

# Cook Islands Visitor Survey Results

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**October - December 2014**

**Prepared for Cook Islands Tourism Corporation**

**by**

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[www.nztri.org](http://www.nztri.org)

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## Executive Summary

This report focuses on the characteristics, expectations and expenditure patterns of tourists who visit the Cook Islands. The data presented is drawn from an online departure survey (<http://www.mycookislandsvisit.com>). The survey period covered in this report is 1 October to 31 December 2014. There were 787 individual respondents to the survey - representing a total of 1462 adults and an additional 142 children (this equates to 5.1% of all visitors during the period – based on the latest 2014 visitor arrival data for the June to September period from the Cook Islands Statistics Office).

The survey results for this quarter are generally similar to those presented in the 2013/14 annual report. The majority (62%) of visitors surveyed come from New Zealand, 23% come from Australia. Visitors are well educated (64% of visitors have some form of tertiary education) and have a relatively high annual household income (34% earn over NZ\$100,000 per year). Just under half of the visitors (49%) travel with one companion. Solo travellers are relatively rare (7%).

Over half of the visitors surveyed (54%) are on their first visit to the Cook Islands, a further 22% have visited once or twice before. The main purpose of the visit is holiday-making (75%). The average length of stay in the Cook Islands is 8.6 nights. The majority (93%) of the visitors stay either one or two weeks. Twenty two percent of the visitors surveyed visit Aitutaki in addition to Rarotonga.

Visitor spend prior to arrival in the Cook Islands (\$1,845) has decreased slightly from the 2013/14 annual average (\$1,985 per person). Spend on the island (per person per day) is \$115 which is higher than the 2013/14 annual average of \$111. The 'in-country' spend is higher than the same quarter for the previous year (\$110 for October-December 2013).

The average local spend per visitor during the whole trip is \$989. If the pre-paid spend amount and the local spend amount are combined, it is estimated that each visitor brings \$1,730 to the Cook Islands economy (or approximately \$201 per day). This figure is higher than \$1,724 average for 2013/14, but lower than \$1756 for the same quarter last year (Oct-Dec 2014).

Water-based activities are characterised by the strongest participation levels. Visitor satisfaction with activities and services is high. Cultural activities are characterised by the highest overall satisfaction ratings. The most appealing elements of the Cook Islands experience are the beautiful natural environment, the friendly local people, the peacefulness and relaxing atmosphere of the islands, activities and attractions, entertainment and events. Smaller numbers of visitors mentioned the quality and availability of food and beverage, the high level of service and the un-commercialised nature of the islands. The least appealing elements of the Cook Islands experience are considered to be poor quality and value for money of food and beverage and accommodation, and a lack of public service and facilities.

Overall satisfaction on the part of tourists is very high: 94% of those surveyed want to return to the Cook Islands and 97% would recommend the Cook Islands to friends or family. The overall satisfaction is very consistent with the previous year.

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## Introduction

The Cook Islands government, local businesses and communities require a clearer picture of the characteristics, expectations and expenditure patterns of tourists who visit the nation. This information is needed to enable the effective planning and development of the tourism industry and to highlight its crucial role within the broader Cook Island's economy. Visitors to the Cook Islands are asked to complete a web-based survey within two weeks of the completion of their visit. This web-based survey ran for 24 months during 2012-2014 on a quarterly basis, and is continuing through 2014-2015.

This report presents the results from the October to December 2014 period. Over this three month period, 2979 visitors were contacted by email to take part in the survey, and 787 responses were received: a conversion rate of 26.4%. These responses cover a total of 1462 adults and 142 children. The conversion rate for this period is slightly higher than for the 2013/14 annual average (25%), and consistent with Oct-Dec 2013 quarter (26%).

The data presented include detailed information on:

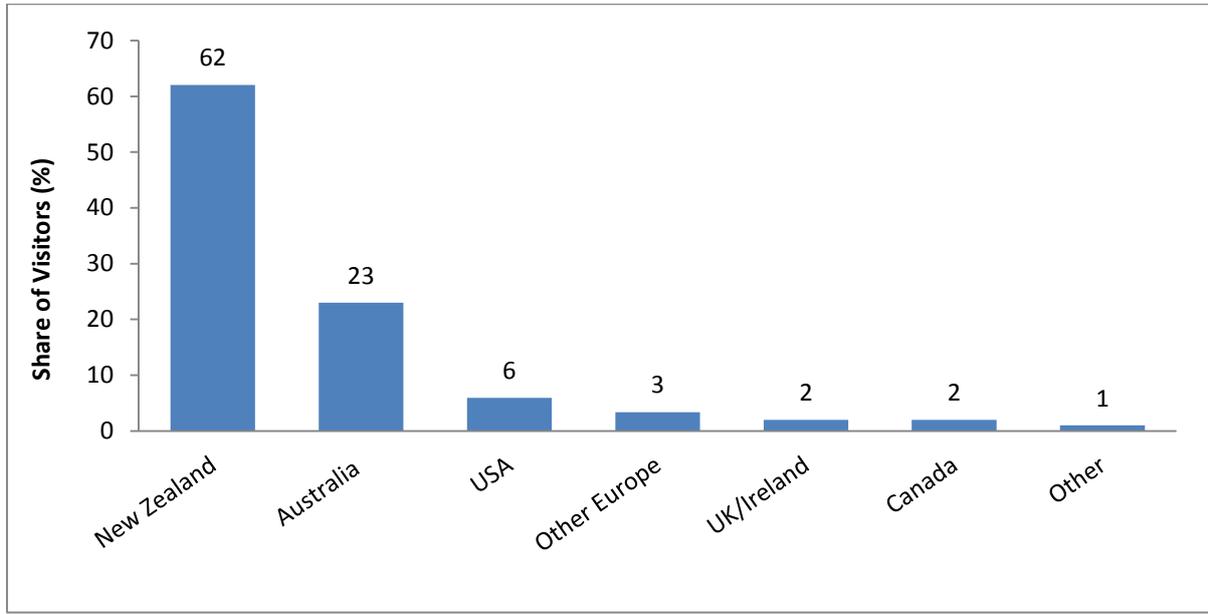
- The characteristics of visitors to the Cook Islands (age, gender, education, country of origin, income, purpose of visit, travelling with whom, number of previous visits, length of stay, airline used, visited islands)
- Visitor expenditure (amount of money spent prior to arrival and while in the Cook Islands, items of spending)
- Visitor satisfaction (most and least appealing elements of the visit, overall satisfaction, satisfaction with activities)

Where there are significant and/or notable variations from the 2013/14 annual averages and 2013/14 October – December Quarterly figures these are highlighted.

## Visitor Characteristics

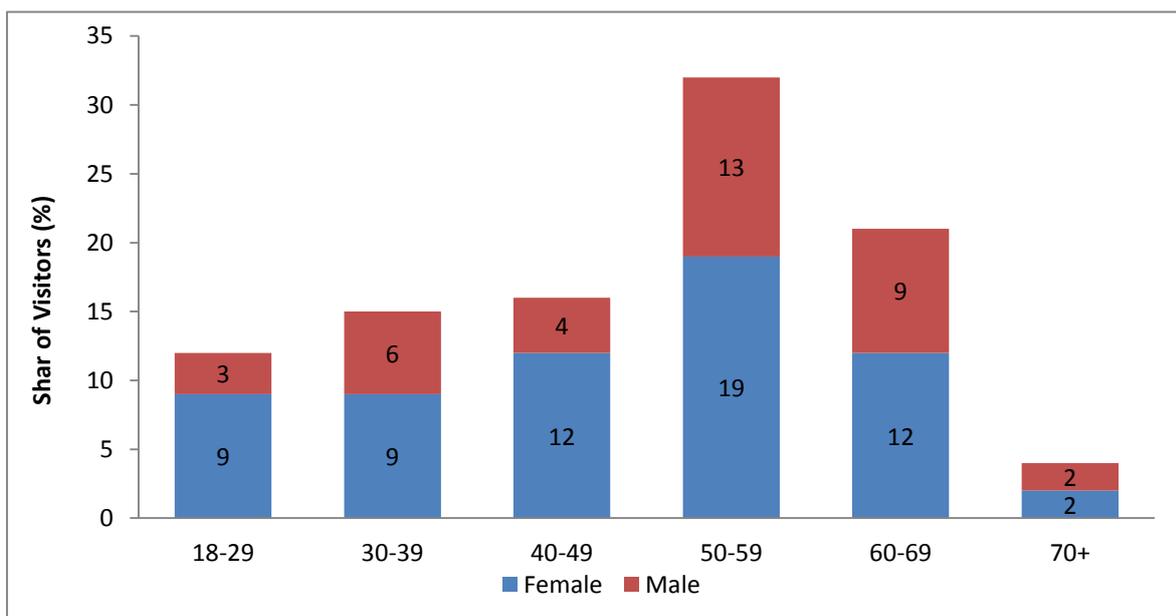
The majority (62%) of the visitors surveyed come from New Zealand (Figure 1). The second largest visitor group is from Australia, with 23% of respondents. Europe, USA, Great Britain, Asia and Canada represent the other main source markets.

**Figure 1: Country of Origin (n=709)**



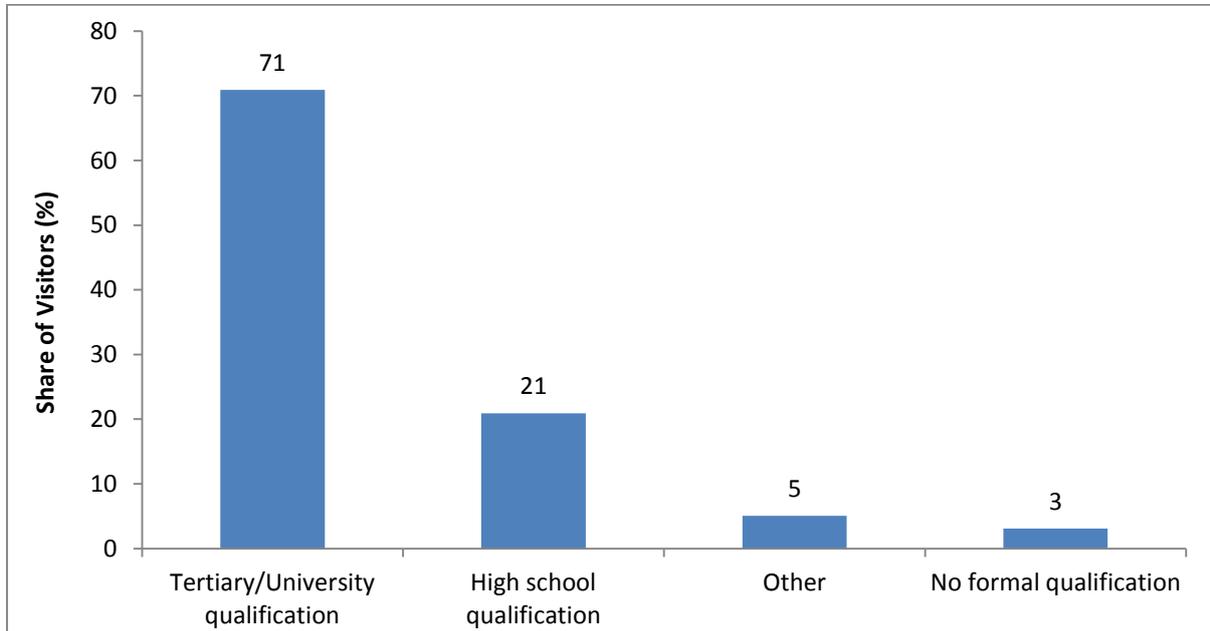
More women (63%) than men (37%) completed the survey (Figure 2). The most significant age group is 50 to 59 year olds, followed by the 40 to 49 and 60 to 69 year age groups. There are relatively few travellers in the 70 plus age bracket.

