

# Cook Islands

International Visitor Survey Report  
April - June 2024



# Acknowledgements

- ❖ The Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO) expresses its gratitude to all contributors to this report on IVS data from April to June 2024, which provides insights into the visitor experience and tourism recovery in the Cook Islands post-border reopening.
- ❖ Thank you to the visitors for completing arrival and departure cards, enabling this analysis. Special thanks to the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITC) for providing the visitor emails to enable survey invitations to be dispatched in a timely manner.
- ❖ We also extend our sincere thanks to the New Zealand Government for their support and collaboration.
- ❖ Appreciation goes to the SPTO researchers and analysts for their meticulous work on visitor profiles, decision-making processes, and expenditure and satisfaction.
- ❖ Further research is needed to refine economic impact estimates, particularly the rate of prepaid expenditure into the local economy. Your ongoing support is highly valued.
- ❖ Thank you to everyone involved.

# Executive Summary

- ❖ The survey, conducted from April to June 2024, analyzed 569 responses out of 611 collected, representing 2% of actual visitors with a 14% response rate. Among the respondents, 14% were solo travelers, and the average household income was NZD 144,641.
- ❖ Visitors were primarily attracted by nature attractions, cultural experiences, business opportunities, and connections with family and friends in the Cook Islands. Overall visitor satisfaction was high, with a rating of 4.7 out of 5. A substantial 98% of visitors indicated they would recommend Cook Islands to others, and 93% expressed willingness to return.
- ❖ The average prepaid spend per visitor was NZD 2,544 with an estimated 40% (NZD 1,018) flowing into the local economy. In-country spending per visitor per trip averaged NZD 2,071 with an average stay of 9.5 nights. This contributed to an *estimated*\* economic impact of NZD 142 million from April to June 2024.
- ❖ Visitors were most attracted to the activities, attractions, entertainment, events, and the welcoming hospitality of the friendly, humble locals, as well as the relaxed island atmosphere. However, they were less impressed with public services, facilities, infrastructure, and the high costs of food, beverages, and other goods and services. To improve the overall visitor experience, they suggested enhancements in public services and infrastructure maintenance, upgrades to accommodations and services, and improvements in airport and flight experiences.

# Background

- ❖ The April – June 2024 Cook Islands Visitor Survey is an initiative of the Pacific Tourism Data Initiative, funded by the Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZMFAT), and is conducted by the Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO).
- ❖ IVS data from April - June 2024 is analysed to help us understand the visitor experience and gain insights into tourism recovery the Cook Islands after the border reopening.
- ❖ The report includes key sections on visitor profiles and characteristics, information and decision-making, visitor expenditure and satisfaction.
- ❖ **N.B.** The visitor emails were collected through the passenger arrival cards completed by visitors on their arrival into Cook Islands.
- ❖ **N.B.** The estimated rate of prepaid expenditure flowing into local economy is 40%, which is observed from other Pacific Island countries. Further research is warranted to establish more accurate estimates.
- ❖ All amounts are reported in **NZD** currency using average rates for the April – June 2024 period.

# Disclaimer

- ❖ **Reproduction of Material** - Information contained within this publication, including all charts, information, and graphical representations, may be used, reproduced, or published without prior approval from SPTO and Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITC). However, the information source must be explicitly referenced and acknowledged in all modes of representation.
- ❖ The **survey instrument** used to collect data for the April to June 2024 period was similar, but not exact, to the survey instrument used in the April to June 2024 period. New questions were added, a handful of existing questions were removed, and the response options for some questions were altered. In those instances where comparisons cannot be made, we report only the results for the April to June 2024 period.
- ❖ **N.B.** All analyses are based on the IVS respondents. No weighting was applied, as the sample data is representative. Therefore, the IVS respondents were not weighted to the actual arrival data.
- ❖ Please note that the Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO) and the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITC) do not accept liability for any loss or damage incurred as a result of the use of information contained in this report. Users are advised to exercise their own judgment in the use of any information provided.

# IVS Respondents (April - June 2024)



**4,102** TOTAL VALID EMAILS SENT



**569** TOTAL RESPONSES ANALYZED

*Note: 611 responses were received. After data cleaning, 569 responses remained.*

**14%**  
CONVERSION RATE

## RESPONSES COVERED



**909** ADULTS



**131** CHILDREN

**2%**  
OF ALL VISITORS IN THIS PERIOD

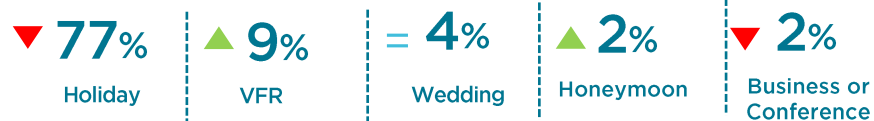
# Cook Islands International Visitor Survey

## Snapshot April - June 2024

### Country of residence



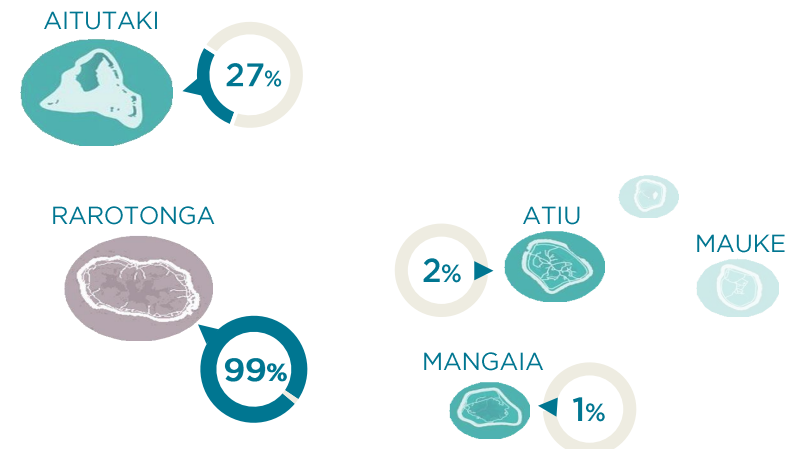
### Purpose of visit



### Most Participated Activities



### Islands visited



### Most appealing



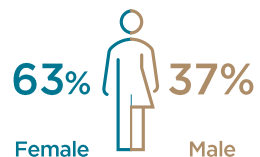
### Least Appealing



### Improvement



### Economic impact



Note: The estimated flow-back rate into the Cook Islands for prepaid spend is 40%. With an average prepaid spend of \$2,544 per person per trip, this equates to \$1,018.

# Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor  
Characteristics  
& Preferences



Information &  
Decision Making



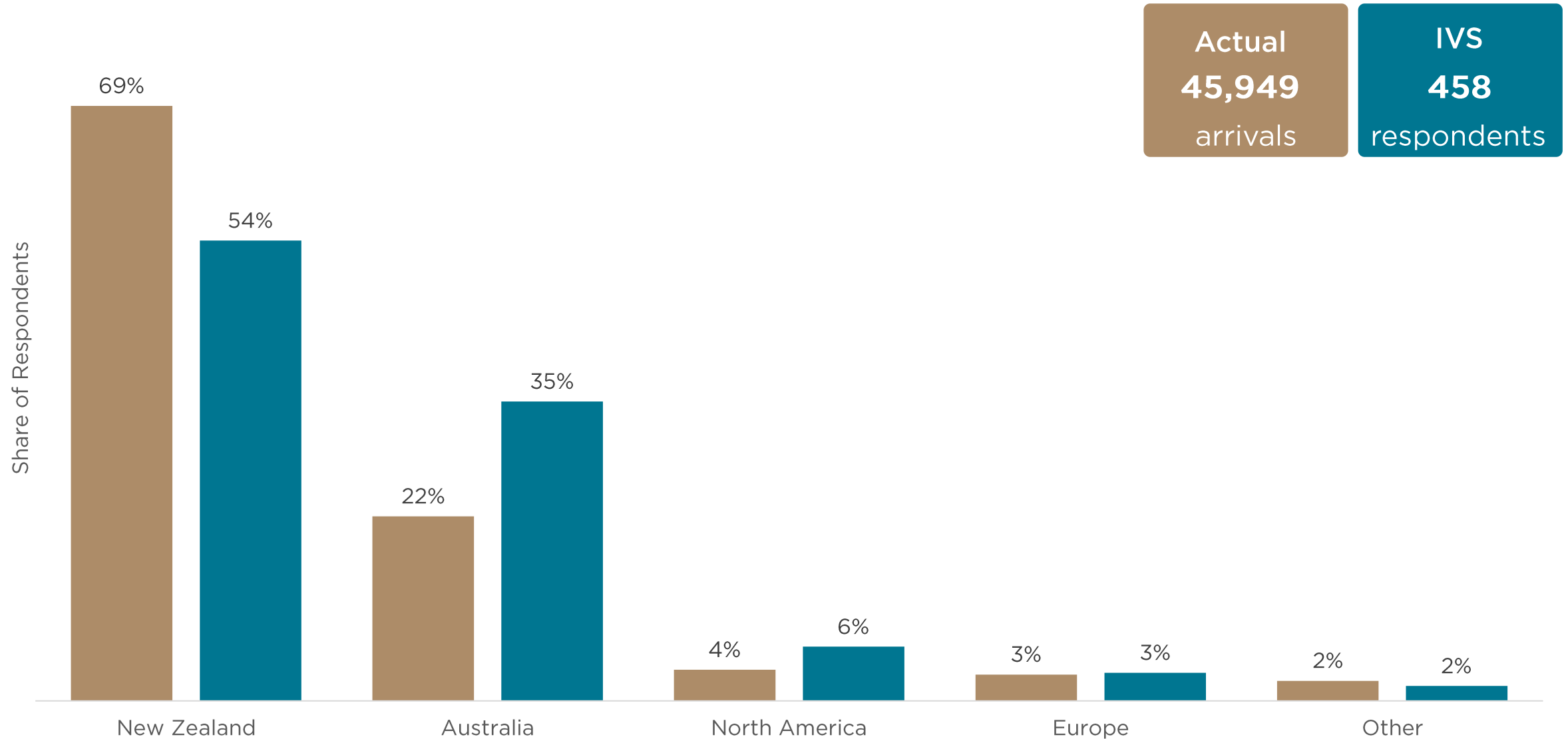
Visitor Spending  
& Impact



Visitor  
Satisfaction

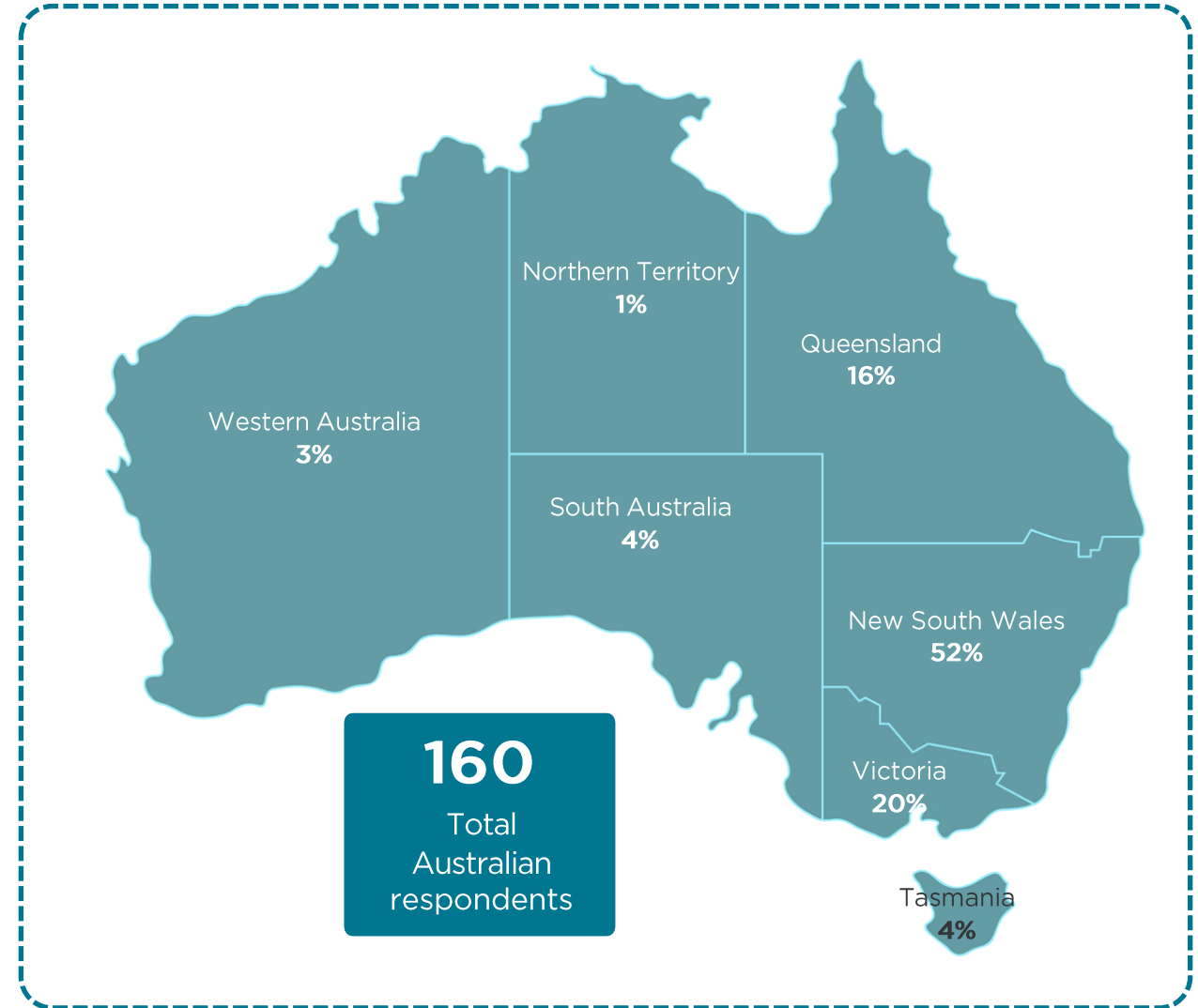
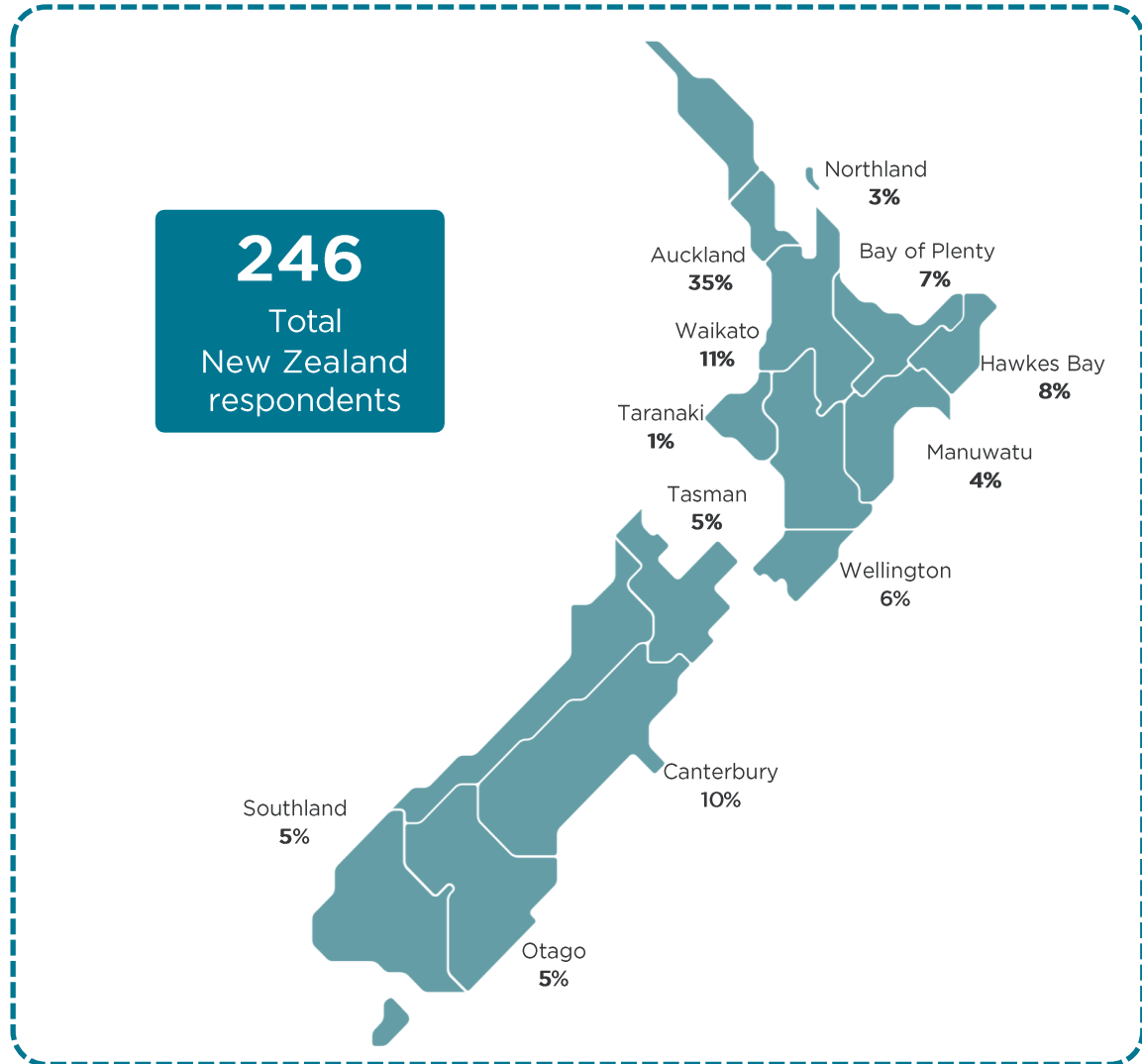


