

Pacific Tourism Data Initiative

Aitutaki Dimensions: International Visitors and Community Attitudes



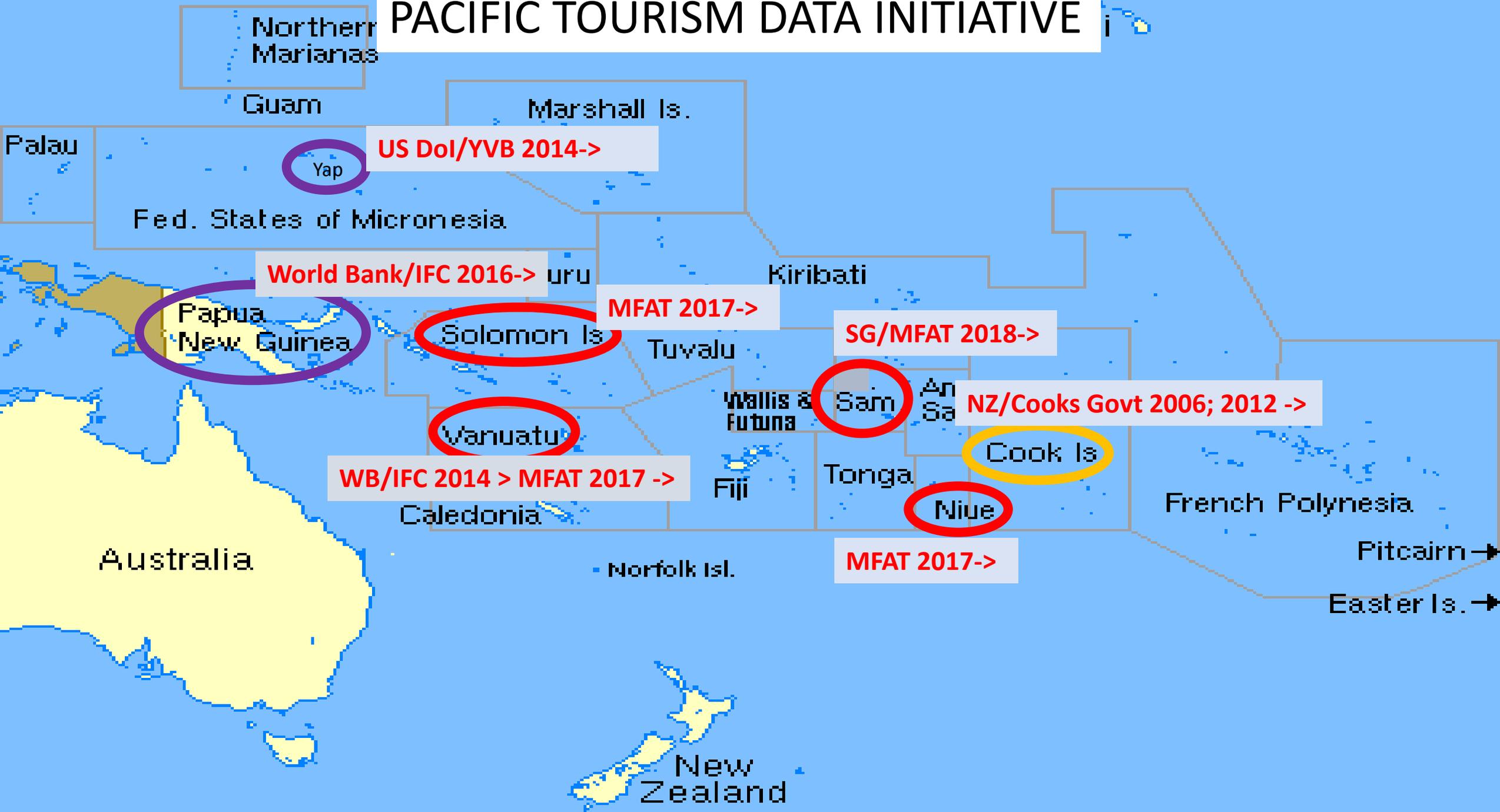
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Simon Milne

Tamanu Resort, Aitutaki, November 11, 2019

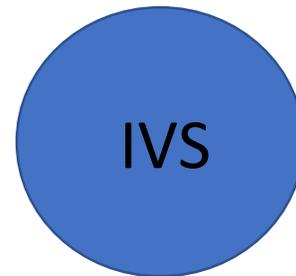
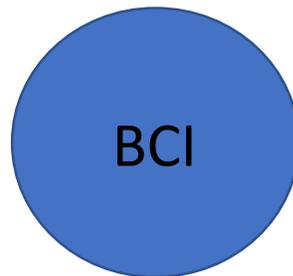

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PACIFIC TOURISM DATA INITIATIVE

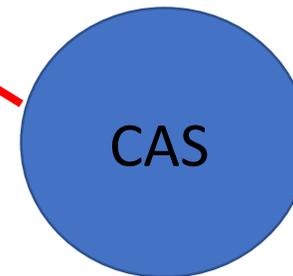
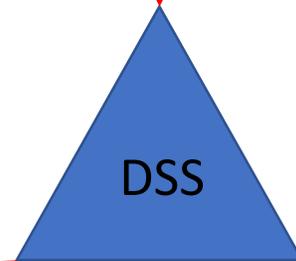


THREE PILLARS OF A DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM

**Business Confidence
Index/Survey:**
Chamber of Comm.,
Sector Orgs, Stats,
NTO



Visitor Survey: Stats,
Immig, NTO



**Community
Awareness/Attitudes
Survey:** Village
Councils, NTO

Cook Islands IVS: 2012/13 – 2018/19 Respondents



Total number of e-mails sent: **129,411**

CONVERSION RATE OF **22%**



Total number of responses: **28,926**

6.5% OF ALL VISITORS DURING THE PERIOD

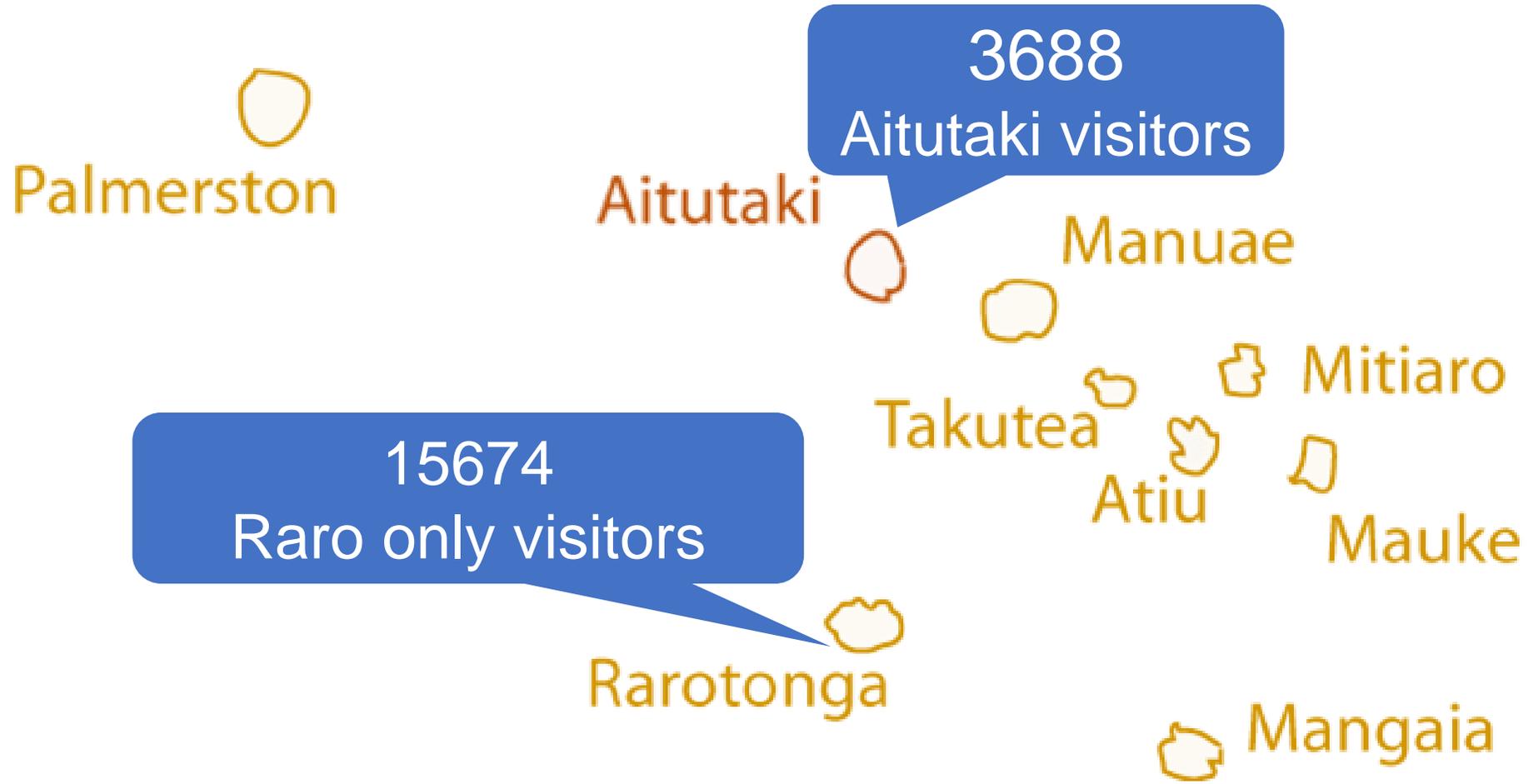


Responses cover a total of
56,103 adults and **8,125 children**

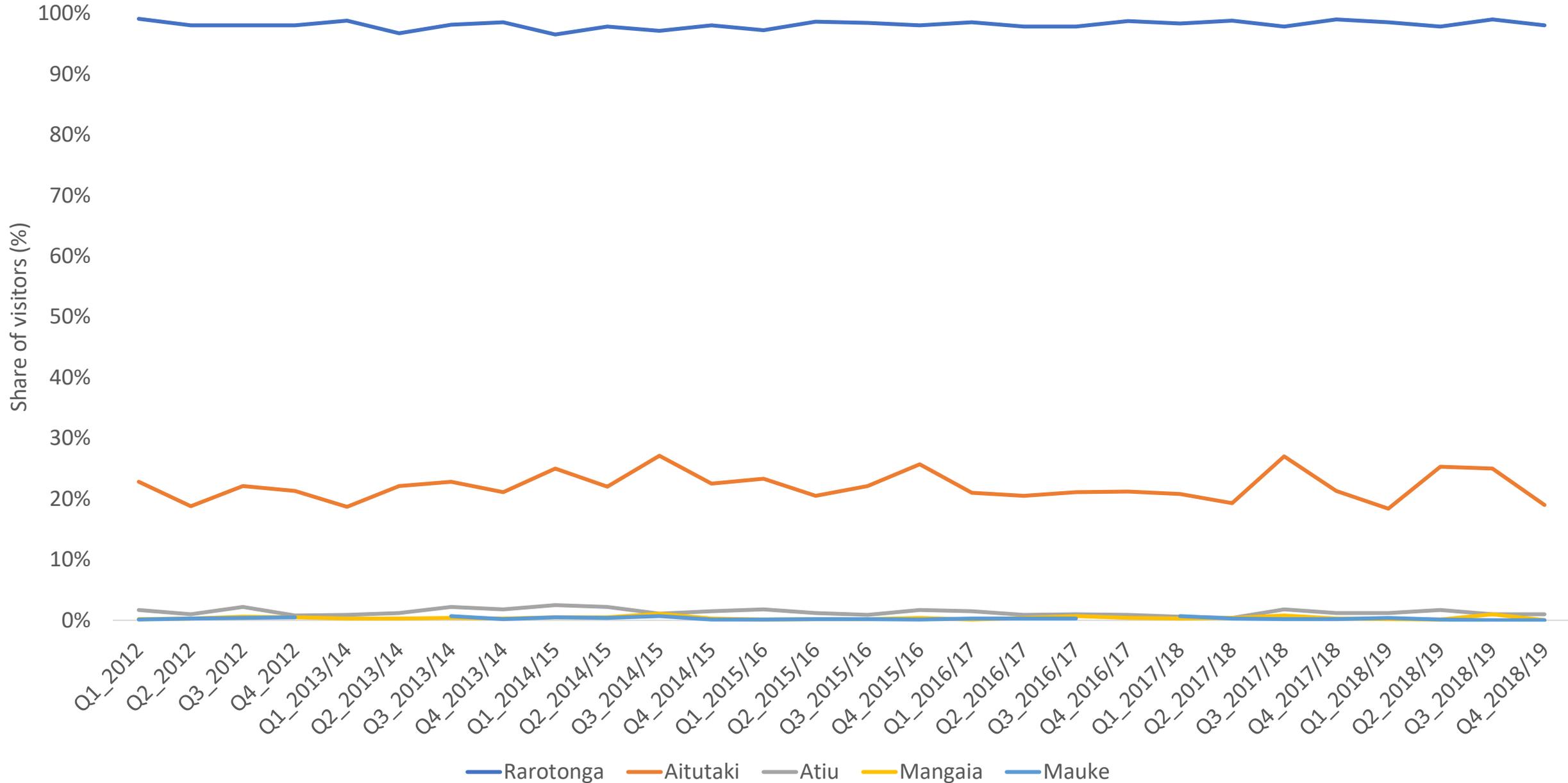
Cook Islands PTDI Resources

www.nztri.org.nz/cook-islands-resources

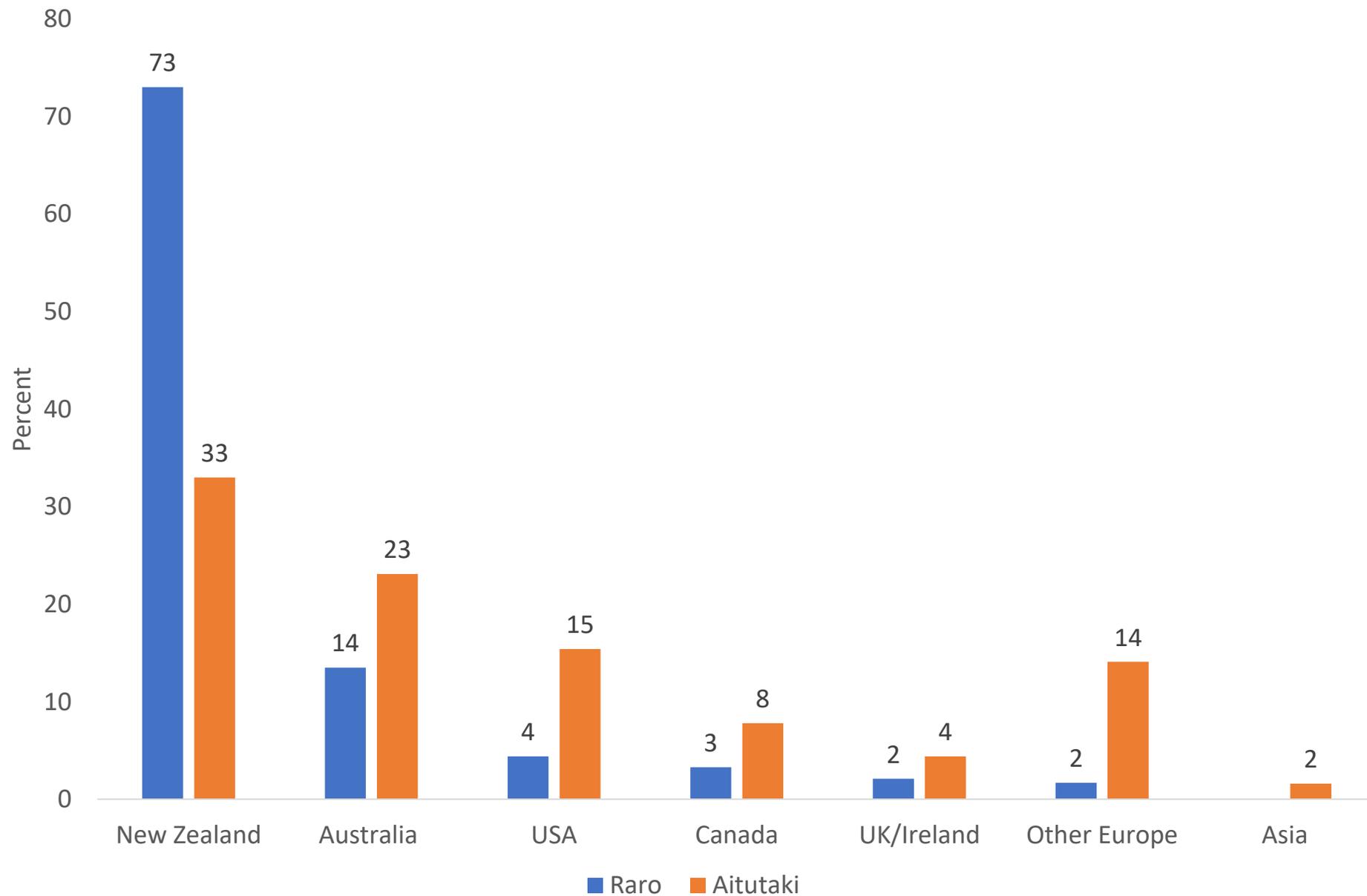
Raro Only vs. Aitutaki Visitors (2017-2019)



