

Cook Islands Visitor Survey Results

July – September 2017

Prepared for Cook Islands Tourism Corporation

by

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Executive Summary

This report focuses on the characteristics, expectations and expenditure patterns of tourists who visited the Cook Islands between 1 July and 31 September 2017. The data presented is collected from an online departure survey (<http://www.mycookislandsvisit.com>). There were 688 individual respondents to the survey - representing a total of 1,461 adults and 152 children in the expenditure analysis (this equates to 3% of all visitors during the period – based on the 2017 visitor arrival data for the July to September period from the Cook Islands Statistics Office).

The majority (68%) of visitors surveyed come from New Zealand, 18% come from Australia. Visitors are well educated (65% of visitors have some form of tertiary education) with a relatively high annual household income (41% earn over NZ\$100,000 per year). Nearly half of the visitors (45%) travel with one companion. Solo travellers are relatively rare (11%).

Over half of those surveyed (58%) are first time visitors to the Cook Islands, a further 27% have visited twice or three times before. The main purpose of visit is holiday-making (75%). The average length of stay in the Cook Islands is 8.2 nights. The majority (96%) of visitors stay either one or two weeks. Twenty one percent of visitors surveyed visited Aitutaki in addition to Rarotonga.

Visitor spend prior to arrival in the Cook Islands (\$1,923 per person) has decreased from the 2016/2017 annual average (\$2,042 per person). Spend on the island (per person per day) is \$138. This spend is lower than the 2016/17 annual average of \$150, and lower than the same quarter for the previous year (\$148 for July to September 2016).

The average local spend per visitor during the entirety of their stay is \$1,137. When pre-paid spend and the local spend are combined, it is estimated that each visitor brings \$1,906 to the Cook Islands economy (or approximately \$232 per day). This figure is lower than the \$2,150 average for 2016/17 and lower than the \$2,137 for the same quarter last year (July to September 2016).

Overall visitor satisfaction levels with Cook Islands services and experiences remain high. The most appealing elements are environment cleanliness and weather; local people; atmosphere; activities, attractions, entertainment and events; food and beverage. The least appealing elements are the lack of public services, facilities and infrastructure; price of goods and services; rubbish and natural environment care; accommodation; customer service; food and beverage; stray animals and mosquitos; attractions and activities; ; poor weather.

The future intentions of visitors remained very similar to the previous year: 93% of those surveyed state that they want to return to the Cook Islands, and 97% would recommend the Cook Islands to friends or family.

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Introduction

The Cook Islands government, local businesses and communities require a clear picture of the characteristics, expectations and expenditure patterns of visitors to the nation. This information enables effective planning and development of the tourism industry and highlights its crucial role within the broader Cook Island economy.

Visitors to the Cook Islands are asked to complete a web-based survey within two weeks of completion of their visit. The Cook Islands online International Visitor Survey has run since mid-2012 and is continuing through 2017.

This report presents the results from July to September 2017. Over this three-month period, 4,318 visitors were contacted by email to take part in the survey, and 688 responses were received: a conversion rate of 16%. These responses cover a total of 1,461 adults and 152 children. The conversion rate for this period is lower than the 2016/17 annual average (30%) and also the July to September quarter (24%). This reduction is simply a reflection of the fact that a tick box indicating desire to participate in the survey was removed from arrival cards in November 2016 – thus we get more email addresses originally but a lower response.

The data presented includes detailed information on:

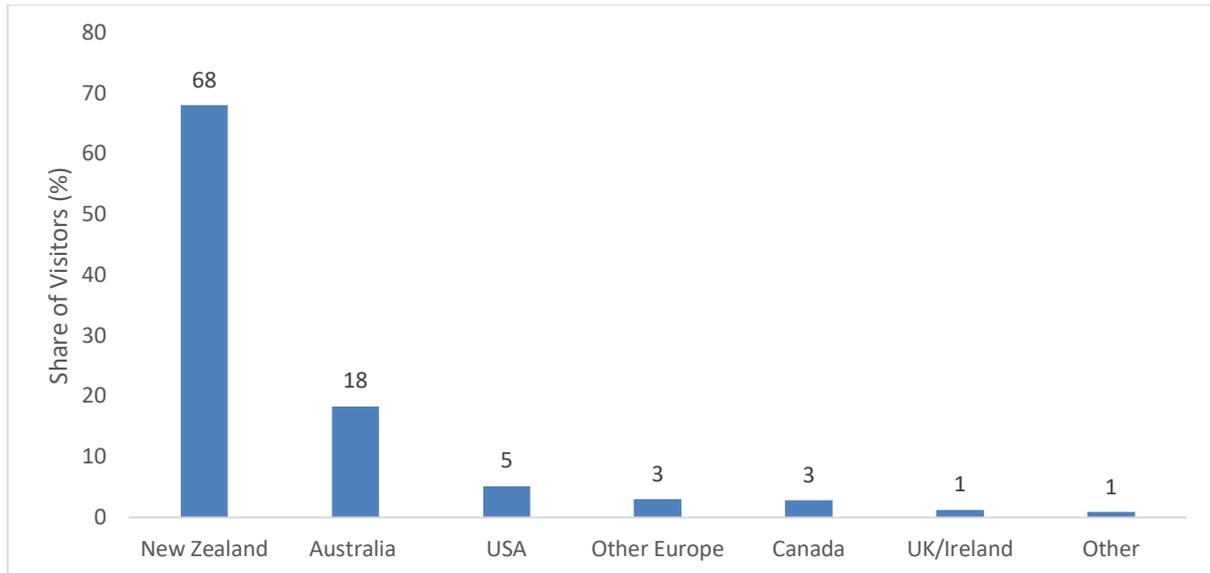
- The characteristics of visitors to the Cook Islands (age, gender, education, country of origin, income, purpose of visit, travelling companions, number of previous visits, length of stay, airline used, islands visited)
- Visitor information obtained about the Cook Islands, the factors influencing in the travel decision making process, and booking information.
- Visitor expenditure (amount of money spent prior to arrival and while in the Cook Islands, items of spending)
- Visitor satisfaction (most and least appealing elements of the visit, overall satisfaction, satisfaction with activities)

Wherever there are significant and/or notable variations from the 2016/17 annual averages or the 2016/17 July – September quarterly findings these figures are highlighted in the discussion that follows.

Visitor Characteristics

The majority (68%) of the visitors surveyed come from New Zealand (Figure 1). The second largest visitor group is from Australia, with 18% of respondents. USA, Europe, Canada, and Great Britain represent the other main source markets.

Figure 1: Country of origin (n=610)



Auckland, Waikato, Canterbury, Bay of Plenty, and Northland account for 73% of New Zealand visitors. For visitors from Australia, the regions of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria generate the highest numbers of arrivals (84%) (Figure 2-3).

Figure 2: New Zealand visitors (n=412)

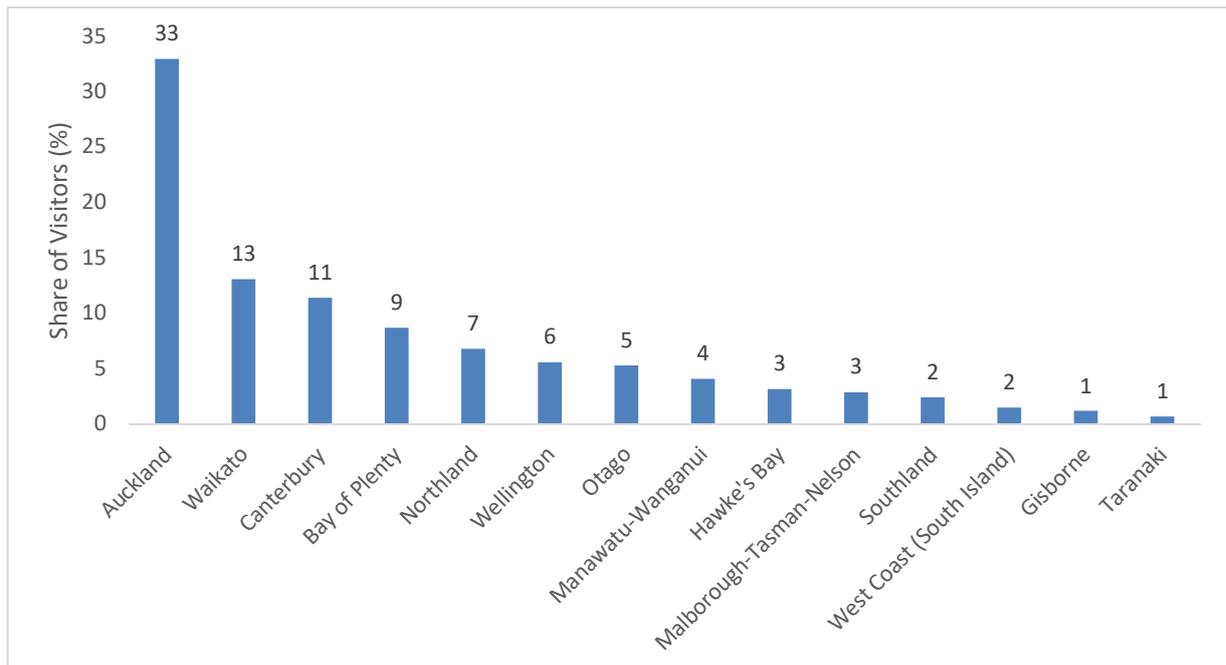
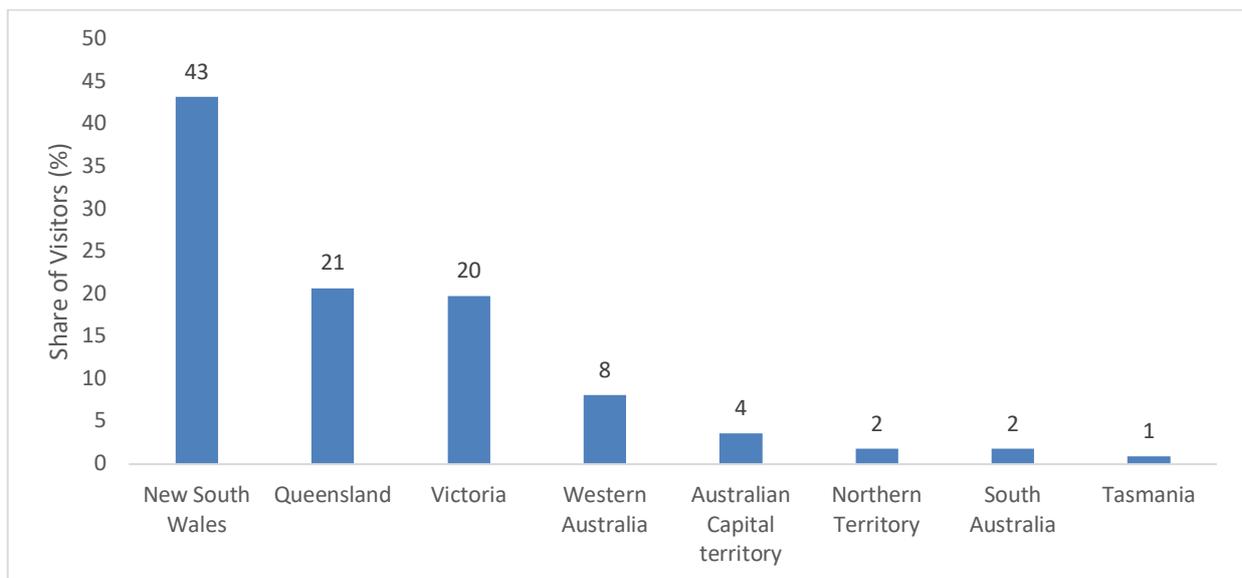
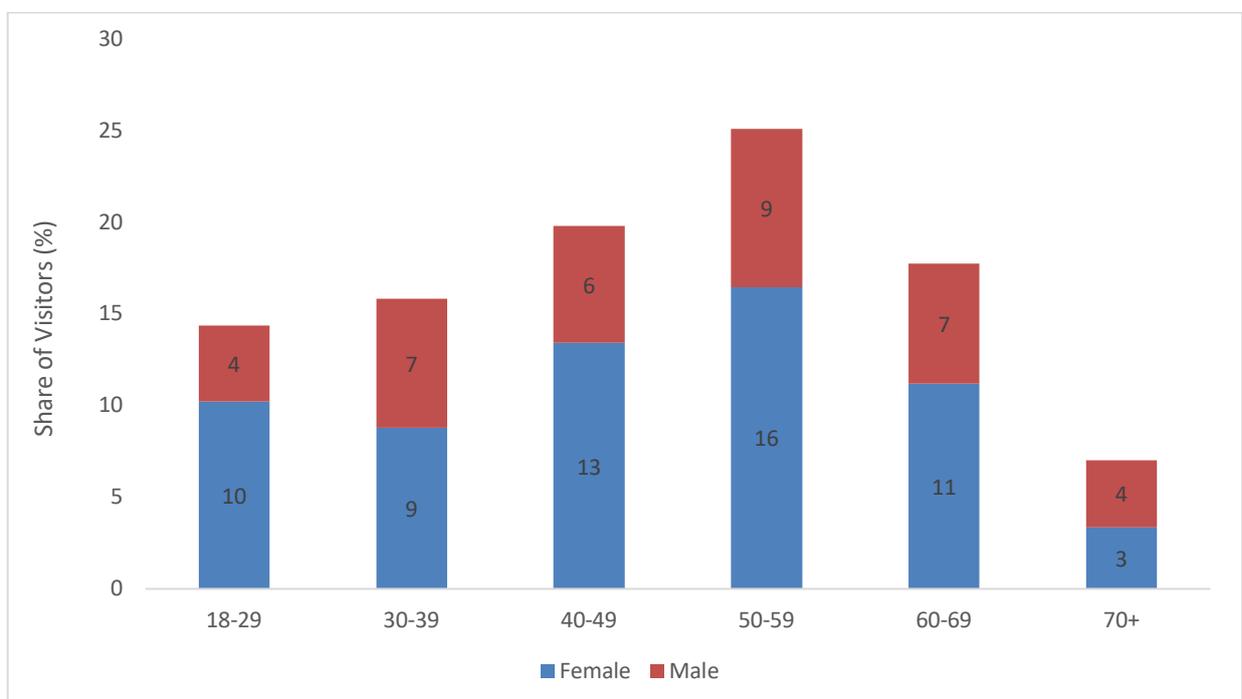


Figure 3: Australia visitors (n=111)



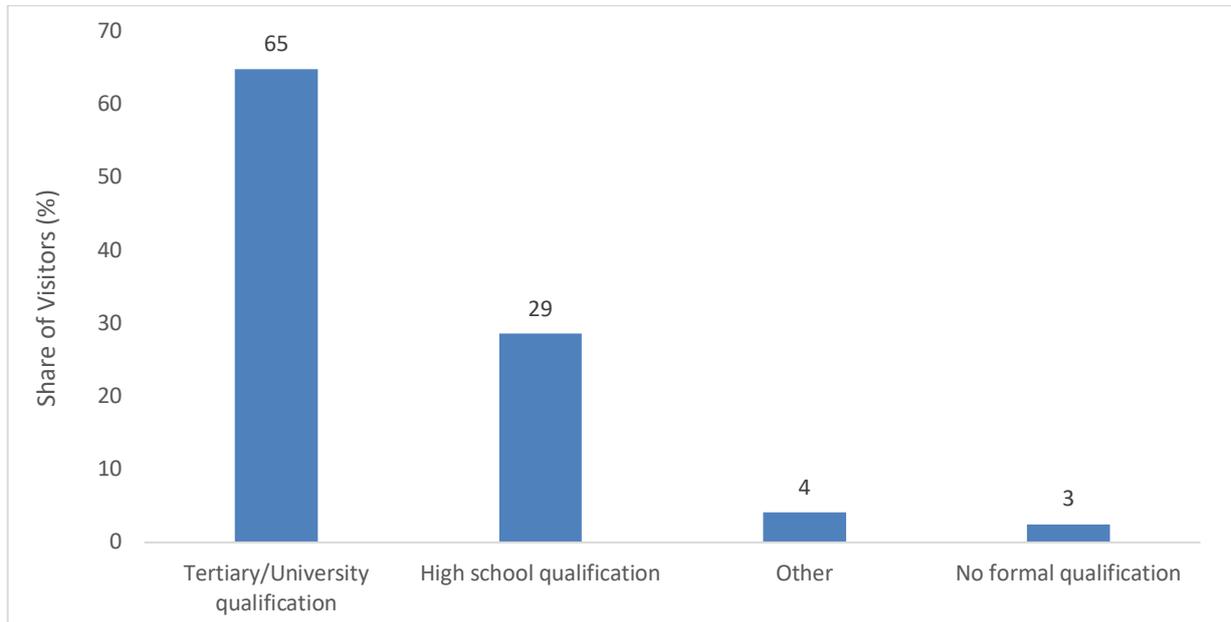
More women (64%) than men (36%) completed the survey (Figure 4). The most significant age categories are the 50 to 59 year (25%) grouping, the 40 to 49 year (19%) grouping, and the 60 to 69 grouping (18%) followed by those aged 60 to 39 (16%) and 18 to 29 (14%). There are relatively few travellers in the 70 plus age bracket (7%).

