



COOK ISLANDS  
TOURISM CORPORATION  
TE MATO MANAVA TUROTO

# Brand Strategy

Version 1.0 / July 2024

# Our Intent

Developed in early 2024, this document has been produced as a joint initiative between the Destination Marketing (DM) and Destination Development (DD) teams, and is designed to provide a high-level overview and explanation of the refreshed ‘Love our little paradise’ brand platform. The main objective of this refresh is to allow the brand to better support Cook Islands Tourism (CIT), our stakeholders and partners in transitioning the Cook Islands to a long term, sustainable approach towards tourism development.

# Our Foundation

# Cook Islands Tourism Mandate

Cook Islands Tourism Marketing Corporation (CIT) is mandated under the Cook Islands Tourism Marketing Corporation Act 1998 & Amendment 2007. As a government agency, the primary objective of CIT is to encourage and promote the development of tourism in the Cook Islands in such a manner which is economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sustainable.

The Corporation is divided into three main divisions; Destination Marketing (DM), Destination Development (DD), and Corporate Services (CS). It's head office is based on the main island of Rarotonga, with satellite offices located in Aitutaki and Atiu, a dedicated sales office in New Zealand, and further sales representation in Australia, North America and Central Europe.

Tourism advances the wellbeing of resident Cook Islanders in a way that is socially acceptable, economically viable, and environmentally sustainable.

# Kia Orana Values & Principles

The Kia Orana Values are the foundation that aligns our tourism industry with the core values of the Cook Islands people and its residents.

[VIEW FULL KIA ORANA VALUES](#)



**KIA ORANA**  
May we live long and fulfilling lives.

Saying Kia Orana means more than hello. Kia Orana is meant as a blessing or a wish for your future.

Kia Orana is the spirit of our way of life in the Cook Islands and we want to ensure the Kia Orana spirit is forever alive in our community and in our industry.

We want to help visitors to the Cook Islands learn how to live a long and fulfilling life the way we do. We want them to share in helping us make our homes happy and our lives long and fulfilling too.



**MEITAKI**  
Here everything is good and well.

Meitaki means everything is good, well, okay and thank you all in one.

how we share how happy we feel. Meitaki is about how we want our visitors to feel when visiting the Cook Islands. Our products and services will run efficiently, and our experiences will be memorable.

Meitaki also refers to how we are feeling. To be 'Meitaki' is to be feeling great. It is



**MANA TIAKI**  
We are proud guardians of these islands.

Mana translates as influence or power. Tiaki means keeper or guardian.

as guardians of these islands and the environment which both nourishes and protects us.

It means guardianship with a sacred purpose, to preserve it for future generations. The keeper has the power or the ability to keep the Cook Islands culture and heritage alive. Mana Tiaki also refers to our responsibility

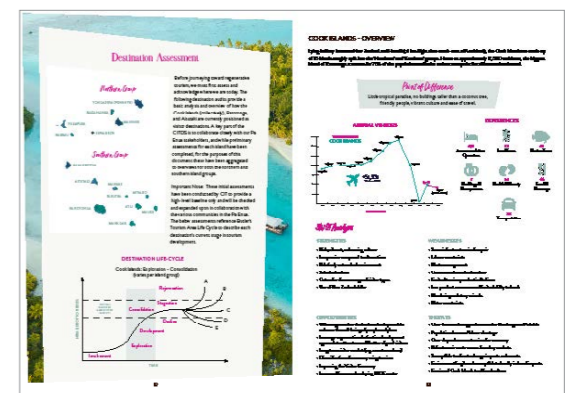
This value guides our development so that growth and change are tempered with our responsibility to minimise and manage impact.

# Cook Islands Tourism Development Strategy Booklet

At its heart, the CITDS seeks to leverage the power of the visitor economy to enhance the well-being of the Cook Islands people and environment by assessing and optimising the impact that visitors have on the Cook Islands culture, community, conservation, and commerce (economy).

This is an objective articulated in the vision statement: 'Tourism advances the well-being of resident Cook Islanders in a way that is socially acceptable, economically viable, and environmentally sustainable'.

[READ THE FULL STRATEGY HERE](#)



# The Challenge

# Our Changing Role

## Destination Marketing

## Destination Management

Past



- Visitor Welcome/Assistance
- Community Support/Engagement
- Industry Engagement

Present



- Delivery Partner ID & Engagement
- Visitor + Industry Insights
- Visitor Welcome/Assistance
- Infrastructure (small scale)
- Event Support
- Quality Assurance
- Industry Engagement
- Community Support & Engagement
- Regenerative Tourism Experience Incubator

Future



- Delivery Partner/Donor Support
- Sustainable Tourism/Wellbeing Performance Reporting (NSDA)
- Visitor Welcome/Assistance
- Visitor Experience Management
- Carrying Capacity Optimisation (Infrastructure & Services)
- Risk & Crisis Management
- Community Support & Engagement
- Sustainable Tourism Standards (Accreditation + Capacity Building)
- Business/Product Development
- Event Development
- Pa Enea Tourism Development
- Workforce Development
- Governance/Regulation
- Cross-Government Collaboration
- Visitor Economy Optimisation
- Climate Change Mitigation/Adaptation



# Our New Business Goal

The Cook Islands is one of the world's largest ocean states, but we are very restricted in terms of usable land. Because of this, our ability to consistently deliver a high-quality visitor experience without causing unacceptable damage to our community or environment is restricted to a relatively small number of people we can host at any one time (known as our 'carrying capacity').