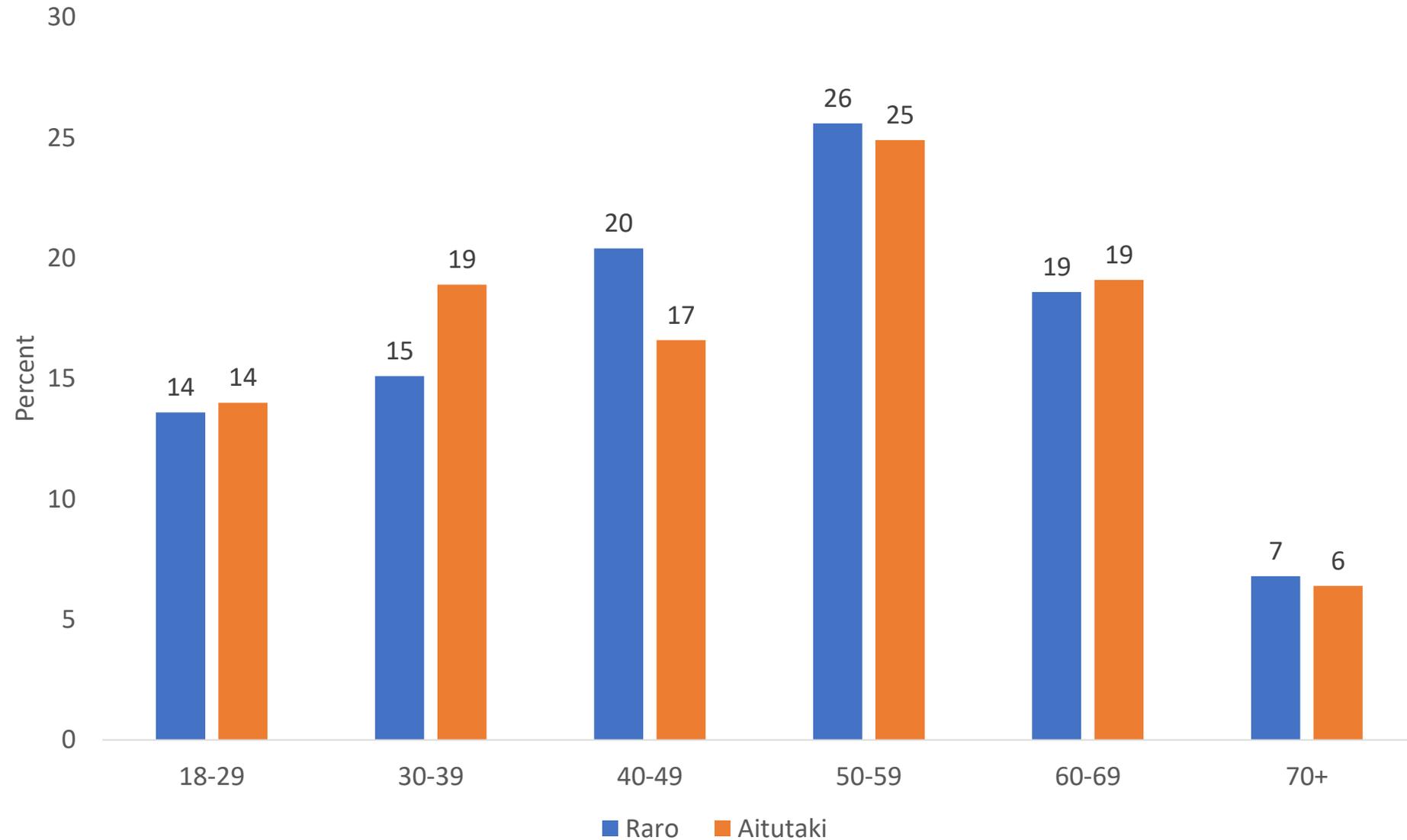
Islands Visited



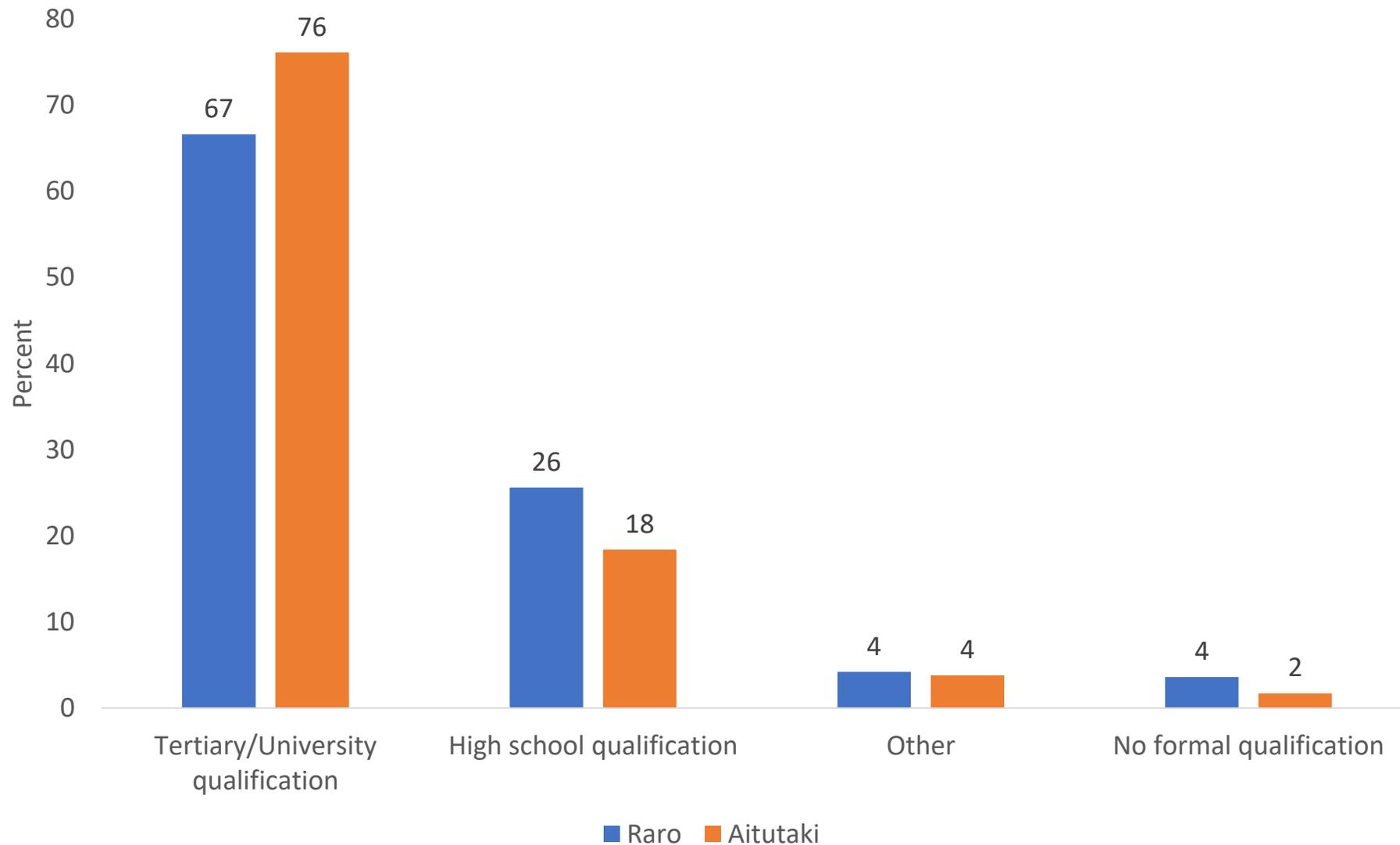
Country of origin



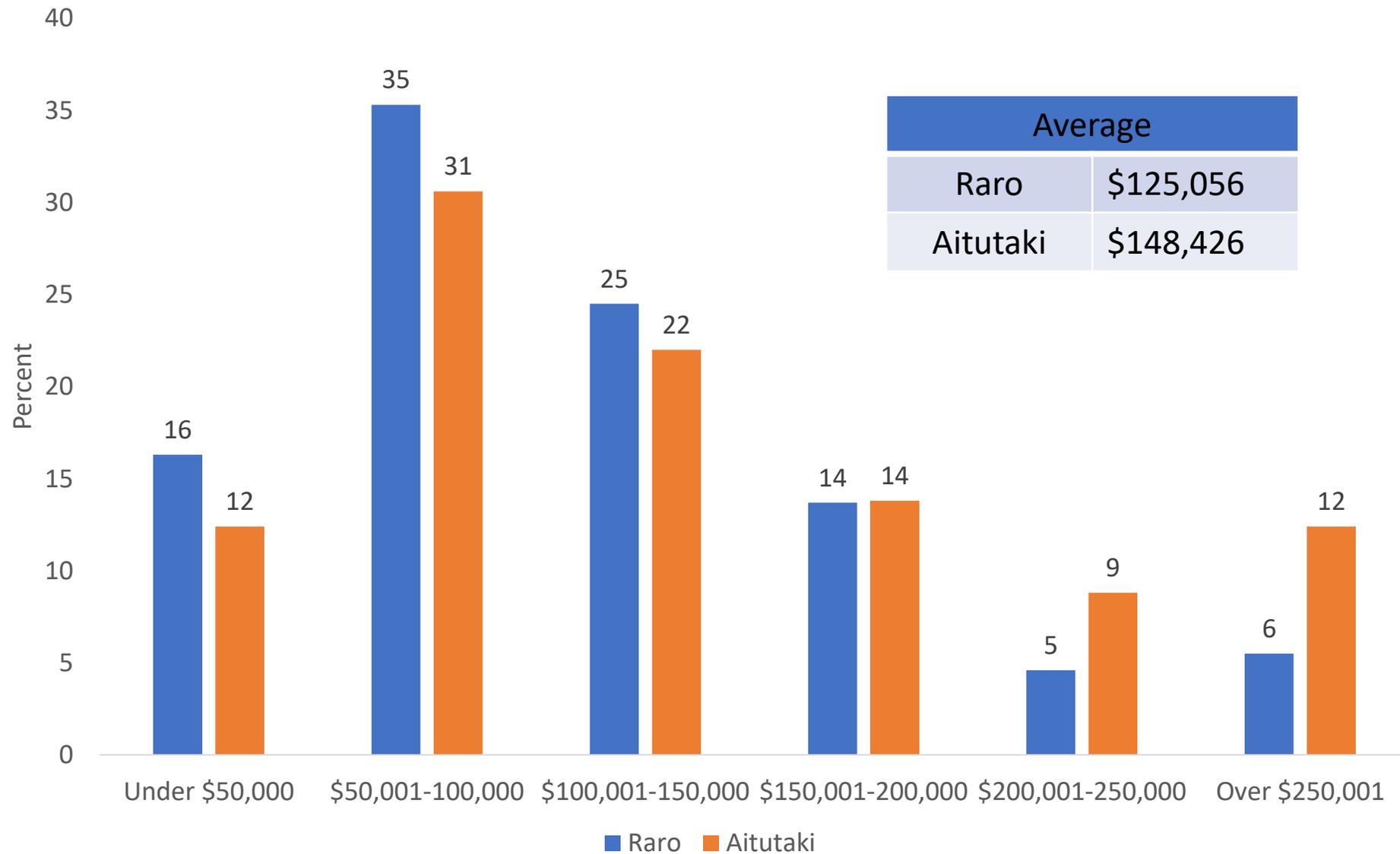
Distribution of age groups



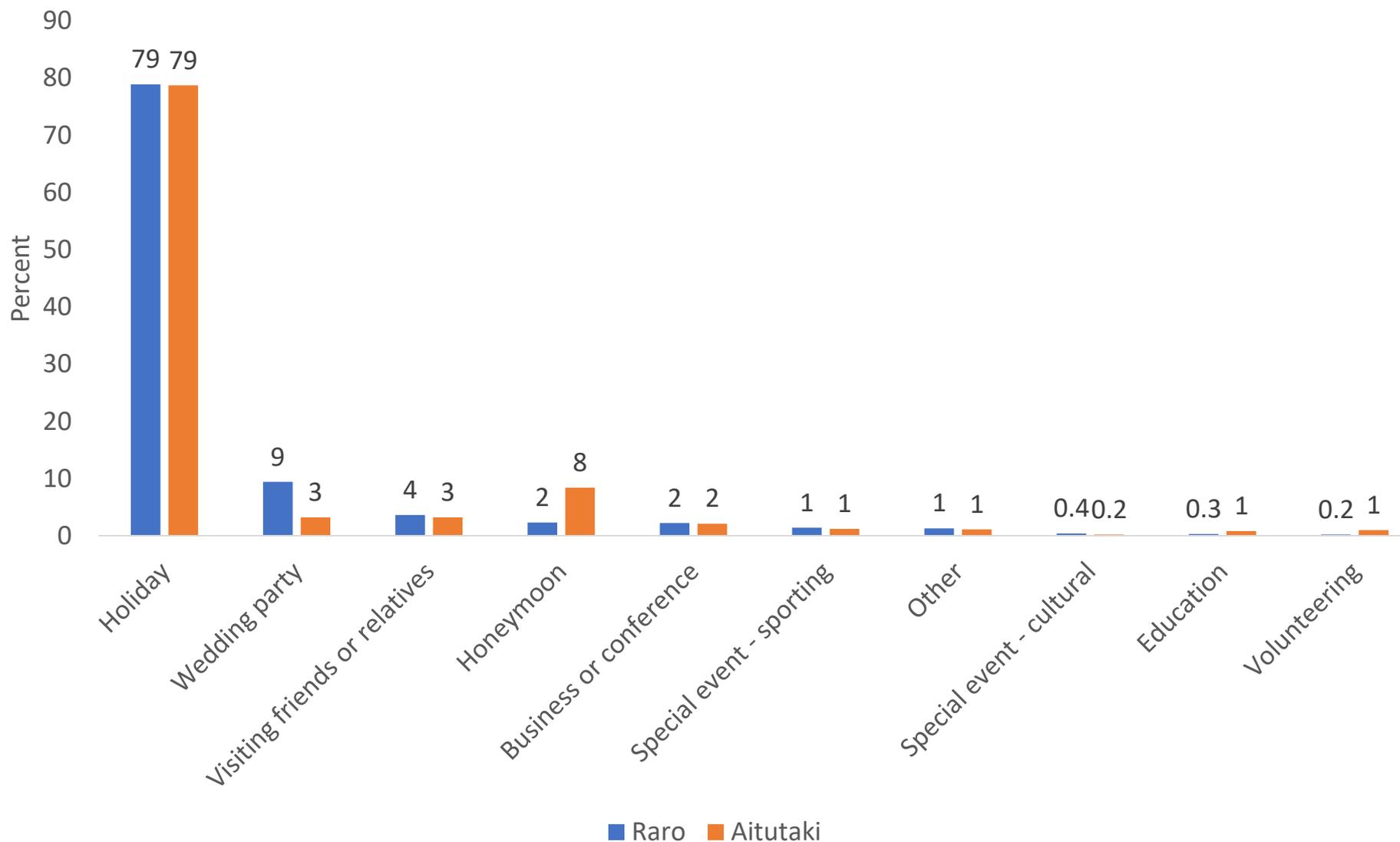
Highest qualifications



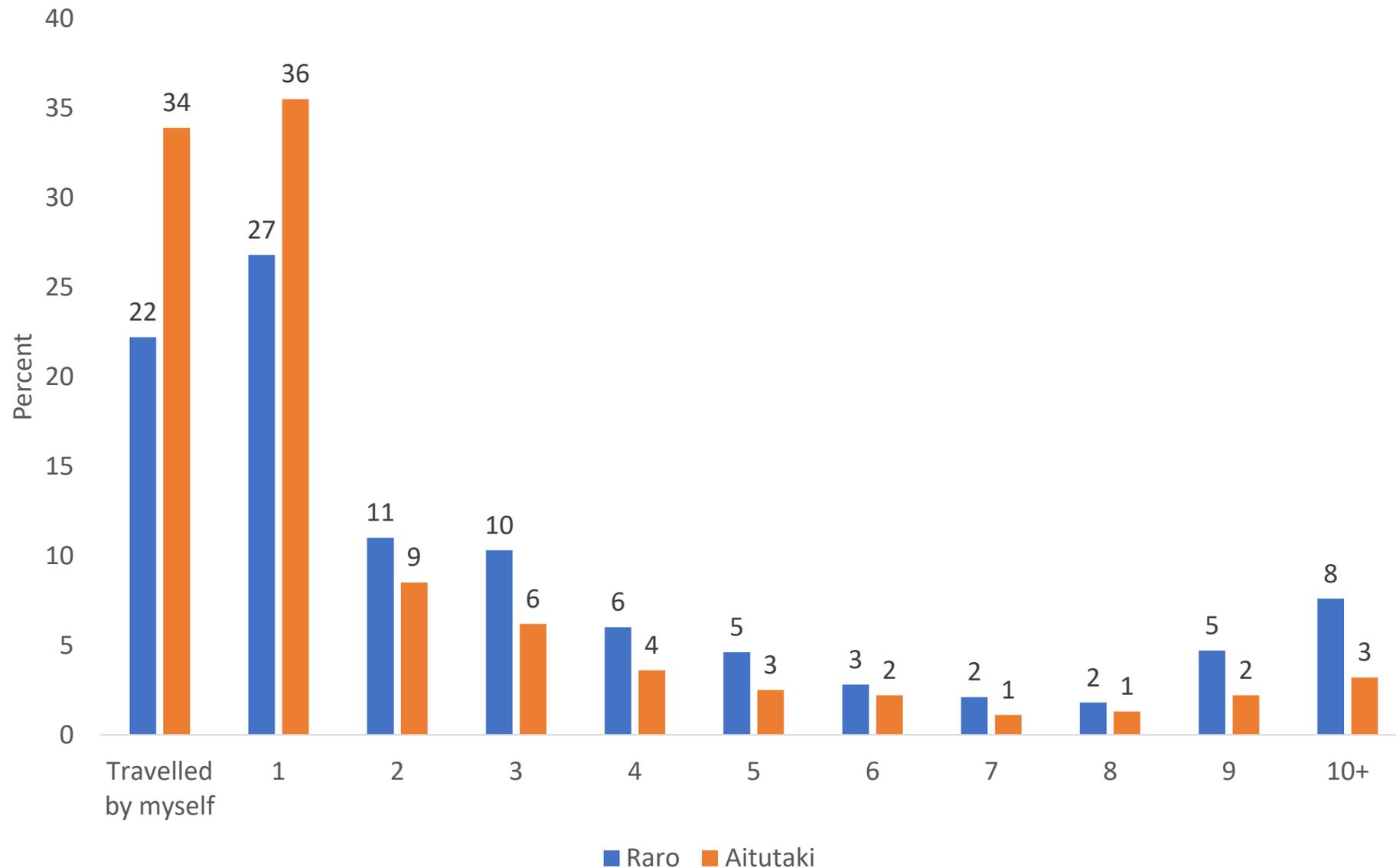
Annual household income in NZD



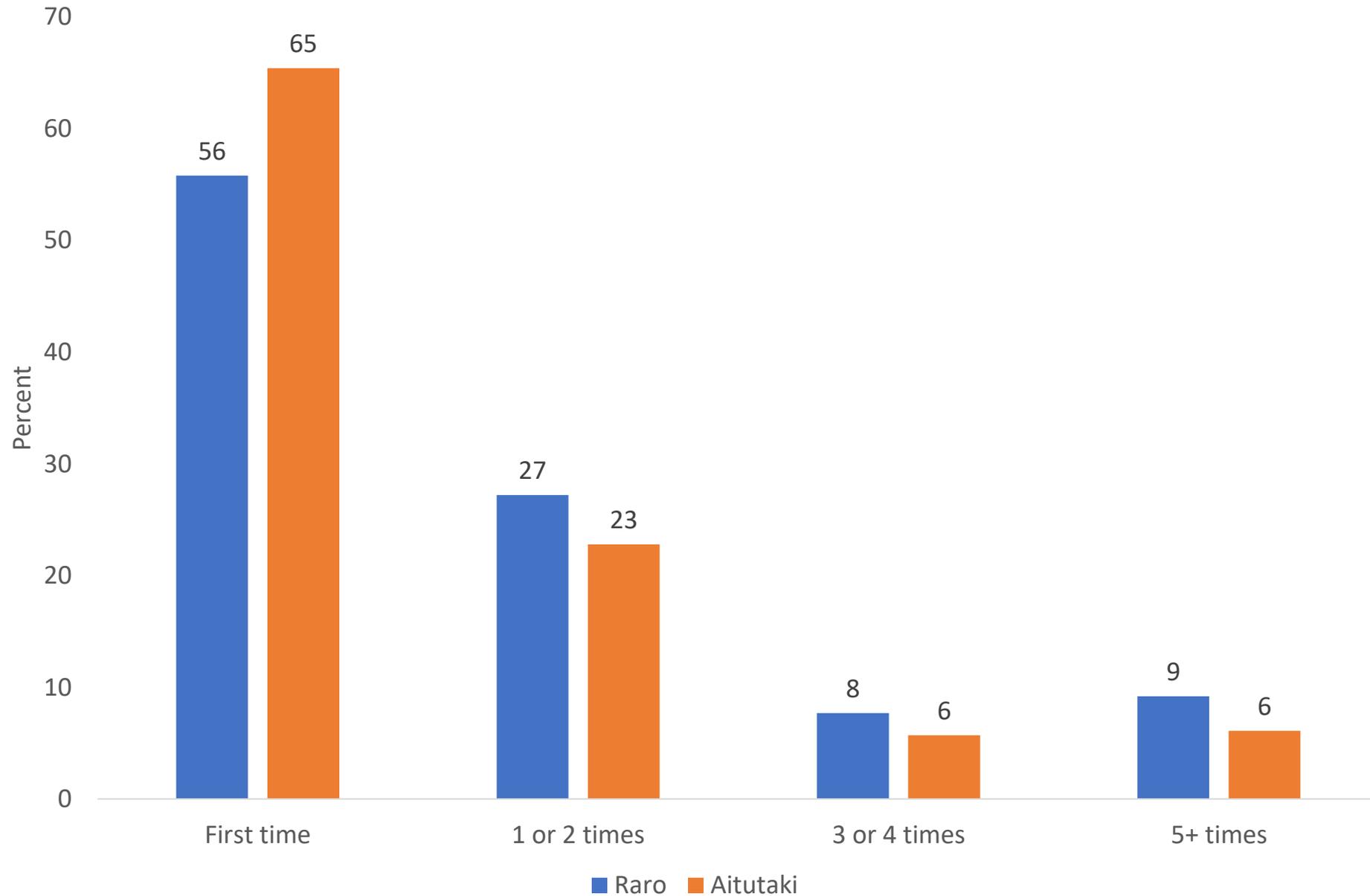
Main purpose of visit



