



Towards Sustainability: Strengthening community dimensions of Auckland tourism

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In January 2021, Auckland Unlimited commissioned the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute at the Auckland University of Technology (NZTRI) to review the concept of regenerative and inclusive tourism with a focus on community engagement. To inform the social sustainability aspect of Auckland’s Sustainable Destination Action Plan (SDAP) this project provides insights into how Aucklanders feel about tourism development and how the visitor sector can better serve Auckland’s communities. Carolyn Deuchar, Simon Milne, Suzanne Histen and Eilidh Thorburn prepared this summary report with contributions from Nathaniel Dobbin. NZTRI acknowledges and thanks Auckland Unlimited for their strong support during the research.

Executive Summary

- This report reviews the concept of regenerative and inclusive tourism with a focus on community engagement. The work provides an evidence base to inform the social sustainability aspect of Auckland's Sustainable Destination Action Plan (SDAP) by providing insights into how Aucklanders feel about tourism development and how the visitor sector can better serve Auckland's communities.
- True sustainability *embodies* regenerative and inclusive principles and is built on the idea that everything is connected - natural resources, cultural assets and traditions, communities, and built infrastructure. It is critical to focus on community and place and enable environmental, social, and economic systems to work together and flourish.
- The focus of government, tourism organisations and industry on destination branding, and marketing and the emphasis on enhancing the economic returns from tourism, have distracted attention away from the socio-cultural and community dimensions of sustainable tourism in New Zealand. While community wellbeing dimensions lie at the heart of sustainable tourism development in theory; they have largely been paid lip service to in practice.
- To move towards a more inclusive 'community-centric' and regenerative approach to tourism, actions for social sustainability (along with relevant indicators and measurement frameworks) need to focus on ways that tourism can be a force to *contribute to* community wellbeing, and local quality of life.
- The way forward for Auckland Unlimited is to move from its strong focus on destination marketing, promotion and branding, to truly embrace sustainable destination management, and to create an environment to which each part of the tourism system can contribute and thrive.
- In planning and developing tourism in host communities it is essential to prioritise mana whenua/iwi, residents and local business as well as the natural environment they are surrounded by. This places the host community at the very core of tourism planning. Such a role places an emphasis on taking care of those who live at the destination so they can benefit from tourism and, in turn, can take care of the environment.
- Definitions of value, and indicators of performance need to be co-developed with community. Indicators will broaden beyond economic and visitor number dimensions to incorporate themes of wellbeing and ecological regeneration. Wellbeing factors can align with aspects of the Living Standards Framework, and Māori Identity and Wellbeing outcomes – achieving a balance between material wellbeing and the spiritual, emotional and cultural needs of communities.
- Research conducted with several destinations in Auckland (pre-COVID), shows that most perceive tourism as being good for the economy and support the visitor industry. It is clear, however, that communities also want a stronger voice in tourism processes and decision-making. A range of common concerns are raised including inadequate public infrastructure, and inadequate safeguards to protect community quality of life, and environmental and cultural assets.

- Research shows that Community aspirations for tourism focus on developing experiences that reflect what residents enjoy most about living in their local area. Community feedback on what tourism experiences could look like in the future often centres on around the natural environment, walks, parks and trails, local heritage and culture. There is a clear desire to make more of what exists and to add new dimensions to current offerings rather than trying to build an industry that doesn't fit well with a local sense of place, products and infrastructure.
- Demand-side research emphasises transformational forms of travel: a movement among consumers to travel with purpose and cause; maximising their time and giving something back to the destinations they visit. Motivations for travel are increasingly becoming values-laden and driven by a quest for learning and personal growth. Research in Auckland's destinations shows clearly that domestic *and* international travellers are looking for connections with nature but even more so with local people who can help to deepen and enrich their experiences.
- Two tourism 'hotspots' – Waiheke and Aotea/Great Barrier Island - are identified from previous research conducted on local perceptions and impacts of tourism. These are destinations where tensions between tourism growth and community quality of life are clearly emerging and that require further attention and mitigation. Aotea provides a particularly good example of how ongoing and cost-effective research can highlight tourism challenges, relevant mitigation options and also trace industry performance at a local scale.
- While there are undoubtedly other hotspots within the Auckland region, this review highlights the need for robust and sustained research to identify these locations. Local level data from visitors, residents and local businesses is required to monitor and evaluate the impacts and performance of the visitor economy. It is vital that local plans and strategies are underpinned by locally informed, cost-effective barometers of tourism industry performance. Opportunities exist to develop both 'citizen' and 'visitor' scientist approaches with both host and guest involved in monitoring aspects of their experience – for example by providing feedback on issues of overcrowding, noise, rubbish etc.
- It is vital that Auckland focuses on co-creating transformative visitor experiences and values-based product bundling with local communities. This can be achieved by working with local businesses (including new social enterprises) to curate experiences that leave a positive impact on host communities in Auckland while giving the visitor an unforgettable experience. Regenerative dimensions can be added to existing experiences that may not be currently characterised by sustainable practices. Businesses and community groups can be encouraged to work together to create values-based experience bundles with an emphasis on positive social impact. Opportunities for rejuvenation, learning, culture and heritage need to be woven in with outdoor experiences such as cycling and walking.
- To guide marketing messages, and strengthen the city's reputation, it is important to tell a tale of contribution, of who we really are. As Aucklanders, we care about others, the environment and the places we call home. Focus on sharing locally developed and inspired content about the

everyday life of residents and local businesses in Auckland's *generous* and vibrant communities, enabling both Aucklanders and potential visitors to learn more about the heart and soul of the city.

- The pandemic offers a significant opportunity to transition to a visitor industry that mainstreams the social and community dimensions of sustainability. Applying regenerative and inclusive approaches to achieving true sustainability in Auckland tourism will link to and help to lead transformative changes happening in New Zealand and globally.

Introduction

This report reviews the concept of regenerative and inclusive tourism with a focus on community engagement. The work provides an evidence base to inform the social sustainability aspect of Auckland's Sustainable Destination Action Plan (SDAP) by providing insights into how Aucklanders feel about tourism development and how the visitor sector can better serve Auckland's communities.

The report:

1. Reviews existing studies to inform the development of social sustainability actions for tourism in Auckland. This includes the identification of local areas/destinations that represent tourism 'pressure points' (pre COVID), and any gaps in our understandings of what communities would like to see from tourism.
2. Identifies opportunities for product development and actions across the visitor economy that are inclusive of community and embrace the core themes of regenerative efforts to achieve more sustainable forms of tourism.

The report emphasises the importance of community engagement within the social sustainability section of the SDAP. A desk-based literature and best practice review focuses on community dimensions of regenerative approaches to sustainable tourism development. An emphasis is placed on literature that has emerged since the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic. The focus of the best practice review is on understanding cutting edge approaches to regenerative urban tourism with a focus on community engagement.

Auckland focused research on community attitudes towards tourism is then presented. This work includes regional insights from the Mood of the Nation reports, the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute (NZTRI) Get Local research programme in Auckland, and community research from Waiheke (see Appendix 1). The report then highlights some areas in Auckland where tourism hotspots (i.e. overcrowding or points of tension), have emerged.

The report concludes with a set of recommendations for social sustainability actions that can assist in moving closer to achieving sustainable tourism in the Auckland region.

Towards sustainability

In recent years, shocks to the tourism system including natural disasters, political and/or economic instability, and terrorism have had a significant impact on the sector in different parts of the globe. These events have often acted as catalysts, forcing government and industry to reconsider approaches to destination development, strengthen resilience and make the visitor industry more sustainable. The current COVID-19 pandemic is different in both its scale and intensity to these previous shocks and has led to the most profound impacts ever experienced by the global tourism industry.

With many nations imposing border and/or quarantine restrictions on international visitors, recovery of global tourism flows has been slower than some expected and an 80% decline in the international tourism economy in 2020 is anticipated (OECD, 2021, 7). The New Zealand tourism sector experienced a significant downturn as a result of the pandemic. The nation closed its border to international tourism on 19 March 2020. In the nine months from April to December 2020 there were 37,300 visitor arrivals to New Zealand, a decrease of 2.66 million compared to the same period in 2019 (Stats NZ, 2021).

Prior to the onset of the pandemic there had been a growing crescendo of concerns expressed about overtourism, climate change, and the broader negative societal and environmental impacts associated with the visitor economy. Some parts of New Zealand were experiencing pressures from overcrowding including the overuse of local infrastructure and amenities, degradation of the local environment, and loss of quiet enjoyment of the places residents call home - all having a negative impact on community quality of life (PCE, 2021a). These negative impacts are only likely to be exacerbated by the broader pressures of climate change, with coastal areas in particular facing challenges associated with rising sea levels and warmer sea temperatures and their subsequent impact on local infrastructure and businesses. One area with a high visitor population in Auckland where this is already happening and may only get worse is along Tamaki Drive (Ōkahu Bay, Mission Bay, Kohimarama through to St Heliers) just 5 km from the CBD.

Between March 2015 and March 2019 international visitor arrivals to New Zealand increased 34% from 2.9 million to 3.9 million (Figure NZ, 2020). Government, Destination Management/Marketing Organisations (DMOs) and industry celebrated these significant increases in the number of international visitors as being good for the economy in terms of visitor expenditure and job creation, and sought ways to distribute tourism through the regions in an effort to spread benefits and potentially reduce pressure points. Areas that experienced a low level of visitation (or undertourism) focused on strengthening links to the visitor industry. However, for the communities involved, “the arrival of ever more tourists each year has not been without cost” (PCE, 2021a, 9).

There has been much *talk* in New Zealand of the need to develop the industry sustainably at corporate or enterprise levels and at a national scale, with relatively limited *action* occurring at community and small business levels. At the same time, while there are some examples of visitor economy strategies and activities that include efforts to grow tourism in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner, there are many cases where sustainability rhetoric has degenerated into little more than lip service.

Several authors argue that the focus of government, tourism organisations and industry on destination marketing, branding and promotion to enhance the financial returns from tourism has outweighed environmental aspects of sustainability. Environmental pressures involve cross-border issues (greenhouse gas emissions and biosecurity risk) but also more place-specific ones such as rubbish, loss of wildness and natural quiet, infrastructure and landscape

change, and pressure on freshwater quality (PCE, 2019, 2021a, 2021b). In each case, tourism growth has been leaving the environment worse off. To compound this further, there has been even less focus on the socio-cultural and community dimensions of sustainable tourism in New Zealand (Peart & Woodhouse, 2020, 22; PCE, 2019, 2021). In New Zealand and elsewhere the economic pillar of sustainability has been the focus of tourism development with far less attention being paid to the critical environmental and social dimensions (PCE, 2021a; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Gibbons, 2020).

The current mothballing of international tourism offers the opportunity to ensure that the reset of the industry does not revert to a 'business as usual' scenario but truly leverages the pandemic as a "transformational moment opening up possibilities for resetting tourism" (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020, 612; see also Pollock 2020; OECD, 2020; Čorak, Živoder & Marušić, 2020). The pandemic offers a significant opportunity to develop the visitor industry by mainstreaming and advancing regenerative and inclusive aspects of sustainability. The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment reinforces this:

The discontinuity created by Covid-19 offers an opportunity to address some of the long-standing environmental and social issues associated with New Zealand's tourism industry (PCE, 2021a, 5).

In response to a call from a broad range of stakeholders to *build back better*, the concept of *regenerative tourism* is currently emerging as a way forward for the industry as it recovers from the pandemic. While the concept of regenerative tourism has gained increased attention in the last two years, it is not new. Regenerative approaches have long been linked to the core tenets of sustainability and first emerged in the context of regenerative economics in the 1990s.

Hutchins and Storm (2019, 52) define regenerative as "creating the conditions for life to continuously renew itself, to transcend into new forms, and to flourish amid ever-changing life-conditions". While there is no commonly accepted definition of regenerative tourism, Mullis (2020) explains the concept as focusing on "how tourism can make destinations *better* for both current and future generations. It involves tourism and other businesses, communities, donors, and government collectively drawing upon tourism to holistically make net positive *contributions* to the wellbeing of residents, host communities, visitors, and the environment to help them flourish and create shared prosperity".

Building on the core tenets of sustainability, regenerative approaches are about seeing our world as a living system, an **ecosystem** where everything is connected, everything affects and is affected by the system, and where all parts of the system focus on *contribution*, mutual benefit and flourishing. In this way, tourism is everyone's business. Regeneration is not about top down systems of organisation (or the '**ego system**') where all components are separate, working in silos and/or competing for resources, where the focus is on extracting resources for personal (or organisational) profit, or where 'it's all about me' (Pure Advantage, 2020; Hurley, 2011). Becken (Pure Advantage 2020) argues that "the focus of sustainable efficiency has been

motivated by profit and wealth” which has degraded the environment and negatively affected communities.

Pollock (2019, 5) contends that “you cannot understand let alone practice regenerative development unless you have fundamentally shifted your patterns of thinking, your ways of seeing, and assumed a deep sense of interdependence with all life on this planet”. The author states that regenerative approaches require disruption in existing thinking and a willingness to deviate from the tourism model of production and consumption to one that embraces and fosters tourism as part of an ecosystem. The shift in thinking needed to embrace regenerative tourism is encapsulated in the following main themes:

- **Respect and contribution:** Regenerative tourism is built on the premise of mutual respect, *contribution* and equality. In this way the narrative is focused on respect for the environment, and for each other. This means it is necessary to treat each person who participates in the system as a valued *contributor* and not as a stakeholder.
- **Partnerships with Indigenous people:** Indigenous people and cultures, and the wisdom and values they hold dear, play a vital role in defining a regenerative path for tourism (Sheldon, 2020). Indigenous peoples must be treated as equal partners.
- **From doing less harm to doing better:** Shift notions of sustainability from ‘doing no or less harm’ to regeneration where travellers *contribute* to bettering the places they visit (Pollock, 2018). A shift is needed in the way government, industry *and* communities organise as a dynamic and collaborative force to respond to the challenges and opportunities offered by closer engagement with tourism.
- **Creating a fertile environment:** Regenerative tourism works on the principle of creating an environment or a set of conditions for the industry to be reborn (Pollock, 2019); one in which people and place can thrive and live with abundance. Tourism is reliant on healthy environments *and* communities (it is not possible to have one without the other).
- **Strengthening host community capacity for tourism** by developing collaborative learning networks that foster an open and mutual exchange of knowledge. Local level innovation depends on dialogue, networking and learning between all social, environmental and economic actors. A focus on supporting mana whenua and communities is essential to address challenges and optimise opportunities associated with tourism. Local level data (visitor, community and business) is required to support decision making at a local level and is critical for success.
- **Integrated policy-industry-community approaches are essential to ensure** policy driven projects do not work in isolation and to optimise social, environmental and economic opportunities while mitigating negative impacts. Development of policy needs to focus on, and empower, community by building local capacity to benefit from the visitor industry to improve resident wellbeing. This requires a shift from top-down approaches, to inclusive and decentralised bottom-up community empowerment.

