

Visitor Volume Estimates Definitions and Methodology

July 2024

Overview

Visitor Volume Estimates (VVEs) is a data source purchased from tourism data experts [Vistr](#) by DQ and LWT. The VVE's utilise highly granular mobile location data, referred to as "cell tower pings," to estimate visitor numbers and movements in Aotearoa. The ping data represents approximately 50% of all mobile devices present in Aotearoa at any given time. Vistr (the data supplier) conducts comprehensive demographic modelling to scale the device counts, creating an insights series representative of the entire population. The resulting estimates provide the industry with reliable and timely data on tourism activity for both domestic and international visitors. For further information about methodology and data modelling please contact DQ's [Data and Insights Analyst](#) to discuss further.

DEFINITIONS

Visitor daily count estimate

Visitor daily count estimate (also referred to as "visitor volume estimates", "visitor counts", "visitor numbers" and "visitation") are reported as peak daily visitor volumes (not unique visitors) for a specific visitor market within a given geography and time of day.

Cumulative visitor estimates

Cumulative visitor estimates is the total number of daily visitors counted over a given period, for most scenarios it is over a month. For example a visitor that is in the region three days is counted three times.

Domestic/ International

Visitor days are segmented into domestic and international segments, as per the following definitions.

- International visitors are defined as visitors to New Zealand that are staying for less than 365 days following the definitions of official statistics by the Stats NZ Population Insights team.
- Domestic visitors are defined as New Zealand residents visiting locations outside of their home RTO boundary for up to 14 days.
- When "Total visitors" are represented, this refers to the combined sum of both domestic and international visitor markets.

Time of recording

Daytime volumes reflect the peak visitor numbers in any given area between 10 AM

and 9 PM each day, rather than a snapshot at a given time (e.g. midday). What is recorded is peak daytime visitation, which results in increased counts that better represent peak volumes. Because peak volumes occur at different times in various regions, its believed this approach provides a more equitable representation of regional activity levels.

KNOWN LIMITATIONS

International Visitors

International visitor definition: We know that an “International visitor” may be defined / considered differently for different regions and stakeholder groups. For V1 of the VVEs Vistr have followed the official definition of an international visitor as used in publication of international travel statistics by Stats NZ. Stats NZ defines an international visitor as anyone non-resident in New Zealand visiting the country and staying for less than 365 days. This includes visitors arriving on study and work visas.

Travel SIMs: Some visitors to New Zealand will use temporary domestic SIMs (travel SIMs). These are not tracked as part of the VVEs.

Domestic Visitors

Second home: Domestic visitors are categorised based on their home location, determined by their most frequent sleeping location within a 14-day period. If individuals stay at a holiday destination for an extended period, that destination may temporarily become their new home location. When these domestic visitors eventually return home after their holiday, they may initially be counted as domestic visitors to their holiday destination.

Commuter behaviour: Commuters who travel across RTO (Regional Tourism Organisation) boundaries are classified as domestic visitors.
