



# Cook Islands Visitor Survey Results

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**January - March 2015**

**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 visited 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 January to 31 March 2015. There were 447 individual respondents to the survey - representing a total of 871 adults and an additional 113 children (this equates to 4.6% of all visitors during the period – based on the 2014 visitor arrival data for the January to March 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 (53%) of visitors surveyed come from New Zealand, 22% come from Australia. Visitors are well educated (74% of visitors have some form of tertiary education) and have a relatively high annual household income (46% earn over NZ\$100,000 per year). More than half of the visitors (52%) travel with one companion. Solo travellers are relatively rare (7%).

Two thirds of the visitors surveyed (66%) are on their first visit to the Cook Islands, a further 19% 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 8.8 nights. The majority (92%) of the visitors stay either one or two weeks. Twenty seven percent of the visitors surveyed visit Aitutaki in addition to Rarotonga.

Visitor spend prior to arrival in the Cook Islands (\$2,019) has increased from the 2013/14 annual average (\$1,985 per person). Spend on the island (per person per day) is \$113 which is higher than the 2013/14 annual average of \$111 and the same quarter for the previous year (\$108 for January to March 2014).

The average local spend per visitor during the whole trip is \$991. If the pre-paid spend amount and the local spend amount are combined, it is estimated that each visitor brings \$1,799 to the Cook Islands economy (or approximately \$207 per day). This figure is higher than \$1,724 average for 2013/14 and \$1785 for the same quarter last year (Jan-Mar 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 a lack of public service and facilities.

Overall satisfaction on the part of tourists is very high: 93% of those surveyed want to return to the Cook Islands and 98% would recommend the Cook Islands to friends or family. The overall satisfaction level is 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 January to March 2015. Over this three month period, 1703 visitors were contacted by email to take part in the survey, and 447 responses were received: a conversion rate of 26.2%. These responses cover a total of 871 adults and 113 children. The conversion rate for this period is higher than for the 2013/14 annual average (25%) and Jan-Mar 2014 quarter (23.6%).

The data presented include detailed information on:

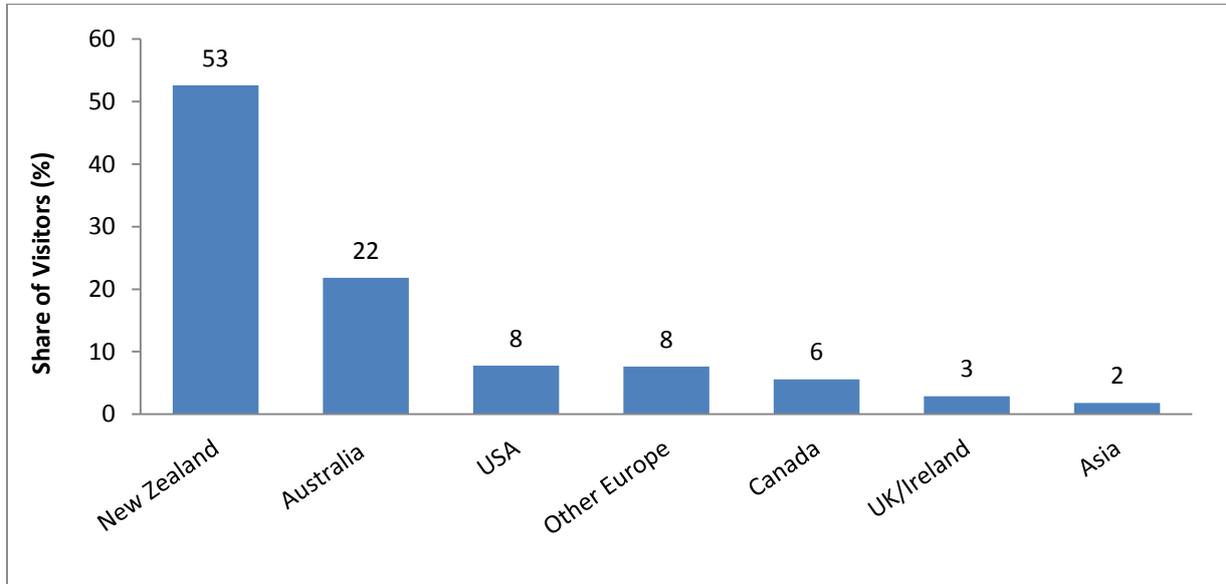
- The characteristics of visitors to the Cook Islands (age, gender, education, country of origin, income, purpose of visit, travelling with whom, number of previous visits, length of stay, airline used, visited islands)
- Visitor expenditure (amount of money spent prior to arrival and while in the Cook 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 or the 2013/14 January – March Quarterly figures these are highlighted.

## Visitor Characteristics

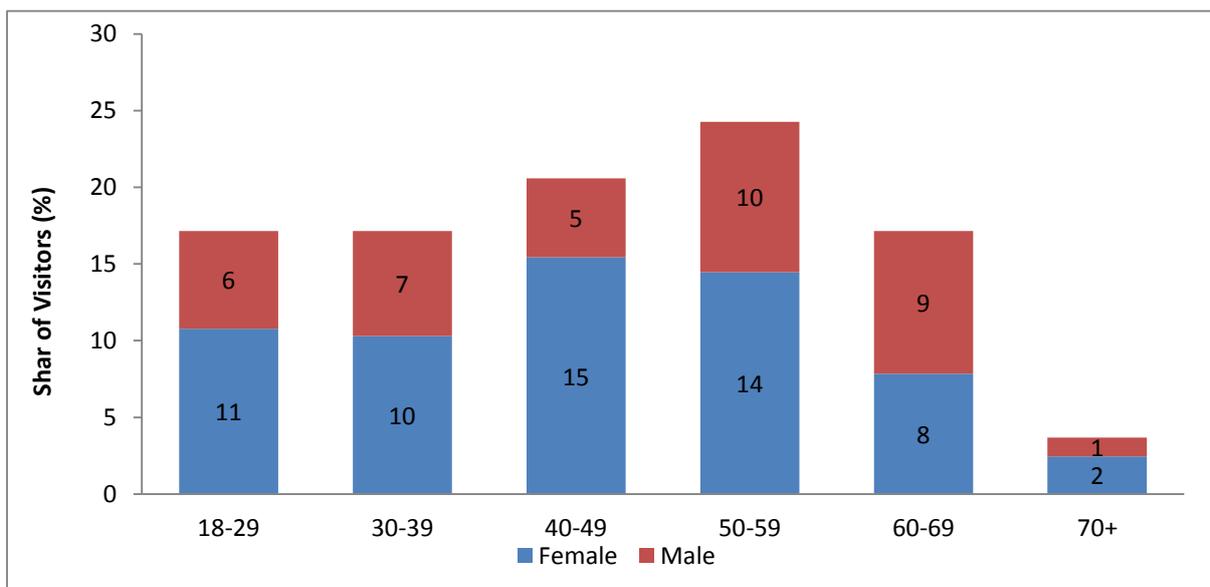
The majority (53%) of the visitors surveyed come from New Zealand (Figure 1). The second largest visitor group is from Australia, with 22% of respondents. Europe, USA, Great Britain, Asia and Canada represent the other main source markets.

**Figure 1: Country of origin (n=409)**



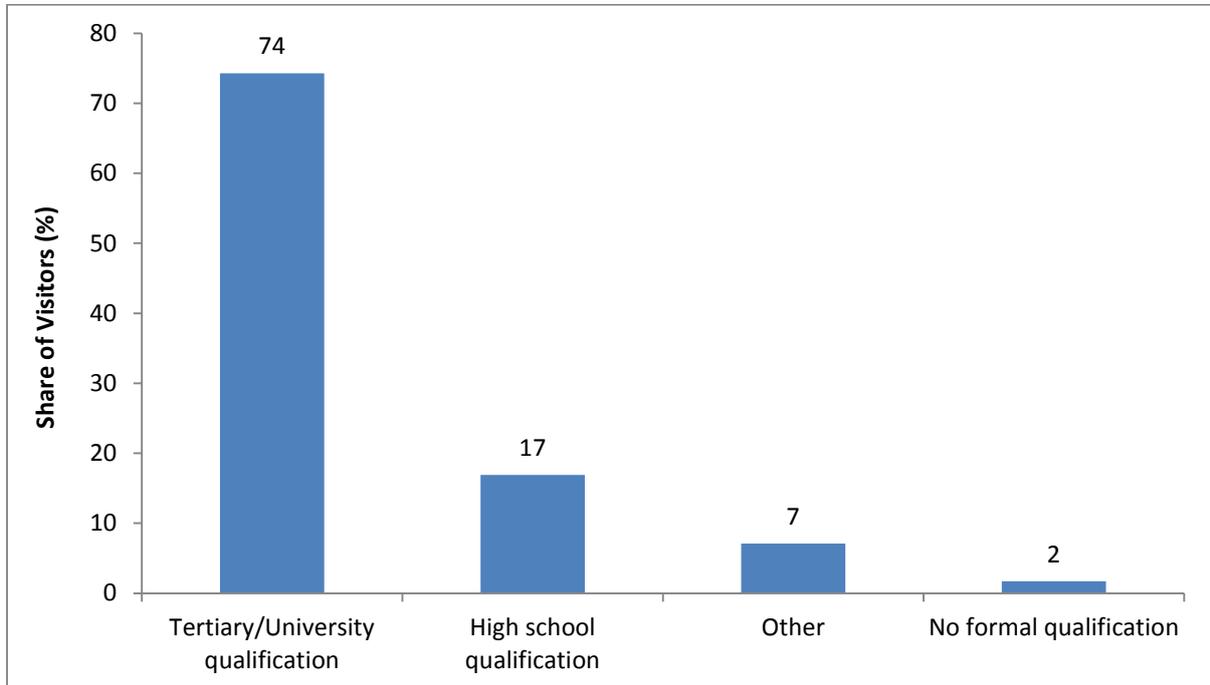
More women (61%) than men (39%) completed the survey (Figure 2). The most significant age group is 50 to 59 year olds, followed by the 40 to 49, 18 to 39, and 60 to 69 year age groups. There are relatively few travellers in the 70 plus age bracket.