Figure 4: Distribution of age and gender (n=625)



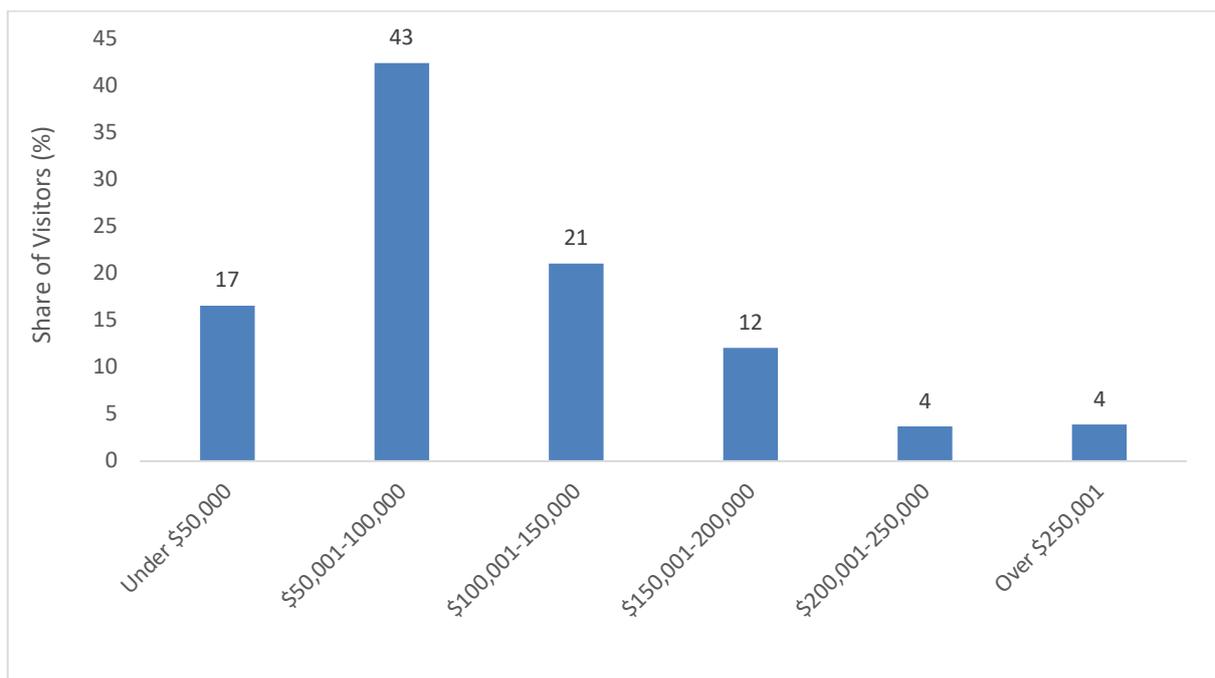
Visitors are well educated: nearly two-thirds (65%) of those surveyed have some form of tertiary qualification, with a further 29% having completed a high school education (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Highest qualification (n=630)



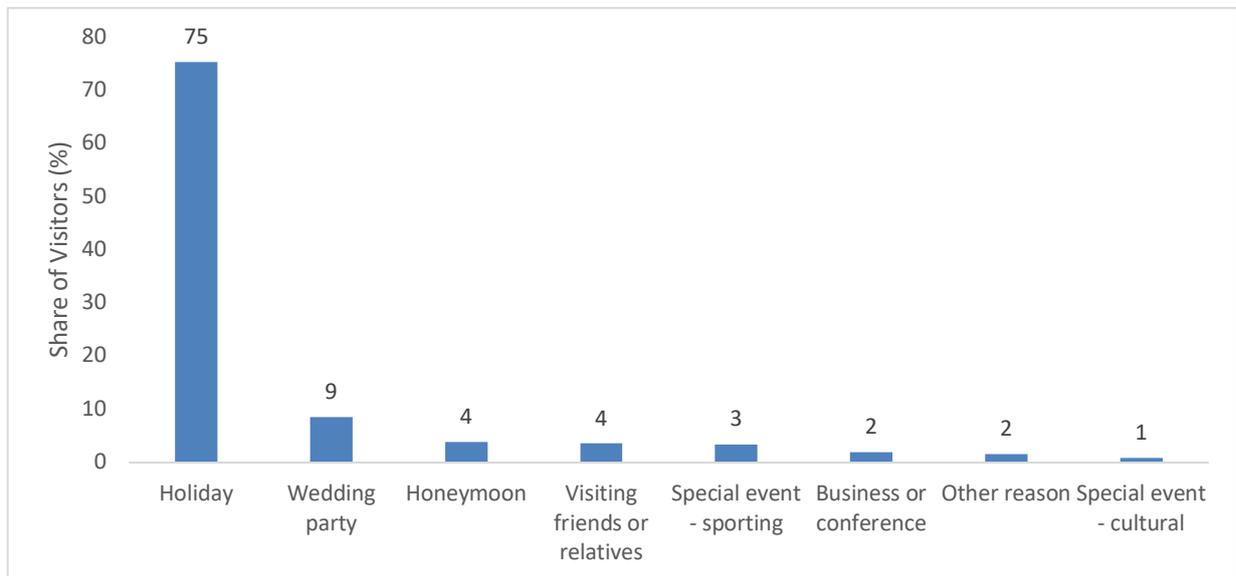
Over a third of visitors (43%) have an annual household income of between NZ\$50,001 and NZ\$100,000. Under a quarter (21%) of those surveyed earn between NZ\$100,001 and NZ\$150,000. A further 20% of respondents have a household income of over NZ\$150,000 per year (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Annual household income in NZD (n=487)



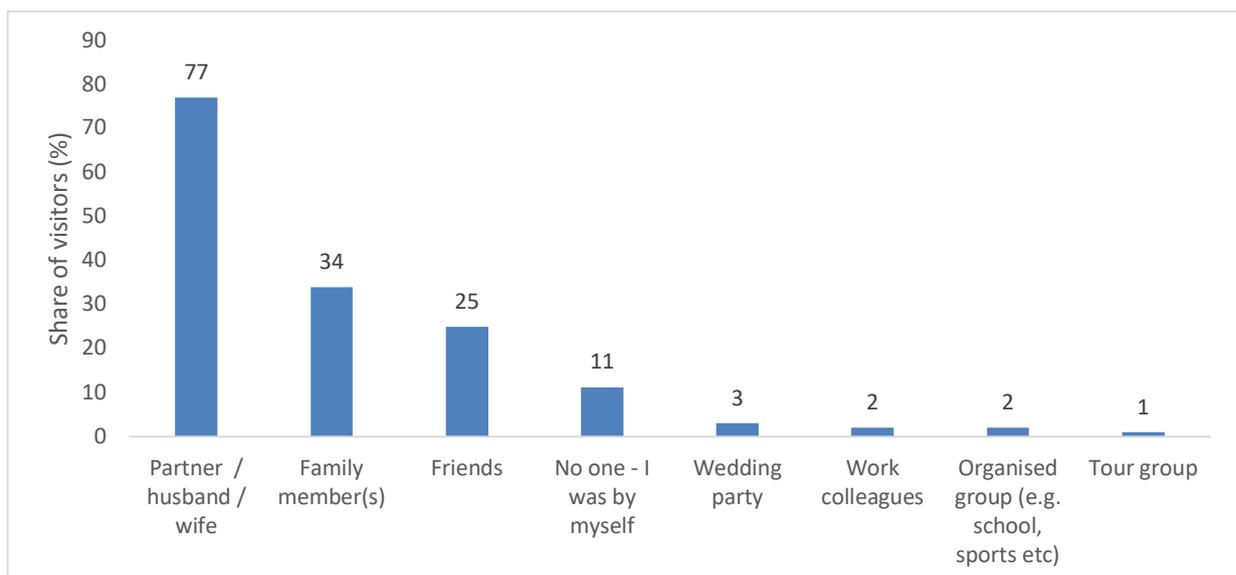
More than three quarters of visitors surveyed come to the Cook Islands for a holiday (75%). Other reasons given include attending a wedding (9%), a honeymoon (4%), visiting friends and relatives (4%), visiting friends or relatives (4%), attending a special event (2%), and for business and conference (2%).

Figure 7: Main purpose of visit (n=686)



Most visitors (77%) surveyed travel to the Cook Islands with a partner or spouse. Visitors also travel with other family members (34%), with friends (25%), or travel alone (11%). Those travelling as part of a wedding party, with colleagues, in an organised group or in a tour group represent a smaller share of the sample (Figure 8).

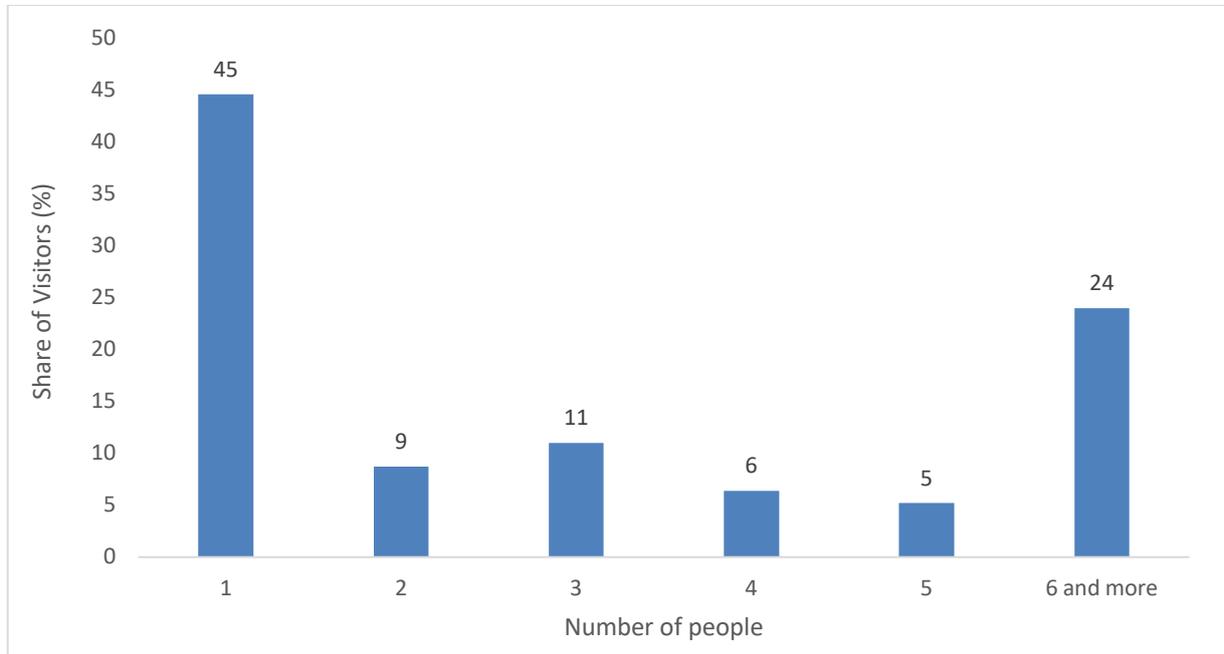
Figure 8: Travelling with whom? (n=608)



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

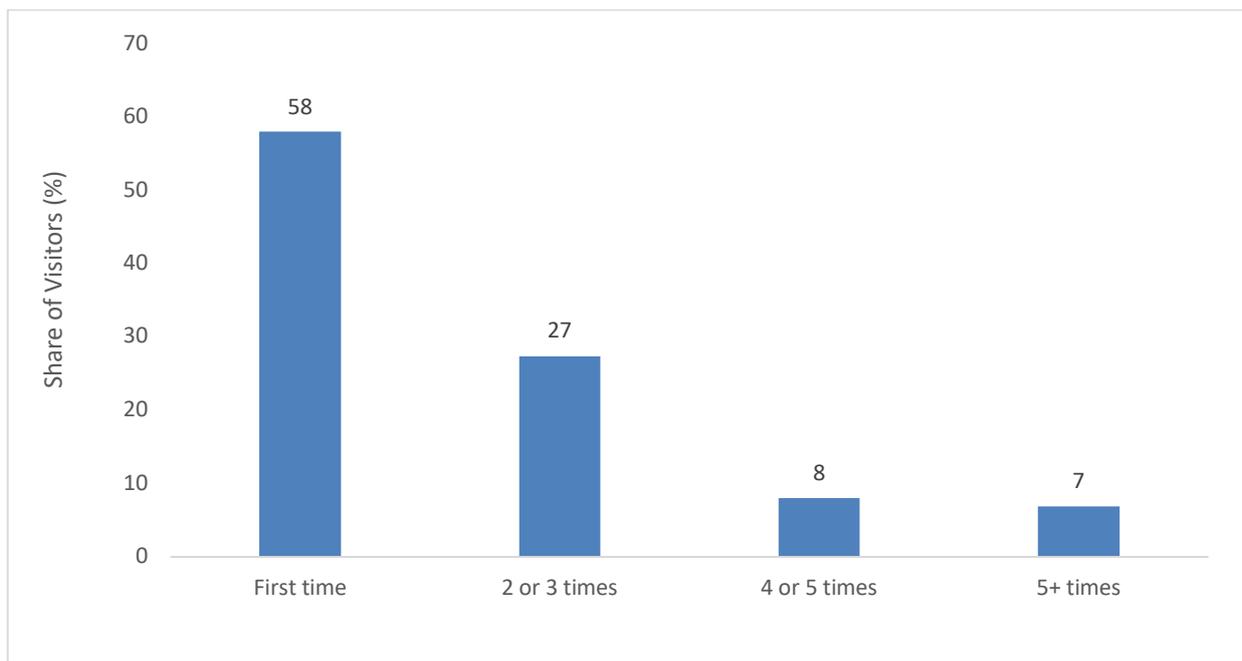
Under half of the visitors (45%) travelled with one companion on their visit to the Cook Islands (Figure 9). Travel groups larger than four people are not very common, with the exception of wedding parties.

