

## Kia Orana!

Te Mato Manava Turoto, Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CIT), presents this factsheet as a snapshot of the visitor economy, highlighting how visitors contribute to the Cook Islands through arrivals, revenue, visitor profile, and our capacity to host them. It draws on data from the Financial Year July 2024 – June 2025 and Calendar Years 2024 and 2025. This overview reflects tourism performance and the opportunities to grow its value sustainably, in ways that benefit our people and protect our future.

### SNAPSHOT

**175,757** ✈️

**VISITOR ARRIVALS**  
Financial Year 2024/25  
vs +7% 2023/24

**98%** 🌟

**VISITOR SATISFACTION**  
Financial Year 2024/25  
93% Visitors willing to return

**\$473.5m** 💰

**TOURISM RECEIPTS (NZD)**  
Financial Year 2024/25  
vs 439.9m 2023/2024

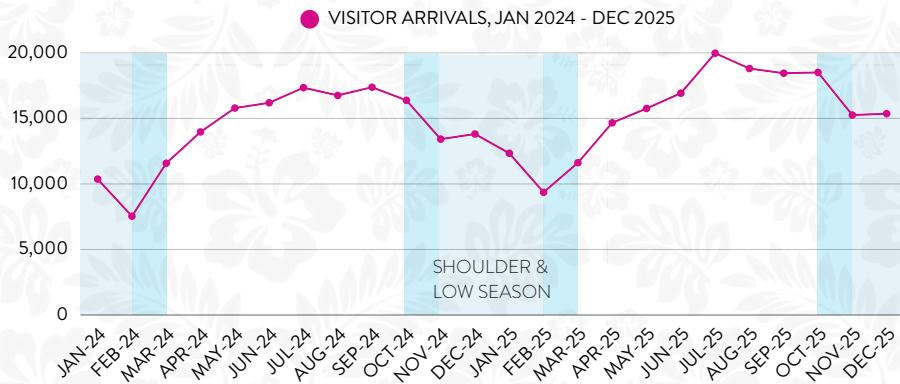
**66%+** 🏠

**TOURISM'S ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION**  
Financial Year 2024/25

Sources: Visitor Arrival Card Information (CIT), CI International Visitor Survey Jul 2024 - Jun 2025, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) Budget Estimates 2025/26

### VISITOR ARRIVALS

When looking at visitor arrivals, it is important to understand the varying seasons and the associated visitor numbers.



FINANCIAL YEAR	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL	% DIF
2024/25	17,346	16,755	17,381	16,380	13,419	13,809	12,339	9,361	11,620	14,665	15,757	16,925	<b>175,757</b>	+7%
2023/24	16,159	15,452	15,734	15,049	12,453	13,270	10,368	7,539	11,579	13,968	15,790	16,191	<b>163,552</b>	+28%

CALENDAR YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL	% DIF
2025	12,339	9,361	11,620	14,665	15,757	16,925	19,975	18,805	18,447	18,508	15,255	15,361	<b>187,018</b>	+10%
2024	10,368	7,539	11,579	13,968	15,790	16,191	17,346	16,755	17,381	16,380	13,419	13,809	<b>170,525</b>	+19%

Source: Visitor Arrival Card Information (CIT) Jan 2024 - Dec 2025.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

Tourism receipts represent the contribution of the tourism industry to the local economy. It is estimated for the 2025/2026 financial year, the tourism industry will account for 37.1% of gross domestic product (GDP) meaning that 37 cents of every dollar added to the Cook Islands economy comes from tourism. For the 2024/2025 period, tourism-related industries, including accommodation and hospitality, contributed just under 40% of nominal GDP. Tourism receipts were \$473.5 million in 2024/25, equivalent to over two-thirds of the economy.