**Figure 2: Distribution of age and gender (n=408)**



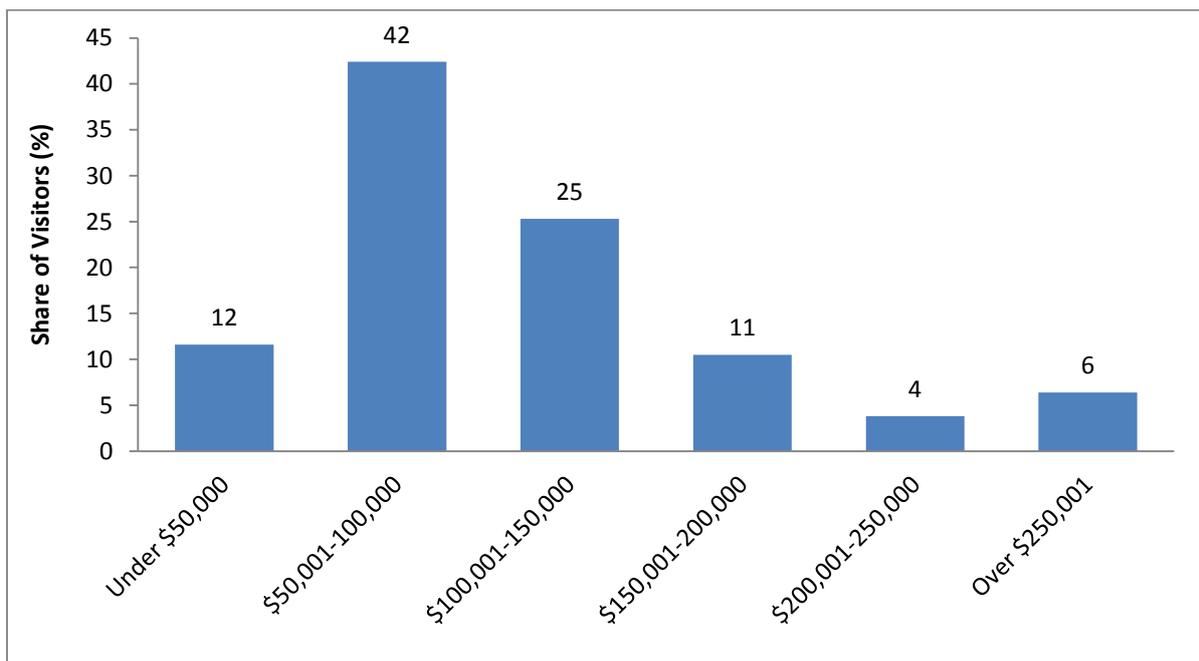
Visitors are well educated: more than two-thirds (74%) of those surveyed had some form of tertiary qualification and a further 17% had a completed high school education (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Highest qualification (n=409)**



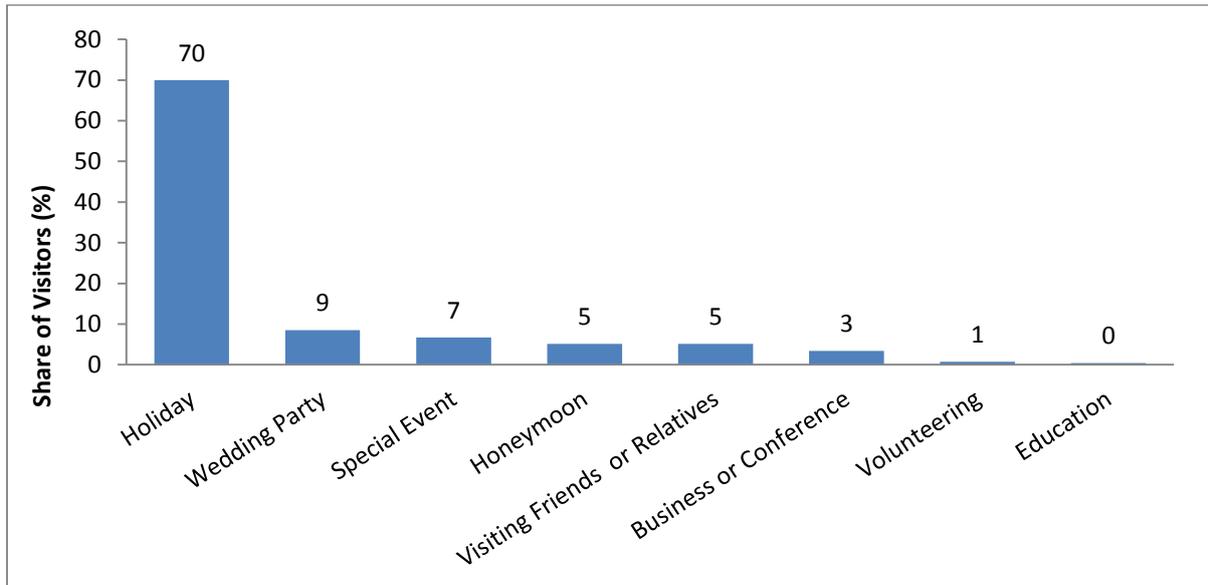
A significant group of visitors (42%) have an annual household income of between NZ\$50,001 and NZ\$100,000. Nearly a quarter of those surveyed (25%) earn between NZ\$100,001 and NZ\$150,000. A further 21% of respondents have a household income of over NZ\$150,000 per year (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Annual household income in NZD (n=344)**



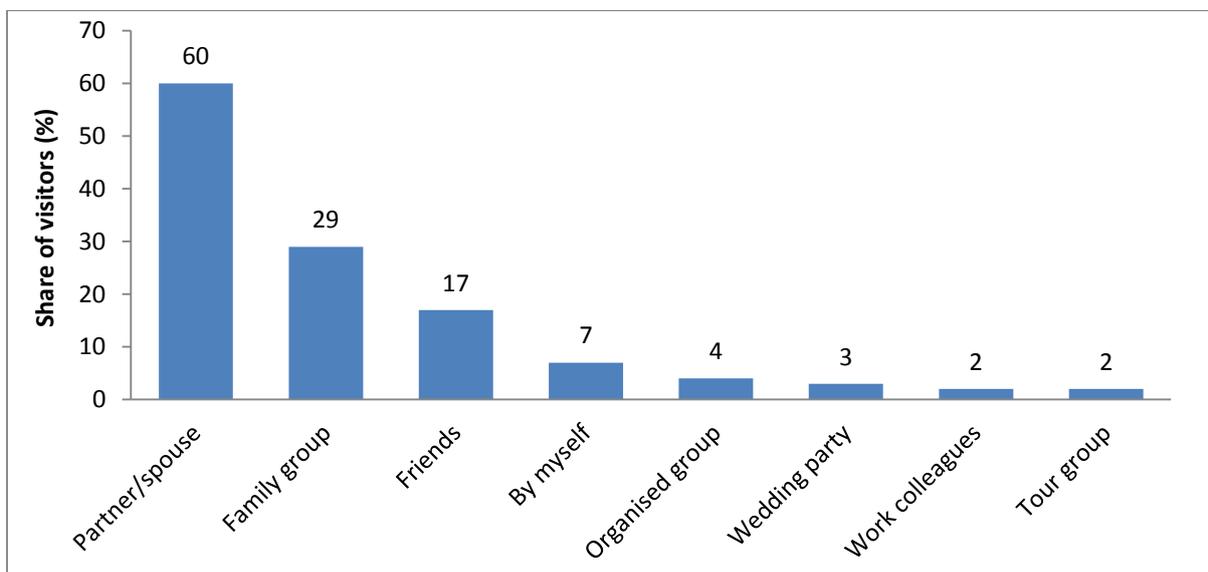
Nearly three-quarters of visitors surveyed come to the Cook Islands for a holiday (70%), with the second major purpose of the visit (9%) being to attend a wedding. It is notable that 7% of the respondents came for a special event (with most attending a sporting event). This figure is considerable higher than the data from the previous year (1.5%) and the same quarter in 2013/14 (1.3%). Five percent of respondents came for a honeymoon, or visited friends/relatives and 3% came for business/conference travel. Just 1% of survey respondents came for volunteering during this quarter (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Main purpose of visit (n=447)**



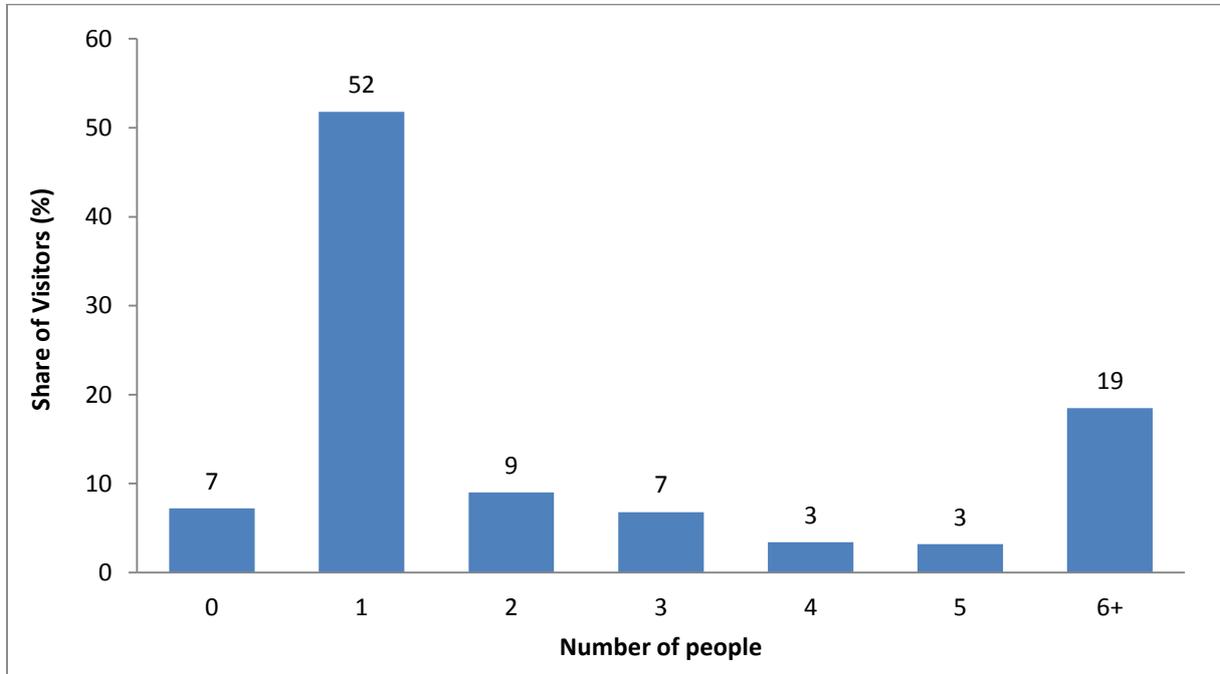
Most visitors (60%) surveyed travel to the Cook Islands with a partner or spouse. Visitors also often travel with other family members (29%) or friends (17%). Those travelling alone, with a wedding party, with colleagues, or with an organised group, represent a smaller share of the sample (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Travelling with whom? (n=446)**