# Source Markets: IVS Respondents vs Actual Arrival



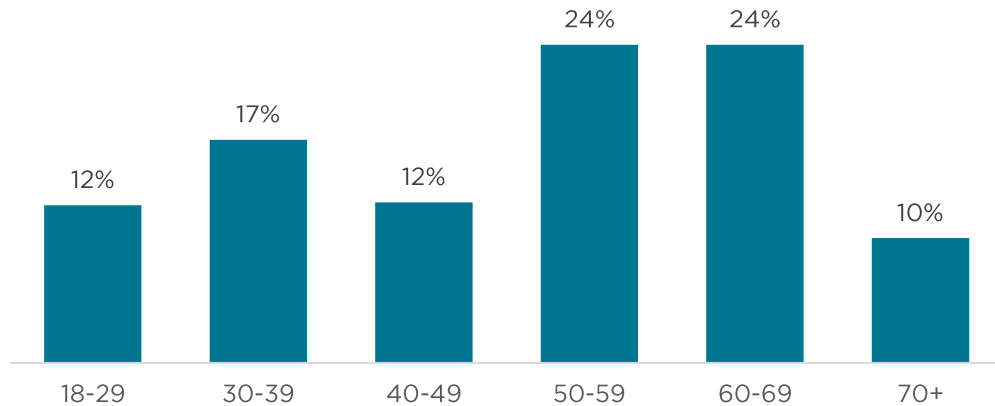
*Note: Due to rounding, some totals do not sum to 100%. No weighting was applied, as the sample data is representative..*

# Top Source Markets



# Respondent Demographics

## Age



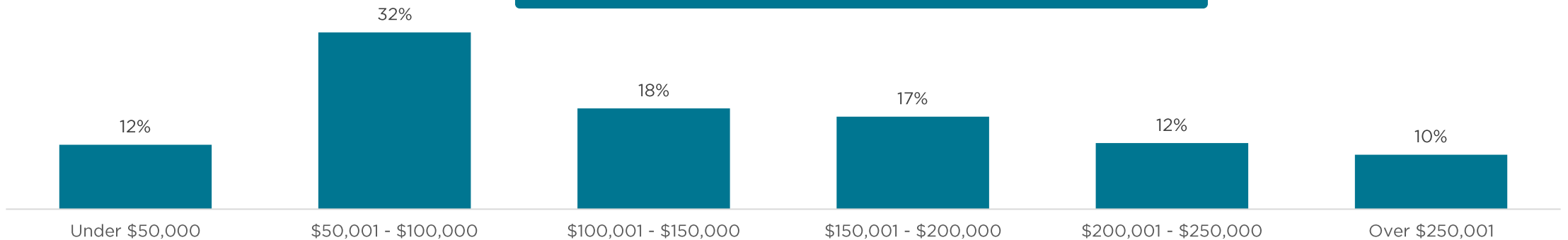
## Gender



## Annual Household Income

Avg. household income

**NZD \$144,641**  
**USD \$89,284**



Note: % share of IVS respondents. \$ in NZD. The average exchange rate to NZD and USD for Apr-Jun 2024 was applied.

# Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor  
Characteristics  
& Preferences



Information &  
Decision Making



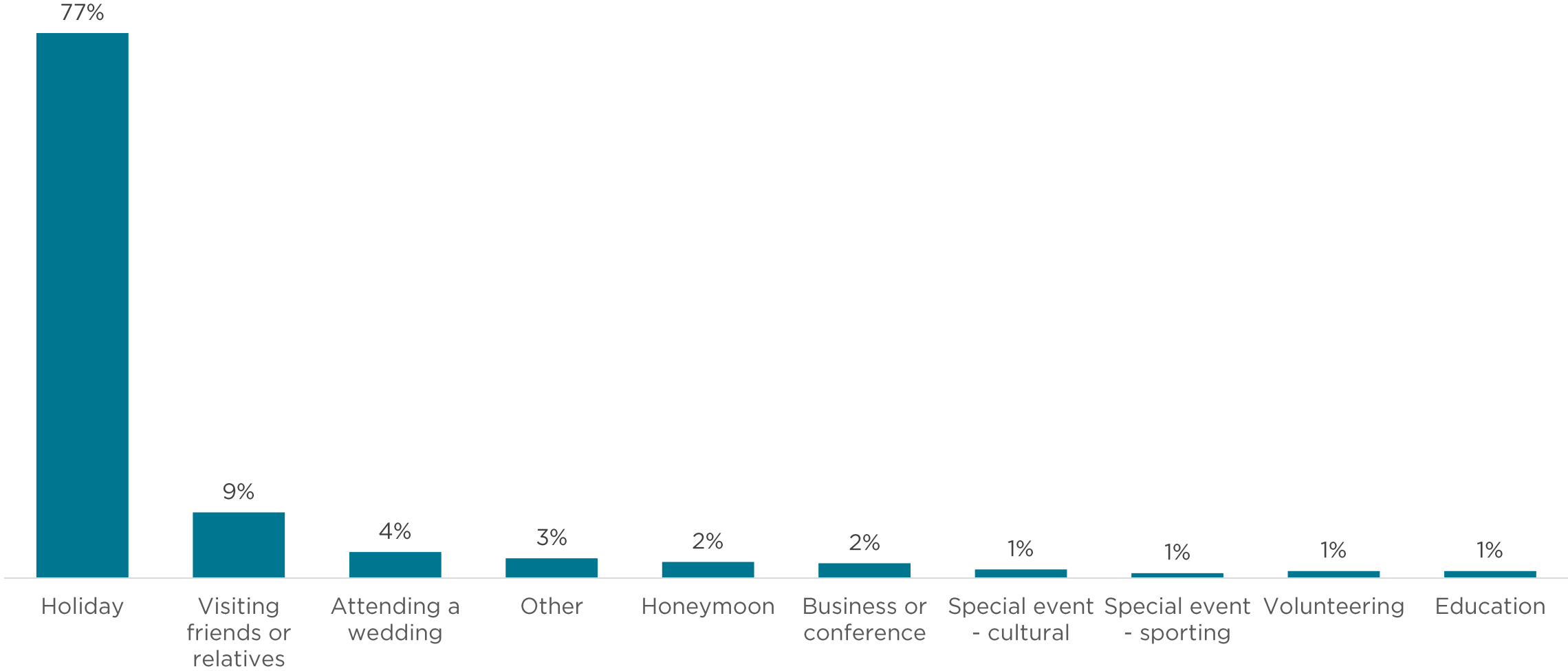
Visitor Spending  
& Impact



Visitor  
Satisfaction

# Purpose of Visit

Q: What was the main purpose of your visit?

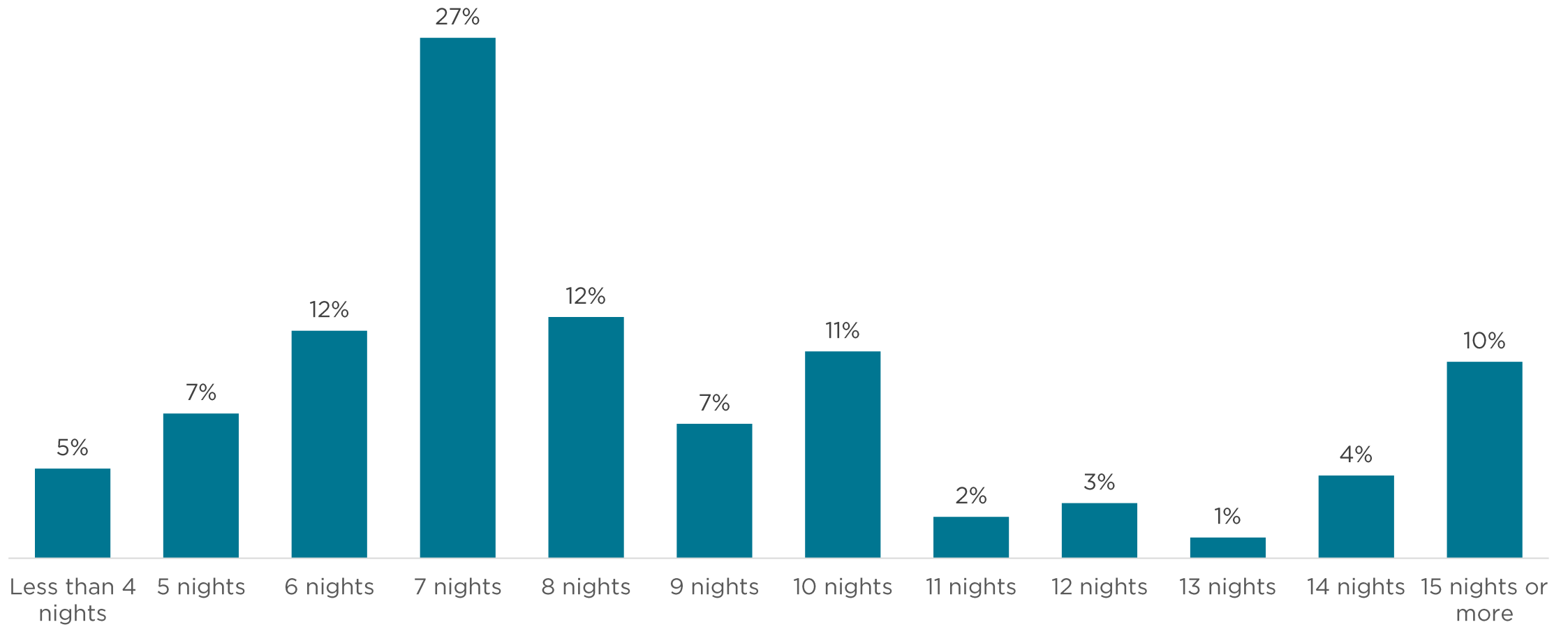


Note: N=569. Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%

# Length of Stay (nights)

Q: How many nights did you spend in Cook Islands?