**Figure 2: Distribution of Age and Gender (n=704)**



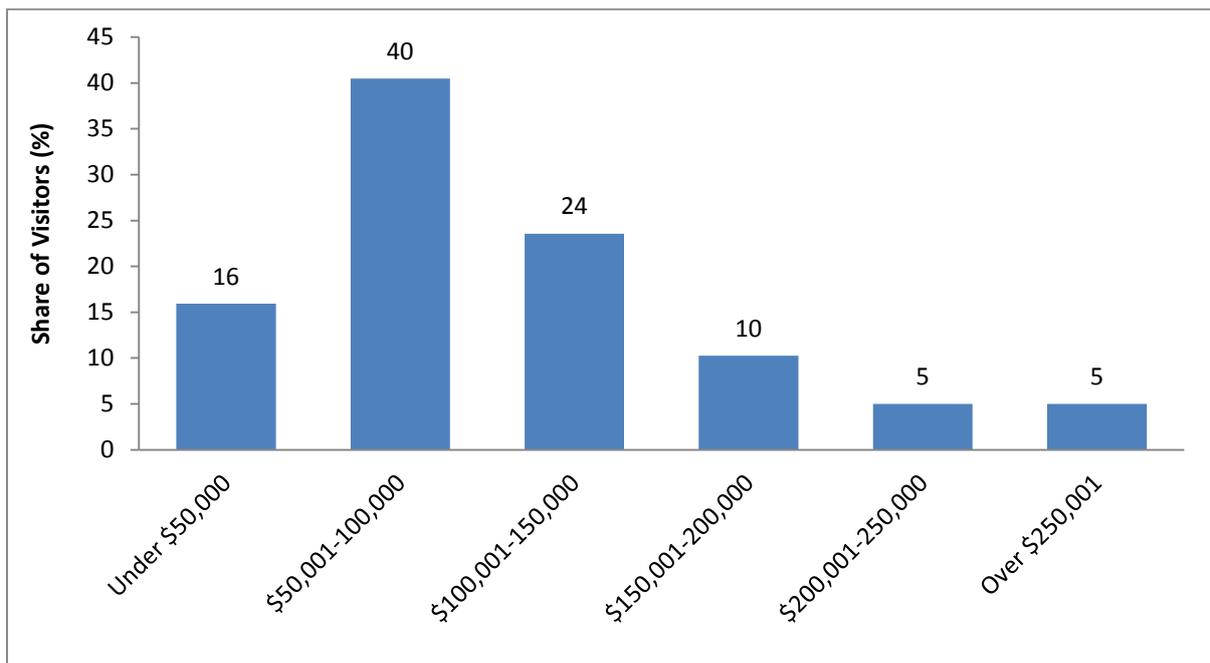
Visitors are well educated: more than two-thirds (71%) of those surveyed had some form of tertiary qualification and a further 21% had a completed high school education (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Highest Qualification (n=708)**



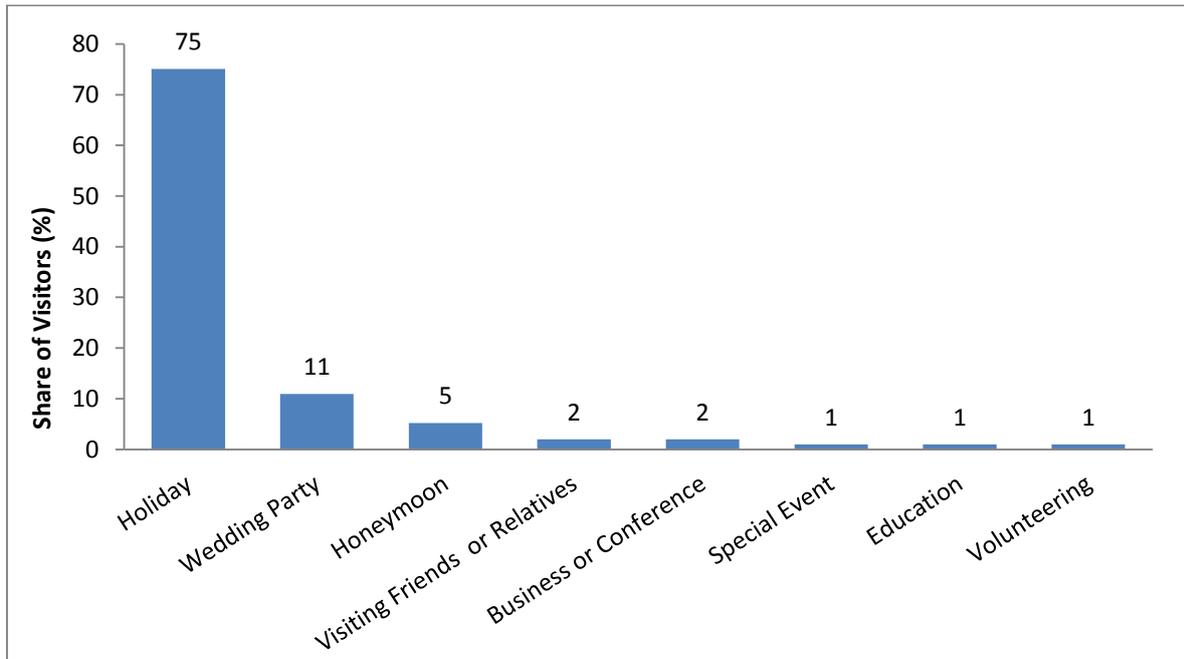
A significant group of visitors (40%) have an annual household income of between NZ\$50,001 and NZ\$100,000. Nearly a quarter of those surveyed (24%) earn between NZ\$100,001 and NZ\$150,000. A further 20% of respondents have a household income of over NZ\$150,000 per year (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Annual Household Income in NZD (n=615)**



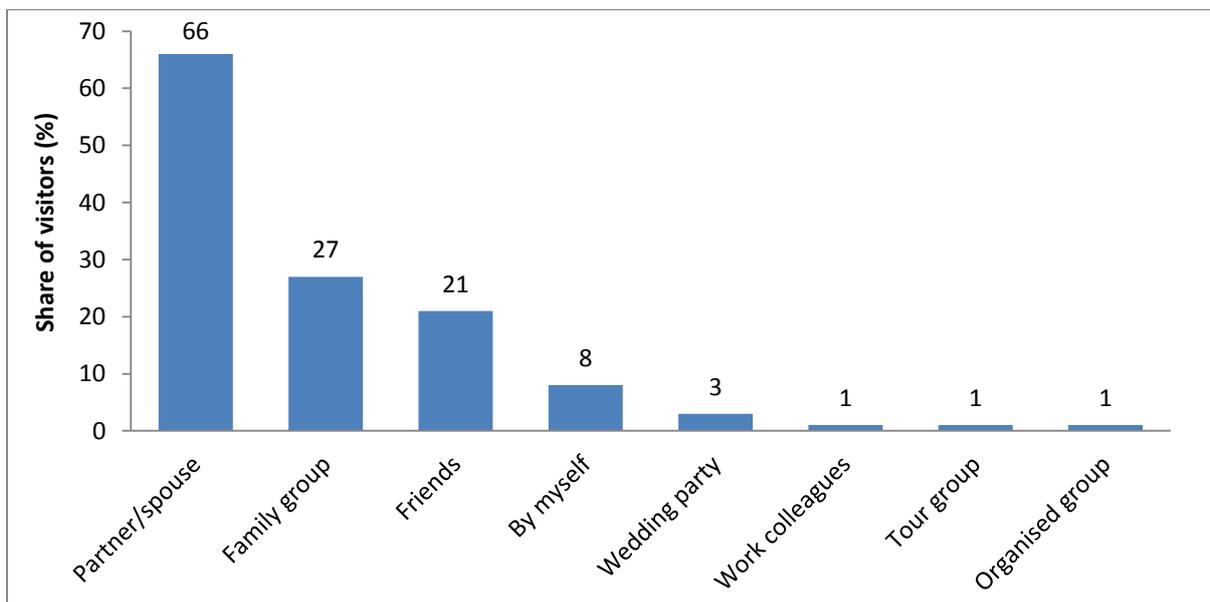
Three-quarters of visitors surveyed come to the Cook Islands for a holiday (75%), with the second major purpose of the visit (11%) being to attend a wedding. Five percent of respondents came for a honeymoon, 2% visited friends/relatives and 2% came for business/conference travel. Just 1% of survey respondents came for a special event during this quarter (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Main Purpose of Visit (n=787)**



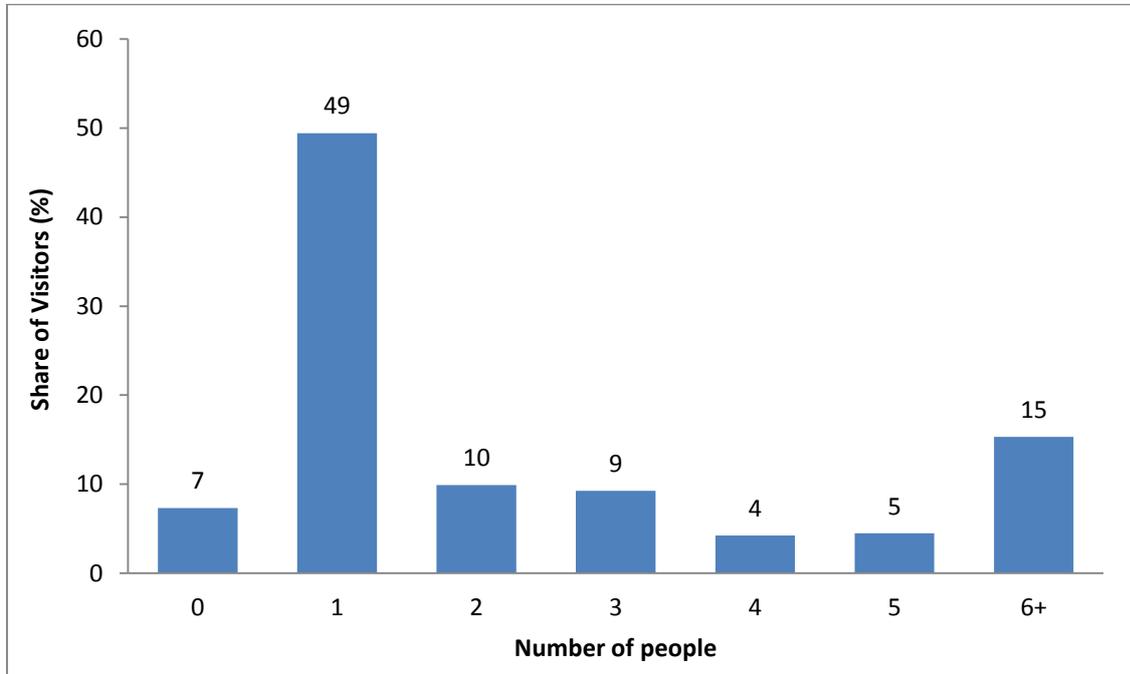
Two thirds of the visitors surveyed travel to the Cook Islands with a partner or spouse. Visitors also often travel with other family members (27%) or friends (21%). Those travelling alone, with a wedding party, with colleagues, or with an organised group, represent a smaller share of the sample (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Travelling with whom? (n=786)**



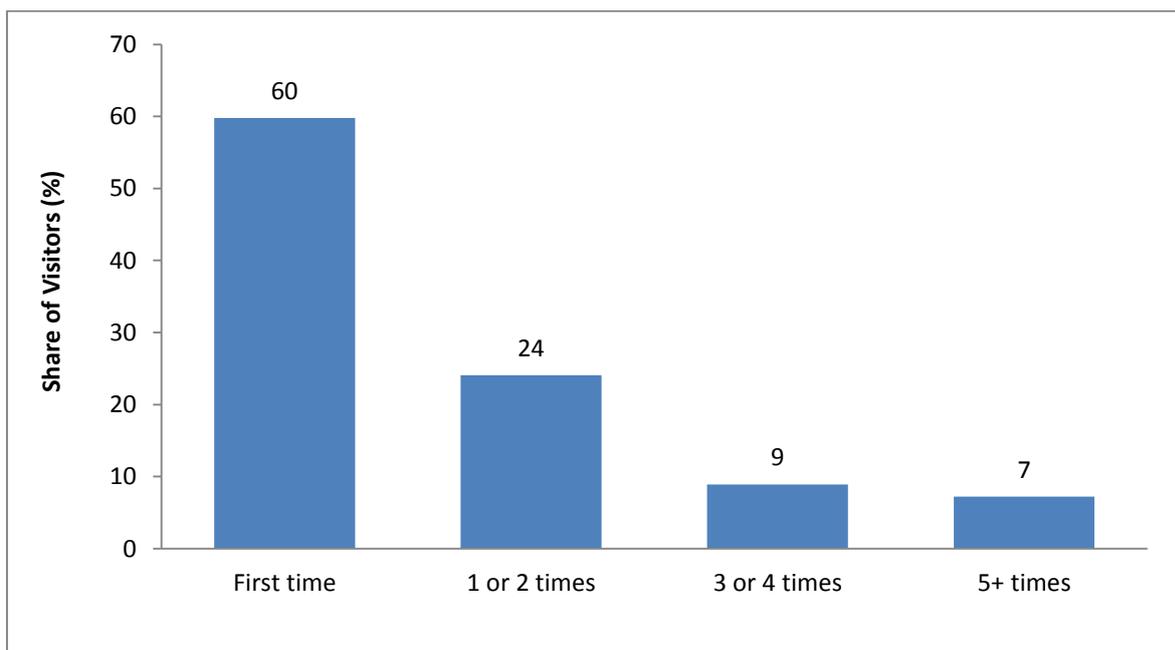
Nearly half of the visitors (49%) travelled with one companion on their visit to the Cook Islands (Figure 7). Travel groups larger than 4 people were not very common, with the exception of wedding parties.