Figure 9: Number of companions on trip (n=543)



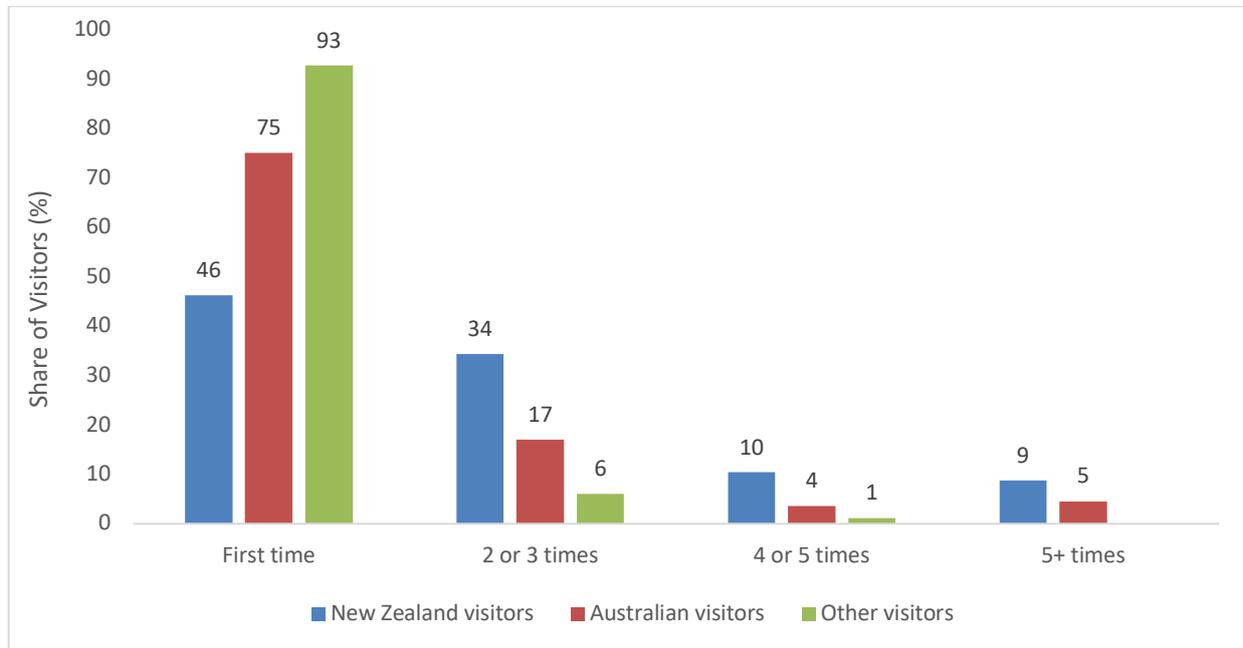
Over half of the visitors (58%) are on their first visit to the Cook Islands. A further 27% have been to the Cook Islands twice or three times before. A smaller group (15%) have visited four or more times (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Number of visits to the Cook Islands (n=628)



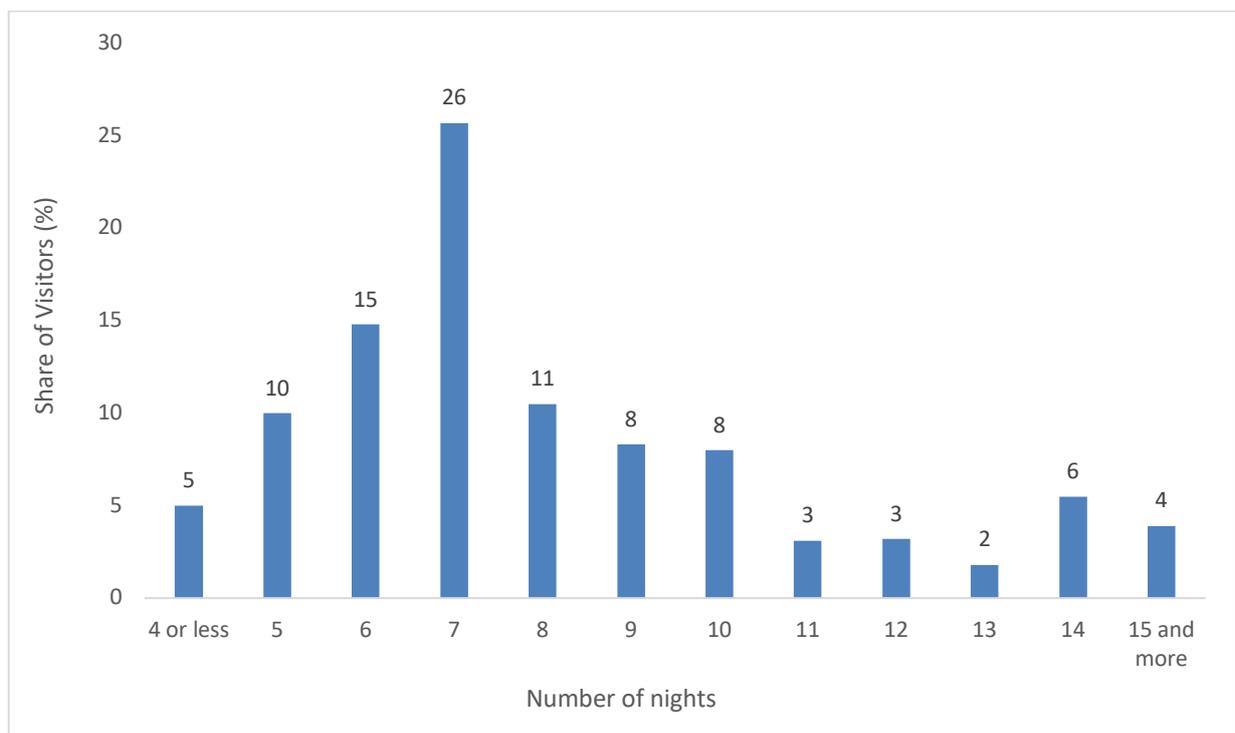
New Zealanders are more likely to be repeat visitors than those from other source markets (Figure 11). Over half of the surveyed visitors from New Zealand (54%) have visited the Cook Islands before compared to only 25% of visitors from Australia and 7% from other countries.

Figure 11: Number of previous visits to the Cook Islands – country breakdown



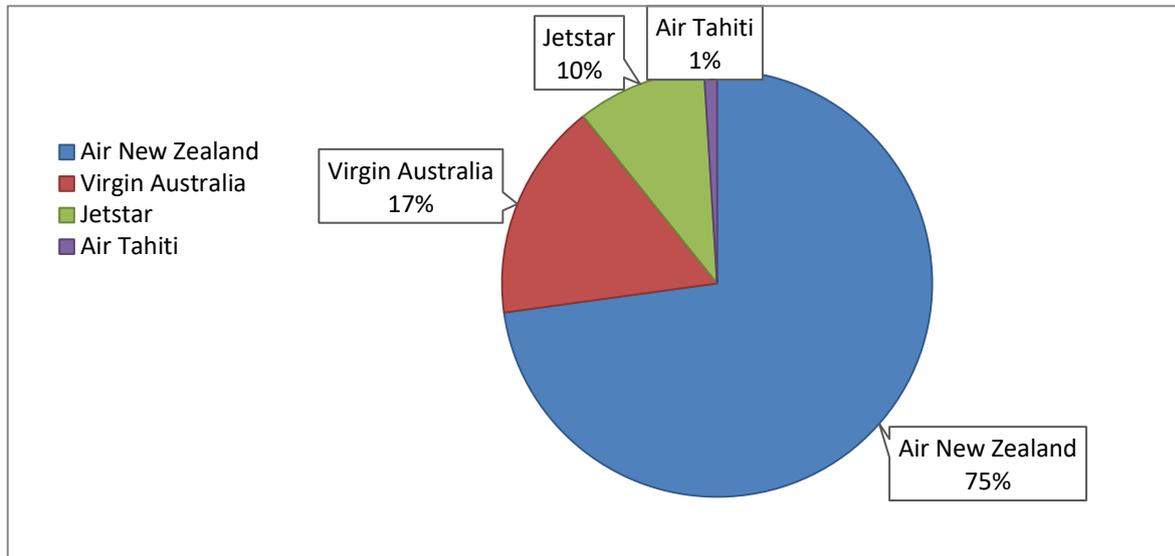
The average length of stay in the Cook Islands is 8.2 nights with 82% of visitors spending 10 or fewer nights in the country (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Length of stay in nights (n=677)



The majority of visitors (75%) travel to/from the Cook Islands with Air New Zealand, a further 17% visitors fly with Virgin Australia (Figure 13), followed by ten percent of visitors travelling with Jetstar and one percent of visitors travelling with Air Tahiti. Visitors that arrived by private charter flights make up less than 1% of air arrivals.

Figure 13: Mode of transport (n=686)

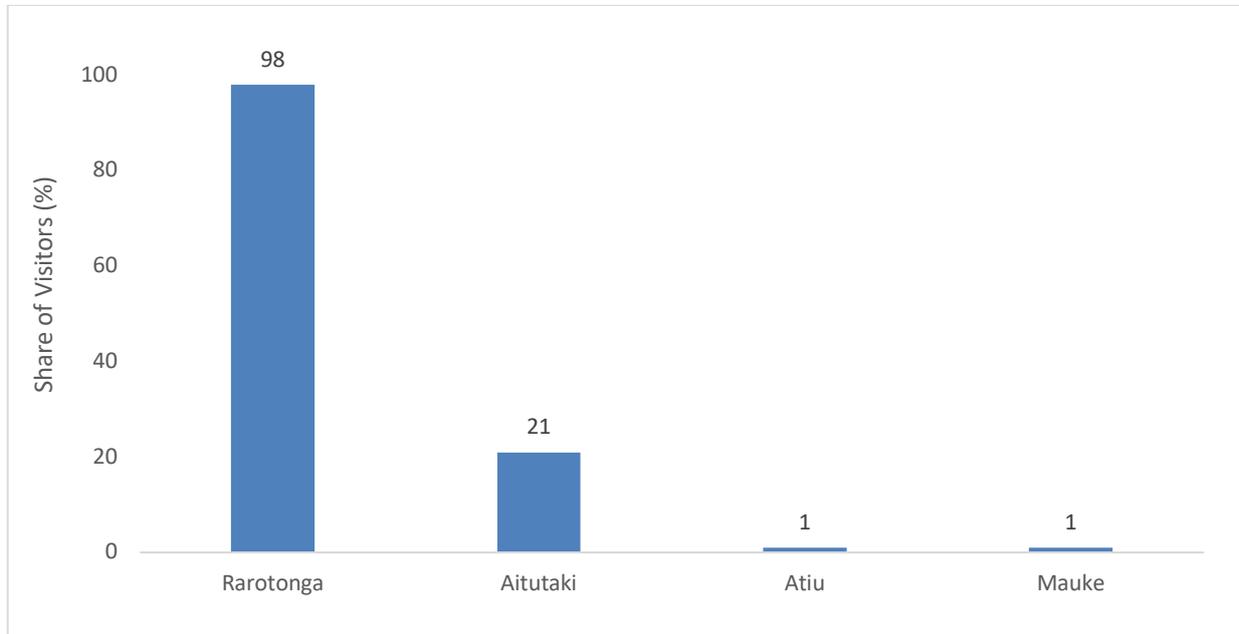


Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

For 91% of visitors, the Cook Islands is the sole destination for their trip. For 9% of the visitors surveyed the Cook Islands is part of a larger journey, including some visitors who are on an around-the-world trip. For those travelling to other countries as part of their trip, the top destination mentioned was New Zealand (76%), followed by travel to Asian countries (26%), other pacific countries (17%), Australia (14%), North America (12%), and Europe (3%).

The vast majority (98%) of visitors to the Cook Islands spend time on Rarotonga, with Aitutaki being the second most visited island (21%) (Figure 14). Other islands rarely feature in the survey responses, with Atiu for example receiving only 1% of visitors.

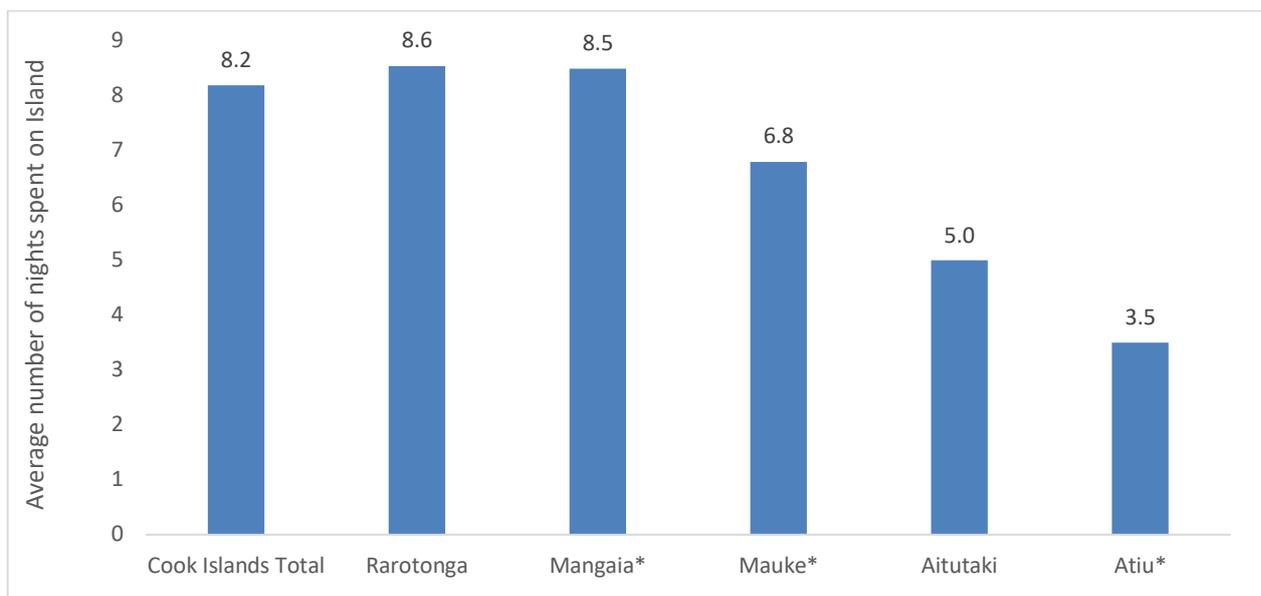
Figure 14: Visited Islands (n=686)



Note: Respondents could visit more than one island, so total may do not add up to 100%.

The average length of stay on Rarotonga is 8.6 nights (Figure 15). For the visitors that went to Aitutaki, the average number of nights spent on the island itself is 5.0. Visitors to Atiu spent an average of 3.5 nights.

Figure 15: Average length of stay in the Cook Islands and on each island (n=680)

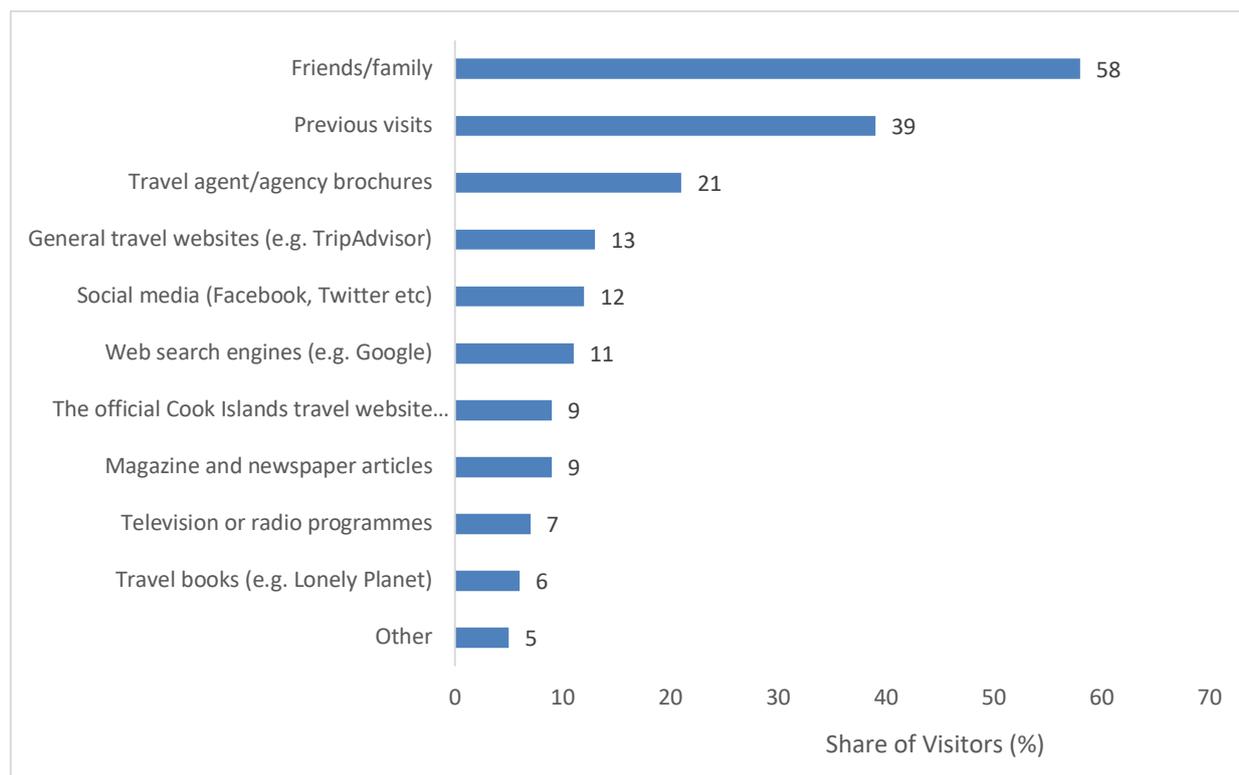


Note: *n<10

Information Sources and Purchasing Behaviour

Participants were asked how they had found out about the Cook Islands as a holiday destination for this trip, and to rank the three sources of information that were most important (Figure 16). Over half (58%) of respondents ranked word of mouth from friends and family members as the most important influence, followed by previous experience (39%), travel agents (21%), and general travel websites (e.g. Tripadvisor) (13%).