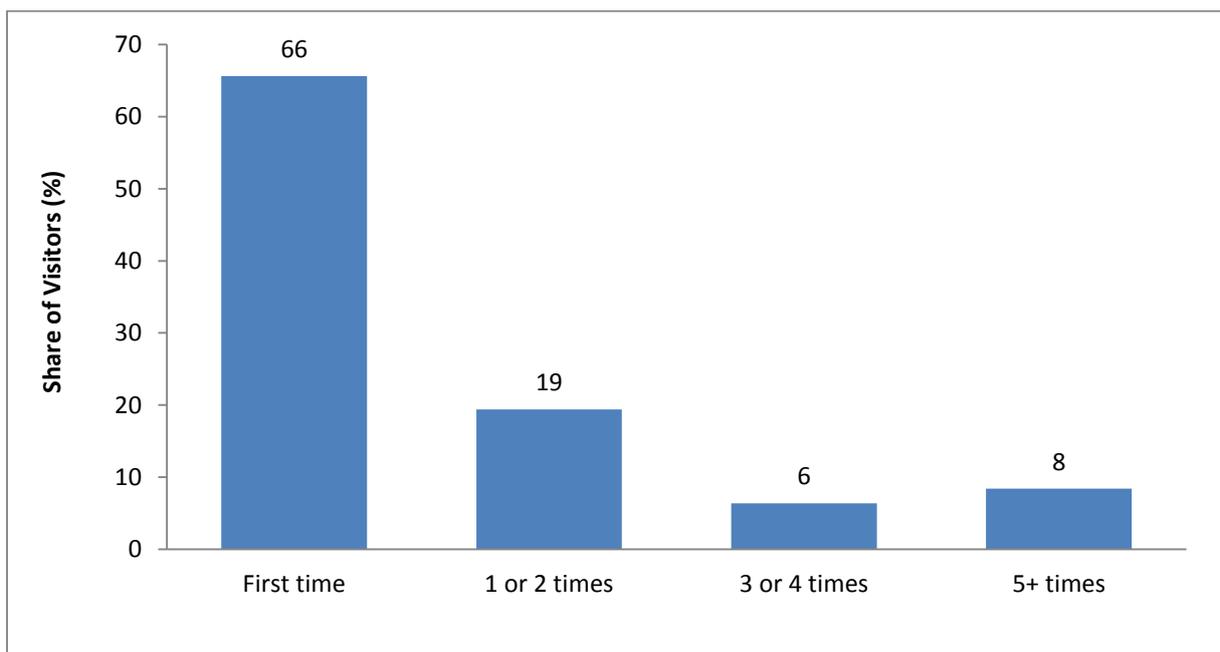
More than half of the visitors (52%) travelled with one companion on their visit to the Cook Islands (Figure 7). Travel groups larger than 4 people were not very common, with the exception of wedding parties.

**Figure 7: Number of companions on trip (n=442)**



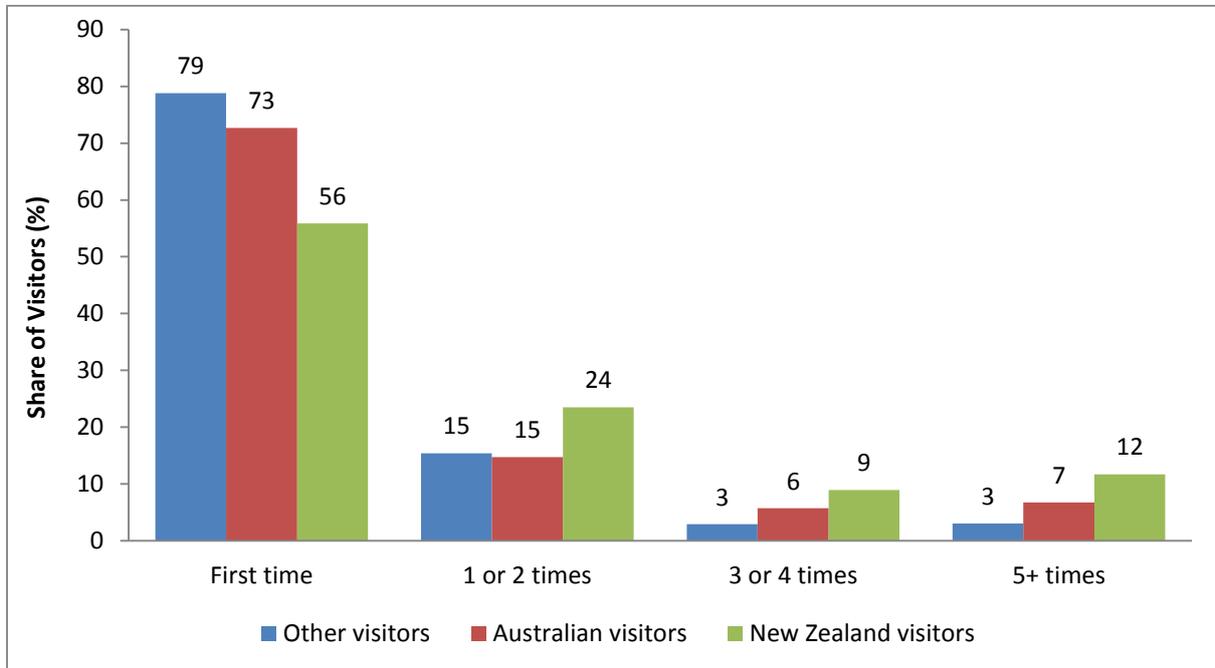
Two thirds of the visitors (66%) are on their first visit to the Cook Islands. A further 19% have been to the Cook Islands once or twice before. A smaller group (14%) have visited 3 or more times (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Number of visits to the Cook Islands (n=407)**



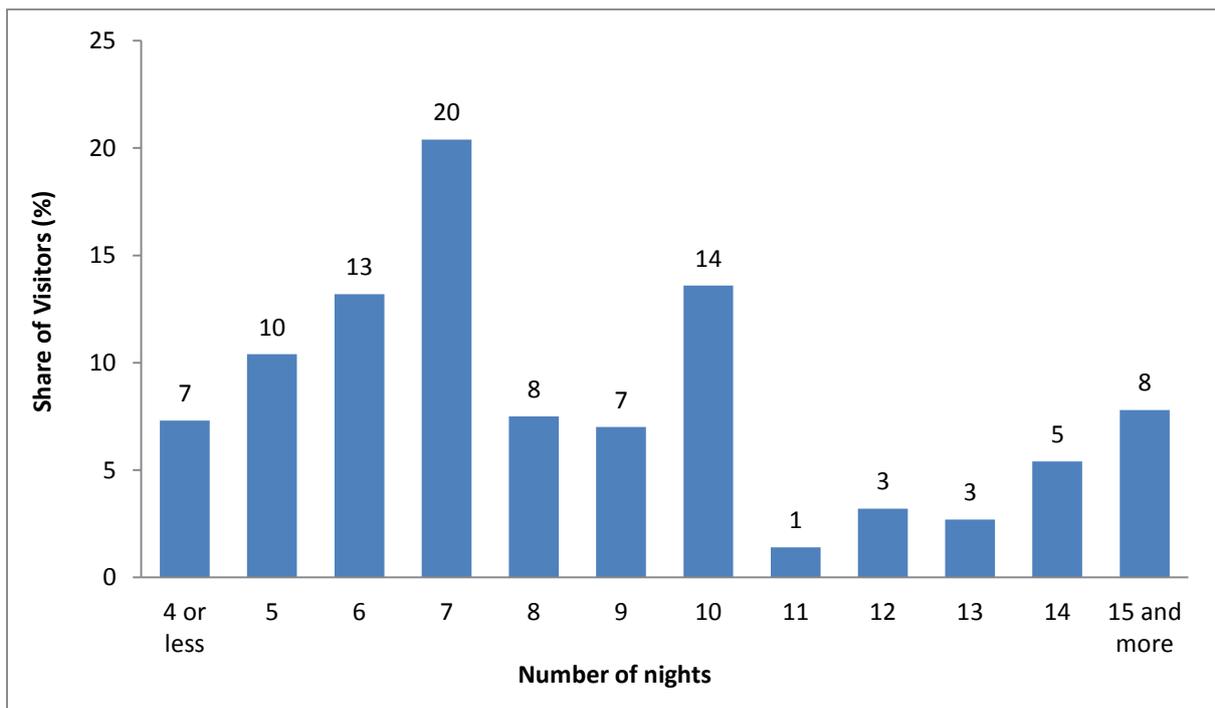
New Zealanders are more likely to be repeat visitors than those from other source markets (Figure 9). 45% of visitors from New Zealand have visited once or more before compared to only 28% of visitors from Australia.

**Figure 9: Number of previous visits to the Cook Islands (n=405)**



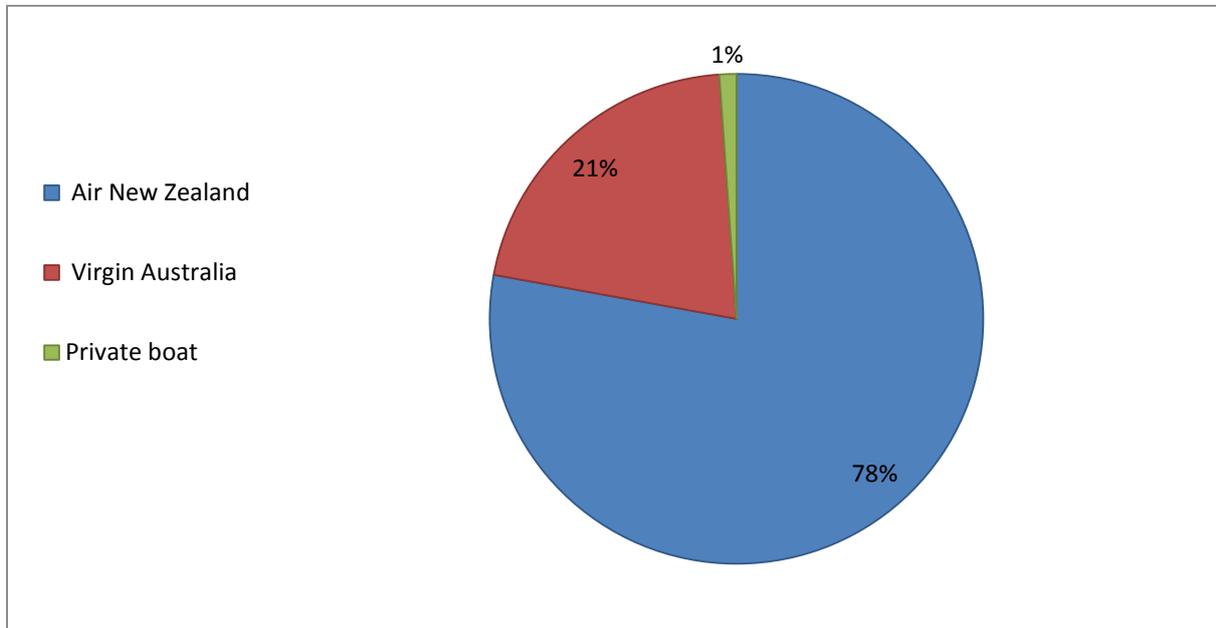
The average length of stay in the Cook Islands is 8.8 nights with 79% of visitors spending 10 or fewer nights in the country (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Length of stay in nights (n=441)**



The majority of visitors (78%) travel to/from the Cook Islands with Air New Zealand, a further 21% visitors fly with Virgin Australia (Figure 11). Most passengers on those airlines fly out of Auckland or transit through Auckland.