There is definitely still room to move, particularly outside of peak season and across our Pa Enea. But as we continue to recover post-Covid, we have to accept that eventually (all going well) perpetual growth of visitor numbers is no longer going to be an appropriate objective - eventually we will be 'carrying' too many people. When that happens, the experience for everyone (visitors & locals alike) will deteriorate, our brand/reputation in the market will be damaged, and our tourism sector will start to spiral downwards.

Our goal for a tourism sector that is both beneficial and sustainable in the long term has to start evolving towards one where we maximise the value gained from the limited number of visitors that we can successfully host.

# Maximise VALUE

# Not Volume

# Business Strategies for Reaching Our Goal

Maximising long-term value means focusing our efforts on increasing the positive impacts (benefits) of our wider tourism sector, while also decreasing the negatives (costs).

As per the Cook Island Tourism Development Strategy (CITDS), this not only applies to economic value, but also environmental, social, and cultural value as well.

There are 3 ways we can achieve our goal.



# Rationale for Sustainable Approach



## PROTECTING THE GOLDEN GOOSE

Refreshing our brand to be more sustainably minded isn't just a savvy marketing initiative or a feel-good, 'nice to have'. This is a critical business decision to protect our most important economic sector in the long-term by ensuring the sustainability of our people and place (the very reason why people want to visit in the first place).



## SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL TRENDS

Globally we are in the midst of a genuine paradigm shift towards a more responsible approach to travel. In general, travellers are seeking more eco-friendly, authentic and sustainable experiences, with a growing avoidance of anything perceived as 'mass tourism'. While the people solely influenced by these responsible principles may still be a minority, being seen as 'sustainable' and 'eco-conscious' has undoubtedly become a mainstream trend with significant influence and value within the travel industry.



## HONOURING COOK ISLANDS CULTURE

The concepts of sustainability and regeneration are nothing new to the Cook Islands. The LOLP brand platform is guided by, and aligns closely to the cultural beliefs of 'Kia Orana', 'Mana Tiaki' and 'Meitaki'.



## POINT OF DIFFERENCE / DISRUPTOR

There is still an opportunity to own the 'responsible travel' market position within our Pacific competitor set. In a marketplace crowded with beautiful beaches, sparkling lagoons and vibrant cultures, creating a fun and feel-good social movement will help the Cook Islands develop a clear point of difference and avoid the trap of promoting the wider category of a 'tropical island holiday'.



## DONOR & DELIVERY SUPPORT

Whether we like it or not, the appetite of donor/delivery partners has moved from supporting the destination marketing function (creating demand) to destination management (ensuring sustainable supply). By creating a brand platform that achieves both of these in a sustainable manner, we create an opportunity for future support to sit across all three of the business strategies mentioned previously.

# Brand Aspirations

The 'Love a Little Paradise' brand tagline has been extremely successful for Cook Islands Tourism since 2015, and there is certainly no need to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

But LALP primarily focused on driving visitor demand, which is now only 1/3 of the job required. We now need a brand platform that focuses on driving holistic value by working hard across all three of our identified strategies.

**Find our North Star.**  
Something we can all connect to and strive towards

## Destination Marketing

- Aligns with the Kia Orana Values (Kia Orana, Mana Tiaki, and Meitaki).
- Appeal to & inspire the right type of traveller (quality not quantity).
- Instil a sense of pride in offering a high quality visitor experience.
- Encourage regenerative tourism practices across all stakeholders (CIT staff, visitors, industry, community)
- Allows us to effectively communicate the Cook Islands' unique selling points (USP's).

## Destination Management

- Create an inclusive movement - something everyone can feel a part of and work towards.
- Something that is simple, easily understood across markets, and stands out from the crowd.
- An evolution (not revolution) of 'Love a Little Paradise'.

# The Solution

# COOK ISLANDS

Love our little paradise

# Brand Concept

If you look after our little paradise, she will look after you.

(Akaperepere ia to tatou parataito, kia vai ruperupe te reira)

‘Love our little paradise’ is first and foremost a warm invitation.

Not only to come and experience the beautiful Cook Islands, but also to think of this little paradise as both yours and mine. A place where everyone (regardless of age, size, ability etc) can escape from the pressures of life and de-stress in whichever way works for them. A paradise that is safe and comfortable for both visitors and locals to share and enjoy together.

Belongingness, comfort and a sense of shared appreciation lie at the heart of ‘Love our little paradise’. Because when we feel we belong somewhere, we care so much more about its wellbeing. Its people become our community. Its beauty, a source of pride. Its protection, more important than anything.