**Figure 7: Number of Companions on trip (n=777)**



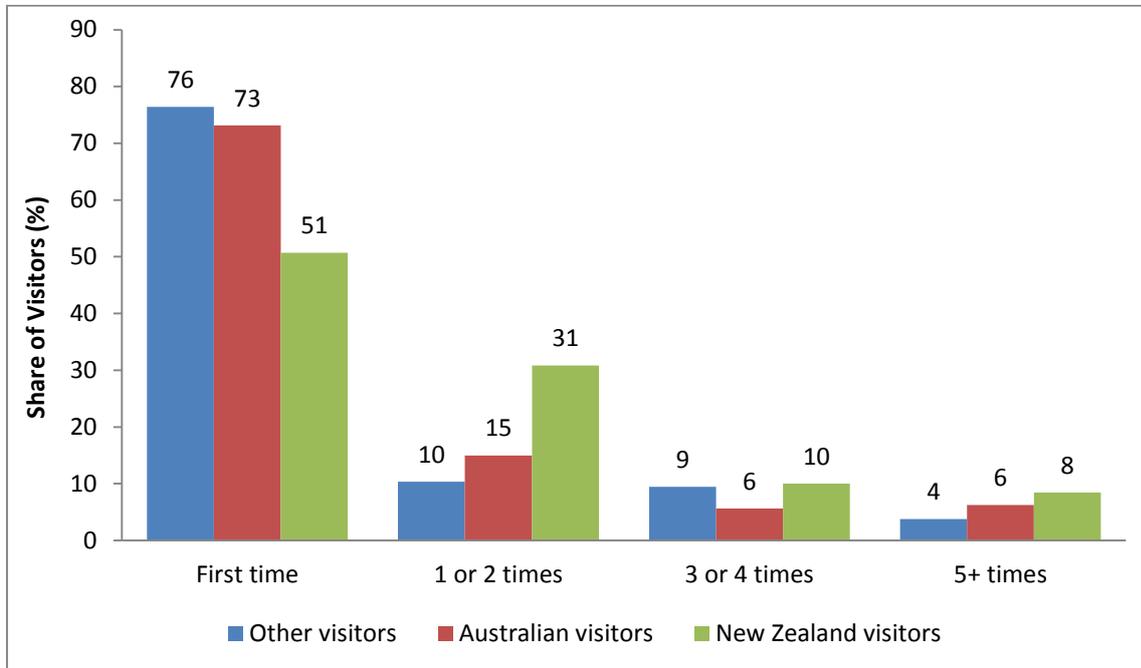
Most visitors (60%) are on their first visit to the Cook Islands. A further 24% have been to the Cook Islands once or twice before. A smaller group (16%) have visited 3 or more times (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Number of visits to the Cook Islands (n=706)**



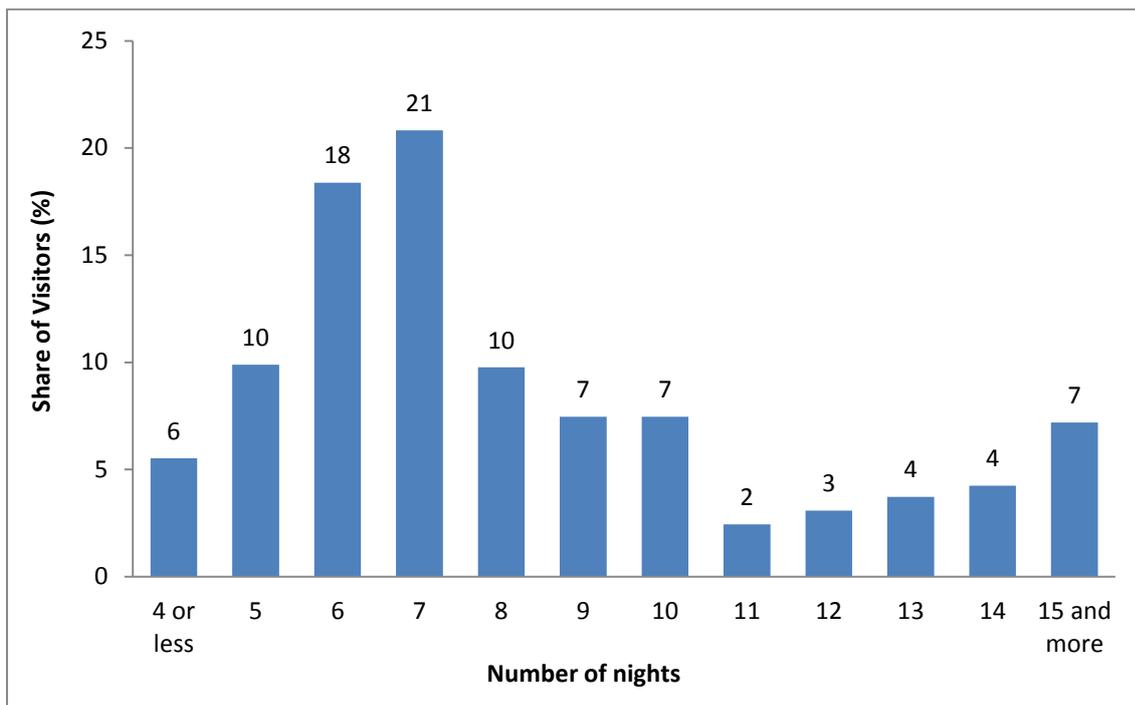
New Zealanders are more likely to be repeat visitors than those from other source markets (Figure 9). Thirty-one percent of New Zealanders have visited once or twice before compared to only 15% of Australians.

**Figure 9: Number of previous visits to the Cook Islands (n=704)**



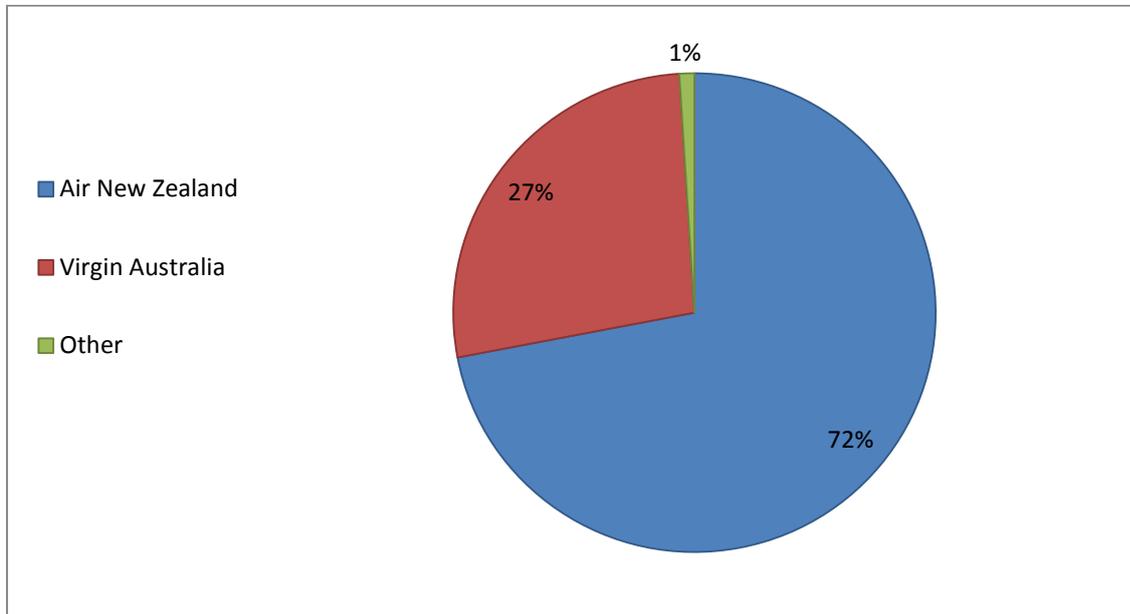
The average length of stay in the Cook Islands is 8.6 nights with 79% of visitors spending 10 or fewer nights in the country (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Length of stay in nights (n=778)**



Most visitors (72%) travel to/from the Cook Islands with Air New Zealand, a further 27% fly with Virgin Australia (Figure 11). Most passengers on those airlines fly out of Auckland or transit through Auckland.

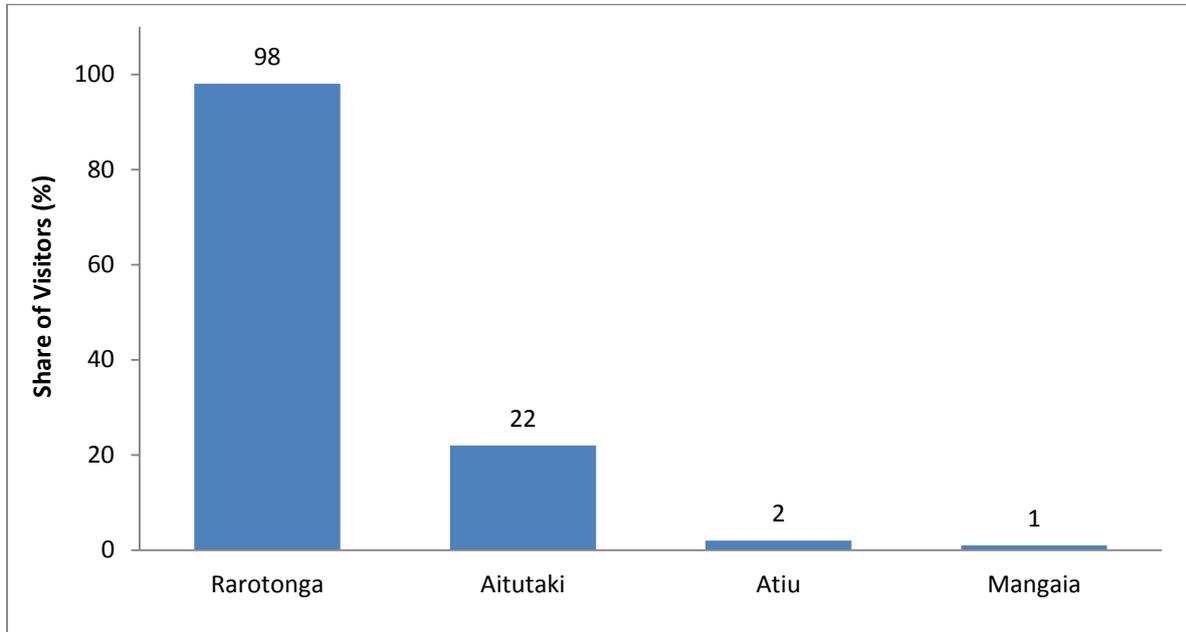
**Figure 11: Airline used (n=779)**



For 80% of visitors, the Cook Islands represent the only destination on their trip. For 11% of visitors the Cook Islands is part of a larger journey, including for some an around-the-world trip. When this group of visitors were asked about other destinations included on their journey the top destination mentioned was New Zealand (71%), second was the USA (23%), followed by Australia (19% of respondents), and other Pacific Islands (17%). Just over one in ten visitors (13%) stated that a destination in Asia was included as part of their larger trip. Other destinations mentioned by respondents included South America (8%) and Europe (5%).