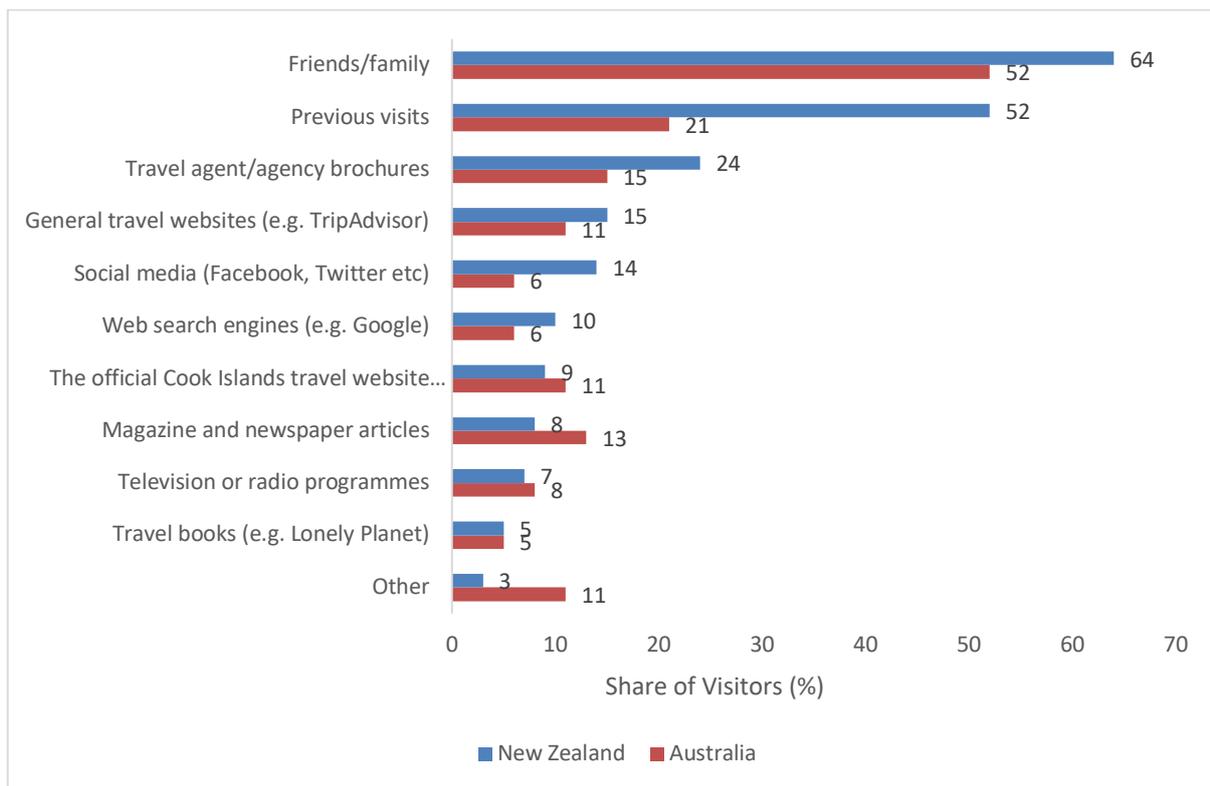
Figure 16: How did you find out about Cook Islands as a destination (n=685)



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

Visitors from New Zealand are more likely to seek information about the destination via word of mouth from friends and family members (64%). There are more repeat visitors from New Zealand than Australia and this is reflected by the fact that over half of visitors from New Zealand (52%) ranked their previous visits as the most important information source (Australian visitors 21%). Australian visitors were more likely to rank travel websites, magazine and newspaper articles, and television or radio programmes as the most important influence.

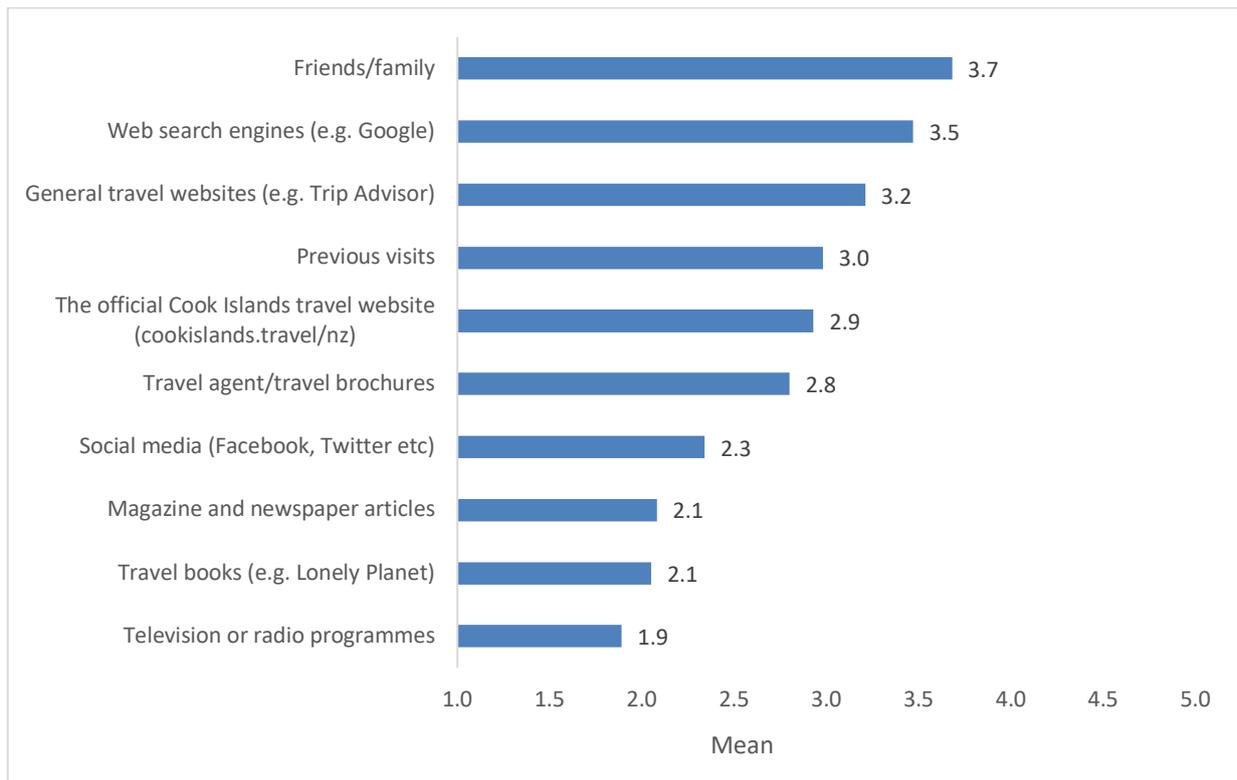
Figure 17: How did you find out about Cook Islands as a destination – country breakdown



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

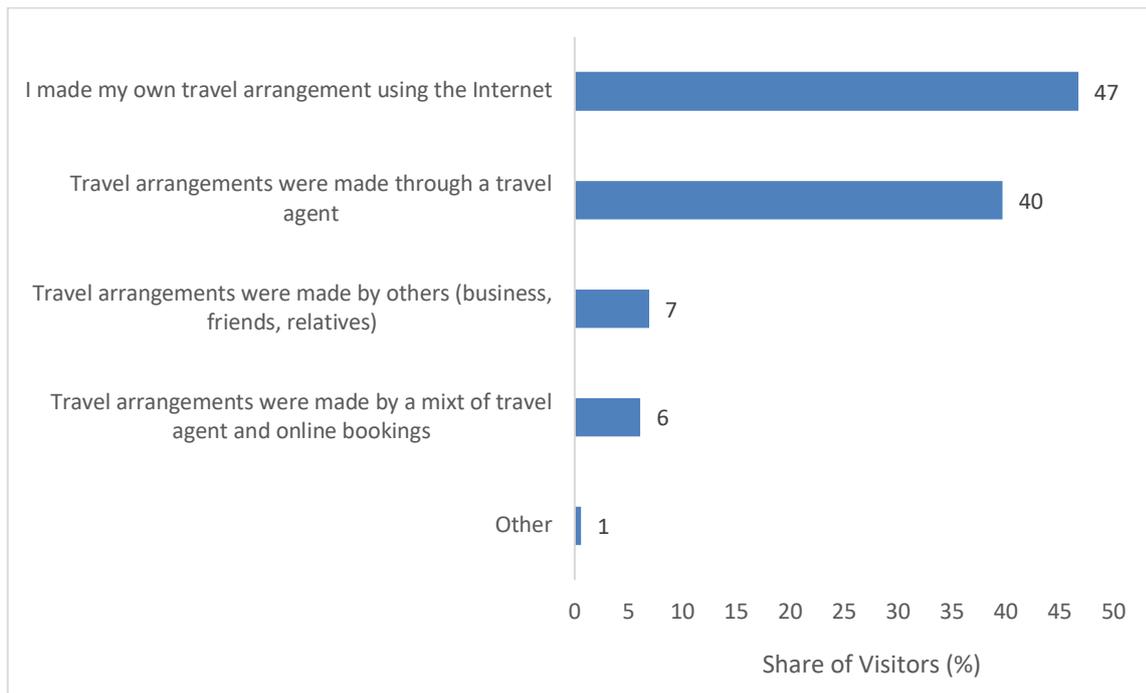
When visitors were asked to rank the importance of the listed information sources used to plan their trip, friends and family members are ranked as the most important source (3.7) (Figure 18). Other important information sources are web search engines (3.5), general travel website (3.2), previous visits (3.0), the official Cook Islands travel website (2.9), and travel agent/travel brochures (2.8).

Figure 18: Importance of information source used when planning your trip (n=458)



Nearly half of visitors surveyed (47%) make their own travel arrangements through online websites or have booked directly with hotels or airlines (Figure 19). A smaller group of visitors surveyed (40%) purchased a pre-paid trip through travel agents, followed by 7% of visitors whose travel arrangements were made by others such as business, friends, and relatives.

Figure 19: How did you purchase your travel to the Cook Islands (n=685)

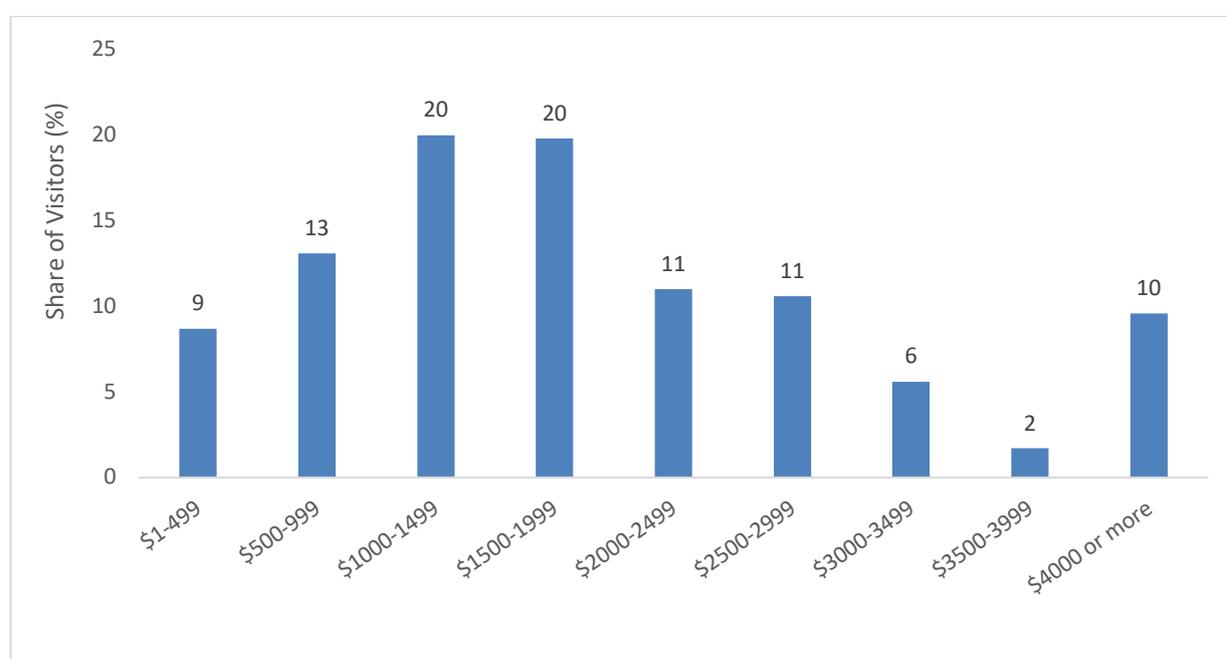


Visitor Expenditure

The survey asks a range of questions about visitor expenditure, both prior to arrival and while in the Cook Islands. All the figures below are based on respondent estimates of their own spending and any others they spent money on (e.g. spouse, children). The following pre-paid expenditure section is based on the number of adults and children that respondents included in their cost estimates: 1,613 people comprising 1,461 adults and 152 children.