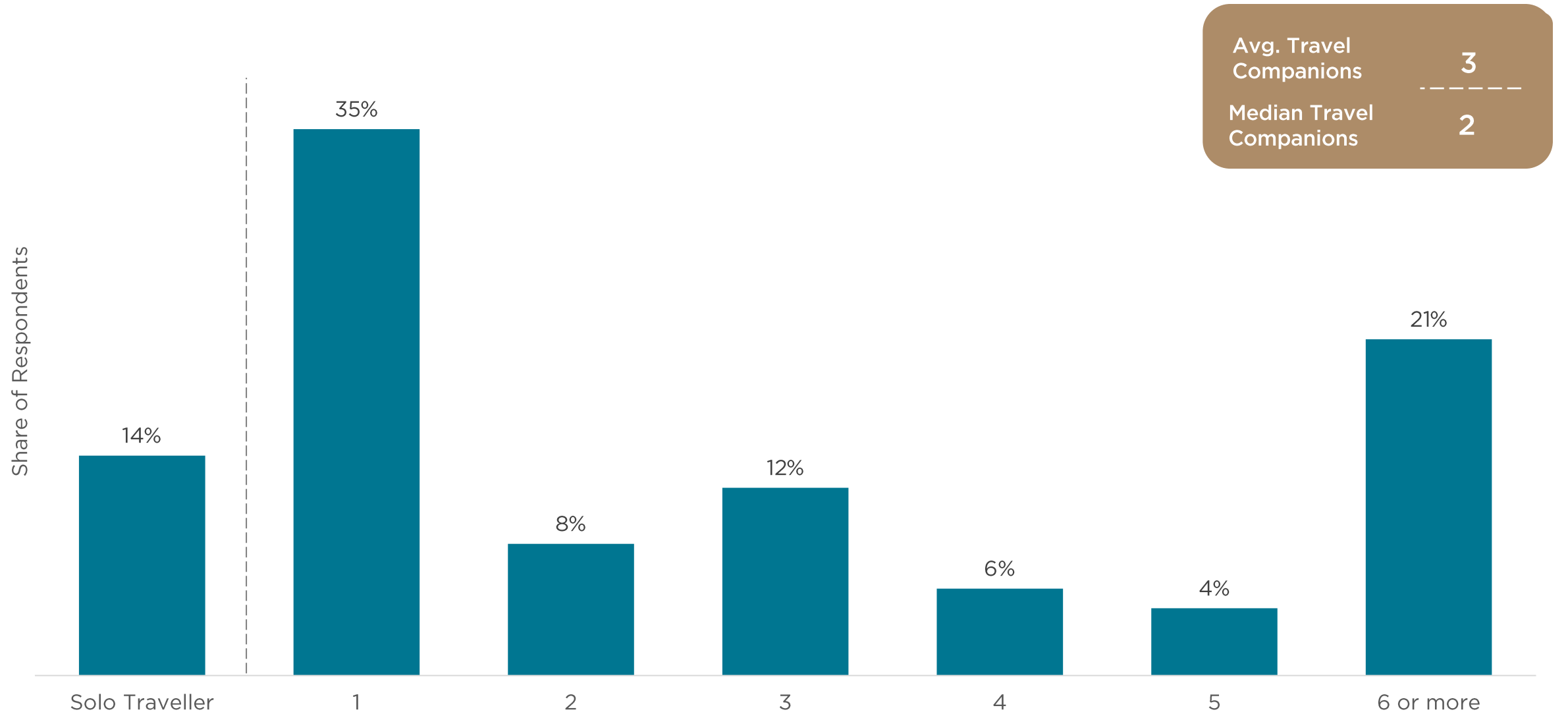
Avg. Length of Stay  
**9.5 nights**



Note: 31 and 31+ days as outliers were removed for length of stay analysis

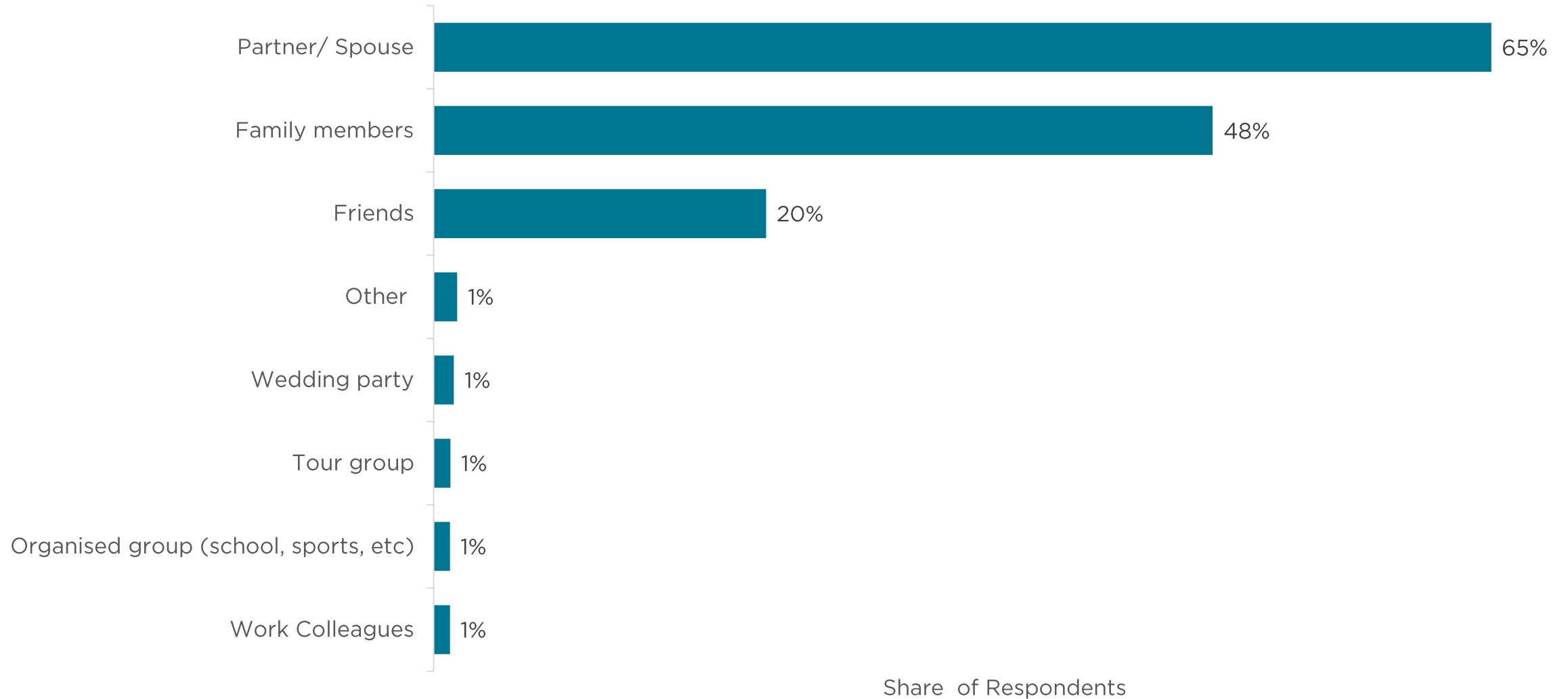
# Travel Group Size

Q: How many people accompanied you on this trip?



Note: N=484. Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%

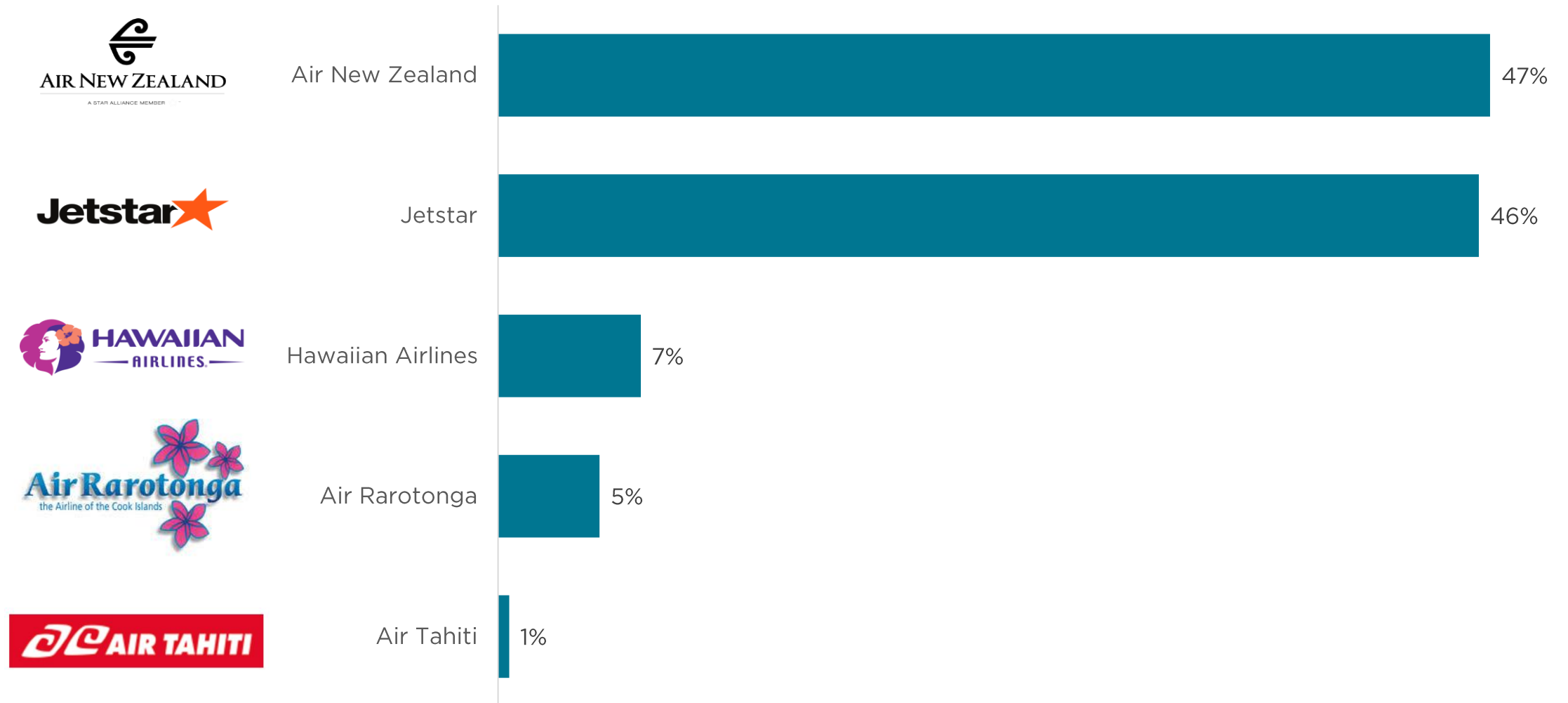
# Travel Companions



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



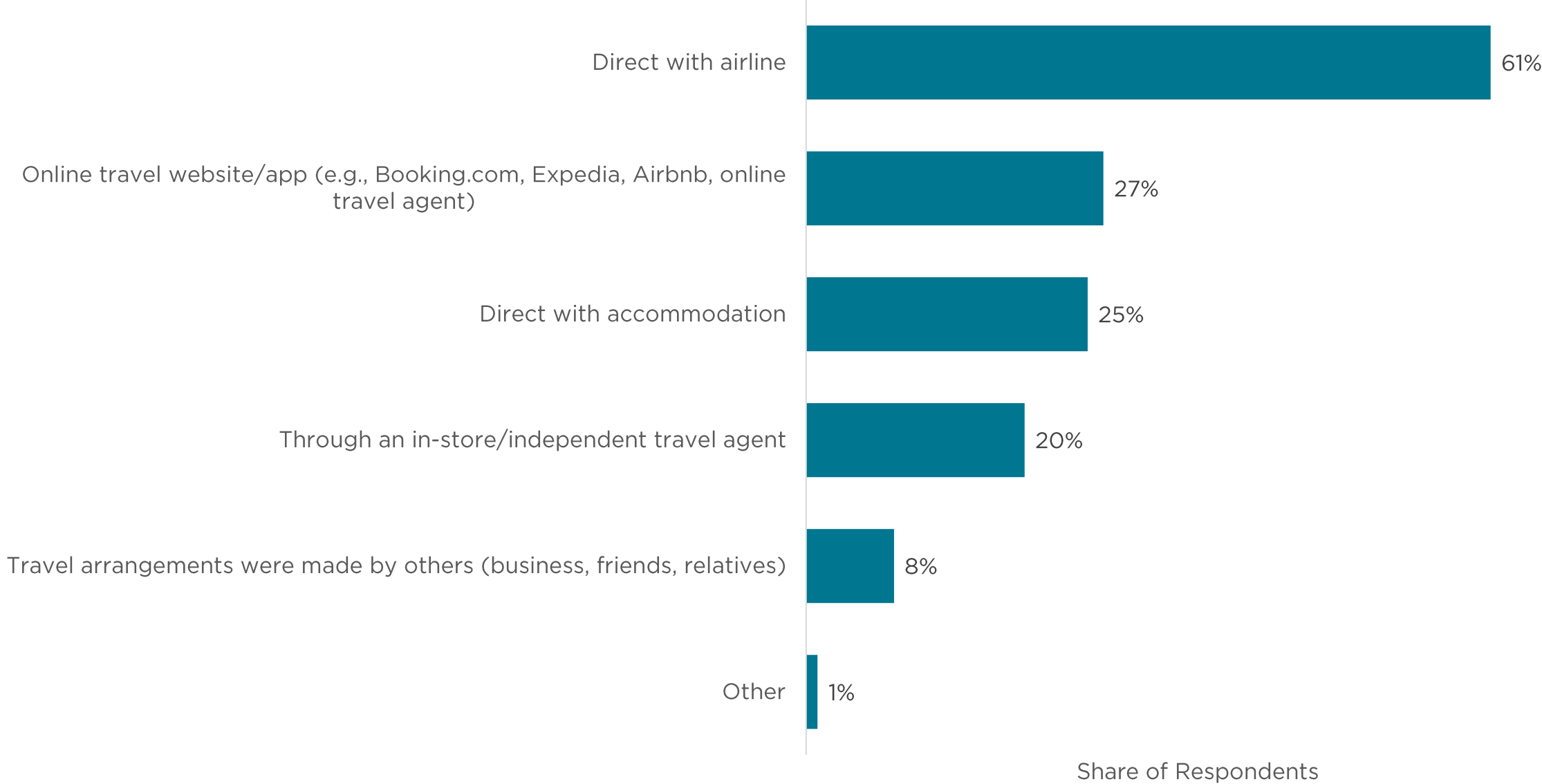
# Airlines Used for Travel



Share of Respondents

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

# Purchasing of Travel



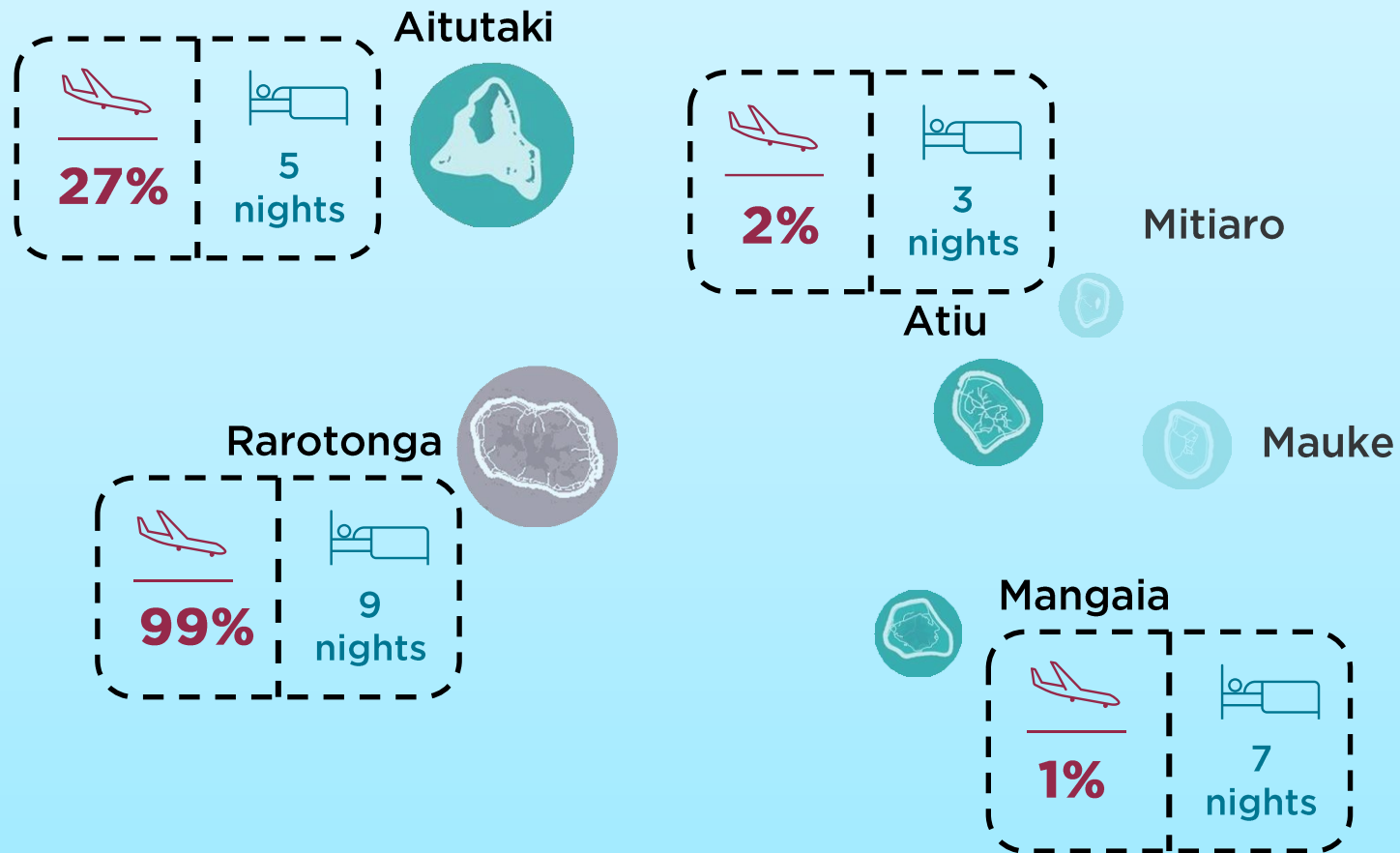
*Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%*

# Islands Visited & Avg. Length of Stay

Avg. Length of Stay  
9.5 Nights

Q: Which island(s) did you visit?

Q: How many nights did you spend on each island you visited?

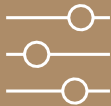


Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%.

# Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor  
Characteristics  
& Preferences



Information &  
Decision Making



Visitor Spending  
& Impact



Visitor  
Satisfaction

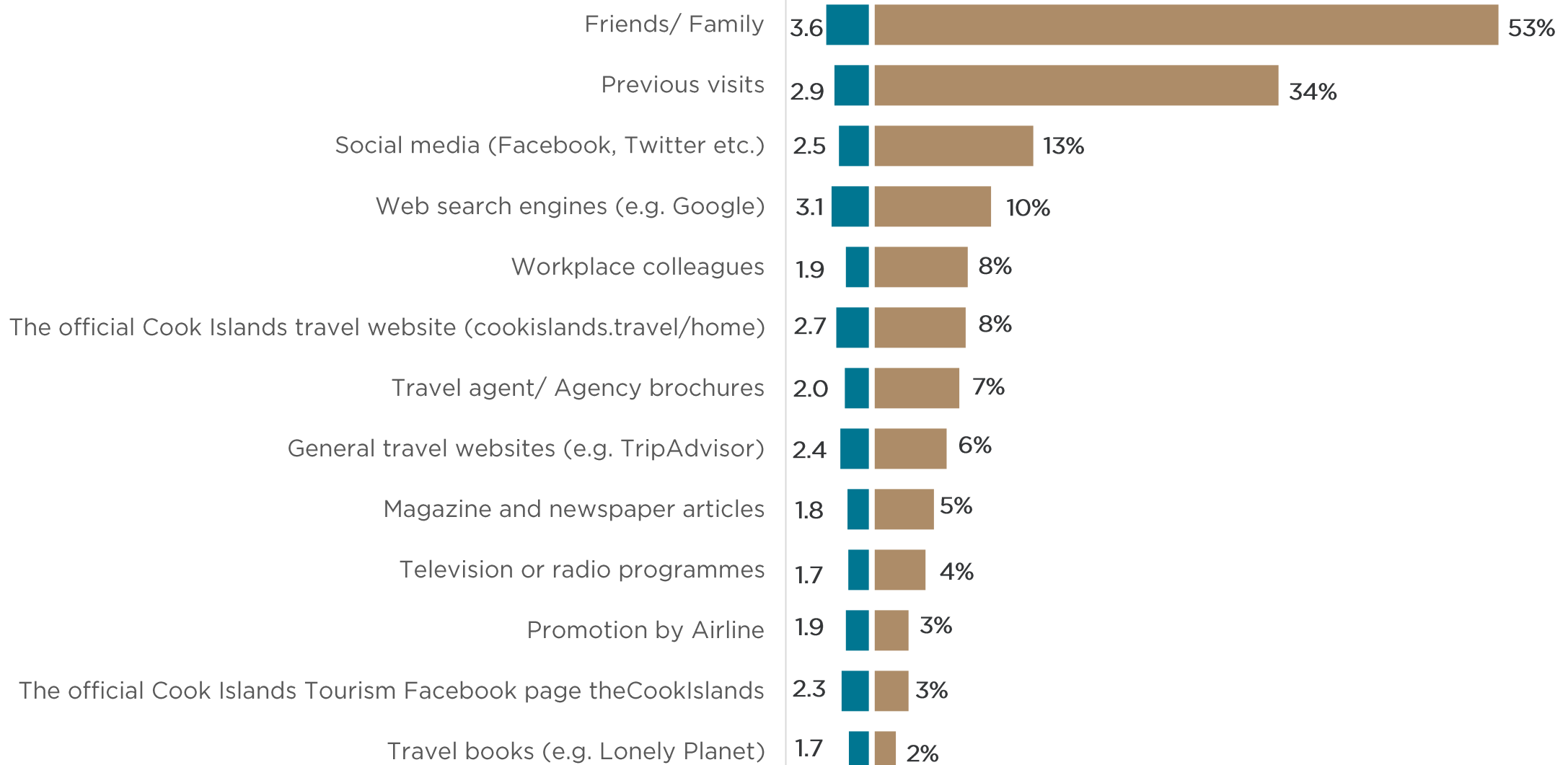
# Information Source

Q: How did you find out about Cook Islands as a destination?

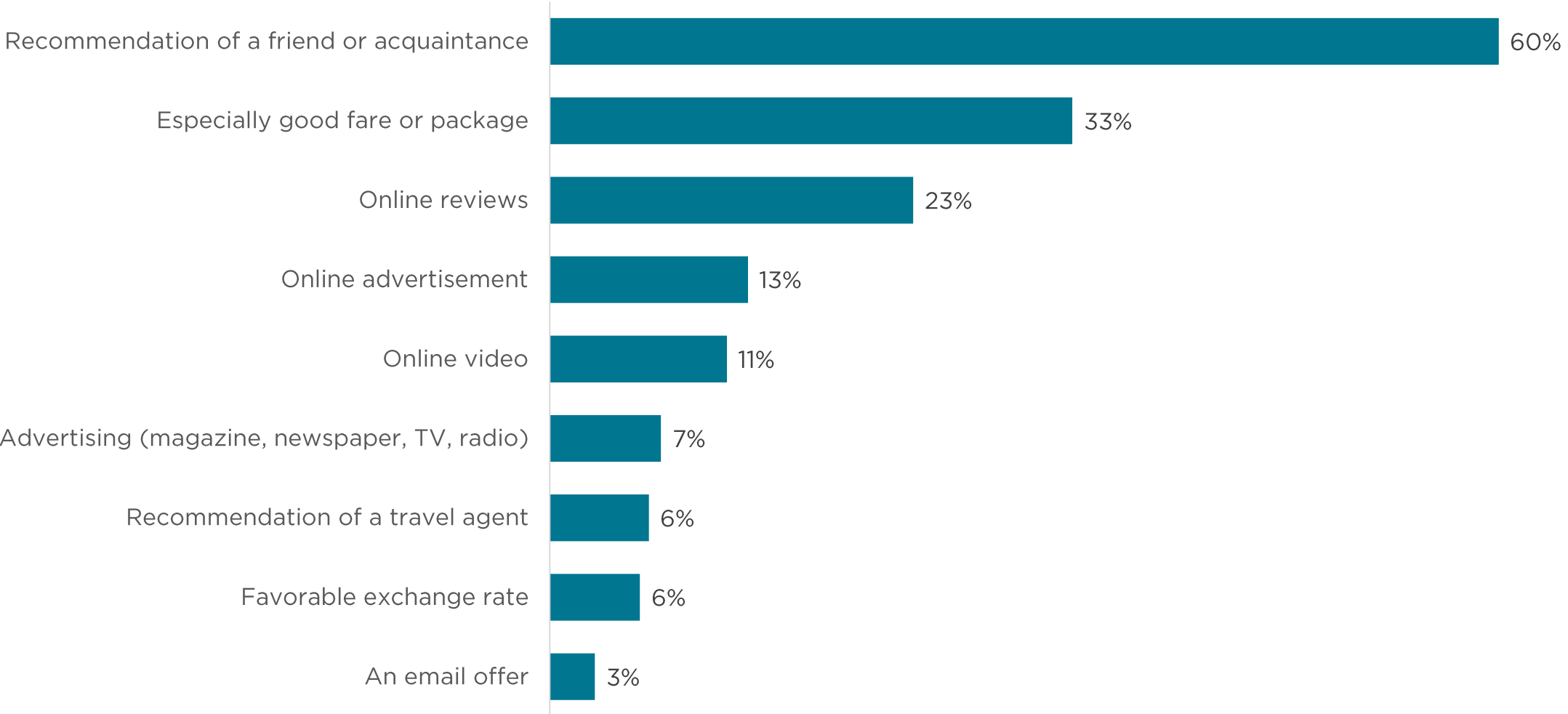
Q: How important was the information source?

Importance  
(out of 5)

Information Source



# Important Promotion/Advertising Channels that assisted in selecting to visit the Cook Islands



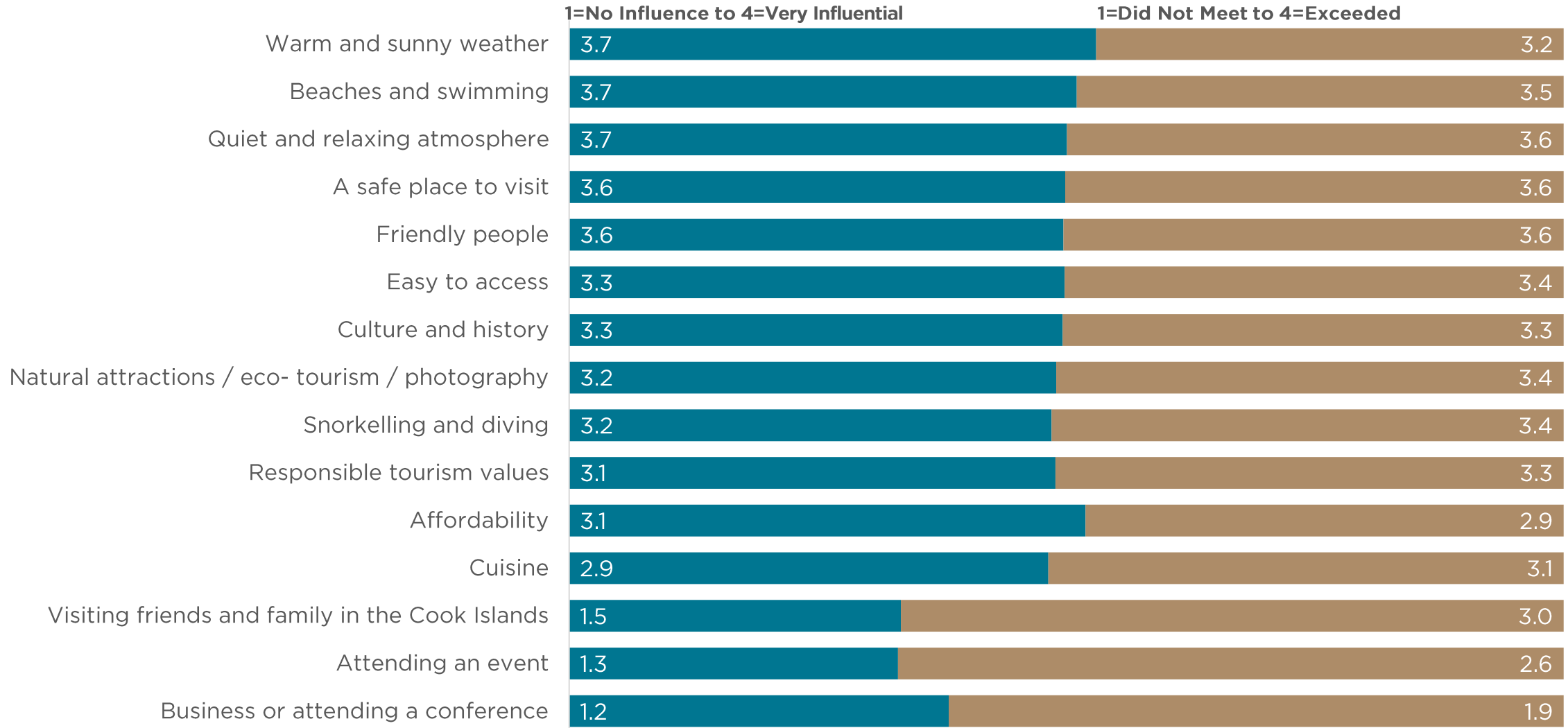
Share of Respondents

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

# Pre-Travel Perceptions Vs Expectations

Q: How influential were the following factors in your selection of the Cook Islands for your recent visit?

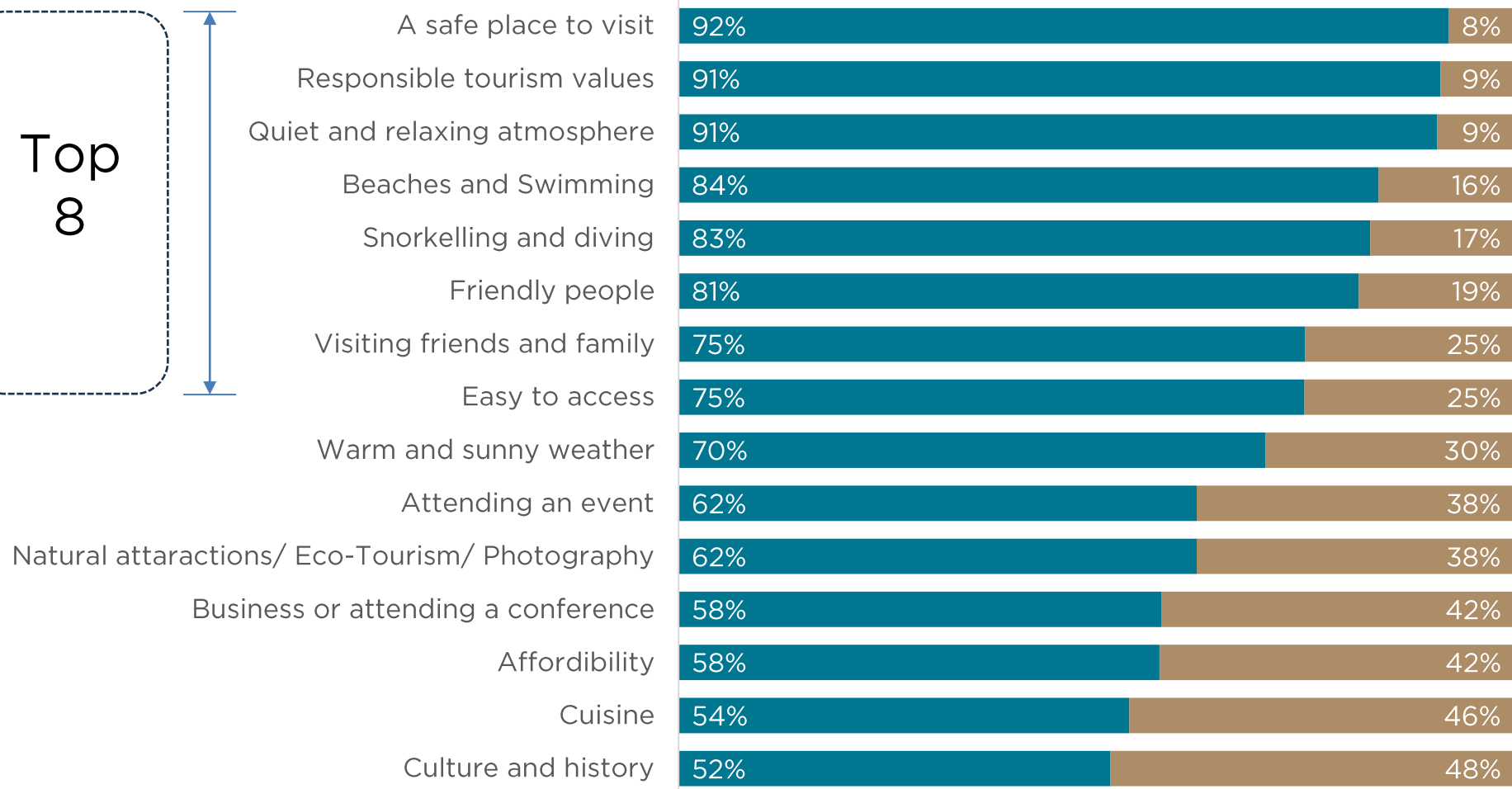
Q: Please evaluate how well your experience aligned with your expectations.



# Unique Selling Points: Cook Islands vs Competitors (based on Visitor Perceptions)

**Q: Please attribute each statement below to the country, Cook Islands or Alternative Destination, that best represents its unique appeal**

Top  
8



**Bottom 6**  
Emphasizing these Unique Selling Points is important, as visitors increasingly associate them with other destinations when comparing with the Cook Islands.

