

Emerging Traveller Trends

This resource summarises the trends uncovered in the *Emerging Trends in the Travel and Tourism Industry* research. By understanding these trends Destination Queenstown and its member businesses can effectively adjust strategic areas of focus, mitigate risks and capitalise on market opportunities.

Pursuing conscious travel & enabling visitor contribution

Travellers are becoming more conscious of the climate crisis and how their travel decisions affect the destinations they visit and the communities living there. People are traveling more thoughtfully, creatively, and intentionally and there is an increasing desire to give back, and to make more conscious choices across the entire travel experience.

This is changing how people are planning their visitor experience and spend their money. Regenerative travel recognises that the visitor economy is part of an interconnected system and those who travel in a regenerative way will have a net-positive impact on the environmental, societal, cultural and the economic wellbeing of a destination.

Examples

- **Wren Urban Nest** - one of Ireland's most environmentally friendly accommodation providers.
- **Ōkārito Kayaks GorseBusters** - a weeklong volunteering opportunity to support the removal of noxious weeds in a lagoon.



Seeking well managed destinations & experiences

People are seeking destinations where there is a well-managed balance between resident and visitor needs. High visitor numbers have often historically been a cause for celebration, but they can reverse some of the very benefits that come from tourism.

Travellers will seek destinations and experiences which manage the impacts of tourism responsibly either through strategic marketing, technology or physical limitations to ensure a high-quality visitor experience while minimizing the impacts on destination and residents.

Examples

- **4VI** - Tourism Vancouver's evolution from a marketing organisation to a social enterprise called 4VI to ensure that travel is a force for good for Vancouver Island – forever.
- **The Wave, Utah** - introduced a ballot lottery system to ensure impacts of mass visitation were minimised on the environment and visitor experience was maintained.



Shifting traveller motivations & experiences

The pandemic provided a unique opportunity to look reevaluate their choices, priorities and values and this has resulted in shift in lifestyle and travel preferences and demands. There is an increased appreciation of mental health leading to an increased interest in wellness and purpose led lives.

People are seeking opportunities to work and travel with purpose and are seeking ways to connect authentically and meaningfully with environments and cultures through travel experiences. Traveller motivations will continue to evolve as new generations begin travelling – namely millennials and Gen Z who want to actively participate in authentic, unique experiences.

Examples

- **EuroVelo** - incorporates existing and planned national and regional cycle routes into a single European network to make it easy for cycle tourists to travel Europe on bike
- **Closed for Maintenance, The Faroe Islands** - popular visitor attractions or sights close for a week to allow volunteer visitors to help preserve and improve the attraction.



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? Preparing for the unpredictable

The travel and tourism industry is susceptible to external factors such as climate change, pandemics, terrorism, earthquakes, financial crises, changing consumer behavior, geopolitical tensions, and political instability. These factors can influence how tourists perceive a destination and make decisions about traveling there.

Building resilience will become crucial for ensuring the visitor economy can thrive and positively contribute to a destination's environmental, social, cultural, and economic wellbeing. Agility, adaptability, transparency, and clear communication are key to ensuring the travel industry's continuity.

Examples

- **Amsterdam Schiphol** - has limited flights to manage environmental and residential impacts.
- **Sharchi, India** - a remote Himalayan region vulnerable to extreme weather events and earthquakes implemented collaborative governance systems between village councils to enable responsible management of the visitor economy.



🇳🇿 Capturing the value of domestic visitors

The pandemic highlighted the essential role that domestic travel plays in the visitor economy. Welcoming domestic visitors has many benefits – it helps address seasonality, disperses visitor flows to less frequented areas, usually has a lower environmental and carbon impact, often leads to repeat visitation and are less impacted by external influences – such as travel restrictions, politics, and economic crises. Aviation has become more expensive, and people are increasingly aware of the environmental impacts of long-haul travel, adding to the popularity of nearby destinations.

Examples

- **Gloucestershire** - have created a programme which encourages domestic visitors to visit different sites through one long distance trail via railroad.
- **Oregon Tourism Studios** - were set up to develop a network of communities and businesses that could deliver unique experiences in across a wide geographical area which will encourage visitor dispersion.



🔄 Flexibility in the customer journey

Historically, travel businesses held the power to enforce their terms and conditions while making the customer pay extra for the ability to change a booking in the future. Uncertainty and fast-changing travel restrictions due to COVID-19 resulted in increased flexibility for travellers.

Travellers will expect to be supported with information that provides them confidence on their booking journey whilst balancing the operational implications for the business. The adoption of new or more effect technologies, software and booking platforms, automation and artificial intelligence should help retain flexibility and increase efficiencies resulting in favourable outcomes for travellers and operators.

Examples

- **Hopper** - an online travel booking platform that has market leading flexibility offering including being able to cancel or leave for any reason and receive a full refund.
- **Technology and AI** innovations through out the travel experience – such as the integration of **ChatGPT**, sentiment monitoring and process optimisations.



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