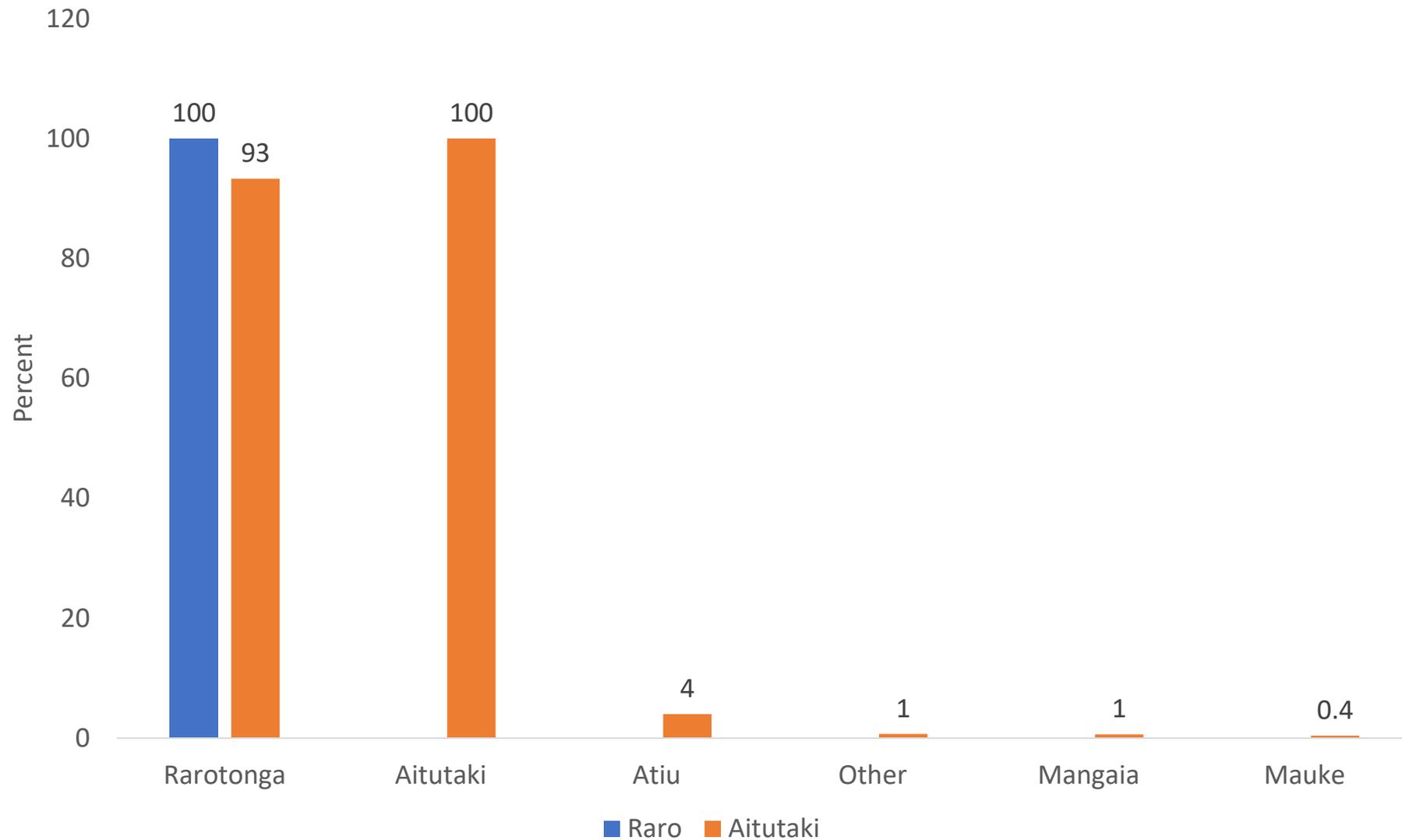
Number of companions



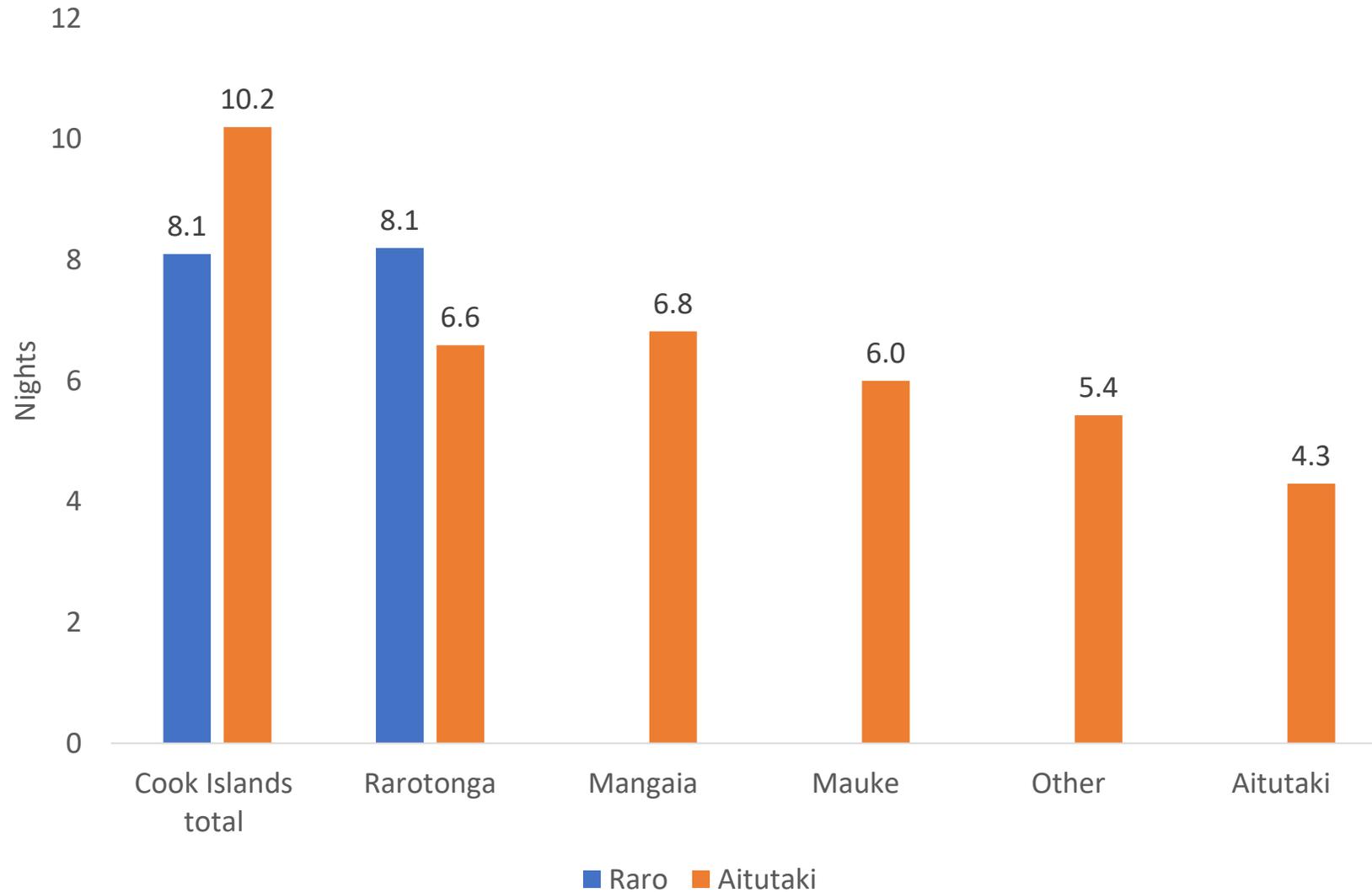
Number of visits to the Cook Islands



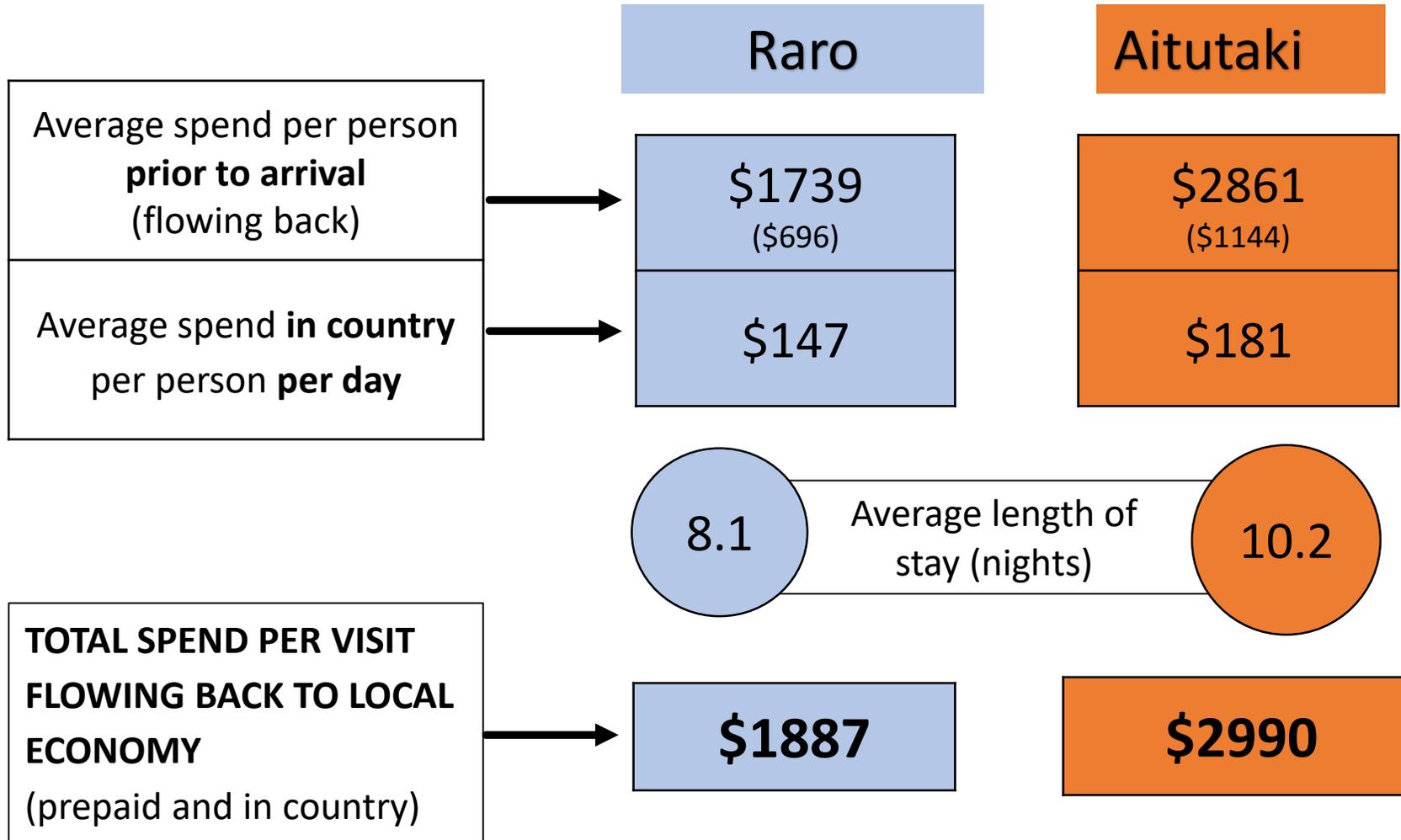
Islands Visited



Average length of stay in the Cook Islands and on each island



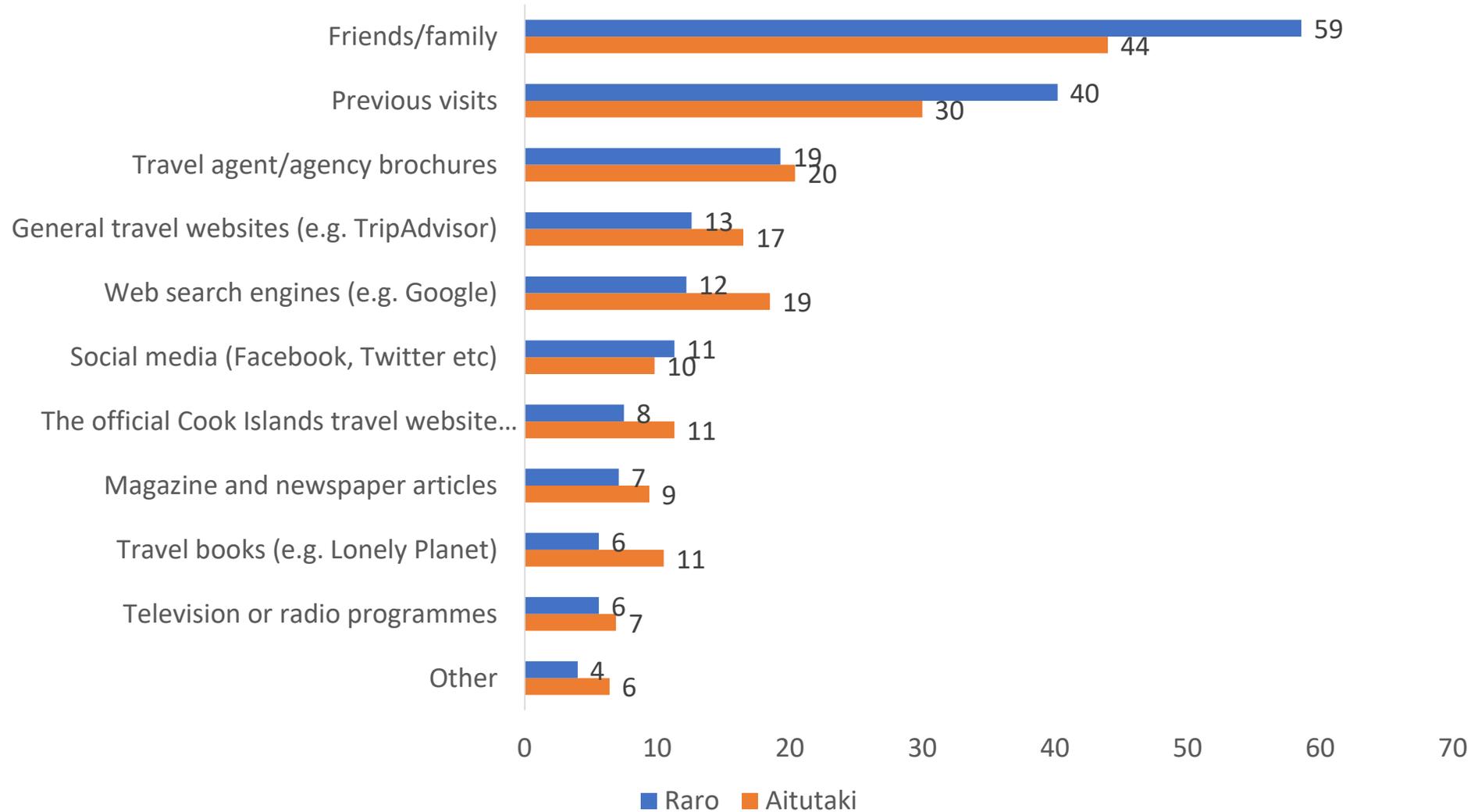
Expenditure



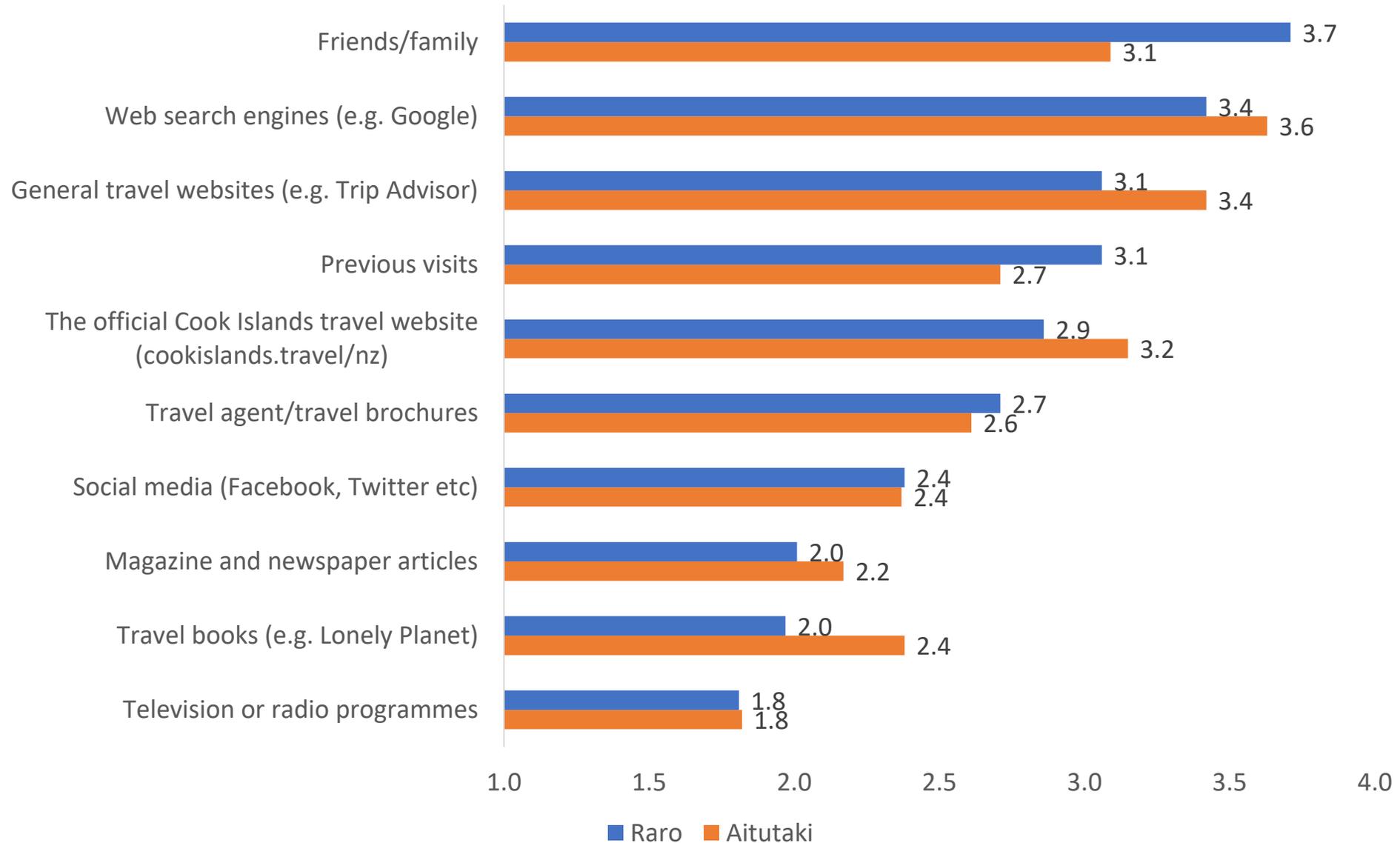
Expenditure – Regional Comparison (NZ\$)

