

# *Cook Islands Tourism Corporation*

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

FOR THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM  
HON. MARK BROWN



Love a little paradise  
— for real



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**HON. PRIME MINISTER MARK BROWN**

Minister For Tourism  
Government Of The Cook Islands

## *Kia Orana!*

The Cook Islands Tourism Corporation is pleased to present its annual report for the financial year 2022/23. This document meets the annual reporting requirements of the Cook Islands Tourism Marketing Corporation Act 1998 and Amendment 2007.

Visitor arrivals this year more than doubled compared to 2021/22, with 127,529 visitors versus 59,755 from the year prior, an increase of 113%. New Zealand remains the key source market for visitors, with 81% (103,648) of arrivals, and a further 11% (14,396) from Australia found their way to our shores. Research informs us that visitors to the Cook Islands are staying longer (9.1 days), spending more (\$216 per day) and are more satisfied (97%) than the same period last year.

Air New Zealand remains the key commercial partner in providing flights from our major gateway (Auckland), and is supported by 3 flights a week by Jetstar. The conclusion of additional airline and route support programmes has created much needed airlift to the Cook Islands. This included inaugural direct flights to Rarotonga from Papeete with Air Rarotonga and Air Tahiti (August 2022 and June 2023), Honolulu with Hawaiian Airlines (May 2023) and Sydney with Jetstar (June 2023). Given the late start into the financial year, this newfound connectivity will undoubtedly fuel our tourism revival for the coming 2023/24 financial year and we will see New Zealand airlift move from 157,267 seats in 2023, with a forecast of 162,320 in 2024. Australia is expected to rise from 17,496 seats in 2023 to 27,504 in 2024. United States will increase from 5,312 seats in 2023 to 9,776 in 2024; and Tahiti is expected to reach 6,500 seats in 2024.



While significant strides have been made to ensure stability for the industry, we are not out of the woods yet, and challenges remain.

Aviation strategy and route development remain at the forefront. Accommodation inventory will speak to our ability to attract best fit options for the airline, route and destination. Available room stock has decreased by 12%, from 8,327 beds to 7,348 in January 2023. This translates to a reduced capacity to accommodate 31,266 passengers per year. This decline in carrying capacity will play a pivotal role in shaping our future airlift considerations. Labour and workforce remain a factor in the industry's ability to rebound, operate and sustain service levels. The Cook Islands is facing critical workforce and labour shortages and the outward migration of foreign and local labour to more attractive offshore employment opportunities is putting a strain on the tourism private sector and there is no short term solution in sight. Supply constraints and increasing prices will continue to impact business.



Focus will remain on fortifying year-round business. While we anticipate a more favourable low season this year with 10,000 additional passengers compared to the previous year, we recognize that it still falls short of the 'traditional low season'. This underscores the importance of our continuous efforts to address low-season challenges.

Tourism remains the cornerstone of the Cook Islands economy, and it will continue to play a pivotal role in fulfilling the development aspirations of Cook Islanders well into the future. Drawing from the lessons learned to date, we can expect that the global demand for leisure travel will continue to grow. Our Data & Insights programme highlights that we are already witnessing a shift in the preferences of future travellers, who will place greater emphasis on environmental consciousness and seek connected experiences alongside the relaxation and enjoyment provided by our tropical holiday destination. The challenge lies in positioning the Cook Islands to meet these evolving expectations and redefining our position in the future of international visitor travel. The Cook Islands Tourism Corporation - through the Cook Islands Tourism Development Strategy (CITDS) launched in October 2023 - is swiftly adapting to these emerging realities, committed to offering continued leadership and support

to the industry, and providing timely and comprehensive advice to Government. Exploring possibilities in our pa enua and embracing regenerative travel principles will diversify our offerings and enrich visitor experiences. By fostering effective public-private collaboration, the collective efforts of our industry partners will drive innovation and competitiveness. Additionally, a comprehensive legislative review of the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation's framework is in order, ensuring our operational structures are agile and aligned with our evolving goals.

I take this opportunity to thank my Board colleagues and our Management and Staff for their dedication and efforts through unprecedented times. I also wish to record our appreciation of the years of guidance and support from our Minister and Prime Minister, Hon. Mark Brown.

Kia Manuia,

**EWANS SMITH**  
CHAIRMAN  
COOK ISLANDS TOURISM BOARD





## 2 STATEMENT OF INTENT

This Statement of Intent establishes the framework for the Cook Islands Tourism Marketing Corporation (CITMC) Annual Report, reinforcing our commitment to transparency, accountability, and alignment with the expectations of Government and our stakeholders.

### **Government Expectations:**

CITMC acknowledges the formal expectations from the Honourable (Mr) Mark Brown, Minister for Cook Islands Tourism Corporation, and our Chief Executive Officer, Karla Eggelton. This commitment links CITMC's work to the National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+ (NSDA+), national priorities, and the Medium-Term Budget Framework, ensuring that our efforts are in harmony with broader governmental objectives.

### **Expenditure Plans:**

In alignment with the strategic objectives outlined in the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITMC) Business Plan, the content of this Annual Report aligns with our strategic goals, agency objectives, and key program deliverables, consistent with Government expectations.

### **Organizational Obligations:**

CITMC's Chief Executive Officer and staff pledge to fulfill the expectations outlined in the Medium-Term Business Plan while performing mandated functions and organizational obligations. These efforts remain dedicated to achieving our goals and advancing the Cook Islands tourism sector.

### **Stakeholder Relationships:**

CITMC remains committed to meeting the needs of all stakeholders and clients. We pledge to provide clear, professional, effective, and timely service, offering honest advice while treating everyone with courtesy, dignity, and respect.

### **Compliance and Governance:**

CITMC upholds high standards of corporate governance, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and policies. We commit to preparing annual reports as mandated and maintaining various corporate documents and guidelines. This includes business plans, staff work plans, performance agreements, and internal policies. CITMC will remain agile, adapting to changes in legislative frameworks, and fostering a culture of ongoing training and efficient operations.

### **Leadership and Accountability:**

CITMC's Chief Executive Officer, Directors, and Managers reaffirm their commitment to clear leadership, sound employer principles, staff capability building, effective communication, adherence to Public Service values, and maintaining productive stakeholder relationships. We also pledge to uphold fiscal responsibility by ensuring public funds are spent as intended, creating value for taxpayers.

### **Review:**

This Statement of Intent will undergo annual reviews or adjustments as circumstances require, ensuring ongoing alignment with our commitments and the evolving needs of the Cook Islands tourism industry.

**Karla Eggelton**  
Chief Executive Officer of  
Cook Islands Tourism Corporation

**Honourable (Mr) Mark Brown**  
Portfolio Minister

**Ewan Smith**  
Chairperson

# MANDATE, RESPONSIBILITY & STRUCTURE

The Cook Islands Tourism Corporation operates as a Crown Agency and is mandated under the Cook Islands Tourism Marketing Corporation Act 1998 and Amendment 2007.

The primary objective of the Corporation is to encourage and promote the development of tourism in the Cook Islands in such manner as will achieved sustained growth, and in a manner which is economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sustainable.

**THE VISION:** Tourism advances the well-being of resident Cook Islanders.

Na te Kimi puapinga turoto e akameitaki i te oraanga mataora o te tangata e noo nei ki te ipukarea

**OUR MISSION:** To ensure resident Cook Islanders benefit from Tourism economically, socially and that we sustain our environment and culture, through relentless pursuit of our goals.

Te Kaveinga; kia rauka mai te au mea me meitaki no te iti tangata kuki airani, mei ko mai i te kimipuapinga turoto mate tau e te tano, e na roto i te tautaanga no te au re i rauka ei te akamatutuanga no to tatou reo, peu, e te ao natura)

The Tourism mandate gives the Corporation the power to promote and market the Cook Islands internationally. This policy has proven successful with the significant increase in Tourism's contribution to the Cook Islands economy through its aviation, marketing and destination development strategies.

The Corporation has a 7-member Board appointed by the Minister of Tourism from the private sector.

The following are the current Board members:

- Ewan Smith (Chairman)
- Rohan Ellis
- Dianna Clarke-Bates
- Serena Hunter
- Emile Kairua
- Teonu Hewitt
- Tereapii Porio

APPENDIX A provides the Organisation Structure as at 30 June 2023.

There are 3 departments within the Corporation; Destination Marketing, Destination Development and Corporate Services (Finance & Admin) with a Total Staff Count of 30:

- Head Office: 22
- Pa Enea – Aitutaki: 1 FT, 1 PTE
- Pa Enea – Atiu: 1 PTE
- New Zealand: 3 FTE
- Australia: 0.5 FTE
- North America: 1 FTE (relocated to HO)

Additional Support supplemented through representation:

- United Kingdom & Nordic States
- Northern Europe - Germany, Switzerland and Austria
- Southern Europe - Italy, France and Spain
- Japan – reduced to 5 hours per week until access is realised.

