

# 'We'll never get a chance like this again'

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*Bianca Ranson. Director Potiki Adventures*

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a massive impact on tourism around the globe, and Waiheke's tourism operators are feeling the full force of the tap being suddenly turned off on domestic and world travel. Owner and director of Potiki Adventures, Bianca Ranson works with overseas visitors and says that as soon as the borders were closed, cancellations were coming in thick and fast. Although the business employs two full-time staff, Bianca says there are between eight and 12 people employed by the company as guides, drivers or in holding workshops, depending on how busy they are. Winter is the busiest time for Potiki Adventures, which works with groups coming from North American universities. They were just gearing up for their busiest months, from May to November, when the pandemic arrived, and Bianca doesn't see New Zealand's borders opening for long-haul flights until the end of the year or even early in 2021. "We have to prepare to be able to sustain ourselves for a year with little income," she says, "but this gives plenty of time to reassess. "I think in a lot of ways it can be a really good thing for the tourism industry, particularly from a Māori perspective. Tourism and the economy have been the reverse of the Māori world view with our connection to the environment being at the top, and that guides us to

the use of resources, which is opposite to the way the economy runs. \*Erin Johnson