The vast majority (98%) of visitors to the Cook Islands spend time on Rarotonga, while Aitutaki is the second most visited island (22%) (Figure 12). The other islands are rarely featured in the survey responses.

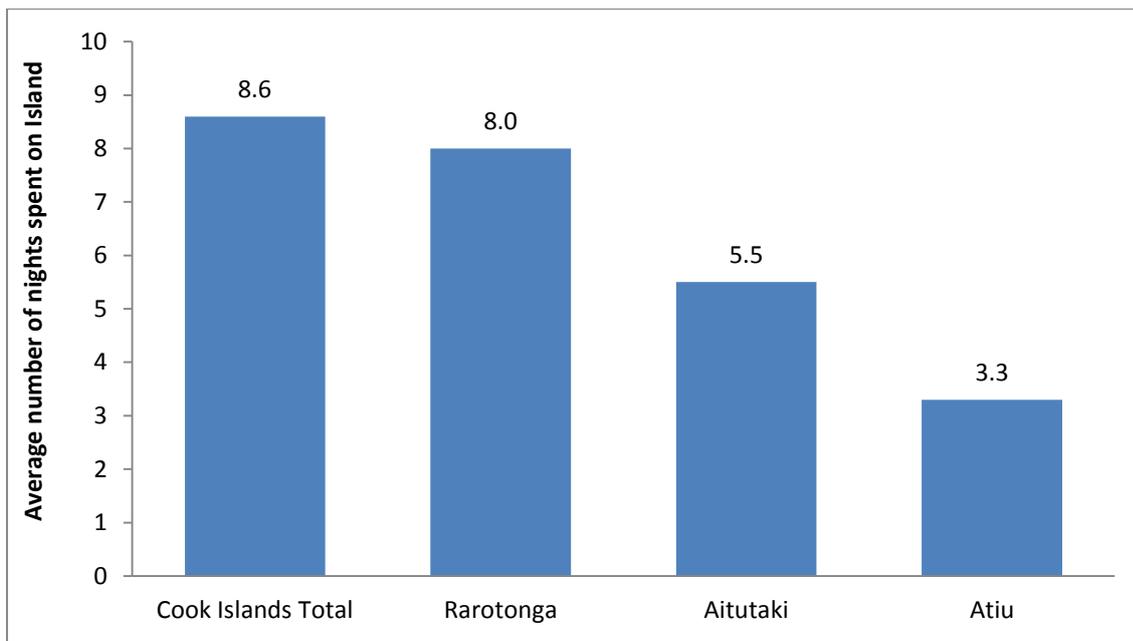
**Figure 12: Visited Islands (n=779)**



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

The average length of stay on Rarotonga is 8.0 nights (Figure 13). For the visitors that went to Aitutaki, the average number of nights spent on the island is 5.5.

**Figure 13: Average length of stay in the Cook Islands (n=787)**

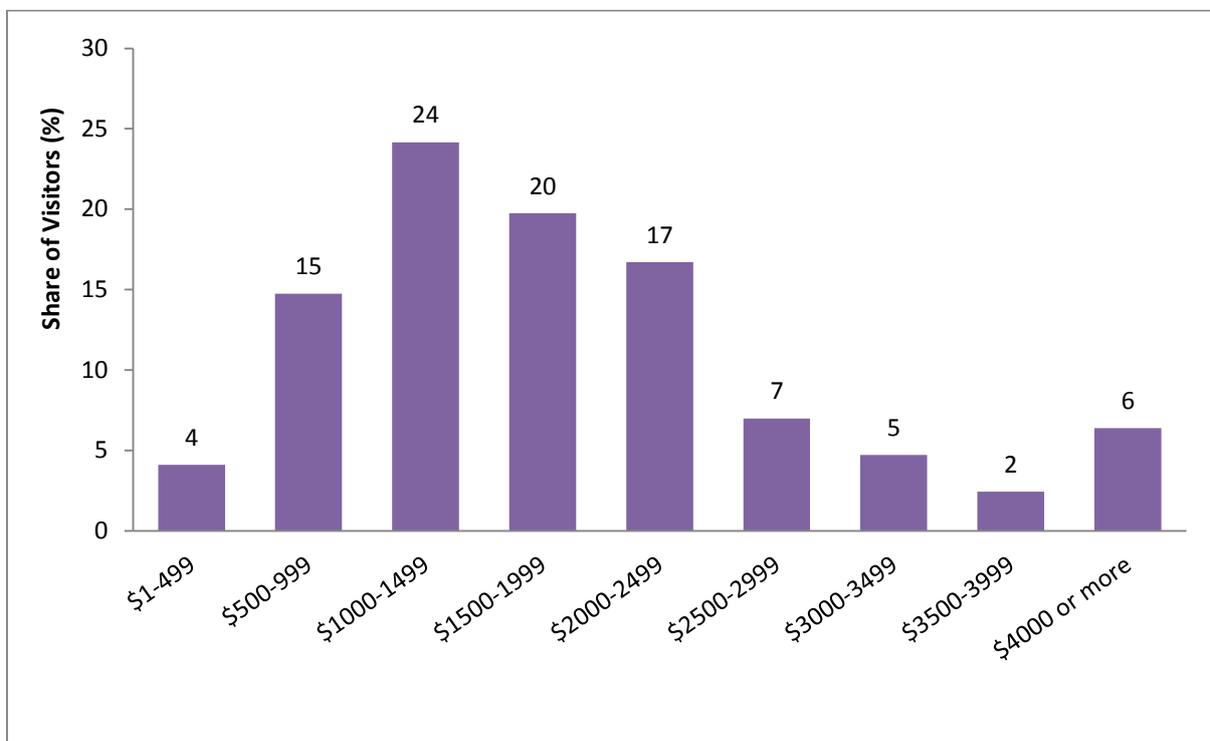


## Visitor Expenditure

The survey asked a range of questions about visitor expenditure, both prior to arrival and while in the country. 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: 1604 people comprising 1462 adults and 142 children.

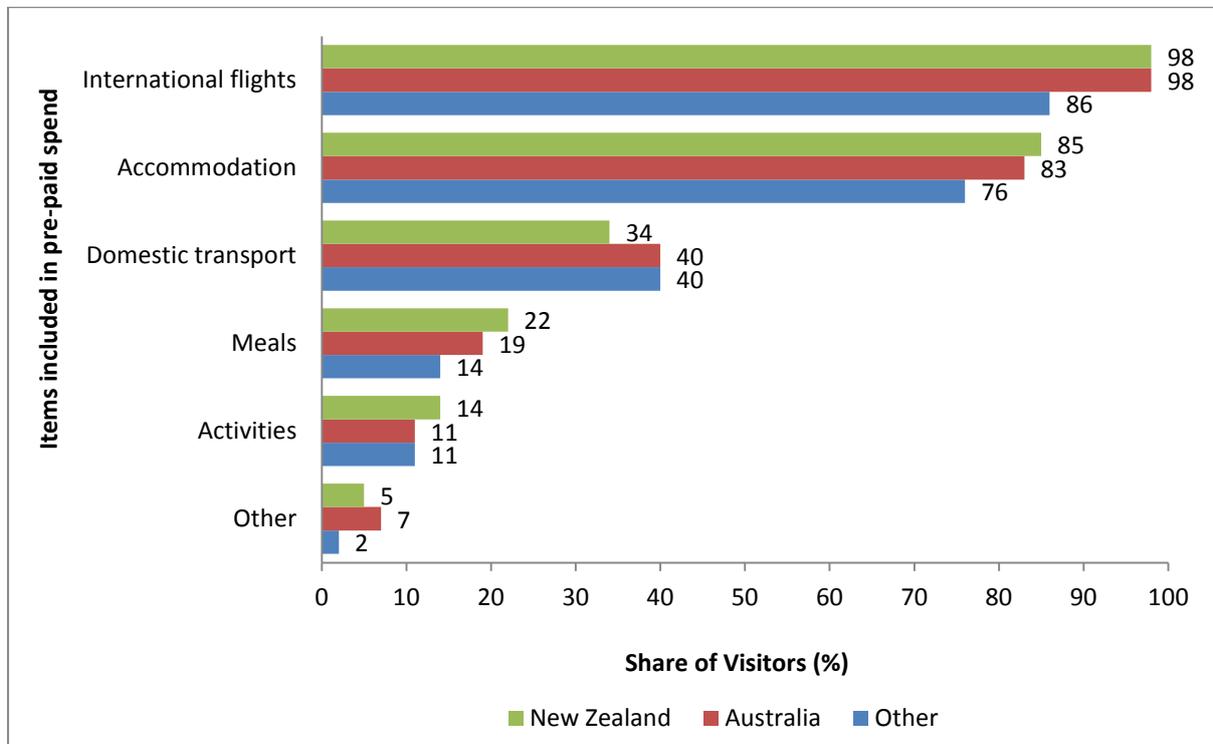
On average, visitors to the Cook Islands spend NZ\$1,854 per person prior to arrival. Most (61%) of the visitors spend between \$1000 and \$2500 dollars. These figures are lower than the data from the previous year (average spend of NZ\$1,985 for 2013/14) and lower than the same quarter in 2013/14 (\$2096) (Figure 14).

**Figure 14: Amount of money spent per person prior to arrival (n=658)**



Besides international flights and domestic transport, spending prior to arrival usually includes accommodation: in 85% of the cases for New Zealand, and 83% for Australian visitors and visitors from other countries (Figure 15). Meals and activities are less likely to be included in pre-paid expenses.

**Figure 15: Items included in money spent prior to arrival (n=648)**



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, and that 80% of the remaining 50% of the pre-paid spend 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, excluding flights, is \$86 and for the average total visit is \$742.

The total spend per visitor per day while in the Cook Islands (excluding any pre-paid expenditure) is \$115 (Table 1). This figure is higher than overall spend figure for 2013/14 (\$111) and the previous quarter (\$108 for July-September 2014). It is also higher than the same quarter in 2013/14 (\$110). Most money spent locally is on restaurants, cafes and bars (28%), accommodation (26%), shopping (13%), and activities (8%). These per person expenditure figures are based on 646 survey responses covering a total of 1572 people (1432 adults and 140 children).

By multiplying daily spend by the average stay (8.6 nights) we can see that each visitor spends on average \$989 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 \$201 per visitor per day (\$115 + \$86), or \$1,731 (\$989 + \$742) per personal visit.

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

Expenditure Items	Overall n=646	
	Mean (NZ\$)	(% of spend)
Restaurant, cafes and bar	32	28
Accommodation	29	26
Shopping	15	13
Activities	9	8
Vehicle rental	9	8
Groceries	9	7
Domestic flights	3	3
Other	3	3
Cruising	2	2
Petrol	2	2
Public transportation	1	1
<b>Total expenditure per person per day</b>	<b>\$115</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 provides an overview of the in-country expenditure by visitor country of origin. Australians and Americans/Canadians spend more than other countries. Europeans spend the least.

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

Expenditure Items	n=46	n=148	n=403	n=36
	USA/ Canada	Australia	New Zealand	Europe
Restaurant, cafes and bar	30	35	33	19
Accommodation	37	26	29	37
Shopping	15	16	15	12
Vehicle rental	8	9	9	5
Activities	8	11	9	8
Groceries	9	9	8	7
Other	1	2	4	4
Domestic flights	7	4	2	7
Petrol	2	2	2	1
Cruising	1	3	2	2
Public transportation	1	1	1	1
<b>Total spend (NZ\$)</b>	<b>\$120</b>	<b>\$119</b>	<b>\$114</b>	<b>\$103</b>

Average Australian spend per person for this quarter (\$119) was slightly lower compared to the 2013/14 average of \$125. It was higher than the same quarter in 2013/14 (\$114). New Zealanders' spend of \$114 per person per day was up from the average of \$103 for 2013/14) and \$109 for the same quarter in the previous year. European visitor spend at \$103 per person per day was down from the average of 2013/14 of \$138, and \$184 for the same quarter in the previous year. Visitors from USA/Canada spend at \$120 for this period was lower than the 2013/14 average of \$136, and \$141 for the same quarter in 2013/14. *Given the fact that only 36 visitor from Europe and 46 Visitors from North America participated the survey, the average expenditure figures for these two regions must be treated with caution.*

## 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 16). Two thirds (71%) of the visitors surveyed ranked their experience as 'very satisfied'. Very few visitors (2%) were unsatisfied with their visit and gave a score of 2 or lower.