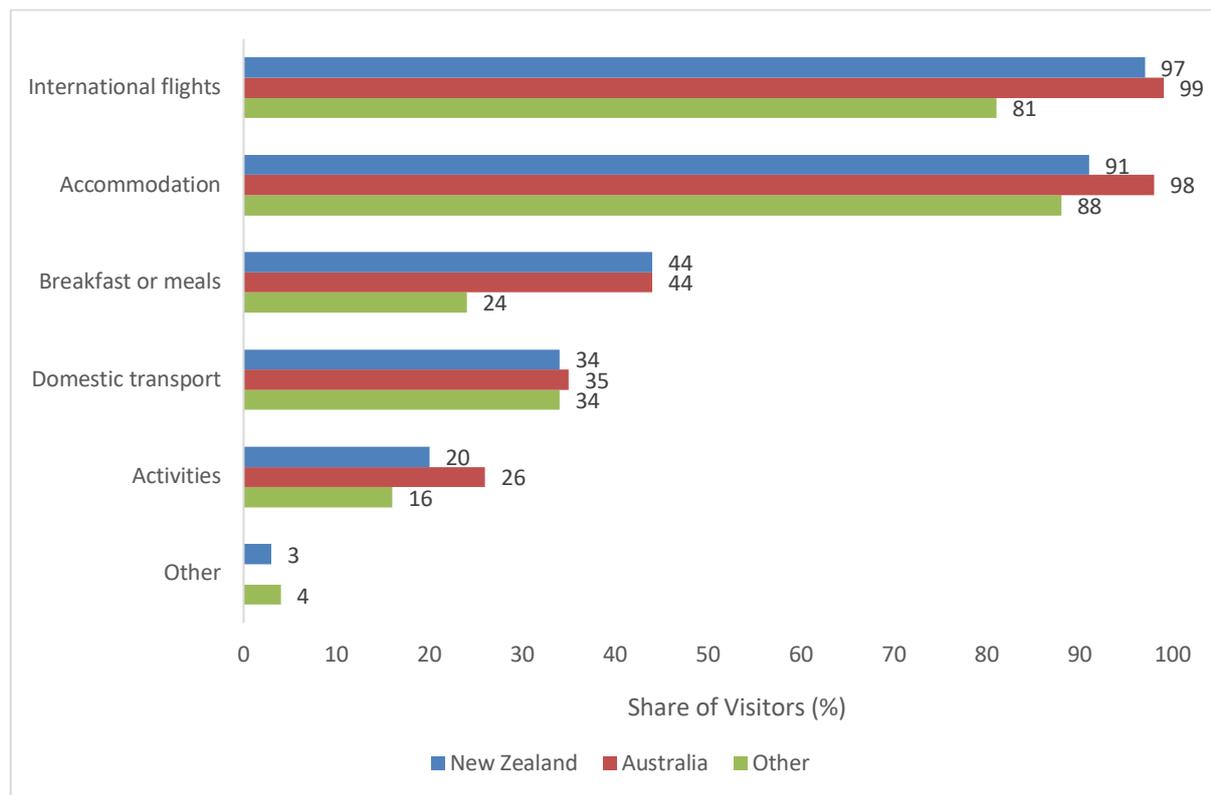
On average, visitors to the Cook Islands spend NZ\$1,923 per person prior to arrival. Over half (51%) of the visitors spend between NZ\$1,000 and NZ\$2,499 prior to arrival. These figures are lower than the data from the previous year (average spend of NZ\$2,042 for 2016/17), and the same quarter for 2016/17 (NZ\$2,050) (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Amount of money spent per person prior to arrival (n=481)



In addition to international flights and domestic transport, spending prior to arrival usually includes accommodation: in 91% of the cases for New Zealand visitors, 98% for Australian visitors, and for 88% of visitors from other countries (Figure 21). Under half of visitors prepaid for breakfast and meals prior to arrival (44% for New Zealand, 44% of Australian visitors, and for 24% of visitors from other countries) which is lower than the data from the previous year and in the same quarter for 2016/17.

Figure 21: Items included in money spent prior to arrival



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

It is difficult to estimate accurately the proportion of the pre-paid spend that flows to the Cook Islands. For the purposes of this study, and based on previous research in the region, we conservatively estimate that 50% of the pre-paid spend is allocated to airfares. Of the remaining 50% of the pre-paid spend, 80% of this flows back to local operators. In total this means that for every pre-paid dollar, 40 cents flows to the Cook Islands. We assess that the pre-paid spend figure per day flowing back to local operators, excluding flights, is NZ\$94 and for the average total visit is NZ\$769 (over 8.2 nights).

The total spend per visitor per day while in the Cook Islands (excluding any pre-paid expenditure) is NZ\$138 (Table 1). This figure is lower than overall spend figure for 2016/17 (NZ\$150) and same quarter in 2016/17 (NZ\$148). The majority of money spent locally is on accommodation (40%), restaurants, cafes and bars (23%), and shopping (8%). These per person expenditure figures are based on 688 survey responses covering a total of 1,603 people (1441 adults and 162 children).

By multiplying daily spend by the average stay (8.2 nights) we can see that each visitor spends on average NZ\$1,137 during their time in the Cook Islands. The total figure of what is spent locally and what flows back to the Cook Islands from pre-paid expenses is therefore NZ\$232 per visitor per day (\$138+\$94), or NZ\$1,906 (\$1,137+\$769) for each visitor.

Table 1: Average visitor expenditure in the Cook Islands (per person per day)

Expenditure Items	N=688	
	Mean (NZ\$)	(% of spend)
Accommodation	56	40
Restaurant, cafes and bar	32	23
Shopping	12	8
Activities	9	7
Vehicle rental	8	6
Domestic flights	7	5
Groceries	7	5
Other	2	1
Petrol	2	1
Internet cost	2	1
Cruising	2	1
Public transportation	1	1
Total Expenditure	138	100

Table 2 provides an overview of the in-country expenditure by the visitor's country of origin. Visitors from USA/Canada have the highest average spend per day at NZ\$183. By comparison, New Zealand visitors spend on average NZ\$42 less per day (NZ\$141).

Table 2: Average expenditure per visitor per day by country of origin

Expenditure Items	n=49	n=112	n=416	n=26
	USA/ Canada	Australia	New Zealand	Europe
Accommodation	78	62	58	53
Restaurant, cafes and bar	39	41	33	29
Shopping	13	18	11	16
Activities	14	8	10	9
Vehicle rental	7	10	9	4
Groceries	7	7	7	5
Domestic flights	13	13	6	3
Other	3	1	2	2
Petrol	1	2	2	0
Cruising	1	1	2	2
Internet cost	3	2	2	1
Public transportation	2	1	1	1
Total spend (NZ\$)	183	166	141	124

Average Australian spend per person for this quarter (NZ\$166) was lower compared to the 2016/17 average of NZ\$185, but higher than the same quarter in 2016/17 (NZ\$165). New Zealanders' spend of NZ\$141 per person per day was lower than the average of \$143 for 2016/17 and the same quarter in the previous year (NZ\$148). European visitor spend at NZ\$124 per person per day was down from the average for 2016/17 of NZ\$146, and lower than the same quarter in the previous year (NZ\$152). The average spend of NZ\$183 for visitors from USA/Canada for this period was higher than the 2016/17 average of NZ\$162, and the figure for same quarter in 2016/17 (NZ\$139).

Visitor Satisfaction

Visitors were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with their experience of the Cook Islands on a scale from 1 'very dissatisfied' to 5 'very satisfied' (Figure 22). Over two thirds (70%) of the visitors surveyed were 'very satisfied' with their overall experience of the Cook Islands. Very few visitors (2%) were unsatisfied (a score of 2 or lower out of 5) with their visit.

Figure 22: Overall satisfaction with experience of the Cook Islands (n=634)

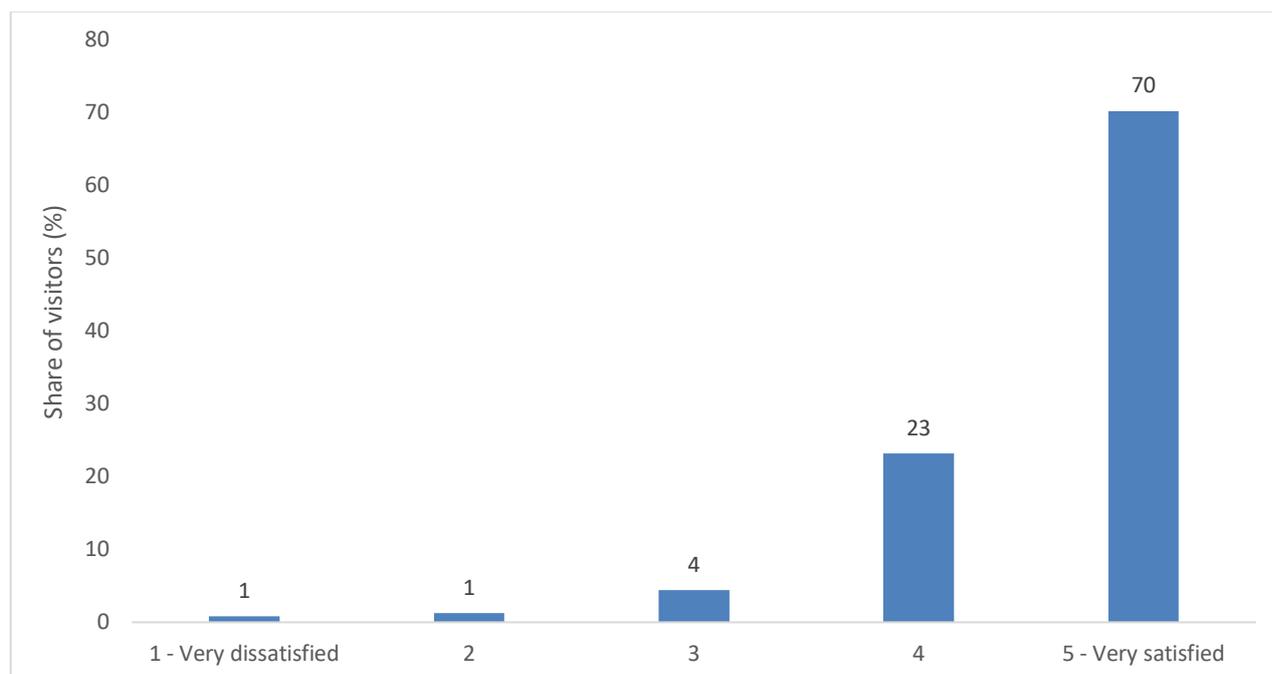


Figure 23 shows the percentage of respondents who undertook specific activities while on their visit to the Cook Islands. Almost all visitors participate in water activities and visit at least one restaurant or café during their trip. Most of the respondents (90%) visit a local market, and 62% of visitors experience an Island Night and Feast Show.

Visitor satisfaction is generally high for all activities undertaken (almost all registering more than 4 out of a possible high of 5) (Figure 23). Activities involving cultural interaction (average satisfaction of 4.6) rank the highest, followed by land-based products (4.5), shopping (4.4), and water-based experiences (4.3). It should be noted that some activities e.g. kitesurfing, bonefishing, whale watching are characterised by relatively low numbers of participants (n=11-27).

Figure 23: Degree of participation in activities (n range=11-666)

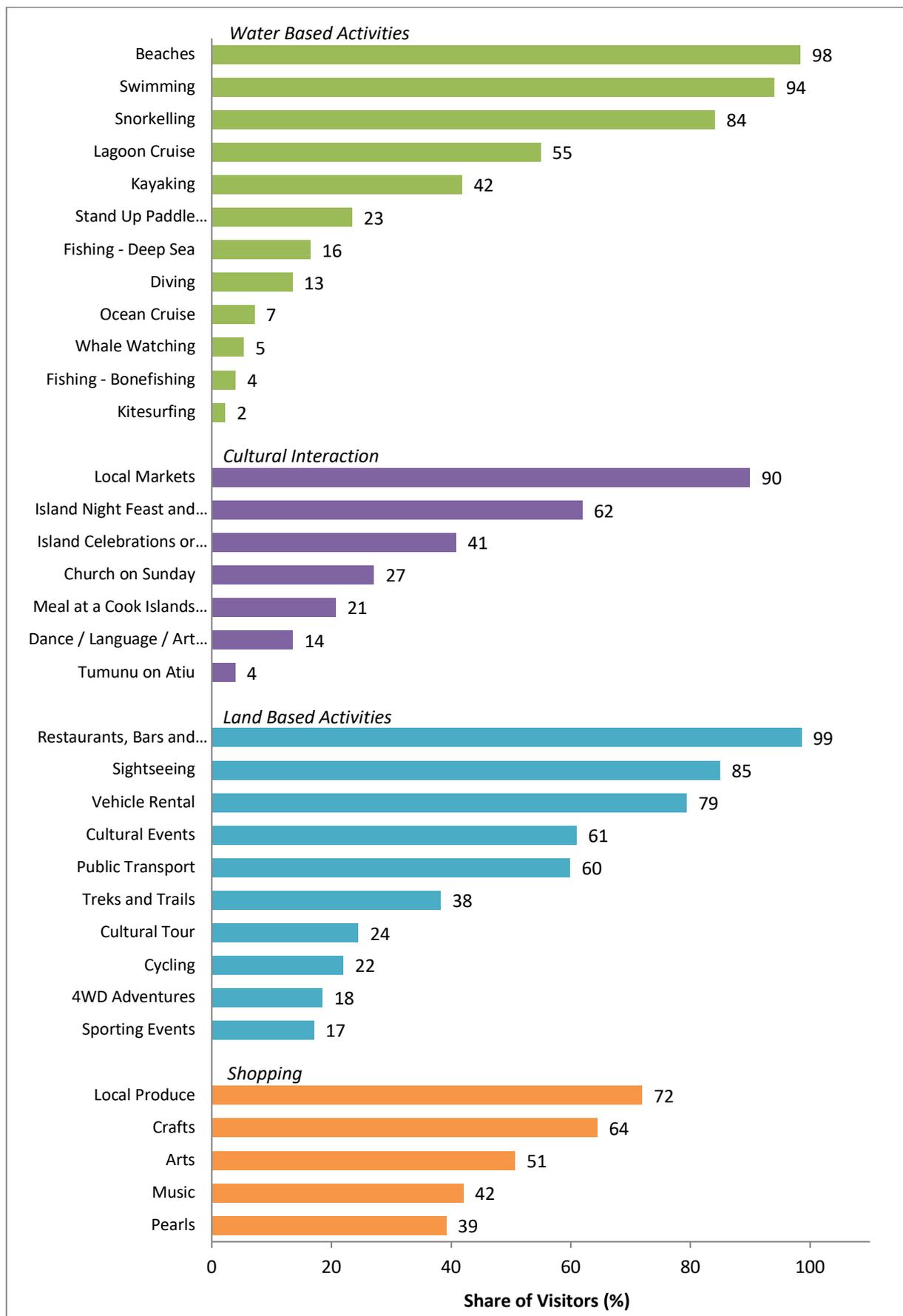
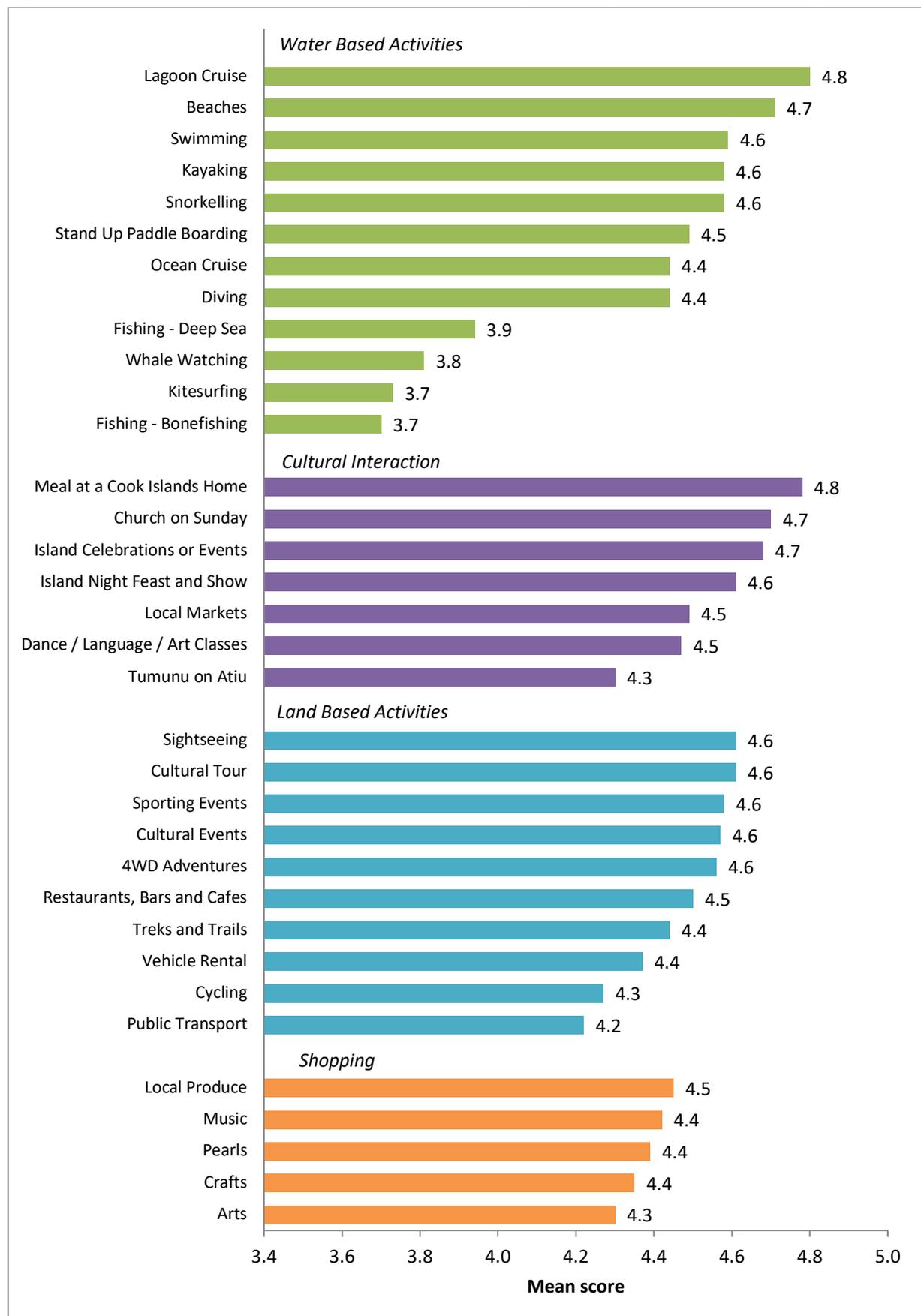