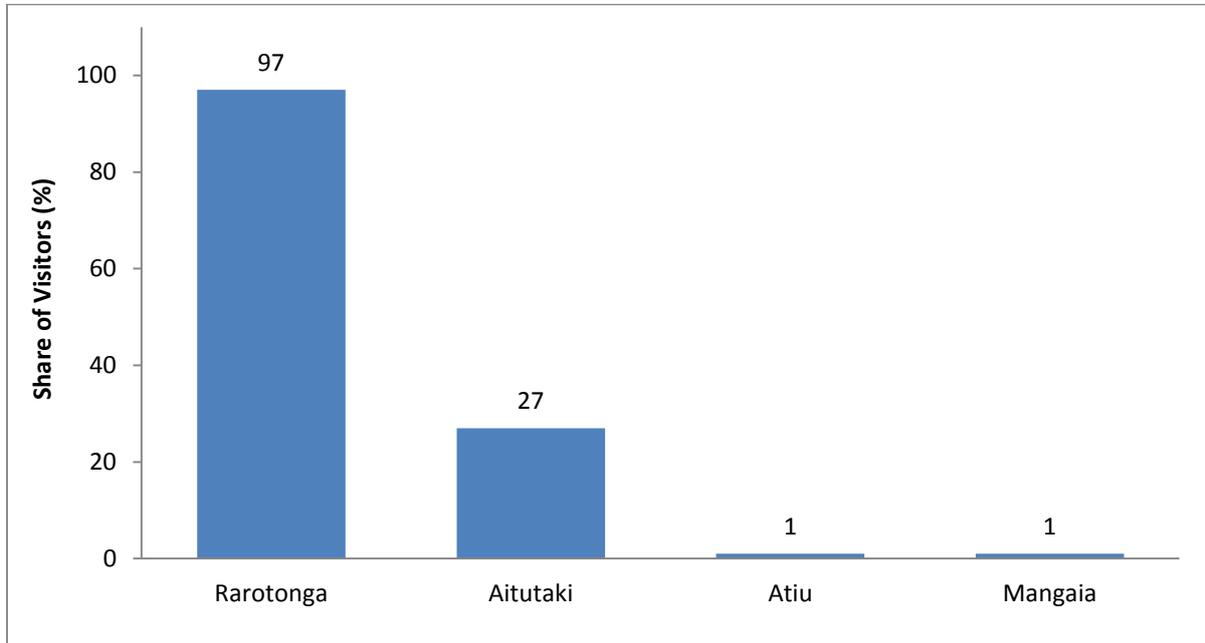
**Figure 11: Airline used (n=443)**



For 80% of visitors, the Cook Islands represent the only destination on their trip. For 20% of visitors surveyed during the January-March 2015 period 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 (58% of respondents), second was Australia (28%) followed by Asian countries (19%), and the USA (18%). Fifteen percent of visitors stated that a destination in other Pacific Islands was included as part of their larger trip. Other destinations mentioned by respondents included Europe (10%) and South America (3%).

The vast majority (97%) of visitors to the Cook Islands spend time on Rarotonga, while Aitutaki is the second most visited island (27%) (Figure 12). Other islands are rarely featured in the survey responses, with Atiu and Mangaia both receiving only 1% visitors.

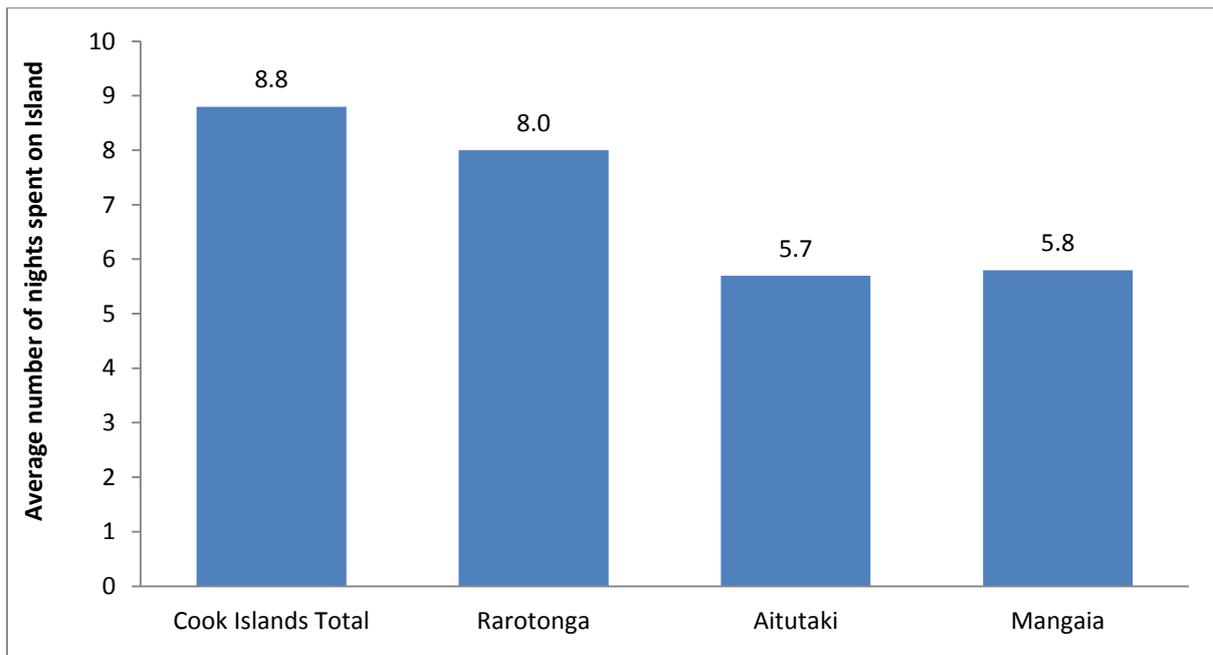
**Figure 12: Visited Islands (n=447)**



*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 5.7.

**Figure 13: Average length of stay in the Cook Islands (n=447)**

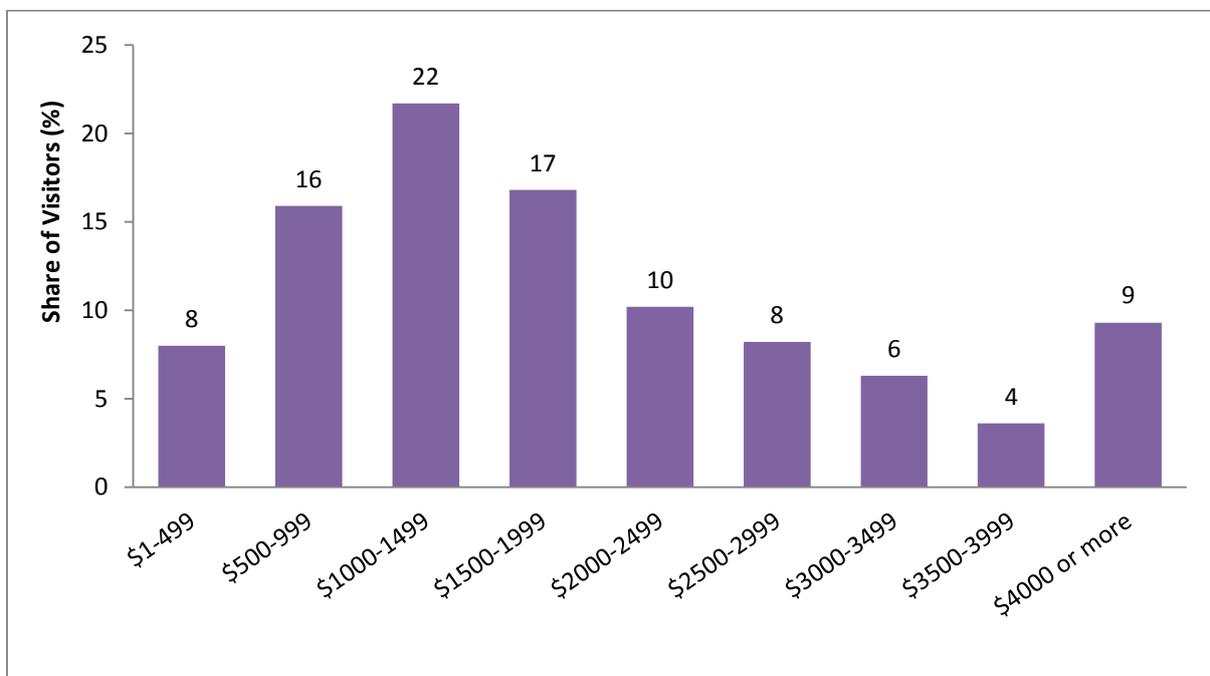


## Visitor Expenditure

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: 984 people comprising 871 adults and 113 children.

On average, visitors to the Cook Islands spend NZ\$2,019 per person prior to arrival. Nearly half (49%) of the visitors spend between \$1000 and \$2500 dollars. These figures are higher than the data from the previous year (average spend of NZ\$1,985 for 2013/14) and slightly lower than the same quarter in 2013/14 (\$2023) (Figure 14).

**Figure 14: Amount of money spent per person prior to arrival (n=364)**



In addition to international flights and domestic transport, spending prior to arrival usually includes accommodation: in 82% of the cases for New Zealand, and 79% for Australian visitors and visitors from other countries (Figure 15). Meals and activities are much less likely to be included in pre-paid expenses.

**Figure 15: Items included in money spent prior to arrival (n=388)**



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 \$94 and for the average total visit is \$808.

The total spend per visitor per day while in the Cook Islands (excluding any pre-paid expenditure) is \$113 (Table 1). This figure is higher than overall spend figure for 2013/14 (\$111) and the same quarter in 2013/14 (\$108). Most money spent locally is on accommodation (30%), restaurants, cafes and bars (23%), shopping (14%), and activities (8%). These per person expenditure figures are based on 407 survey responses covering a total of 929 people (805 adults and 124 children).

By multiplying daily spend by the average stay (8.8 nights) we can see that each visitor spends on average \$991 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 \$207 per visitor per day (\$113 + \$94), or \$1,799 (\$808 + \$991) for each visitor.

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

Expenditure Items	Overall n=407	
	Mean (NZ\$)	(% of spend)
Accommodation	34	30
Restaurant, cafes and bar	26	23
Shopping	16	14
Activities	9	8
Vehicle rental	8	7
Groceries	8	7
Domestic flights	4	4
Cruising	3	2
Other	2	2
Petrol	2	2
Public transportation	1	1
<b>Total expenditure per person per day</b>	<b>\$113</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 provides an overview of the in-country expenditure by visitor country of origin. Visitors from Canada/USA spend more than other countries. Australians spend the least.

