 000 is a good investment to make on behalf of our district, it may also help keep our district buoyant in these economically interesting times.

Yours sincerely
Pete and Libby Chandler

Spellbound Glowworm and Cave Tours

334 Boddies Road,
Oparure
Te Kuiti 3981

p 0800 773 552 NZ only
e info@glowworm.co.nz
w glowworm.co.nz