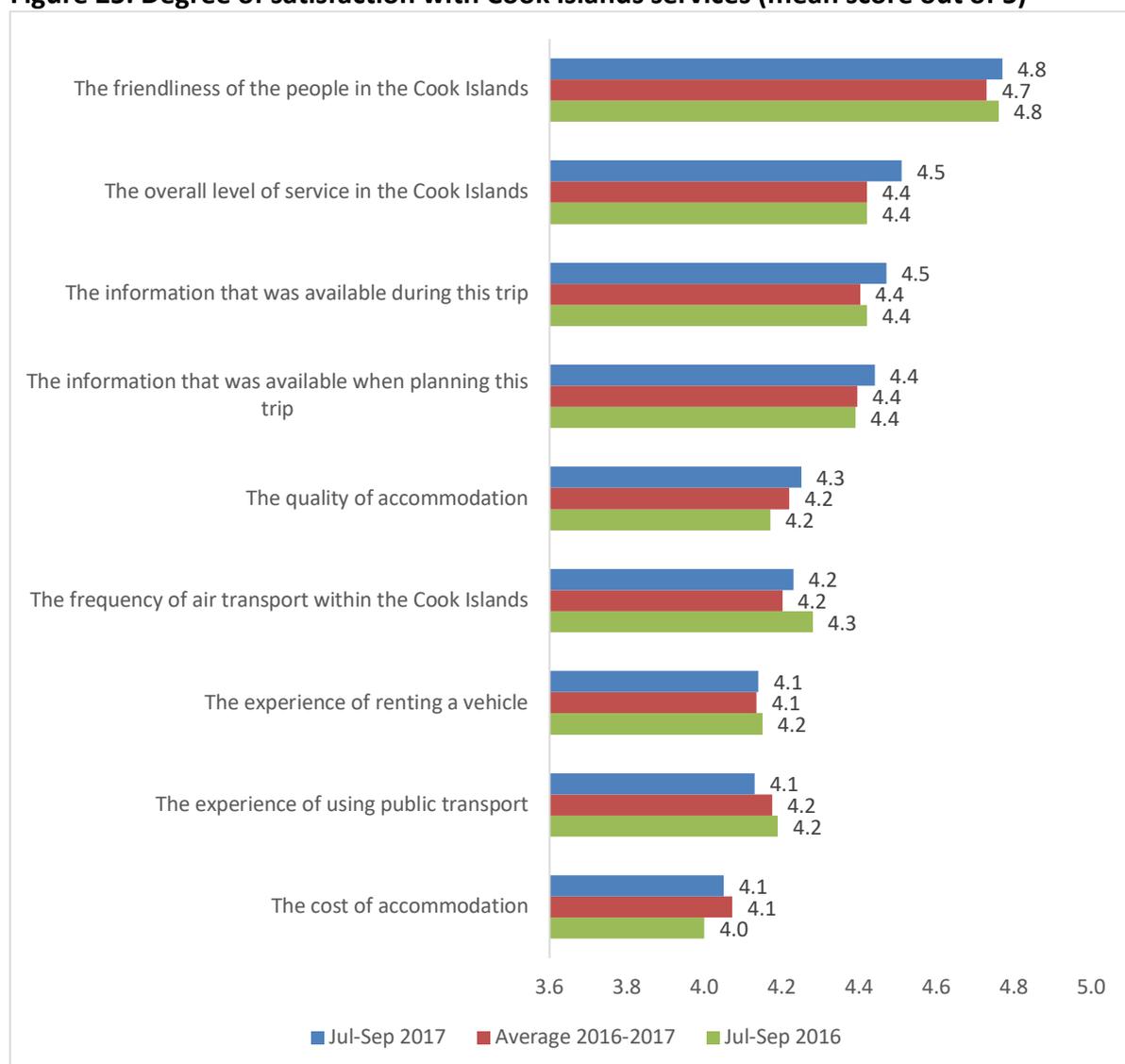
Figure 24: Degree of satisfaction in activities participated in (mean score out of 5)



Visitors were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with nine different statements relating to their most recent visit to the Cook Islands. Responses from the period of July to September are compared to the annual average for 2016/17, and the same quarter for 2016/17 (Figure 25). Respondents have consistently given the friendliness of the people in the Cook Islands the highest score.

As can be seen from Figure 25, visitor satisfaction level with the frequency of air transport within the Cook Islands, the experience of renting a vehicle, and the experience of using public transport are slightly lower than the same quarter in 2016/17.

Figure 25: Degree of satisfaction with Cook Islands services (mean score out of 5)



Most appealing aspects of the Cook Islands

Visitors were asked “What did you find most attractive or appealing about the Cook Islands on your most recent visit?” (Table 3). The most appealing elements of the Cook Islands experience are the beautiful and clean natural environment, the friendly and welcoming local people, the peacefulness and relaxing atmosphere of the islands, and the tourist attractions and activities on offer. Smaller numbers of visitors mentioned aspects such as food and beverage (12%), convenience and safety (6%), accommodation (5%), culture (5%), the level of service experienced (4%), not too commercialised aspect (3%) and the overall good experience (3%).

Table 3: Most appealing aspects of the Cook Islands (n=636)

Themes	Share of respondents (%)
Environment, cleanliness & weather	48%
Local People	46%
Atmosphere	29%
Activities, attractions, and entertainment & events	23%
Food and Beverage	12%
Convenience & Safety	6%
Accommodation	5%
Culture	5%
Level of service	4%
Un-commercial	3%
Overall good experience	3%

* Share of respondents who made a comment that falls into each theme. Respondents could give more than one answer, so total does not add up to 100%.

Environment, cleanliness & weather

Nearly a half of the respondents (48%) considered the destination’s beautiful scenery, natural environment, and the warm waters and climate to be the most appealing aspects of their Cook Islands experience. Visitors used words such as ‘beautiful’, ‘clear’, ‘clean’, ‘stunning’, ‘breath-taking’, ‘amazing’, and ‘unspoilt’ to describe the environment. Most comments here focused on the beauty and the cleanliness of the beaches and lagoons, the weather, the warm and clear water, and the beauty of the islands in general. Comments included:

“The clear ocean water absolutely beautiful.”

“The warm weather, beautiful beaches.”

“The lagoon beaches, the warm climate, and the locals were all very friendly. Beautiful scenery on the trails and all around Raro. Very interesting place, very different pace of life!”

"The tropical and laid back nature of Aitutaki, sunshine, the lagoon and crystal clear water."

"Beautiful beaches & the climate."

"...scenery was just amazing. We will never forget the beautiful beaches, sunsets, how lean the islands are kept, conservation of islands and protection of wildlife."

"Tropical paradise."

"Also, it is really good to see a developing place like this place so much emphasis on the environment and realising the need for recycling, renewable energy and caring for nature."

Local people

A forty six percent of the respondents (46%) noted that the most appealing part of their visit was their interaction with local people in the Cook Islands with comments about the friendliness, welcoming nature of local people. Key words that dominated the responses included 'caring', 'friendly', 'beautiful', 'welcoming', 'helpful', 'lovely', 'kind', 'nice', 'happy', 'warmth' and 'accommodating'. Comments included:

"Without a doubt the people. Having travelled extensively around the world I have found in most countries those working in the tourist industry provide you with a painted on smile and a very fake greeting (its part of the job). But in the Cook Islands the smiles, greetings and questions are genuine and friendly, the high profile attractions around the world could learn from the Cook Islanders."

"The friendly polite happy locals."

"Friendliness of the people stood out, they were always smiling and helpful."

"The friendliness of the people and the helpful nature of everybody to ensure a fabulous time."

"The wonderful friendly people and being able to mix with the locals - not so much 'them and us' as there is on the other islands."

"The People are your greatest asset to be invited into such a beautiful culture and expect nothing in return makes the Cook Islands a special place."

"The people from there very friendly easy to talk with. Always smiling & happy, willing to explain things with you if you wanted info."

"Very helpful & extremely caring people. Also they were very happy to do anything for us."

"The indigenous Aitutaki population where magic. Felt welcome and really enjoyed the interaction."

"Most Aitutaki and all Palmerston people are beautiful: they're friendly, honest and incredibly hospitable. We very much like about Aitutaki that foreigners can't buy land/houses there unless they have a blood link to the island. Another attraction is that money is less important than their faith to Aitutaki locals and that they therefore don't want flights on Sunday. We support them in that. Life on Aitutaki and Palmerston is so pure and natural"

"People of the Cook Islands are very genuine friendly and down to earth proud of what they have."

Atmosphere

Nearly thirty percent of visitors surveyed (29%) focused on the relaxed atmosphere of the Cook Islands. They considered the Cook Islands to be very peaceful, quiet, relaxing, and laid-back, which made it a good destination to 'chill out' and 'unwind'. Respondents used words such as 'relaxing', 'peaceful', 'laid back', 'slow pace' and 'quiet' to describe the overall atmosphere of the Cook Islands. The notion of 'island time' was also mentioned. Comments included:

"Relaxed holiday with the laid back local community, this helps me to unwind and is an important part of my time away. Would hate to see that change for the sake of any perceived efficiency."

"Relaxing feeling throughout the island."

"The relaxing lifestyle and laying on the deck chair poolside/lagoon side at Manuia Beach Resort."

"The slow pace means you can unwind and do nothing."

"Relaxing, friendly, family orientated atmosphere."

"Relaxation straight away - feels immediately like New Zealand but relaxes and chilled."

"Incredibly easy time out that is laid back and fun."

"The general slow, laid back, unhurried pace."

"It's so laid back, relaxed, unspoiled, not crowded, absolutely loved every minute..."

"The fact that it was definitely Island time."

Activities, attractions, entertainment & events

Activities, attractions, entertainment and events were mentioned by 23% of respondents as the most appealing elements of their visit to the Cook Islands. Most comments in this category focus on water-based activities such as swimming, snorkelling, diving, kayaking, fishing and lagoon cruises. Land-based activities that respondents mentioned included hiking, walking, cycling, cultural tours, events and local markets. Aitutaki lagoon is the most outstanding attractions of the Cook Islands. Comments included:

“Snorkelling the lagoon. Love swimming every year I go back...”

“The fly in day trip to Aitaki was brilliant. The day cruise around the islands and crystal blue water was a real highlight. The food on the cruise and entertainment by our host Arki was first class. The night markets at Muri Beach was another highlight ith cheap local food. The beach and lagoon in front of the Muri Beach Club was outstanding The free hire of paddle boards and kayaks was very appealing.”

“Safe swimming for small children and outstanding snorkelling and swimming for the entire family.”

“The diving was spectacular - saw sharks and turtles! The mixture of slow paced and fast paced activities to suit everyones needs. Still quite old school which I liked.”

“The hiking to "The Needle" on Rarotonga was very memorable. I loved the variety on Rarotonga...mountains + water both provide a lot of opportunities for sports and staying physically active during vacation. The highlight was staying in Aitutaki for 4 nighs. Truly the most beautiful lagoon, with the best people. I will forever remember the motus, kayaking, snorkeling, etc I was able to do on the Vaka lagoon cruise.”

“The lagoon tour was amazing and driving around the island exploring.”

“The lagoon, the wase of activities. Rope swings on the beach, tasty places to eat newr the water, the sailing club, fresh coconuts, hearing the languages of Cook Islanders, seeing the dances, songs and performances of Constitution week, the local market, he beach/lagoon, thr cultural museum, the cross island trek, the flora and fauna.”

“Then the lovely enclosed reef for snorkeling. Fish feeding and general activities around the resort. Local markets were fabulous.”

“We loved going to the Constitution week celebrations, scootering around the island, the Vaka lagoon cruise, and the general beauty of Aitutaki. One of the best places we've been!”

“Cultural events and kayaking.”

Food and beverage

Just twelve percent of respondents (12%) mentioned food and beverages as the most appealing aspect of their trip. Their comments focused on the quality and range of fresh food available in the Cook Islands. They used words such as 'great', 'amazing', 'excellent', 'high standard/quality', 'good', 'delicious', 'healthy', 'authentic' and 'fresh' to describe the food. Many visitors commented on the selection and variety of options of good cafes and restaurants, about the food markets and on the availability of fresh seafood and tropical fruit. Comments included:

"The increase in healthy eating options."

"Local authentic food..."

"Excellent food, dining."

"The night Markets, the variety of local food and fresh fruit available. The friendliness and helpfulness of the locals, the number of lovely restaurants to dine in with good Island service."

"...good choice of food outlets..."

"...the amazing fresh and tasty food."

"Many very good restaurants."

"Good variety of restaurants and eateries."

Convenience & Safety

The convenience and safety of the Cook Islands as a holiday destination were mentioned by four percent (6%) of respondents. In particular, they referred to the ease of getting to the Cook Islands and also of getting around the islands, the availability of public transport, the convenience of using the New Zealand dollar. Some tourists emphasis on the safety when swimming especially for their children. Comments included:

"It was easy to make your way around the island. Also coming from New Zealand it was great to be able to use the same currency."

"The ease of using public transport..."

"The ease of travel. Easy to cycle or walk around the island."

"How easy it was to get around the whole island either by rented vehical or by bus."

"...easy with NZ dollars/close to get to."

"Able to use NZ currency."

"Safe swimming for small children and outstanding snorkelling and swimming for the entire family."

"Clear water and safe swimming."

"...a feeling of being safe there as there were no grills/grates on any of the houses or shops."

"The one thing that stood out was how safe I felt the entire time there. As women travelling, this is a big deal. The fact that there was no begging or hassle of street vendors trying to get you to buy junk."

"Feeling safe to walk."

Accommodation

Another 5% of respondents noted that the accommodation they stayed in was an appealing aspect of their visit to the Cook Islands, referring to the high quality, the location, the setting, the level of service, and the warm welcome from their hosts. Comments included:

"Stress free relaxing break on a beautiful island in great accommodation."

"Our accommodations and host (Thomas) at Aitutaki Escape were wonderful."

"Our resort was wonderful."

"The resort was stunning, the snorkelling and swimming and available right outside our room."

"PACIFIC RESORT thanks gave us use of their top value apartments, for a few days."

Culture

The island's unique local culture was mentioned by five percent (5%) of respondents as an appealing aspect of their Cook Islands visit. Respondents referred to the local events, history and performance in addition to referencing the overall enjoyable aspects of Cook Islands culture. Comments included:

"The respect for culture, language, music, family was really obvious."

"I loved how all the residents are so proud and willing to share their rich culture."

