

President's Report – 2024 TIAPEI Annual General Meeting
Kent Scales, Board of Directors President, TIAPEI

Dear TIAPEI members, partners, and stakeholders,

I am pleased to provide the President's report for TIAPEI for the 2023 year. Our combined efforts have continued to drive growth and resilience, making PEI a top tourism destination in Canada.

In 2023, our accommodations saw just shy of 684,000 overnight stays in fixed roof, and 333,000 in overnight stays at campgrounds. Traffic by air and bridge were both up and a slight decline on the ferry. Strong visitor numbers in peak summer months were complemented by an increase in off-season traffic, which was supported by festivals and events, and meetings and conventions.

In partnership with Tourism PEI, we launched an ambitious 5-Year Tourism Strategy. This forward-looking plan lays out strategic goals for sustainable growth, visitor engagement, workforce development, and the integration of technology. The strategy emphasizes year-round tourism, enhanced Indigenous tourism experiences, and environmental stewardship. Together, we are positioning PEI as an innovative, sustainable, and accessible destination for all.

Understanding the ongoing challenges in tourism workforce recruitment, TIAPEI hosted a series of Tourism Job Fairs across the Island. These events connected hundreds of job seekers with employers in various sectors of the industry, filling key positions and supporting seasonal and year-round employment. With strong attendance, the job fairs have proven to be invaluable in addressing workforce gaps and promoting careers in tourism.

To ensure a high level of service and hospitality, we launched the TIAPEI Tourism Training Series, offering workshops and courses tailored to industry needs. Topics covered included customer service excellence, cultural awareness, and sustainable practices. These sessions, held in multiple locations, provided tourism operators and staff with valuable skills to enhance visitor experiences and meet evolving market demands.

With the support of ACOA, TIAPEI delivered the PEI Events Innovation Fund (PEIF). This fund helped to fund festivals and events to innovate and expand, creating new opportunities for various events across PEI. From music festivals to culinary celebrations, these events attracted both local and international visitors, creating memorable experiences that showcase PEI's unique culture. The PEIF has been instrumental in strengthening our event-based tourism, drawing visitors during peak and shoulder seasons alike.

In alignment with our commitment to inclusivity and cultural celebration, TIAPEI has deepened partnerships and collaboration with Indigenous PEI, supporting the

development of Indigenous tourism initiatives. This included partnering to deliver the Allies in Epekwitk training to various tourism operators. I would like to take this opportunity to applaud Indigenous PEI for hosting a very successful Atlantic Canada Indigenous Tourism Summit, for the creation of the Indigenous PEI Store and for the ongoing support and development of the Indigenous tourism product offerings on PEI. We believe these efforts add unique value to PEI's tourism experience and looking forward to continued collaboration and growth.

TIAPEI has advocated for critical transportation services, particularly the PEI-to-Nova Scotia ferry, which is essential to many operators. Our ongoing discussions with stakeholders and government partners emphasize the need for consistent and reliable access to and from PEI to support tourism and economic growth. In addition, we continue to work collectively with operators and the provincial government on Island-wide transportation to ensure our that tourism workers can safely travel to their place of employment.

The achievements of this past year underscore the strength and dedication of our members. As we move forward, we are excited to bring the 5-Year Tourism Strategy to life, fostering innovation, inclusivity, and environmental sustainability. Together, we will continue to position Prince Edward Island as a premier, year-round destination.

Thank you for your hard work and commitment to our industry's success.

Sincerely,
Kent Scales
President, TIAPEI