

Tourism Research highlights a positive experience

The latest international visitor survey (IVS) report for the period of July-September 2022 shows that the Tourism industry met visitors expectations. Overall, 98% of visitors had very high satisfaction levels with their experience and this matched their desire to recommend the destination to others. CEO, Karla Eggelton shared, “tourism research continues to remain an integral part of our operations as it indicates areas that require strengthening and on that basis, evidence based programmes or activities are developed to suit. Clearly the research shows that our destination is making a generally positive impression on visitors, however there is still room for improvement and our recently launched Cook Islands Tourism Development strategy will contribute towards addressing these areas.”

Visitor spend is higher than the same quarter in 2019 but is slightly lower than previous survey periods after the border reopened for international visitors from May 2021. This reflects the fact that some travellers are now switching to longer haul destinations or other travel options as the rest of the world is opening up again. The latest IVS report shows visitors spend approximately NZ\$2,073 per person prior to arrival and \$200 per day on island, with the average length of stay for this quarter being 8.3 nights.

Sustainable Tourism manager, Sieni Tiraa said, “satisfaction for cultural events was ranked the highest of all the activities and this highlights that cultural activities are tracking extremely well. This also shows that our programmes such as the cultural tour guide workshops developed in partnership with Tauranga Vananga are working.”

In the wake of industry rebuilding, the areas that will require greatest attention will be management of the quality of the environment, ensuring community sentiment and readiness, and ensuring that the tourism offering represents good value for money. It is critical that service levels meet visitor expectations, and it is clear that there are opportunities for improvement in this area. “Cook Islands Tourism continues to build a strong relationship with the Cook Islands Tertiary Institute to develop courses to upskill the labour force in the areas that require attention,” mentions Sieni.

It is vital to continue to build on this overall positive industry performance and to convert it into even greater economic benefits for local people. This report reinforces the fact that cost effective on-line research can generate information that is of value to both the tourism industry and government policy makers. As the survey continues we will be able to explore in more detail, the characteristics of different visitors as they return and their assessment of the performance of the industry.

To view the latest tourism research visit <https://cookislands.travel/corporate/research-report>

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