"...hearing the languages of Cook Islanders, seeing the dances, songs and performances of Constitution week, the local market, the beach/lagoon, the cultural museum,"

“The cultural performance during the constitution week celebration were the highlight of the trip.”

“The overall experience the culture everything was wonderful.”

Level of service

A four percent (4%) of visitors commented on the service they encountered while in the Cook Islands. Respondents had positive comments on the local hospitality they experienced, especially mentioning the friendly, hospitality, professional and helpful staff at the restaurants, bars, hotels, and resorts. Visitors also emphasised the lack of pressure or hassle to buy which made them feel comfortable. Comments included:

“the friendliness of staff.”

“Akura fishing charters and their staff made my holiday amazing.”

“...friendly motel manager and good service at restaurants and bars.”

“The Muri beach club hotel staff and especially the Fijian bar staff were amazing, the local bar staff member called Rangī was awesome too, she was asked to do a traditional dance for our wedding at short notice and was amazing. Our wedding planner Turina was awesome and went far beyond the bounds of her job to make our wedding completely unforgettable. The local staff/guides of the raro buggy tours/quad tours were awesome and great fun.”

“...the staff and service were wonderful, friendly, helpful and full of smiles.”

“...excellent customer service and friendliness.”

Not too commercialised

Three percent (3%) of respondents mentioned the Cook Islands as being a place that is not over-commercialised or too touristy. Some visitors also emphasised the importance of preserving the destination from mass tourism development and keeping it the way it is. Comments included:

“The lack of large tourist crowds is the bonus.”

“It was refreshing to be in a place where there was no western influences, ie. fast food chains.”

“The people and the way the island feels untouched by tourism!”

“It was not commercialised tourism.”

"We like traveling off the beaten path, and it was not touristy or saturated with many people or many touristy hotels, businesses, etc."

"Beautiful beaches and island without all the crowds and commercialism."

"Laid back, not too touristy."

Overall good experience

Three percent (3%) of visitors surveyed simply stated that their whole experience was a good one, and that they 'loved everything'. Some visitors expressed their desire to visit the Cook Islands again in the future. Comments included:

"Such a beautiful friendly island. We just loved every minute of our stay."

"The Cook Islands is one of the most beautiful, enjoyable experiences my husband & I have had."

"Loved everything about the island and the people we met. most relaxing place in the world!!!"

"Everything about our journey was great - we were not let down in any manner. The people, the food, the transport, the entire experience was amazing - as always :)"

"I loved everything!"

Least appealing aspects of the Cook Islands

Visitors were asked: “What did you find least attractive or appealing about the Cook Islands on your most recent visit?” A quarter (25%) of the visitors surveyed, found “nothing” unattractive, with more than one person saying “nothing at all” was considered the least appealing aspect. Table 4 summaries key themes respondents felt were unappealing. Comments ranged from issues with public services and facilities, price of good and service, rubbish and natural environment care through to disappointment with the safety issues.

Table 4: Least appealing aspects of the Cook Islands (n=577)

Themes	Share of respondents %*
Public services and facilities and infrastructure	18%
Price of good and service	13%
Rubbish and natural environment care	12%
Accommodation	11%
Customer service	9%
Food and beverage	9%
Stray animals and mosquitos	9%
Attractions and activities	8%
Poor weather	7%
Rental cars or scooters	5%
Law and Legislation	5%
Too touristy Local people	4%
Flight related issues	4%
Local people	3%
Safety	1%

* Share of respondents who made a comment that falls into each theme. Respondents could give more than one answer, so total does not add up to 100%.

Public services, facilities, and infrastructure

Most respondents (18%) considered the destination’s public services and facilities to be the least appealing aspects of their Cook Islands experience. Visitors used words such as ‘disappointing’, ‘potholes’, ‘terrible’, ‘rough’, ‘limited’, ‘poor’, ‘unpredictable’, ‘bumpy’, ‘and ‘low quality’ to describe the condition of the roads and public transport. Most comments here focused on the road conditions, public transport and poor internet. Comments included:

“Quality of road very low so not comfortable traveling on scooters!”

“...the pot holes in the roads.”

“Public transport was terrible. The bus was up to 50 minutes late.”

“Data network systems to allow research and booking of activities.”

“Limited bus service and shops open on Sundays.”

“Roads a bit rough and Internet charges.”

“Road surface is terrible - makes your behind hurt when cycling and makes the buses noisy and rattly.”

“Internet access to keep in touch with family back home. Too expensive.”

Price of goods and service

Thirteen percent of the respondents (13%) noted that the least appealing part of their visit was the price of goods and services with comments about food, taxis, accommodation and internet. Key words that dominated the responses included ‘costly’, ‘expensive’, ‘overpriced’, and ‘overcharging’. Comments included:

“The cost of most things were very expensive and lack of accessories to the internet due to price.”

“Accommodation is expensive.”

“How expensive it must be to live there.”

“Cost of getting a license to hire a scooter. Hence we didn’t.”

“The cost of food and activities were expensive.”

“Overpriced resort cocktails. Also it was wasp mating season so they were all over the accommodation but this can't be helped...”

“The supermarket was expensive, with not a lot of selection.”

“Excessive prices for general services i.e. - mobile and internet....”

“It was pricier (accommodations & food) than other tropical destinations, and I was hoping for healthier food options at restaurants (it was a lot of fried fish, fried potatoes), such as fresh fruit salad, green salad, baked chicken, grilled chicken, grilled fish, etc.”

Rubbish and natural environment care

Rubbish and natural environment care were mentioned by 12% of respondents as the least appealing elements of their visit to the Cook Islands. Most comments focus on practises such as littering, burning rubbish, and muri beach. Comments included:

“Outdoor burning of rubbish - especially when doing a triathlon (breathing heavy)...”

"Rubbish by the beaches in some of the lay-bys and Grass verges."

"Rubbish on the streets."

"...concerned about health of lagoon near Muri..."

"I was bummed to see as much trash on the beaches as we did. People need to clean up after themselves and protect this beautiful environment."

"The amount of rubbish and glass bottles that people; generally tourists leave on the beautiful beaches. Each time we visited the beach, which was daily, we always took a bag and collected rubbish from the beach."

"The burning of rubbish."

"A clean up of rubbish cans and glass bottles along the roads, and dog poo on the beach."

"Sea slugs on Muri beach."

"The public rubbish bins in town (Rarotonga). They were often overfilled and spilled onto the lawns."

"The lagoon coral and reef fish life did not match the brochure pictures, and the wind stirred up the water more than was comfortable, but that was nobody's fault."

"The local trails were very over grown. We had looked into lots of the walks before we came to Rarotonga but we wandered around several places looking for entrances to local tracks and could not find them."

Accommodation

Eleven percent of visitors surveyed (11%) focused on accommodation of the Cook Islands. They considered most of the accommodation to be lacking service and not worth the prices. Respondents used words such as 'expensive', 'terrible', 'not for families', 'shocking', 'ugly' and 'poor service' to describe their experience at the Accommodation. Comments included:

"Speed of service within the restaurant at our hotel... Definitely a sign that they were understaffed."

"Lack of fresh water available to drink at the resort and the price of groceries."

"Hard to find good quality accommodation with a reasonable price."

"The service was disappointing. People do not seem to work hard or care for the quality of their service. Possibly since they have set wages and don't rely on tipping..."

"Accommodation supposed to be superior but was rundown and overpriced..."

“Accommodation is expensive. Our stay at the resort was not good at all. The place is rundown and in need of upgrading and repairs, our room smelled of mould. there were holes in the bathroom walls filled with paper and painted over, the steps to the second level were rusty and very loose/wobbly...”

“Service at our hotel was shocking”

“...every now and then service was not as expected - particularly the Resort - most places and people good.”

“The resort, we didn't stay there, just went for lunch, so ugly, very tacky.”

“Service, food and general accommodation at the resort. We would actively dissuade friends and family to stay.”

Customer service

Nine percent respondents (9%) mentioned customer service as the least appealing aspect of their trip to Cooks Island. Their comments focused on visitor handling services at the accommodation, transport, airport and restaurants. Most visitors used words such as ‘no response’, ‘long waits’, ‘rude’, ‘poor attitude’, ‘unfriendly’ and ‘least impressive’ to describe the services. Comments included:

“The resort was terrible and service was non-existent”.

“Arriving at 7 am and waiting until 2 pm for our room to become available. After an all-night flight.”

“The unfriendly staff at the golf course.”

“Least attractive was a woman in the shop where had to buy a SIM card not very friendly.”

“Queuing at the airport; airport waiting areas. Not major issues - but least appealing of all components of our visit.”

“Waiting for so long to be transported from the airport to the motel as it was already really late when we arrived.”

“Attitude of Cook Island staff to non-Cook Island staff at the resort. Appalling and they should be ashamed of themselves. Very bad attitude.”

“...airport staff were very rude and did not display any Kia Orana... it was like thanks for coming and spending your time and money with us but now you are leaving we don't care about you.”

“Lack of response from car Rental Company for a charge against our credit card by way of

explanation."

Food and beverage

Another 9% of respondents noted that the food and beverage at Cooks Island was the least appealing aspect of their visit, referring to the high prices, limited food choice, food poisoning opening hours of restaurants and service. Comments included:

"We expected to be more fresh produce for sale, but was very little and very hard to find..."

"The cost of food and activities were expensive."

"Lack of shops at the airport and places to sit and have a drink or food variety..."

"Found the food disappointing. Was expecting more fish. Many burgers, chips etc."

"The restaurants often being closed for lunch or evening meals"

"High food prices."

"Groceries and alcohol were very expensive."

Stray animals and mosquitos

Stray animals and mosquitoes were also mentioned by 9 percent (9%) of respondents. In particular, they complained that the dogs roaming on the streets, mosquitoes and the roosters made their trip miserable at the Cooks Island. Comments included:

"Stray dogs hanging around."

"Dogs roaming."

"The dogs - most were ok, but some could be a little annoying. Even for a dog lover!"

"The mosquitos at night...."

"Too many dogs wandering onto the roads and more rubbish around. Noisy roosters."

"...the NOISY roosters! Crowing all the time from very early in the morning. - They really ruined the peace and quiet."

"...the roosters crowing any time of the day."

"Roosters squawking in the night. But we didn't care that much."

"Dogs while eating at Restaurant's..."

Attractions and activities

Eight percent (8%) of respondents mentioned the least appealing aspect at Cooks Island were the attractions and activities. Comments included:

"...apparent lack of reef fish when snorkelling."

"We couldn't go snorkelling because of cyclone Debbie. Also, weather the entire time not great. Surfing no good with the reefs in such shallow conditions. Taking a surfboard over was also not fun (extra costs on plane)."

"The extent of religion in all activities."

"...the boat tour in Aitutaki was terrible..."

"That there is no nightlife, and the shops and restaurants are closed so early."

"Beach where we were was not good for paddling, current strong."

"...although sea too rough to go out fishing."

"...sea urchins when tide was low, hard to swim."

Poor weather

Seven percent (7%) of visitors commented on poor weather while in the Cook Islands. Respondents had negative comments on how they missed some of their activities due to poor weather. Comments included:

"The weather was windy and on the cool side, as was the water."

"We probably should have gone when it was a bit warmer but we were trying to avoid cyclones."

"Weather was bad during visit so unable to do some things..."

"Weather was not very good"

"...the wind at our hotel make it impossible to enjoy the beach or poo!"

"Weather was very disappointing."

Rental cars or scooters

Five percent (5%) of respondents mentioned Rental cars and scooters as least appealing aspect of their Cook Islands visit. Respondents referred to the rental cars and scooters as

being highly expensive, unreliable service, old vehicles and process of getting them. Comments included:

"The scooter hire processes."

"Lack of response from car Rental Company for a charge against our credit card by way of explanation."

"...Rental Company was seriously lacking in customer service skills."

"Not being able to rent a moped even with my full nz licence."

"Difficulty in hiring a scooter."

"Cost of rental vehicles and quality."

"...wearing helmets and the cost of the temporary license."

Law and Legislation

Another five percent (5%) of visitors surveyed simply stated that their whole experience was disappointing because of the Island's laws and regulations, from wearing helmets, licensing, check out time to shops closing on specific days. Comments included:

"The difficulty of renting a scooter and completely licensing thing."

"The fact that we have to wear helmets. Won't come back unless it change."

"...inconsistent messages from government departments when asking questions i.e. immigration/customs."

"...the process and waiting to get a scooter licence."

"The driver's license for tourists is a scam. Also difficult to do anything when rental places close on public holidays."

"...wearing helmets and the cost of the temporary license."

Too touristy

Four percent (4%) of respondents mentioned the Cook Islands as being a place too touristy, commercialised, and overcrowded with visitors being rude to residents and the environment. Comments included:

"Too many tourists."

"Tourists being disrespectful and rude."

"...the island seemed to be quite overcrowded."

"I am also worried about how tourism is affecting the environment in the next 5/10/15 years. Too many hotels are taking over access to the beaches."

"The rudeness of the other tourists!"

"The amount of rubbish and glass bottles that people; generally tourists leave on the beautiful beaches..."

"Probably the endless procession of tourists in cars and on bikes on the road around the island...but then we were also part of that!"

Flight related issues

Another four percent (4%) of respondents mentioned flight related issues as the least appealing aspect at Cooks Island. Visitors used words such as 'expensive', 'long queues', 'late and night departures', 'ridiculous' to describe the situation at the airport and flight schedules and prices of the flights. Comments included:

"...the 2 hour queue when we landed at the airport."

"...waiting for plane connection to Aitutaki - too long checking in and waiting 3 hours at Rarotonga Airport-yuk."

"The late departure from the Cook Islands back to LA."

"Just the difficult flight arrival and departure times with Jet star."

"The ridiculous timetable of Virgin Australia flying back to Christchurch late at night."

"Airport facilities that can't handle the volume of air traffic. Delayed on approach to the island, then having to wait in the aircraft on the runway before disembarking, then long queues for arriving travellers that extended out on to the tarmac! Not much fun in the middle of the night!"

"The price of domestic flight, way too expensive!"

Local people

Three percent of the respondents (3%) noted that the least appealing part of their visit was their interaction with local people in the Cook Islands. Comments about the unfriendliness, unwelcoming nature of local people and the aspect of island time were common. Key words that dominated the responses included 'unfriendly', 'unwelcoming' and 'not helpful'. Comments included:

“Attitude of cook island staff to non-cook island staff at the resort. Appalling and they should be ashamed of themselves. Very bad attitude.”

“...seemed un-friendly and not helpful.”

“...the very unfriendly people that imposed the rip-off \$5 charge to see the wig more’s falls.”

“Lack of service by some locals.”

“Island time is a real thing but after 3 days I was used to it.”

“The locals didn’t seem as happy and friendly to tourists as per previous visit.”

“Some negative attitudes to non-cook islanders.”

“Some locals seem a bit tired of tourist.”

Safety

Safety of the Cook Islands as a holiday destination was mentioned by one percent (1%) of respondents. In particular, they referred to increase in crime rate and low road safety as being paramount issues. Comments included:

“Items being stolen from our accommodation.”

“Increase of crime in Raro.”

“Lack of road safety among the locals e.g. no helmets when riding motorbikes or scooters.”

“Husband and son valuables stolen off the beach when swimming by muri.”

Suggestions to improve the visit to the Cook Islands

When asked if there was anything that could have improved their visit to the Cook Islands, over a third (40%) of respondents said 'yes'. Of the group that made suggestions 19% focused on public services and infrastructure, attitude of locals and service levels (15%), a longer stay or to visit more places (12%), accommodation (11%), entertainment, activities and transport (10%), weather (10%), environment/safety/animal care (9%), flight schedules in and out of Cook Islands (6%), value for money (5%), and quality/cost of food and beverages (4%). Comments on these themes included:

"Better public transport and scooter testing system."

"Needs a decent wifi network."

"Was not very impressed with the locals attitudes as they did not seemed very friendly especially when trying to look for car parks at the auditorium."

"Accommodate more for medical needs. Walkers, wheelchairs. Good healing location for retreat."