# 4 DASHBOARD

## ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION



**\$251M**  
VISITOR EXPENDITURE  
(DIRECT)



**89%**  
VS 2021/22 (\$96.7M)

## VISITORS



**127,529**  
VISITORS ARRIVALS  
2022/2023  
**+113%**  
VS 2021/22



**\$216**  
AVERAGE SPEND  
(ON ISLAND, PER DAY)



**9.1**  
AVERAGE LENGTH  
OF STAY (NIGHTS)



**97%**  
VISITOR  
SATISFACTION RATE



**94%**  
WILLING TO  
RETURN



**97%**  
WILLING TO  
RECOMMEND

## PURPOSE OF VISIT



HOLIDAY  
**83%**  
vs 76% JAN - MAR 2022



SPORTING EVENT  
**2%**  
vs 7% JAN - MAR 2022



WEDDING  
**5%**  
vs 5% JAN - MAR 2022



VFR  
**4%**  
vs 4% JAN - MAR 2022



HONEYMOON  
**2%**  
vs 3% JAN - MAR 2022

## VISITOR INSIGHTS



AGED 70+ VISITORS  
**12%**  
vs 6% JAN - MAR 2022



TRAVEL COMPANIONS  
**3 PEOPLE**  
vs 3 PEOPLE JAN - MAR 2022



FIRST VISIT  
**45%**  
vs 50% JAN - MAR 2022



AVG. INCOME  
**\$154,882**  
vs \$148,890 JAN - MAR 2022

Source: International Visitors Survey, Jan - Mar 2023

## DIGITAL DESTINATION MARKETING: WEBSITE

www.cookislands.travel



**1.3M**  
TOTAL  
WEBSITE USERS  
**+27%** VS 2021/22

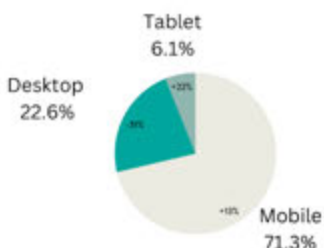


**1.7M**  
TOTAL WEBSITE  
SESSIONS  
**+19%** VS 2021/22

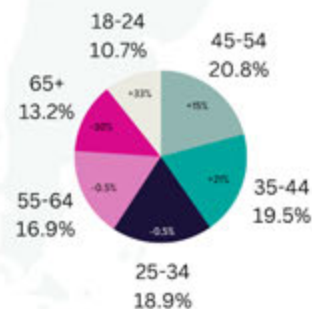


**3.8M**  
TOTAL WEBSITE  
PAGE VIEWS  
**+59%** VS 2021/22

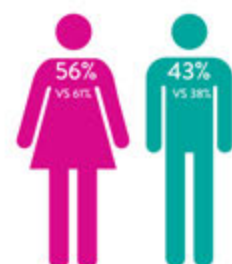
## USERS BY DEVICE



## USERS BY AGE



## USERS BY GENDER



## TOURISM CAPACITY



**78%**  
AIR CAPACITY  
LOAD CAPACITY FILLED



**127,529**  
# INBOUND  
PASSENGERS



**163,864**  
# TOTAL  
SEATS

## ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY



**658**  
TOTAL  
PROPERTIES



**2,941**  
TOTAL #  
OF ROOMS



**7,348**  
TOTAL #  
OF BEDS



**572**  
HOLIDAY  
HOMES



**8**  
HOTEL 35+  
ROOMS

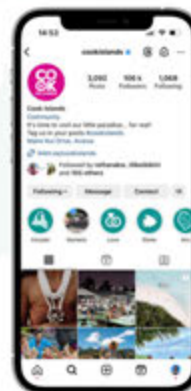


**78**  
HOTELS/ SELF  
CATERING  
35- ROOMS

## DIGITAL DESTINATION MARKETING: SOCIAL MEDIA



**1.1M**  
TOTAL SOCIAL MEDIA  
FOLLOWERS  
+2% VS 2021/22



**989,079**  
FACEBOOK LIKES  
VS 852,297 (2020/21)



**33.3M**  
TOTAL SOCIAL  
MEDIA IMPRESSIONS  
+2% VS 2021/22



**105,230**  
FOLLOWERS  
VS 94,377 (2020/21)

# 5

# PERFORMANCE

OVERALL PERFORMANCE AGAINST OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

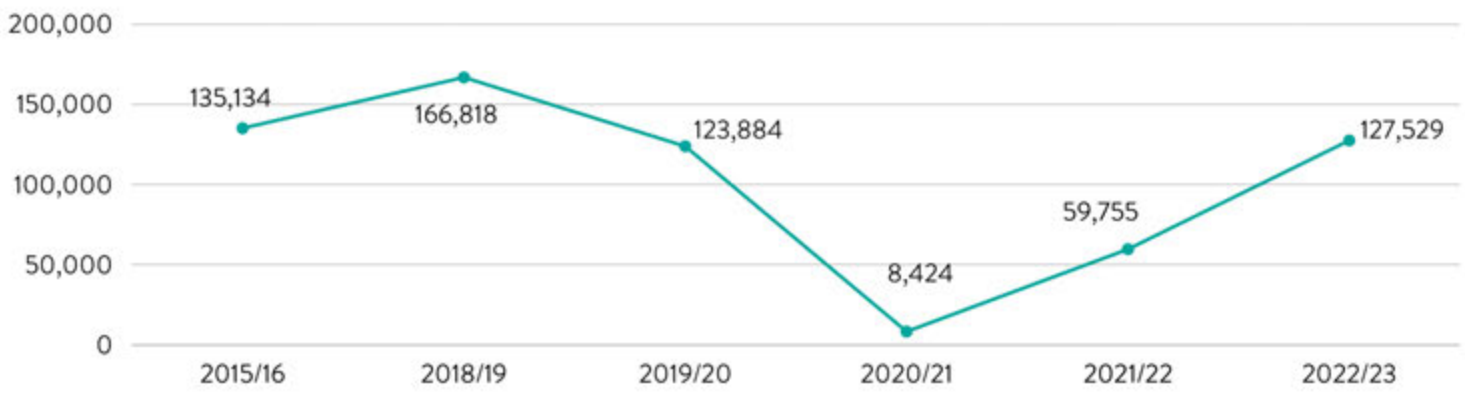
### VISITOR ARRIVALS

Cook Islands finished the financial year 2022/23 at 127,529 visitor arrivals. Compared to the year prior 2021/22 this more than doubled from 59,575, a 113% increase.



**127,529**  
VISITOR ARRIVALS  
2022/23  
**+113%**  
VS 2021/22

### ANNUAL VISITOR ARRIVALS BY FINANCIAL YEAR



### FINANCIAL YEAR



FINANCIAL YEAR	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
2022/23	15,012	13,151	12,893	11,860	9,308	9,916	7,041	6,003	7910	9,904	11,091	13,440	127,529
2021/22	12,405	5,856	0	0	46	53	3,638	3,173	3,583	8,052	9,010	13,939	59,755
2020/21	160	17	44	26	85	122	63	62	139	166	1,486	6,054	8,424
2019/20	18,612	18,464	17,913	16,092	13,410	14,567	9,986	8,928	5,814	0	0	98	123,884
2018/19	18,332	16,777	16,499	15,468	13,141	14,109	10,128	7,608	10,659	13,739	14,430	15,928	166,818
2015/16	14,362	12,658	12,063	13,252	9,440	11,120	8,226	6,109	9,926	11,346	12,262	14,370	135,134



## AIRLIFT

Key to the increases in visitor arrivals has a direct bearing on significant changes in airlift. With the conclusion of additional airline and route support programmes, this is expected to stabilise baseline airlift to the Cook Islands for the next 24-36 months.

### AIRLINE INVENTORY: SEATS INTO COOK ISLANDS BY CALENDAR YEAR

	2019	2022	2023	2024 (FORECAST)
New Zealand	202,479	150,908	157,267	162,320
Australia	16,972	0	17,496	27,504
United States	16,777	0	5,312	9,776
Tahiti	3,593	884	4,832	6,500
Total	239,821	151,792	184,907	206,100

### SEAT CAPACITY BY AIRLINE INTO COOK ISLANDS 2022/23



## ACCOMMODATION

Since 2020 available room stock reduced by 12%, from 8,327 beds to 7,348 in January 2023. The annualised difference of 979 beds (factoring average length of stay of 8 nights and 70% occupancy) means the Cook Islands has reduced ability to accommodate 31,266 passengers per year. This reduction in carrying capacity will factor into future airlift considerations.

### ACCOMMODATION INVENTORY: ROOM STOCK

TOTAL ALL ISLANDS	2020	JAN -23	DIFF	% CHANGE
Number of Properties	805	658	147	-18%
Number of Rooms	3,311	2,941	370	-11%
Number of Beds (pax)	8,327	7,348	979	-12%



## SOURCE MARKET PERFORMANCE

Cook Islands Tourism Corporation has sales and marketing branches and representation in New Zealand, Australia, North America, UK & Nordic, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, and Japan. COVID-19 has reshaped the markets and will take years to fully recover. Some of the key highlights by market for 2022/23;

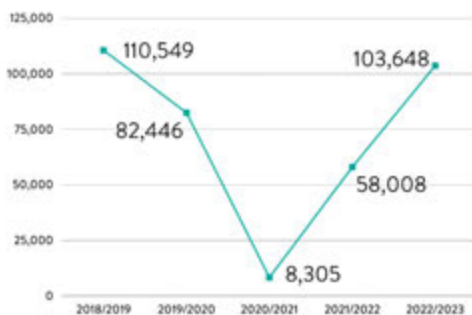
### NEW ZEALAND

DIRECT ACCESS SINCE 13 JANUARY 2022

New Zealand, our leading source market, displays high awareness and holds the #1 position in visitor arrivals. This short-haul market enables swift responses to low occupancy, enhancing our adaptability. Our vision is to position the Cook Islands as the premier choice in the South Pacific, diversifying beyond a single market. We aim to reduce reliance on any one market, strategically reallocating resources for a more balanced and sustainable growth trajectory.