	Cook Islands	Samoa	Vanuatu	Niue	Solomon Islands	PNG	Yap
Survey period	Apr to Jun 2019	Jan to Dec 2018	Jan - Dec 2018	Oct 2018 to Mar 2019	Jan - Dec 2018	Jan - Dec 2018	Jan 2015 - Dec 2018
In country spend per person per day	\$154	\$88	\$136	\$99	\$104	\$120	\$163
Total spend per person per person per day	\$259	\$180	\$278	\$163	\$241	\$321	\$325
Total spend per person per visit	\$2,069	\$1,476	\$2,247	\$1,297	\$2,370	\$3,144	\$2,273

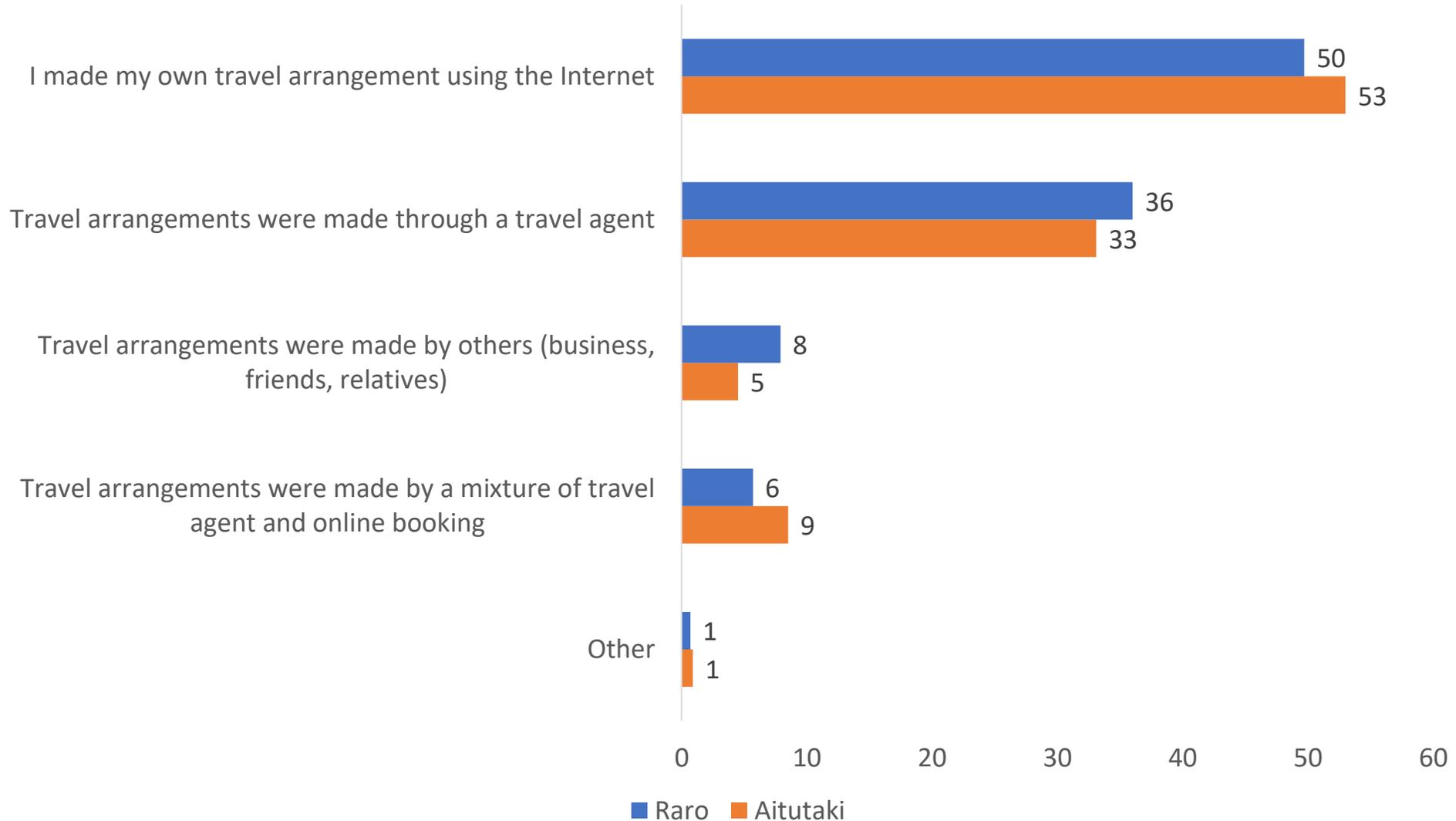
How did you find out about Cook Islands as a destination



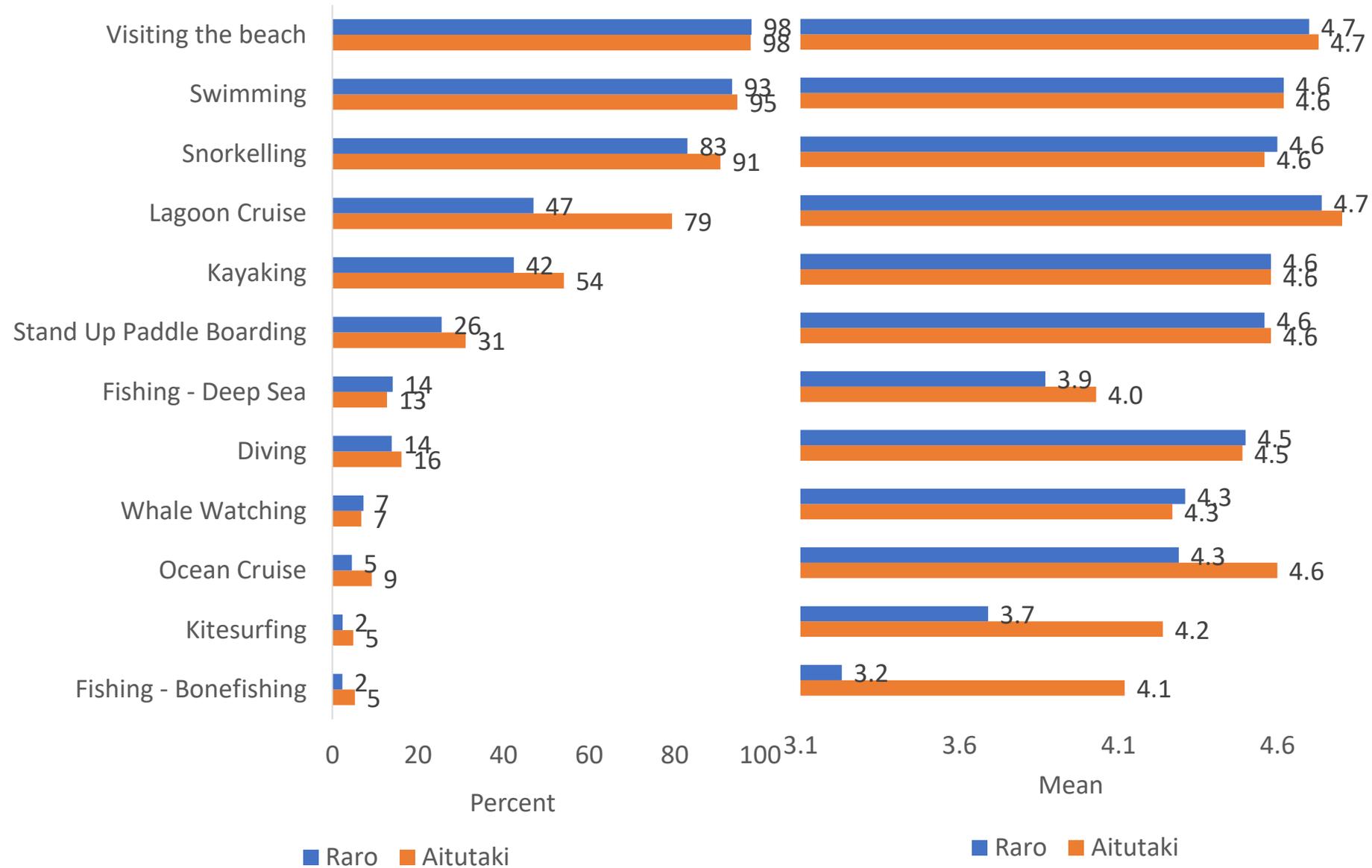
Importance of information source used when planning your trip



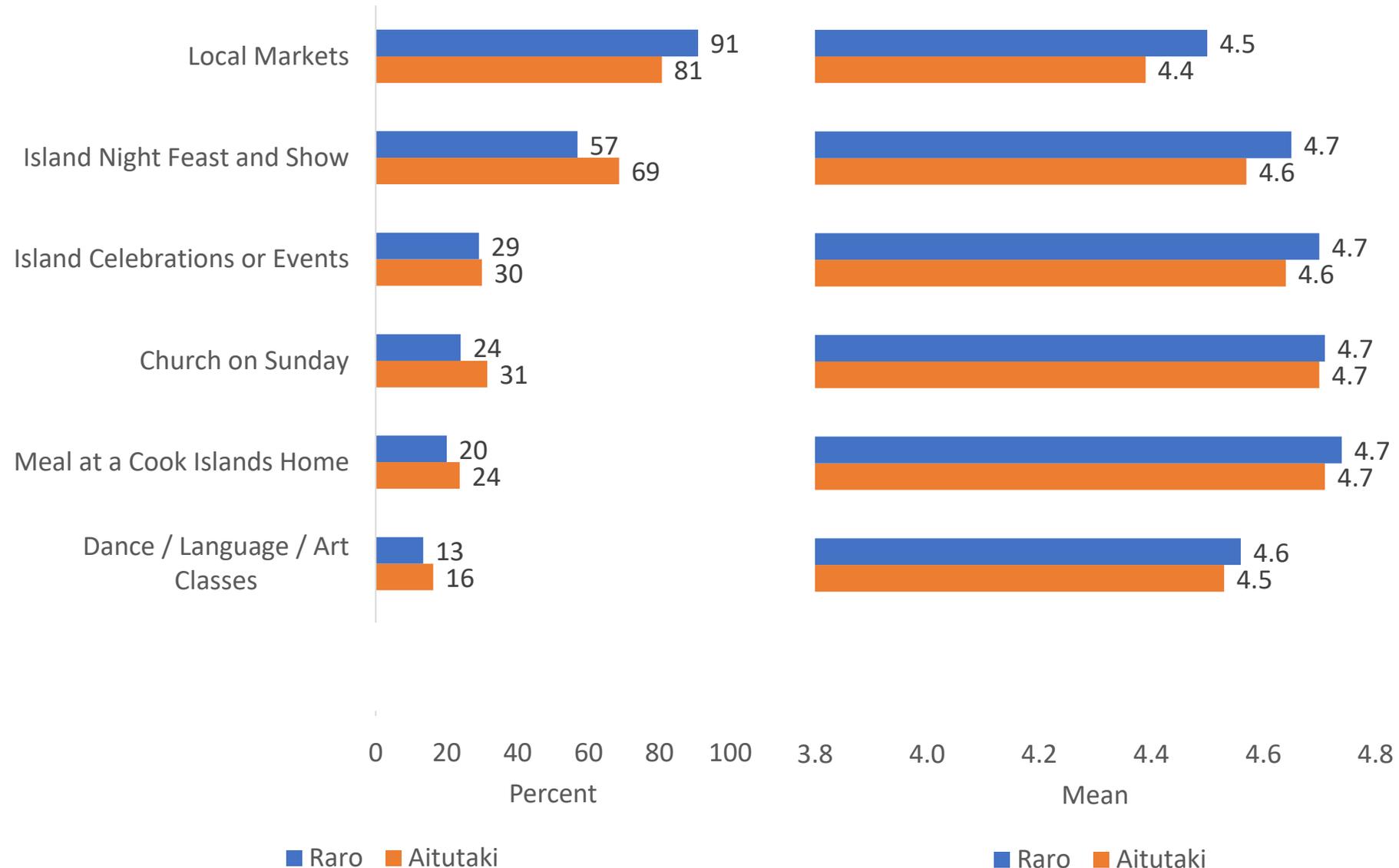
How did you purchase your travel



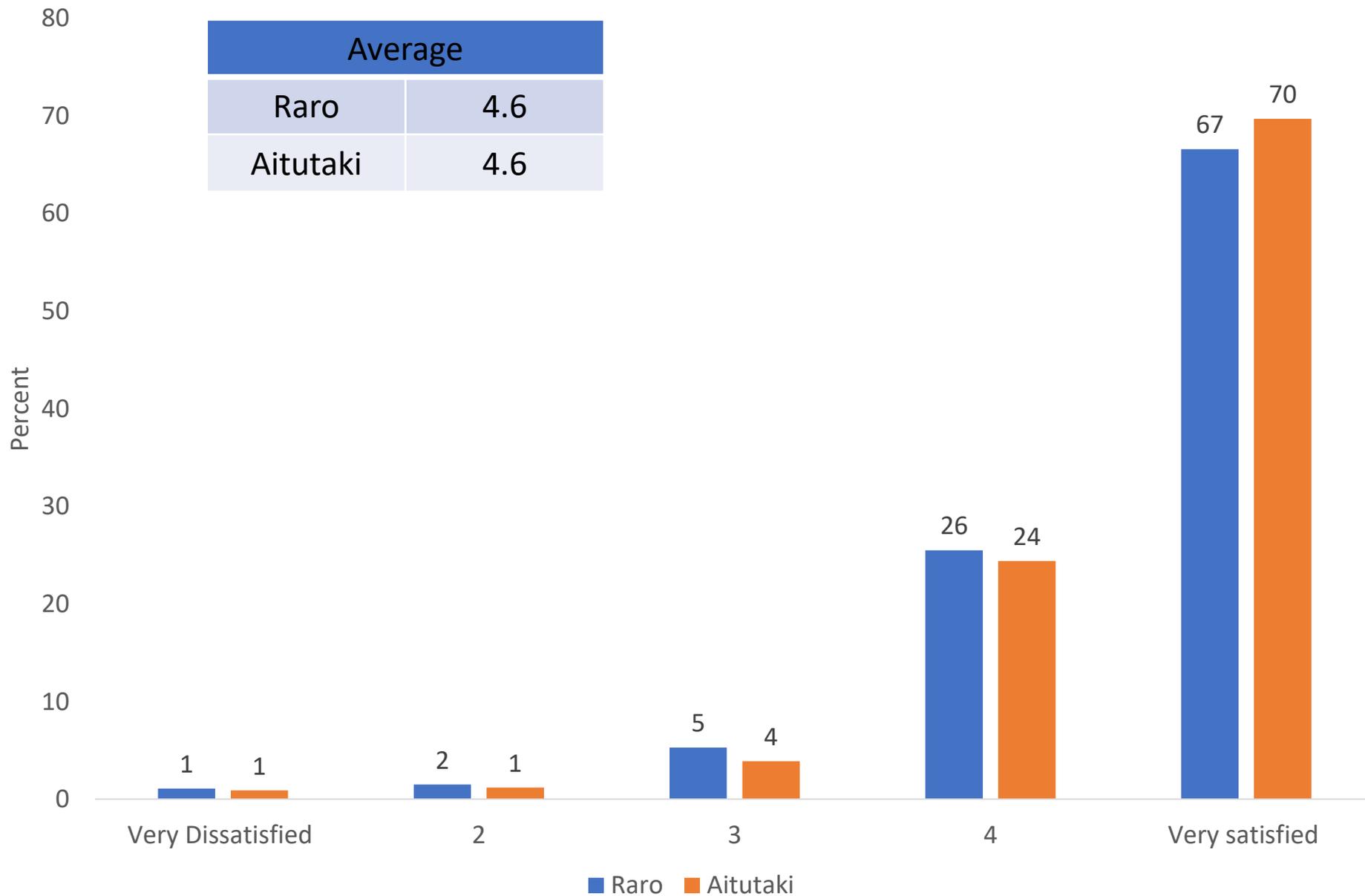
Participation & Satisfaction with Water-based Activities



Participation & Satisfaction with Cultural Interactions



Overall satisfaction



Overall Satisfaction (Satisfied/Very Satisfied)

Country/State	Satisfied	V. Satisfied	Total
Cook Islands	23	70	93
Niue	27	66	93
Yap	33	57	90
Samoa	32	54	86
Vanuatu (1 st qtr 2019)	34	52	86
PNG			73
Solomon Is	39	28	67

Most Appealing Aspects

- The highlight was staying in Aitutaki for 4 nights. Truly the most beautiful lagoon, with the best people. I will forever remember the motus, kayaking, snorkelling, etc I was able to do on the Vaka lagoon cruise.
- The simple way of life on Aitutaki. The lack of traffic, relatively few tourists, unobtrusive architecture, friendly locals and a relaxed pace of life made it a unique experience and my favourite place of all that I've visited. Don't ever let it change.
- We have travelled all over the world and it is the most perfect, authentic beach experience we have ever had. Beaches are almost too perfect to believe in Aitutaki.

Most Appealing Aspects

- Have visited Aitutaki many times in the last 10 years and love the island and its lagoon, but especially the people. Initially went there to work and over the years have made some very good friends. This most recent trip combined work with a family trip including my 80 year old mother.
- On Aitutaki it was so quiet. It almost felt like we were the only tourists there. I loved the fact our resort didn't have a bunch of activities and/or music going on all the time. It was nice to just sit on our deck and listen to nature.
- I thought that Aitutaki was the most attractive part of the trip. I never really looked into the Cook Islands while planning the trip, my husband did and although I saw quick a few posts on instagram, Aitutaki is for sure the place I would go again. They have nicer beaches than Rarotonga.