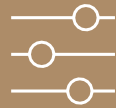
■ % of Respondents that chose the Cook Islands
 ■ % of Respondents that chose Other Destinations



# Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor  
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Information &  
Decision Making



Visitor Spending  
& Impact

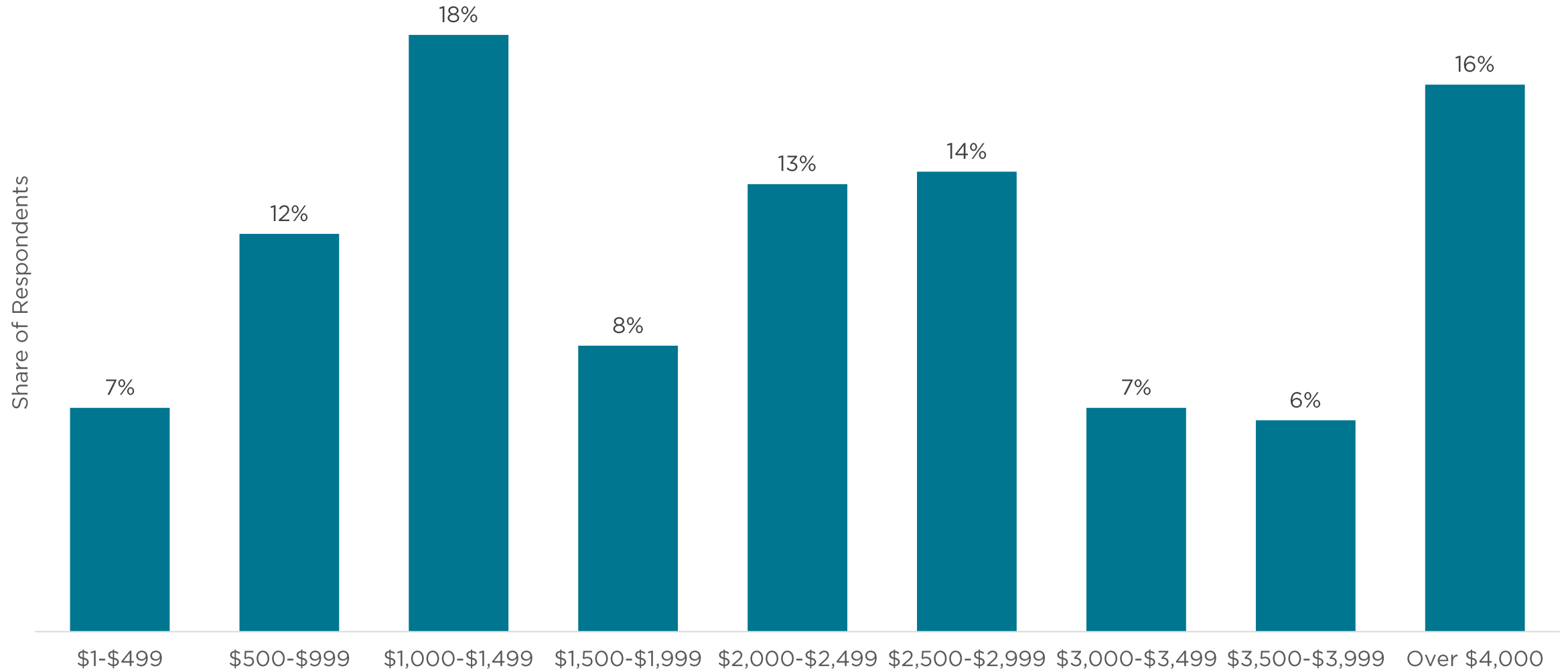


Visitor  
Satisfaction

# Prepaid Expenditure

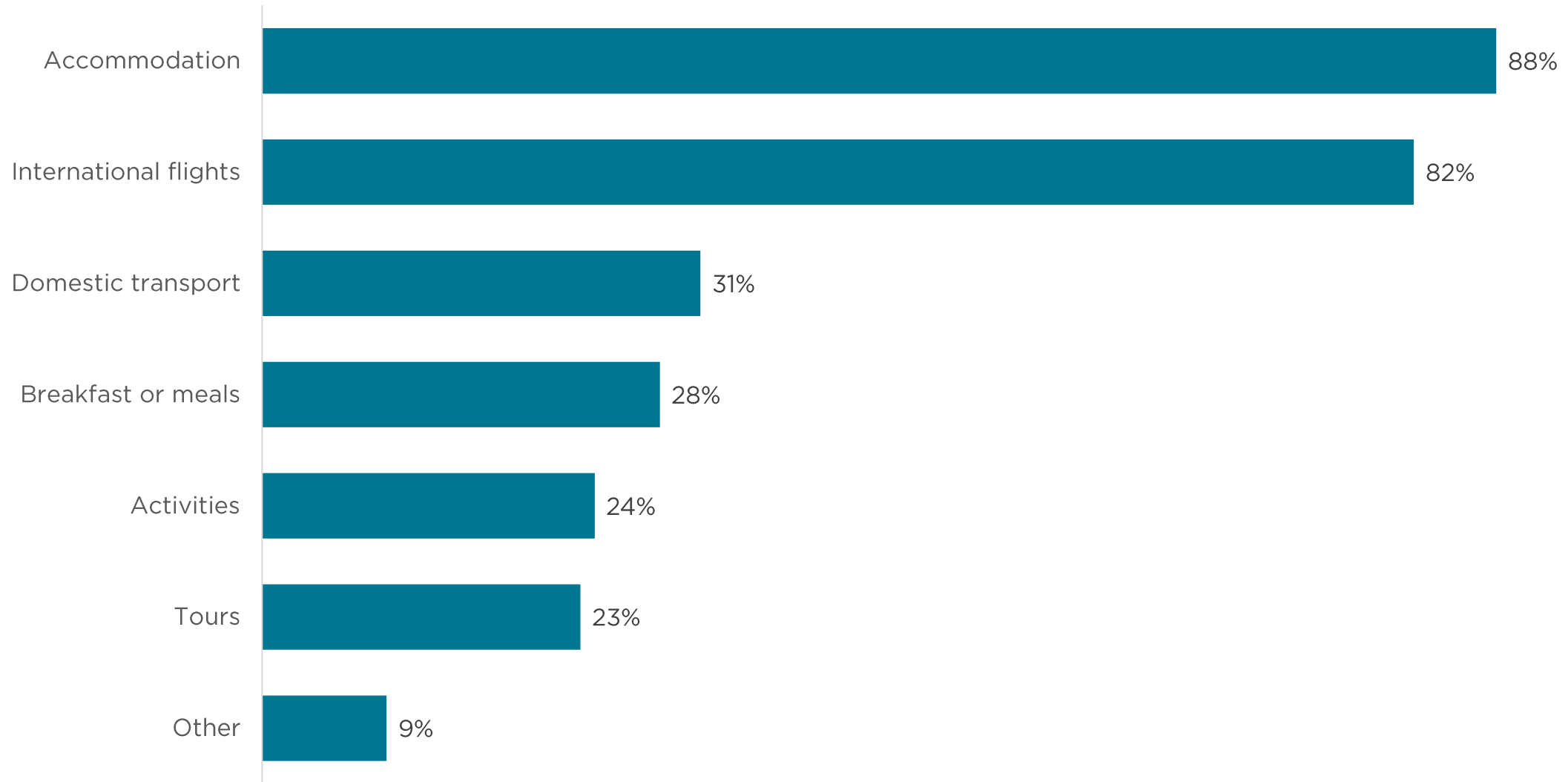
Avg. Prepaid per Person  
per Trip

**NZ\$2,544**



Note: NZ dollars.

# Prepaid Items



Share of Respondents

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

# In-country Spend Per Person Per Day While in the Cook Islands

	Local Spend Per Person Per Day		
	<u>% of sector</u>	<u>NZD</u>	<u>USD</u>
Accommodation	41	90	55
Restaurant, Cafes & Bars	22	48	30
Vehicle Rental	6	13	8
Petrol	1	3	2
Domestic Flight	9	19	12
Public Transport	1	1	1
Internet Cost	1	2	1
Water-based activities	5	10	6
Land-based activities	3	6	4
Groceries	5	11	7
Shopping	6	13	8
Other	2	3	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>218</b>	<b>134</b>

*Note: Total Economic Impact-Per Trip and Per Day are per-person expenditures and can be used to estimate the total economic impact, through extrapolating to the total number of visitor arrivals during the surveyed period.*

# Economic Impact - Per Person and Total

	Visitor Expenditure Per Person & Total	
	Apr-Jun24	Apr-Jun24
	NZD	USD
<b>Average Spend Prior to arrival</b>		
Per Person Per Trip	2,544	1,570
<i>Flowing into local economy rate - estimated 40%</i>		
Per Person Per Trip	1,018	628
Per Person per Day	107	66
-----		
<b>Average Local Spend</b>		
<i>Length of Stay (nights)</i>	<i>mean 9.5 nights</i>	
Per Person Per Trip	2,071	1,278
Per Person per Day	218	134
-----		
<b>Total Economic Impact-Per Trip</b>	<b>3,089</b>	<b>1,907</b>
<b>Total Economic Impact-Per Day</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>201</b>

April - June 2023

# NZD 100 MILLION

FROM VISITORS 34,435

 PREPAID EXPENDITURE

 IN-COUNTRY SPEND

**\$2,570**

Prepaid per visitor per trip

**\$200**

In-country spend per day

**40%** Flowing into local economy rate

**x 9.4 nights** Average length of stay

**\$1,024**

Prepaid per visitor per trip

**\$1,880**

In-country spend per trip

 ECONOMIC IMPACT

**\$2,904** per visitor per trip

**\$309** per visitor per day

April - June 2024

# NZD 142 MILLION

FROM VISITORS 45,949 ▲

 PREPAID EXPENDITURE

 IN-COUNTRY SPEND

**\$2,544 ▼**

Prepaid per visitor per trip

**\$218 ▲**

In-country spend per day

**40%** Flowing into local economy rate

**x 9.5 nights** Average length of stay ▲

**\$1,018 ▼**

Prepaid per visitor per trip

**\$2,071 ▲**

In-country spend per trip

 ECONOMIC IMPACT

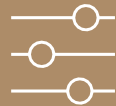
**\$3,089** per visitor per trip ▲

**\$325** per visitor per day ▲

# Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor  
Characteristics  
& Preferences