#### NEW ZEALAND VISITOR ARRIVALS

2018/19 - 2022/23



103,648

VISITOR ARRIVALS  
2022/23

8.5 nights  
LENGTH OF STAY

+45,640

VISITOR ARRIVALS  
+79%

\$207 daily  
LOCAL SPEND

81%

MARKET SHARE

\$1,760  
TOTAL SPEND



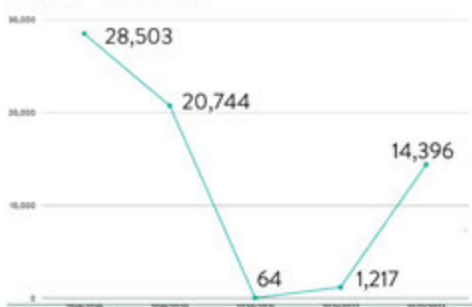
### AUSTRALIA

DIRECT ACCESS SINCE 29 JUNE 2023

Australia, our second highest visitor source, presents immense potential despite its current low awareness. It's a market with a high propensity for spending and extended stays. Our strategy focuses on consumer education and re-education of trade partners to elevate awareness. This includes efforts to position the Cook Islands as an attractive destination, encouraging market diversification. The close geographical location to Australia provides significant growth opportunities, reducing dependency on the New Zealand market. Key activity supports our direct Jetstar SYD-RAR flight, bolstering accessibility and promoting increased visitation.

#### AUSTRALIA VISITOR ARRIVALS

2018/19 - 2022/23



14,396

VISITOR ARRIVALS  
2022/23

9.9 nights  
LENGTH OF STAY

+13,179

VISITOR ARRIVALS  
+1,083%

\$218 daily  
LOCAL SPEND

11%

MARKET SHARE

\$2,158  
TOTAL SPEND





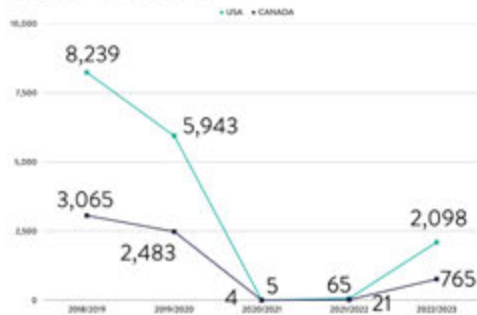
## NORTH AMERICA

DIRECT ACCESS SINCE 20 MAY 2023

North America represents a market with enormous potential, despite current low awareness levels. Consumers here have the highest propensity to spend and extend their stay. Our strategy emphasises consumer education and trade partner re-education to enhance awareness. We aim to position the Cook Islands as an undiscovered gem, capitalising on unique selling propositions (USPs) to lead the market. With a particular focus on the Pacific North West and targeting US retirees in Honolulu, growth potential is promising. Marketing promotions and activity supports the direct Hawaiian Airlines flight, ensuring increased accessibility. The General Manager is currently based at Rarotonga Head Office, and once business stabilises from this new route, then we will see a likely move to a permanent presence in the market.

### NORTH AMERICA VISITOR ARRIVALS

2018/19 - 2022/23



2,863  
VISITOR ARRIVALS  
2022/23

11.7 nights  
LENGTH OF STAY

+2,777  
VISITOR ARRIVALS  
+3%

\$220 daily  
LOCAL SPEND

2%  
MARKET SHARE

\$2,574  
TOTAL SPEND



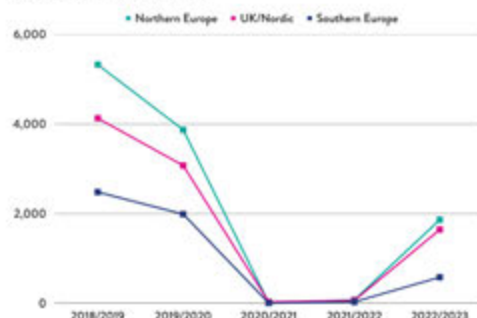
## NORTHERN EUROPE / SOUTHERN EUROPE / UK / NORDIC

NO DIRECT ACCESS. OPTIONS VIA PPT/ HNL/ AKL/ SYD

Our European and UK/Nordic markets present a promising opportunity for growth, albeit with current low awareness levels that require concerted efforts to rebuild our presence. Notably, these travelers often choose to explore during our off-peak season and have are more likely to venture to the Pa Enua islands. The strategy involves embracing the consumer's influence on destination choice and implementing digital outreach to effectively reach and inform this market segment. While growth is challenging, we aim to support established routes and prioritise market diversification. Focus on the primary key markets, with a keen emphasis on operational efficiencies to maximize the impact of our marketing efforts is critical to upgauge these high value markets.

### NORTHERN EUROPE / SOUTHERN EUROPE / UK / NORDIC ARRIVALS

2018/19 - 2022/23



4,092  
VISITOR ARRIVALS  
2022/23

1,865 +1,791  
+2,420%  
NORTHERN EUROPE

9.3 nights  
LENGTH OF STAY

3%  
MARKET SHARE

581 +1,584  
+1,837%  
SOUTHERN EUROPE

\$215 daily  
LOCAL SPEND

1,646 +581  
+2,554%  
UK/NORDIC

\$2,000  
TOTAL SPEND





**ASIA (CHINA AND JAPAN)**

NO DIRECT ACCESS. OPTIONS VIA PPT/ HNL/ AKL/ SYD

The Asian market will not be a focus for Cook Islands Tourism until the above source markets are reinstated. China representation has been closed down. Japan is based on a small contract to keep some of the digital platforms functional.

**AIRLINE INAUGURALS**

During this financial year, the Cook Islands celebrated the arrival of four inaugural flights, creating direct access via Pape’ete, Honolulu and Sydney. This complements the already reestablished Auckland routes with Air New Zealand and Jetstar.



Route: RAR-PPT  
 Commenced: 13 Aug 2022  
 Aircraft: SAAB 340B  
 Capacity: 26 seats  
 Frequency: 1 flight per week



Route: HNL-RAR  
 Commenced: 20 May 2023  
 Aircraft: A321neo  
 Capacity: 189 seats  
 Frequency: 1 flight per week



Route: PPT-RAR  
 Commenced: 24 June 2023  
 Aircraft: ATR 72 & ATR 42  
 Capacity: 58 seats / 38 seats  
 Frequency: 2 flights per week



Route: SYD-RAR  
 Commenced: 29 June 2023  
 Aircraft: A321neo LR  
 Capacity: 232 seats  
 Frequency: 3 flights per week



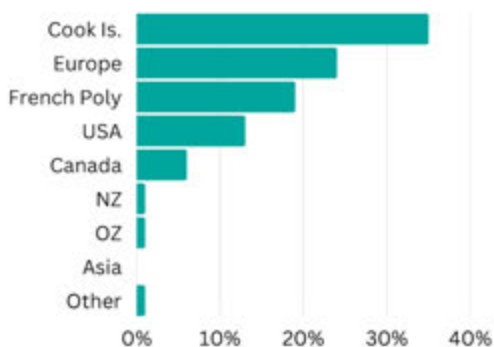


## EXPANDING HORIZONS: DIRECT ACCESS FROM TAHITI TO THE COOK ISLANDS

Although the route has existed in the past, Cook Islands Tourism has not undertaken active promotion of it until now. The initiative is being led by the Head Office and is currently in its early stages of development. Throughout this phase, seven digital campaigns have been initiated, each complemented by a dedicated landing page to enhance engagement.

To extend the reach, billboard advertising has been strategically employed, featuring compelling Calls to Action. A visit was conducted by the Director of Sales and Marketing to Travel Partners including Tahiti Nui Travel, Tahiti Islands Travel, and Raterere Travel, further solidifying relationships within the market. In order to bolster domestic marketing efforts, familiarization trips were arranged, involving Air Tahiti and Raterere Travel. These excursions served to identify and emphasize the Unique Selling Points (USPs) that can effectively drive the success of current and future campaign.

### PPT ARRIVALS BY ORIGIN



### PROMOTIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA TILES



## TAHITI CRUISE EXPLORATORY

With the advent of strengthened and renewed relationship with French Polynesia, the Cook Islands was presented a unique opportunity to become a destination for the largely Tahitian based Aranui Cruises. The main objective was to assess the potential for collaboration with Aranui Cruises to incorporate the Cook Islands into upcoming cruise itineraries. Additionally, the goal was to explore potential freight partnerships, given that Aranui 5 operates as both a passenger and freight vessel. This was the maiden voyage to Rarotonga and Aitutaki for the Aranui 5. Regrettably, due to adverse weather conditions, the planned visit to Atiu had to be canceled. The positive outcomes included the value of a fit for purpose vessel that can navigate smaller more remote islands





## DESTINATION MARKETING

The Destination Marketing department is responsible for the promotion and marketing of the Cook Islands tourism offerings, with the focus on driving economic growth through the attraction of international visitors. This is achieved by actively engaging with our global audience across various owned, earned, and paid digital and distribution channels. While increasing awareness of our destination remains a priority, equal emphasis is placed on converting interest generated from potential travelers into tangible visits. The primary tasks of the Destination Marketing department are centered on the execution of destination and tactical promotions it also includes the management of public relation initiatives, the facilitation of a familiarisation program, and consistently identifying global opportunities to address seasonal fluctuations.



User Generated Content captured by visitors to the Cook Islands

## DIGITAL STEWARDSHIP

Digital marketing stewardship in today's digital age serves as the guiding force behind the Cook Islands Tourism Corporations (CIT) online presence, strategy, and engagement with potential customers. Digital marketing stewardship leads the destination and industry and allows the Corporation to effectively manage and protect its brand image. By maintaining a consistent and positive online reputation through platforms like websites, social media, and review sites, the organisation can influence travelers' perceptions and build trust.

Stewardship involves the responsible management of digital resources and budgets. In an era where online advertising and campaigns are key drivers of tourism, ensuring efficient allocation of resources is crucial. It enables CIT to maximize its reach and impact, reaching potential tourists effectively.