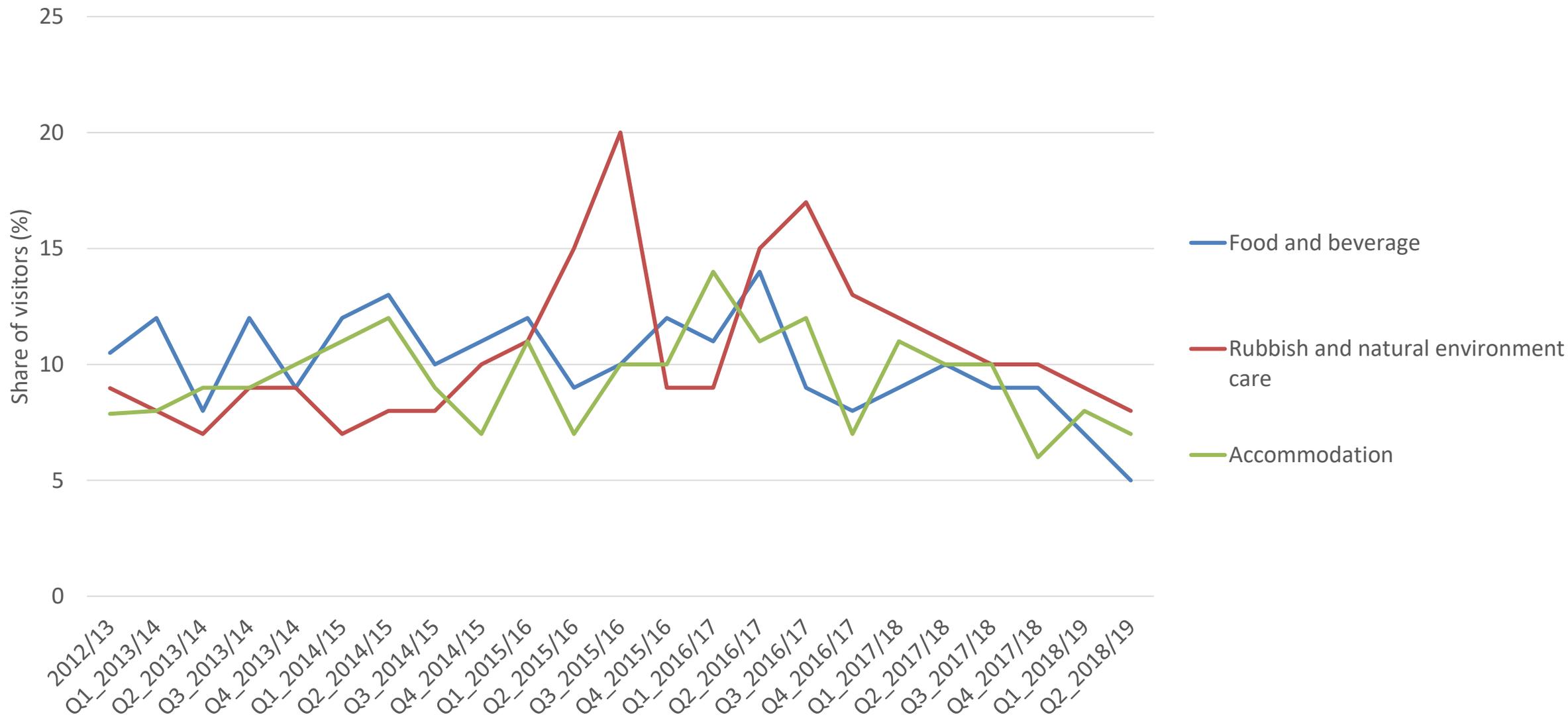
Least Appealing Aspects

- The accommodation at Aitutaki. Poor value for money.
- Markets and access to fresh fruit and vegetables - I was looking forward to more markets with shells, weaving etc. on Aitutaki but didn't see any.
- Lack of gift shops and general merchandising in Aitutaki
- We would have liked to have been able to buy fresh fish on Aitutaki.
- Getting good, reliable service is hard. We waited up to 2 hours for meals at the restaurant. The staff are working hard but there are not enough chefs/serving staff.

Least Appealing Aspects

- The airfares to Aitutaki on Air Raro are too expensive. Costs us more to fly to Aitutaki than it does to fly from NZ to Rarotonga!!
- The reef damage was extensive which was sad. I was on Aitutaki in 1980, which was amazing! While the island has not seen many changes the reef sure has. On the little islands on the lagoon there was lots of garbage, plastic bottles which was also sad. My friend and I went out several times with garbage bags from the hotel and brought all the garbage off the islands. Really disappointing when people don't respect the environment.
- The environment is not being taken care of. Locals are desperately setting up businesses to attract tourists and the island is getting dirtier and dirtier. I heard of one operator who encourages people to jump onto the backs of turtles for a ride after they are chased down and tired.

Cook Islands - Least Appealing Aspects



Least Appealing (Environmental Quality)

Country	% Visitors
Yap	3
Niue	4
Cook Is.	8
Samoa	11
Vanuatu	15
PNG	18
Solomon Is	35

Future intentions

Return



Raro	Aitutaki
92% would like to return	91% would like to return
42% would like to visit outer islands 54% maybe visit outer islands	55% would like to visit outer islands 41% maybe visit outer islands

Recommendation

Raro only	97% would recommend the Cook Islands
Aitutaki	97% would recommend the Cook Islands

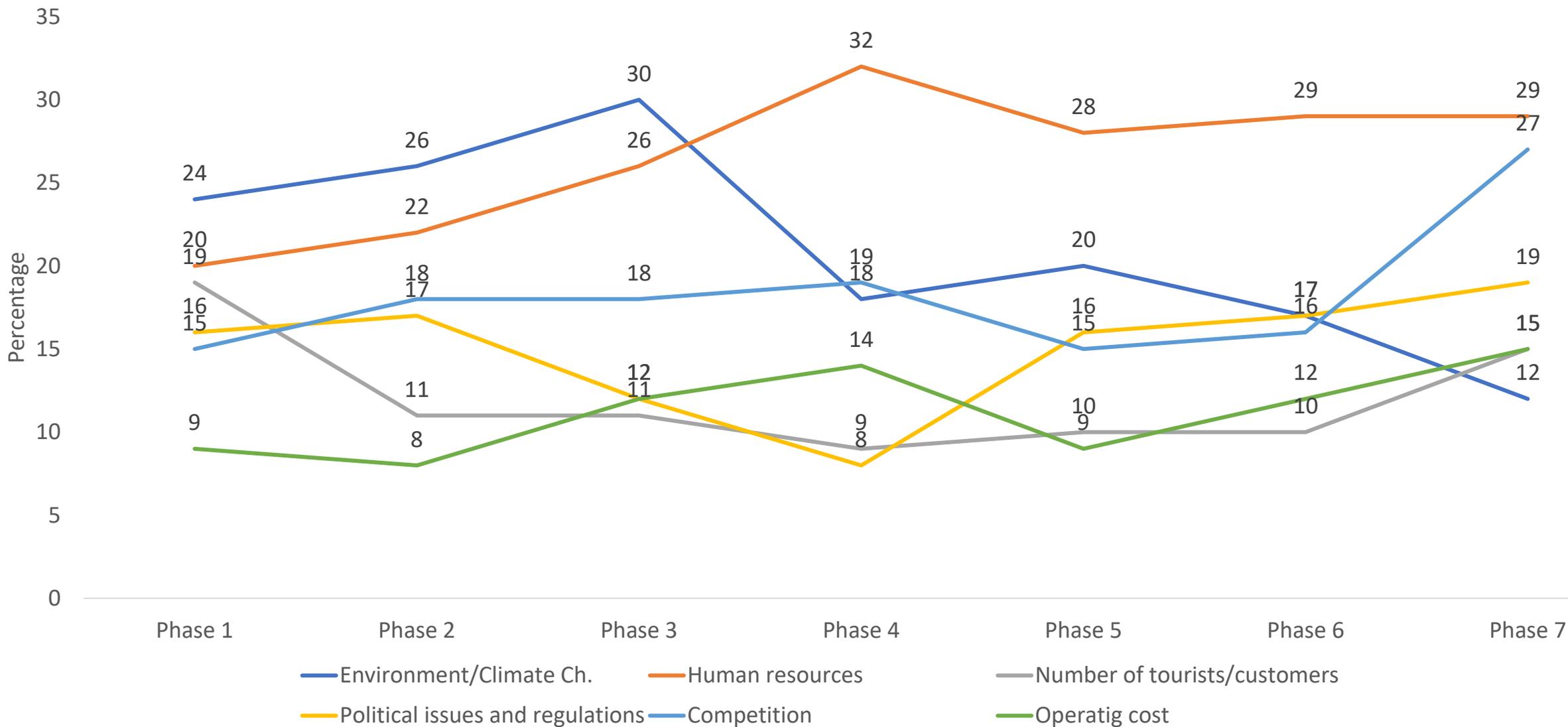




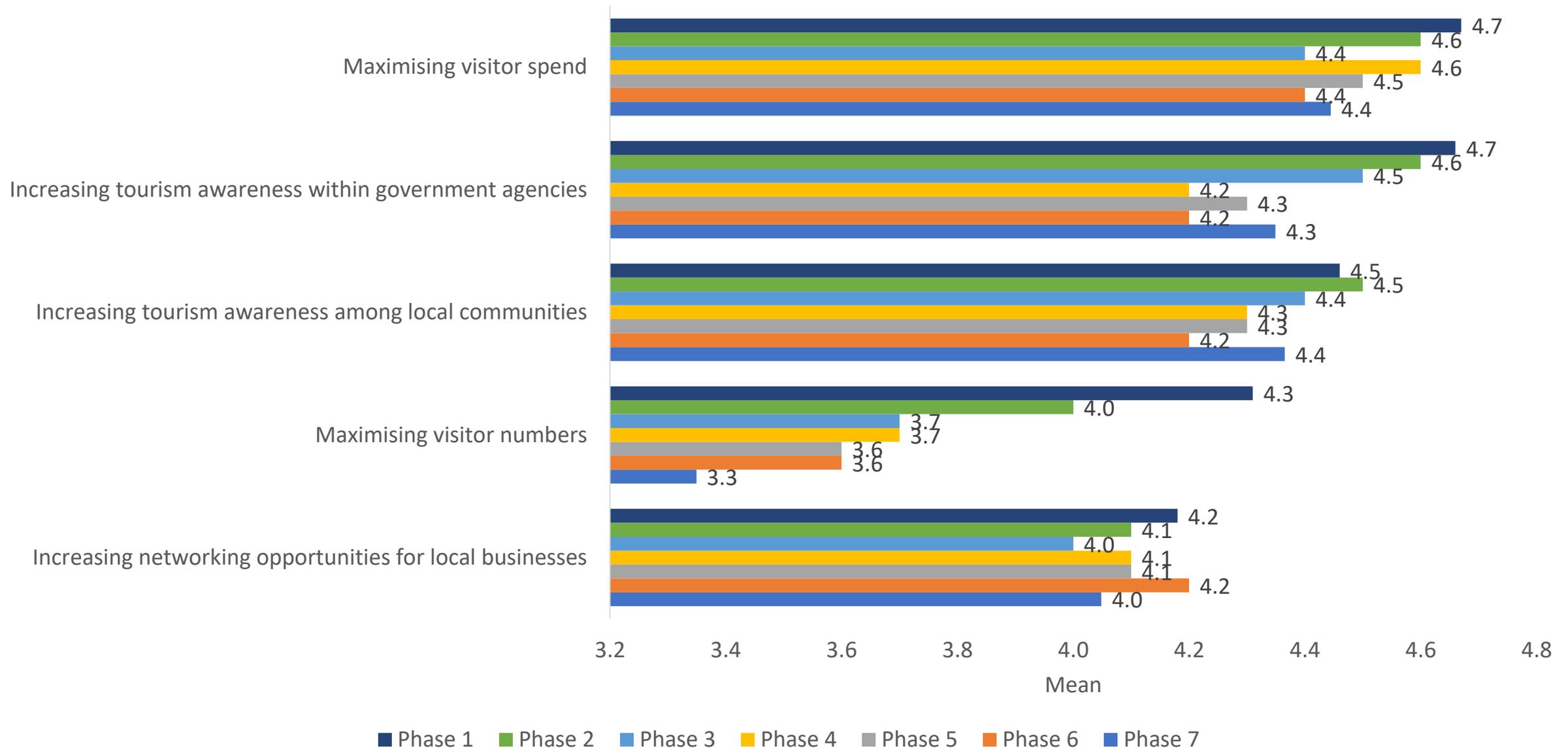
Business Confidence Index Survey



The major challenges in next five years?



How important are the following to the Cook Islands?



Cook Islands Community Attitudes Towards Tourism

NZTRI

November 2019

Introduction

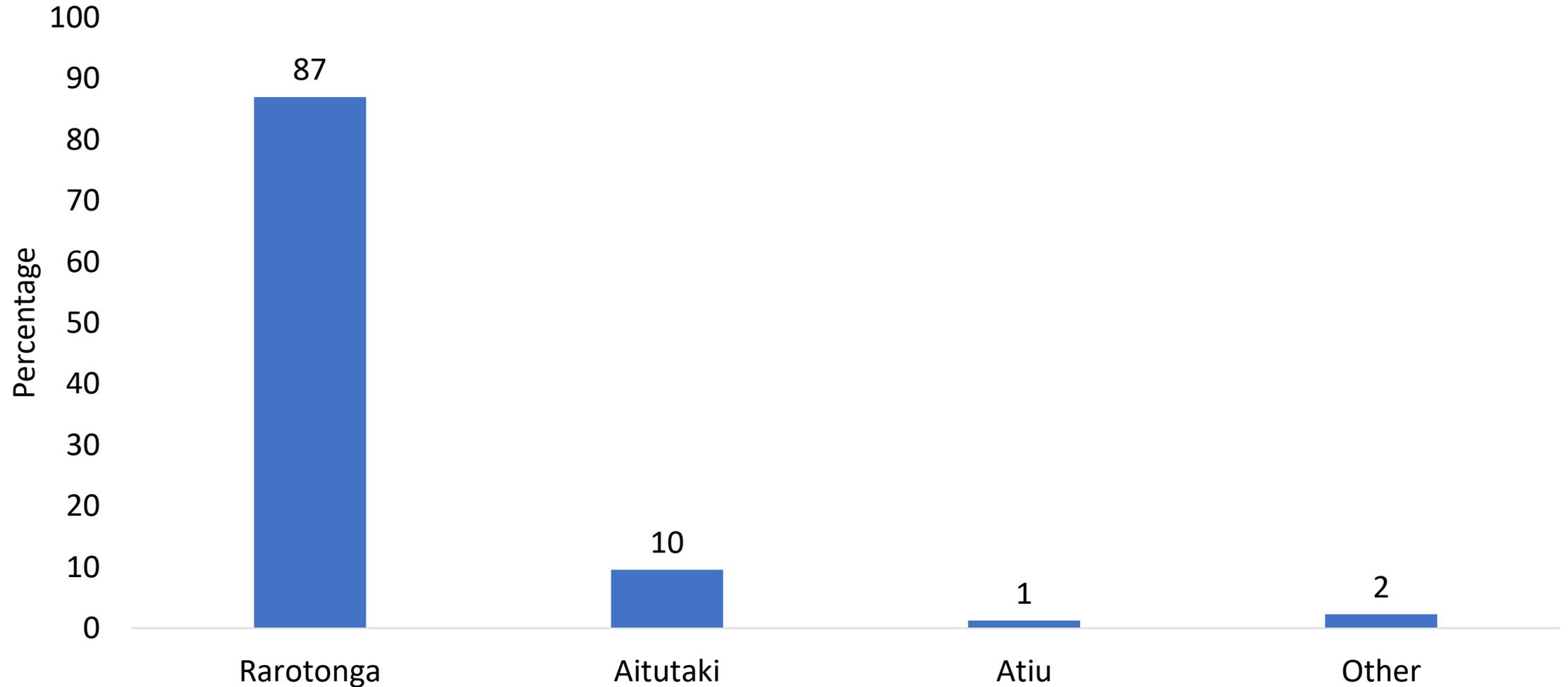
- The *Cook Islands Community Attitudes Towards Tourism Survey* explores the relationships between community and tourism from a number of perspectives including: economic, cultural, environmental and in terms of general quality of life.
- Online data collection was run with the support of Cook islands Tourism and Telecommunications provider Bluesky. The survey ran from 9 August to 31 October 2019. 975 usable responses were collected. Based on the total population aged over 15 (2016 census) of 13,138 the sample size is estimated to be approximately 7% (NB for ethical reasons the survey only targeted those aged 18 and over).
- The data is analysed and compared with a focus on the following variables: (1) Cook Island Maori and Non-Cook Island Maori; (2) Age groups; (3) Island of residence (Rarotonga and Aitutaki); and (4) employment type (tourism sector and non-tourism sector).



Respondent Characteristics

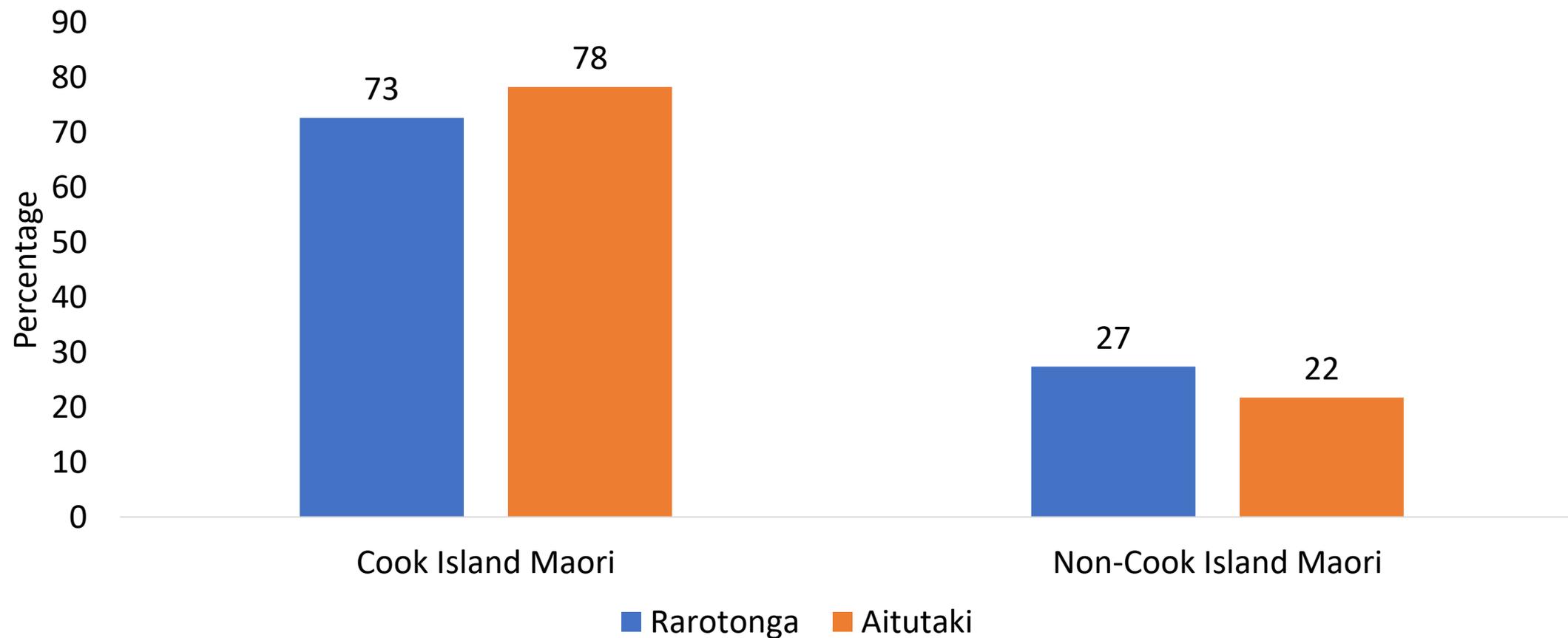


Where do you live in the Cook Islands?