- **Definitions of value, and measurement frameworks need to be locally co-developed** with community aspirations as determining factors in the creation of indicators of success. Indicators will be more closely aligned with psychology (wellbeing, learning, connectedness etc.) and ecology, than profit (Pollock, 2019). The value attached to the visitor economy needs to be defined by local communities and not just on externally imposed notions of financial sustainability or ‘high spending’ visitors.
- **Communities will work for tourism if tourism works for communities.** Nature, people and place are the focus of the local communities and the tourism system. As such, the question is not: What can community do for tourism? It is: **What can tourism do for community?** The narrative moves to ‘health before wealth’ by placing the focus on the social and environmental dimensions of tourism development. There is a focus on tourism’s *contribution* to communities and not solely on visitor numbers and economic impacts.

Sustainability: still the goal

Reflecting on the pre-COVID focus of the tourism industry, it is clear that ‘commitments to sustainability’ have been well leveraged in terms of marketing, branding and promotion but perhaps not always as sincere endeavours to contribute to the wellbeing of the planet and of those who live in New Zealand’s host communities (PCE, 2019, 2021). It can be argued that issues around sustainability are to be found more in the interpretation of the concept than in the concept itself. Bateson (2019) suggests that interpretation of sustainability has largely focused on finding “safe zones of destruction” and greenwashing. In a recent survey to better understand Auckland-based tourism business’ perceptions of sustainability, 86% of respondents indicated that sustainable tourism is ‘very important’ to their business (ATEED, 2020). Nevertheless, the same respondents noted that sustainability really means sustaining business activity, the environment and the ability to operate with significantly less focus on the social and community dimensions of the concept.

Existing and emerging tourism descriptors (e.g. green and eco, slow, responsible, regenerative, transformative) seek to highlight a holistic approach to development of the visitor industry. However, we must be wary of terms that are presented as heralding change but that may simply be presenting old wine in new bottles. The concept of sustainability must remain central to forward planning for tourism - now, and post pandemic. Sustainable development has *always* been linked to corrective action and wellbeing however the social and environmental dimensions have been largely underplayed or paid lip service to without any real commitment. Regenerative approaches are another step towards achieving the core concepts that underpin the original focus of sustainability and the complex interrelationships that strengthen it (Bramwell, Higham, Lane & Miller, 2017). As Becken (2020a) notes:

Ultimately, the goal of operating in a way that does not compromise the opportunities of future generations (i.e. following the 1987 Brundtland Report), is not so different from the new paradigm of regenerative economies, or more specifically regenerative tourism.

Community wellbeing lies at the heart of sustainable tourism discourse. Wellbeing is very much tied to human connectedness to nature at a local level and is shaped by broader environmental dimensions such as processes of climate change. Humans derive benefits from nature such as positive moods, feeling refreshed and restored, better health, spiritual connections with flora and fauna. In urban areas, and especially in cities with a high or increasing level of housing intensification, lifestyles have often created a disconnect from the natural environment with many spending significant time indoors. This disconnection from nature can have a negative impact on wellbeing – and on the environment. The construct of nature connectedness is also related to eco-psychology – or how human wellbeing is related to the welfare of the natural environment. This theory is based on the idea that the needs of humans and nature are interdependent so human health will suffer if nature is adversely affected. As a result, some are less connected to nature and feel less responsibility towards protecting the environment (Conn, 1998; Blaschke, 2013).

Moving forward, the key message is to shift from the often mis-used rhetoric of sustainability and “false promises of ‘responsible’ tourism solutions” (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020, 612) to reorienting tourism in ways that are inclusive, build community resilience, and address issues of the past. Regenerative approaches already exist as a component of sustainability and are now being emphasised in more detail given current COVID circumstances. There is a need to intertwine *all* dimensions/pillars of sustainability in a more holistic manner; and to utilise and focus on regenerative approaches that are about giving back to people and place – and not just to a company or organisation (Hutchins & Storm, 2019).

The question that needs to be asked therefore is not: What is a regenerative tourism? Rather: **How do we make tourism more sustainable by emphasising regenerative approaches?** Here a useful term is Regenerative Sustainability (Gibbons, 2020) which includes all participants in dialogue, works outside of narrowly focused silos, cuts across policy and planning, and encourages feedback for continuous refinement and improvement (Brown, 2016).

To make tourism more sustainable by emphasising regenerative approaches, it is essential to prioritise mana whenua, residents and local business in host communities as well as the natural environment they are surrounded by. This places the host community at the very core of tourism planning. Such a role for community places an emphasis on taking care of those who live at the destination so they can benefit from tourism and, in turn, can take care of the environment (OECD, 2021; UNWTO, 2020; Everingham & Chassagne 2020; Cave & Dredge, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Cheer, 2020, PCE, 2021a). Tourism is reliant on healthy environments *and* communities (it is not possible to have one without the other). Community wellbeing dimensions are integral to sustainable development and always have been; however, they have largely been paid lip service to. While *talk* of ‘social licence to operate’ has become part of the tourism parlance from government and industry organisations, pressure from overtourism has often frustrated communities who may struggle to have their voices heard, leading to anti-overtourism protests (e.g. Waiheke Island in Auckland) or direct community

engagement in visitor management (e.g. Aotea / Great Barrier Island proposed \$5 visitor levy, or the Te Henga beach community assisting with visitor information provision).

In New Zealand, Destination Management Organisations (DMO), government, public agencies, and tourism organisations have made some effort to enhance the social sustainability of the visitor industry with the Mood of the Nation survey (Kantar, 2020) an example of a desire to better understand New Zealanders' perceptions of international tourism. However, recognising the increasingly unsustainable pressures on some communities prior to the pandemic, in November 2020, the Minister for Tourism, the Hon. Stuart Nash, emphasised the need to revisit approaches to tourism development to meet the need for long-term sustainability stating: "the Tourism industry will not return to 'business as usual', or the world that existed pre-COVID. There is no going back to Tourism circa 2019." He urged the industry to focus on high-spending visitors, to meet "New Zealanders' expectations of a tourism sector that supports their communities and businesses." To do this he adds that: "We must attract high value and high spending visitors who buy into our own vision of sustainability." (New Zealand Government, 2020b).

The government's focus on increased tourism productivity has prioritised value-led growth measuring 'value' in terms of economic contribution (tourism expenditure) (PCE, 2019). The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment argues that 'value' is not well defined in New Zealand tourism and a focus on the economy fails to address concerns about degradation of the environment, social disruption, user conflict and commodification of local culture. The Commissioner poses the question: "What sort of value and whose values?" (PCE, 2019, 122) and in his latest report reiterates this point:

*It is certainly true that tourism development can result in new economic opportunities. But if those opportunities are to be **truly sustainable in the long term**, it is vital that any such development is on terms that local people are comfortable with. The only way of achieving that in practice is to pay much greater attention to the wishes of communities and iwi when decisions about tourism development are being made (PCE, 2021a, 9).*

The importance of community has long been acknowledged as being important in theory in Auckland tourism planning. In 2007, AucklandPlus (Auckland's economic development agency at the time) developed *Bringing the World to Auckland*. One of the guiding principles of the document is that the visitor economy in Auckland should be "implemented with adherence to the principles of sustainability" and focus on environmental, cultural and community sustainability (AucklandPlus, 2007, 18). To achieve this the document describes Auckland's "fabric", the everyday elements and functions that serve the basic needs of both residents and visitors (2007, 3), and outlines how to convert these into a compelling visitor offering. Fourteen years later, it is perhaps time to stop and reflect on progress; how far have we come in terms of creating positive benefits for communities in Auckland from tourism?

At the moment the focus on the industry is very much on survival and recovery and on understanding the COVID-19 economic impacts of tourism in New Zealand's largest city. While Auckland was the largest generator of annual tourism spend in the country, the year October 2019 to October 2020 saw the Auckland region experience the greatest decline of all New Zealand regions in estimates of tourist expenditure (-26%); followed by Otago (-22%) (MBIE MRTE, 2021a). Tourism Electronic Card Transaction (TECT) data shows Auckland visitor spend was down 29% in December 2020 compared with December 2019, and that the city witnessed the greatest fall in domestic spend (-18%) of any region. The year to January 2021 saw 420,000 international visitor arrivals in Auckland, a decrease of 84.6% on the previous year. The month of January 2021 saw 4,951 international visitors, down 98.3% on the previous January (Auckland Unlimited, 2021).

More recently, the NZ Minister of Tourism stated:

“I do recognise that in some areas, it's not simply about supporting tourism businesses, but ensuring communities survive. In fact, the region that has had the biggest hit with the loss of international tourism is Auckland. However, all advice tells us that when the Auckland tourism sector suffers in this way, it doesn't bring down whole communities, like it may in other regions with a significantly higher economic exposure” (New Zealand Government, 2021).

This comment perhaps belies a lack of deeper understanding of what the broader visitor economy means to destinations within Auckland, and the communities (residents and businesses) that live there. This in turn reflects a lack of sub-regional data related to the impact of the pandemic on host communities in Auckland.

Currently there is a paucity of data to understand how tourism benefits Auckland's communities. There is even less available research to support indicators that can monitor local context specific progress over time. There is a need for indicators to be co-designed with Auckland's diverse local areas to gauge levels of community wellbeing linked to tourism, to identify their aspirations and needs, to track progress towards those goals, and to aid in strengthening community capabilities. Such indicators would focus on reflecting community conditions and needs, as well as measuring them in ways that are valuable to the people involved.

In June 2019, the World Travel & Tourism Council released its report *Destination 2030: Global Cities' Readiness for Tourism Growth*. Auckland was identified as a 'Mature Performer' or a city “that has strong leisure and/or business travel dynamics and an established tourism infrastructure, but there is a risk of future strains related to visitor volume, infrastructure or activity that is testing readiness for additional growth” (WTTC, 2019, 5). The report emphasises the need for DMOs to be “proactive in embracing tourism policies that take into consideration the needs of both visitors and the local population” (WTTC, 2019, 16). This highlights the importance of understanding tourism perceptions of local residents affecting their material

wellbeing (e.g. rising cost of living), community wellbeing (e.g. change in social fabric), emotional wellbeing (e.g. loss of character and local culture of the neighbourhood) and health and safety wellbeing (e.g. unruly tourist behaviours, crime rates, traffic congestion and environmental pollution). The lack of data to inform relevant measurement frameworks presents a significant barrier to managing tourism in Auckland, to be consistent with community sustainability aspirations and to develop new forms of tourism that could actively support these aspirations.

Visitors – how do they fit in?

There is an opportunity to use tourism as a regenerative force; to empower local people and strengthen direct relationships between visitors and host communities (C2C or consumer to community) (Milne, Mason, Speidel & West-Newman, 2004). To achieve this the focus must be on developing host community capacity to help determine the type of visitor they would like to attract. This requires dialogue between participants in the tourism system and insights to inform decision making at a local level. Community are then able to play a significant role in shaping demand and attracting visitors whose values align with their own and create sustainable local outcomes. Community must also play a role in determining how tourism success should be defined and measured, including engagement with monitoring impacts and destination management. The role of the visitor becomes one of *contributor* to support communities to achieve their aspirations for their future wellbeing.

The pandemic has created an opportunity to rethink the direction of tourism and has also been the catalyst to look at the changing values of our domestic and international markets. Recent demand-side research indicates a strong trend (in New Zealand and elsewhere) towards transformative experiences. Motivations for travel are increasingly becoming values-laden and driven by a quest for learning and personal growth. There is an emphasis on gaining a deeper understanding of different ways of being, to self-reflect, question 'own' assumptions, gain new knowledge and develop a more tolerant worldview (Visit Scotland, 2020; Ateljevic, 2020). While in the short-term, the focus for New Zealand is on the domestic traveller, it should be noted that these demand-side trends emerge from and affect both domestic and international markets. The focus for Auckland's DMO therefore needs to be on creating the fertile environment for the industry to be reborn as a whole and not simply on, for example, domestic visitors, then domestic and Australia and Pacific etc.

Demand-side trends are focusing on more transformational forms of travel: a "movement among consumers to travel with purpose and cause; maximising their time and giving something back to the destinations they visit, and consciously off-setting the impact of their travel" (Visit Scotland, 2020, 3). It is vital that visitors (domestic and international) are supported to meet these needs and provided with avenues for them to 'give back' – to contribute to the host community and ecosystem in which the tourism milieu is embedded.

For visitors, contribution may involve spending money in local businesses, participating in a beach clean-up, supporting a local community, heritage or environmental conservation

initiative, or simply influencing destination choice via ‘word of mouth’. The greatest opportunity for tourism, however, is to strengthen interactions between visitor and host to encourage return visits; to support visitors to grow a relationship with a community or destination and vice versa, to maintain links with diaspora communities, friends and family, and create a favoured place to return to frequently.