Staying abreast of technological advancements and industry trends ensures that the organisation adapts to changes in online behavior, search algorithms, and social media platforms, remaining relevant and competitive.

Cook Islands Tourism Corporation continues to strengthen digital data collection and analysis, allowing CIT to make informed decisions based on user insights and behavior. This data-driven approach enhances marketing effectiveness and ROI, ensuring that the organisation's efforts align with its strategic goals.



## WEBSITE KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

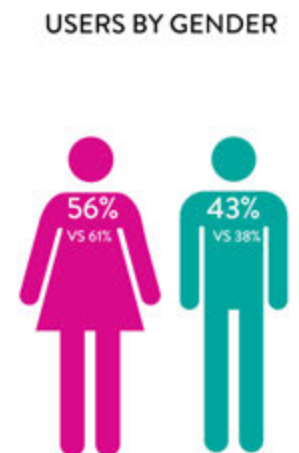
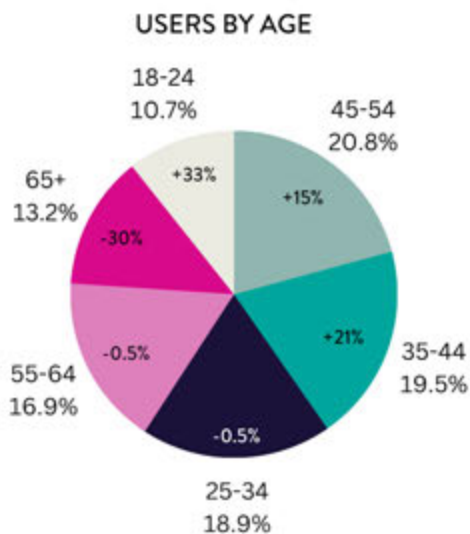
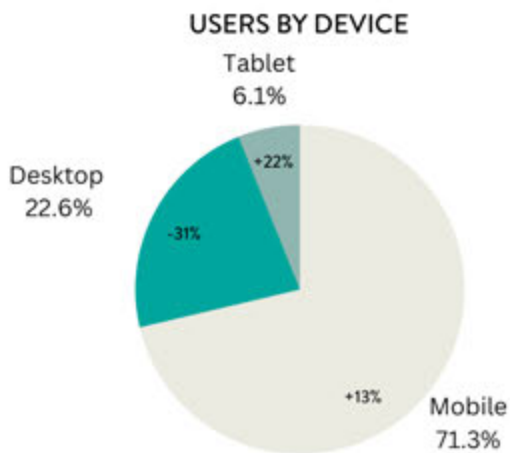
www.cookislands.travel

2022/23 VS 2021/22



## AUDIENCE PROFILES









2022/23 VS 2021/22







## SOCIAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE

The power of social media, particularly on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, is instrumental for the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation in engaging with, influencing, and converting potential travelers. Through captivating visuals and compelling content, these platforms allow us to showcase the breathtaking beauty and cultural richness of the Cook Islands to a global audience. By actively engaging with users, responding to inquiries, and sharing authentic stories, we build a sense of community and trust. This engagement helps us influence travelers' decisions by inspiring wanderlust and providing valuable travel information. Furthermore, the ability to use targeted advertising and partnerships with influencers on these platforms allows us to efficiently convert interest into action, driving bookings and visitation. In essence, Facebook and Instagram are dynamic tools that enable us to connect with travelers worldwide, leaving an indelible impression of the Cook Islands as a must-visit destination.


## SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS SUMMARY

PLATFORM	POSTS	FOLLOWERS	IMPRESSIONS	ENGAGEMENTS	AVG. ENGAGEMENT RATE
	353	988,963	129,393,161	368,178	1.70% Industry Benchmark 0.15%
	226	105,530	11,402,627	120,672	5.38% Industry Benchmark = 1.13%
	144	778,410* Viewers	214,100* Unique Viewers	57,100* Finishes	7.31% Industry Benchmark = 0.5%
	70	8,472	663,331 #COOKISLANDS*	2,409	7.31% Industry Benchmark = 1%
	42	4,679	150,730	16,170	12.13% Industry Benchmark = 5.7%
	5	4,940	48,912	3,188	6.5% Industry Benchmark = 3.5%
	156	3,102	5,924,321	121,534	2.05% Industry Benchmark = 2.0%
	38	2,109	49,054	4,365	8.93% Industry Benchmark = 2.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,034</b>	<b>1,101,005**</b>	<b>32,511,942</b>	<b>693,616</b>	

## FACEBOOK RANKING

Page	Page likes ↓
 Australia.com Tourism Australia's official Facebook page. Post your best photos to our wall to ...	8.6M
 Hawaii - gohawaii.com Hawaii is our home. Learn more about how you can make a (care for) Hawaii's w...	1.9M
 Cook Islands Kia Orana and Welcome to the official Cook Islands Tourism Corporation Faceb...	980.4K <b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>
 Tourism Fiji Bula! Official account of Fiji. Where Happiness Comes Naturally.	641.7K

## INSTAGRAM RANKING

Account	Followers (Effected) ↓
 Australia Tourism	5.7M
 Hawaii Tourism	224.8K
 New Zealand Tourism	190K
 Tourism Fiji	172.8K
 Cook Islands Tourism	108.7K <b>5<sup>th</sup></b>



## FAMILIARISATION PROGRAMME

Our familiarisation programme is designed to educate trade and media agents about tourism offerings in the Cook Islands. Through immersive experiences and insightful engagements, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of our destination, fostering better representation and informed promotion out in key source markets.

### FAMIL PAX\* BY MARKET

MARKET	PAX
New Zealand	48
Australia	41
North America	21
UK/EU (UK 8, NE 14, SE 1)	23
Head Office	8

\*FAMIL pax includes all types of famils (Media, Trade, Prizewinners and Influencers)

### COST SHARING BREAKDOWN



### ISLANDS VISITED BY PAX

ISLAND	NO. FAMS	PAX
Rarotonga	53	140
Aitutaki	35	90
Aitutaki	4	16
Mangaia	1	6
Mauke	1	1



140

TOTAL PAX  
VS 404 2018/19



113

TOTAL PAX  
TO PA ENUA  
VS 251 2018/19

### FAMIL PUBLIC RELATIONS DELIVERABLES



### TOTAL PUBLIC RELATIONS SUMMARY





## WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS

The Cook Islands was awarded "Oceania's Leading Island Destination 2023" at the World Travel Awards. It's worth noting that Aitutaki secured this title independently last year. This collective recognition solidifies the Cook Islands' position as a premier Oceania island destination, especially when compared to Bora Bora, who previously held the title for three consecutive years.



## NORTHERN EUROPE PROMOTIONAL ROADSHOW

A Europe Promotional Roadshow held from August 24 to September 30, 2023 by key representatives including Cook Islands Tourism Director of Sales and Marketing and Turama Pacific Managing Director. The roadshow covered a span of 17 cities and engaged with over 100 travel agents with the primary objectives of providing destination updates and creating awareness of the new Papeete route with Air Rarotonga.

To stimulate bookings, an incentive program was introduced, encouraging travel agents to secure reservations. This initiative was further complemented with public relations and media materials throughout the roadshow. Additionally, the roadshow successfully introduced new marketing collateral, contributing to the overall promotional efforts.

As a part of the promotional strategy, three 2-minute videos were produced, serving as impactful visual tools to highlight the Cook Islands. This comprehensive approach aimed to maximize the exposure and effectiveness of the Europe Promotional Roadshow for the Cook Islands.



## SOUTH PACIFIC TOURISM ORGANISATION (SPTO) CONFERENCE

The Cook Islands achieved a significant milestone by hosting the first in-person board meeting since the onset of the pandemic during the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) Conference. At this pivotal event, we proudly launched the Cook Islands Tourism Development Strategy, underlining our commitment to strategic growth. We took the opportunity to showcase the unique offerings of the Cook Islands, emphasizing our dedication to sustainable tourism initiatives.

The objectives were successfully achieved through the seamless execution of multiple hosted events, including three board meetings. The highlight of the event was the inauguration of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Leadership Summit, underscoring the dedication of the Cook Islands to sustainable tourism practices.

This event brought together 18 representatives from the 21 SPTO member countries, fostering collaboration and a shared vision for a sustainable Pacific tourism landscape.





## EVENT SUPPORT

Developing special events to stimulate the low and shoulder visitor season has been a strategy implemented some years ago. An event development strategy can yield numerous benefits for Cook Islands Tourism. Firstly, it acts as a powerful magnet to attract tourists, both domestic and international, by offering unique and culturally immersive experiences. Successful events can enhance the destination's reputation, strengthening its brand image and attracting repeat visitors. Additionally, events bring substantial economic advantages, stimulating various sectors like hospitality, retail, and transportation, boosting local businesses, and contributing to overall economic growth.

Events provide opportunities to distribute tourist arrivals more evenly throughout the year, reducing the dependency on peak seasons and mitigating seasonal variability challenges. By emphasizing cultural events, the strategy helps preserve and showcase the Cook Islands' rich cultural heritage, enhancing its appeal as a vibrant and authentic destination. Engaging the local community in event development fosters a sense of pride and ownership, strengthening the relationship between tourism and residents.

Events can garner media attention and coverage, providing valuable publicity and increasing global awareness of the Cook Islands as a sought-after tourism hotspot. Attendees' extended length of stay during events boosts visitor spending, benefiting tourism revenue. In conclusion, a well-planned event development strategy can significantly contribute to the sustainable growth, cultural preservation, and economic prosperity of Cook Islands Tourism.

