

The Ruapuha Uekaha Hapu Trust the owner and kaitiaki of the Waitomo Glowworm Caves says it is working with Tourism Holdings Limited (THL) as the tourism operator manages the fallout of Covid-19.

Interim Trust Manager Piki Knap said they had a huge amount of sympathy for both the company and the staff affected, many of whom are locals and hapū members. No one in our lifetime has had to deal with a situation like this.

Piki says there is not a business in the world that has not been affected in some way by Covid-19, and sadly tourism has been particularly hard hit.

As the landlord the trust doesn't run the tourism operations. THL has a lease with the Trust to run tours in the Caves and employs the staff who work there.

As, Kaitiaki we work closely with THL and DOC to ensure the cave is looked after appropriately.

We have been here for hundreds of years and we will continue to be for hundreds more. Our people are resilient, and we are confident we will get through this tough time.

The Trust is working with THL, Department of Conservation and Tourism bodies to see what opportunities there might be for staff impacted by what Covid-19 has done to tourism.

The trust has more than 3,000 registered members spread across the country. It supports hapū members with education, marae and kaumatua grants.

Piki says while the trust will see a significant decrease in income this year with the downturn in tourism, the Trust has committed to continuing its current grants and work programme.

Ends