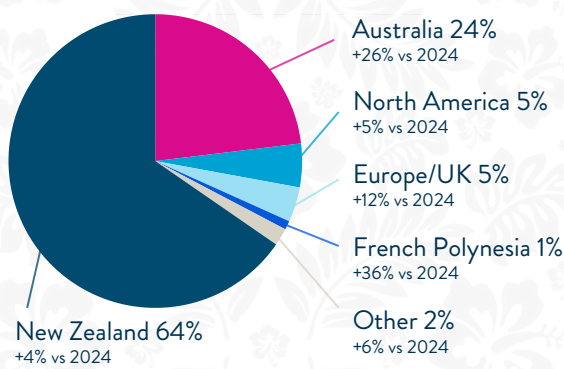
YEAR	TOURISM RECEIPTS (NZD)
2025/2026 (estimated)	\$475m
2024/2025	\$473.5m
2023/2024	\$439.9m

The Cook Islands economy recovered strongly from the devastating impacts of COVID-19, supported by record numbers of visitor arrivals. Economic growth is expected to continue at a more moderate pace in coming years.

Significant risks and uncertainties exist in relation to the evolving global oil supply situation. The Government is continuing to closely monitor developments.

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) Budget Estimates 2025/26

### VISITOR ARRIVALS BY MARKET



TOP NORTH AMERICA STATES 2025	
California	23%
Hawaii	16%
Canada	15%
Pacific North West	14%
Rockies	12%

TOP EUROPE CITIES 2025	
Germany	26%
United Kingdom	21%
Italy	12%
Switzerland	8%
France	4%

### CAPACITY SNAPSHOT

Capacity reflects the Cook Islands' ability to receive and host visitors, through both seat availability and accommodation supply. It shapes visitor flows, influences experience quality, and underpins overall tourism performance.

In 2026, the focus is not simply on increasing volume, but on achieving balance, aligning access with community aspirations to support visitor experience across the destination.

### SEAT CAPACITY BY CARRIER FOR 2026

<b>AIR NEW ZEALAND</b> 170,364 +6% vs 2025	<b>Jetstar</b> 92,968 +19% vs 2025	<b>HAWAIIAN AIRLINES</b> 9,672 0% vs 2025	<b>AIR TAHITI</b> 6,448 +21% vs 2025	<b>Air Rarotonga</b> 2,704 +30% vs 2025
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**NEW ROUTE:**  
Jetstar, Brisbane  
(from 18 May 2026)

**NEW ROUTE:**  
Air New Zealand, Christchurch  
(26 May–Oct 2026)

**EXTRA FLIGHT:**  
Air Tahiti, Papeete  
(6 Jul–10 Aug 2026)

Source: Cook Islands Tourism Aviation data (2026 predicted).

### VISITOR PROFILE

**49%**  
50–69 VISITOR AGE GROUP

**74%**  
FEMALE VISITORS

**54%**  
FIRST TIME VISITOR

**8.7**  
AVG. NIGHTS STAY

**\$167,051**  
AVG. HOUSEHOLD INCOME

### BOOKING TRENDS

**54%**  
DIRECT WITH AIRLINE

**25%**  
ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCY (OTA)  
e.g. Airbnb, Booking.com

**21%**  
INSTORE OR TRAVEL AGENT

**21%**  
DIRECT WITH ACCOMMODATION

### SEAT CAPACITY BY COUNTRY FOR 2026



Source: Cook Islands Tourism Aviation data (2026 predicted).

### REASONS FOR VISITING

**79%**  
HOLIDAY

**6%**  
VFR

**6%**  
WEDDING

**2%**  
HONEYMOON

**2%**  
CONFERENCE

### CURRENT ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY

**715**  
TOTAL PROPERTIES

**3,111**  
TOTAL ROOMS

**7,591**  
TOTAL BEDS

**675**  
HOLIDAY HOMES

**40**  
HOTELS & RESORTS

Source: Cook Islands Tourism Data Collection, Room Stock as at March 2026.

Source: CI International Visitor Survey Jul 2024 - Jun 2025.

# Shaping Tourism for the Future

VOLUME 3: MARCH 2026



Tourism in the Cook Islands is being reimagined through a more connected and caring approach that places visitors, Cook Islands communities, and the environment at the centre of its benefits. Tourism is a vehicle to uplift the wellbeing of the nation, it is not simply an industry of numbers or revenue.

## THIS WORK IS DELIVERED THROUGH THREE KEY WORKSTREAMS:



### REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Focuses on initiatives that directly support, uplift, and showcase Cook Islands communities.



### INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

Focuses on initiatives that build, support, and strengthen a thriving tourism industry.



### VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Focuses on initiatives that guide, support, and enhance the visitor journey across the Cook Islands.