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

Expenditure Items	n=53	n=87	n=211	n=43
	USA/ Canada	Australia	New Zealand	Europe
Accommodation	49	26	35	52
Restaurant, cafes and bar	24	27	28	31
Shopping	30	12	15	13
Activities	9	7	11	12
Vehicle rental	10	7	10	3
Groceries	14	7	8	6
Domestic flights	3	6	4	3
Cruising	2	4	2	3
Petrol	2	2	2	1
Other	2	3	2	3
Public transportation	1	0	0	1
<b>Total spend (NZ\$)</b>	<b>\$146</b>	<b>\$101</b>	<b>\$116</b>	<b>\$129</b>

Average Australian spend per person for this quarter (\$101) was lower compared to the 2013/14 average of \$125 and the same quarter in 2013/14 (\$131). New Zealanders' spend of \$116 per person per day was up from the average of \$103 for 2013/14) and \$100 for the same quarter in the previous year. European visitor spend at \$129 per person per day was down from the average of 2013/14 of \$138, and \$131 for the same quarter in the previous year. Visitors from USA/Canada spend at \$146 for this period was higher than the 2013/14 average of \$136 and \$119 for the same quarter in 2013/14. *Given the fact that only 43 visitors from Europe and 53 visitors from North America participated in the survey the average expenditure figures for these two regions must be treated with some 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 (69%) of the visitors surveyed ranked their experience as 'very satisfied'. Very few visitors (3%) were unsatisfied with their visit and gave a score of 2 or lower.

**Figure 16: Overall satisfaction with experience of the Cook Islands (n=408)**

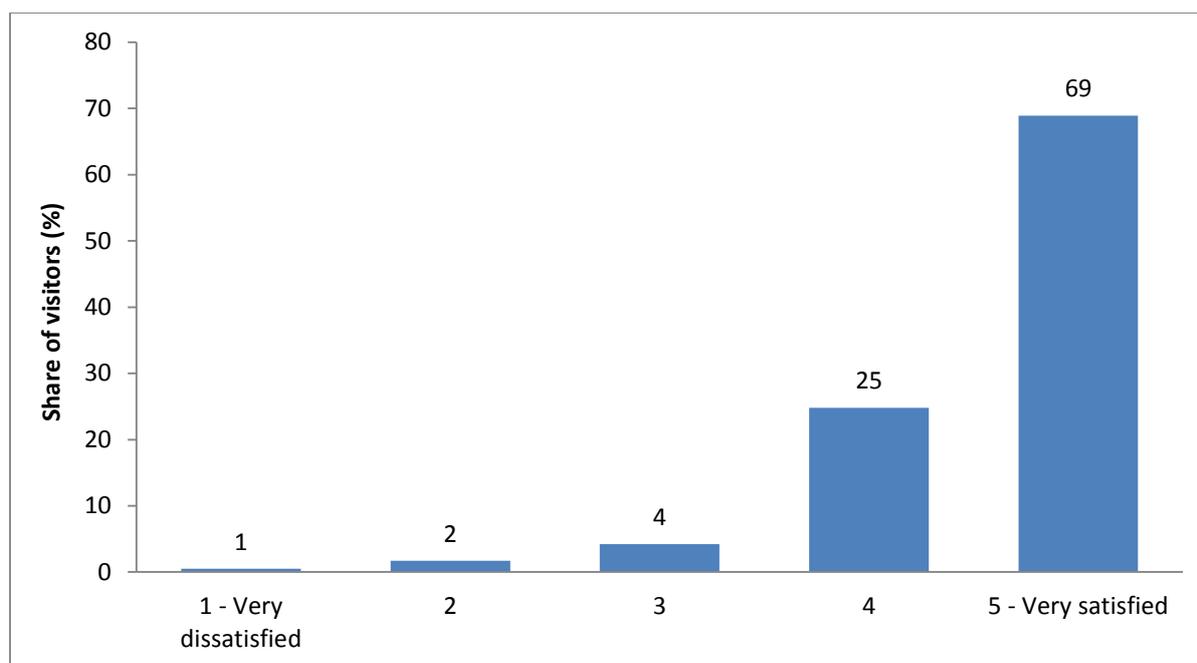
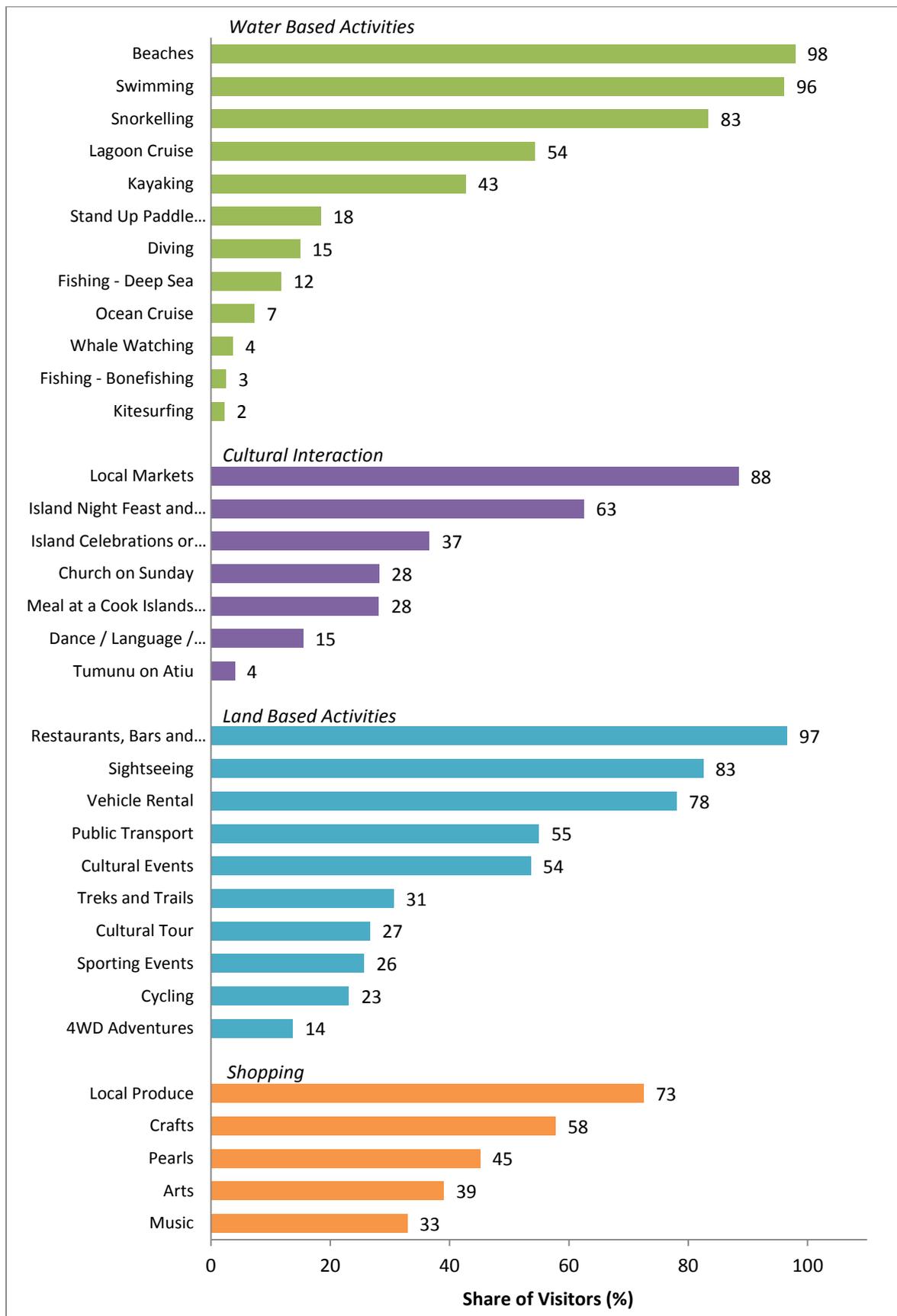
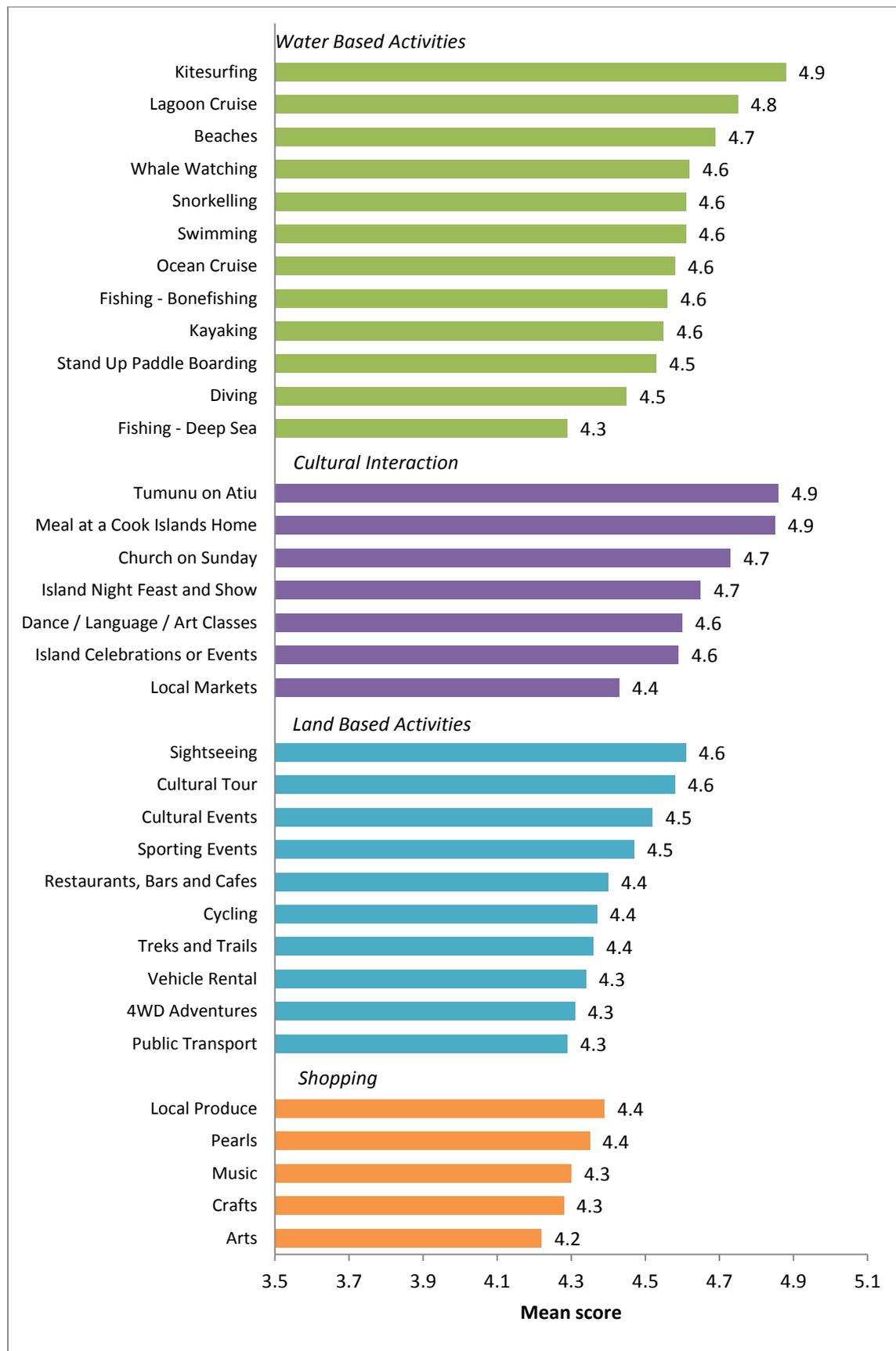


Figure 17 shows the percentage of respondents who undertook an activity while on their visit to the Cook Islands and Figure 18 shows their level of satisfaction with these activities. Almost all visitors participate in water activities and visit at least one restaurant or café during their trip. Most of the respondents (88%) visit a local market, and 63% 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 (4.4) and shopping (4.3). It should be noted that some activities e.g. kitesurfing, bonefishing, whale watching, and Tumunu on Atiu, are characterised by relatively low numbers of participants (n=8-14).