In this sense, ‘Love our little paradise’ is also a commitment that we ask of those who are here.

Because with shared enjoyment comes shared responsibility - if we commit to looking after our little paradise together, then these islands will continue to provide what we need from them in return...both now, and into the future.

## Connection to our Values

### KIA ORANA

May we live long and fulfilling lives.

### MEITAKI

Here everything is good and well.

### MANA TIAKI

We are proud guardians of these islands.

# Brand Pillars

PEOPLE		PRODUCT		PLACE	
Points of Parity	Points of Difference	Points of Parity	Points of Difference	Points of Parity	Points of Difference
Friendly Locals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kia Orana Spirit / Genuine warmth of people</li> <li>Lightheartedness</li> <li>Approachable</li> <li>Not pushy</li> <li>Safe</li> <li>Everyone is equal</li> </ul>	Cultural Performances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connection to real-world culture</li> <li>Regenerative initiatives</li> </ul>	Tropical Paradise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of crowds</li> <li>Ease of access</li> <li>Cleanliness</li> <li>Extreme-end beauty</li> </ul>
Example: A visitor stumbles upon a community event and is welcomed to join in.		Example: The fire dancing/drumming group who are so happy to be passing on the knowledge/skills to the next generation.		Example: From plane to beach in 30 minutes. No private beaches, no problem getting a park, no queues	
Vibrant Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Living culture</li> <li>Proud mix of old / new</li> </ul>	Soft Adventure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible adventure</li> <li>Fit a lot in</li> <li>Regenerative experiences</li> <li>Not overly regulated</li> <li>Price / value for money</li> </ul>	Warm / Dry Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Non beach weather' options</li> <li>Transient weather</li> </ul>
Example: The older couple who are comfortable enough to jump on a public bus.		Example: Coral restoration tour combining snorkel with reef education		Example: If it's raining on one side of the island, it's likely sunny on the other.	
Sustainable / Responsible Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mana Tiaki / Guardianship</li> <li>Lightheartedness</li> </ul>	Sightseeing & Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with the locals</li> <li>One big resort</li> <li>Freedom to explore</li> <li>Accessible</li> <li>Safe</li> </ul>		
Example: The Aunties! ('Listen up! Or we might just pay YOU a visit')		Example: The older couple who are comfortable enough to jump on a public bus.			

## PILLARS

1. Easy / Accessible / Approachable / Comfortable
2. Ability / Freedom of Travel Style
3. Genuine / Authentic / No Pretending



# Tone of Voice



LOLP should make you feel good! It should take what are some fairly serious concepts of sustainability, guardianship and shared responsibility, and have some fun with them. Having a good grasp of our playful tone is vital for us to retain our authenticity and stand out from the crowd - let's not take ourselves too seriously.

We can't be too boastful, claim to be perfect or have all the answers - better to be honest and proud of who we are and what we're trying to achieve. This is a journey towards a common goal that we are inviting others to join us on.

Overall, LOLP needs to share it's key messages the way a Cook Islander would! It's easy to slip into using lingo and jargon - we need to remember to pass the discussed concepts and terminology through the Cook Islands world view and express them in our unique style. To narrate from the playful, genuine, and inclusive point of view of someone who loves our little paradise.

# Message Heirarchy

## OURS TO ENJOY, OURS TO PROTECT

Easy / accessible /  
approachable / comfortable

The Cook Islands are an easy, safe, and comfortable little paradise where everyone can enjoy life as it should be enjoyed. With shared enjoyment comes shared responsibility - we all have a responsibility to look after our little paradise.

## FREEDOM TO CHOOSE

Yours to enjoy  
however you wish to

In the Cook Islands people can enjoy their own version of our little paradise however it works for them. Here, you are not forced into a particular style of holiday or way of doing things - you are free to enjoy this special place in your own way.

## REAL-LIFE PARADISE

Genuine / natural /  
no pretending

This is real-life, Cook Islands style! Here, you are not put in a 'tourist bubble' - there is authentic culture, traditions and everyday life happening all around you This isn't a performance or anything staged - it is real people living real lives.

## CATCH CRY

If you look after our little paradise, she will look after you.

(Akaperepere ia to tatou parataito, kia vai ruperupe te reira)

## TAGLINE

Love our little paradise

# The Adoption

# Third-Party Use

One of our brand aspirations was to create an inclusive movement - something everyone can feel a part of and work towards together.

For that to work, we need the LOLP brand platform to be flexible so it can be used in a number of ways by various stakeholders and delivery partners. At the same time, we also need to effectively control how it is used to avoid diluting or damaging what the brand stands for.

The Cook Islands Tourism Brand Guidelines have been created in the first instance to help guide this 3rd-party usage.

We have also sought legal advice regarding Trademark and Copyright law in the Cook Islands to protect the brand against future inappropriate or unsolicited use. While limited, there are some steps we can take to warn against this.

REQUIRED: How do we empower our deliver partners to adopt LOLP in a way that works for them?

[VIEW FULL BRAND GUIDELINES](#)