**Me anga'anga kapiti teia au tu'anga e toru, ka rauka teia i te akatupu i te pu'apinga no te ora'anga e te akamatū'anga o tō tātou iti tangata Kūki 'Āirani.**

Together, these three areas support and enhance the wellbeing of the Cook Islands.

## WHAT YOU WILL SEE IN THE NEXT 6 MONTHS

### REGENERATIVE TOURISM

#### TAKI TUA PEU MĀORI

We recognise the integral role cultural storytelling plays in celebrating the stories of our tūpuna. Taki Tua Peu Māori, our cultural storyboard initiative, reflects the beauty and living presence of our reo Māori and history while contributing to cultural tourism for both visitors and the community. A recently developed creative style guide will support rollout across Rarotonga, with future pathways to the Pā Enuā. In the coming months, installations will begin, placing culture at the forefront of how our stories are shared.



#### MANA TIAKI

Mana Tiaki is a microgrant programme enabling local ideas to grow and be realised in meaningful ways across the Cook Islands. The Vaka Pride (Rarotonga), Te Vaka o Rū (Aitutaki), and Te Pā Tiare o Enuā Manu (Atiu) committees have completed their application processes, confirming successful recipients and celebrating the diversity and strength of projects now underway. Te Ieie o te Orau committee in Mauke has reconvened with applications opening soon. We look forward to sharing the projects supported as they begin to take shape.



### INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT



#### COOK ISLANDS QUALITY ASSURED (CIQA)

The CIQA refresh is moving toward a more intuitive onboarding and renewal system that supports providers from entry through to ongoing participation. Delivered in phases, the system will adapt and improve over time, shaped by the experiences of industry leaders and operators. This creates a more responsive framework that supports success while maintaining strong standards across the tourism sector.



#### TE ARATA'A O TE PAE TUROTO SCHOLARSHIPS

Te Arata'a o te Pae Turoto Scholarship is delivered in partnership with Air New Zealand, Pacific Resort Hotel Group, and Cook Islands Tourism. Recipients have been confirmed and will study at the Auckland University of Technology in Aotearoa from July 2026 for six months. They will return with a certificate, experience and skills to support industry development. The future growth and expansion of this programme will seek broader industry support to invest in the growth of our next generation.

### VISITOR EXPERIENCE

#### PUNANGA NUI MARKET ACTIVATION

The Visitor Information Centre (VIC) at Te Tapora Kai, Punanga Nui Market is now complete and coming to fruition through active trialling, with roster times being tested and conversations underway with key partners. It is our aspiration for this space to uplift and support the many local growers and sellers who bring the market to life. An MOU and coordinated activation calendar are being developed to guide this next phase. Further updates will be shared, including the signing of the MOU and the official opening and blessing of the VIC.



#### DIGITAL VISITOR GUIDE

The Digital Visitor Guide (DVG) is focused on enhancing the visitor experience by seamlessly connecting visitors with the diverse range of experiences across the Cook Islands. System design is progressing, with interaction and booking pathways now prototyped to support easy discovery. Current work centres on an intuitive platform that enables seamless content updates in preparation for going live. Early trial access will prioritise CIQA members, with later phases opening access to a wider range of experiences across the islands.



## CELEBRATING OUR PEOPLE

### COOK ISLANDS PEOPLE'S CHOICE

The 2025 People's Choice Awards (PCA) put the spotlight on the real stars of our nation, the people and businesses who live the Kia Orana values every day. A record 905 nominations were received, with 23,591 votes cast from around the world. PCA generated over 1 million global impressions, once again showing how much people everywhere love our little paradise. Congratulations to all of our nominees, finalists, and winners, you embody the warm, authentic spirit of the Cook Islands.



### WOMEN IN TOURISM

In partnership with Te Kumiti Au Vaine, we proudly recognise Maeva Taruia-Henry as Tourism Woman of the Month for September 2025, honouring her decades of service and leadership. Celebrated alongside World Tourism Day, the award highlighted her vital role in strengthening the industry and mentoring future leaders.



All information contained in this factsheet is accurate at the time of printing (20 March 2026). Data sources and references are listed under each section where information is provided. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or used without prior written approval from the Chief Executive Officer of Cook Islands Tourism.