**Figure 16: Overall satisfaction with experience of the Cook Islands (n=709)**

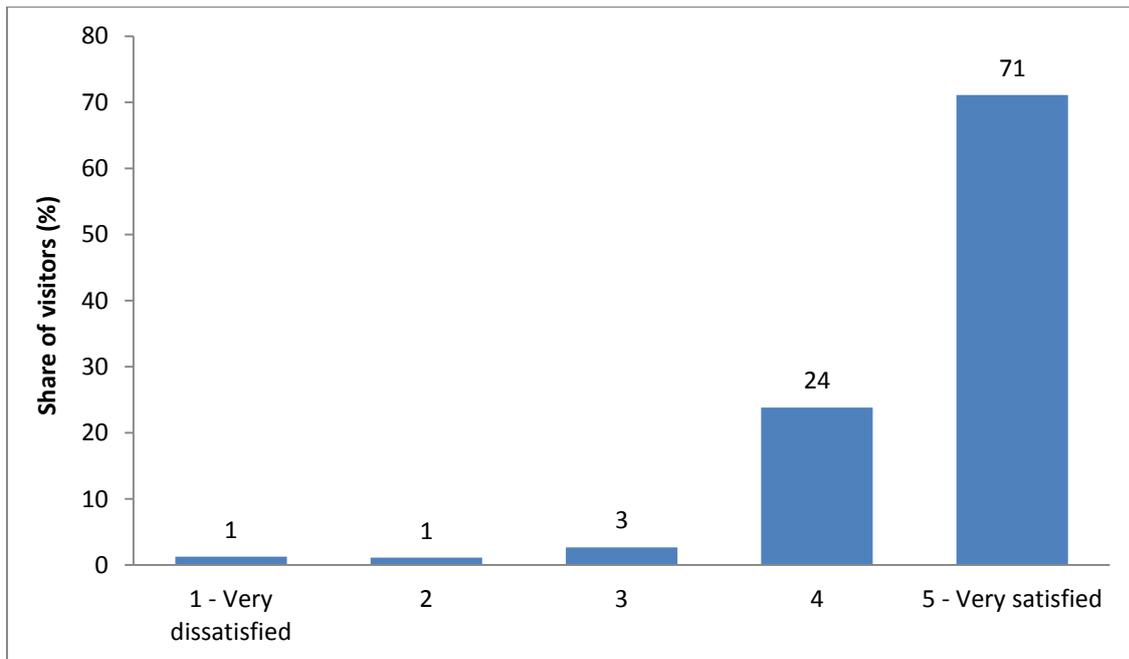
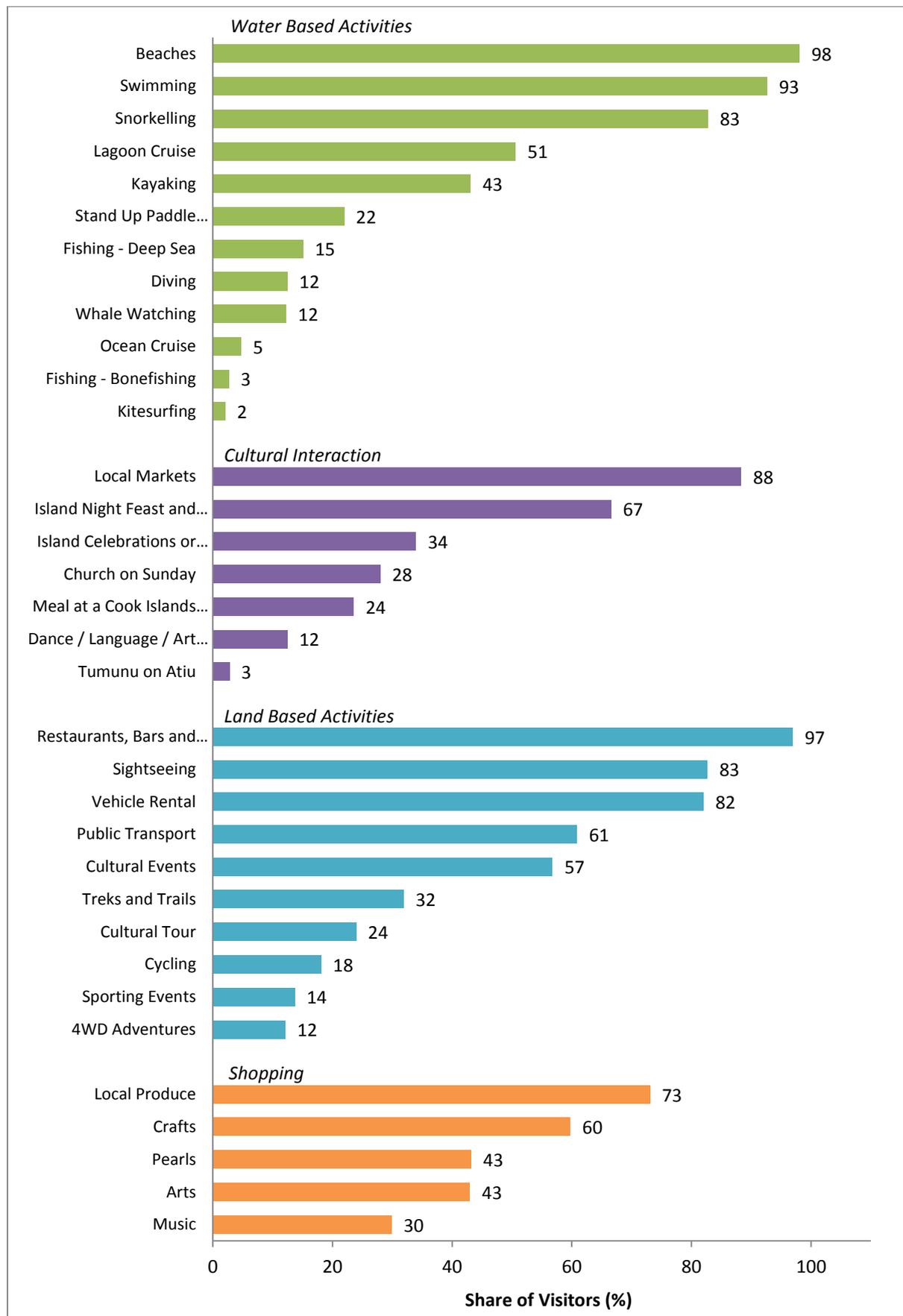
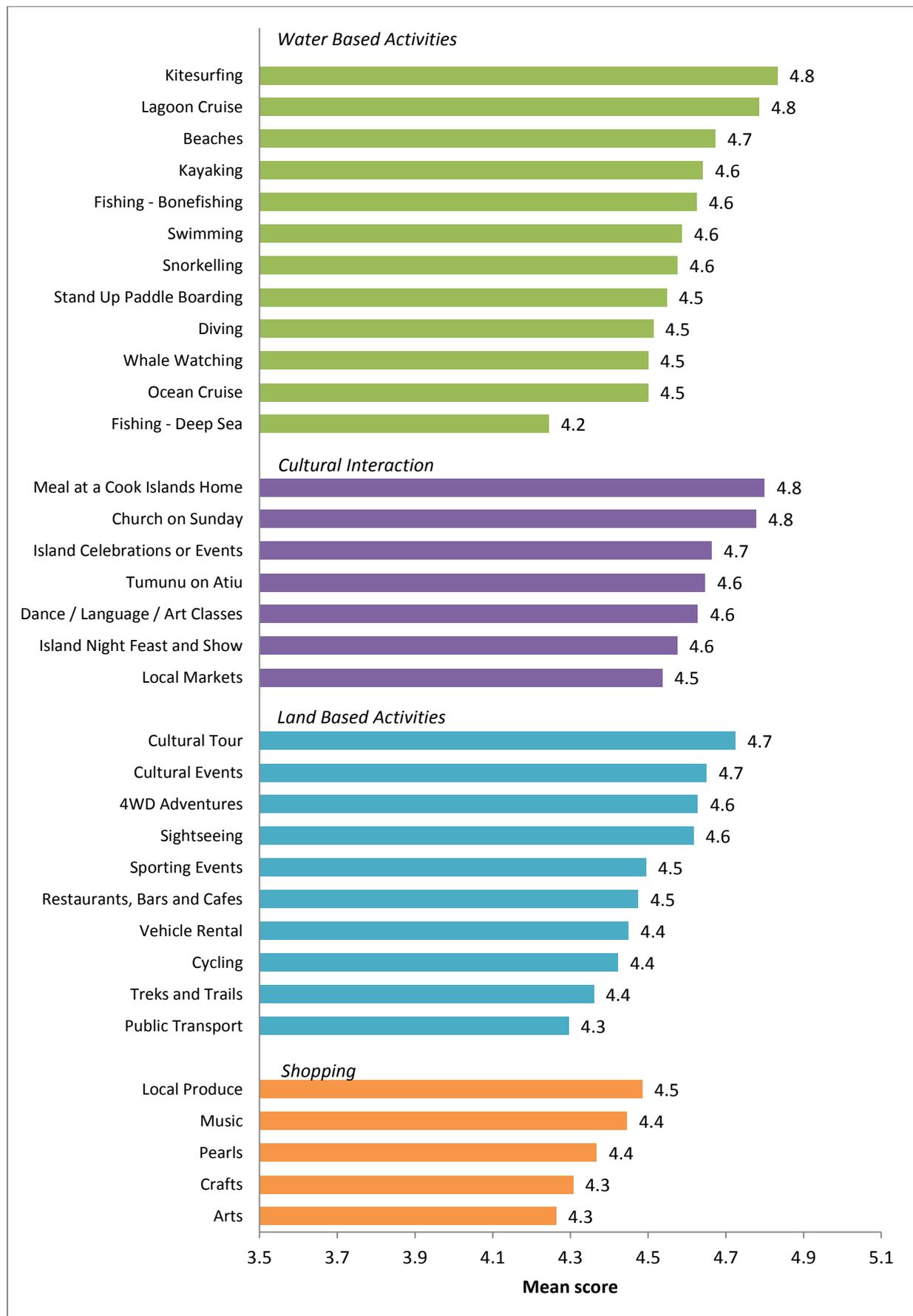


Figure 17 shows the percentage of respondents who undertook an activity while on their visit to the Cook Islands and Figure 18 shows their level of satisfaction with these activities. Almost all visitors participate in water activities and visit at least one restaurant or café during their trip. Most of the respondents (88%) visit a local market, and 67% of visitors experience an Island Night and Feast Show. Visitor satisfaction is generally high for all activities undertaken (all registering more than 4 out of a possible high of 5). Activities involving cultural interaction activities rank highest (average satisfaction of 4.7) followed by water-based activities (4.6), land-based activities (4.5) and shopping (4.4). It should be remembered that some activities e.g. kitesurfing, bonefishing, ocean cruise, and Tumunu on Atiu, are characterised by relatively low numbers of participants (n=12-28).