Recent research into New Zealand domestic visitor preferences and motivations, reflects many of the global trends outlined above (Tourism NZ, 2021; Expedia, 2020) and highlights three main themes:

1. **Unique and safe destinations:** visitors are looking for the unique, for nostalgia, for places to take their children that they once visited as children themselves, and to grow memories. They want to reconnect with the familiar and discover new places that are off the beaten path.
2. **Stories of place, heritage, Māori culture and transformative experiences:** Domestic visitors want to understand more about destinations through stories of place. Many New Zealanders want to engage with locals and have enriching experiences; they especially want to hear stories and learn the worldview of Māori and mana whenua (Tourism NZ, 2021). Stories enable visitors to read the urban landscape and decipher its content, they also weave different resources into a new identity for urban precincts, and help to inject creativity into neighbourhoods (Richards, 2020). The way local governments, communities, businesses and cultural organisations engage with ‘place storytelling’ can have a significant impact on the success of a region in competing for tourism and economic development spending (Bassanoa et al., 2019, 10). Place storytelling enables local stakeholders to give their own accounts about their beloved places to visitors; by doing so they also retain important local cultural, heritage and environmental information for future generations. (Richards, 2020).
3. **Value for experience.** Visitors seek value for money when travelling; they are used to buying packages when travelling internationally and even as Free and Independent Travellers often buy some combinations of product e.g. airfares and land transport. It is vital that regions and operators work together to create packages that give Kiwis what they are used to internationally. However, rather than adopt a low yield ‘value for money packages’ approach, Tourism New Zealand is focusing on strengthening ‘value for experience’:

“This could mean being taken to a spot by a guide that not even locals knew about, or uncovering new local knowledge, hidden gems or stories about a destination’s history, for example” (TNZ, 2021).

All visitors (domestic and international) are attracted by the beautiful natural environment and friendly local people in destinations, so too are residents; indeed, these are integral elements

in local quality of life. There is the potential for conflict if residents believe visitors are showing a lack of respect for their community and surroundings, or if community are disrespectful towards visitors. This, in turn, undermines the visitor experience and impacts the value of the industry; highlighting the need to understand local attitudes towards, and community aspirations for, tourism and to accommodate these as the industry develops (Peart & Woodhouse, 2020). The key is to align the visitor industry with visitor needs while prioritising the aspirations of local communities for tourism (and the environment). All travellers, whether they are domestic or international, are increasingly looking to travel with a sense of purpose and to experience the worldview of others.

Indicators and measurement frameworks

The New Zealand-Aotearoa Government Tourism Strategy acknowledges that the “recent pace and scale of visitor growth has effectively outstripped the capacity of our system to respond in some areas” (MBIE, 2019, 2). One of five goals in the Strategy is that “New Zealanders’ lives are improved by tourism”. However, relevant indicators for success and desired outcomes outlined in the Strategy are predominantly about pathways from education into employment, improvements in local infrastructure, and community support for tourism. While these provide useful measures to understand objective community conditions such as income levels there is also a need to understand residents’ perceptions of, and satisfaction towards, community and social indicators of wellbeing linked to tourism (Sung & Phillips, 2018; Richards, 2020). A more regenerative and sustainable approach to measuring these dimensions would be to consider how tourism can *contribute to, build* and support community.

Prior to the pandemic, MBIE commenced work on the development of a Sustainability Dashboard and a set of indicators to help measure tourism in New Zealand. While still at a nascent stage of development, feedback from MBIE’s engagement processes conducted just prior to the onset of the pandemic, identifies five domains for indicator development: The Economy, The Environment, Visitors, Communities, and finally Regions. The pandemic provides an opportunity to reflect on the development of sustainability indicators and incorporate regenerative dimensions that reflect a focus on community wellbeing.

The Auckland visitor strategy was released in May 2018. *Destination AKL 2025* signals

“a new direction for Auckland’s visitor economy: a fundamental shift in thinking and approach. It is a shift that reflects and is in step with what is increasingly considered best practice across the businesses community and in society generally: a growing awareness of, and concern for, sustainability” (ATEED, 2018, 6).

The Strategy proposes a greater focus on quality of life in order to achieve a visitor sector that contributes to an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable city. The Strategy identifies six strategic imperatives to enable Auckland to reach its true potential as a destination. One of these is: *‘A sustainable place’ A region recognised as a world-leader for taking action on sustainability”* (ATEED, 2018, 11). The strategic imperatives are then further

distilled into twelve key focus areas under two separate headings: 'Destination management' (with 6 key focus areas – one of which is 'Sustainability'), and 'Destination Marketing' (with another 6 key focus areas – one of which is 'Host community engagement').

'Sustainability' is described as: Ensuring the visitor economy delivers sustainable and desirable *environmental* outcomes to benefit Auckland. There is no mention of social outcomes here.

'Host community engagement' is described as: Engaging with Auckland's host community to ensure they understand the value of the visitor economy and are ambassadors for Auckland (ATEED, 2018, 12)." Recommended actions under this heading are to (ATEED, 2018, 16):

- Better inform Aucklanders of the benefits of the visitor economy
- Introduce local promotional campaign to Aucklanders to build advocacy
- Develop 'greeters' programme to welcome and assist visitors

Of course, host communities have a much stronger role in destination management than that described above. To move towards a more 'community-centric' and regenerative approach to tourism, actions for social sustainability (along with relevant indicators and measurement frameworks) need to shift from engaging with host community to educate them that tourism is good for them, to look at ways that tourism can be a force to *contribute* to community wellbeing and local quality of life.

There are two measurement frameworks that must be considered when developing future social sustainability indicators for Auckland:

The New Zealand Living Standards Framework (LSF) was launched by the New Zealand Treasury in December 2018 (six months after the Destination AKL 2025 Strategy) (Figure 1). Treasury is currently working to refresh the LSF in 2021, developing the framework to better reflect Māori and Pasifika world views; matters that affect child wellbeing; and the different ways in which culture contributes to wellbeing. The 2018 version of the LSF incorporates:

- 12 Domains of current wellbeing outcomes: Civic engagement and governance, Cultural identity, Environment, Health, Housing, Income and consumption, Jobs and earnings, Knowledge and skills, Time use, Safety and security, Social connections and Subjective wellbeing.
- The four Capital stocks that support wellbeing now and into the future are; Natural capital, Human capital, Social capital, and Financial and physical capital.
- Risk and resilience.

Figure 1: The New Zealand Treasury’s Living Standards Framework



Source: New Zealand Government, The Treasury (2020)

Regenerative approaches to tourism call for measures of success to move beyond GDP, visitor arrivals and expenditure data, and to be more aligned to broader wellbeing and local quality of life factors. Better measurement and locally defined and negotiated ‘value’ and indicators will focus on community wellbeing and see where tourism fits in - not the other way around. Wellbeing factors should align with aspects of the Living Standards Framework, and Maori Wellbeing Outcomes – with a focus on achieving a balance between material wellbeing and the spiritual, emotional and cultural needs of communities. Key considerations for social sustainability also include the potential of tourism to contribute to host communities in the following ways:

- Retains people’s cultural memories and advances practices
- Embraces cultural diversity and social integration, social equity
- Strengthens learning and knowledge exchange, intergenerational and intercultural exchanges, social mixing
- Brings about changes in value systems
- Fosters self-esteem, identity, self-worth, self-pride
- Strengthens civic engagement (and community participation)

- and cohesion, quality of life, and social capital
- Protects their national identities
- Strengthens place attachment
- Fosters a sense of belonging and civic pride
- Enhances local sense of place and creates vibrant local areas
- Improves health (especially mental health e.g. by reducing isolation)
- Creates safe and secure communities

While the LSF was launched after the Destination AKL strategy, if the strategy had been aligned to the LSF there would be stronger emphasis on how the visitor industry in Auckland can become a catalyst for environmental, social, cultural and economic regeneration; heal ecosystems, empower local communities, and have a net positive benefit on resident quality of life.

The diversity of New Zealanders (including Aucklanders) means that matters of importance (values and places) to individual, family, whānau or communities will vary (NZ Government, The Treasury, 2018). No single framework will capture all that matters for everyone, and there is work to be done to incorporate a wellbeing approach into indicator development and strategic planning for the Auckland visitor economy. However, the four capital stocks and 12 wellbeing domains of the LSF capture elements of wellbeing generally important to people in New Zealand that are ‘fit for purpose’ in the context of a small nation in the southern hemisphere. This potentially presents a better framework to draw on or align to, than focusing solely on one (for example) developed in Washington, USA (e.g. the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, GSTC Destination Criteria¹).

Māori Identity and Wellbeing outcomes must also be considered across all measures outlined in the Auckland Plan 2050². Outcomes include: Whānau wellbeing based on principles of whanaungatanga, Māori in employment, education and training, Māori decision making, and Te reo Māori across Tāmaki Makaurau.

As an example, in the Destination AKL strategy one ‘measure of success’ under ‘*A unique place*’ relates to “perceptions of Auckland’s identity by *visitors* and potential visitors”. Another relates to “Perception and acceptance of Auckland’s identity and positioning by industry stakeholders and residents” (ATEED, 2018, 19). If aligned to the LSF, this would either change or be added to and focus on the way tourism can strengthen place identity and *residents’* ability to express their identity as Aucklanders. Then, by integrating with Māori Identity and Wellbeing outcomes, other dimensions that could be woven into an indicator or ‘measure of success’ related to identity would recognise, value and celebrate Aucklanders’ differences as a strength, and be tied to ‘Māori identity and wellbeing’, ‘belonging and participation’, connectedness and the strengths of young people.

¹ <https://www.gstcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/GSTC-Destination-Criteria-v2.0.pdf>

² <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/Pages/maori-identity-wellbeing-progress.aspx>

One idea is to create a set of core indicators – taken from a variety of sources including the LSF and Māori Identity and Wellbeing outcomes that consider a range of participants in the tourism system (including local businesses) that can be adopted and adapted by each local area (or sub-region) in Auckland based on local context, and then developed further by local participants where supporting data allows.

There is value in considering indicators and measurement frameworks that underpin the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)³, The UNWTO Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism⁴, and the Global Destination Sustainability Index⁵. There is, however, a need to look closely at the relevance of these indicators and frameworks for Auckland and its communities. There is also the challenge of gathering robust data to inform these frameworks to understand the value that the visitor industry brings to tourism.

Destinations face increasing pressure to address social and environmental concerns associated with tourism. If not addressed, there is a limit on the financial value that can be created for participants in the visitor economy (Day, 2017). This raises an important question that Auckland Unlimited (AU) must consider: **Who are you creating value for?** Is it the communities of the Auckland region or the tourism system in these host communities? The answer needs to be both. While RTOs focus more on destination leadership, coordination, facilitation and stakeholder engagement, “the stakeholders are often defined as tourism business operators and governments as opposed to consumers and destination residents” (Day, 2017, 190).

Responding to the needs of stakeholders is integral to the successful planning and implementation of sustainable visitor strategies (Rasoolimanesh, 2020; Hall, 2019). Government, public agencies, private enterprise, and communities are all vital participants in a truly sustainable visitor economy. Including them in the design and development of relevant indicators that underpin local destination management plans ensures that monitoring, and evaluation processes are successfully implemented. This requires all dimensions of the visitor economy to be considered including major events (e.g. sport) business events, festivals and concerts.

Hall (2012, 10) refers to mega-events as being “symbolic of an unsophisticated approach towards sustainable development. They provide substantial corporate benefits with the costs accommodated by the wider public.” The author asks: Who wins from hosting such events and how does that fit in with our understanding of sustainability? He recommends that key indicators for mega-events be grounded in values that reflect the maintenance or enhancement of natural capital, such as emissions. Social considerations, such as health and wellbeing should also be given greater prominence, with mega-events requiring a social charter as well as an environmental one. In essence, sustainable events are more likely to be found in smaller localised community-based festivals and events that run over the longer term or at least

³ <http://tourism4sdgs.org/tourism-for-sdgs/tourism-and-sdgs/>

⁴ <https://www.unwto.org/standards/statistical-framework-for-measuring-the-sustainability-of-tourism>

⁵ <https://www.gds.earth/>

use existing infrastructure – rather than infrequent mega events that are “appealing for the self-promotion of political and corporate interests, as well as profit driven consulting firms and academics, that thrive off large-scale events” (Hall, 2012, 11).

AU must work with host communities in Auckland’s local areas to create an effective evaluation framework through which to measure tourism performance in the future. Such a framework must meet the needs of a diverse set of participants and localities, and incorporate social, environmental and economic objectives for the sustainable development of the visitor industry in Auckland. A framework of this nature would include locally negotiated performance indicators, and performance metrics. By taking this inclusive approach, AU would take the lead in the development of a sustainable evaluation framework that incorporates regenerative approaches; one that other New Zealand RTOs and economic development agencies could follow.

Best practice examples

The following examples highlight ways that governments, organisations and communities are adopting and adapting regenerative approaches to achieving socially sustainable outcomes from tourism. The focus is on understanding broader government policies and tools, as well as tourism activities that facilitate contribution (or ‘giving back’) to host communities in urban areas.

Rather than placing an emphasis on strategy alone, we also look at specific examples of visitor experiences that link to community wellbeing, positive social impacts and engagement. The discussion highlights that there are cutting-edge examples of regenerative tourism right here in our own backyard; at the enterprise level, and also in the development of inclusive approaches to evidence-based tourism planning and development at local scales.

[Edinburgh Tourism Strategy 2030](#)

Edinburgh’s *Draft* Tourism Strategy 2030 (Toposophy, 2020) provides an example of an integrated policy-industry-community approach to strategy development, and an illustration of indicators for success that consider resident quality of life. The aim of the strategy is “to contribute to resident quality of life, the visitor experience and the economic vitality of the city” and identifies five priorities for action: Our people, Our place, Our environment, Our partnerships, Our reputation.

Priorities that underpin the plan include making sure residents have an opportunity to be informed about tourism developments, to participate in decision-making and implementation of the strategy, and to have channels of communication to identify and resolve any nuisance issues. Monitoring resident sentiment around tourism is noted as important, along with research to identify where overcrowding is occurring and steps for enhanced management. Capacity building and skills development for the tourism workforce, regulation and enforcement of property use (e.g. short-term lets), and improvements in connectivity (e.g.

online and physical wayfinding, integrated transport solutions) are also features of the plan. Relevant indicators of success are in development and currently include:

- The level of support for tourism by local residents
- Participation of residents from lower-income backgrounds in cultural events and attractions
- Edinburgh's competitiveness across key economic and social indicators with its peers
- Comments and complaints received on tourism-related issues / resident sentiment around tourism in the city
- The quality and quantity of engagement from city tourism stakeholders (including residents)
- Reduction in tourism-related traffic in the city
- Residents' satisfaction with tourism and its impact on the city
- Level of visitor spending within localities
- Percentage of tourism suppliers paying the living wage
- Number of jobs created with fair work conditions and employee satisfaction levels
- Reduced carbon emissions related to tourism activity in Edinburgh, reduced waste produced by tourism businesses,
- Increased percentage of Scottish-made goods used by and available through the tourism sector.