**Figure 17: Degree of participation in activities (n range=8-438)**



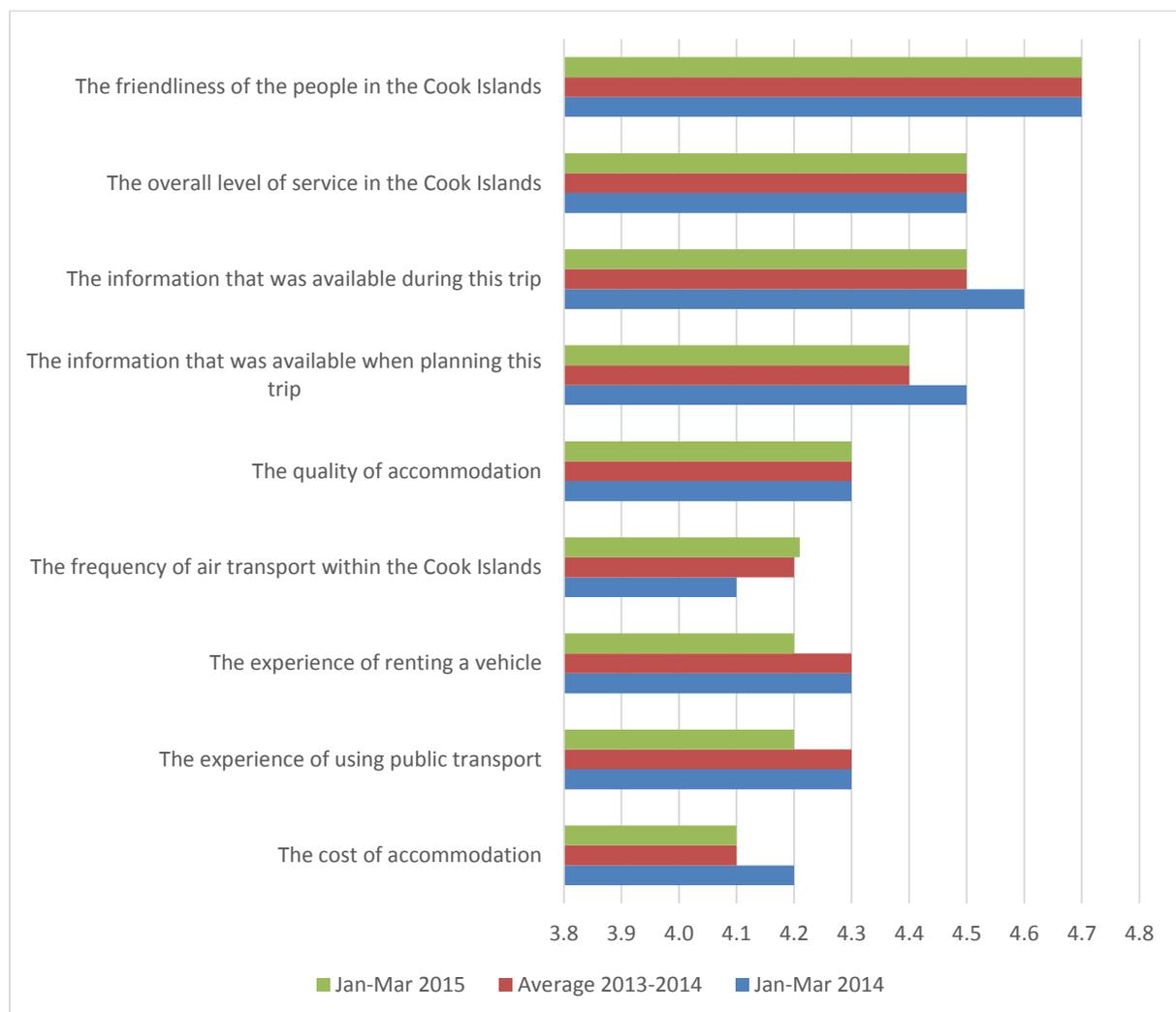
**Figure 18: Degree of satisfaction in activities (mean score out of 5)**



Visitors were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with nine different statements relating to their most recent visit to the Cook Islands. Responses from the period of January to March are compared to the same period of 2013/14 and the annual average for 2013/14 (Figure 19). Respondents have consistently given 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 towards a higher level of satisfaction with the frequency of air transport within the Cook Islands, but a lower level of satisfaction on the experience of using public transports and renting a vehicle for the current quarter compared to the average for 2013/14. Compared with the same quarter of 2013/14, higher satisfaction exists on the frequency of air transport within the Cook Islands, but slightly lower levels of satisfaction can be seen with the availability of information for planning and also during the trip, the experience of public transport and vehicle rental, and the cost of accommodation.

**Figure 19: Degree of satisfaction with Cook Island services (mean score out of 5) (n=445)**



## 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 food and beverage, the level of service, the convenience of the Cook Islands as a destination and the un-commercialised nature of the islands. These figures are similar to the annual average for 2013-2014 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=420)**

Themes	Share of respondents (%)
Environment	48%
Local people	41%
Atmosphere	25%
Activities, attractions, entertainment and events	22%
Food and beverage	9%
Level of service	5%
Un-commercialised	5%
Convenience of the Cook Islands as a destination	5%
Overall good experience	3%
Accommodation	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%.

### **Environment**

Under half (48%) of the respondents considered the environment to be the most appealing aspect of their Cook Islands experience. Visitors used words such as ‘beautiful’, ‘amazing’, ‘magnificent’, ‘stunning’, ‘wonderful’, ‘untouched’, ‘unspoilt’ and ‘not crowded’ 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 beauty of the Islands, the smell of the flowers and the roadside fires. The weather and the peaceful, welcoming surroundings.”*

*“The beautiful paradise scenery.”*

*“Unspoilt and beautiful beaches.”*

*"It still had an untouched feel and not 100% over run with tourists though I can see it getting that way soon. Beautiful Ocean life and forest. It would be nice to have some Rarotongan or pacific type restaurants/cafe that you can go to, the only option I had was at the markets or at a show and feast evening which are quite pricey."*

*"Our first visit to Aitutaki. Completely amazing. Loved the clean water in the lagoon. Took a private boat tour - excellent. Visited the clam growing place - all good."*

### **Local people**

A large number of respondents (41%) noted that the most appealing part of their visit was the interaction with the local people in the Cook Islands. There was an 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', 'genuine', 'helpful', 'lovely', 'kind', 'happy', 'wonderful', 'respectful', 'simple', 'welcoming' and 'hospitable'. Comments included:

*"The People are very friendly and most don't try to sell you. We were welcomed as friends not as Tourists. That is unique and the biggest asset!"*

*"The local people - for sure. There are a lot of beautiful places in the world and Cook Islands is certainly one of them. But the wonderfully warm and pleasant people of the Cooke Islands put it over the top."*

*"The happiness of the people. They were so friendly and unpretentious. We loved them."*

*"The people, they are the most friendly, happy, funny and relaxed anywhere, I needed a restful, happy holiday and got exactly that"*

*"The people were so lovely, kind, friendly, welcoming...you name it, they really made me feel good on my most recent visit."*

*"The people - honestly. The people were so friendly and open and lovely. From the moment we arrived I was so impressed. We came from Tahiti where there was a generally high level of snobbery, but that wasn't the case here. The bus drivers were amazing and helpful and funny (and what great singers!) and we just started to relax for once on our very long trip."*

### **Atmosphere**

A number of visitors surveyed (25%) focused on the relaxed atmosphere of the Cook Islands. They considered the Cook Islands to be very peaceful, relaxing, safe and laid-back. Respondents used words such as 'quiet', 'relaxing', 'laid back', 'stress-free', 'easy', 'slow pace' and 'peaceful' to describe the overall atmosphere. The notion of 'island time' was also frequently highlighted. Comments included:

*"The wonderful relaxing pace of life there."*

*"Just so relaxing and laid back."*

*"The whole atmosphere in Rarotonga is so wonderful, the people are so friendly and the whole island has a wonderful stress free feeling to it."*

*"The laid back lifestyle and lack of hustle and bustle. Locals didn't hound me for my business. All just very relaxing."*

*"We use it as a true island getaway to escape our busy lives. We spend a lot of time walking the beaches, reading, investigating different villages around the island."*

*"Relaxation - the only country of many I have visited where I have felt so welcome and relaxed."*

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

Activities and entertainment were mentioned by 22% of respondents as the most appealing elements of their Cook Islands visit. Most comments in this category focus on water-based activities such as swimming, snorkelling and lagoon cruises. Land-based activities that respondents mentioned included the experience of travelling around the island by scooter, shopping, visiting the local churches, cultural tours and local markets. Comments included:

*"The beaches were beautiful and the weather was perfect. We loved the scooter rentals and the local market."*

*"...and we took in a local comedy event... impressed with the opening and closing prayers...nice to see you embrace your religion..."*

*"Lagoon Tour was fantastic, both educational & fun. Beaches were wonderful, loved the water."*

*"Muri beach lagoon and snorkelling in it!"*

*"Loved the beaches, the people, it rained hard the day we were going to hike, so we put off the hike and went to the museum. Fabulous!! Great snorkelling."*

*"Saturday market, swimming, cultural tour."*

### **Food and beverage**

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

*"The local food was out of this world...Beautiful island, beautiful food beautiful people."*