**Figure 17: Degree of participation in activities (n range=12-754)**

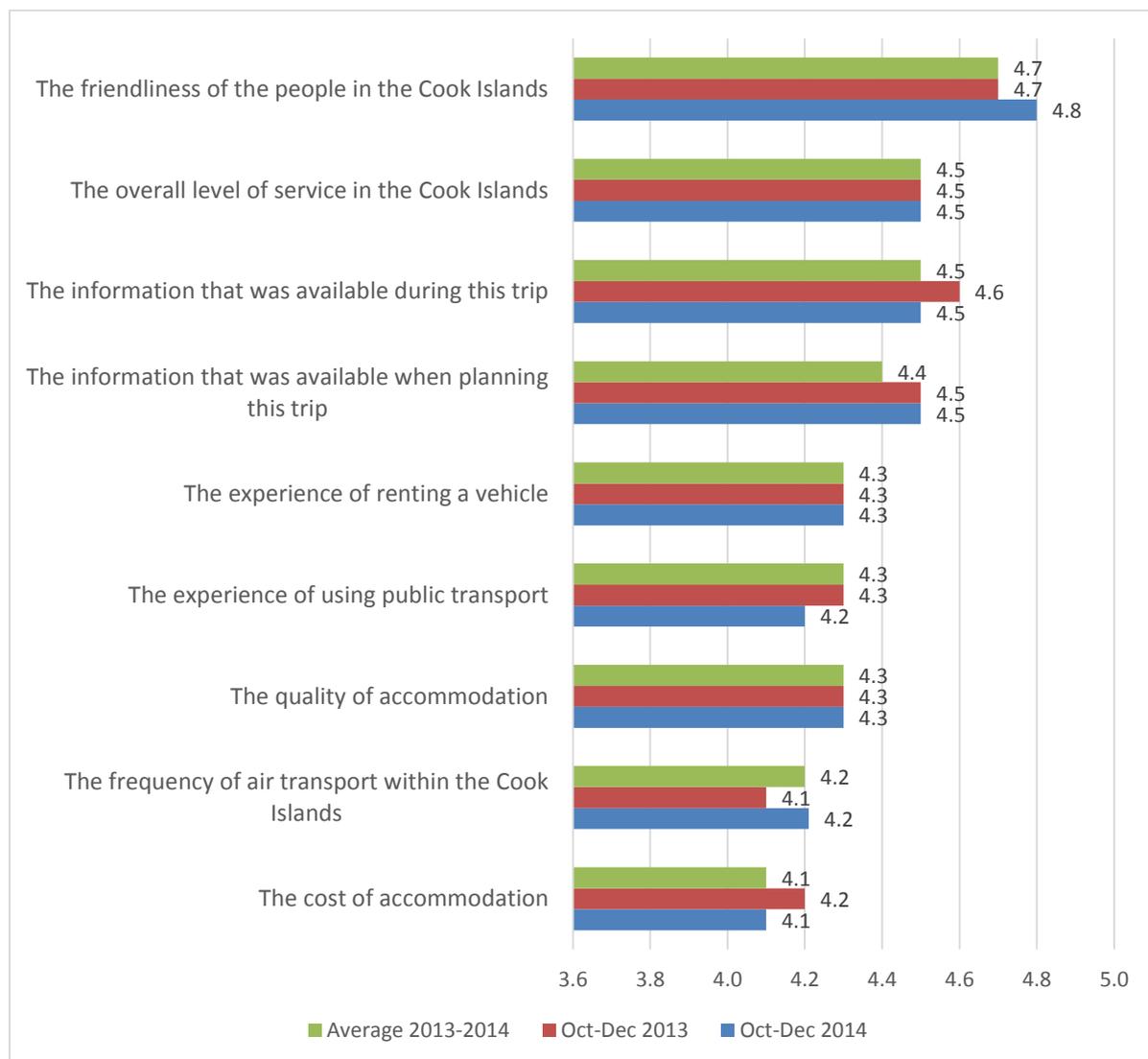


**Figure 18: Degree of satisfaction in activities (mean score out of 5)**



Visitors were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with nine different statements relating to their most recent visit to the Cook Islands (Figure 19). Responses from the period October to December 2014 are compared to the same period of 2013/14 and the average for 2013/14. Overall, respondents give the friendliness of the people in the Cook Islands the highest score. The lowest levels of satisfaction relate to local air transport and the cost and quality of accommodation. In none of the cases do scores fall below 4 out of 5. There is a slight trend in a higher level of satisfaction across several items, but a lower level of satisfaction on the experience of using public transportations for the current quarter compared to the average for 2013/14. Compared with the same quarter of 2013/14, lower satisfaction can be seen in the information during the trip, experience of using public transport, and the cost of accommodation.

**Figure 19: Degree of satisfaction with Cook Island services (mean score out of 5) (n=779)**



## 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 considered to be the beautiful natural environment, the friendly local people, the peacefulness and relaxing atmosphere of the islands and the tourist attractions and activities. Smaller numbers of visitors mentioned the activities, attractions, entertainment and events, food and beverage, the level of service provided, the un-commercialised nature of the islands and having enjoyed an overall good experience. These figures compare well to the annual average for 2013/14 where respondents rated the top three most appealing aspects as the ‘environment’ (50%), ‘local people’ (43%) and the ‘atmosphere’ (30%).

**Table 3: Most appealing aspects of the Cook Islands (n=728)**

Themes	Share of respondents (%)
Environment	56%
Local people	46%
Atmosphere	34%
Activities, attractions, entertainment and events	29%
Food and beverage	12%
Level of service	8%
Un-commercialised	8%
Overall good experience	8%
Accommodation	5%
Convenience of the Cook Islands as a destination	5%

\* 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**

Over half (56%) of the respondents considered the local environment to be the most appealing aspect of their Cook Islands experience. Visitors used words such as ‘beautiful’, ‘unspoilt’, ‘stunning’, ‘breath-taking’, ‘spectacular’, ‘magnificent’ and ‘uncrowded’ to describe the environment. Most comments here focused on the beauty and the cleanliness of the safe beaches and lagoons, the warm climate, the pristine water and the beauty of the islands in general. Comments included:

*“The cleanliness of the island both on the land and in the ocean was excellent - it is clear that locals make the effort to keep the island free from dumped garbage. I love your island!!”*

*“The scenery was just like a postcard - Muri Lagoon is beautiful.”*

*"The beaches. Everywhere I looked, I saw nothing but BEAUTIFUL beaches, ocean. If I close my eyes I can still see it all. Rarotonga, you are burned into my memory forever..."*

*"Beautiful islands, stunning lagoons, fabulous snorkelling"*

### **Local people**

A large number of respondents (46%) noted that the most appealing part of their visit was the interaction with the local people of the Cook Islands. There was emphasis placed in the comments on the friendliness and welcoming nature of the local people, as well as their fascinating lifestyle and culture. Key words that dominated the responses included 'friendly', 'lovely', 'kind', 'happy', 'wonderful', 'welcoming', 'helpful' and 'genuine'. Comments included:

*"The people were very accommodating and I was made to feel more like a long lost family member than a visitor."*

*"The people and life style that you have is something that I will cherish for the rest of my days."*

*"From the moment you arrive people are smiling - not because they have to, because they are genuinely happy. It is a most uplifting & wonderful experience."*

*"The people we met and their hospitality. Our first meal in a beach hut (met them when walking along beach) with a mixture of locals and N.Z. regulars who caught the fish, showed us how to prepare local food including me making the coconut milk for the raw fish and rice.."*

*"The people; everyone was so welcoming and laid back it was amazing and I have not stopped raving about it since I got back."*

### **Atmosphere**

A number of visitors surveyed (34%) focused on the relaxed atmosphere of the Cook Islands. They considered the Cook Islands to be peaceful, relaxing, safe and laid-back. The notion of 'island time' was also frequently highlighted. Comments included:

*"Laid back lifestyle. A great supporter of "Island Time."*

*"The remoteness and friendly atmosphere. We came to relax and unplug and it was perfect."*

*"We loved the relaxed atmosphere on the islands as well as the lack of crowds."*

*"The time and space to think.... sounds silly but we needed to switch off, and have limited available activities so that we could enjoy what was available and not guilty about 'switching off'.*

*"Relaxing, laid back, stressless."*

### **Activities, attractions, entertainment and events**

Activities and entertainment were mentioned by 29% of respondents as the most appealing elements of their Cook Islands visit. Most comments in this category focused on water-based activities such as swimming, snorkelling and lagoon cruises. Land-based activities mentioned included the experience of travelling around the island by scooter, shopping, visiting the local churches, cultural tours and local markets.

*"Silence, snorkelling, peace and quiet, snorkelling, its warm, snorkelling, the lovely slow pace of life, snorkelling, bus rides, snorkelling, great range of eating places and did I mention snorkelling!!!!"*

*"I enjoyed the lagoon cruise with snorkelling & lunch the most, the trip was very entertaining & the music was lovely, the guys had a great sense of humour & were great hosts"*

*"We loved the beaches and loved riding around the island exploring and sightseeing."*

*"Everyday morning market for fresh fruit, vegetables and doughnuts, and really liked that Sunday was a day of church and rest no shops."*

*"I loved the Muri night market. Great food all round."*

*"The Aitutaki Lagoon is like nothing I have ever seen in my life."*

*"The cultural activities hosted at Shows and Evening Dinners."*

### **Food and beverage**

Twelve percent of the respondents mentioned 'food and beverage', adding that they found these to be delicious and of high quality - especially local, fresh produce. Many visitors commented on the great selection of cafes and restaurants and the good range of food available. Comments included:

*"The food was absolutely delicious everywhere we went."*

*"Food variety very good, plenty of places for a family to eat."*

*"Great fresh produce from street stalls, fabulous bread at market."*

*"The food, the freshness of the vegies, your oranges; excellent quality of most of*

*restaurants.”*

*“Loved the food at the restaurants that were independent of resorts. Wonderful diverse food options were available and they were reasonably priced and to a high standard with great service.”*

*“No fast food outlets.”*

### **Level of service**

Eight percent of visitors commented on the service they encountered while in the Cook Islands as being an appealing feature of their trip. Respondents had positive things to say about the local hospitality, especially mentioning the friendly and helpful staff they encountered at restaurants/bars/hotels. Visitors also emphasised the lack of pressure to buy which made them feel comfortable.

*“We were looked after very well. Met some awesome locals and had some great nights out! He made the trip so memorable and fun and exciting!”*

*“We really enjoyed staying at the place where the staff were very friendly and helpful and the facilities great.”*

*“The most attractive/appealing experience I had in the Cook Islands was the friendliness of the locals and the staff, who offered us friendly advice, car and motorbike rides, as well as sightseeing and night-time activities. “*

*“Friendly helpful people. No pressure selling of products enabling us to relax at all times which is what we really wanted and needed.”*

*“Airport was also pleasant re cleanliness & comfort (nice & cool). Have travelled to several other pacific islands (Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu) & this airport & welcome was the best I've experienced. ”*

*“They were friendly but always respectful and never pushy when selling goods! “.*

### **Overall a good experience**

Eight percent of respondents simply stated that their whole experience was a good one, using terms such as: ‘lovely’, ‘love everything’, ‘amazing’ or ‘we will be back’:

*“Everything and everyone was amazing and that made for a fantastic relaxing holiday!”*

*“The whole experience was just wonderful”*

*“Everything, it is a paradise.”*

*“Loved everything, the people, accommodation, scenery, wonderful time”*

*"Enjoyed every minute that I was there and will return to visit outer islands at a later date."*

*"I fell in love with Rarotonga! Everything about it, accommodation, beaches, restaurants, people, weather..... I'm definitely coming back soon. Why would you go anywhere else for a relaxing beach holiday???"*

*"Everything, we have been there 12 times now in 17 years."*

### **Un-commercialised**

Eight percent of the respondents mentioned the Cook Islands being a place that is not over-commercialised or over-developed. Some visitors also emphasised the importance of preserving the destination from mass tourism development and keeping it the way it is. Some repeat visitors noted how positive it is that the Cook Islands remain relatively unchanged. Comments included:

*"The tourist bug has hit but I love the fact that it is still partly uncommercialised."*

*"The fact that the Cooks Islands still have 'local' flavour. Not ruined by tourism, not over-crowded. "Go Local" is the only way to go. As long as it stays this way, we will come back."*

*"One observation we made in regards to what we enjoyed about our experience (4th visit to the island) was that we felt that any attempt to upgrade the roading that resulted in the creation of fancy foot paths would DESTROY the undeveloped charm of the island experience. Improve the roading certainly, but leave us all walking on the verge - makes for a real sense of a lack of commercialisation and touristification!"*

*"You have no Mc Donald's and big hotel brands like Hilton with a lot of concrete. It's like a small village, when you go to the night market you see people that you see days before on the Matutu tour, the lagoons and beaches are not overfilled with people, its soft tourism."*

*"It is not spoilt like the rest of the pacific and the people are proud and clean. The Islands are tidy, no rubbish. It is low key and relaxed. You have a beautiful country. It's not commercialised like everywhere else."*

### **Convenience**

The convenience of the Cook Islands as a travel destination was mentioned by a small proportion of respondents (5%). In particular, they referred to the ease of getting around

the islands, the convenience of using the New Zealand dollar, the availability of direct flights, the lack of language barrier and the good value for money. Comments included:

*"The smallness of the island and being easy to get around."*

*"Being able to use the \$NZ currency, freedom of exploring the island by scooter."*

*"Easy, direct flight."*

*"Was very relaxing, not busy, everything you need is right on your doorstep or a short drive away - beaches, bars, food and etc."*

*"Rarotonga is a beautiful island paradise that is affordable for a family holiday."*

### **Accommodation**

A further 5% of respondents noted that the accommodation they stayed in was an appealing aspect of their visit. The key words used to relay the visitors' experience were 'excellent', 'beautiful', 'fantastic' and 'amazing' referring to the quality of the offering, the setting and the welcome from hosts. Comments included:

*"Our accommodation was amazing so quiet and peaceful, we were well looked after."*

*"We really enjoyed staying at the resort where the staff were very friendly and helpful and the facilities great."*

*"Loved the spa bath in my room and closeness to beach. Wedding plans all sorted with little effort."*

*"Easy, well-run, tourist-friendly systems and helpful locals. Good accommodation choices on Aitutaki to suit different wallets. We enjoyed staying there and were very well looked after but also left alone to do our thing, which was the perfect combination."*

### **Least appealing aspects of the Cook Islands**

Visitors were also asked "What did you find least attractive or appealing about the Cook Islands on your most recent visit?" Twenty three (23%) of the visitors took the trouble to note that they found nothing was 'unappealing', that "everything was great", or that the only unappealing aspect was that they "had to leave". This group of visitors responded with comments such as "nothing", "leaving" or "I honestly cannot think of something that was unappealing". These visitors expressed that their stay "was perfect in every way" and "love everything about the islands and their people". There were, however, a number of areas that did attract comments (Table 4).