UNWTO AI-Ula Framework for Inclusive Community Development Through Tourism:

The AI-Ula framework is an exemplar of government-enterprise-community integration in tourism strategy and planning. Developed by the UNWTO and the G20 Tourism Working Group, the AI-Ula Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism is designed to help fulfil the sector's potential to contribute to and achieve inclusive community development and the Sustainable Development Goals. There are nine focus areas:

- Capacity building for jobs and opportunities
- Promoting the role of women in communities
- Fostering innovation, digitalization and entrepreneurship
- Empowering of local communities
- Providing infrastructure and services
- Communities as champions of nature and heritage preservation:
- Tourism for all (including access tourism)
- Decent work and formalization
- Public/private/community development, towards a new governance model

The policy document is structured under four pillars of action: Empower, Safeguard, Prosper, Collaborate. Each area of focus (above) is linked to each pillar with details of programmes, interventions, actions, participants, and expected outcomes. There is a clear implementation and evaluation plan.

[Protecting our future: Cook Islands Sustainable Tourism Development Policy Framework & Goals](#)

In response to growing pressures associated with increased visitor numbers, the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation, (2016) developed with NZTRI an evaluation framework to support sustainable tourism goals in the Cook Islands.

The framework and indicators were informed by consultation with a wide range of tourism stakeholders from Rarotonga and Aitutaki. Those consulted range across a number of Ministries, industry sectors and NGOs and also include representatives of the community. The indicators and associated KPIs are inclusive of visitor yield, length of stay and expenditure and other inputs to inform economic impact reporting, but also include resident perceptions of and satisfaction with tourism development as well as a broad range of indicators focused on the sustainable development of the visitor industry in the Cook Islands. The DMO (Cook Islands Tourism Corporation) is using this [framework](#) to monitor and evaluate their own performance.

The framework comprises seven sections and each includes the following indicators:

Management and governance: Whole of Government/ Industry approach - Bodies are formed by Government and Industry to enable more coordinated responses. User-pays funds for environment protection.

Marketing and destination development: Marketing materials support local linkage creation, Marketing materials provide sustainable tourism information in emerging market languages, Develop/Refine Rapid Marketing Response plan for Disasters, amount of product that is highly linked to local economy, Return on marketing investment Marketing investment: yield per person.

Economic: Visitor Yield, Return Visitation, Length of Stay, Business supply linkages, Investment impacts, Increased linkages to local economy (especially local agriculture), Cruise/Yacht yield, Visitor Comments on availability of local food/Handicrafts, Visitor spend on local food/handicrafts, in country and prepaid spend.

Education and employment: Cook Island Maori/ Female workers, businesses owned/managed by women, school curriculum featuring tourism content, students having access to tourism programs.

Environment: Visitor feedback on environmental dimensions of their visit – qualitative & quantitative, rental transport hybrid or electric, tourism plant in areas vulnerable to climate change, visitors using car, cycle or public transport.

Culture and heritage: Visitor attitudes towards and engagement with cultural tourism experiences, number of products offering cultural experiences, Community: Community awareness of and support for tourism, Community involvement in tourism, Community perceived impacts of tourism (Perceived impact on income, Quality of life etc.) measured qualitatively and quantitatively through annual Community Attitudes Survey.

Health, Safety & Security: Disaster Response effectiveness, operators with disaster plans in place, Online information easily available on health care costs, Visitor road accidents, new and existing tourism businesses that are access friendly.

The indicators outlined above, and several others, are driven by data and insights drawn on an ongoing basis from the online International Visitor; Business Confidence; and Community Tourism Attitudes Surveys. Development of in-country survey capacity is another element of the process to sustain data collection. In the Cook Islands the DMO role and function has become one that includes building community awareness and support for tourism, providing information of relevance to all sectors of the economy, improving human resource capacity and encouraging school leavers to join the industry, and ensuring the sustainable development of the destination.

[Authenticitys](#)

Authenticitys is an online platform that promotes social tourism experiences and connects visitors with locals in several cities (e.g. Amsterdam, Barcelona, Madrid, Vienna, Athens, Berlin, Bogota, Delhi, Buenos Aires, Lima). The aim is to support community driven initiatives, connect at-risk and marginalised members of community to tourism and focuses on host capacity building. This provides an excellent example of how to stimulate and support values-laden product development and create jobs and new local businesses in urban areas. A range of initiatives have been developed including those that provide support for: NGOs to secure training and employment for people living on the streets, environmental clean-ups and protection of oceans and waterways, local entrepreneurs working in sustainability in the fashion industry, skills development in vulnerable youth and women (e.g. young mothers aged 12-18 years old), retention of local culture, the retention of traditional knowledge, and sharing heritage stories.

Urban tours are designed with a local community of entrepreneurs and focus on providing visitors with opportunities to leave a positive social or environmental impact on the city visited. As visitors have an engaging and enjoyable experience they also learn about local life and culture, and directly support various community initiatives. The visitor can choose the type(s) of impact they would like to leave. Social impact categories are: Health, Environment, Education, Happiness, Employability, and Equality. The visitor then selects the type of experience they would like to have. Categories are: Neighbourhoods & Community, Action & Sports, Fashion & Beauty, Food & Drink, Culture & Arts, Nature & Relax, Music & Sounds, Workshops & Classes. Examples of related tours include:

Biking the invisible Barcelona: Issues with overtourism have had a profound effect on residents of the city of Barcelona. City planners are focusing on drawing visitors away from the popular inner city and disbursing the benefits of tourism to other parts of the urban area. This tour is under the 'Freedom & Equality' and 'Neighbourhoods & Community', 'Action & Sports categories'. This tour allows the visitor to see a lesser known part of Barcelona guided by a young local, and link to various 'at risk youth' education, skills development and employment schemes.

Paddle Surf the Beach Clean: Both Visitors to Barcelona *and* residents are encouraged to participate in this tourism activity. Participants learn about the maritime ecosystem of local beaches, its threats and issues, marine life and its history from an environmental organisation who, in turn, use the activity to encourage residents to join them as volunteers. Participants enjoy a one-hour class of stand-up paddle boarding and can join in on a beach clean-up afterwards. This activity has a 'citizen/visitor science' component where participants study the types of contamination they find and feed the data into a global beach pollution report.

A plastics fishing experience in the canals of Amsterdam: Visitors who join this two and a half-hour plastics fishing tour can enjoy a canal ride through the historical centre of Amsterdam with a local guide. While doing so they use large nets to collect plastic waste and help the city keep the canals plastic-free. They support a social enterprise with a mission to make the world's waters plastic-free by creating value from plastic waste. The boat that participants use on their canal ride is made of plastic waste 'fished' from the canals of the city. During winter participants can enjoy 'winter sights and lights' and are provided with blankets - this off-sets issues of seasonality for this tourism business. The plastic collected is recycled to create plastic boats and furniture.

Cusco women, employability and leather workshop: Casa Mantay provides shelter, food and education for young mothers between the ages of 12 and 18 in Cusco, Peru. The mission trains and employs these young women to work in a leather workshop so they can make a living; they can do so in a safe place, where they can be close to their children, and where guests are required to act in a kind and respectful manner. Visitors participate in a leather workshop which ends with lunch which is also made by the young women. The tour supports Casa Mantay, their mission their staff, volunteers and women and children through a donation which is made to the Casa in the name of the visitor. Visitors are supplied with a leather souvenir after their leather workshop.

[Airbnb Social Impact Experiences](#)

These experiences are designed to give guests an opportunity to explore parts of urban areas that are off the beaten track. Visitors learn about cities at a neighbourhood level, undertake activities that benefit the local environment and are introduced to local people, leaving a positive impact in their wake.

Airbnb social impact experiences are run by local not for profit organisations that collect 100% of Airbnb's fee from each transaction. Guests can join [tours or activities](#) run by local hosts, experts and advocates in social or environmental sustainability. They can participate in cooking classes run by local hosts who want to share their food culture with others while creating income for their families.

One example is [Newcomer kitchen](#) in Toronto, Canada where cooking workshops are held by recently arrived residents (newcomer women) who gather to prepare meals for delivery to surrounding neighbourhoods. The Kitchen brings newcomers together and provides jobs for women through pop-up dining; visitors can participate in cooking classes and enjoy cultural and social exchanges. By paying for the cooking class, they provide meals to locals in need. Other examples of Airbnb's social impact experiences include: a hike with rescue dogs to help with their training, an ethical fashion class, a visit to a horse rescue sanctuary where guests can help horses who have been abused and neglected to trust people.

[TIME Unlimited Tours Auckland](#)

TIME Unlimited Tours is operated by a Māori-European couple who provide personalised and interactive Auckland and Māori Indigenous Cultural Tours. The business incorporates regenerative environmental and social sustainability approaches in their tours and activities. TIME works to restore biodiversity and shares indigenous knowledge and a Māori worldview with guests to encourage deeper understandings of the environment, cultural heritage and protocols. They sponsor various community organisations to support environmental initiatives.

The business supports environmental (e.g. bush regeneration) initiatives on Marae and works with at-risk youth to reintegrate them to benefit Maori and society in general. TIME support initiatives that ensure Auckland's biodiversity is not just maintained but further enhanced. They also support language and cultural programmes. Tours are designed to strengthen visitors' understandings of sustainability issues, biodiversity, and environmental considerations. The operator encourages tour participants to contribute to the areas they visit, for example, by picking up rubbish left by others. The organisation prioritises use of locally produced food, goods and services, wherever possible.

[NZTRI Get Local programme - Auckland](#)

This is an example of best practice in inclusive destination strategy development in Auckland and elsewhere in New Zealand, with an emphasis on community wellbeing. The Get Local approach (Milne, Deuchar & Peters, 2016) focuses on making better use of existing resources, building human capital (skills and capacity), establishing locally informed decision support systems (local visitor, community and business data), designing themed urban trails, and community-generated storytelling (local knowledge). At the same time efforts are made to strengthen relationships, build local networks and develop collaborative activity (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The Get Local Programme approach



The focus is on understanding how activities associated with the visitor economy can contribute to the wellbeing of iwi, community and the environment. Common features of the Get Local approach are:

An integrated iwi-community-government-enterprise approach to local strategy development starts by engaging with mana whenua and/or iwi, and community groups (e.g. heritage and environmental groups, education providers, local food producers). This is done alongside the development of relationships between local government/various public agencies, and tourism and other business networks to increase local economic yield in a sustainable manner.

Community is engaged from the onset using a mix of engagement techniques to understand local resident aspirations (for themselves, and for tourism), and perceptions of, linkages to, and satisfaction with, the visitor industry. Research with businesses does not focus solely on tourism operators but encompasses all sectors. The Get Local programme also acknowledges the importance of all forms of tourism ranging from domestic travellers visiting friends and relatives through to international holiday or business visitors.

Local tourism review (online) and visitor experience audits (on-site) are used to understand the visibility of destinations online and the tourism potential of local resources to sustain resident livelihoods and build community resilience. This can be another way to engage community as they see how they are presented (or not) to others and also provides a catalyst for further engagement as they design solutions to strengthen web content and wayfinding for visitors and locals alike. From these insights all participants in strategy development look at approaches to enhance the visitor experience, build capacity and skills, strengthen local linkages, generate income and employment for local people, and support business growth.

Sub-regional or local level community, visitor, and business data is collected from residents, businesses and visitors to provide a locally focused decision support system for tourism, to inform strategy development and provide a useful barometer to measure progress over time. NZTRI's 'Get Local' programme gathers information to inform local decision-making to generate greater benefits from tourism and advance the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of New Zealand's host communities and regions. The focus here is on triangulating perspectives on tourism – from the demand, supply and community dimensions and establishing an approach that can be cost effectively continued over time.

Stories of place and themed urban trails: Stories told by locals often feature in the development of themed urban trails. One example is the Ōrākei Visitor Strategy (2015-2018) which sets out to draw visitors from Tamaki Drive to other parts of the local area with storytelling trail development plans within the 'theme' Protecting Our Place. This involved

community members (including local businesses) in storytelling activities to generate local content (videos, podcasts, image libraries) about their neighbourhood or locality. These resources can be used in marketing and promotional activities, as well as creating digital archives of important local heritage, cultural and environmental information.

In Auckland, the Get Local programme began in 2010 with visitor, business and community survey research to inform the development a five-year Visitor Strategy for the Puhoi to Pakiri region now known as Matakana Coast Wine Country. Local network development is a core focus of this programme and Matakana Coast Tourism now represents eight tourism and business groups across the region. Other Get Local research includes work in Albert-Eden, Manukau Harbour, Franklin, and North West Rodney, and outside the Auckland region in the Hawke's Bay and Southland. In 2018 Get Local activities focused on research to inform trail development through the Hunua ranges, a tourism audit of the Hibiscus Coast and Bays area, and visitor strategy development for Aotea / Great Barrier Island.

The Aotea / Great Barrier Island Visitor Strategy 2018-2023 is referred to in the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment 2021 as an example of a community-centric plan that asks local residents and businesses “how much or what style of tourism local communities would be comfortable with”. The Strategy is called “a distinctly local plan that speaks to local needs and environment” and as a way to “articulate and then incorporate a community’s vision for tourism into a local destination management plan” (PCE, 2021a, 51, 55, 58, 59).

In the case of Aotea / Great Barrier Island the Local Board acted as a facilitator and assisted in convening a strategy advisory group made up of mana whenua, residents and local businesses, who led the development of a local destination management plan. Implementation of the plan features a community survey to gauge community support and the perceived impact of tourism – survey research also includes visitor and business perspectives and was repeated in 2020 to monitor progress with the Strategy. Local capacity to implement the Strategy is augmented by the appointment and resourcing of a local community tourism coordinator whose role is to focus on Strategy implementation.