*"The people and the food - local food is what we expect to eat when we visit. Not food we can get at home."*

*"Ease of which you can get around the island and the amount of cafes, bars etc."*

*"The freshness of the seafood and the papayas!"*

*"Good quality local beer."*

### **Level of service**

Five 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. Comments included:

*"The people and level of service were absolutely outstanding. It was the most relaxed and pleasant holiday we've ever had."*

*"The staff made our 50th Wedding Anniversary so special. They always welcome us back like old friends."*

*"The staff were very friendly and took wonderful care of us."*

*"The personality of the staff of the Resort - welcomed us like family!!"*

### **Not too commercialised**

Five percent of the respondents mentioned the Cook Islands as 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. Comments included:

*"How relaxed everything was and not too overcrowded and touristy."*

*"Not over commercialised at all and that the Cook Islanders own the Cook Islands."*

*"The Polynesian location. Unspoiled. No big hotels. Lack of "fussy" tourists. Thank God the Sheraton failed."*

*"As yet it has not been ruined like most places on this precious earth by over development. It still maintains a casual laid back attitude and lacks the frantic bustle and rush of so many other holiday destinations."*

*"The tidiness and pride people take in their properties. The physical beauty of the island. The authenticity of the island - in other words, Americanization (no Starbucks, no McDonalds) hasn't arrived."*

### **Convenience**

The convenience of the Cook Islands as a 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 and the good value for money. Comments included:

*"The scooters how easy accessible it is and to travel around the place and how carefree it all us there's a no fuss feel about it"*

*"Beauty of the island, ease to get around and lovely friendly people."*

*"NZ\$!"*

*"Extra shopping and the ability to take home goods which didn't need to be declared as they were safe to bring back to NZ."*

### **Overall good experience**

Three percent of respondents simply stated that their whole experience was a good one. Visitors expressed their positive experience with words such as 'fantastic', 'amazing', 'everything' or 'all good'. Comments included:

*"Everything this is my second home the people are such beautiful people."*

*"It is a fantastic place to spend some relaxing holidays with the family and at the same time combine it with sports and activities."*

*"It was the most relaxed and pleasant holiday we've ever had."*

*"Organized, friendly, and timely, a wonderful island experience. I would recommend it to anyone, 150% better than my experience to Fiji. COOK ISLANDS ALL THE WAY!!!! LOVED Muri Beach and surrounding area. Can't wait to come back. It was everything we dreamed of and more."*

*"I love your beaches and have travelled there 3 times in the last 12 months and this time. My daughters and 6 of their friends came too and all loved it as much as I do".*

*"The fact that it is a great place to visit... This was my 12th visit to the Cook Islands."*

*"Our first visit to Aitutaki. Completely amazing."*

### **Accommodation**

Another 2% of respondents noted that the accommodation they stayed in was an appealing aspect of their visit, referring to the quality of the offering, the setting and welcome from hosts. Comments included:

*“...accommodation and staff are amazing!!!”*

*“Absolutely loved the resort in Aitutaki and the Lagoon Cruise, but also enjoyed Rarotonga and all it has to offer - would love to come back!”*

*“Loved the hospitality. We rented a Villa for 15 days of our stay and 1 day at the Sanctuary. The villa was family friendly for us and we got to meet a lot of the locals.”*

*“We are not resort people and so stayed at a simple Rarotongan house and enjoyed sitting on the balcony at nights soaking up the relaxation.”*

## **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-two (22%) of the visitors took the trouble to note that they found nothing was ‘unappealing’, that ‘it was all good’, or that the only unappealing aspect was that they ‘had to leave’. This group of visitors responded with comments such as “nothing”, or “nothing comes to mind”. These visitors expressed that they “enjoyed every moment” and “had great time”. There were, however, a number of areas that did attract comments (Table 4).

**Table 4: Least appealing aspects of the Cook Islands (n=389)**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Share of respondents (%)</b>
<b>Nothing</b>	22%
<b>Price of goods and services</b>	15%
<b>Public services, facilities and infrastructure</b>	13%
<b>Animals</b>	11%
<b>Food &amp; beverage</b>	10%
<b>Accommodation</b>	9%
<b>Rubbish and natural environment care</b>	8%
<b>Attractions and activities</b>	6%
<b>Poor weather</b>	6%
<b>Local people</b>	4%
<b>Flight related issues</b>	4%
<b>Rental cars or scooters</b>	4%
<b>Too touristy</b>	1%

\* 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%.

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

A relatively high number of visitors (15%) mentioned the price of goods and services as the least appealing aspect during their stay in the Cook Islands. These visitors made comments about ‘costs’ and the ‘price of things’. Comments included:

*“Everything is expensive.”*

*"The cost of everything. Accommodation, car rentals and how unsafe they were (our rental broke down, and it took a long time to get fixed.) and especially the cost of food. We couldn't afford to participate in many activities as we were spending close to \$100 a day to feed our family of four."*

*"The transport costs are horrendous, I am sure the locals would not be charged what the tourists are and while I would expect to pay more the charges are way too high."*

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

Thirteen percent (13%) of survey respondents expressed their disappointment with the public services, facilities and infrastructure. Visitors commented about the 'quality of roads', the 'lack of Internet access', 'poor telecom infrastructure' and public transport. Comments included:

*"Unable to get internet access."*

*"Theft and burglary that is becoming a regular occurrence, also arson and the drunk drivers. The state of the roads is very bad at the moment too."*

*"The road is very busy and generally poor quality. It desperately needs a first quality resurfacing and a BIKE LANE. The road is not safe for bikes or pedestrians, and the piecemeal maintenance work is totally deficient."*

*"The reason I didn't go to Aitutaki is that I felt it was 'tourist trap conveyor belt' I must be difficult to combine mass tourism with the feeling of discovery by yourself, but it would have great to have more options to travel to the other islands. I inquired about Manihiki and discovered one has to book 6 months in advance, and from the UK. Also, the constant noise of the mopeds. Maybe you could try car/moped free days and see how it goes?"*

*"The lack of frequency of buses."*

### **Animals**

The stray dogs, noisy roosters and mosquitoes continue to be an annoyance or a worry for 11% of respondents during their time spent on the islands. This figure is lower than the last annual average (14%). Respondents used a variety of words to describe the dog situation including 'unappealing', 'aggressive', 'roaming', 'vicious' and 'uncared'. Other comments included:

*"Hungry uncared for animals."*

*"The amount of dogs roaming, I went for a couple of runs and had to run the gauntlet of the dogs trying to chase me. Very unappealing."*

*"I had a scary experience with two threatening stray dogs while walking on the main road."*

*“Roosters that crow 7x24...”*

*“gecko (yellow lizards) in the honeymoon villa room at the resort!!!Killed our anniversary night!! As I booked it exclusively for my wife and she hated staying in the room!”*

*“Mosquitoes and dengue fever.”*

### **Food and beverage**

A number of visitors (10%) commented on negative dimensions to the cost, quality and availability of food and beverage in the Cook Islands. Respondents complained about the price of food. They would like to see more fresh and local products, more healthy options, and less western foods. Comments included:

*“The Christmas lunch was a complete shambles and our long standing online booking was not honoured and they made us wait for a table to become free and made us feel like we were an inconvenience. The Turkey was the best I have ever tasted but the ham was wet and tasteless. Overall the meal was very poor indeed and not value for money. The service at the Restaurant was again very poor.”*

*“Lots of poor quality stuff at Saturday Market. Not very authentic looking.”*

*“Lack of a local cuisine and local produce.”*

*“Lack of fresh fruit and little range in local dairies.”*

*“The quality of the food within the resorts does not warrant the cost associated. Poor quality food made the stay less enjoyable.”*

*“A trip back to the seventies in a lot of restaurants but for us this was nostalgia and we enjoyed it all. Interesting that, other than the fish, most of the seafood was imported.”*

### **Accommodation**

The high cost and poor quality of accommodation was a concern for a number of visitors (9%). Visitors surveyed mentioned that the cost of accommodation is expensive for the value received, that some accommodation places need of an upgrade of facilities and services, and that there have been safety issues. Comments included:

*“The cost of the accommodation was high given the quality of the accommodation.”*

*“Some of the accommodation needs work.”*

*“The worst service from the staff at the Rarotonga that I have ever experienced anywhere.”*

*“Found accommodations expensive for what you got. Liked having no TV, Internet for example. but then was paying rates I would pay at larger more developed venues in N. America.”*

*“The lack of cleanliness of the hotel - our room got made up every day but the floors didn't get swept or the bathroom cleaned - while in a tropical beach location sand gets everywhere.”*

### **Rubbish and natural environment care**

Other visitors (8%) mentioned waste management and the lack of care of the natural environment in the Cook Islands as unappealing factors. Rubbish on the beach and street, and the burning of rubbish were often commented upon. The poor condition of the lagoons and beaches, erosion, polluted water, degraded coral reefs and threatened marine life, also concerned a small group of visitors. Comments included:

*“Lack of rain due to climate change - water management and water pollution run-off into sea a concern. No native birds left on the mainland, no known conservation programmes, although happy there is a marine reserve, but more needs to be done to protect the reefs and set up a predator-proof fence and eradicate pests in order to reintroduce native birds form outer islands!”*

*“Comparing our visit 8 years ago we got a shock of how many things changed for the worst. 1 In Aitutaki Lagoon many of the Giant clams disappeared from snorkelling spots that we have visited before. 2 The few that still remains were sporting one colour only which was like a furry brown...guessing that the contamination from the boat fuels are affecting the delicate ecosystem and clean water that they need for existing happily. It does not help that the tour guide is using dishwashing liquid to clean goggles that is washed off on top of the giant clam garden in the lagoon! It should be banned!! Supporting Eco tourism like sailing should be number one priority and number 1 choice for the Cook Islands Government... before the whole underwater scene disappears...!”*

*“The rubbish. Rubbish in the streets. No places, bins for plastics, cans, and bottles.”*

*“Least attractive was probably some of the litter and rubbish around the Markets. Disappointing to see such a jewel in the pacific not being cared for.”*

*“That people burn their rubbish (in their gardens). It is catastrophic for the environment, very unhealthy for the people and the smell makes walking or cycling around the beautiful island a very unpleasant undertaking.”*

### **Attractions and activities**

A small number of visitors (6%) expressed their disappointment with the degradation and damage to the natural attractions, the lack of variety of activities in offer, particular in rainy days and on Sundays as well as the lack of attention provided by some tour operators or service providers. Comments included:

*“The Cross Island Hike with "Pa" left us uninspired - the hike itself was wonderful and the scenery beautiful, but Pa was not at all informative, nor did he take into account the different levels of fitness of some of the participants which left them in a position of great physical risk, injury and potential danger. I would recommend anyone who is of a reasonable fitness level do the walk in a small group but not to pay to do the tour with Pa. It was a real disappointment in terms of learning about the history, culture, fauna and flora of the island.”*