Events Development and Support by Cook Islands Tourism Corporation extended across Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Atiu. It included sporting, cultural, cuisine, art and education themed programmes and attracted incremental visitation and included existing and new events:



15  
EVENTS SUPPORTED



550\*  
INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS  
approx\*

Events supported in 202/23 financial year:

- Motu2Motu
- Aitutaki Lift-off
- Air New Zealand Triathlon
- BSP Netball in Paradise
- Round Rarotonga Road Race
- CIRL World Cup
- Raro/Aitutaki Fishing Comp
- Cook Islands Game Fishing Karaoke Competition
- Mama Reef Comp
- Teachers Google Summit
- Sandie Waddell (Paralympian) Event Support
- Rising Stars Championships
- Te Mire Ura
- Worlds Chef's Global Challenge
- Netball Cook Islands World Qualifiers





## DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

The Destination Development Department continues to play a vital role in the development of Tourism in the Cook Islands. The primary objective of Destination Development is to enhance the visitor experience through project implementation under its key pillars, and working collaboratively with local stakeholders in Government, private sector, NGO's and the community to develop tourism in the Cook Islands.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

### ADOPTION OF COOK ISLANDS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

#### COOK ISLANDS TOURISM CORPORATION LAUNCHES COOK ISLANDS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Cook Islands Tourism Development Strategy (CITDS) provides a roadmap towards a more regenerative approach to tourism and destination development in the Cook Islands over the next 5 years. Developed and administered by Cook Islands Tourism Marketing Corporation (CIT), this document aligns with national, regional, and global sustainable development approaches, and leverages the power of the visitor economy to enhance the wellbeing of the Cook Islands people and place across the economic, socio-cultural and environmental pillars. This is a sentiment captured via the overarching Vision; 'Tourism advances the well-being of resident Cook Islanders in a way that is socially acceptable, economically viable and environmentally sustainable'.

The CITDS is framed by four main aspirations:

- **Optimise our Visitor Economy:** Optimise tourism's contribution towards a prosperous, sustainable, and resilient Cook Islands economy.
- **Encourage Regenerative Tourism Practices:** Ensure tourism has a positive influence on the wellbeing of our people and place.
- **Optimise the Visitor Experience:** Ensure the ongoing wellbeing, comfort, and satisfaction of our visitors.
- **Empower our Tourism industry:** Develop and maintain a positive relationship with our tourism industry to help build capability and resilience, and collectively ensure a high-quality offering to visitors.

The CITDS is designed to be a starting point for the development of a more regenerative tourism industry in the Cook Islands and as time progresses so will the evolution of this strategy and the accompanying operational plan.





## TOURISM RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE

One of the key priorities for Destination Development is to ensure the benefits of Tourism extend through to the Pa Enua and the islands unique environment is preserved. This requires strong partnership with Islands Councils, ensuring a common understanding and alignment of goals and priorities with sustainable tourism.

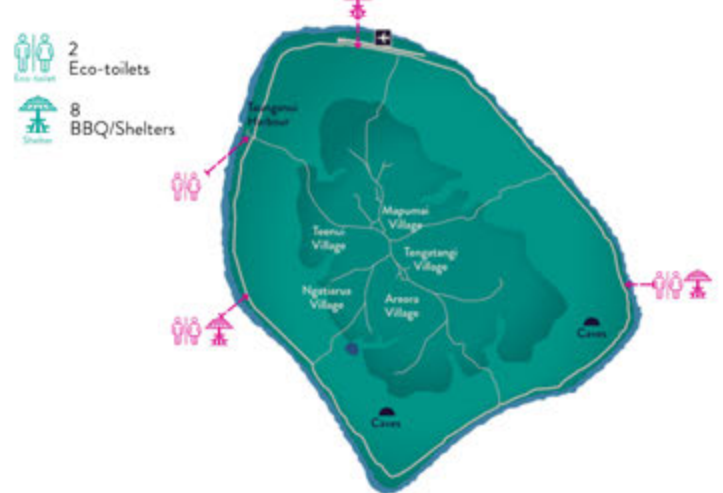
The tourism infrastructure projects for 2022/23 were delivered on the islands of Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Atiu, Mauke, Mangaia and Mitiaro. This pillar is designed for visitor convenience and to connect areas of environmental and cultural significance to improve the economic impact of tourism and enhance visitor experiences. These were the key projects delivered;

RAROTONGA	AITUTAKI	ATIU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avarua Town Plan</li> <li>• Eco-toilets</li> <li>• Hiking directional signage</li> <li>• Outdoor furniture</li> <li>• Road signs</li> <li>• Water safety signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBQ tables and shelters</li> <li>• Channel markers</li> <li>• Storyboards</li> <li>• Tourism office renovations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBQ Tables</li> <li>• Plaques</li> <li>• Eco-toilets</li> <li>• Airport shelter</li> </ul>

### AITUTAKI



### ATIU

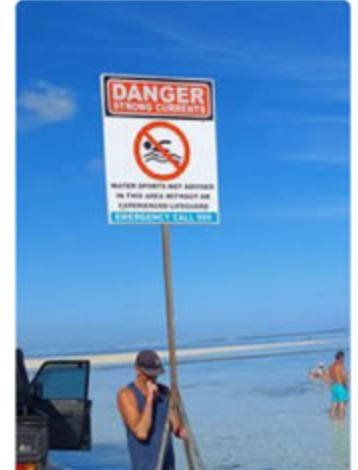


MANGAIA	MAUKE	MITIARO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eco-toilets (yet to be installed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directional signage</li> <li>• Eco-toilets (yet to be installed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eco-toilets (yet to be installed)</li> </ul>

## VISITOR SAFETY

### TURTLE TOURS IN AVAAVAROA PASSAGE

In line with our commitment to visitor safety, substantial progress has been made through targeted initiatives. In particular a significant subset of resource this year was allocated to Turtle Tours operating in Avaavaroa Passage. Cook Islands Tourism Corporation focused on informing and educating visitors through strategic advertisements related to water, hiking, and marine life, with upcoming features on whale safety. New water danger signs and turtle-related signage installations further contribute to this effort. With 11 operational AEDs and plans for their maintenance and replacements, we aim to ensure immediate medical support if needed. The key learning from these initiatives emphasise influencing visitors to prioritize their safety, enhancing collaboration with key stakeholders, and leading the development of a comprehensive Public Safety Policy for legislation over the next 12-18 months.



## DOG CONTROLLING STRATEGY

The Dog Registration and Animal Control Committee referred to as DR-ACC was formed in March of 2021. The creation of this committee is to help address the Dog and Animal issues and concerns raised through the International Visitor Survey and voiced by the Cook Islands Community. The DR-ACC members are made up of Cook Islands Police Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Te Are Manu (Cook Islands) Inc., Cook Islands SPCA Inc., and Cook Islands Tourism Corporation. A Dog Controlling Strategy has been developed to guide the efforts of the DR-ACC committee in the next 5 years. The programme successfully implemented 12 dog desex clinics resulting in 176 de-sexed dogs in the 2022/2 year.

### Dog desex Schedule RAROTONGA 2023

DATES	PUNA
8 February	Tupapa
8 March	Titikaveka
10 April	RAPPA
24 May	Matavera
27 June	Murienua
19 July	Tupapa
23 August	Akoia
20 September	Nirotonga
18 October	Nikao
15 November	RAPPA

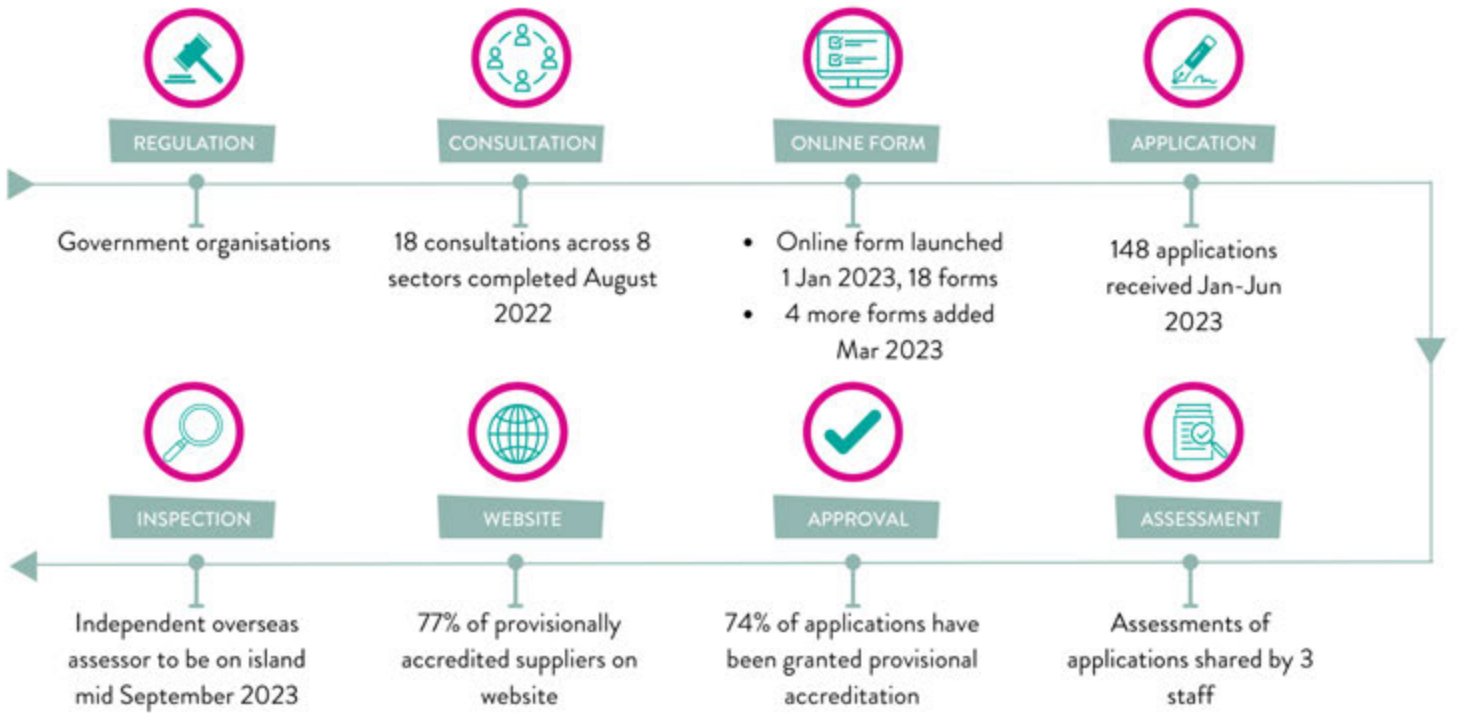


PUNA	TOTAL
Takuvaive/Tutakimooa	14
Akoia	21
Nikao/Panama	25
Ngatangia	16
RAPPA	21
Tupapa	26
Titikaveka	21
Matavera	17
Murienua	15