Auckland: The host community experience

Several reports exist that provide information on community attitudes towards tourism development in Auckland. For the purposes of this report community members are defined as permanent residents, non-permanent residents and local business operators. Host communities in Auckland, welcome intra-urban/regional visitors (fellow Aucklanders), domestic, and international visitors.

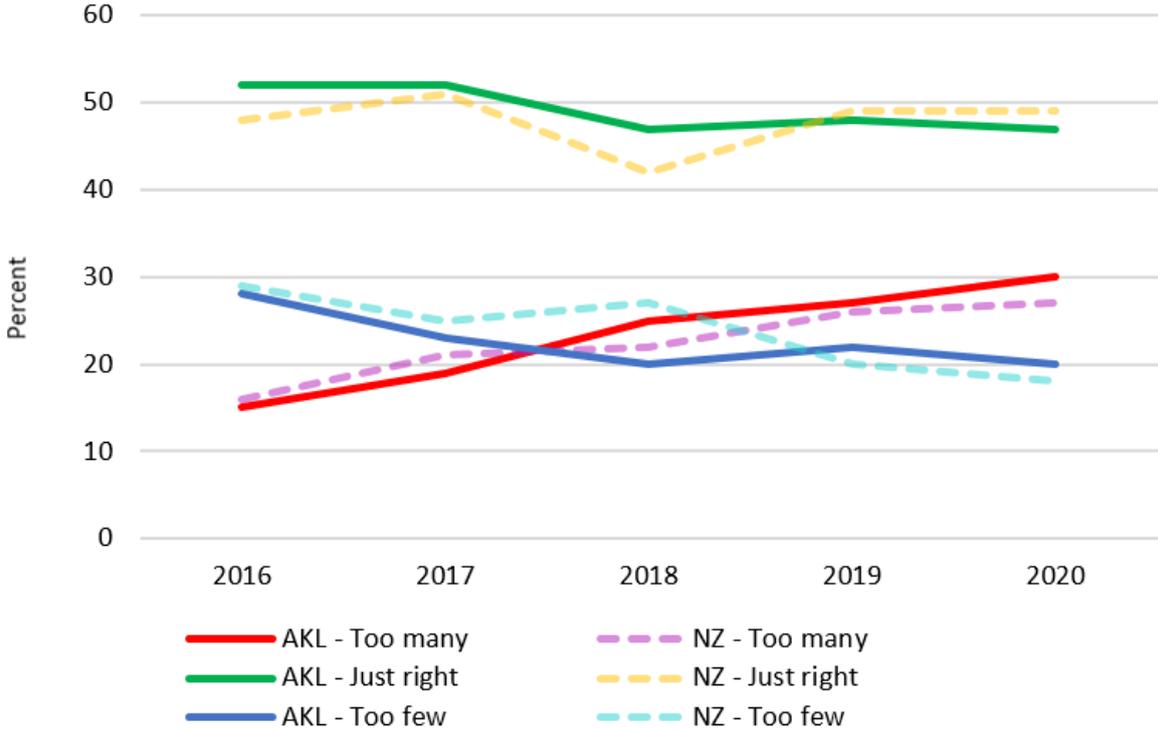
The Get Local research conducted by NZTRI relied on a mix of online surveys to provide insights into business, community and tourist perspectives. There are common elements across the surveys allowing for some degree of comparison across the city. The approach generated robust sample sizes and was focused on generating a good cross section of responses across

target groups. The Waiheke research conducted with the support of Otago University relied on “interest-based community mailing lists”, and “Waiheke networks” (PFW, 2018, 5) to recruit participants in the Project Forever Waiheke community tourism survey research which could potentially generate some bias in responses. The Waiheke community tourism survey response rate was 4.1% of the Island population based on the 2018 census figures (StatsNZ,2018). The community response rate for the two NZTRI Aotea / Great Barrier Island community surveys discussed in the report represent 18.7% (low season) and 24.4% (high season) of the Island population as of 2018.

The nationally focused Mood of the Nation survey provides some basic insights into Aucklanders’ perceptions of international visitors. The total Auckland region sample of 100 participants is small and must be treated with real caution, nevertheless the research does reveal some interesting trends from March 2016 to March 2020 (Figure 3).

It is worth noting that prior to COVID-19, 30% of Auckland respondents perceived the current number of international visitors to be ‘too many’; with 47% indicating ‘just right’. Since 2016, the percentage of Aucklanders who perceive there are ‘too many’ international visitors has doubled (Figure 4). The 2020 report also reveals that 38% of Aucklanders feel that not enough action is being taken to address the pressures of tourism growth (Kantar, 2020).

Figure 3: Perception of current number of international visitors

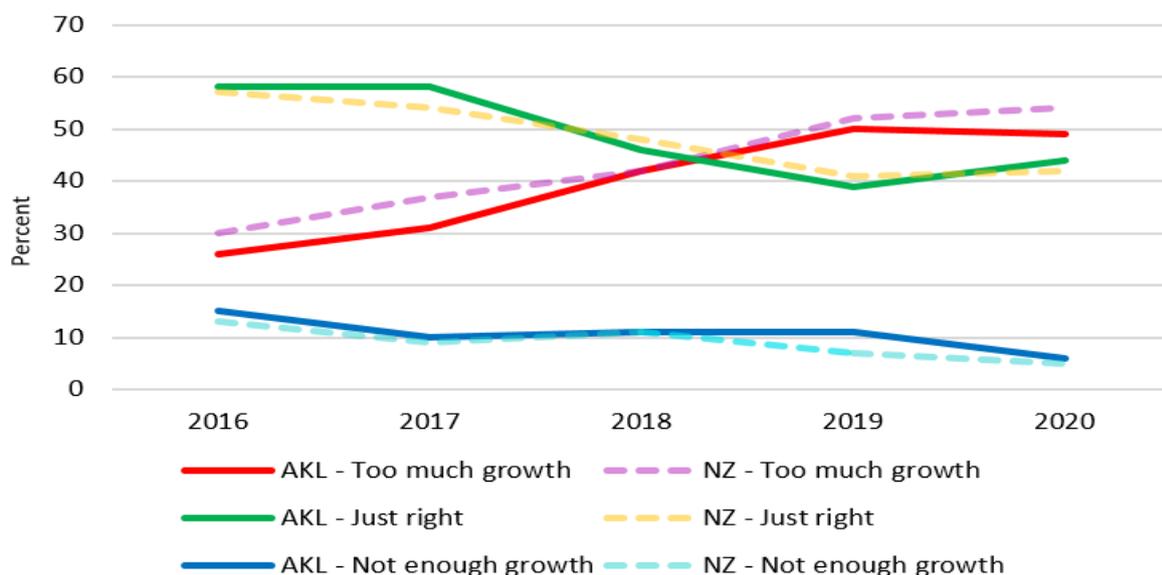


Source: Kantar, 2020

Over the last five years Aucklanders’ attitudes towards predicted future growth of international visitors per year generally reflect the views of New Zealand as a whole (Figure 4). In the last

survey prior to COVID-19 (reported in 2020) half of Aucklanders said that there was too much predicted growth in international tourism compared to 26% in the 2016 report. Aucklanders have consistently sat just below the national average in this respect.

Figure 4: Attitudes towards predicted future growth of annual international visitors



Source: Kantar, 2020

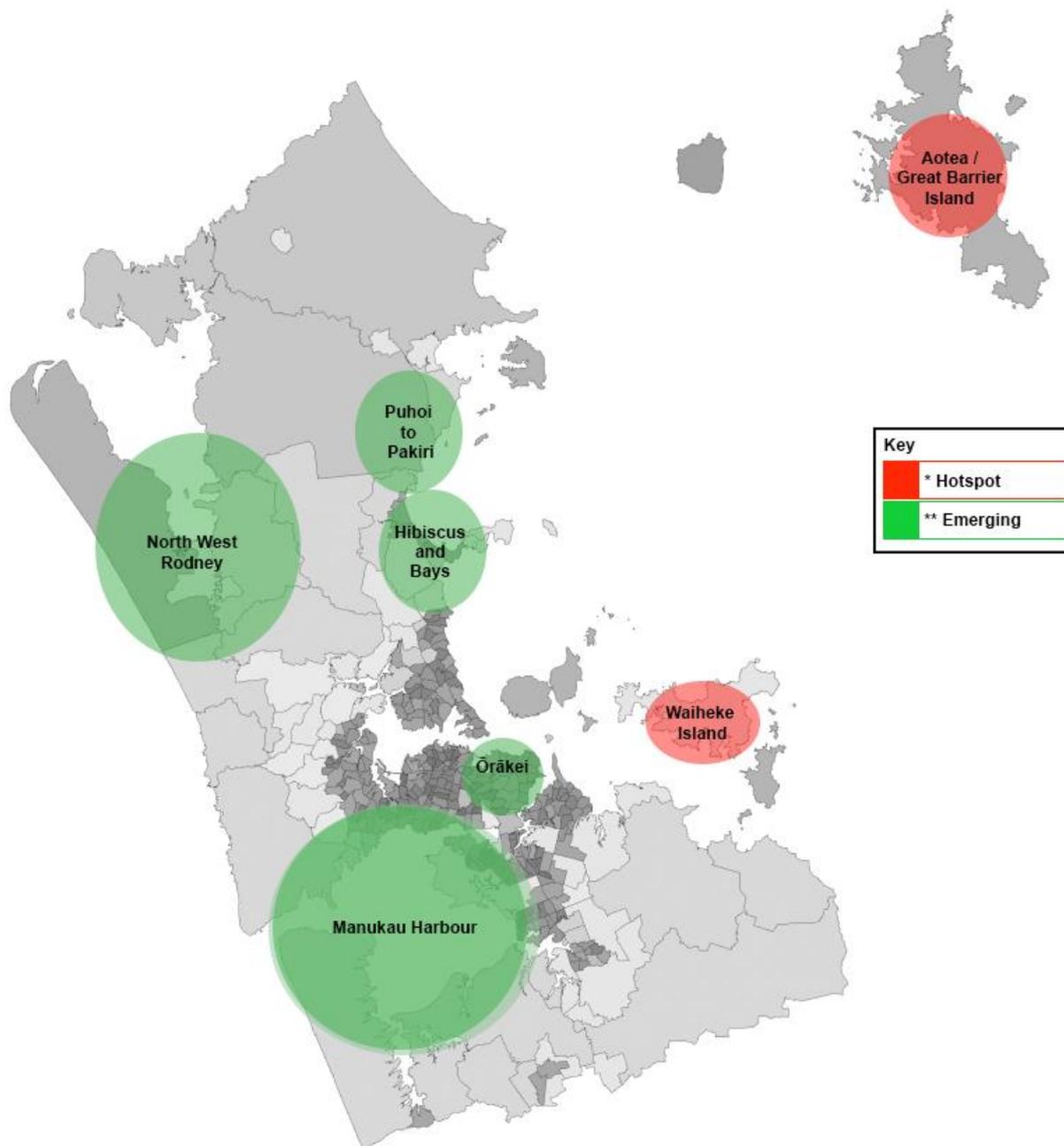
While the broader urban perspectives provided by the Mood of the Nation work are useful, they cannot allow us to really drill down to the local scale of community-tourist engagement. Insights into where opportunities may lie to maximise the benefits flowing to communities, while also mitigating concerns about negative tourism impacts, must be generated at the local scale. It is, after all, at the community and local destination ‘coal face’ where host and guests interact. Findings from locally focused research are needed to understand the perceptions that communities have of tourism as well as locally identified challenges, opportunities and aspirations for future development (see Figure 5).

The findings presented below all reflect a pre-COVID-19 situation and reflect a time when industry growth in the region had been sustained for several years. It is vital that similar future research now be conducted to trace how attitudes are evolving. It is critical that indicators and barometers of change are put in place. The following discussion identifies local areas/destinations that represent tourism ‘pressure points’. While an entire region may not be characterised as a hotspot for tourism, it is important to note that specific communities within the region may well fit that description. For example, Matakana residents showed a stronger sense of an ‘overcrowded’ community during the summer season compared to their counterparts in Warkworth.

Much of the local research reviewed also explores what communities would like to see from tourism and identifies community thoughts on product development and actions across the

visitor economy. The summary draws on a more detailed comparison of key findings from the research conducted (Appendix 1).

Figure 5: Locally focused research on tourism impacts in Auckland



* 'Hotspot': tensions between tourism and local Quality of Life are clearly evident

**'Emerging': tensions between tourism and Quality of Life are limited but require monitoring

Perceptions, challenges and benefits

Host communities are very willing to share their perceptions of tourism and their experiences. Feedback ranges from the positive impacts associated with welcoming visitors to the area, to the associated costs to community quality of life, local infrastructure and the environment.

- **Support for the visitor industry:** Auckland residents are generally supportive of the visitor industry in their area; with those who also own/operate a business tending to express stronger support. Host communities in Hibiscus and Bays, North West Rodney, Matakana Coast and Country, and on Aotea / Great Barrier Island (GBI) all believe that visitors are good for the local economy. Visitors are seen in a positive light overall because they add more vibrancy to the local area, attracting services and amenities that residents can enjoy, and creating a diverse and often multi-cultural atmosphere.
- **Employment and business opportunities:** The visitor industry provides employment opportunities for residents with many working for an organisation that provides services and/or products to visitors. Residents of Hibiscus and Bays are less sure that visitors to their area stimulate employment opportunities for locals and create opportunities for local businesses than other areas surveyed. Similarly, businesses in Hibiscus and Bays and North West Rodney state that their local economies are not heavily dependent on the visitor industry compared to those operating on Aotea / GBI and in the Matakana Coast and Country area. A surprisingly high percentage of businesses in sectors such as retail, transport related services (e.g. mechanics and petrol stations) and professional services state that they have no direct connection with the visitor economy and do not rely on it as a source of revenue. This points to a need to raise awareness of the true value and sectoral reach of tourism to local economies.
- **Quality of Life:** Residents appreciate the diverse activities now on offer to them as locals but overall are somewhat 'neutral' about the impact of visitors on their Quality of Life. Waiheke residents do not feel tourism on the Island has improved their standard of living or provided opportunities to preserve local culture. On both Aotea / GBI and Waiheke, many residents (defined as permanent residents and non-permanent residents) see few, if any benefits in relation to quality life, from tourism, noting as ratepayers, they are paying for the upkeep of the local infrastructure and services for the benefit of visitors and tourism operators. Business respondents are generally more positive about the impact of tourism on quality of life.
- **Visitor numbers pre COVID-19:** Over half of the residents surveyed in localities across the Auckland region want to see the number of visitors coming to their location 'remain about the same' over the next five years. There are concerns that untrammelled growth will be 'too much' for some communities with Aotea / GBI and Waiheke in particular being more sensitive to high visitor numbers than other urban destinations. Aotea / GBI Local Board are currently exploring introducing a \$5 visitor levy to respond to the impacts of tourism, modelled on Stewart Island's regional tourism tax. Business operators in North West

Rodney, Matakana and Ōrākei tend to want to see an increase in visitor numbers and see this as one of the priorities for the visitor industry.