*“The lagoon is being fished out, and the snorkelling experience was very disappointing. We have come several times over the last decade or so, and have noticed a remarkable decline in the fish population. We have watched groups of people inside the reef at low tide beating the fish into nets - we are sad to see it happening.”*

*“There are not a lot of activities you can do when it is raining. Or we could not find information about it. With 2 young children and 4 days of rain an alternative would have been nice.”*

*“I also found there wasn't much for teenagers or young adults to do really except drink once they had done everything. The flights to other islands were too costly and I think the lagoon cruises were over-rated a bit but it was still nice.”*

### **Poor weather**

A small number of survey respondents (6%) 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:

*“Perhaps the weather could have been a little warmer but that's no one's fault.”*

*“We had lots of rain but that was expected.”*

### **Local people**

A limited number of visitors (4%) found that the local Cook Island people did not seem as friendly towards visitors as they expected and complained about the quality of staff. Visitors

from this group 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 local people were quite 'rude'”*

*“This is our 10th trip to the Cook Islands as we love it so much however noticed on this visit (been a year since our last)the locals were not as friendly as in the past.”*

*“I found the Cook Islands people at our resort especially the younger ones and some of the adults weren't very hospitable. They didn't seem happy when we got there and they didn't seem to make you feel welcome at first as if they weren't happy but being at a resort you would think they would need to put on a welcoming face all the time to make us feel like we are on holiday. It made us feel uncomfortable and like we shouldn't ask them for anything. I found the Fijians were a lot more helpful and wanting to help than the Cook Island people. The Cook Islanders eventually became better but first impressions always stick.”*

*“I did not find the locals as genuinely friendly as I had expected.”*

*“We found that Aitutaki locals appeared more friendly & laid back than Rarotongans”*

Other unappealing aspects mentioned by visitors include: flight/airline-related issues (influent, flight arrival and departure times), rental cars and scooters, and becoming too commercialised/touristy.

Comments included:

#### Flight-related issues

*“Air Raro cancelling flight with no notification.”*

*“Wanted our entire holiday in Aitutaki, however two stopover nights in Rarotonga due to flight connections were a waste of time and money.”*

*“Unhelpful airline schedules between the Cooks and NZ. Aitutaki is impossible to get to or from within a day from Dunedin and is therefore not considered because nobody wants to interrupt a holiday with night stopovers.”*

*“We would have liked to visit another island or two but it is very expensive and flights were limited so we did not. This was very regretful.”*

#### Rental cars and scooters

*“The shocking state of the hire car that we had paid top dollar to hire. Was in such bad condition (rust hole in the chassis floor meaning we thought the seat about to*

*drop through at any moment), swapped car for another and got one without working seatbelts and in also bad condition, spent a day of our precious holiday trying to get a roadworthy car. I think whoever is doing the WOFs needs to be checked out as on closer inspection almost every car in their lot shouldn't have been on the road.*

*“Rental cars breaking down - we had three scooters break down in two days! And had to return a car also”.*

*“The fact that car rental places cheerfully rent out scooters to people before they tell you about the test.”*

### Becoming too touristy

*“Muri Beach (Rarotonga) is getting overdeveloped. It’s a pity that so many palm trees have been removed in the latest rounds of development - so that the buildings are very noticeable from the lagoon. The variety and number of fish in the waters directly off Muri Beach have also reduced. We have been visiting here every other year for 20 + years.”*

*“Very touristy, but I accept this is inevitable for economic reasons. Good that the worst of tourism tends to be confined to selected areas.”*

## **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 (41%) of respondents said ‘yes’. Suggestions mentioned by respondents focused on public services and infrastructure (17%), entertainment, activities and transport (12%), friendliness of locals and service levels (11%), quality/cost of food and beverages (11%), environment/safety/animal care (10%), accommodation (8%), weather (7%), and flight schedules in and out of Cook Islands (6%). Comments on these themes included:

*“Although not a huge deal, our only negative experience during our trip was that of the vehicle testing and hire. For both incidents above, I believe that a clearer process could be implemented to avoid confusion in the future.”*

*“More information about local sports or cultural events online, I wanted to attend some sports (particularly football) whilst there but I couldn't find any fixture information. I would also have liked to get involved with community projects and I couldn't find any information on this kind of thing too.”*

*“Compared to our visit eight years ago on Rarotonga...the reef was at places like a dead cemetery with black corals and hardly any fish... it was another shock to see. Isn't reef, nature conservation and animal welfare the number one issue for The Ministry of Agriculture and Tourism?...for the whole Cook Islands to benefit from it?”*

*Not talking about the sad existence of street dogs and the danger that they cause for the public and to themselves... should be solved urgently. We have found on Rarotonga beaches that were full of rubbish from broken glasses, cans, plastic, rubber...and packaging... perhaps there should be clean up days on Rarotonga...and penalty should be given out by the police to the offenders. Beach patrols could look after the standard of the cleanliness and that could be job opportunity for locals to do."*

*"I think all dogs should have a chip injected into them and registered."*

*"Better service at the car rental facility would have made things a lot more pleasant."*

*"Customer service may need some attention."*

*"The market was disappointing. Everything is grossly overpriced. When I think of a market, I think of lots of handcrafts at very reasonable prices. I think if the prices were cheaper, they would sell a lot more product and that would encourage more local industry in making product instead of importing it. It seems to me from a business point of view that there is a captive audience of tourists that are really not being taken advantage of with local resources. One example is fresh drinking nuts or even bottles coconut water. The price for a Nu is way too high considering they are just going to waste everywhere you look. If they sold them for 50 cents or even \$1 I'm sure they would sell a lot more of them."*

*"More fresh food options to purchase, as our cabana had a kitchen. There were limited food shopping options."*

*"...better air conditioning in the restaurants and cafes, and being able to see the coconut crabs."*

*"More genuine interaction with the people and culture."*

*"We wanted to stay more nights but could not due to connection of Air New Zealand to Los Angeles."*

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

The majority of visitors (93%) indicated that they would consider re-visiting the Cook Islands. This figure is slightly lower than the 2013/14 annual average of 94% and the same quarter in 2014 (95%). 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 friendly local people, and the overall great holiday destination. These four themes covered the majority of the responses provided.

Forty-two 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 'the pace of life' and 'a beautiful place to relax'. Visitors used key words such as 'relaxing', 'easy', 'slow', 'quiet' and 'laid back' – indicating the emphasis they place on the islands as a place to completely relax. Comments included:

*"It's paradise, plain and simple. It's a true repose from the stresses of life, in one of the most uniquely beautiful, secluded and special places on Earth."*

*"Most gorgeous, remote, serene and "untouched" place I've ever been."*

*"It's a paradise on earth and one can really disconnect from the modern world."*

The warm climate and natural beauty of the Cook Islands was noted by 24% 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:

*"Yes because the nature and landscape of the islands are amazing."*

*"Because it is a fantastic place to have a holiday where the water is warm..."*

*"...the water temperature was good and its viability good."*

Nineteen percent of the visitors identified the friendly, helpful and welcoming local people as a significant feature that encourages them to return to the Cook Islands. Respondents commented:

*"I'm planning on coming back because of how welcoming and lovely all the locals were feel like I now have another home away from my original here in Australia."*

*"The local people are so welcoming, the service is great everywhere you go."*

*"...people are lovely and very friendly."*

Those who stated that they had an overall great experience (17%) mentioned that their trip to the Cook Islands had 'exceeded expectations', was 'paradise' and that they just 'love it!' Others commented that they 'can't wait to go back', and that they had 'awesome holiday'. Respondents also mentioned that they would 'go back in a heartbeat', have 'already booked for next year' or that they have been returning for many years. A number of respondents also mentioned that they would be bringing family or friends next time in order to share the experience with them. Comments here included:

*"Already planning 2016. It was my second visit but my husband first. He said it was his best holiday ever!"*

*“This was our 4th visit over 15 years. We love it. Favourite place on earth.”*

*“Overall a great place for a holiday, next time I would budget a bit more money for extra activities.”*

*“Because of it being my soul haven. Been there many times and after moving back to Europe it is my treat every few years.”*

*“I have been twice now and am returning in April for another wedding and it’s absolutely my favourite holiday destination.”*

Of those respondents (n=30) who said they would not be returning to the Cook Islands (7%), the main comments were revolved around the fact that they felt they had seen what they really wanted to see in the Cook Islands and now wanted to visit other countries. Other comments included the high cost of the overall trip, distance, and the unpleasant experiences. Comments here include:

*“We have seen it and enjoyed it but would prefer to go elsewhere ...”*

*“For business yes but for pleasure no. Too expensive.”*

*“Is very far for me, and I would visit other island I have not visited yet.”*

*“The locals were unfriendly and there was too much trash around. I can go to other places to snorkel.”*

*“Kite surfing spoils the peace and tranquillity of the lagoon.”*

Nearly all visitors surveyed (98%) said that they would recommend the destination to their family and friends. Just one third (33%) of these visitors stated they would recommend the Cook Islands because of the ‘atmosphere’: this was again described as ‘relaxing’, ‘peaceful’, ‘quiet’ and with a ‘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 ‘chill out’ from their busy lifestyle.

Twenty six percent of the 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 – ‘beautifully preserved beaches’, ‘authentic’ and ‘stunning’ place.

Eighteen percent 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 ‘good experience’ and ‘perfect relaxing holiday’ and that they just ‘loved it’.

Fifteen percent of the visitors mentioned the 'friendly' local people as a key to their recommendation of the Cook Islands. Other words used to describe the Cook Islanders included 'lovely', 'welcoming' and 'friendly'.

Other themes that were mentioned included the convenience of the islands as a destination – especially for New Zealanders and Australians (7%), the attractions and activities available (5%), the Cook Islands culture (5%), food and beverage options (3%), the ease of New Zealand currency and language (3%), affordability of the holiday (2%), the islands being a family friendly and safe destination (2%), and the accommodation available (1%).

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

*"It is a quick flight. Uses NZ currency and you can make it as cheap or expensive as you like."*

*"Peaceful, beautiful, different to anywhere else in the world, unspoiled. No crime."*

*"Island paradise NOT ruined by over commercialization!"*

*"See another part of Polynesia which has a clean environment and good tourist spots."*

*"Better beaches and water than mainland Fiji..."*

*"History and cultural significance."*

*"...so friendly, relaxing and beautiful, you never want to leave."*

*"We were advised of what great experiences others had had prior to our trip and found it to be true."*

*"Great for a family getaway. Family friendly country."*

*"There are some fantastic places to see and wonderful people that welcome you even if they do not know you."*

Only 2% of visitors (n=10) 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 January to March 2015 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 with 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.

Visitor spend prior to arrival in the Cook Islands has increased slightly from the 2013/14 annual average, average visitor spend once on the island is up 1.8% from the 2013/14 average and nearly 5% 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*