"More professional hotel service and condition of room."

"Next time we will plan to make time for one of the outer islands as well."

"For me to have more money and time to stay there longer!"

"Accommodation not worth the money."

"The quality of the large hotel/ resorts."

"Public transport could be more regular and more consistent."

"The main island has limited appeal after beaches."

"Sunny weather- it was overcast and windy most of the time."

"Better weather and calmer seas would have allowed us to take part in many more activities we wished to experience."

"Very concerning that the water quality and coral life is dying. Something needs to be put into place soon to protect what you have left or we will lose this paradise forever."

"Clean up the street and pavement facilities round Muri, clean up your leaching sewerage sanitation around the same area."

"Same dog law as in Aitutaki- no dogs."

"More direct flights from Australia to Rarotonga."

“Arrival times from Sydney. Some arrangement for the wait for the room.”

“Also Internet usage is ridiculously expensive and restrictive.”

“Car hire on Aitutaki was very expensive.”

“A few cheaper food options would have been great.”

“More traditional local food choices.”

Reasons to return to the Cook Islands and recommend to others

The majority of visitors (93%) indicated that they would consider re-visiting the Cook Islands in the future. This figure is slightly higher than the 2016/17 annual average of 92% and the identical quarter in 2016 (92%). Of the 7 percent of visitors who added reasons why they would not want to return to the Cook Islands, the majority simply stated that they wanted to visit other destinations (41%). Some visitors (28%) commented that a holiday to the Cook Islands is expensive compared to other destinations. Other factors included have already revisited the Cook Islands (13%), limited attractions and activities (9%), low level of service (4%), have seen all they could see (4%), bad weather (4%), flight-related issues (2%), the long distance to the Cook Islands (2%), and too touristy and commercial (2%). Comments included:

“Would like to explore other islands in the South Pacific.”

“Well not for a number of years anyway. Time to try somewhere else.”

“As I have been there three times already.”

“Not many activities, snorkelling not satisfied.”

“The resort service was terrible and we wouldn't risk spending a lot of money only to have a bad experience in the resort.”

“I think we saw all we could see.”

“The weather was not good, which did not help.”

“Need direct daytime flight from Australia more than once a week.”

“Too far away for further visits.”

Under half (47%) of the visitors mentioned that they would definitely include the outer islands in their next visit. A further 50% of visitors indicated they will “maybe” visit outer islands next time. Most (92%) of the visitors surveyed in this quarter mentioned they would like to include ‘Aitutaki’ in their next visit to the Cook Islands. ‘Atiu’ was the second most mentioned island at 35%; another 22% of visitors stated that they would like to visit Mangaia, 20% of the respondents would like to visit Mauke. A small number of visitors mentioned Manihiki, Palmerston, Penrhyn, Pukapuka, or as many as they can visit. Three percent mentioned the

high cost of visiting outer islands as a barrier for not visiting. A number of respondents were not sure which other islands to visit and needed to do some research before deciding.

Nearly all visitors surveyed (97%) said that they would recommend the destination to their family and friends which is consistent with previous survey periods. Only 3% of visitors would not recommend the Cook Islands to others and this is largely based on the high prices, local people and low standards of service, flight-related issues and accommodation.

Final observations

This report shows that the Cook Islands tourism industry generally performed well during the July to September Quarter. Visitor satisfaction levels and the desire for return visitation have remained very high, and it is clear that the destination is making a generally positive impression on visitors. However visitor spend has dropped from the same period last year and it will be important to see if this trend is sustained for the rest of the year.

This report again highlights that there is room to enhance the visitor experience and to increase the economic yield and broader community benefits associated with tourism. As with previous reports, this quarter's research highlights issues around the lack of public services, facilities and infrastructure in the Cook Islands. There are also some concerns about the value for money/quality of service provided by accommodation, environmental degradation and limitations to food/beverage.

It is critical to find ways to build on and develop the visitor experience in a manner that enhances local economic linkages. By developing new product offerings, and more importantly, enhancing the quality and 'value added' of existing activities and experiences, the tourism industry can increase visitor satisfaction, and enhance the generation of positive local economic outcomes.

Appendix – Cook Islands Visitor Survey



简体中文

Cook Islands Visitor Survey

Information for participants

Kia Orana and warm Pacific greetings to you. As a recent visitor to the Cook Islands, we invite you to participate in research designed to improve the visitor experience as well as support us to make good decisions for tourism in our beautiful island nation. The research is funded by the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation and conducted by the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute at AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand.

If you are a permanent Cook Island resident, thank you for your interest but this Survey is focused on non-resident visitors to the Islands.

We would like to know about your most recent visit to the Cook Islands and ask you to complete this Visitor Survey within two weeks of your trip if possible.

Participation is entirely voluntary. To participate in this research, simply click on the button below. The Survey asks a number of questions where you select your answer from a range of options given. Some questions ask you to type your comments in your own words into the box provided. We would appreciate it if you could fill this survey out as accurately as possible. All questions are optional. The survey will run until the end of 2017.

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

[Take the survey](#)

All answers are confidential and can in no way be linked to your personal details. By taking the survey you are giving consent to be part of this research.

Aggregated results of this research may be used in journal and conference publications. A summary of the results of this research will also be available on www.nztri.org in 2017.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT:

This survey is about your most recently completed visit to the Cook Islands. We would ask you to complete this survey within two weeks of your return home if possible.

(If you are a permanent Cook Islands' resident, thank you for your interest but this survey is focused on non-resident visitors to the Cook Islands)

By completing the survey you are giving consent to participate in this research.

1. Using the calendar below, please select the date you arrived in the Cook Islands.

2. How many nights did you spend in the Cook Islands on your most recent visit?

3. What was the main purpose of your visit?

- Holiday
- Wedding party
- Business or conference
- Visiting friends or relatives
- Honeymoon
- Special event - sporting
- Special event - cultural
- Volunteering
- Education
- Other reason, please specify _____

4. How did you get to the Cook Islands? (tick as many as apply)

- Airline - Air New Zealand (1)
- Airline - Virgin Australia (2)
- Airline - Air Tahiti (3)
- Ferry (4)
- Private charter plane (5)
- Private boat (6)

5. Did you travel by yourself to the Cook Islands?

- Yes
- No

5.1 Who were your travelling companions? (tick as many as apply)

- a) Partner / husband / wife
- b) Family member(s)
- c) Friends

- d) Work colleagues
- e) Tour group
- f) Organised group (e.g. school, sports etc)
- g) Wedding party
- h) Other _____

6. How many people accompanied you on this trip?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4
- e) 5
- f) 6
- g) 7
- h) 8
- i) 9
- j) 10+

7. How did you find out about the Cook Islands as a destination? (tick as many as apply)

- Previous visits (1)
- Friends/family (2)
- Travel agent/agency brochures (3)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc) (4)
- Television or radio programmes (5)
- Travel books (e.g. Lonely Planet) (10)
- Magazine and newspaper articles (6)
- The official Cook Islands travel website (cookislands.travel/nz) (7)
- General travel websites (e.g. TripAdvisor) (8)
- Web search engines (e.g. Google) (9)
- Other (10) _____

8. How important were the following sources of information when planning your trip to the Cook Islands? (from 1 to 5, 1 refers to not at all important and 5 refers to extremely important)

Previous visits (1)

Friends/family (2)

Travel agent/travel brochures (3)

Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc) (4)

Television or radio programmes (5)

Travel books (e.g. Lonely Planet) (9)

Magazine and newspaper articles (6)

The official Cook Islands travel website (cookislands.travel/nz) (7)

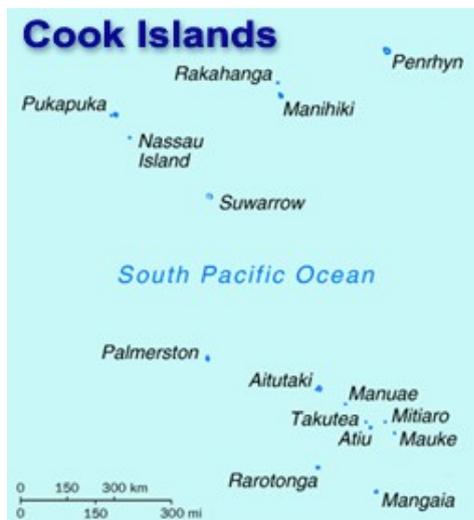
General travel websites (e.g. Trip Advisor) (8)

Web search engines (e.g. Google) (9)

9. How did you purchase your travel to the Cook Islands?

- Travel arrangements were made through a travel agent (1)
- I made my own travel arrangement using the Internet (2)
- Travel arrangements were made by a mixture of travel agent and online booking (5)
- Travel arrangements were made by others (business, friends, relatives) (3)
- Other - please specify (4) _____

10. Which islands did you visit on this trip? (Tick as many as apply)



10.1 How many nights did you spend on each island?

- a) Rarotonga
- b) Aitutaki
- c) Atiu
- d) Mangaia
- e) Mauke
- f) Other

10.2 Please select the accommodation(s) you stayed in on Ratorotonga? (Hold down the Ctrl key to choose more than one accommodation)

10.3. How satisfied were you with the following aspects in terms of your recent visit?

The level of service provided at this accommodation (1)

The quality, availability and maintenance of facilities provided at this accommodation (2)

The overall value for money (3)

10.4 Please select the accommodation(s) you stayed in on Aitutaki? (Hold down the Ctrl key to choose more than one accommodation)

10.5 How satisfied were you with the following aspects in terms of your recent visit?

The level of service provided at this accommodation (1)

The quality, availability and maintenance of facilities provided at this accommodation (2)

The overall value for money (3)

10.6 Please select the accommodation(s) you stayed in on Atiu? (Hold down the Ctrl key to choose more than one accommodation)

10.7 How satisfied were you with the following aspects in terms of your recent visit?

The level of service provided at this accommodation (1)

The quality, availability and maintenance of facilities provided at this accommodation (2)

The overall value for money (3)

10.8 Please select the accommodation(s) you stayed in on Mangaia? (Hold down the Ctrl key to choose more than one accommodation)

10.9 How satisfied were you with the following aspects in terms of your recent visit?

The level of service provided at this accommodation (1)

The quality, availability and maintenance of facilities provided at this accommodation (2)

The overall value for money (3)

10.10 Please select the accommodation(s) you stayed in on Mauke? (Hold down the Ctrl key to choose more than one accommodation)

10.11 How satisfied were you with the following aspects in terms of your recent visit?

The level of service provided at this accommodation (1)

The quality, availability and maintenance of facilities provided at this accommodation (2)

The overall value for money (3)

11. On your most recent visit to the Cook Islands, please indicate below (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'very dissatisfied' and 5 being 'very satisfied') the activities that you engaged in and how satisfied you were with your experience.

Water based activities:

- a) Beaches
- b) Swimming
- c) Snorkelling
- d) Diving
- e) Kayaking
- f) Fishing - Deep Sea
- g) Fishing - Bonefishing
- h) Lagoon Cruise
- i) Ocean Cruise
- j) Whale Watching
- k) Kitesurfing
- l) Stand Up Paddle Boarding

Cultural interaction:

- a) Island Night Feast and Show
- b) Meal at a Cook Islands Home
- c) Church on Sunday
- d) Island Celebrations or Events
- e) Tumunu on Atiu
- f) Local Markets
- g) Dance / Language / Art Classes

Land based activities and Touring:

- a) Restaurants, Bars and Cafes
- b) Cultural Events
- c) Sporting Events
- d) 4WD Adventures
- e) Cultural Tour
- f) Treks and Trails
- g) Cycling
- h) Sightseeing
- i) Vehicle Rental
- j) Public Transport

Shopping:

- a) Pearls
- b) Arts
- c) Crafts
- d) Music
- e) Local Produce e.g Coffee, Coconut Oil etc

Please tell us about any other activities you participated in:

12. On your most recent visit, how satisfied were you with the following (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'very dissatisfied' and 5 being 'very satisfied')?

- a) The information that was available when planning this trip?
- b) The information that was available during this trip?
- c) The cost of accommodation?
- d) The quality of accommodation?
- e) The experience of renting a vehicle?
- f) The experience of using public transport?
- g) The frequency of air transport within the Cook Islands?
- h) The overall level of service in the Cook Islands?
- i) The friendliness of the people in the Cook Islands?

13. What did you find most attractive or appealing about the Cook Islands on your most recent visit?

14. What did you find least attractive or appealing about the Cook Islands on your most recent visit?

15. Is there anything that could have improved your visit to the Cook Islands?

- a) No
- b) Yes

EXPENDITURE

Information on how much money you spent during your visit helps the planning and development of the Cook Islands economy.

We would appreciate it if you could fill out this section as accurately as possible.

16. Did you prepay for any of your travel arrangements prior to arrival?

- a) Yes
- b) No

16.1. In the expenditure estimates you will provide below, how many people are included (including yourself)?

- a) Adults
- b) Children (0- 16 years old)

16.2 Please indicate below the total value of what you paid prior to your arrival to the Cook Islands (including purchases made via travel agents or the internet), in the currency specified below:

- a) NZD
- b) AUD
- c) GBP
- d) USD
- e) EUR
- f) CAD
- g) Other - please specify: _____

16.3 Please indicate below the total value of what you prepaid (including purchases made via travel agents or the Internet) (Please enter only numbers in the box provided e.g. 1000).

16.4 What does this amount above include? (tick as many as apply)

- a) International flights
- b) Accommodation
- c) Breakfast or meals
- d) Domestic transport
- e) Activities
- f) Other

17. Did you spend any money while in the Cook Islands?

- a) Yes
- b) No

17.1 In the expenditure estimates you will provide below, how many people are included (counting yourself)?

- a) Adults
- b) Children (0- 16 years old)

17.2 During your most recent visit to the Cook Islands, how much do you estimate that you spent in each island in local currency (NZ\$)? Please enter your spend figures in the boxed provided e.g. 1000)

- a) Accommodation
- b) Restaurants, Cafes & Bars
- c) Vehicle Rental
- d) Petrol
- e) Domestic flights
- f) Public transport
- g) Internet cost
- h) Cruising
- i) Groceries
- j) Shopping (e.g. souvenirs, clothes)
- k) Activities (e.g. water sports, sightseeing)
- L) Other

18. Was the Cook Islands the only country you visited on this trip?

- a) Yes
- b) No

18.1 What other destinations were included in that bigger trip?

19. Would you return to the Cook Islands? Why?

- a) Yes
- b) No- please give reasons why not _____

19.1 Would you visit the outer islands next time?

- a) yes
- b) maybe
- c) no

19.2 Would you include the following outer islands? (tick as many as apply)

- Aitutaki (1)
- Atiu (2)
- Mangaia (3)
- Mauke (4)
- Other (5) _____

20. Would you recommend the Cook Islands to others? Why?

- a) Yes
- b) No - please give reasons why not _____

21. How satisfied were you with your overall experience of the Cook Islands (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'very dissatisfied and 5 being 'very satisfied')?

ABOUT YOU

22. How many times have you been to the Cook Islands prior to your most recent visit?

23. Your age group:

- a) 18-29
- b) 30-39
- c) 40-49
- d) 50-59
- e) 60-69
- f) 70+

24. Your gender:

- a) Female
- b) Male

25. What is your highest qualification?

- a) No formal qualification
- b) High school qualification
- c) Tertiary/University qualification
- d) Other

26. What is your approximate annual household income in your home currency? Please use the following format: e.g. 50,000 and specify currency in question 26.1.

26.1 Please select your currency

- a) NZD
- b) AUD
- c) GBP
- d) USD
- e) EUR
- f) CAD
- g) Other - please specify

27. Where do you live? (Please select from list of all countries)

27.1 If you are from New Zealand, which region do you live in (Please select from the list)?

Please provide your New Zealand post code in the box below. (This helps the Cook Islands to garget its limited marketing budget).

27.2 If you are from Australia, which state do you live in (Please select from the list)?

Please provide your Australian post code in the box below. (This helps the Cook Islands to garget its limited marketing budget).

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