## COOK ISLANDS QUALITY ASSURED

Cook Islands Quality Assured - The Business Partnership Programme is the leading activity for tourism enterprise and industry standards. The objective is to improve the overall quality of products and services in the Cook Islands and across the Tourism industry through a value-adding, inclusive and integrative programme. The workplan for on-boarding new members from the existing accreditation scheme continues and the timeline below reflects the onboarding process for this financial year 2022/23.





## RESEARCH & STATISTICS

Research and Statistics remains the backbone to Cook Islands Tourism continues to invest in data to support evidence based decision making to drive projects and activities. As leaders in the Pacific Cook Islands Tourism in partnership with New Zealand Tourism Research Institute (NZTRI) our programmes are designed and delivered for the Cook Islands context and have now been tailored and used across the Pacific. NZTRI have now disbanded, and Cook Islands Tourism Corporation have transitioned to participate in a regional data programme delivered through Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) and supported by MFAT. This financial year 2022/23 deliverables were the Cook Islands International Visitor Survey and key economic data was derived from this and expressed in the table below:

## ECONOMIC IMPACT



### PREPAID EXPENDITURE

**\$2,705**

PREPAID PER TRIP  
vs \$2,179 JAN-MAR2020

**40%**

FLOWING INTO LOCAL  
ECONOMY RATE  
vs 40% JAN-MAR2020

**\$1,082**

PREPAID PER TRIP  
vs \$872 JAN-MAR2020



### IN-COUNTRY SPEND

**\$216**

IN-COUNTRY SPEND PER DAY  
vs \$166 JAN-MAR2020

**x9.1** NIGHTS

AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY  
vs 8.8 NIGHTS JAN-MAR2020

**\$1,966**

IN-COUNTRY SPEND PER TRIP  
vs \$1,461 JAN-MAR2020

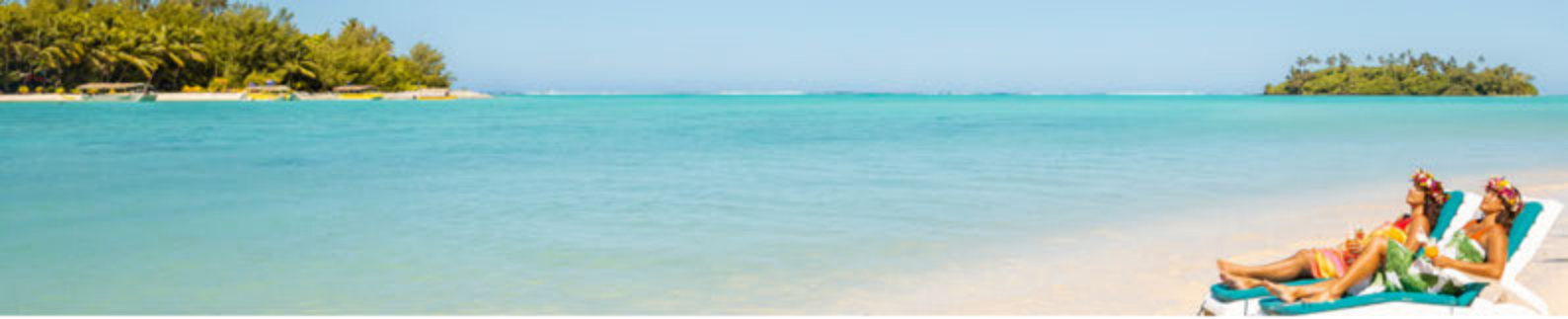


### ECONOMIC IMPACT

**\$3,048** PER TRIP vs \$2,333 JAN-MAR2020

**\$335** PER DAY vs \$265 JAN-MAR2020

Source: International Visitors Survey, Jan - Mar 2023



## INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT (TOURISM EDUCATION & TRAINING)

The Cook Islands Tourism Corporation embarked on its Tourism Education and Training initiatives particular to hospitality, visitor experience and safety. The programmes delivered were:

### KIA ORANA VALUES TRAINING

A signature programme delivered year round. The Kia Orana Values Project is an initiative of the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation to align our tourism industry with the core values of our Cook Islands people. Our values are based on our culture and traditions, while reflecting our unique and modern way of life. These values are a platform promoting sustainable tourism in the community. They guide and inform our collective approach to the industry and inform our aspirations for the continued development of tourism. There were multiple sessions conducted over Rarotonga with 1347 participants in attendance over the financial year.



### COOK ISLANDS BRONZE MEDALLION

The Cook Islands Bronze Medallion (CIBM) was established under Water Safety & Surf Life Saving Cook Islands Incorporated (WSSLCII) to promote water safety, drowning prevention, and to implement rescue strategies in the Cook Islands. Cook Islands Tourism in collaboration with, awarded 26 Cook Islands Bronze Medallion recipients their certification, with some recipients also receiving Instructor status to assist with continuing the programme. Participants who took up the programme, underwent a 2-week training regimen under Chief Surf Lifesaving and Training Instructor, Lisa Maddison, a Bronze Medallion accredited facilitator from Gold Coast, Australia. The course involved rigorous theory and practical application sessions both in the classroom and out on the water. Water safety is paramount and this course and support for water based tour operators is expected to continue.



### CAREERS EXPO

Cook Islands Tourism took part in the Careers Expo held on 21 June 2023 at the National Auditorium. The careers expo is an essential part of the CIT's operations and one that is planned well in advance to contribute to growth, development and advocate for the career opportunities that exist within the tourism industry for the Cook Islands. In particular Cook Islands Tourism aimed to enlighten students as well as the community, the importance of Tourism and the role it plays in our economy. Cook Islands Tourism held two activities which included, general knowledge about the Corporation, and geographical knowledge of places-of-interest in the Cook Islands as part of the expo to interact and engage with the students. CIT's educational booth consisted of Kia Orana Values presentations and a game to test their knowledge of the different tourism sectors with associated prizes to entice and incentivise their interests and participation. The booth received much attention from the participation of over 350 students from years 11-13 in Rarotonga





## AITUTAKI BOAT MASTERS COURSE

A Boat Masters Course is a comprehensive training program designed to educate individuals in the safe and proficient operation of boats, particularly in the context of the maritime and tourism industry. This course equips participants with the knowledge and skills required to become competent boatmasters, responsible for safely navigating vessels and ensuring the well-being of passengers and crew. The curriculum typically covers a range of essential topics, including navigation techniques, maritime laws and regulations, emergency procedures, weather interpretation, and vessel maintenance. Participants also learn about the unique challenges of operating boats in specific environments, such as coastal areas or inland waterways. The Aitutaki Boat Masters Course was held in May and June 2023 and was attended by 20 water-based operators and Aitutaki Fishermen.



## MANA TIAKI PROGRAMMES

### VAKA PRIDE | TE VAKA O RU | TE IEIE O TE ORAU | PA'A TIARE O ENUA MANU

This Vaka Pride programme rewards and acknowledges individuals and community groups working towards principles under the Mana Tiaki Value that underpins the Kia Orana Values Programme championed by Cook Islands Tourism Corporation. These Mana tiaki principles capture the essence of those who are guardians and caretakers of our environment, culture and people. This valuable programme is steered by a multi-agency committee across 4 islands: Rarotonga (Vaka Pride) Aitutaki (Te Vaka O Ru) Atiu (Pa'a Tiare O Enuu Manu) and Mauke (Te Ieie O te Orau). This committee nominate people and groups within the community throughout the year (quarterly) who actively and continuously showcase the value of Mana Tiaki. Nominations for individuals and community groups under the principles of Akono I te Ao Rangi, Peu Maori and Tupuranga Tangata were chosen by the Vaka Pride committee based on their work in those respective categories. This year funding was shared amongst 55 community groups and individuals who mostly volunteer their time, energy and community spirit as Mana Tiaki champions. Akono I te Ao Rangi is combined with the beautification programme managed by Internal Affairs who are also a part of the Vaka Pride committee. These community groups were rewarded because of the extra work that they do in their villages. The Peu Maori category acknowledges and rewards those who preserve and share different elements of our culture and the Tupuranga Tangata category focuses on the development of our people.

WINNERS	TOTAL
Community Groups	20
Church Initiative	3
Culture	3
Mana Tiaki individuals	3
Non-government Organisation	18
School initiatives	2
Special Award	1
Sports/Fitness Groups/initiatives	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>



# KEY CHALLENGES & MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Since the Cook Islands opened its borders 13 January 2022, the focus has been building back the sector. Aviation has been the key driving factor for tourism business and the forecast is to end 2023 at 130,000 visitors, an increase of 14% against 2022 (113,551). While still early to forecast, based on current flights (2023 schedule) and indicators (73% average load factor) we can comfortably guesstimate calendar year 2024 business to increase 15% bringing a total 150,043 visitors. This gives certainty to the short term landscape and provides breathing room to consider needs in the outer years. While growth remains a considered element when looking forward, a broader scope of work is necessary to balance desired optimum long term outcomes.