Information &  
Decision Making



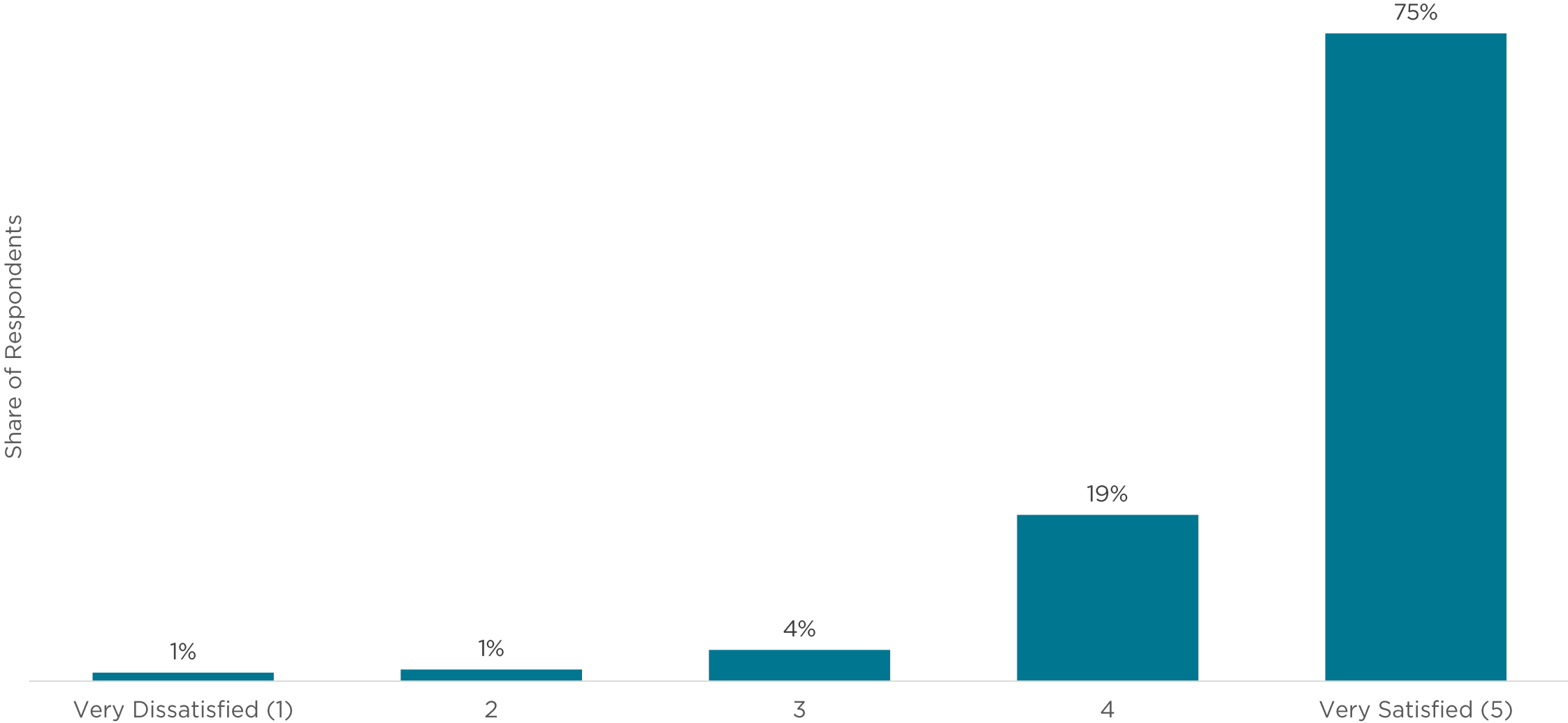
Visitor Spending  
& Impact



Visitor  
Satisfaction

# Visitor Overall Satisfaction

Avg. Overall Satisfaction  
**4.7**

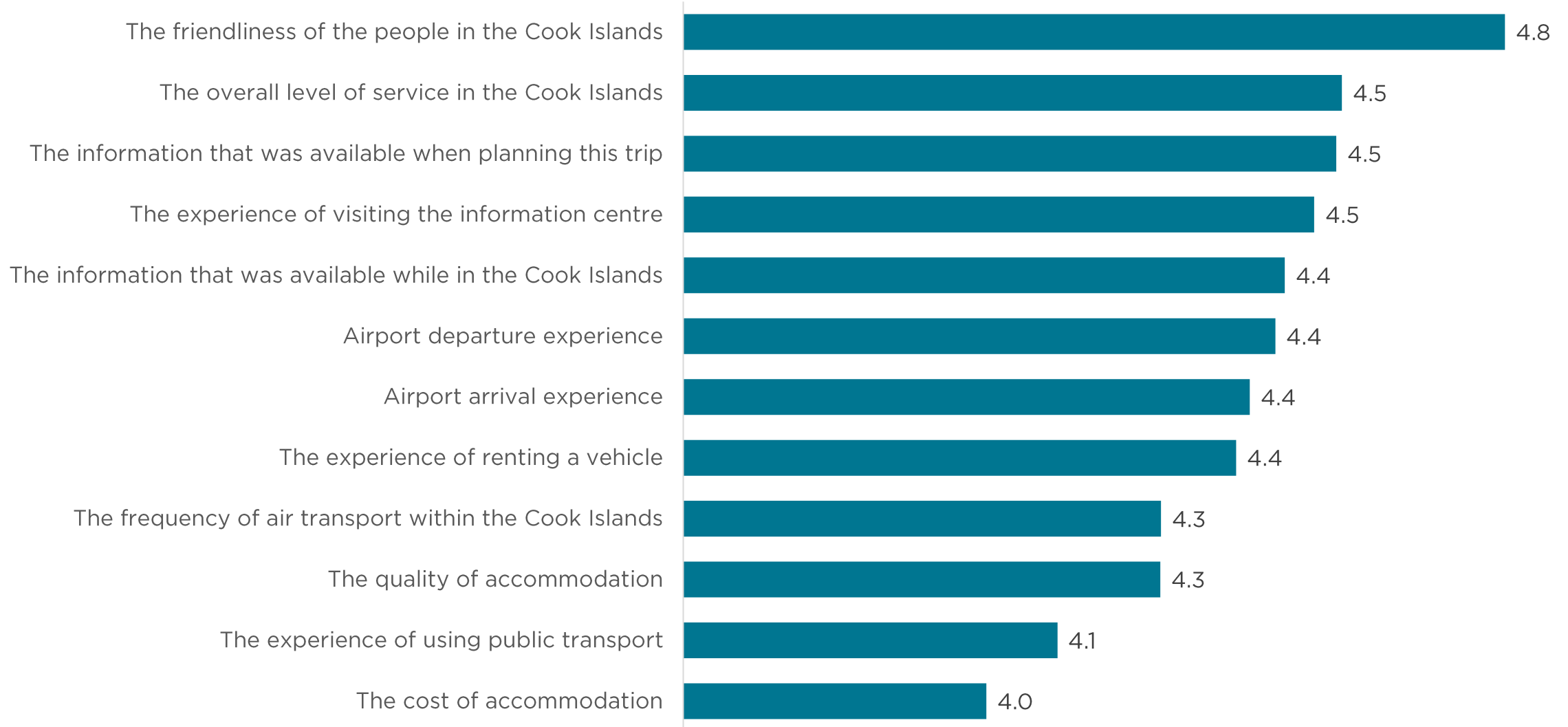


*Note: Due to rounding, some totals do not sum to 100%*



# Satisfaction with Travel Experience

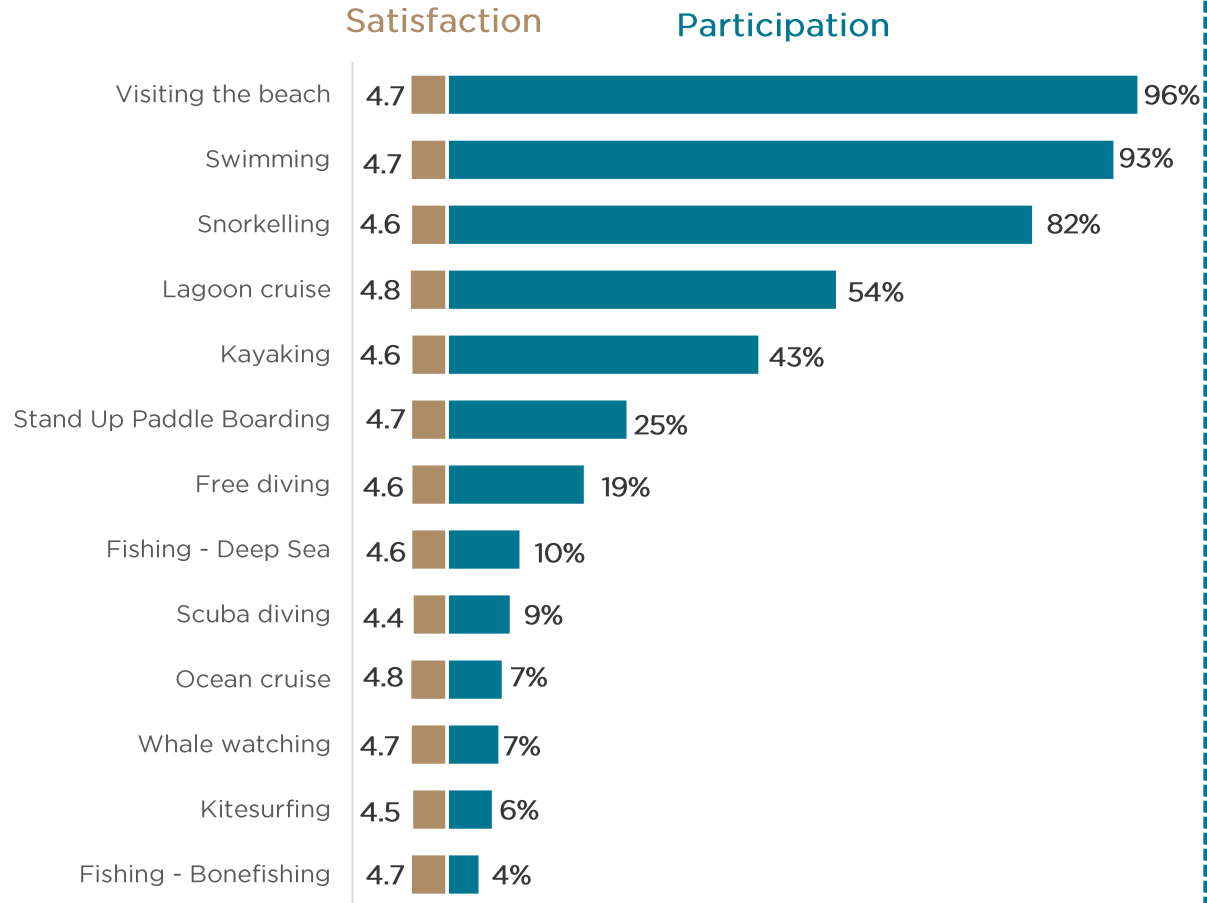
Q: How satisfied were you with the following?



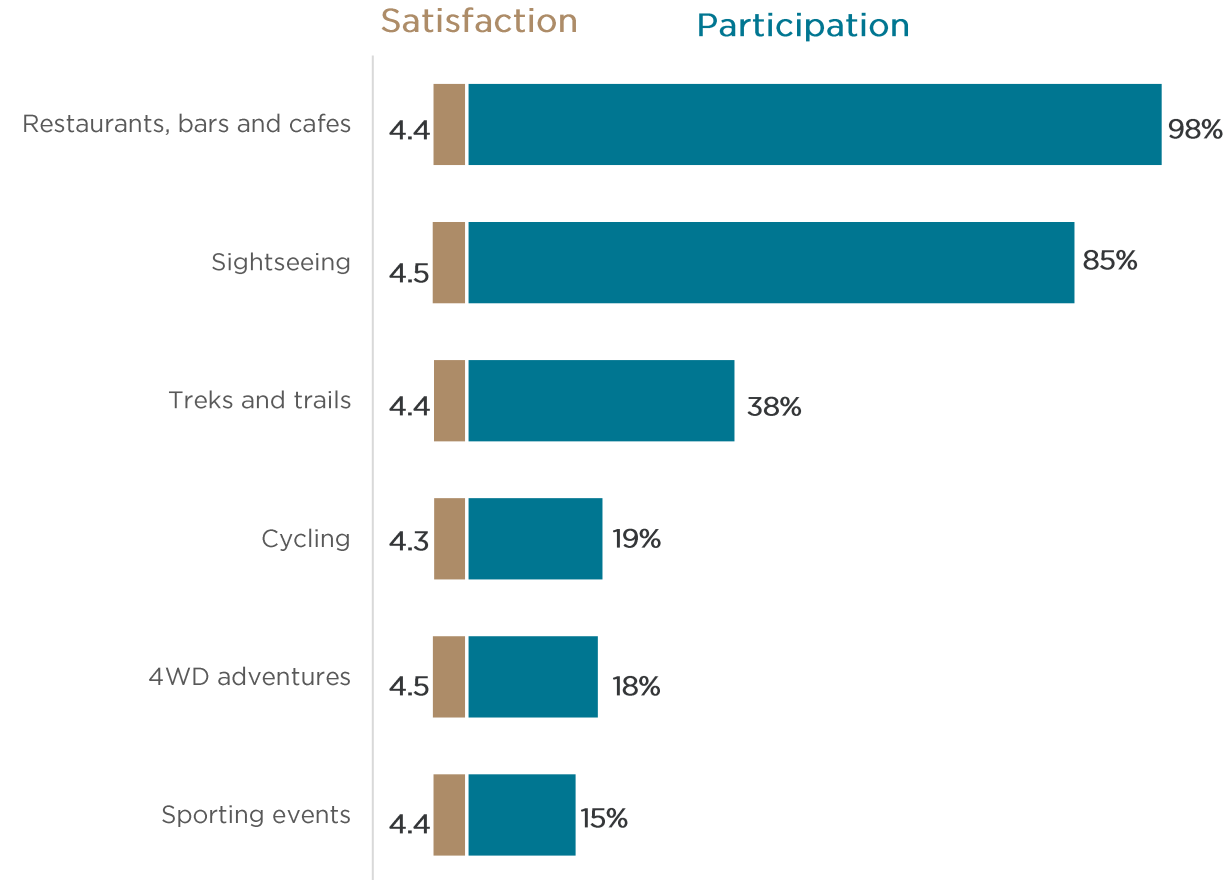
# Satisfaction with Activities

Q: How satisfied were you with the following?

## Water-based activities



## Land-based activities

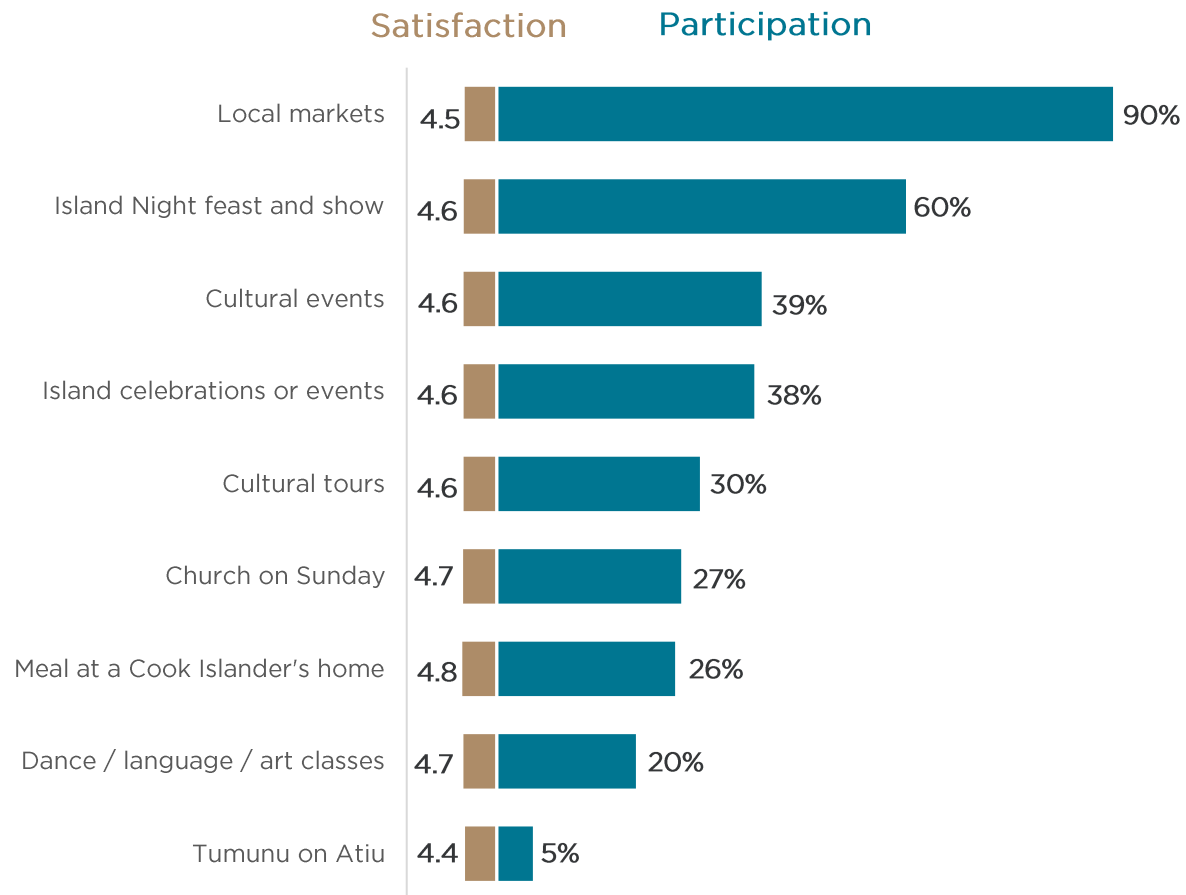


Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

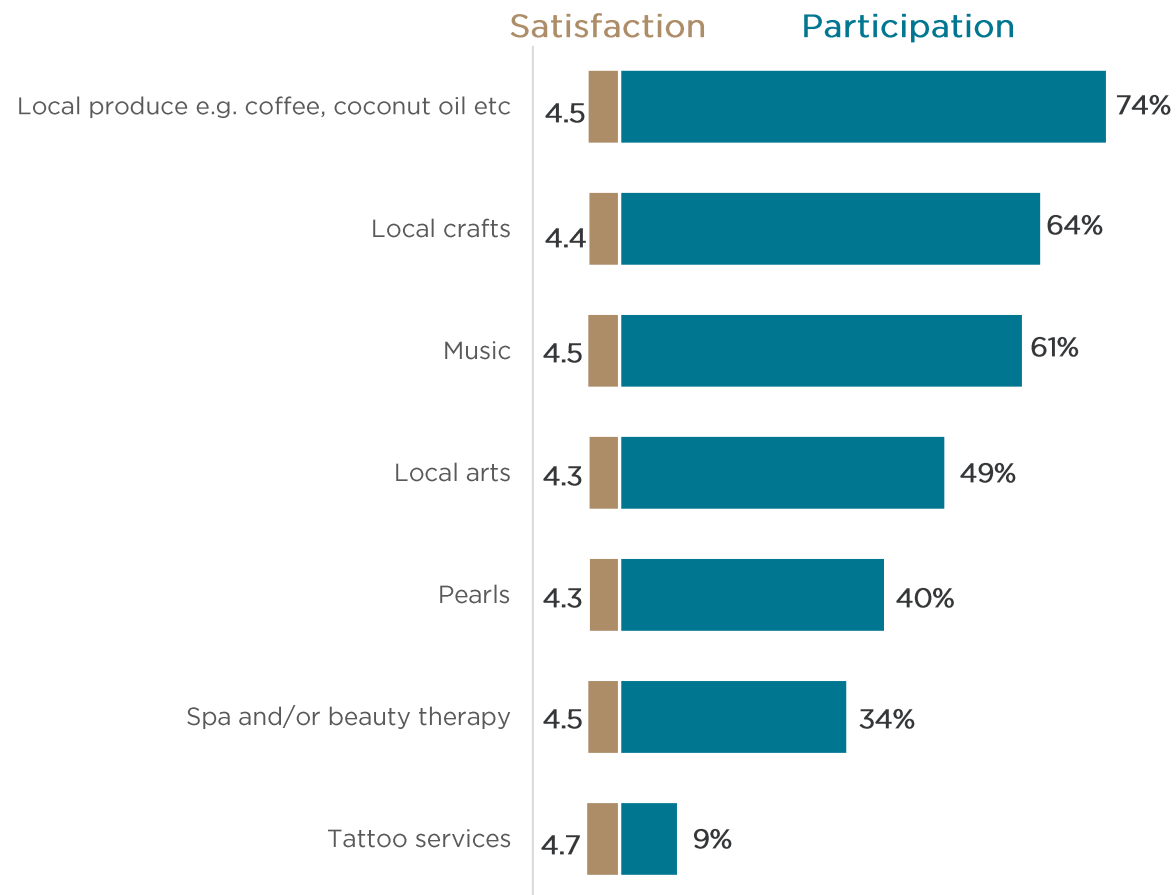
# Satisfaction with Activities

Q: How satisfied were you with the following?