- **Increased pressure on local infrastructure and community amenities:** Communities across the region tend not to believe that increased visitor numbers lead to better maintenance of public facilities and services. Host communities often highlight that one of the least appealing aspects of living in their area is increased visitor numbers putting pressure on already strained public infrastructure and facilities. Businesses in Hibiscus and Bays state the number one challenge for them over the next five years is the lack local infrastructure to support growth in their area.
- **Increased traffic congestion and limited public transport** is making it hard for residents to move around their local areas and to access other parts of the city. Some residents living in Hibiscus and Bays and Matakana are beginning to feel isolated from the rest of Auckland due to traffic congestion and limited public transport. For Aotea / GBI residents, their ability to get on and off Island is a major concern with flights and ferry services often being fully booked and expensive especially during the peak season. Reliable on and off Island transportation is essential and impacts directly on their quality of life e.g. access to medical services, secondary education, and for regular contact with family and friends.
- **Visitor behaviour** can have a negative impact on members of the host community, for example, poor driving noted by residents of Aotea / GBI as being a problem. Local residents also comment that not all visitors staying in holiday homes and Airbnb's within residential areas show respect for community norms and values around noise control. A further issue raised by those living on Aotea / GBI is visitors, particularly those coming by private boat, not supporting local businesses by bringing their own supplies with them – in other words these are not tourists giving much if anything back to the hosts.
- **Overcrowding, seasonality and the need for a break:** Most respondents across the region experience some degree of overcrowding in their local area during the high /summer season due to a combination of intra-regional, domestic and international visitors. Some feel deeply concerned at the misuse (or even abuse) of community resources and the impact that visitors are having on 'their place'. Crowding and congestion restricts access to community amenities and local services including transport and public facilities e.g. parking. Many residents say they enjoy the break from high visitor numbers during the low season. For business respondents who do operate in the off-peak season it can be difficult to manage due to lower visitor numbers, limited facilities for visitors, and the challenge of finding staff.
- **Housing, affordability and supply:** the pressure from growth in visitor numbers impacts not only existing public infrastructure and facilities, but also negatively affects housing supply and affordability. The operation of Airbnb's on Aotea / GBI for example can limit opportunities for long term rentals for those wanting to live and work on the Island and for short term renters such as seasonal staff. The local community is not in favour of an increase

in the number of holiday rental homes on Aotea / GBI especially those owned by people who don't live there. Some in the community comment on rising cost of living due to 'tourist prices' and express concerns over the resultant inter-generational impacts on the younger members of their community, with this sentiment strongest among respondents from Waiheke and Aotea / GBI.

- **Concern for the environment:** Host communities are very aware of the importance of protecting their natural environment and the need to create a sustainable visitor industry. Residents feel that visitors, in some situations, have a noticeable negative impact on the local environment. Residents express dissatisfaction with what is perceived to be a lack of managed environmental protection to safeguard the flora, fauna and outdoor spaces that attract both residents and visitors. Other concerns relate to waste management and rubbish generally, water and energy supply and consumption, the protection of beaches and coastlines, and also protection of wahi tapu (sacred sites to Māori).
- **Erosion of local sense of place:** Residents surveyed in North West Rodney and Hibiscus and Bays are concerned about increased urbanisation threatening the natural environment and 'sense of place' of these peri-urban settings. This concern is exacerbated by visitor numbers and encroachment of Airbnb and holiday rentals.
- **Community resistance:** Some business respondents report a level of push back from members of their local community as they try to attract more visitors to help grow and expand their operation. To help counter this, local tourism operators see the value in raising the awareness of how important the visitor industry is to the local economy by highlighting overall benefits such as job creation, and related local investment in infrastructure and services.
- **Operational issues and local infrastructure:** Residents in all areas note that local infrastructure inadequacies need addressing. Residents and business owners/operators alike want to see improvements to roading, parking, public transport, and internet connectivity to enable growth without additional costs to community.
- **Opportunities for community voices to be heard:** Respondents express an appreciation for the opportunities provided to communicate their thoughts on tourism development in their area through tourism reference groups, completing relevant consultation and attending local meetings and workshops. Residents of Aotea / GBI would like Auckland Council to play a stronger role in addressing their concerns about tourism on the Island.

Host community: Aspirations and opportunities

In addition to highlighting perceptions and concerns about tourism, host communities were also often asked about what type of tourism they would like to see developed in the future – with a focus on experiences and products.

- **Making more of what we have:** Communities focused on making the most of existing resources and assets within an area (including heritage and the natural environment). The types of visitor experience most communities would like to see developed reflect what residents enjoy most about living in their local area: the natural and built environment, arts/culture, music, local interest groups and community organisations, all of which contribute to a 'sense of place' and forms part of the local story of place. The communities are proud of their attractions and activities and a clear majority are happy to promote 'their place' in an appropriate fashion and to share it with visitors. As an example, residents in the Manukau Harbour Forum area would like to promote local fauna and flora to visitors, especially the birdlife – both in their natural surrounds, and in sanctuaries, places mentioned included Waipipi Bird Park, and Awhitu.
- **Urban trails:** Community and business respondents alike see opportunities to promote cycling and walking trails as a way to complement what is already on offer locally and as an effective way to 'slow the visitor down'. Such trails can add value to the visitor experience and the local economy. Residents express interest in the development of trails and activities that link to local beaches, Regional Parks, and other green spaces; these are resources that can be shared by both visitor and host. Again, for residents of the Manukau Harbour walkways, cycleway and trails in the area are seen as significant attractors. The most often mentioned locations include the Waitakeres (parts of the Hillary Trail), Onehunga Foreshore Walk, Kiwi Esplanade walkway, Onehunga (Coast to Coast walk), Mangere Bridge and Cornwallis.
- **Values-based aspirations:** Host communities welcome visitors who are respectful of residents, who support local businesses, and who care for the place they visit. Communities are becoming more aware of the need to create a sustainable visitor industry that does not degrade the environmental and community resources upon which both community and tourism depend. Business operators also want to attract visitors who will support local livelihoods by staying longer and spending more money in their area. As part of the community business operators are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of generating higher local value from every visitor rather than simply relying on an increase in numbers alone.
- **Collaboration:** Residents and business operators can see the benefits from increasing networking opportunities and knowledge sharing around tourism. Local businesses often stress that the private sector does not always work well together or with government.
- **Sharing stories and history:** Many areas of Auckland are rich in both Māori and migrant history and culture, with host communities seeing the potential to promote cultural tourism offerings and add value to the visitor experience and local economy. Examples include urban storytelling trails around the Ōrākei Local Board area; and heritage trails that link places of interest, timber milling (old sites), churches, historic tours of pa sites on Awhitu Peninsula as well as Marae north of Waiuku.

- **Promoting sustainability:** Across the region, there is an awareness of the need to promote low impact and high value tourism. On Aotea / GBI there are opportunities to promote a 'living off the grid' experience, which helps to preserve the natural environment by minimising the ecological footprints of visitors.
- **Well-managed destinations:** Communities stress the importance of managing the development of the visitor industry carefully and the need to prioritise effective engagement with residents at the grassroots level. Of critical importance is the need to involve community and business in tourism processes and decision-making. Communities fear losing their distinctiveness and are passionate about protecting their quality of life and natural and cultural assets.

Visitor attitudes toward host communities

The studies reviewed often reveal significant common ground between the views held by community and visitors on what they enjoy about a specific locality, and on ways to improve the tourism experience for all. This identification of common ground opens up opportunities to develop and hone locally focused strategies that meet both host and visitor demands.

- **Shared appreciation:** Visitors often state that the most appealing aspect of their visit to a destination is the natural environment, followed by the recreational opportunities on offer. This reflects what host communities find most appealing about living in their place – the natural environment is integral to quality of life.
- **Lifestyle, sense of place:** Visitors look for destinations that offer something distinct and different that reflects a unique sense of place. Visitors are particularly attracted to the more relaxed lifestyle and atmosphere found in peri-urban areas such as North West Rodney, Puhoi to Pakiri, and the two Island destinations. Like the host communities, visitors enjoy the relaxed atmosphere away from the central city. Visitors to the Manukau Harbour noted a sense of solitude when coming to the area. Visitors also made special mention of Ambury Regional Park (Ambury Farm) as an example of a 'rural experience' in close proximity to the city centre that is family friendly and educational.
- **Safe and welcoming destinations:** Visitors value how friendly and helpful the locals are and this has a positive impact on their overall visitor experience. Seasonal pressures on locations like Aotea / GBI however have resulted in survey feedback that reveals less than friendly encounters between visitors and locals, with some visitors occasionally feeling unwelcome and/or unwanted on the Island. Often these encounters take place in local business settings or in areas where crowding is evident.
- **Improved infrastructure:** A common theme expressed by visitors is the need for better infrastructure and facilities in the destinations. This reinforces the views expressed by host communities around points of tension and overcrowding. Improved public transport, parking, roading and rubbish management are among the top priorities.

- **Adding value to the visitor experience:** Visitors highlight that value can be added to their experience by providing better customer service and enhancing the depth of experiences presented. The highest day visitor spend is normally on food and drink, and depending on the area - shopping, outdoor activities or attractions are also important. It is important to ensure there is a range of quality local products and services on offer. Visitors, like locals, tend to stress a preference for improved management and/or enhancement of existing natural and built offerings, rather than the need for the development of additional attractions.

In summary, it is evident that while there are several similar themes emerging across the region from resident, local business and visitor perspectives, there are also important differences around perceptions of visitor industry impacts. Figure 5 highlights in red the areas that exhibit levels of higher tourism/visitor tension – these so-called ‘hotspots’ deserve further scrutiny and monitoring in the future. Other areas also require ongoing monitoring to help ensure that they don’t slip into the ‘hotspot’ category. The range of community experiences of tourism also reinforces the need to have a coordinated and locally informed approach to tourism research and indicator development. The map also reveals that there is much of the Auckland region that has received little or no attention in terms of robust research into local community awareness of, and attitudes towards, tourism.

Destination AKL: embracing change, optimising potential

Building on the feedback from communities and the best practice dimensions highlighted earlier, the report now presents ways that stronger community engagement with Auckland’s visitor industry can be achieved with a view to enhancing resident quality of life. It is guided by the question: **What needs to happen to move towards more socially sustainable tourism in Auckland?**

Recommendations are first presented for initiatives to build partnerships, strengthen relationships and capacity among participants in the tourism system. Potential opportunities for product development based on sustainable tourism that emphasise regenerative approaches are then presented. Recommendations for key messages that businesses and Auckland Unlimited can incorporate in their marketing and promotional activities are also provided. The section concludes with recommendations on indicator development designed to support shifts to more regenerative forms of tourism and a deeper understanding of the sustainable outcomes they aim to deliver.

Approach and Recommendations

Build meaningful relationships and partnerships with mana whenua and iwi:

It is essential to respect mana whenua and iwi relationships with the land and sea, and to ensure that iwi is acknowledged as Treaty of Waitangi partners; not simply subsumed into references to the local community as *stakeholders*. In the New Zealand-Aotearoa Government Tourism Strategy there is frequent mention of the importance of developing better partnerships with Māori (tourism enterprises, iwi/hapū/whanau and tangata whenua), as well as promoting Māori culture and values through tourism (MBIE, 2019). The concepts of kaitiakitanga (environmental guardianship) and manaakitanga (hospitality, care, respect for visitors) are important for Māori and should not be misused or merely paid lip-service to.

Relationships and genuine partnerships need to be based on principles of mutual respect, equality, trust and reciprocity. Ancestral wisdom must be honoured, and definitions of *value* derived from the visitor economy aligned to Māori wellbeing outcomes and aspirations for future generations - and not by focusing on what iwi can do for tourism.

Recommendations:

- **Build partnerships with and fund iwi to** develop innovative ways to share knowledge and ideas with community based on a Māori worldview. Create opportunities for iwi to establish their own businesses to actively bring regenerative approaches into existing tourism products; in so doing enhance the visitor experience and increase yield.
- **Engage at an early stage with Treaty Partners:** If there are initiatives for the visitor economy under consideration; it is vital to approach mana whenua/iwi and work together as partners from the onset. Such approaches should be made by those who hold top level positions and local government agencies should not outsource these crucial initial communications to others who Māori may perceive as not having mana e.g. to research organisations and consultants. Support is needed to build this capability in Auckland's Local Boards to guide them on ways to develop relationships and partnerships with iwi at a sub-regional or local level. The Māori Crown Relations Capability Framework for the Public Service is a useful resource here⁶.
- **Strengthen partnerships with iwi when developing COVID-19 recovery plans:** It is recommended that the Destination AKL 2025 strategy be refreshed. By placing a strong strategic focus on community, and the environment that surrounds them, there is ample opportunity to move tourism in Auckland towards *true* sustainability. The first step of that journey must be to strengthen partnerships with mana whenua to firmly embed a Māori world view into strategy development and the future direction of the visitor industry in Auckland.

⁶ <https://www.tearawhiti.govt.nz/tools-and-resources/public-sector-maori-crown-relations-capability/>

Approach and Recommendations

Integrate iwi-community-government-industry in governance structures to provide input into policy and planning

Sustainable development of tourism requires strong partnerships among iwi, community, public agencies, private enterprise, and it is also essential to give community a clear voice in visitor planning. It is important to leverage residents' strong sense of ownership and ties to 'place' and ensure that community be empowered to engage with tourism and have opportunities to make decisions about matters that directly affect them.