Next steps for Tourism Post Covid Recovery is to look inwards and consider key strategic steps to reposition the Cook Islands Tourism Sector so it remains resilient to possible external shocks and to further future-proof the destinations value proposition (the why) and complementing product (the what). With emerging travel trends highlighting the evolving habits of future travellers; adapting a sustainable model focussing on value and yield tourism rather than volume will drive future thinking.

As a summary the top high level elements for early consideration include:

- Determining Destination Carrying Capacity
- Tourism Economics – Key instruments for modern measurement
- Low Season Strategy
- Aviation Strategy / Route Development
- Destination Development – Pa Enea possibilities
- Destination Development – Regenerative Travel
- Creating an enabling public sector
- Effective working programmes with private sector
- Legislative Review of Cook Islands Tourism Corporation
- Cruise Support
- Future Resourcing of CITMC

## DETERMINING DESTINATION CARRYING CAPACITY

Past carrying capacity modelling was largely focussed on airlift and room stock. Work needs to expand to include environment, infrastructure, social elements and pa enua. This will bring together stakeholders from a broad cross section of the community and align collective thinking. Current data suggests carrying capacity based on room stock and airlift (as in tables above) sets a ceiling of approx. 150,000 visitors per annum. A proper assessment will provide clarity and a guideline for next steps.

**Action:** CI Tourism working with ADB to undertake a scoping study before Dec 2023.

## TOURISM ECONOMICS

Giving consideration to the changing tides and strengthening the baseline fundamentals of Cook Islands Tourism, there is an associated need to re-evaluate key instruments for modern measurement of the Visitor Economy. This considers intelligence platforms to harness existing data, identifying new data needs and streamline reporting across government. This will improve efficiencies in ensuring reduced duplication of effort, removal of redundant data, and consistent reporting. There is overall umbrella benefit for the work of metric support for the Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+.

**Action:** Work with MFEM Economics Planning Division and CPPO to align key cross-cutting metrics.



## LOW SEASON STRATEGY

Maintaining year round business is a critical consideration requiring constant review and attention. Case studies of other destinations suggest the flow on effects can restrict business significantly and once businesses ‘close up shop’ for the low season, it is difficult to have the business return in any significant form. This needs to be avoided at all costs. As this is a permanent programme on the Cook Islands Tourism agenda it is given constant attention.

### LOW SEASON COMPARATIVE: SEATS & VISITOR ARRIVALS

	FY19		FY22		FY23		FY24 (forecast)	
	SEATS	PAX	SEATS	PAX	SEATS	PAX	SEATS	PAX
Nov	19,840	13,141	1,418	46	12,781	9,308	16,054	12,150
Dec	21,119	14,109	1,575	53	12,608	9,916	17,306	11,500
Jan	19,710	10,128	5,985	3,638	11,653	7,041	17,431	9,375
Feb	14,257	7,608	8,663	3,173	8,773	6,003	14,211	6,375
March	18,886	10,659	9,047	3,583	10,661	7,910	14,508	11,550
<b>Total</b>	<b>93,812</b>	<b>55,645</b>	<b>26,688</b>	<b>10,493</b>	<b>56,476</b>	<b>40,178</b>	<b>79,510</b>	<b>50,950</b>

Action: Short term mitigation involves increased access over key markets including Australia, French Polynesia and United States. The Long term outlook requires a combination of stakeholder management, additional compelling reasons to visit during November-March and tactical considerations to encourage travel. Work is ongoing.

## AVIATION STRATEGY / ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

It is unlikely we will see significant change in airlift for the FY24 and quite possibly F25. The expectation is that short haul will take care of itself in the next 12-18 months. Current performance for Auckland and Sydney flights is above forecast and forwards are solid. The exception remains the summer/low season, particularly February.

The Airline Committee was established 7 years ago as an informal advisory group to review performance of underwrite programmes and provide airline advice to the Minister of Tourism. Members include MFEM and CI Tourism officials and board members. In 2023 Airport Authority were invited to join and this year Crown Law and Ministry of Transport will also be included. This structure and approach has worked well in establishing single points of contact on behalf of Cook Islands Government. A coordinated airline approach will front foot blanket operational issues. This speaks to including border-agencies, airport tariffs and future scheduling.

Action: Enhance strategic imperatives and operational outcomes with a Cook Islands Incorporated approach when dealing with all airline matters.



## DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT: PA ENUA POSSIBILITIES

With the launch of the new Cook Islands Tourism Development Strategy focussed on a sustainable and resilient future; an opportunity exists to expand the tourism offering and amplify community led tourism in the Pa Enuā. While each island is on its own individual journey Tongareva has shown interest in developing a sustainable tourism product for the island to cater to 50 passengers per week (domestic and international). A sealed runway/airport is the catalyst to elevating and advancing the conversation and speaks to a possible pilot programme to design a 'playbook' for other islands that will assist in establishing and/or maintaining a viable tourism product. This speaks to creating economic opportunity, enabling private sector in the pa enua and reducing reliance on Cook Islands Government.

**Action:** (i) Expand tourism work to actively tailor work with and support for Pa Enuā needs. (ii) Develop a 'playbook' to provide a guiding framework to assist Pa Enuā development. (iii) Consider debt/equity fund designed to provide seed investment to pa enua residents for tourism projects that have realistic potential for the future eg. holiday homes, small business (iv) unlock private jet charter potential.

## DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT: REGENERATIVE TRAVEL

The Cook Islands Tourism Development Strategy (CITDS) embarks on a long term regenerative approach to travel. It seeks to share success via a quadruple bottom-line approach – ensuring the 4 C's (commerce, conservation, culture and community) receive appropriate resource and attention to the broader pillars of Tourism. The approach is not dissimilar to other destinations, and if not executed properly there is the risk of negative optics of 'green washing' the tourism offering. By virtue of its size (eg. Population and geography) the Cook Islands is uniquely placed to corner this work and place itself at a leader in the Pacific. The task now is to operationalise the strategy and activate projects. Key to this is stakeholder engagement and buy-in. This includes working collaboratively across both public and private sector.

**Action:** Programme to deliver (i) A Cook Islands Tourism Stakeholders Roundtable to share the CITDS and present opportunities for partnership and collaboration. (ii) Develop domestic communications plan to create awareness and build community support and engagement.

## CREATING AN ENABLING PUBLIC SECTOR

The public sector serves as a facilitator by creating a favorable environment for tourism to thrive. Many examples have come to the fore in recent months that highlights opportunity to review 'purpose and process' as we build back capacity to deliver a commercially considered approach to business and service. This includes developing and enforcing regulations that maintain the pristine beauty of our islands, promoting safety and security for visitors, and investing in infrastructure and services that enhance the overall tourist experience. Moreover, an effective public sector also collaborates with private stakeholders and international partners to implement policies that foster tourism development while preserving our unique cultural and environmental assets.



## EFFECTIVE WORKING PROGRAMMES WITH PRIVATE SECTOR

Cook Islands Tourism Corporation will seek to provide tangible value to the tourism private sector through the development and execution of programmes that will build capability. This looks at assistance in (i) optimising visitor satisfaction by matching tourism offering (supply) with visitor motivations (demand) and vice versa (ii) increasing private sector understanding, support and adoption of regenerative tourism principles and practices.

**Action:** Programme to deliver (i) A Cook Islands Tourism Stakeholders Roundtable to share the CITDS and present opportunities for partnership and collaboration. (ii) Develop domestic communications plan to create awareness and build community support and engagement. (iii) Maintenance programmes for Rarotonga – specifically Holiday homes/Villas market, currently 25% of room stock.

## LEGISLATIVE REVIEW OF COOK ISLANDS TOURISM MARKETING CORPORATION (CITMC)

Given the increased role destination development is playing under the CITMC umbrella (currently mandated to provide marketing services) an evolution to a Destination Management & Marketing Organisation (DMO) is required to add strength to the extensively collaborative role CITMC will be required to undertake to ensure success in programmes. A variety of approaches is being considered and likely a phased approach, working to address urgent issues as a priority ie. managing visitor/public safety (eg. Turtle tours) then rolling out extended measures. An enabling tourism legislative framework is required to deliver to expectation.

**Action:** Update of the Tourism Act to reflect current and future operations.

## CRUISE SUPPORT

One significant outcome from the cruise exploratory conducted with the inaugural Aranui5 visit was the identification of a need for enhancements in cruise port facilities and streamlined processes to accommodate cruise ships.

**Action:** To overcome these challenges, it is recommended that the Destination Management (DM) and Development Division (DD) collaborate closely with government bodies and port authorities. By establishing a cooperative approach, the aim is to minimize entry barriers and simultaneously enhance the overall experience for cruise passengers. This concerted effort seeks to not only bolster cruise tourism but also strengthen the overall tourism landscape in the Cook Islands.

## FUTURE RESOURCING OF CITMC

With significant increases in responsibility to support 3 routes and an expanded Destination Development portfolio, the CITMC is under increasing pressure to perform with very slim baseline funding support. CITMC budget FY24 currently is the same budget level as FY23. This base budget sits as the lowest on record for the last 10 years. CITMC will require a significant boost in support for FY25 and beyond. High level calculations puts an increase in support at a minimum \$3.5M

**Action:** (i) Present a robust business case to MFEM to support a request for an increase in baseline funding by \$3.5M for FY25 and beyond. (ii) Complete donor-funding mapping to assist in identifying and unlocking available funding envelopes.

# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & PERFORMANCE

## COOK ISLANDS TOURISM MARKETING CORPORATION STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

In New Zealand Dollars	Notes	Actual 2023 \$	Actual 2022 \$
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and Equivalents	5	50,539	1,672,164
Trust Accounts		-	-
Prepayments		40,761	53,488
Inventory		-	-
Debtors and Other Receivables	6	318,810	270,464
Aid Receivables		-	-
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>410,110</b>	<b>1,996,116</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property, Plant, and Equipment	9	150,254	216,174
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>150,254</b>	<b>216,174</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>560,364</b>	<b>2,212,290</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Creditors and Other Payables	7	270,275	1,845,127
Aid Liabilities		-	-
Employee Entitlements	8	125,667	139,101
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>395,942</b>	<b>1,984,228</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>395,942</b>	<b>1,984,228</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>164,422</b>	<b>228,061</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Contributed Capital		89,442	89,442
Accumulated Surplus / (Deficit)		74,981	138,619
<b>Total Equity</b>	10	<b>164,423</b>	<b>228,061</b>

The accompanying notes should be read in conjunction with these Financial Statements



**COOK ISLANDS TOURISM MARKETING CORPORATION**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

In New Zealand Dollars	Notes	Actual 2023 \$	Budget 2023 \$	Actual 2022 \$
<b>Revenue</b>				
Funding from the Crown		3,672,000	3,672,000	3,622,000
Revenue from non exchange transactions	2	57,440	-	-
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>3,729,440</b>	<b>3,672,000</b>	<b>3,622,000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Personnel Expenses	3	1,717,421	1,718,213	1,863,050
Audit Fees		-		-
Write Down of Inventory / Impairment of Property, Plant, and Equipment		-		-
Litigation Settlements		-		-
Depreciation Expense	9	75,713	75,713	65,453
Finance Costs		-		-
Other Expenses	4	1,919,012	1,878,073	1,630,130
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>3,712,146</b>	<b>3,672,000</b>	<b>3,558,633</b>
<b>Operating Balance before Gains and Losses (OBEGAL)</b>		<b>17,294</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>63,367</b>
<b>Other Gains / (Losses)</b>				
Foreign Exchange Gain / (Loss)		(5,780)	-	13,522
Gain / (Loss) on Disposal of Assets		560	-	(1,464)
<b>Total Other Gains / (Loss)</b>		<b>(5,220)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,058</b>
<b>Net Surplus / (Deficit)</b>		<b>12,074</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>75,425</b>

Explanations of major variances against the budget are provided in Note 15.

The accompanying notes should be read in conjunction with these Financial Statements

The primary focus this 2022/23 financial year for Cook Islands Tourism Corporation was rebuilding our tourism sector, and aviation has emerged as the linchpin in this recovery. Despite this significant challenge, the Cook Islands has done well to bounce back thus far. With the year 2023 set to conclude with an estimated 130,000 visitors, reflecting a substantial 14% increase over 2022, we have taken important strides in revitalizing our industry and therefore the economy. Moreover, the promising trajectory for 2024 - with a projected 15% growth to 150,043 visitors - instills a sense of confidence in our immediate future. These numbers not only provide short-term clarity but also afford us the latitude to contemplate our long-term needs.

Our vision extends beyond numerical targets. While growth remains a crucial element of our strategy, we must broaden our horizons to achieve the desired long-term outcomes. The Cook Islands Tourism Corporation's Annual Report for 2022/23 underscores the pivotal priorities and direction for the future of our tourism sector.

Our next steps in the post-COVID recovery phase calls for introspection and strategic recalibration. To position the Cook Islands Tourism Sector as resilient to external shocks and to ensure the lasting appeal of our destination and products, we must adapt to emerging travel trends. The future lies in embracing a sustainable model centered on value and yield tourism, shifting our focus from sheer volume to quality experiences. As we chart this course forward, some key high-level themes warrant early consideration:

#### **Determining Destination Carrying Capacity**

We must understand the limits of our natural and cultural resources to preserve the authenticity and allure of our islands.

#### **Tourism Economics**

Developing modern measurement instruments is vital to comprehensively assess the economic impact of tourism.

#### **Low Season Strategy**

To ensure year-round sustainability, we must devise strategies to minimize the impact of seasonality.

#### **Aviation Strategy and Route Development**

Nurturing aviation partnerships and expanding our flight network will be instrumental in sustaining growth.

#### **Destination Development - Pa Enea Possibilities**

Exploring opportunities in our outer islands will diversify our offerings and spread the benefits of tourism.

#### **Destination Development - Regenerative Travel**

Embracing regenerative travel practices will help us protect and rejuvenate our natural environment.

#### **Creating an Enabling Public Sector**

Collaboration between the public and private sectors is essential to provide a conducive environment for tourism development.

#### **Effective Working Programs with the Private Sector**

Strengthening partnerships with businesses in the industry will lead to innovation and competitiveness.

#### **Legislative Review of Cook Islands Tourism Corporation**

Updating our legislative framework will align our operations with contemporary tourism dynamics.

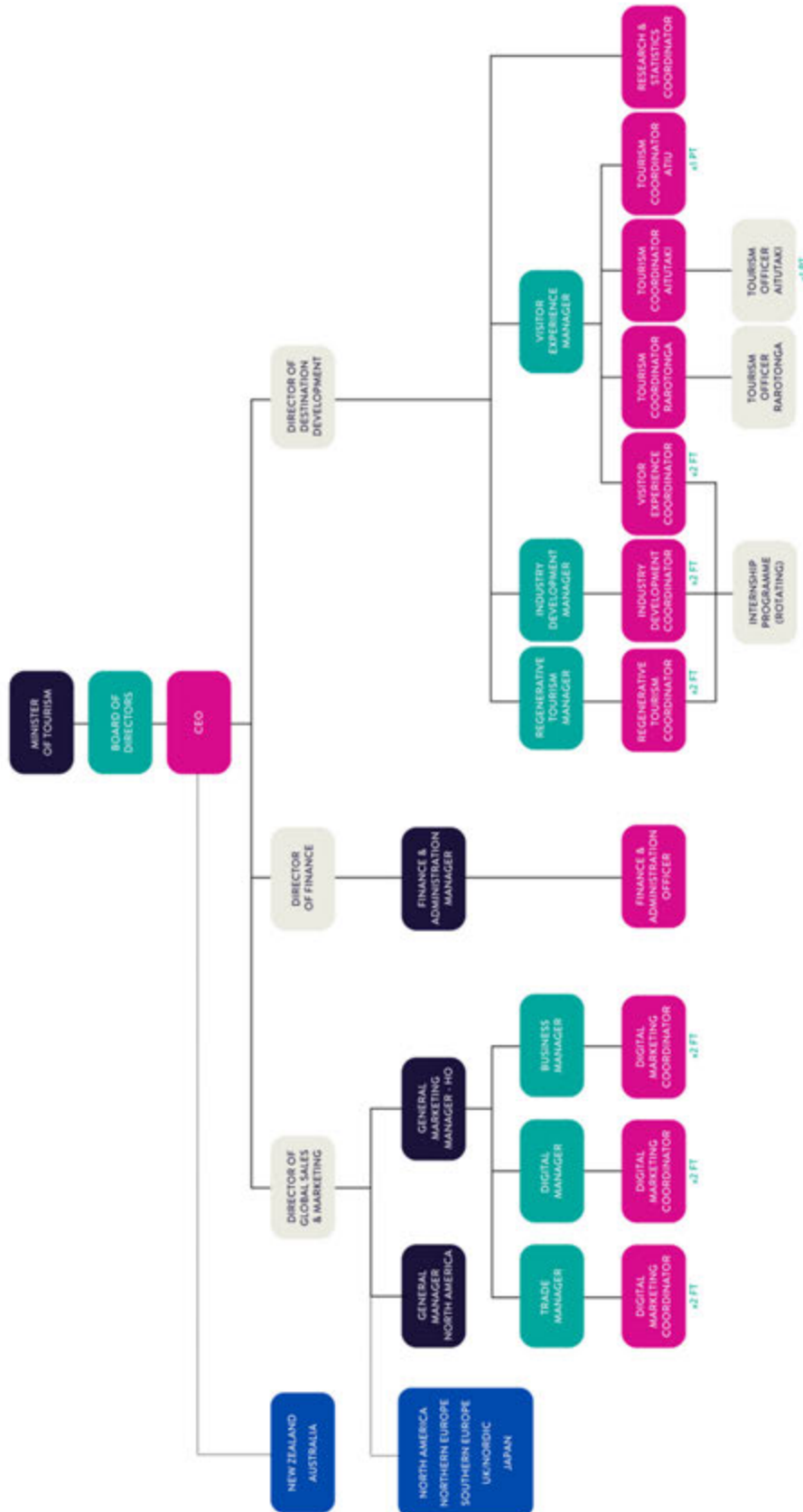
#### **Future Resourcing of CITMC**

Ensuring adequate resources will enable the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation to fulfill its mission effectively.

As we stride confidently into the future, our focus extends beyond numbers and revenue. It encompasses sustainability, resilience, and the creation of a lasting legacy for the Cook Islands. By addressing these high-priority elements and embracing change, we will not only navigate the challenges ahead but also seize the opportunities for a brighter and more prosperous future for Cook Islands tourism. Together, we will continue to offer travelers a unique and unforgettable experience while safeguarding the natural beauty and cultural heritage that make our islands so extraordinary.

# APPENDIX A

## 2022/23 ORGANISATION STRUCTURE







**CO**  
**OK**  
**ISLANDS**

Love a little paradise  
*...for real*