## Arts and Cultural Activities



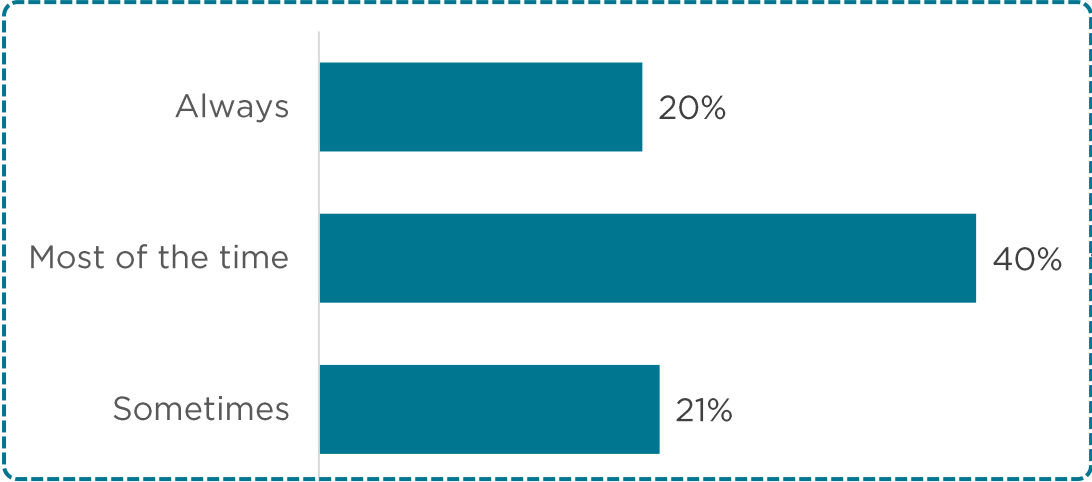
## Shopping activities



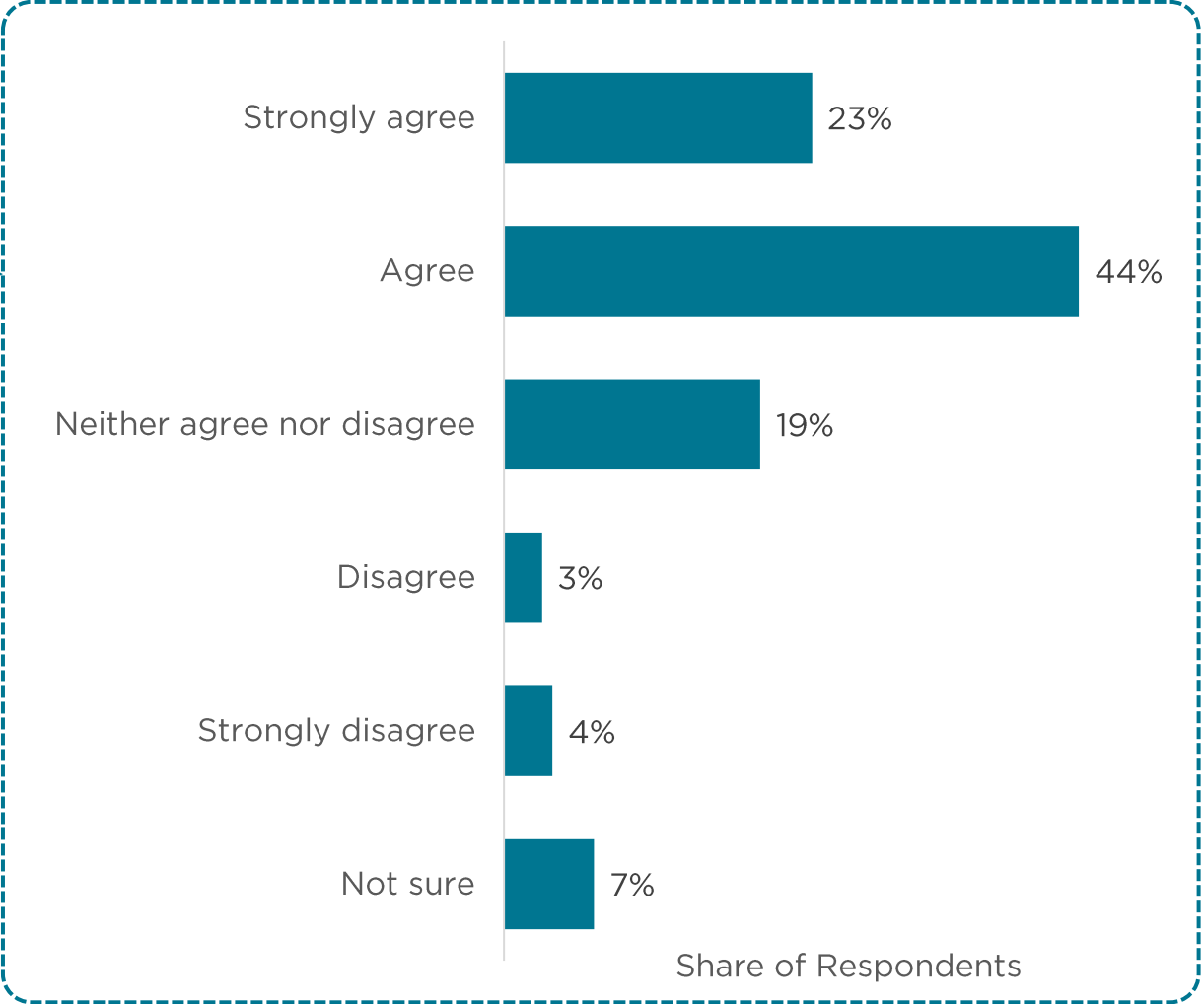
Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

# Socio-Cultural and Environmental Awareness

**Q: During your trip to the Cook Islands, to what extent did you take sustainability, which includes the environment, the local community, and the culture, into account when deciding what activities to do, things to buy, or services to use?**



*"I am willing to contribute to a tourist visitor levy aimed at supporting social, environmental, and cultural regeneration in the Cook Islands, because I believe that tourism can have a positive impact, and I want to be part of the solution"*

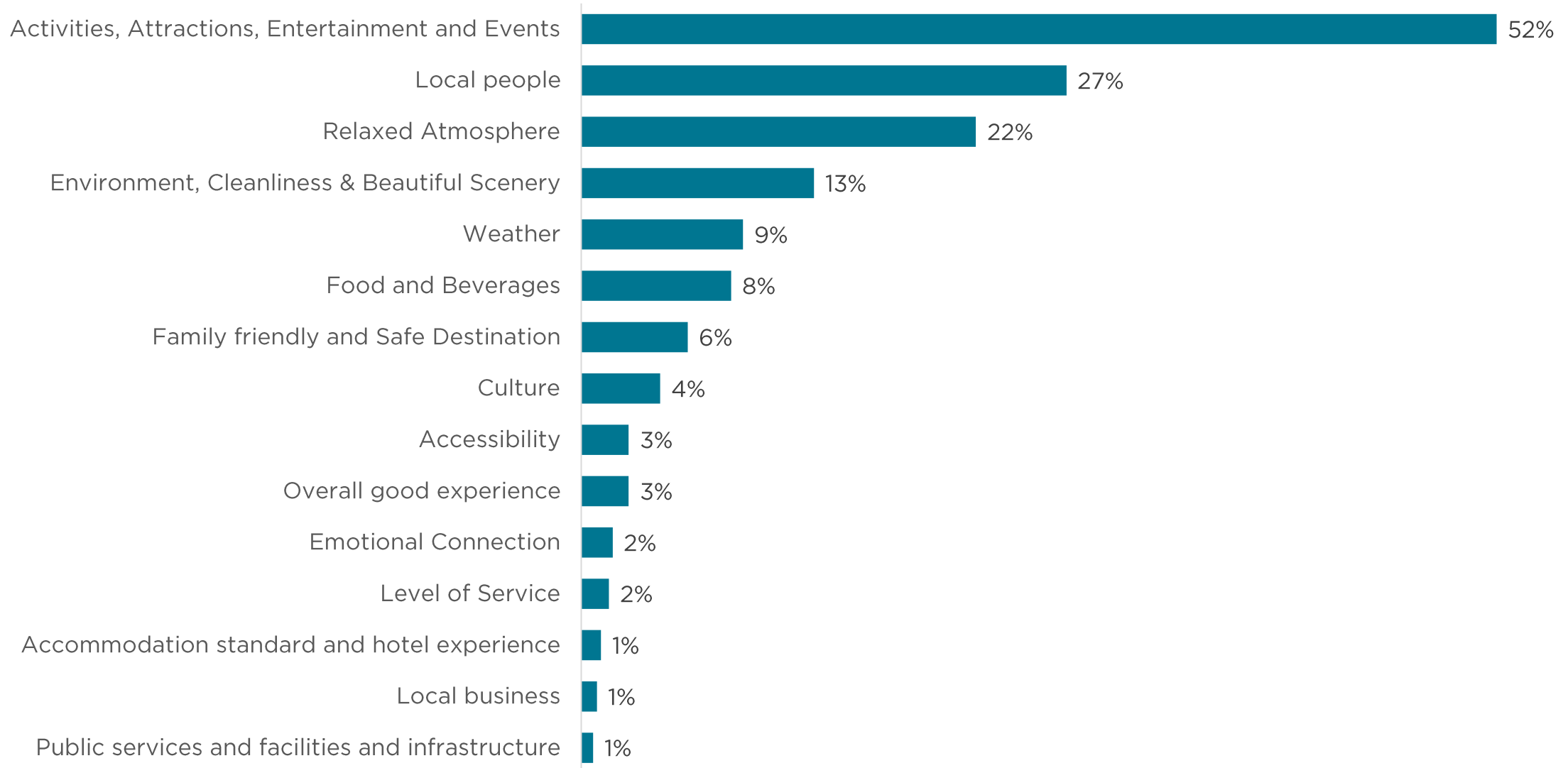


Share of Respondents

Share of Respondents

Note: New variable added for the July 2023-June 2024 survey period to address question on sustainable practices.

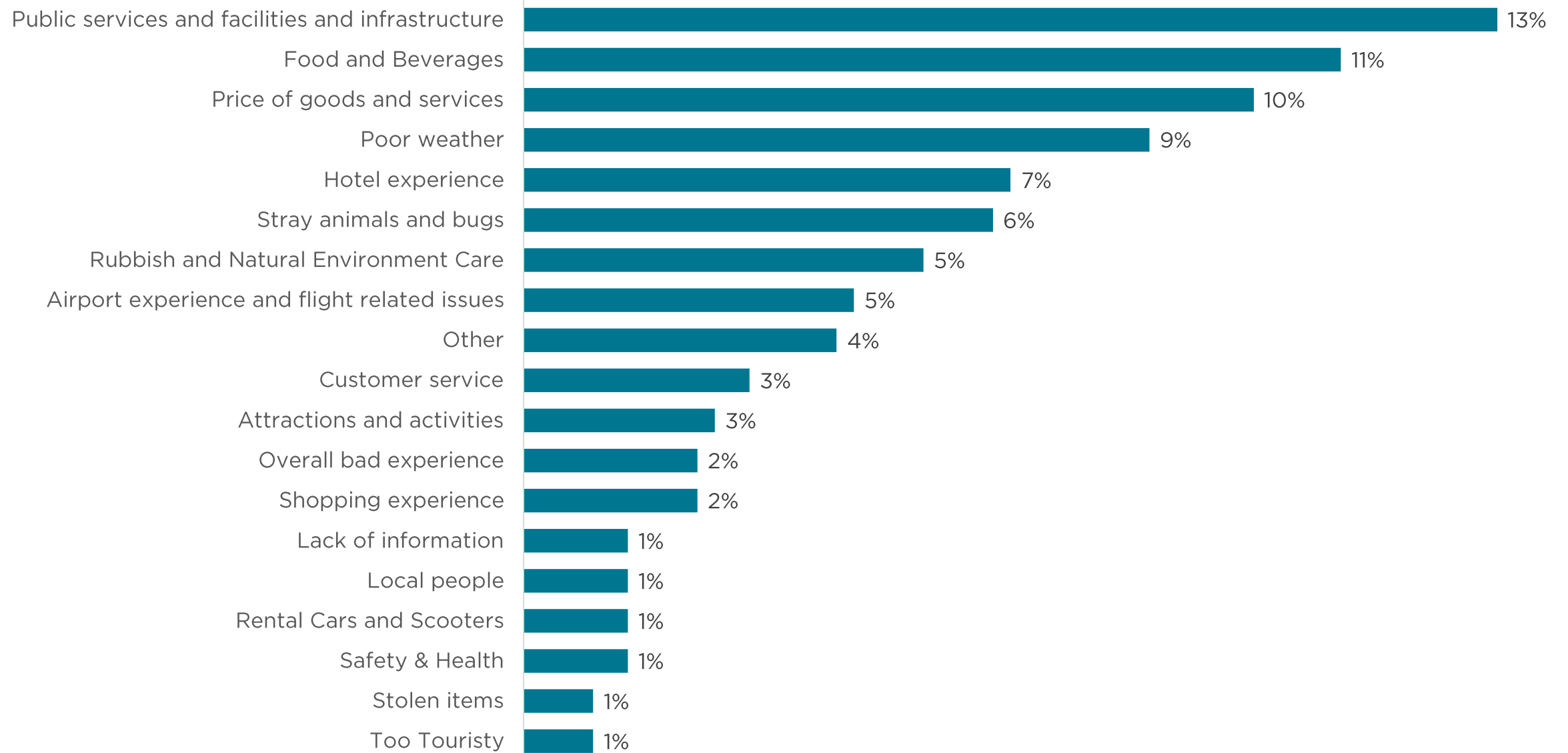
# Most Appealing Aspects



Note: Total response N=450. Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%



# Least Appealing Aspects

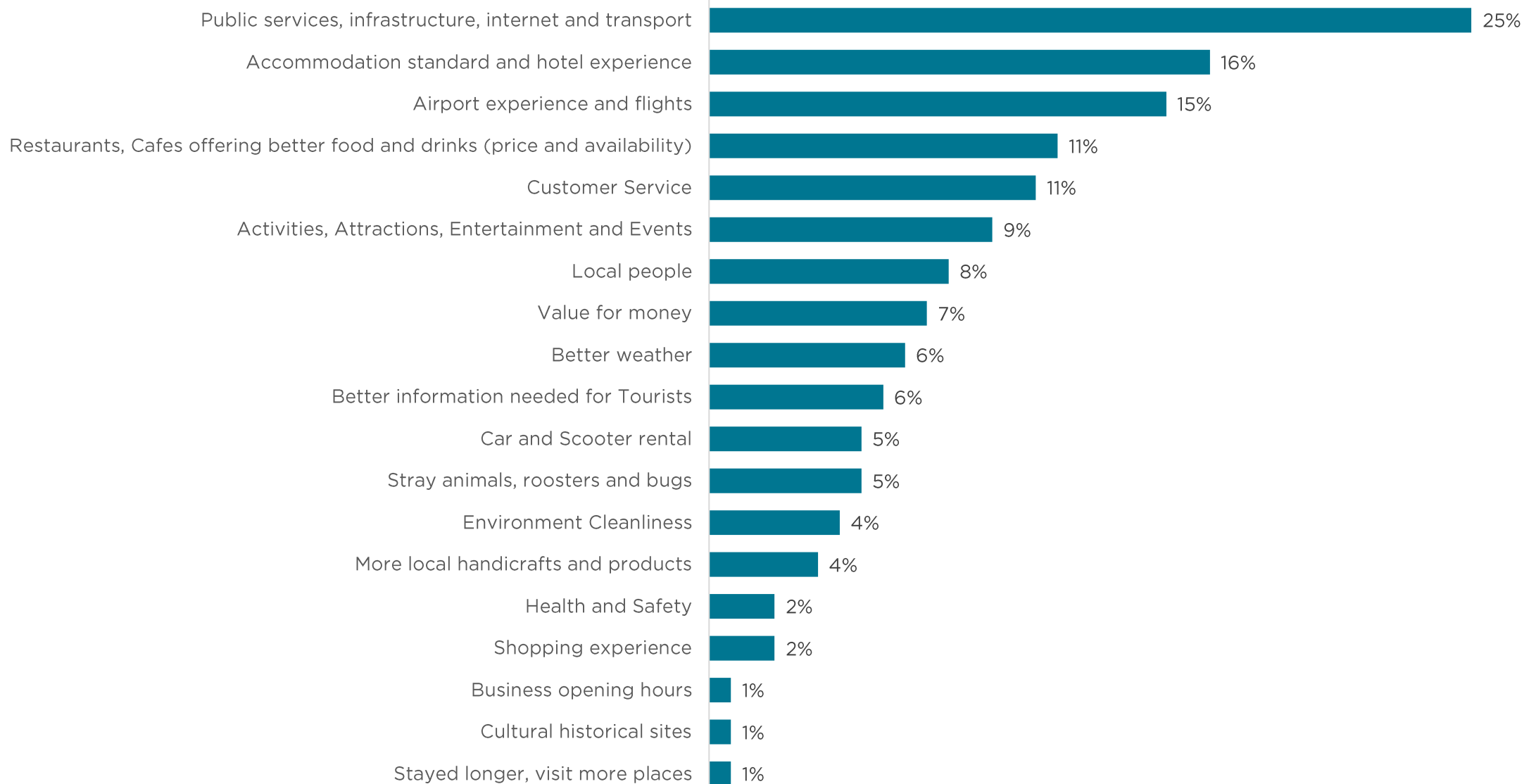


Note: Total response N=421. Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%