Recommendations:

- **Develop and support locally negotiated iwi-community-government-industry** governance structures at a sub-regional or local destination level.
- **Create mechanisms for community to participate** in debates and to have a stronger voice in tourism development. Create opportunities for the sharing of ideas and debate of issues, to enable greater involvement in, and ownership of, the management of the local visitor industry.

Building host capacity and defining value

Engagement with community should focus on defining the ways that tourism can add value to the wellbeing of residents. Value needs to be locally defined and may include the following dimensions: employment opportunities, household income, social connections, support for regenerative community initiatives (e.g. environmental, cultural, horticulture, heritage, education, health).

Recommendations:

- **Co-design collaborative learning networks connected to people and place.** Organise hybrid forums (Callon et al, 2009) (or *wānanga* where appropriate) that bring iwi, residents, community groups, businesses, public agencies and experts together in dialogue to strengthen learning and knowledge exchange. Use these gatherings to reflect and act together, with the aim of constructing a common focus around locally defined challenges and to identify opportunities. Such fora encourage equal influence and input from a range of participants and are not simply 'community meetings', focus groups, or seminars focused on one-way information dissemination.

Participants should not be limited to members of the community who usually turn up for such events; a concerted effort is needed to encourage participation by groups who are culturally or socially isolated or are economically disadvantaged. It is vital to foster intergenerational and intercultural exchanges, social mixing and enhance resident connections to place and to each other.

Approach and Recommendations

- **Create a point of collaboration** by using such gatherings to locally define ‘value’ and create a community vision for tourism. Frame the dialogue by asking: How much, and what style of, tourism would the local community be comfortable with? The idea is that over time these gatherings evolve into a learning community based on respect for each other and knowledge exchange; one that generates collaborative activities, sharing ideas and resources and builds host community capacity to design regenerative and inclusive initiatives for tourism. Identify skills within the community that may be of benefit to the development of the work of the network.

From the outset think of indicators that reflect the aspirations of the group and that can be used to assess impacts of tourism activities from a community perspective. Then co-design formative and summative evaluation criteria to measure industry progress. While there will be core elements that can be included to allow for comparative purposes, indicator and measurement frameworks need to embrace local specificity.

- **Place Māori and community wellbeing at the forefront of defining ‘value’.** Where appropriate, request Māori to act as leaders and facilitators of hybrid forums - or they may prefer to take a *wānanga* approach. Start with asking residents about *their* aspirations; for themselves and their families. What is important to them? What do they hold dear about the place they live and wish to sustain and advance? What are *their* aspirations for the future? Over time move discussions to ways that tourism could be of benefit to them as a community by focusing on what they value, what they would like tourism to bring to their place; and input on how they suggest this may be achieved. Focus on open sharing of the challenges each participant is faced with, and the opportunities they would like to explore.
- **Grow capacity of the local hosting community** to understand regenerative approaches to tourism and what it means for them. Capacity building could start with Auckland Unlimited and Auckland’s Local Boards, to embed core concepts of regenerative aspects of sustainability across all units to support host communities. This is not about focusing simply on training local people how to do tourism marketing and promotion. This goes further, to strengthen host capacity to assume a stronger role in tourism by allocating funding and resources to create local tourism coordinators focused on the social and environmental aspects of destination management.
- **Build community capacity to share knowledge with visitors** either spontaneously should residents casually interact with visitors on occasion, or more formally, for example, by developing a [Global Greeters network](#), or becoming part of the [International Greeter Association](#). Another more commercial example is [Authenticitys](#) (see Best Practice review)

Embed true sustainability across all units at Auckland Unlimited

A full and holistic view of sustainability requires the principles of regeneration and inclusion to be embedded in the context of the visitor economy and in all aspects of local government planning

Approach and Recommendations

(including events). The question to be asked at all stages of work is: How will this tourism-related initiative have a positive social impact on the city's local community?

Recommendations:

- **Develop an ecosystem approach** to the management of tourism. Identify and remove top-down silo thinking, and ways of organising and thinking about tourism. Ensure that strategy development and planning for tourism cuts across AU and Auckland Council initiatives for community development, investment, events and festivals, arts culture & heritage, parks and recreation, housing, waste management and local infrastructure to ensure there is recognition of the diverse and unique needs of the visitor industry.

The key message here is to change the narrative from 'profit' to 'contribution'; from 'it's all about me' to 'it's all about us'. While there is value in educating Aucklanders about the benefits of tourism, it is essential to support Aucklanders to *find value* from tourism and add to their quality of life.

- **Work with Auckland Transport to improve visitor adoption of public transport.** It is vital from a sustainable development perspective to move more travellers into the use of more sustainable forms of transportation whether they be bus, train or cycles and walking. NZTRI (2016) provided a segmentation framework (as part of the Public Transport Adoption framework) for the Auckland visitor and tourism market to Auckland Transport. The work provides a profile of Youth Free Independent Travellers (Youth FIT) visitors and outlines a range of options to bring visitors to key destinations and to build new 'visitor friendly' dimensions into ticketing. One recommendation is to create a Visitor Transport Pass for Auckland that has a high level of integration of public transport with the visitor experience.

Changing the narrative

Tell a tale of contribution: As Aucklanders, we care about others, the environment and the places we call home. In destination marketing activities the story of 'contribution' needs to be told. The notion of 'giving back' or 'leaving a place better than we found it' is fundamental to regenerative approaches and is encapsulated in the word 'contribution'.

There are tensions within New Zealand about Auckland and Aucklanders. Recent visitor research (Tourism New Zealand, 2021; NZTRI, 2016) shows that respondents sometimes voice an '*Us*' versus '*Them*' attitude towards Auckland.

To guide marketing messages and imagery, and strengthen the city's reputation, focus on developing content about our local communities, their stories and people, and enable Aucklanders and potential visitors to learn more about the heart and soul of the city to inspire a day trip, visit or a longer stay. Use marketing to alter the narrative from our 'friendly people' to our 'friendly, generous people' and work to change sometimes negative perceptions of other New Zealanders about Auckland and Aucklanders.

Approach and Recommendations

Recommendations:

- **Our vibrant and generous communities:** Images and key marketing messages should focus on everyday life of the people in Auckland's vibrant communities. There are examples of residents, community groups and businesses that are contributing to the health, wellbeing and lives of others and to the environment all the time. Work with locals to create stories that reflect these contributions and develop community-generated content (images, videos, podcasts etc.).
- **Communities within communities:** Engagement with community starts with identifying ways to access residents. Identify relevant groups and portray the work of Aucklanders who participate in a broad range of local community initiatives. These could include those associated with the environment, with youth groups or with the elderly, cultural, heritage or arts groups, ethnic groups, local food producers and food banks, care for the homeless, Auckland Pride and our rainbow communities, mental health support, health and disability support networks, local environmental volunteers, community hubs, sports clubs, community gardens and so on. Link to these communities in product development.
- **Change the narrative:** from our 'beautiful natural environment, beaches, and (free to use) outdoor areas' to '*conservation and regeneration*'. Move the narrative from 'what's in it for you' to 'here's how you can contribute to the place we all love while you visit and live as a local'. One strong message is to shop local and to link to locally produced goods where possible.
- **Celebrate the contribution of local businesses:** Encourage businesses associated with the visitor economy to celebrate their social and environmental sustainability stories. They may employ local people who face challenges in securing a job or build transferrable skills in their employees; restaurants may be donating food to foodbanks, businesses may be supporting local community initiatives or using their websites to link to other businesses and experiences in their area that visitors may enjoy.
- **Emphasise the need to respect 'our place'.** Respect the local community and the surrounding environment. Include information on how visitors to our place are expected to behave; consider the quiet enjoyment of the place our residents call home. Work with the community groups that feature in marketing activities to understand how visitors could contribute to or participate in their initiatives to 'give back' to the places they visit.

Transformative experiences and values-based bundling

Align community aspirations and values, with values-based bundling of transformative visitor experiences. Instead of creating low value packages reflect 'value for experience' (Tourism New Zealand, 2021) through experience bundling. For relevant examples see the products offered by [Authenticitys](#) and expand on this concept by creating bundles of social impact experiences for travellers who seek a transformational experience.

Approach and Recommendations

Recommendations:

- **Work with local businesses** (or encourage new social enterprises) to curate experiences that leave a positive impact on host communities in Auckland. Add new regenerative dimensions to existing experiences that may not be characterised by sustainable practices. Encourage businesses to work together to create values-based experience bundles with an emphasis on positive social impact.
- **Opportunities for rejuvenation**, culture and heritage need to be woven in with outdoor experiences e.g. cycling, walking. Domestic and international travellers are looking for connections with nature but even more so with people who can help to deepen and enrich their experiences.
- **Refine aucklandnz.com** to show the Auckland experience as one where visitors can enjoy conservation areas; the beautiful outdoor areas and beaches of the city, *and* ways they can contribute to conservation activities. Highlight experiences that are focused on a *net positive contribution* to the social wellbeing of our communities and work with community to design ways that visitors could participate in or contribute to local initiatives.
- **Integrate learning and contribution** as key components of future experience development. Create experiences where visitors can have fun, learn about the worldview of others, learn new skills and gain knowledge about other cultures and ecosystems, and construct their own identity, beliefs and values.
- **Move health and wellbeing of the mind, body and soul to the forefront** of product development. Do this through experiences that focus on fun, a challenge or thrill, advance physical wellbeing, bring families closer together, and strengthen resilience and emotional wellbeing. For example, develop and incorporate experiences that offer opportunities to learn about growing, cooking, and enjoying locally produced healthy food. Connect visitors with memorable and meaningful experiences and provide opportunities for them to 'give back' to the host community.

Stories of place to strengthen civic pride, and local (and visitor) attachment to place

It is important to change the narrative for Auckland by promoting the unique experiences on offer, and by sharing stories of the region to help differentiate itself from other gateway destinations.

Recommendations:

- **Use place storytelling to allow visitors to get to know Aucklanders** and what makes them tick. To understand more about the environments, neighbourhoods and activities we enjoy and the taonga we wish to protect. Tell stories of pre and post-colonial settlement of Auckland that are honest and authentic. Face, rather than avoid, uncomfortable truths by decolonising storytelling and focusing on what we have learned. Engage local communities in place storytelling especially through engagement with the development of online resources.

Approach and Recommendations

- **Tell the stories of our cultural heritage**, including that of our diverse ethnic communities. Human stories of our everyday lives, relatable, human challenges and how they have been overcome. Stories from the heart that evoke emotion, expose vulnerabilities, celebrate success, strengthen connections, and portray vibrancy. Things that we (and visitors) can do that challenge us or nourish our souls.

- **Stories that portray a sense of place**: Local culture and ‘sense of place’ embrace everything that is unique about a location. These are special and memorable qualities that mean something and resonate with community and visitor alike. They involve a set of personal, family and community stories that include features of ‘place’.

Taken together, these stories constitute an attachment to place and that is something that can add real value – economically, socially and culturally. Attach storytelling to urban trails, with stories narrated by locals who wish to retain their narratives or local histories for future generations. This approach supports new and existing residents as well as visitors to create stronger attachment to places in Auckland.

- **Tell stories that appeal to sensation-seekers**. Sensation seeking can be about play, fun, music, art, dance, viewing stunning landscapes, compassion, gardening and growing, cooking and taste, learning and nurture. As visitors engage in activities to fulfil their needs in terms of sensation-seeking, there is an opportunity to add a regenerative dimension to products and experiences.

There are several examples from the best practice review that are relevant here e.g. the *Paddleboard surf the beach clean* activity from Barcelona. Co-design activities with local entrepreneurs and community groups that allow visitors to learn – for example - about the environment and to participate in local initiatives to protect the areas that locals treasure (e.g. beach clean-ups).

Data, indicators and measurement frameworks

It is clear that current performance indicators used by Auckland Unlimited in their Statement of Intent (Auckland Unlimited, 2020), the Destination AKL 2025 strategy, and Destination Auckland Recovery Plan, need to be updated. KPIs, indicators and measures are currently focused on volume metrics and Net Promoter Scores.

While the Statement of Intent outlines many ways that Auckland Unlimited contributes to community (p. 22), there is little available evidence to understand how those goals are achieved. More insightful measures are needed to understand the impact of AU’s efforts in facilitating community inclusive and regenerative forms of tourism development. Economic value needs to be defined as more than simply a contribution to regional growth, instead favouring metrics that specify local benefits such as type and quality of local spend, local linkages and impacts on household incomes and economic wellbeing. It is vital also to gain community perspectives on impacts related to environmental and social concerns.

Approach and Recommendations

Recommendations:

- **Engage community in indicator development:** There is a need to gather local level data to support communities and government to monitor and evaluate the impact of the tourism industry. It is vital to strengthen capacity for research at the destination level; communities need support to identify what matters to them in terms of tourism impacts and performance.

The Get Local approach, for example, engages community in indicator development at an early stage and designs cost effective approaches to collecting data. This may, for example, mean running online community, business and visitor surveys at various times of the year e.g. after high season, during low season. There is also merit in exploring more cutting-edge citizen science approaches. Citizen science is beginning to gain attention in community-focused tourism development; engaging visitors (visitor science) and locals in joint efforts to generate data on a variety of topics. These community-led projects may involve a partnership with an academic or research institution, where all groups concerned can work together to collect, analyse, interpret and share data.

- **Fill gaps in community level data:** many areas within the Auckland region lack readily accessible data on community and visitor perspectives on tourism development and its impacts, or what sort of tourism will best fit community needs and values in the future (Figure 5). There is a need to develop an Auckland-wide approach to coordinating and managing future studies – ensuring that there are common themes that can be compared and aggregated across Auckland while at the same time keeping a focus on specific local needs. While this will require resourcing it need not be an expensive exercise, as tools and approaches can be developed to enable low cost, community managed and driven, barometers of change.

Here AU would do well to work with different sub-regions / tourism cluster groups within Auckland to develop local or sub-regional level destination management plans (or update existing visitor strategies) with associated implementation plans and identified resources, and measurement frameworks/indicators bespoke to their area.