**Table 4: Least appealing aspects of the Cook Islands (n=683)**

Themes	Share of respondents (%)
Nothing	23%
Food & beverage	13%
Price of goods and service	13%
Accommodation	12%
Attractions and activities	12%
Public services, facilities and infrastructure	11%
Animals	10%
Poor weather	9%
Local people and staff	8%
Flight related issues	8%
Rubbish and natural environment care	8%
Rental cars or scooters	5%
Other	4%
Too touristy	2%

\* 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%.

### ***Food and beverage***

A number of visitors (13%) commented on the cost, quality and availability of food and beverage in the Cook Islands. Some respondents complained about the ‘*price of food*’ and ‘*the limited range of fresh produce*’. They would like to see more fresh and local products, more healthy options, and less westernised foods. Responses included all options such as restaurants, resort dining and shops.

*“F&B and standard services need to be improved for some Resorts if commanding the current rates. This is an important part of any holiday and it can either make it or break it.”*

*“There is such a variety of things grown on the island one would think there would have been more variety in what was offered.”*

*“The lack of fresh fruit!!! and the expense of mandarins, oranges, non existence of strawberries,!!!! variety of vegetables !!! this island nation only seems to sell the food it likes to eat..... We felt a much bigger variety of food could be grown looking at the soil quality.....”*

*“I understand locals don't eat out and that is probably why the restaurant/cafe foods try to mostly sell foreign foods, but it would have been nice to have a choice of more of the local foods - I can eat poorly made overpriced pizza anywhere”.*

*"There is a lot of just burgers and greasy food at most restaurants we visited."*

*"Most Breakfast Buffets did not have proper fresh fruit during the winter season; we complained at one resort when they served us apples - we did not travel all the way from Australia to eat apples. We came to eat home grown mango, papaya, black taro (from Atiu) pineapple, fresh fish & seafood. I had to fight with all the kitchen staff to get a green salad each night? Lots of deep fried food which is not healthy at all. I think food needs to be seriously addressed and looked at across all resorts."*

### **Price of goods and service**

Several visitors (13%) mentioned the price of goods and services as the least appealing aspect of their stay in the Cook Islands. These visitors made comments about 'high costs' and/ or the 'poor value for money' received:

*"Prices in general, everything is very expensive and sometimes overpriced!"*

*"Cost of things. Big difference when compared to US prices so kind of shocking."*

*"Way overpriced for what you get and not a good value destination for holiday".*

*"Pearls were very expensive. I bought a pendant at a place recommended to me by a local. Once I took it home and got it valued, I realised I paid double the price I should have."*

### **Accommodation**

The high cost and poor quality of accommodation was a concern for a slightly higher number of visitors (12.5%). Visitors surveyed mentioned that the cost of accommodation is expensive for the value received and that some accommodation places are in need of an upgrade of facilities and services. There was also some mention made of safety issues. Comments included:

*"Accommodation prices were quite high compared within other similar tropical destinations available to us."*

*"The customer service and food was dreadful. We have travelled extensively and stayed in luxury accommodation. This was the poorest experience we have had. It was tired and not worth the \$900+ per night we paid."*

*"Low quality accommodation - we had booked Rarotonga accommodation online but didn't stay at the place we had booked because it looked terrible and because there was no one there to show us our rooms or check us in - no office at all."*

*"Prices of good hotels are really expensive if you compare to other parts of the Pacific."*

*"Quality of the hotel food, major disappointment especially for the rate charged and cleanliness of rooms."*

*"Some of the locks at the property didn't work and there were a number of occasions where strangers walked or drove on to the property and left when they*

*were approached. It made us think that our belongings weren't safe when we were not there."*

### **Attractions and activities**

A number of visitors (12%) expressed their disappointment with the 'degradation' and 'damage' of the natural attractions, the lack of 'variety of activities' on offer (particularly on rainy days), the 'limited trading hours' as well as the 'lack of attention to detail' provided by some tour operators or service providers. Some visitors also commented on the general lack of signage and information about attractions and trading hours:

*"We had forty year lows in temperature and terrible rain, and there's essentially nothing to do in that weather, and certainly nothing affordable."*

*"Lack of things to do if raining or on a Sunday backed up by constitution day."*

*"Disappointing that we were not made aware that some tours and activities do not operate on Sundays for religious reasons".*

*"Could have been told in advance that everywhere was closed on Sunday."*

*"The lack of fish life in Muri lagoon."*

*"Lack of signage to attractions i.e. Wigmore's Waterfall."*

*"The damage to the reefs we saw, and the weather was very windy."*

### **Public services, facilities and infrastructure**

Eleven percent (11%) of survey respondents expressed their disappointment with the public services, facilities and infrastructure. Visitors commented about the 'poor road conditions', the 'lack of Internet and phone coverage' and the 'limited transport' provided by bus services plus the infrequent service provided by ferries/ flights to the outer islands. Comments included:

*"The internet service, we kept paying for extra but it often didn't work."*

*"Hard to walk down some of the roads, a foot path would help. I hear you are doing up the roads, so that is good to hear, as they are very bumpy."*

*"The main complaint we had that really "bugged" us was the Wi-Fi on the island. It was seriously expensive and unfriendly. My wife and I have travelled extensively to many parts of the world and in most places we have stayed Wi-Fi is very inexpensive and in many cases free. As we travelled with our entire family and 2 friends we all needed access to the internet via Wi-Fi. It was a real downer for us and did actually cost us a considerable sum to remain connected to our home base."*

*"Lack of decent and approachable transportation between islands (unaffordable plan tickets to Manihiki and Pukapuka, lack of timetables for ferries)".*

*"Public transport - times buses arrived or didn't, you couldn't plan your day. Gave up and hired a car instead".*

## **Animals**

The stray dogs, noisy roosters and mosquitoes are an annoyance or a worry for 10% of respondents. This figure is lower than the last annual average (12%). Respondents used a variety of words to describe this theme including 'noisy', 'roaming', 'uncontrolled', 'unhygienic' and 'lack of care'. A number of visitors were also disturbed by the abundance of sea cucumbers along the beach. Comments included:

*"The amount of stray dogs. I felt sorry there were so many homeless dogs, some with injuries from fighting."*

*"Perhaps the least attractive/appealing thing about the Cook Islands was the inhumane views and treatment some locals have towards the stray dogs and cats that roam Rarotonga. I think more should be done to educate the locals about treating pets with adequate care."*

*"The amount of dogs wondering around the island.....randomly walking in front of traffic, very dangerous for drivers on motorbikes."*

*"The number of chickens in-land - so many more of them and so much noisier than all other trips we've been".*

*"Also the poor tethered horses that were emancipated and had no water or shelter from the sun was heart-breaking".*

*"Sea cucumbers! They were everywhere in the water outside our hotel and being squeamish I wasn't in the water as much as I wanted".*

## **Poor weather**

Some survey respondents (9%) expressed their disappointment with the weather conditions on the Cook Islands. In particular complaints were made about the low temperatures, wind and the amount of rain, although a number of respondents acknowledged that this shortcoming was due to the season and cannot be changed. Comments included:

*"Expected (media, photos, others experience) for it to be warm, sunny, breezes... However the week we were there it was none of these until the final full Day!!!!. We got wind and wind, some rain, chilly / cool and clouds. BUT we still managed to enjoy ourselves. Wouldn't chose this time of year again though..."*

*"It was cool and raining a lot! We had hoped to get more sunshine, but there's not a lot you can do about that."*

*"The weather deteriorated during our last week's stay but I could hardly blame the Cook Islands for that."*

### **Local people and staff**

A number of visitors (8%) found that the local Cook Island people did not seem as friendly towards visitors as they used to be and complained about the quality of staff. Visitors surveyed commented on how customer service in general was poor, and the local people are not friendly to visitors – with the visitors getting the feeling that the local people do not appreciate the tourists coming to the Cook Islands. Comments included:

*“Some of the locals are rude. You get the feeling they don't want you there. Some are also lovely, but it leaves a bad taste in your mouth when you get negative experiences.”*

*“We didn't have a particularly good experience when dealing with the staff in the Rarotongan, the staff seemed particularly disinterested and the fire show went to was very average.”*

*“Felt that the Cook Island people in some way resented the number of tourists on their island. Some were very friendly, but many were indifferent and did not seem to want to interact with tourists. I was not expecting this. Even at church, even though they put on a large meal afterwards, they did not personally interact with us, including not shaking our hand at the door, and talking to their own church members at the time they could have greeted us.”*

*“I was told the local people were friendly. I should say yes for the staff working in the hotels and restaurants. Some locals seemed quite negative towards the tourists.”*

Other unappealing aspects mentioned by visitors include: flight/airline-related issues (infrequent, flight arrival and departure times), the amount of rubbish and lack of care for the natural environment, becoming too commercialised/touristy (over-developed, arrogant tourists), rental cars and scooters (quality, cost and service) and other issues (safety, poverty, graveyards, traffic and state of buildings, with some specific comments about the ‘Old Sheraton’). Comments included:

#### Flight related issues

*“We really disliked the return overnight flights to Australia. We had a lengthy wait on Rarotonga after our local flight from Aitutaki and then a flight in the early hours of the morning to Auckland, before our connection to Adelaide. It meant that we arrived home quite exhausted after such a restful holiday. This would be the only factor preventing us from visiting the Cook Islands for another holiday break”*

*“Unfortunately, the experience of Air New Zealand not providing meals as part of the airfare was poor. Although I paid a surcharge for meals to be provided, this was not carried over to the return journey & so I had no hot meal and the snack foods*

*were limited. This ruined the last part of the journey for me as 6 hours is a long time to go without a meal. They need to get their acts together on this as I wasn't the only passenger that went hungry & many of them, including overseas travellers, voiced their dissatisfaction."*

#### Rubbish and natural environment care

*"The amount of rubbish at the water falls, bins overflowing and hadn't been emptied in a long time."*

*"Rubbish on the beaches. Broken glass at every beach. Dangerous and ruined the overall experience."*

*"The rubbish left on certain areas of the road - it made me sad to see that it had been dumped in such a beautiful place with no thought of the environment. This being said it was only every so often but it's such a beautiful place it's a shame to see it at all."*

*"Disappointed at some of the rubbish around the island. A good example of this is at the waterfall by the cross island track where there was an overflowing rubbish tin and the trees and vines are starting to encroach. Also rubbish lying amongst the bushes. This is a place that many visitors go and it doesn't leave a good impression."*