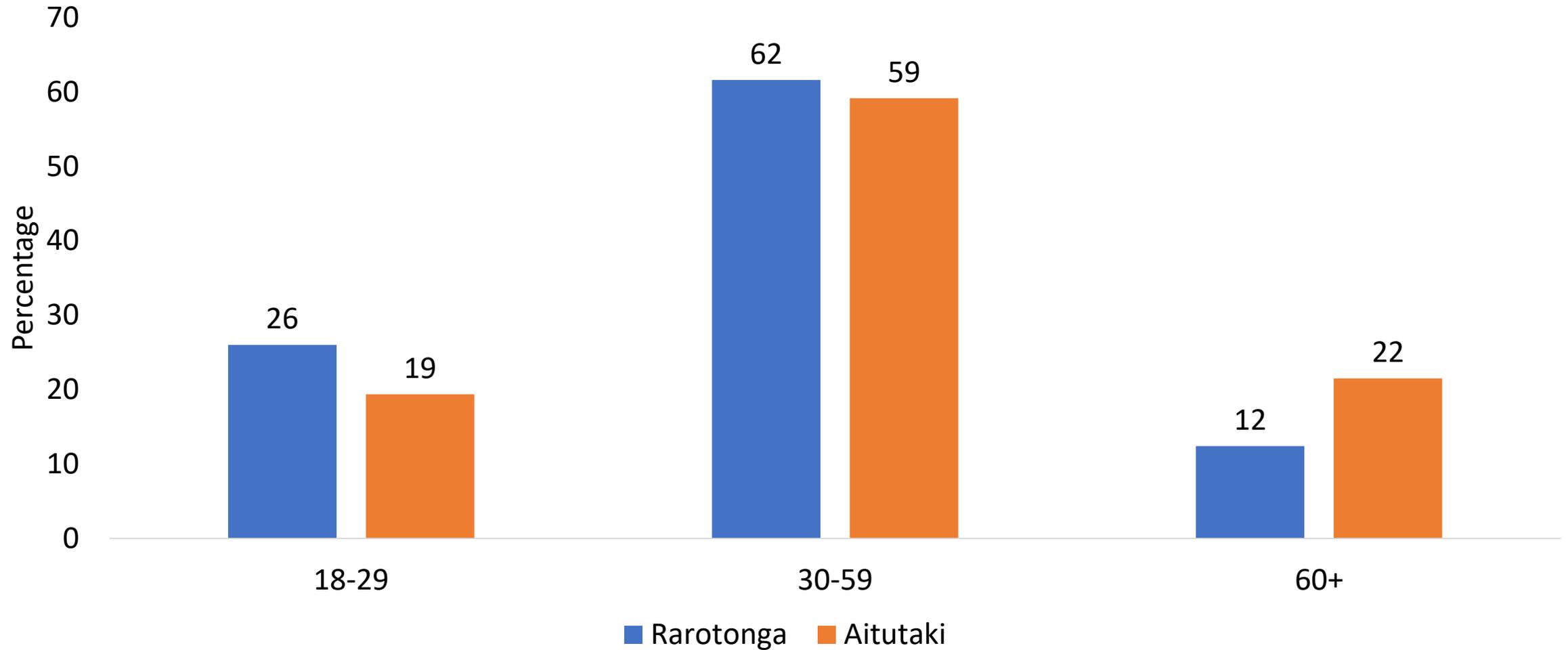
Which of the following best describes you?

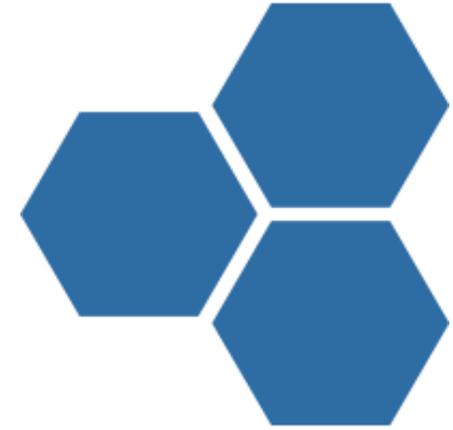
Rarotonga / Aitutaki by CIM/Non CIM



Which age group are you in?

Rarotonga / Aitutaki

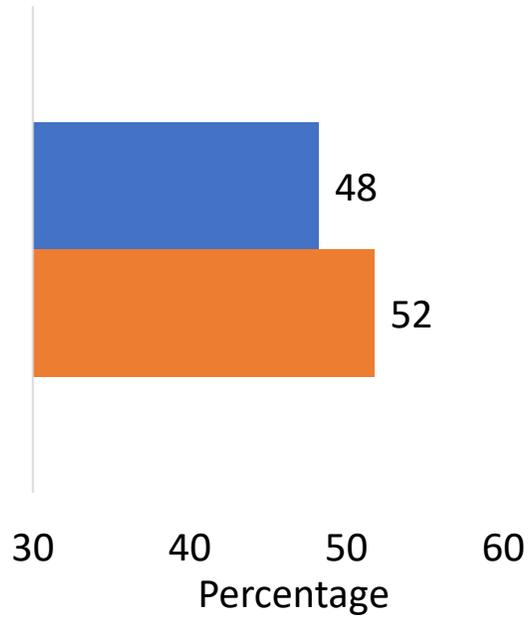




Community Linkages to Tourism



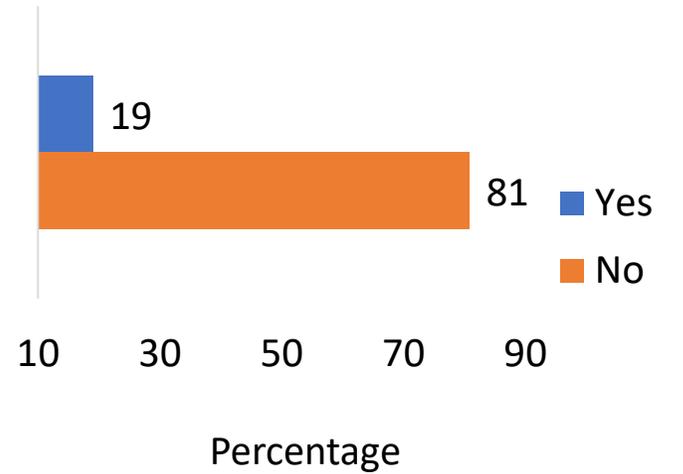
Do you work in or own a business in the tourism sector?



■ Yes
■ No

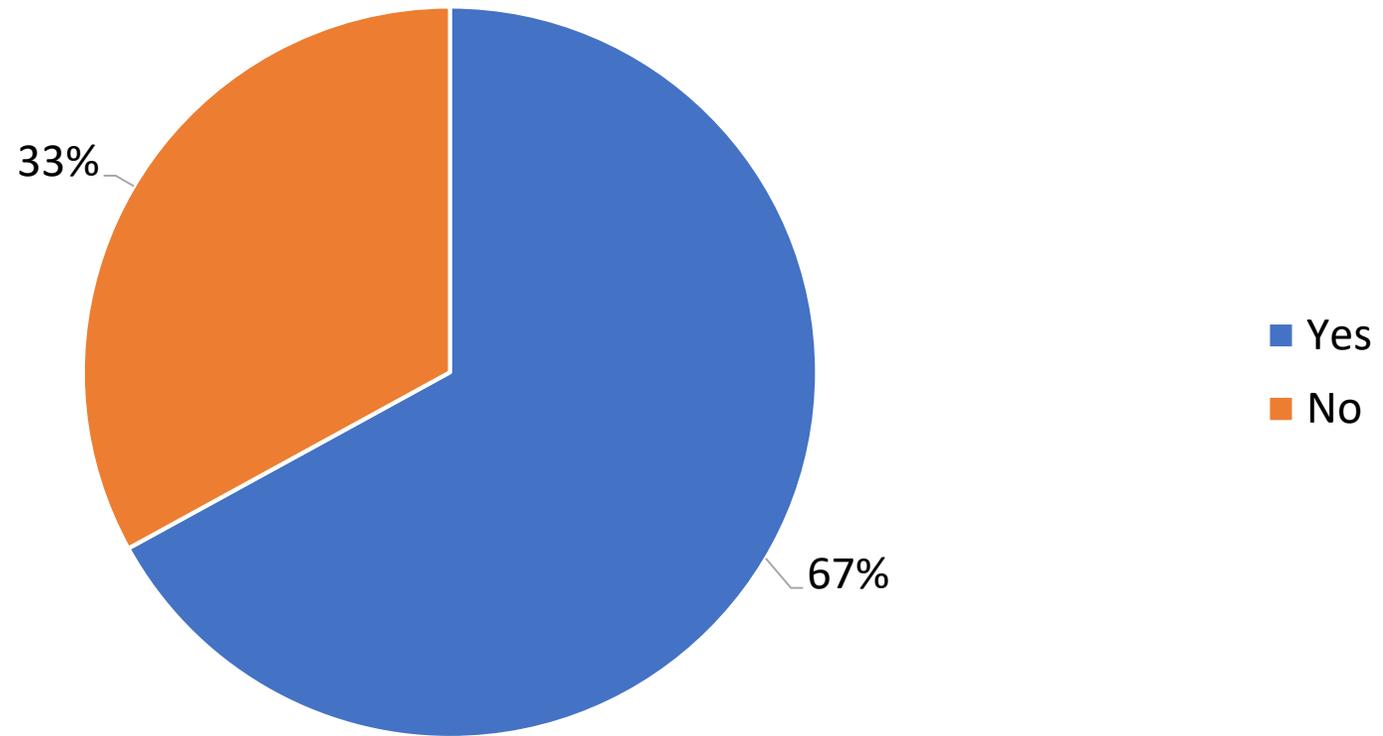
If responded NO

Do you get any income from tourism?



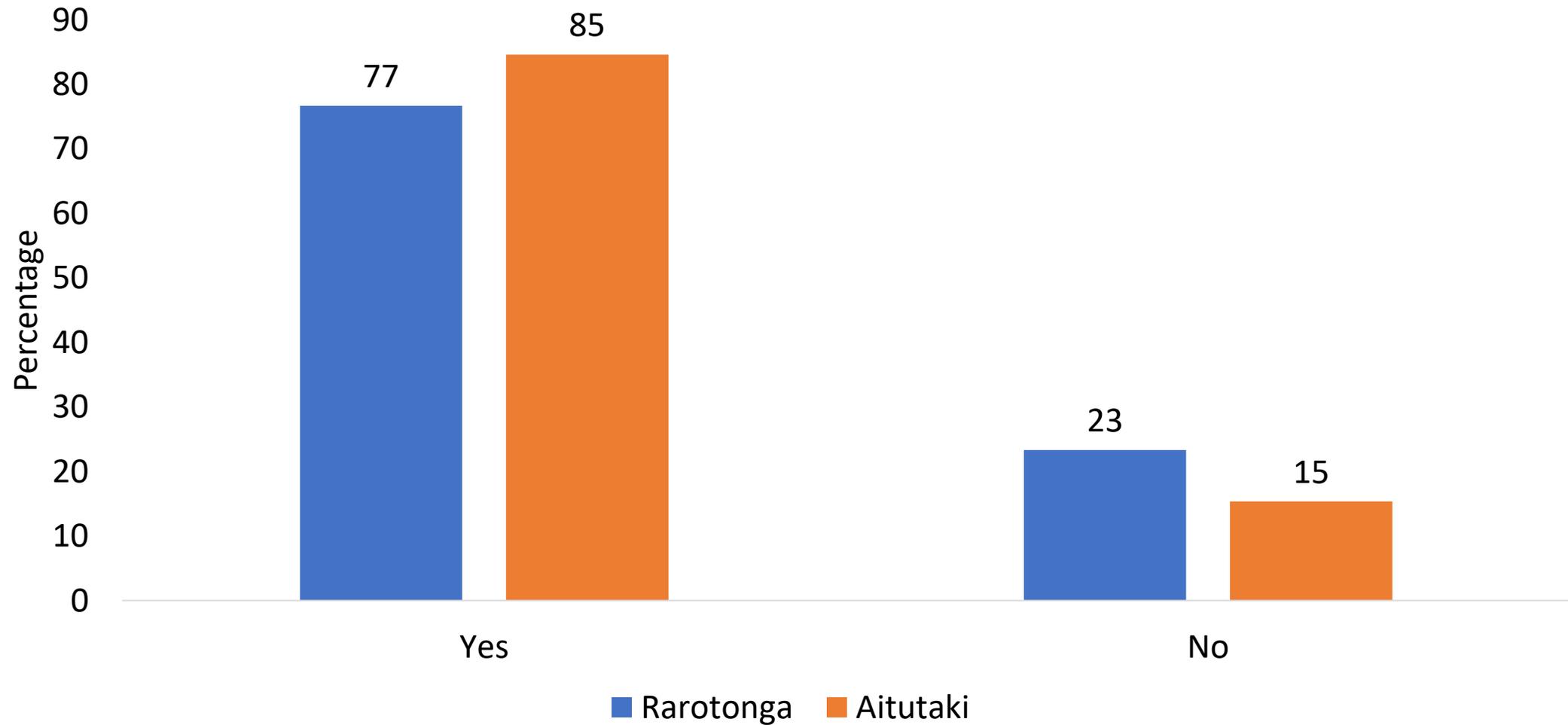
■ Yes
■ No

Do you have family members who work in the tourism industry?



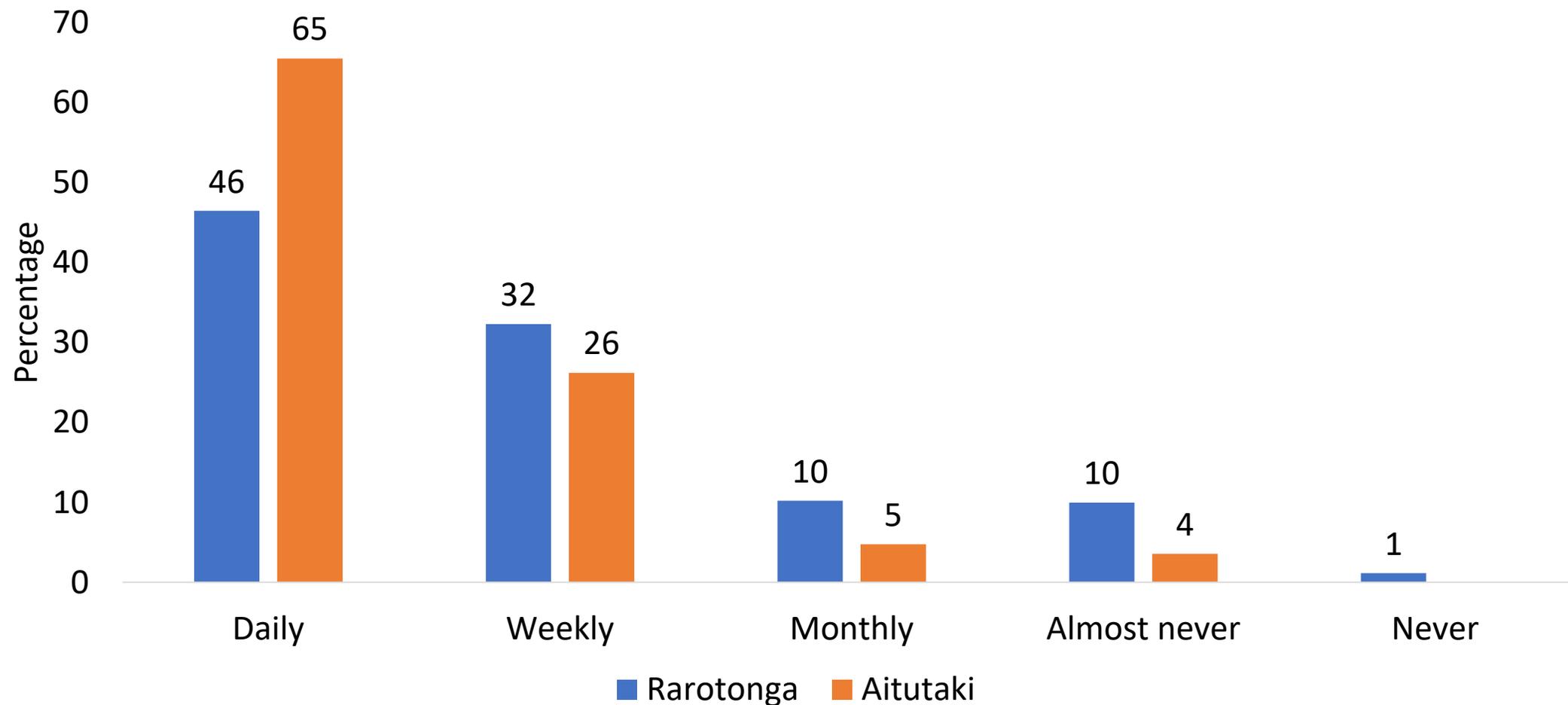
Do you have family members who work in the tourism industry?

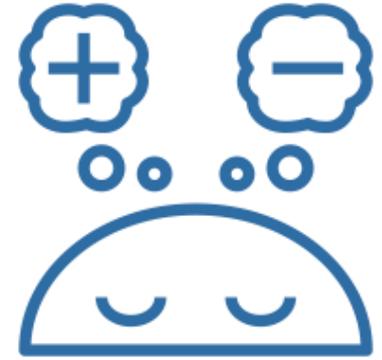
Rarotonga / Aitutaki



How often do you talk with tourists?