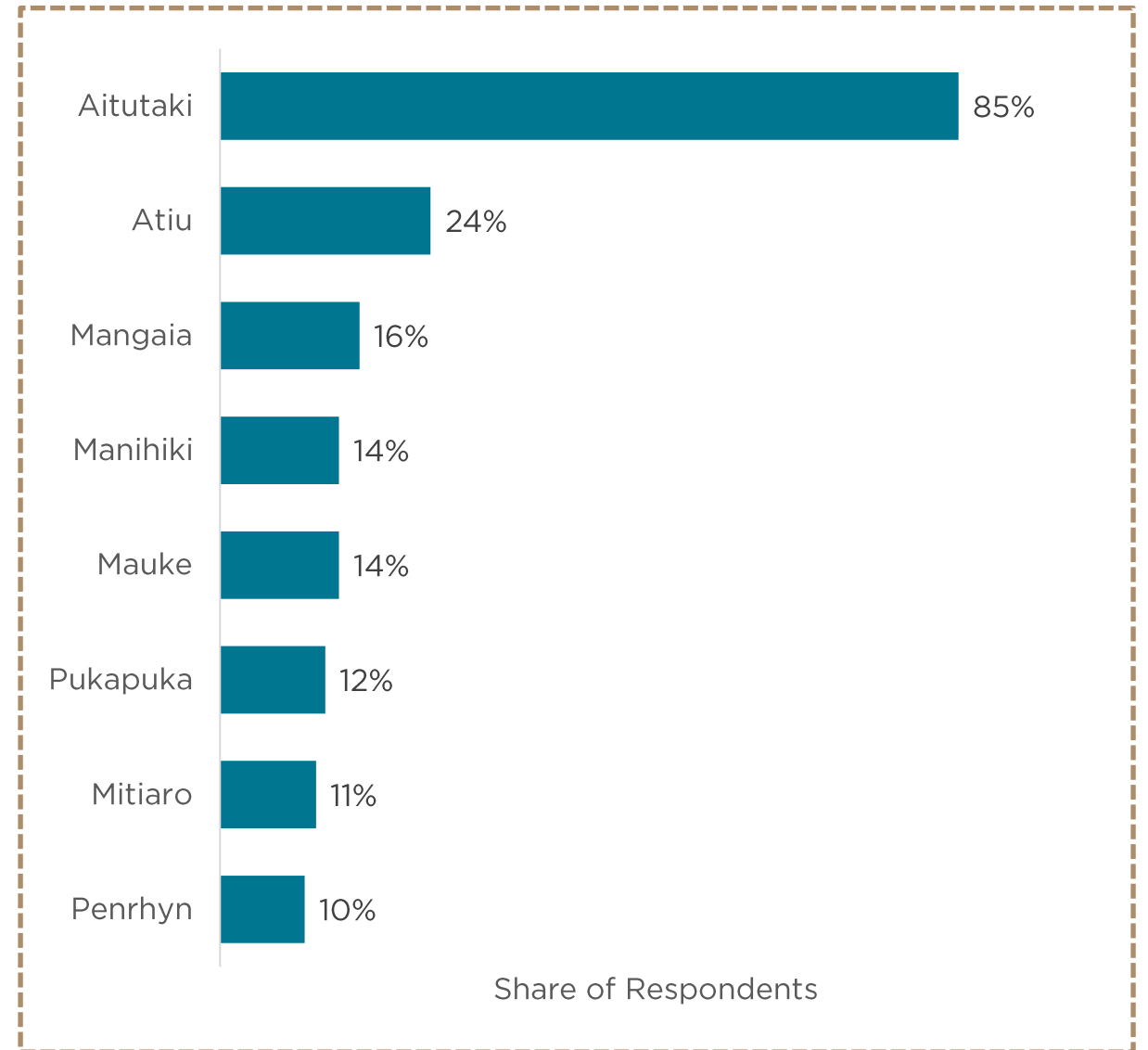
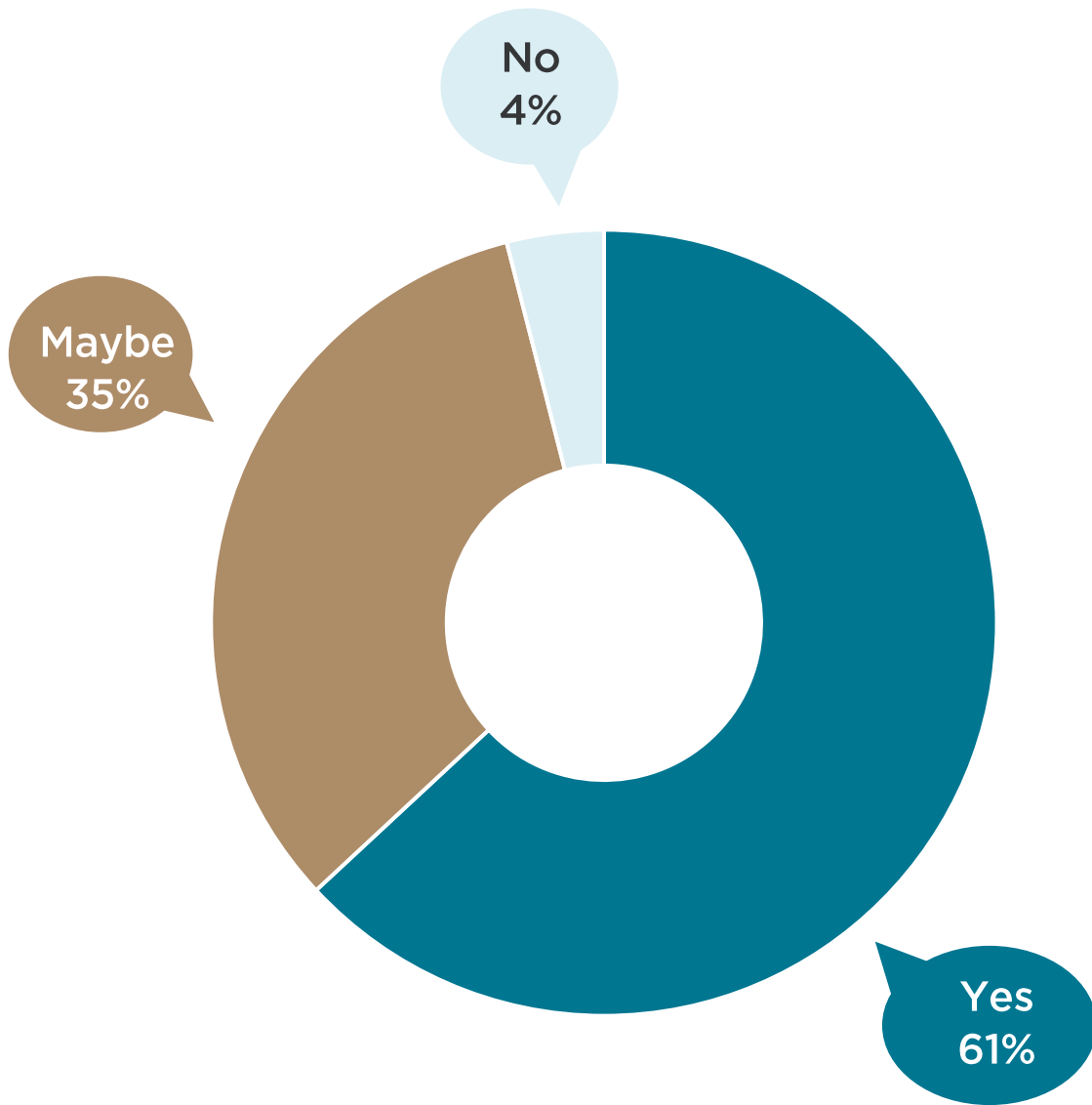
# Suggestions for Improvement



Note: Total response N=140. Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%



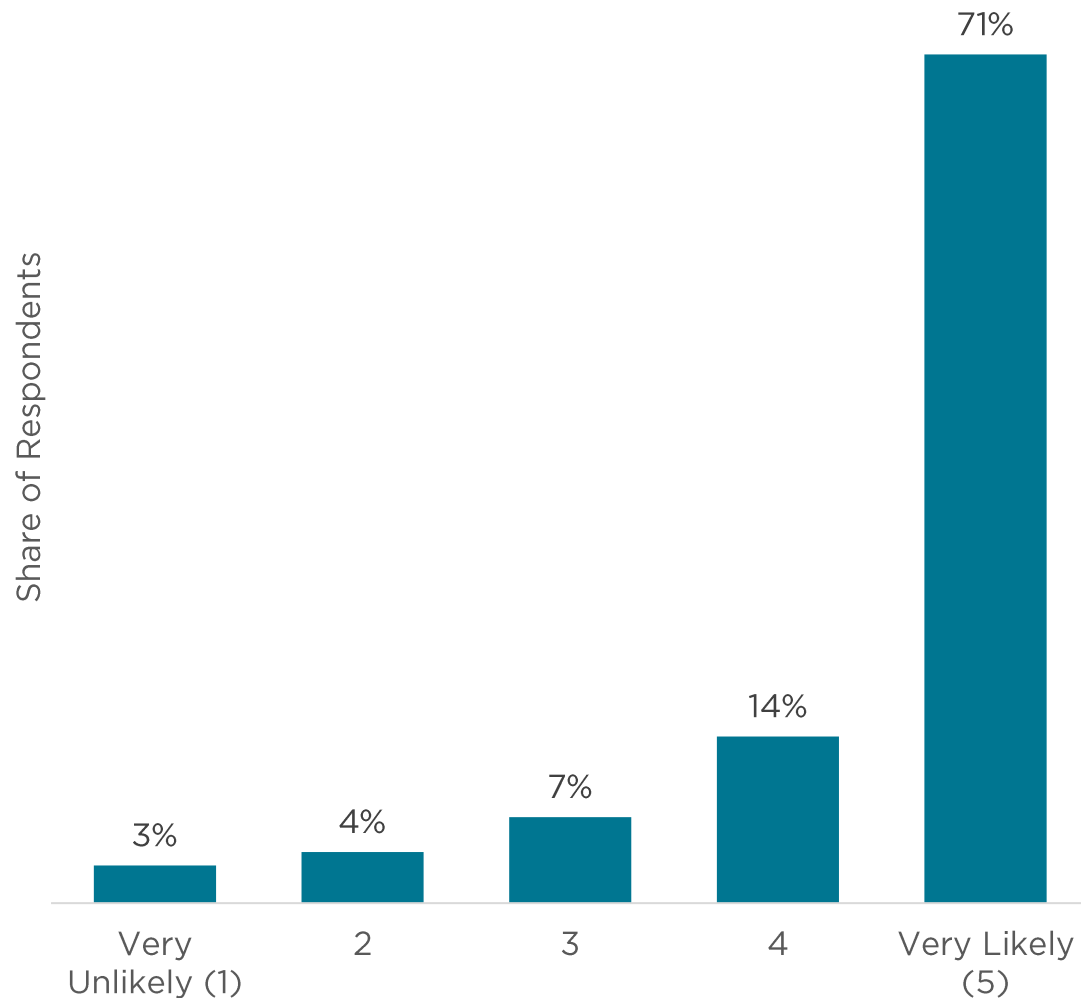
# Willingness to Visit Outer Islands



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

# Future Motivations

Q: How likely would you return to the Cook Islands?

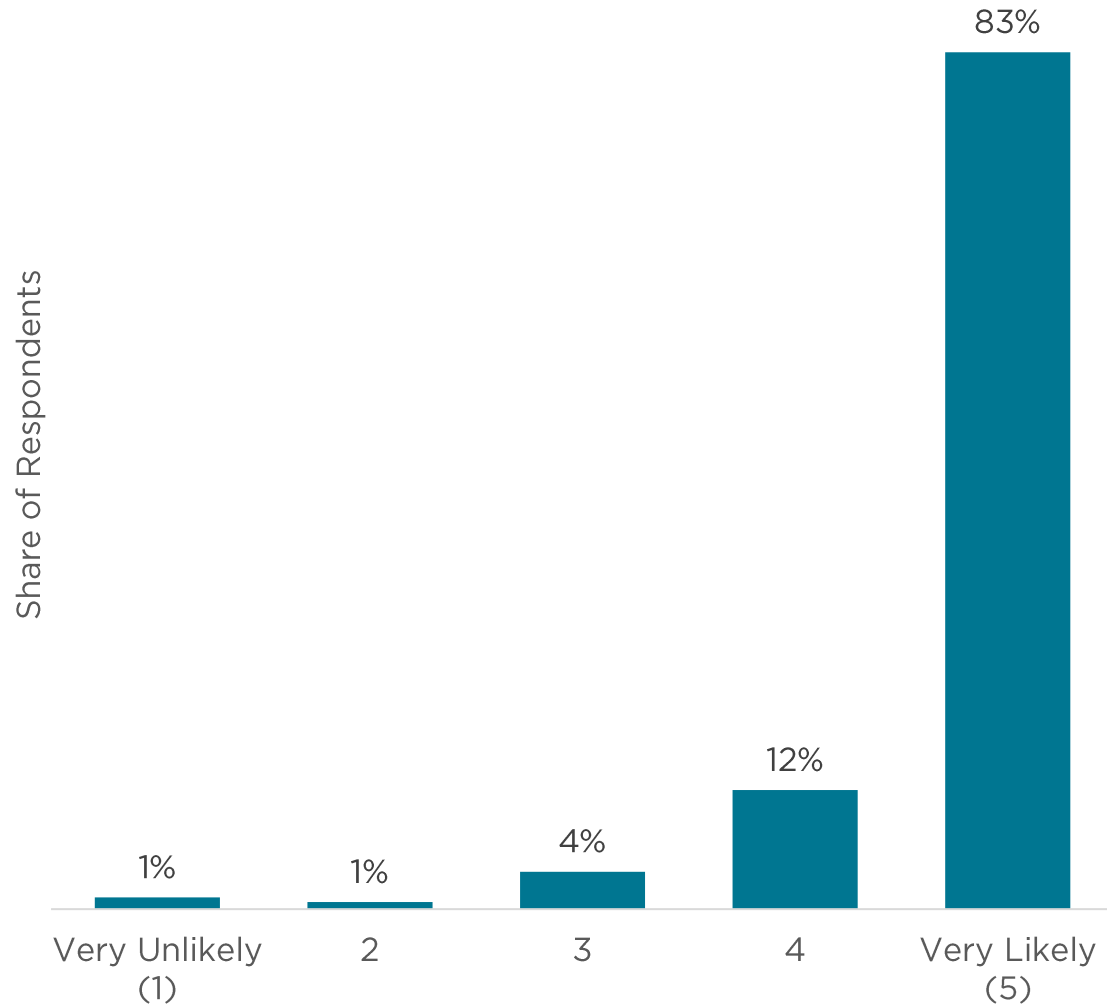


## Quotes: Reasons to not return

- + *Too far away and very expensive to get too and have done island.*
- + *Too expensive, dislike nasty New Zealander locals, prefer authentic Polynesian local.*
- + *Too expensive for what you get in accommodation/ meals etc. No need to return. Other places to visit.*
- + *Roads are rough, nothing is signposted well, lack of healthy foods.*
- + *People weren't as friendly as I thought. Not enough convenience stores.*
- + *Overpriced. Crap quality. If I want a frozen pizza heated up, I'm not flying to Rarotonga and paying 30 dollars. So many reasons.*
- + *Not happy travelling Jetstar took 22 hours from when we left home to arrive at resort 7am and then be told we couldn't go to our room until 2pm afternoon.*
- + *It was a nice experience, but the world is big. Lot s of other places are there to visit.*
- + *I thoroughly enjoyed it, but I don't feel I need to return, as I did what I wanted to do in the Cook islands. If I wanted a similar type of holiday, I would probably try a different destination.*
- + *I really loved this trip, but I never come back to the same place, there are so many places to visit. And is very far from Italy.*
- + *Basic grocery items very expensive. Little variety in fresh fruit and vegetables. Other options to try.*

# Future Motivations

Q: How likely would you recommend the Cook Islands?



## Quotes: Reasons to not recommend

- + *The weather.*
- + *Overpriced. Poor quality. Cold. Windy. Disappointing service.*
- + *Distance and affordability.*
- + *Cold, windy and expensive. Poor food, little option. Everything closed on Sundays.*
- + *Due to what happened to us Beautiful place, but horrible memories of the last few days spoiled it.*
- + *Japan cheaper in food and transport and everything.*
- + *Been there done that loved it but must try other things.*



# SPO



This report was prepared at SPTO by the Pacific Tourism Data Initiative team in collaboration with the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation and the New Zealand Government.

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