*"Shocked by the fact that the two boys from the hotel who brought us for snorkelling .... went away snorkelling on the coral reef and I saw them standing on the corals and searching for something (pearls or what?) ... by smashing with stones on the corals with stones or some tool? If everyone do like this ... there won't be coral in a very short time!!!!"*

#### Becoming too commercialised

*"The rapid development of overseas owned / funded new resorts which I guess is unavoidable but so Rarotonga remains beautiful this need careful monitoring."*

*"Too much development and too many rental cars compared to 10 years ago."*

*"The amount of development (new resorts, hotels etc) concerns me because I love how quiet it is... But I do understand that it also has to make money! I only hope that the planning laws are strict enough to preserve the beautiful peaceful beaches."*

#### Rental cars and scooters

*"Lack of helmets required for scooter riders."*

*"The bicycle/scooter rental. They did not find locks for the bicycles we wanted to rent and were completely unhelpful in finding a solution."*

*"Erratic driving by tourists especially on scooters. I would really like to see this tightened up for the sake of all."*

Other issues (safety, state of main town and buildings):

*"There were many damaged & dilapidated buildings that appeared to be abandoned."*

*"the abandoned houses on Aitutaki."*

*"The sight of the derelict hotel which could be better used for those in need of housing."*

*"the uncared for look of the towns and villages."*

### **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, just under half (46%) of respondents said 'yes'. Suggestions mentioned by respondents focused on public services and infrastructure (22%), accommodation (13%), friendliness of locals and service levels (11%), weather (10%), entertainment, activities and transport (10%), flight schedules in and out of Cook Islands (10%), environment/safety/animal care (7%) and quality/cost of food and beverages (7%). Comments on these themes included:

*"Road surface on Rarotonga is deteriorating making it difficult for cycling."*

*"Public transport/bus after 5pm. We got stuck in town not knowing how to get back to the resort as there was no taxi rank."*

*"Information board at the airport about special events within the next few days."*

*"I think that for around \$500.00 a night accommodation I would expect 5 star service."*

*"Better value accommodation. Not up to expectations."*

*"Consistent standard in Customer Service, I will always return to a place if the service is consistent and has an overall warm feeling."*

*"The weather was very unsettled, but you can't control the weather!!!"*

*"Promote healthy Island food and cultural dance, it is one your biggest sellers."*

*“Some of the rental scooters are in bad shape.”*

*“Flights arrive in Rarotonga (and on return to Auckland) in the middle of the night.”*

*“Seemed to be less sea life than when we had previously visited.”*

*“I would have loved to have seen more genuine eco-tourism happening. The island is special and needs to be looked after. Don't let it fall victim to mass unstructured tourism that doesn't benefit the locals or the environment. That makes it less attractive as a destination.”*

*“More local food. It was a surprise to me that there was no fresh coconut offered in the restaurants.”*

### **Reasons to return to the Cook Islands and recommend to others**

The majority of visitors (94%) indicated that they would consider re-visiting the Cook Islands. This figure is consistent with the 2013/14 annual average of 94%. Most of the respondents thought the Cook Islands provided a wonderful experience due to the relaxed atmosphere on the islands, the unspoiled beautiful environment and warm climate, the overall great holiday destination and the welcoming and friendly local people. These four themes covered the majority of the responses provided.

Forty-three percent of those surveyed mentioned the relaxed and laid-back atmosphere. This atmosphere was noted as the most attractive part of the Cook Islands when considering a return visit. Visitors would return to the Cook Islands because of the ‘slow pace of life’ and ‘a great place to relax’. Visitors used key words such as ‘relaxing’, ‘unwind’, ‘slow’, ‘quiet’ and ‘laid back’ – indicating the emphasis they place on the islands as a place to completely relax. Comments included:

*“Very relaxing and great way to unwind.”*

*“Best place to go to do nothing and all day to do it in.”*

*“Great place to play and relax.”*

*“I love the laid back, care free attitude of Rarotonga.”*

*“Because we love the relaxed, uncomplicated and non-commercial lifestyle - a place where we can blob out and forget everything.”*

Those who stated that they had an overall great experience (33%) mentioned that their trip to the Cook Islands was ‘amazing’, ‘paradise’ and that they just ‘love it!’ Others commented that they ‘had a great time’, that it was ‘the perfect holiday’, or that the Cook Islands feel like their ‘home away from home’. Respondents also mentioned that they would ‘definitely

return', have 'already booked for next year' or that they are already long-time return visitors and 'will be back'. A number of respondents also mentioned that they would be bringing family or friends next time to be able to share the experience with them. Comments here included:

*"ABSOLUTELY! Why would you go anywhere else??"*

*"My favourite Pacific island."*

*"It's our home away from home. Have been over 12 times."*

*"We have been 8 times already - they must be doing something right!"*

*"I loved it and am already saving up to come back with the children."*

The warm climate and natural beauty of the Cook Islands was noted by one third (29%) of the visitors as a significant factor in leading people to want to return. The respondents enjoyed the beautiful unspoilt islands, the clear waters and marine life, the lovely beaches, and the great warm weather. Comments included:

*"Because of the clean water and sea life."*

*"Really enjoy the warm weather during NZ winter."*

*"Very nice beaches and warm weather."*

*"Most beautiful place in the world."*

One quarter of the visitors (25%) identified the friendly, helpful and welcoming local people as a significant feature that encourages them to return to the Cook Islands. Respondents commented:

*"Love the people and what they stand for and it is one of the most beautiful places on earth."*

*"Experience was very satisfying. People were a delight to talk to and be around."*

*"Your beautiful people and your way of life is most enriching."*

Of those respondents (n=42) who said they would not be returning to the Cook Islands, the main comments were revolved around the fact that they felt they had seen what they really wanted to see in the Cooks and now wanted to visit other countries. Other comments included the lack of value for money, the relatively high cost of the overall trip and the distance of the travel. Comments here include:

*"Feel like I have seen most of what there is to offer. Would like to explore other islands next time."*

*“Probably not. There are better value destinations in Asia Pacific region.”*

*“It was very long and expensive to get there. It was a once in a lifetime experience!”*

*“Too far unless another round world trip planned.”*

Nearly all visitors surveyed (97%) said that they would recommend the destination to their family and friends. Just under half (47%) of these visitors stated they would recommend the Cook Islands because of the ‘atmosphere’; this was again described as ‘relaxing’, ‘peaceful’, ‘quiet’ and with the ‘laid-back’ lifestyle. Respondents felt that the Cook Islands was a great place to ‘chill out’ and ‘unwind’ and they would recommend the Cook Islands as a good holiday destination for those who need to ‘escape’ from their busy lifestyle. Another aspect of the relaxing holiday was noted as *‘your holiday can be as busy or laid-back as you want’*.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents stated that ‘the environment’ of the Cook Islands was a reason for recommending the island nation to others – including the beautiful scenery, great beaches, the warm climate, unspoilt and clean nature – *‘Perfect holiday destination. Absolutely beautiful!’* Many visitors describing it simply as ‘paradise’ – *“It’s a little piece of paradise - what’s not to like!”*

Thirty percent of the visitors mentioned the ‘friendly’ local people as a recommendation of the Cook Islands. Other words used to describe the Cook Islanders included ‘lovely’, ‘welcoming’ and ‘beautiful’ - *“Gorgeous scenery, fantastic food, unspoilt cultural activities and the world’s friendliest people”*.

One quarter (25%) of the respondents would recommend the Cook Islands because they had a great experience there themselves. These visitors stated their Cooks holiday to be a ‘great experience’ and ‘the best holiday’ and that they just *‘loved it’* - describing it as: *“Such a wonderful picturesque place, relaxing, a place for the ‘bucket list’”*.

Other themes that were mentioned included the convenience of the islands as a destination – especially for New Zealanders and Australians (11%), the attractions and activities available (9%), affordability of the holiday (7%), the islands being a family friendly and safe destination (6%), food and beverage options (4%), the Cook Islands culture (4%), the ease of New Zealand currency and language (3%) and the accommodation available (1%).

Comments on why visitors would recommend the Cook Islands to others included:

*“It is everything it says it is....rejuvenates, refreshes, relaxes and you recuperate.”*

*“I have already! People were very interested to know about the Cook Islands.”*

*“Great beaches. Superb cultural performances. World Class hiking.”*

*“Great place for a relaxing holiday and reasonably priced if you steer clear of the bigger hotels...We didn't find that groceries were particularly expensive despite the moans from fellow Kiwis”*

*“Fantastic place and people, reminds me of NZ 30 years ago, love it.”*

*“New Zealand’s own Hawaii - closer and cheaper.”*

*“I have recommended to young families as a safe place to take their young children to.”*

*“Because it is beautiful and not too touristy like Fiji for example.”*

*“We had a great experience and are happy to share but not with too many!”*

Only 3% of visitors (n=20) would not recommend the Cook Islands to others and this is largely based on the lack of service and poor value for money.

## **Final observations**

This report shows that the Cook Islands tourism industry generally performed well during the October to December 2014 period. 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 tourists.

Nevertheless this report also highlights that there is room to enhance the visitor experience and to increase the economic yield and broader community benefits associated with tourism. As in previous reports, this research highlights issues around environmental degradation and infrastructure provision that should be monitored and managed carefully. There are also some concerns from visitors around the value for money/quality of service provided by accommodation and food/beverage operations that need to be addressed. The on-going concerns around stray dogs should also be noted.

While visitor spend prior to arrival in the Cook Islands has decreased from the 2013/14 annual average, spend on the island is up 6.6% from the 2013/14 average and 4.9% on the same quarter for 2013/14.

Overall the Cook Islands tourism sector is performing well in terms of visitor satisfaction but it remains important to look at ways to increase visitor yield in a sustainable manner. It is critical to find ways to build on and develop the visitor experience in a manner that enhances local economic linkages. The 2014/15 annual report will review this theme in more depth.

## Appendix – Cook Islands Visitor Survey



### 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 December 2013.

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

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.

[Take the survey](#)

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](http://www.nztri.org) in late 2013.

For further information about this research contact:

Project Coordinator: Carolyn Deuchar, New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, AUT University: email [carolyn.deuchar@aut.ac.nz](mailto:carolyn.deuchar@aut.ac.nz), phone 09 921 9999 ext 8892

Team Leader: Professor Simon Milne: New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, AUT University: email [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz), phone 09 921 9245

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 13 December 2011. AUTEK Reference Number 11/335.

## **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. When did you arrive in the Cook Islands on your most recent visit? (format dd/mm/yyyy, e.g. 26/06/2013)

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?

- a) Holiday
- b) Wedding party
- c) Business or conference
- d) Visiting friends or relatives
- e) Honeymoon
- f) Special event – sporting
- g) Special event – cultural
- h) Volunteering
- i) Education

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

- a) Airline - Air New Zealand
- b) Airline - Air Tahiti
- c) Ferry
- d) Private charter plane
- e) Private boat

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

- a) No one - I was by myself
- b) Partner / husband / wife
- c) Family member(s)
- d) Friends
- e) Work colleagues
- f) Tour group

- g) Organised group (e.g. school, sports etc)
- h) Wedding party

6. How many people accompanied you on this trip?

- a) 0 - travelled by myself
- b) 1
- c) 2
- d) 3
- e) 4
- f) 5
- g) 6
- h) 7
- i) 8
- j) 9
- k) 10+

7. Which islands did you visit on this trip? Please provide additional information when prompted on the following page.

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

8. 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:

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9. 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?

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

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

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12. 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.

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

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

14.1 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- a) International flights
- b) Accommodation
- c) Meals
- d) Domestic transport
- e) Activities
- f) Other

15.1 After you arrived in the Cook Islands, how much do you estimate that you spent in each island (Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Other island(s)) in local currency (NZ\$)?

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

16. Was your recent visit to the Cook Islands part of a bigger trip?

- a) Yes
- b) No

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

- a) Yes
- b) No

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

- a) Yes
- b) No

19. 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')?

20. Please add any comments you would like to make about your overall experience of the Cook Islands.

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## **ABOUT YOU**

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

22. Your age group:

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

23. Your gender:

- a) Female
- b) Male

24. What is your highest qualification?

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

25.1 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 below:

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

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

*Survey Powered By Qualtrics*