Rarotonga / Aitutaki



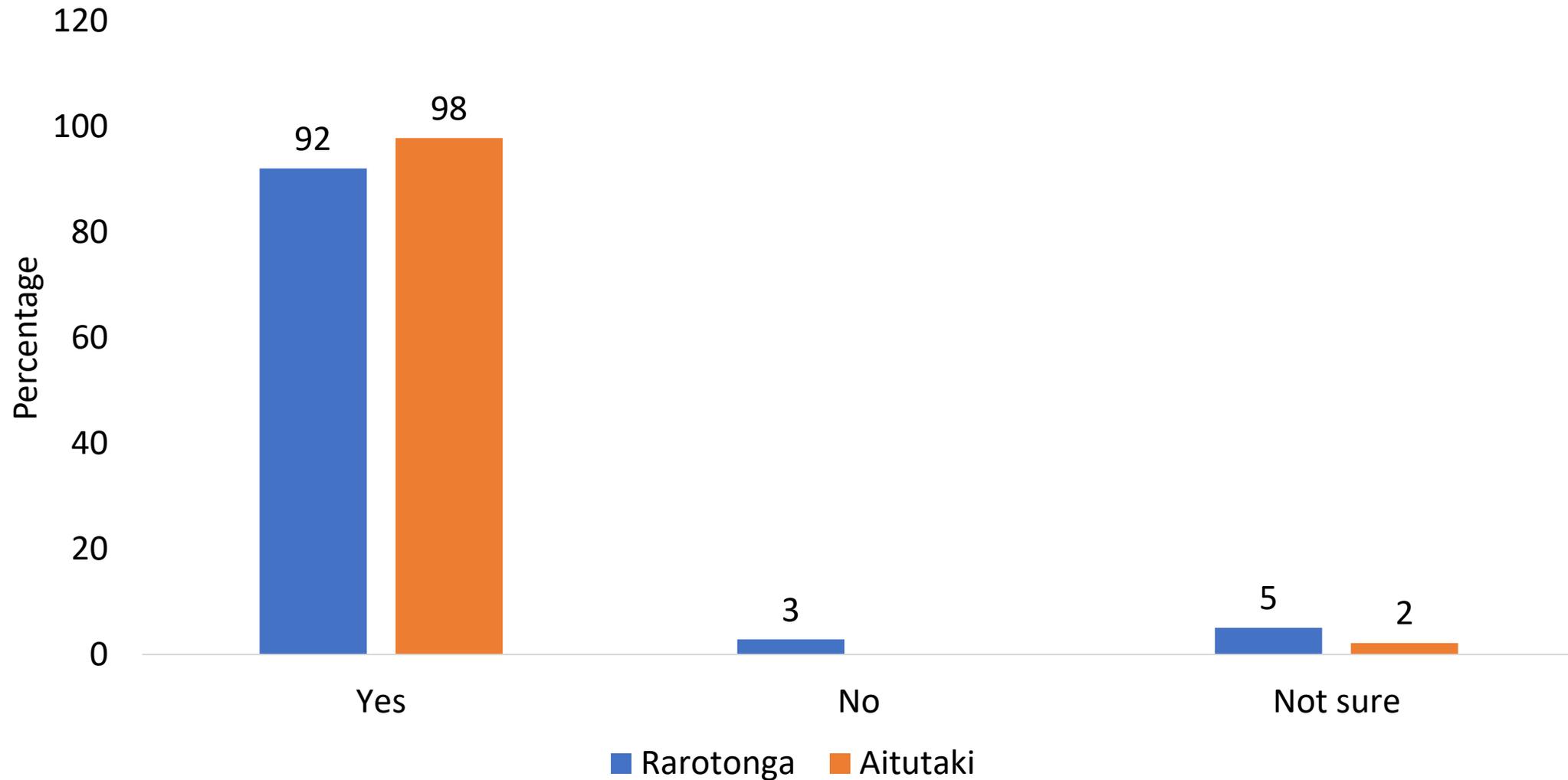


Attitudes towards Tourism

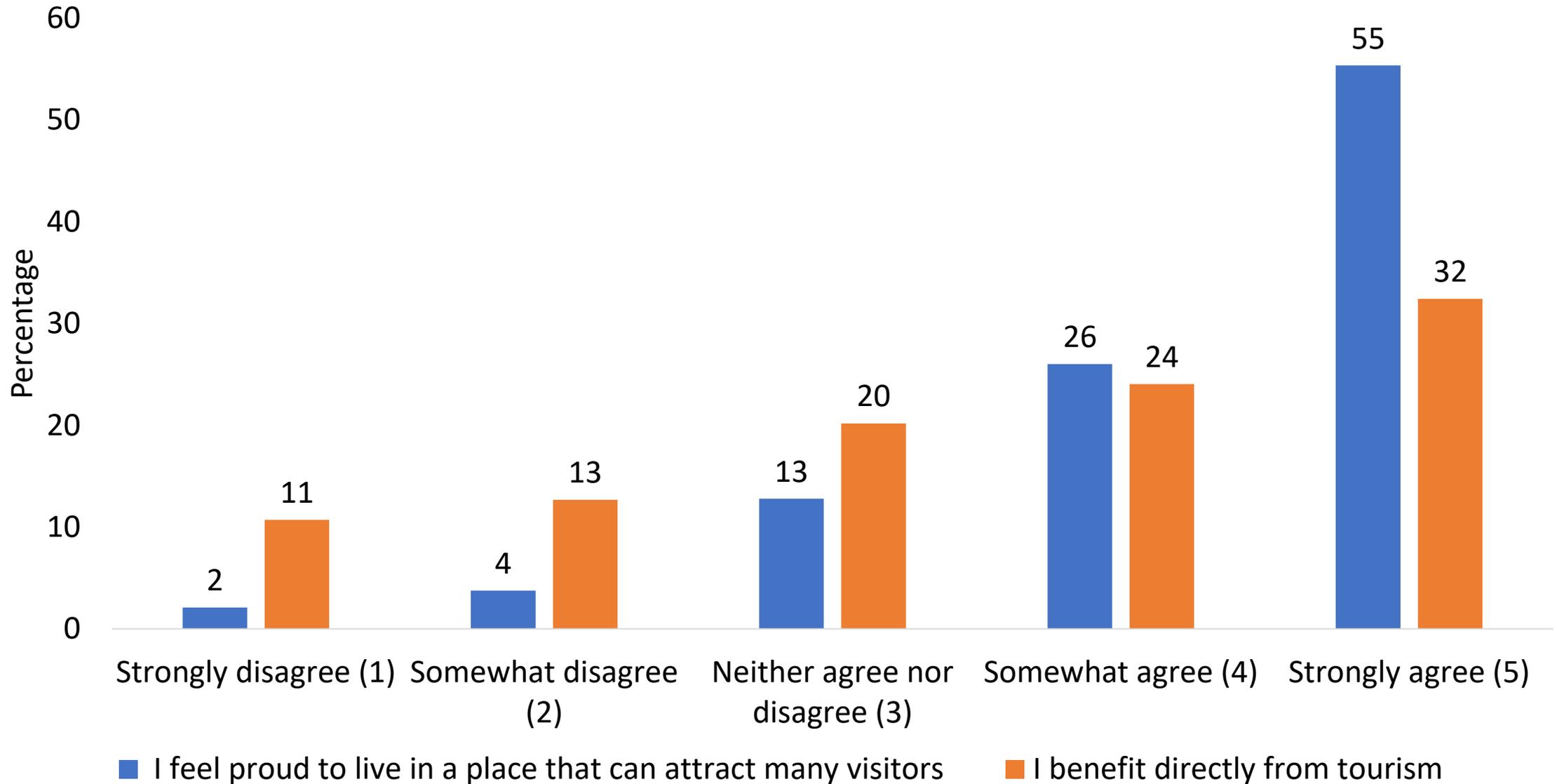


Do you think that tourism is good for the Cook Islands?

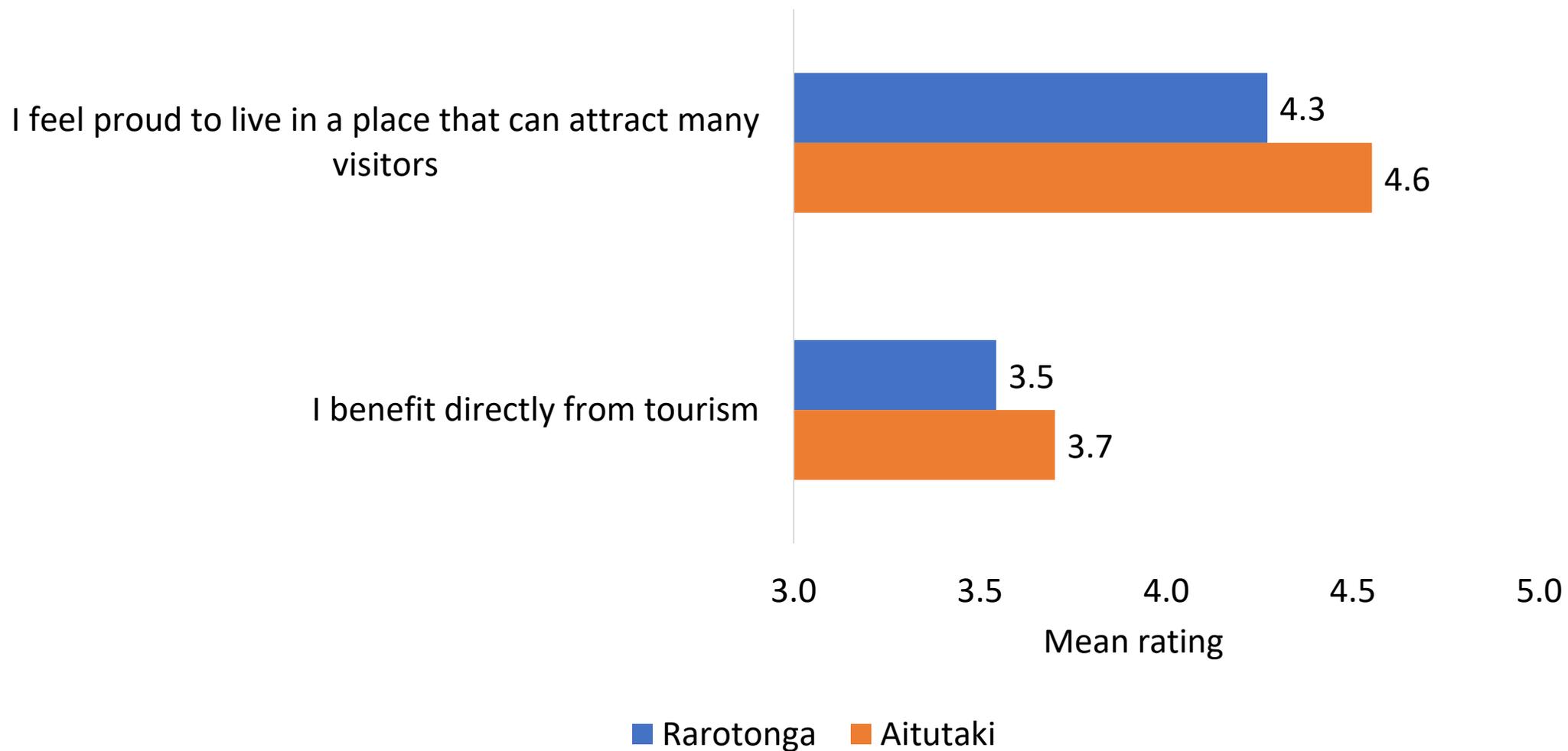
Rarotonga / Aitutaki



Tourism as a source of pride and direct benefit



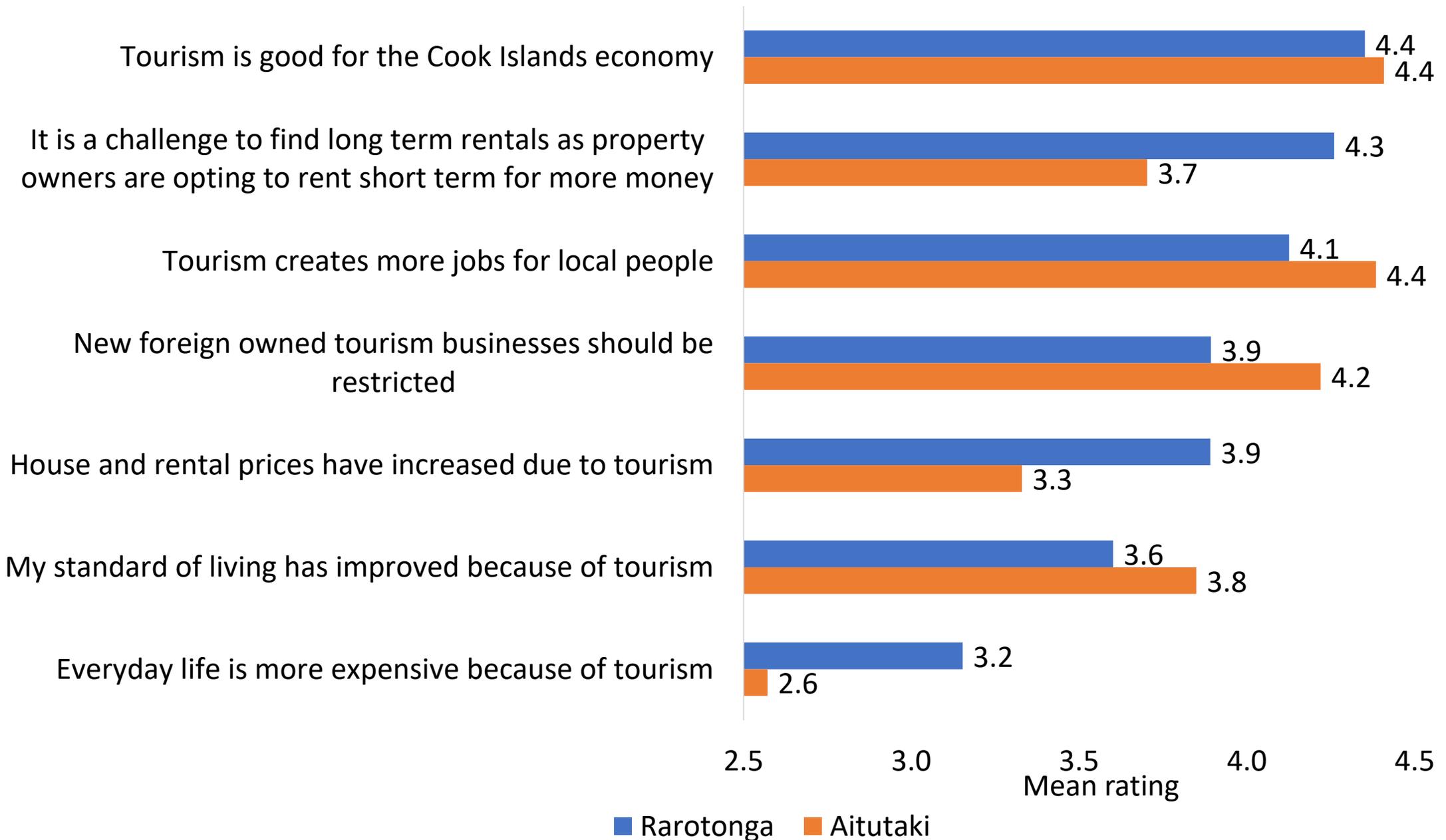
Tourism as a source of pride and direct benefit - Rarotonga/Aitutaki





