

# TOURISM YOUTH PERCEPTIONS

RESEARCH REPORT

Opportunities in tourism:  
What young New Zealanders think



Auckland  
Tourism, Events and  
Economic Development  
An Auckland Council Organisation



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# Foreword

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***Tourism has been enjoying a period of unprecedented global growth, creating huge demand for labour across the tourism and hospitality sector.***

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**This is creating challenges in New Zealand where our expanding visitor economy is struggling to find the people it needs to provide our visitors with a world-class experience.**

While those in the industry know that tourism has viable and attractive career options, the reality is that many young people and their parents have a contrary view.

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) identified 'People and Skills' as being critical to meet the goals of the Tourism 2025 Framework, developing a supporting strategy which recognised the importance of this issue. It acknowledged that attracting young people to the sector is key to helping alleviate the shortages.

Likewise, the recently launched Destination AKL 2025 strategy, spearheaded by Auckland Tourism, Events, and Economic Development (ATEED), has listed getting more young people into a career in tourism as one of the key strategic imperatives towards developing a sustainable visitor economy in Auckland.

Ultimately, getting more young New Zealanders into the visitor economy is a win-win – it will help address a serious skills shortage in the industry and provide a huge range of jobs and career pathways for young people starting out.

But what do young people really think about a career in tourism? And, why are they not attracted to working in the country's number one export industry?

What follows are the findings of a nationwide research project initiated by ATEED and TIA to respond to a long-standing gap in information about what New Zealanders, particularly young people, think about working in tourism.

The research offers new insights for industry employers and educators, so that they can increase recruitment of young people, and effectively retain and develop these young people in sustainable career pathways.

We need to clearly understand their perceptions in order to work out the most effective response to encourage young people to go with a tourism career and ensure New Zealand can continue to offer a world-class visitor experience.



**STEVE ARMITAGE**  
ATEED General Manager  
Destination



**CHRIS ROBERTS**  
TIA Chief Executive

# Executive Summary

## There has never been a better time for a young New Zealander to enter tourism.

The sector is booming, and growth forecasts are strong. Employers, tertiary providers and government agencies are united in their desire to attract school leavers into the industry.

**The irony however is that tourism has been more successful in marketing New Zealand to visitors than promoting itself as a career to young New Zealanders. If we are to sustain the industry's success, we need to attract young people to provide high quality visitor experiences.**

## Inside the tourism tent - it's buzzing

**Encouragingly, young people studying and working in tourism are largely positive.**

Research revealed those who studied the subject at school enjoyed it especially if it was taught with passion. Recent tourism recruits enjoy the work they do with three quarters finding the industry appealing to work in. They're learning new skills they feel are transferable internationally and to other industries. Many feel they're living the dream in a fun, fast-paced and culture-rich industry.

The only real discord is around remuneration with one in five respondents indicating that the pay they receive is inadequate to retain them in tourism long term. With 60% of respondents feeling that the pay is 'average' or enough to retain them in the industry, and a further quarter considered pay to be low.

This is concerning given the current challenge of attracting young people and the training investment required to upskill them. It's just as important to retain current talent as it is to attract new people.

## Outside the tourism tent - it's quiet

**Young people outside the industry hold less positive perceptions.**

There's a large vacuum in their minds around a career in tourism and how far they can go.

To them it lacks the all-important status factor unlike medicine or law. Young people refer to the role of tourism as 'serving others' rather than being served.

While young people view working in tourism as potentially fun, exciting, global and adventurous, it's something you do while making up your mind. A means to an end rather than a career in itself. Parents as the main influencers, hold similar views and above all, want secure futures for their children.

Within schools, there's a disconnect between the urgent needs of New Zealand's number one export industry, the promotion of the subject and the quality of tourism studies being taught. Worryingly, it's perceived as a 'low status' subject that academic students are discouraged from studying.

Furthermore, tourism recruitment or career marketing is largely not cutting through with young people or their influencers, namely parents, teachers and peers.

# Background

## Tourism employers are facing unprecedented skills shortages in Auckland and in popular destinations across New Zealand.

Having the right people, in the right place, at the right time is critical to achieving the Tourism 2025 aspirational goal of a visitor economy valued at \$41 billion.

Tourism needs to attract talented young New Zealanders to ensure high quality visitor experiences.

TIA members rate 'People and Skills' as the major challenge facing both tourism and their own businesses. TIA has developed the People and Skills 2025 Framework for industry action as shown below.