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Appendix 1. Host community research in Auckland

Aotea / Great Barrier Island

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Hibiscus and Bays

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Manukau Harbour

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Matakana

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North West Rodney

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Mood of the Nation

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Appendix 2: Matrix of findings from community research for Auckland

(Please refer to Appendix 1 for report details of research findings discussed below).

Community findings

Key findings/themes	Aotea / Great Barrier High Season Research	Aotea / Great Barrier Seasonal research	Hibiscus and Bays Research	Project Forever Waiheke Research	North West Rodney Research	Manukau Harbour Research	Orākei Research	Puhi to Pakiri Research
	2020	2018	2019	2018	2014	2014	2013	2012
Most appealing aspects of living in their local area								
Top three	Lifestyle	Pristine natural environment	Natural environment	Community people, friendly	Natural environment	Natural environment		Beach/sea/coast
	Pristine natural environment	Belonging and membership	Sense of local community	Natural environment	Recreational opportunities	Recreational opportunities		Sense of place peaceful atmosphere
	Belonging and membership	Sense of ease	Relaxed lifestyle	Relaxed lifestyle freedom, peaceful	Friendly warm local community	Accessibility proximity to city		Community local people

Key findings/themes	Aotea / Great Barrier High Season Research	Aotea / Great Barrier Seasonal research	Hibiscus and Bays Research	Project Forever Waiheke Research	North West Rodney Research	Manukau Harbour Research	Orākei Research	Puhi to Pakiri Research
Least appealing aspects of living in their local area								
Top three	Culture of local community gossip/bullying, negativity	Local community vested interests, rigid views	Hard to get around traffic, poor public transport	Traffic tourist volumes congestion at the wharf	Roading/lack infrastructure traffic congestion	Pollution environmental issues		Traffic congestion
	Cost of living price of food, freight, petrol, travel	Accessibility, transportation	Housing development	Pollution environmental issues, rubbish	Urbanisation and new developments	Lack of local infrastructure and facilities		Infrastructure roads, parking, footpaths
	Lack of infrastructure	Lack of infrastructure	Lack of amenities / leisure activities	Transport service, cost	Socio economic issues petty crime, lack of jobs	Invasive weeds and limited beach access		Living expenses
Percentage of local work force employed in the visitor industry *(HS – high season)								
	66% *(HS)	44% *(HS)	33%	Small percentage in visitor industry. High number of workers commute to city	44%	- -	- -	72% *(HS)

Key findings/themes	Aotea / Great Barrier High Season Research		Aotea / Great Barrier Seasonal research		Hibiscus and Bays Research		Project Forever Waiheke Research	North West Rodney Research	Manukau Harbour Research	Orākei Research	Puhoi to Pakiri Research			
Impact of visitors to the area/region/Island (Mean 1= low to 5=high level of agreement with statement) C- Community B - Business														
	C	B	C	B	C	B	C	C	B				C	B
• Visitors are good for the local economy	4.1	4.4	4.2	4.6	4.2	4.4	47% Not very satisfied/Very dissatisfied	4.5	-	-	-	-	4.4	
• Visitors to the area stimulate employment opportunities for locals	4.1	4.4	4.0	4.4	3.8	3.8	Tourism seen as low wage sector unstable due to seasonal work	4.1	-	-	-	-	4.2	
• More visitors lead to better maintenance of public facilities, infrastructure and services	3.2	3.8	3.2	3.7	3.2	3.3	69% little or no benefit	3.3	-	-	-	-	3.6	
• Local area is overcrowded by visitors during the high season	3.6	3.1	3.5	3.1	3.1	3.1	64% Not very satisfied/Very dissatisfied - Too many visitors	3.6	-	-	-	-	3.6	
• It is good to have a break from large numbers of visitors during the low season	3.8	3.7	4.0	3.7	3.5	3.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Key findings/themes	Aotea / Great Barrier High Season Research		Aotea / Great Barrier Seasonal research		Hibiscus and Bays Research		Project Forever Waiheke Research	North West Rodney Research		Manukau Harbour Research		Orākei Research		Puhoi to Pakiri Research	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors to the area have a negative impact on the local environment 	3.4	2.8	3.2	2.7	2.8	2.7	68% Not very satisfied/ Very dissatisfied with protection of beaches etc	3.0	-	-	-	-	-	3.0	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors to the area improve resident's quality of life 	*	*	*	*	2.8	2.9	Impacts on residents' enjoyment of living on the island	3.4	-	-	-	-	-	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the number of holiday rental homes on Great Barrier Island is a good thing 	2.7	3.1	2.9	3.3											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ownership of holiday rental homes by people who don't live on Great Barrier Island is a good thing 			2.4	2.6											

Impact of visitors on respondent's quality of life C- Community B - Business															
	C	B	C	B	C	B	C	C	B					C	B
• Positive/very positive	39%	67%	29%	72%	-	-		41%	-	-	-	-	-	52%	-
• Neutral	40%	30%	45%	19%	-	-		48%	-	-	-	-	-	28%	-
• Negative/slightly negative	21%	3%	26%	9%	-	-	74% negative impact on quality of life	11%	-	-	-	-	-	20%	-
Visitor numbers over next 5 years															
• More	24%	36%	31%	50%	33%	53%	Top priority to manage tourism volumes and manage tourism generally								
• Same	55%	51%	58%	47%	58%	44%		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
• Less	21%	13%	11%	3%	9%	3%		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Sharing local experiences – what to promote								
		Outdoor activities – local beaches, walking, tramping – Aotea Track, Kaitoke hot springs; Dark Sky status	Local beaches and water-related activities; Outdoor activities - walking and cycling; Regional and other parks	Natural environment, the tranquility, the friendliness of the community, a strong focus on sustainability. Match visitor experience to what locals love and value	Outdoor activities on offer - trails, walkways; Natural environment; Gastronomic attractions	Experiencing the great outdoors- walkways, cycleway and trails; fauna and flora of the Harbour especially the birdlife	Hospitality sector, Auckland's major attractions proximity to city	Beaches and tranquillity/escape; Vineyards/wine tours; proximity to Auckland
Types of visitor experiences community would like to see developed								
		Nature-based/eco-tourism; off-grid tourism; star gazing	Coastal, marine, aquatic activities, trails, nature based, Local food and culinary	Eco-tourist destination, with tourism offerings all focused on low impact and reflecting the historic and contemporary Waiheke	More activities, trails, events; opportunities to attract more Aucklanders; Accom. experiences	Develop the Onehunga wharf as a hub for marine and recreational activities for residents and visitors		Quality experiences; better dining; Improve on current offerings

Business findings

Key findings/themes	Aotea / Great Barrier High Season Research	Aotea / Great Barrier Seasonal research	Hibiscus and Bays research	North West Rodney Research	Manukau Harbour research	Orākei Research	Puhoi to Pakiri Research	Comments
Percentage of local businesses with direct links to the visitor industry *(HS – high season)								
	-	88% *(HS)	35%	40%	-	-	-	
Opportunities over next 5 years								
Top three	Tourism - attracting domestic visitors, holiday packages etc.	Diversification – higher quality visitor experience	Diversifying and growing the business sector within H&B	Business development and growth		Increased profitability and sustainability	Increasing visitor numbers	
	Economic opportunities – promote local goods	Dark Skies tourism - more shoulder season visitors	Local businesses to expand outside the area	Growing local population		Attracting new businesses to the area	Marketing – raising the awareness of the region	
	Destination marketing, extend the season, enhance services	Improved ferry service fast ferry	Population growth in area	More visitors – attract more to the area		Introducing new products and services	Business growth/ development	

Key findings/themes	Aotea / Great Barrier High Season Research	Aotea / Great Barrier Seasonal research	Hibiscus and Bays research	North West Rodney Research	Manukau Harbour research	Orākei Research	Puhoi to Pakiri Research	Comments
Challenges over next 5 years								
Top three	Operational issues staffing, competition- Off Island	Access to the Island rising freight costs, ferry service	Lack of local infrastructure to support business growth	Infrastructure to support growth		Competition from malls and other similar outlets	The economy	
	Limited infrastructure – freight, transport	Staffing – supply, staff housing, decreasing population	Traffic congestion	Council and government plans and regulations		The state of the economy	Visitor numbers - attracting more	
	General downturn in the economy	Financially surviving - compliance costs, cost of living	Increasing costs of operating a business	Keeping business running		Loss of foot traffic in their areas	Business survival – being self sufficient	
Business networking and collaboration (Mean 1= low to 5=high level of agreement with statement)								
• Increasing networking opportunities for local businesses	3.7	3.4	4.3	4.2	-	4.1	4.2	

Key findings/themes	Aotea / Great Barrier High Season Research	Aotea / Great Barrier Seasonal research	Hibiscus and Bays research	North West Rodney Research	Manukau Harbour research	Orākei Research	Puhoi to Pakiri Research	Comments
• Local businesses are supportive of visitor industry	3.5	3.8	3.6	3.4	-	3.6	3.9	
• The local economy depends heavily on the visitor industry	4.2	4.0	3.1	3.3	-	-	4.2	
• Local businesses work well together	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.3	-	3.5	3.3	
• The local area needs more day visitors	-	-	-	4.0	-	4.0	4.0	
Priorities for the visitor industry (Mean 1= low to 5=high level of agreement with statement)								
• Attracting Aucklanders	3.7	3.2	3.8	4.5	-	-	-	
• Attracting domestic visitors	3.9	3.5	3.9	4.4	-	4.3	4.5	
• Increasing visitor spend	4.1	3.9	3.8	4.4	-	4.2	4.5	
• Increasing visitor numbers	3.2	3.0	3.2	4.3	-	4.1	4.3	
• Understanding how important visitors are to the local economy	4.2	3.7	3.8	4.3	-	3.8	4.2	
• Attracting international visitors	3.1	3.2	3.6	4.3	-	3.6	4.3	

Visitor findings

Key findings/themes	Aotea / Great Barrier High Season Research	Aotea / Great Barrier Seasonal research	Hibiscus and Bays research	North West Rodney Research	Manukau Harbour research	Orākei Research	Puhi to Pakiri Research	Comments
	2020	2018	2019	2014	2014	2013	2012	
Most appealing aspects of visiting the destination								
Top three	Pristine natural environment	Beauty of the place	Beaches	Natural environment	Natural environment	-	Countryside/scenery	Reflects resident findings
	Recreational activities	Recreational activities	Beautiful scenery including Regional Parks	Recreational activities	Recreational opportunities	-	Beach/sea/coast	
	Lifestyle and atmosphere	Lifestyle and atmosphere	Visitor amenities	Peaceful rural lifestyle	Sense of solitude	-	Wine/wineries	
Least appealing aspects of visiting the destination								
Top three	Culture of local Lack of infrastructure community	Lack of Infrastructure and facilities – roading, accessibility	Lack of local Infrastructure and public facilities	Roading/ lack infrastructure	Lack of local infrastructure and facilities	-	Infrastructure roads, parking	Reflects residents findings

Key findings/themes	Aotea / Great Barrier High Season Research	Aotea / Great Barrier Seasonal research	Hibiscus and Bays research	North West Rodney Research	Manukau Harbour research	Orākei Research	Puhoi to Pakiri Research	Comments
	Expensive location high costs of petrol etc.	Not enough things to buy or do	Traffic congestion	Environmental issues logging, litter	Environmental issues pollution	-	Traffic congestion	
	Issues with mosquitoes, feral animals – impact on environment	Lack of friendliness of local people	Environmental issues water quality, litter	Not accessible/ proximity to city	Natural environment tidal nature, access to the water	-	Expensive location	
Visitor suggestions on how to improve the destination								
Top three	Improved infrastructure and facilities rubbish, recycling roads	Improve local infrastructure and facilities recycling, roads	Improved local infrastructure and facilities including lack of parking at popular spots like Orewa	-	Improved local infrastructure and facilities roads, boat ramps,	-	-	
	Better transport options locally and on/off Island	Better public transport options	Better retail and dining options	-	Better public transport options	-	-	

Key findings/themes	Aotea / Great Barrier High Season Research	Aotea / Great Barrier Seasonal research	Hibiscus and Bays research	North West Rodney Research	Manukau Harbour research	Orākei Research	Puhi to Pakiri Research	Comments
	Better hospitality options and customer service	Better food and service	More visitor information online and onsite	-		-	-	
Visitors' perceptions of the local community and the destination (Mean 1= low to 5=high level of agreement with statement)								
• Locals are friendly and helpful	4.5	4.4	4.2	-	-	-	-	
• It is a safe destination	4.6	4.7	4.5	3.9	-	4.5	4.5	
• Offers something distinct and different to other parts of the Auckland region	4.6	4.8	4.1	4.1	-	-	-	
What time spent in a destination offers to visitors (based on percentage of respondents)								
• A beautiful natural environment where I can spend time outdoors	91%	94%	-	80%	87%	-	-	
• An opportunity to escape the city and to be in a more rural environment/ be on a remote Island	84%	87%	-	73%	-	-	-	

Concerns related to tourism on the Aotea / GBI Island		
	Aotea / Great Barrier High Season Research – 2020 56% of all respondents expressed some concerns during the high/summer season	Aotea / Great Barrier Seasonal research – 2018 60% of the community respondents and 47% of the business respondents expressed some concerns.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top three concerns 	Facilities and infrastructure	Environmental Issues
	Tourist behaviour – driving skills, lack of respect for locals	Tourist behaviour – driving skills, lack of respect for locals
	Crowding and congestion – traffic, pressure on services	Crowding and congestion – traffic, pressure on services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to address these concerns 	Waste management	Legislation & regulations
	Reduce visitor numbers – attract high yield	Facilities & infrastructure
	Legislation, regulations and enforcement	Information & education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is best placed to do this 	Auckland Council	Auckland Council
	Multi-stakeholders - working together	GBI Local Board
	Government and public agencies	Multi-stakeholders - working together
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can local communities/ businesses benefit more from visitors 	Destination marketing – attract visitors	Improving infrastructure
	Support local linkages and business opportunities	Local ownership of the tourism industry
	Support local businesses to service tourism	Support local businesses to service tourism