Tourism and Economic Dimensions

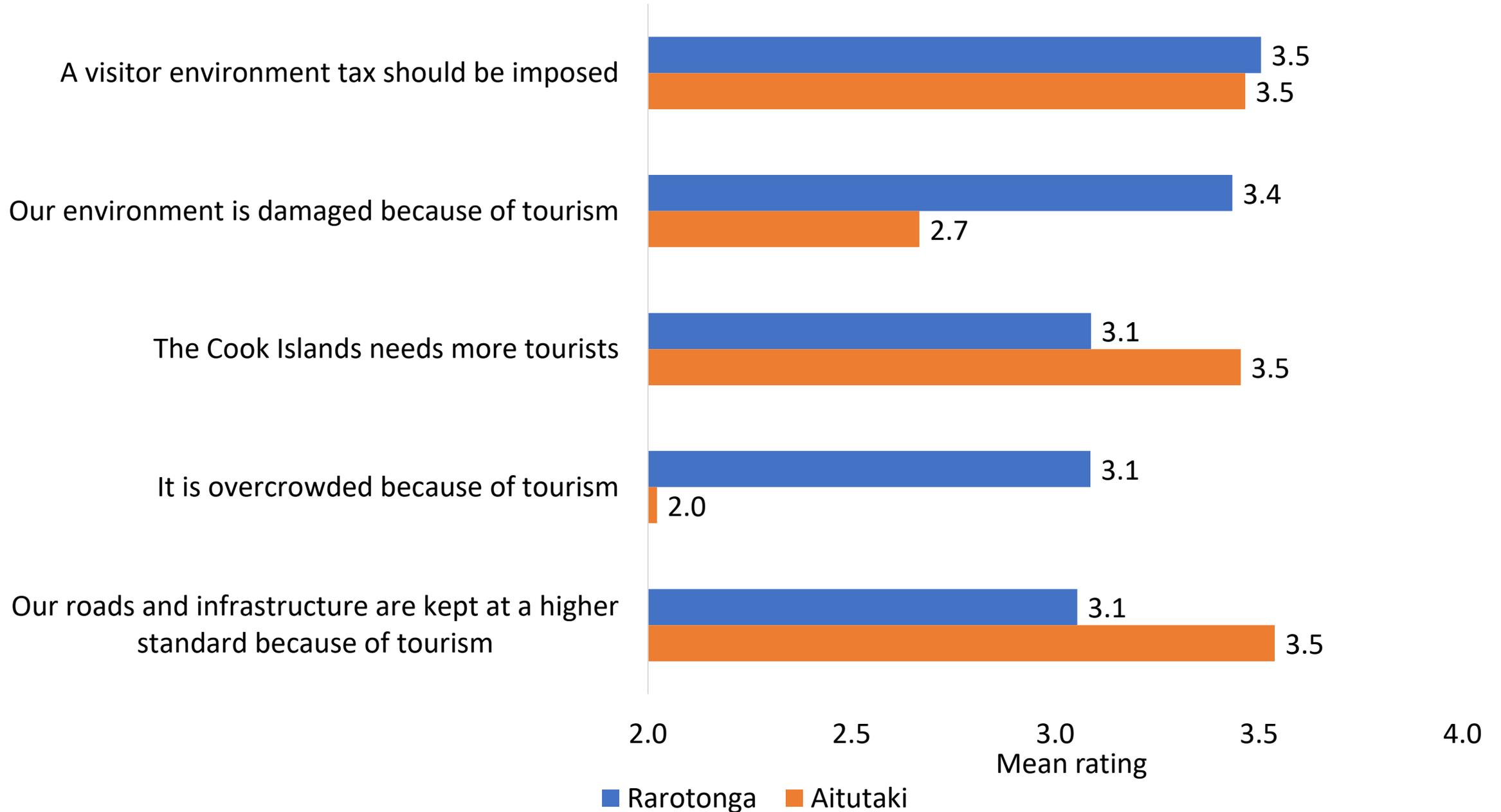






Tourism and Environmental Dimensions

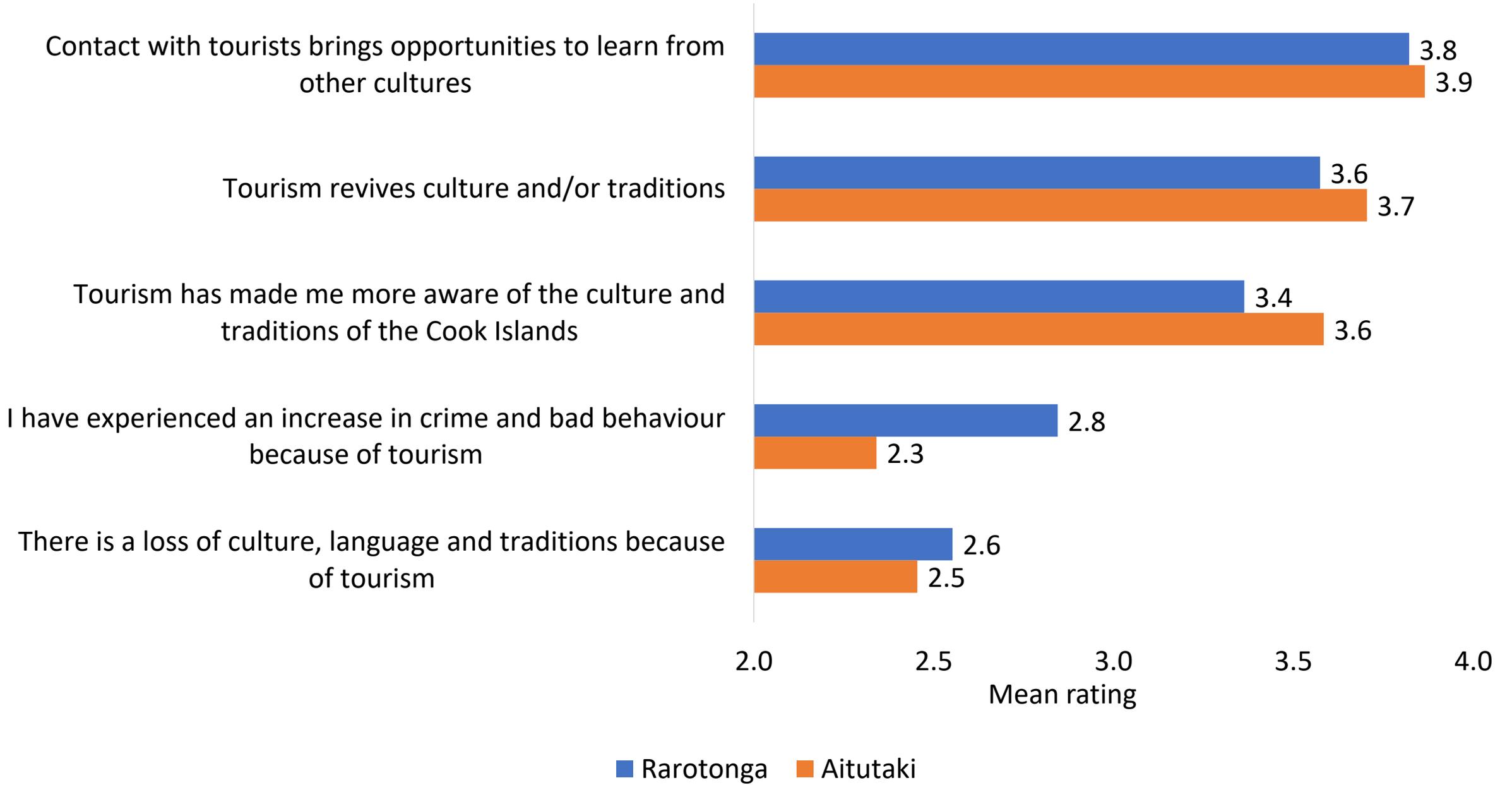






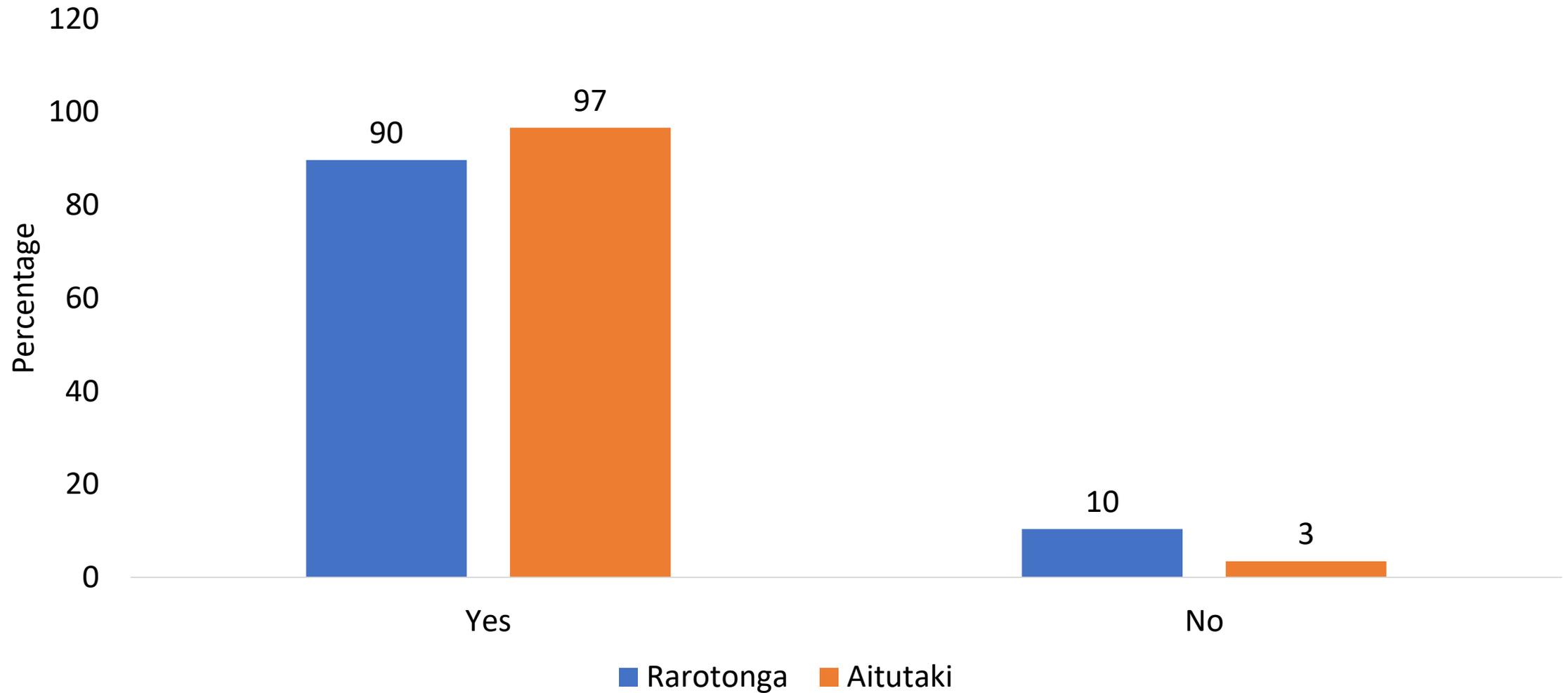
Tourism and Cultural Dimensions





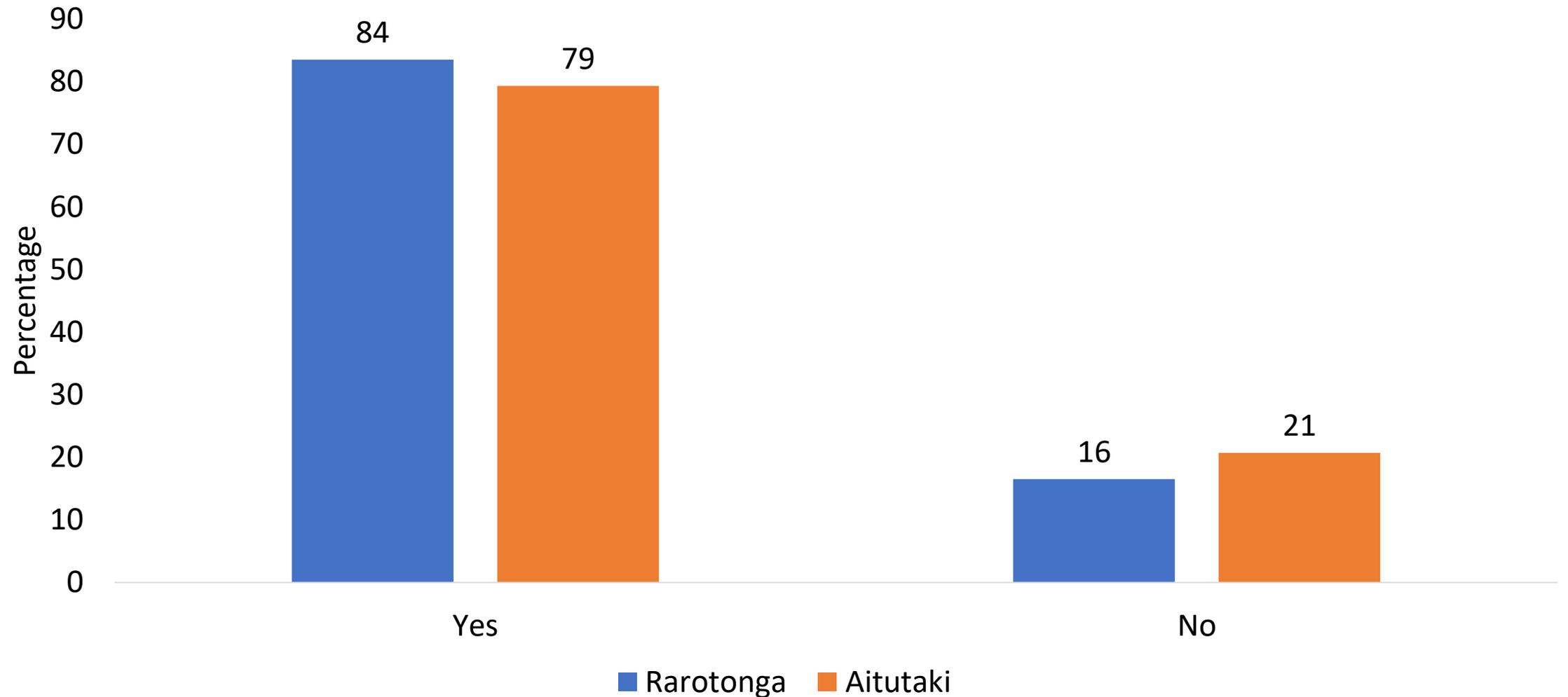
I would like to share my culture and values with tourists

Rarotonga / Aitutaki



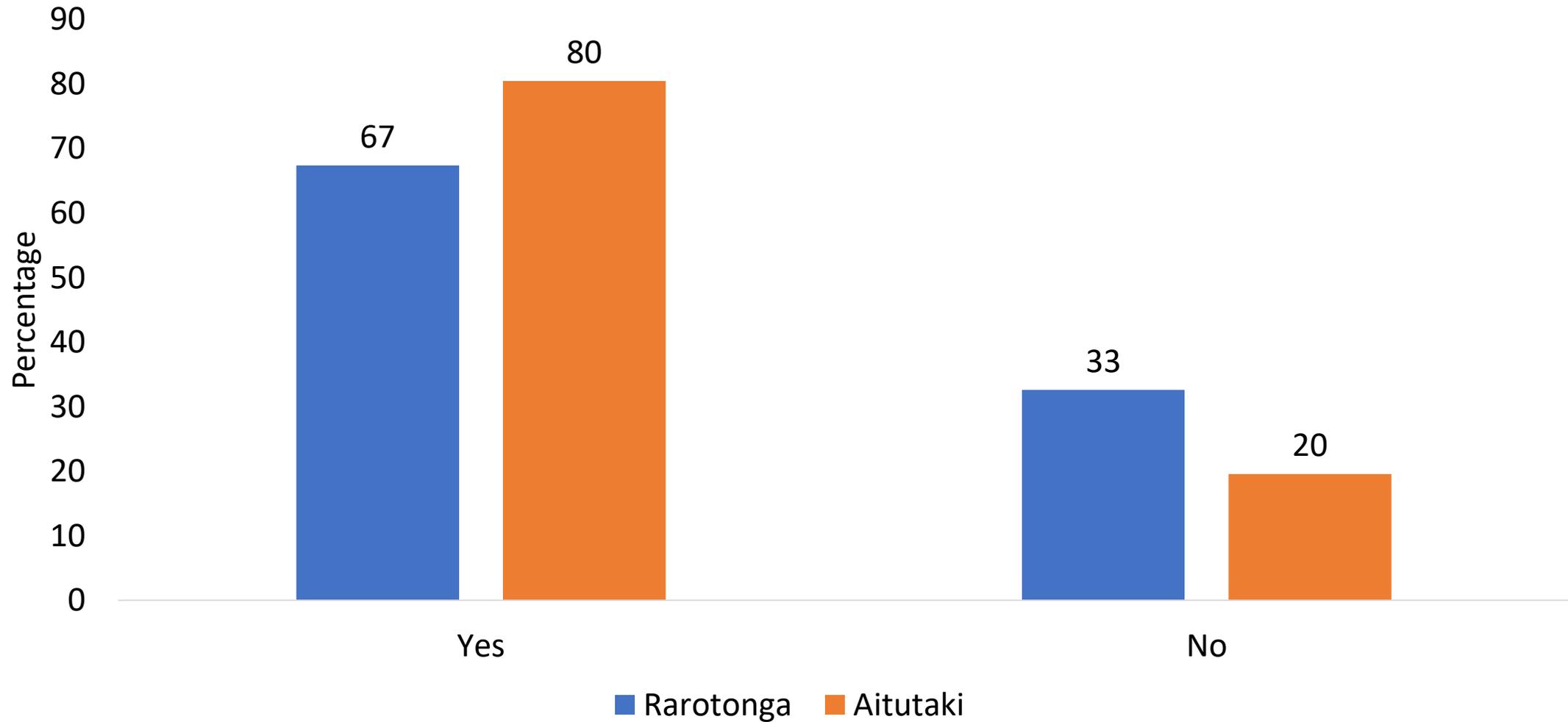
I am aware of the Kia Orana Values programme

Rarotonga / Aitutaki



I am willing to be a Kia Orana Ambassador

Rarotonga / Aitutaki

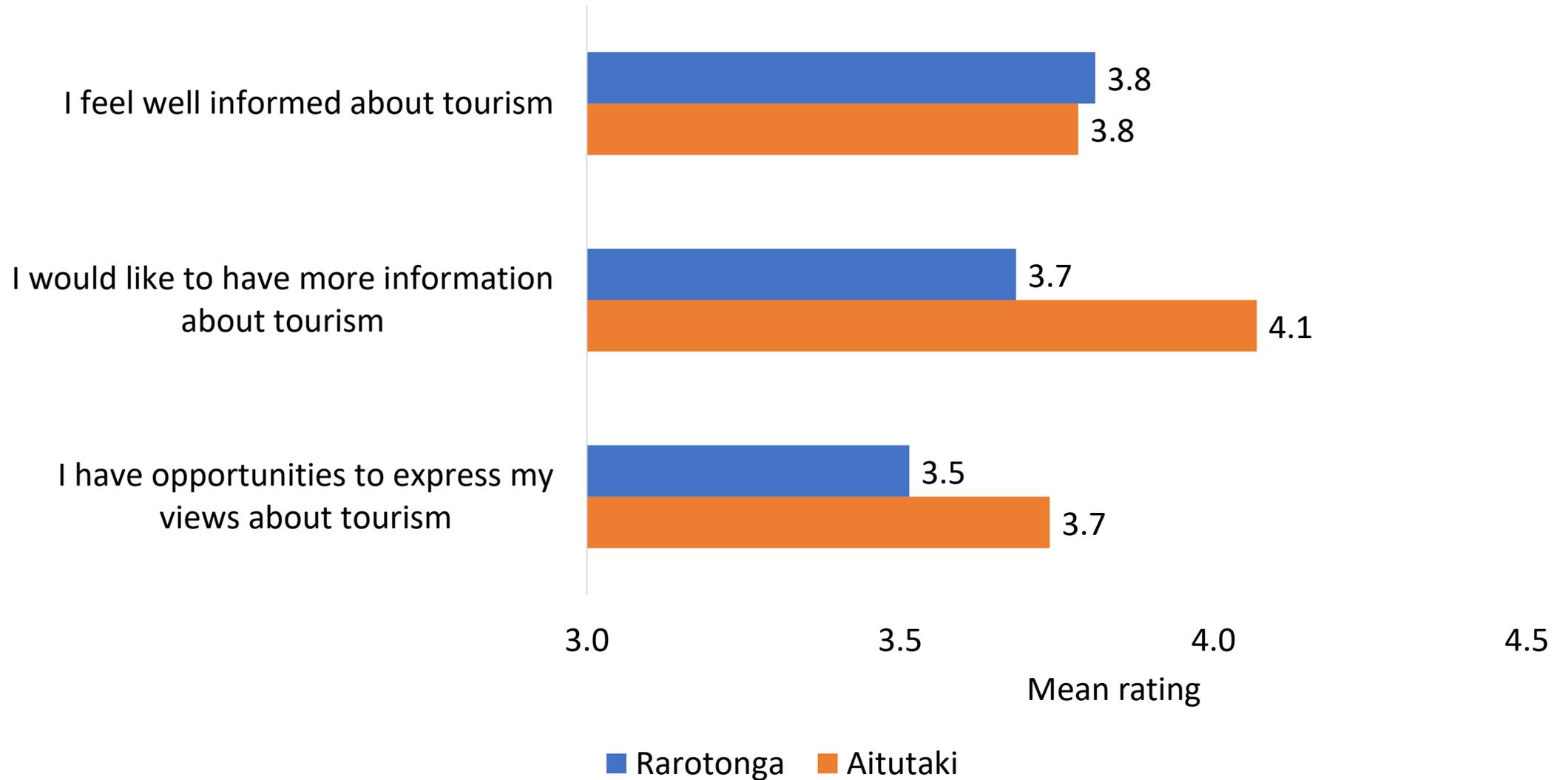




Tourism and Information Access



Tourism and information access – Rarotonga/Aitutaki





Open-ended responses to 'further comments' question



Themes identified (% of all comments made)

Suggestions for tourism development	Positive comments	Negative comments	Don't blame tourism or tourists	Neutral comments	Appreciation of being asked
68%	41%	38%	2%	2%	2%

Suggestions on tourism development	
Marketing	16%
Infrastructure improvement	15%
Government strategies and regulations	13%
Sustainable tourism development	12%
Balance culture and economic benefits	11%
Education referring to tourism	10%
Tourists education	5%
More opportunities & priorities for locals	5%
More events or activities	3%
More training for local businesses	3%
More connections	2%
Accommodation related regulations	2%
Foreigners (worker and owner)	2%
More opportunities for outer islands	2%

Positive comments	
Well done tourism	27%
Positive economic impacts	19%
Being proud of CI	19%
Tourists' positive impacts	13%
Good willing to contribute	8%
Positive environment impacts	6%
Positive cultural impacts	4%
Infrastructure development	1%

Negative comments	
Tourists' behaviours and numbers	34%
Environment impacts	19%
Social issues	8%
Local people' attitude and services	7%
Economic impacts	7%
Cultural impacts	5%
Political issues %and regulations	5%
General concerns	3%
Housing and renting	2%
Infrastructure	2%
Stop over-developing tourism	1%

Positive comments

- Tourism not only changes peoples lives it also gives opportunity to those who are in need. So I may say tourism is a part of our day lives whether we are in business industry or not. Because from nothing to something that's all thanks to tourism.
- We clearly benefit greatly from tourism in the Cook Islands economically and it is an important economic driver to maintain.
- I am proud of my country when tourists choose to come here, and also when I hear good and positive comments from them.
- Tourist are complying with our cultural ways and customs.
- Look after tourism for the future generations.
- Tourism helps some of us keep our islands clean because we want to make a good impression on others about our home.

Negative comments

- Tourism numbers are too high and now have an overall negative impact on the country.
- Environmental issues have been caused by the large number of tourists visiting the Cook Islands.
- Tourism is our future but we must have regulations to control its impact.
- Whether they well informed about the culture, important about some dress codes and keep safe, stay safe, and road rules.
- I think it is a shame that so many foreigners own tourism businesses.
- Overall tourism has increased social inequality, loss of culture and environmental destruction- this needs serious consideration and to be brought under control. Meitaki.
- The substantial cost of long term renting is another existing issue due to tourists staying in Raro, very difficult for some.

Suggestions on tourism development

- More promotion and affordable travel to the outer islands - they offer a very different type of holiday and their beauty should be shared.
- We need to implement a local price/tourist price situation like many other tourism heavy countries, this is easily done and tourists are understanding.
- Stop promoting Rarotonga with photos of Aitutaki. Aitutaki should be promoted as its own destination not a day trip.
- Better infrastructure is needed in order to deal with the rise in tourism numbers.
- Tourism is good to a limit but must be controlled to a point that is sustainable.
- Balance growth of Tourism with Environment and retention of traditional practices to avoid exploitation
- Educating our young ones.
- Local community must benefit and not have profits head off overseas.

Don't blame tourism or tourists

- We lost our language & culture thru education a long time ago. Don't blame the tourists. The crime rate in increased when they started sending our bad kids back from Australia & New Zealand. Tourism is very good for the country. Bring it on.
- Cost of living for most people I know is very high and struggling to put food on the table, not because of tourism.
- Tourism is the backbone of Cook Islands economy, it has a good and bad side , but many of the issues that bother us in the Cook Islands we must look at within ourselves and not lay blame on others.
- It's easy to blame tourists for the feeling of overcrowding and visible damage to our roads and environment, but as a country I believe that we need to invest ourselves into the infrastructure and planning of our land and resources in order to accommodate both our visitors and locals.

Appreciation of being asked

- Great survey guys keep up the good work.
- Thanks for having this opportunity to fill out this survey form... Kia Orana e Kia Manuia.



Thank you!

Simon Milne

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www.nztri.org.nz

Authors: Simon Milne, Jin Yi, Mindy Sun, Sam Li

Which village do you live in?

Aitutaki

Village	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Island
Amuri	25	29	Aitutaki
Arutanga	13	15	Aitutaki
Nikaupara	9	10	Aitutaki
Reureu	8	9	Aitutaki
Vaipae	7	8	Aitutaki
Tautu	6	7	Aitutaki
Ureia	6	7	Aitutaki
Vaipeka	6	7	Aitutaki
Aratea	5	6	Aitutaki
Araura	1	2	Aitutaki