### INCREASE CAPACITY

Attract and develop a workforce of capable New Zealanders



### IMPROVE CAPABILITY

Customer focussed capable of delivering high value visitor experiences

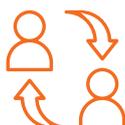


### ACKNOWLEDGE THE REGIONAL DIMENSION

Regional solutions are needed to respond to workforce needs



### ACKNOWLEDGE SIZE OF ENTERPRISE



### RECOGNISE CHANGES IN THE WORKFORCE



### REDUCE CHURN



### EMBED THE TRAINING CULTURE



### CONTINUE ATTRACTING PEOPLE



### ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATION PROVIDERS

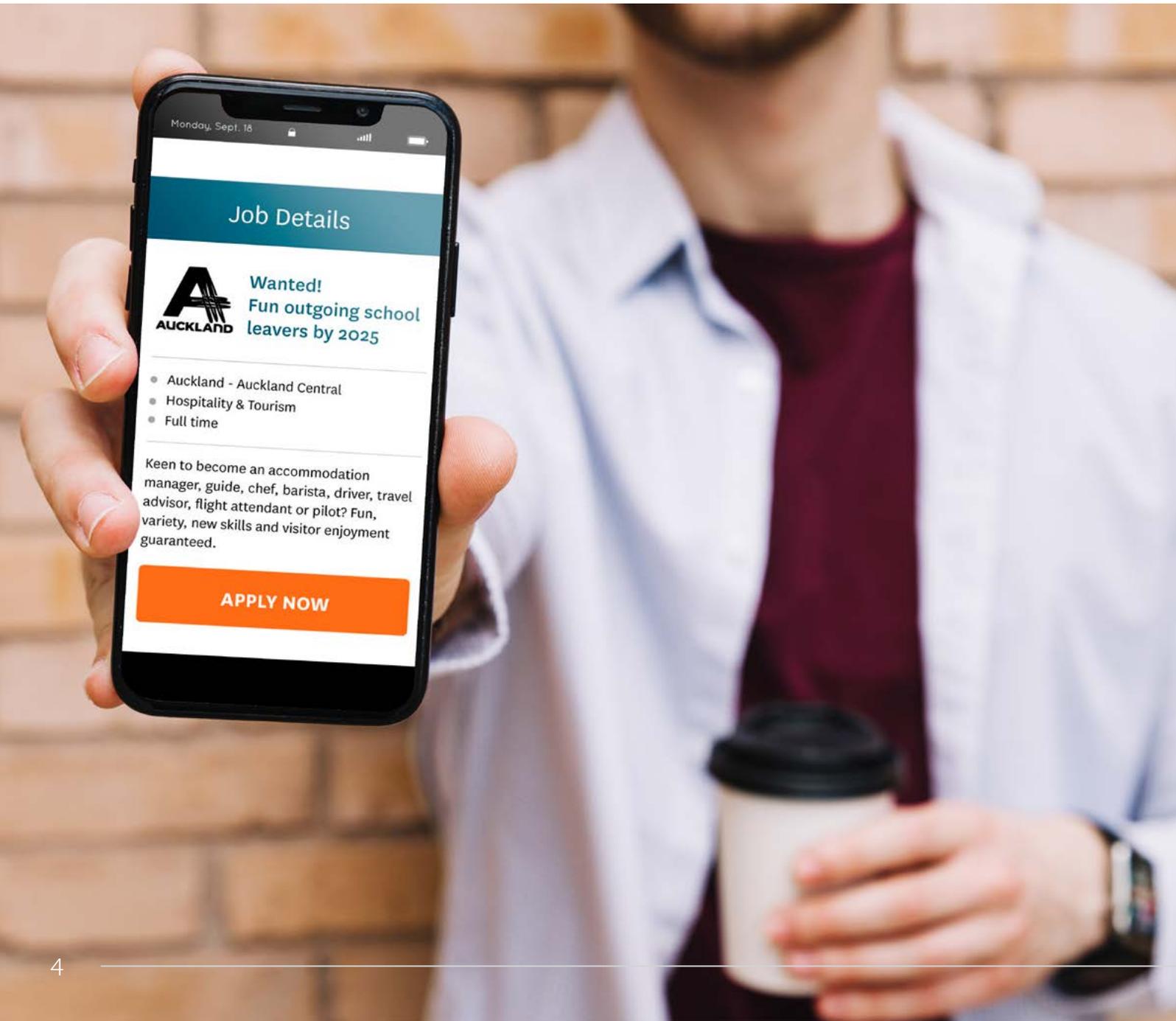
ATEED's recent 'Destination AKL 2025 Strategy' outlines six strategic imperatives, one of which is to enable Auckland as:

**“A Skilled Place: A region where more young people are choosing globally relevant careers in the visitor economy.”**

Actions include developing an employment strategy to attract more young people into tourism as Auckland accounts for around one-third of the national workforce.

**This research project supports many of the priorities identified in the TIA People and Skills Framework and ATEED's Destination AKL 2025 Strategy.**

There is no known research which explores in-depth how young people in New Zealand view tourism as a career. Research insights are required to help shape strategies around the recruitment and retention of young people into tourism to help address the skills shortage.



# Research Partnership

*ATEED and TIA commissioned research in 2018 to discover how young people evaluate post-school options and what they (and their influencers) think of tourism as a career choice.*

The research also aimed to identify the barriers relative to other pathways. The research was co-funded by ATEED and TINZT (Tourism Industry New Zealand Trust) and project-managed by ATEED.

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TIA  
TOURISM  
INDUSTRY  
AOTEAROA

TINZT  
TOURISM  
INDUSTRY  
NEW ZEALAND  
TRUST

“ By 2025 Tourism has an aspirational goal of a visitor economy valued at \$41 billion.



# Research Objectives and Methodology

*The goals of the tourism youth perceptions research were to discover:*

**HOW YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN AND FORM OPINIONS ABOUT CAREER CHOICES.**

**HOW THEY VIEW TOURISM AS A CAREER OPTION, SPECIFICALLY THE BARRIERS OR DEMOTIVATORS.**

**WHAT MOTIVATES YOUTH ABOUT TOURISM.**

The research involved both qualitative and quantitative studies and included high school students, key influencers namely parents, teachers or career advisors and young people who have recently started training or working in tourism.

**The qualitative research was conducted independently by Angus and Associates and included 11 qualitative focus groups and 6, one-on-one, interviews across Auckland, Christchurch, Nelson, Rotorua and Wellington.**

Focus group members were recruited from a representative cross-section of ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds.

**The quantitative research was an online questionnaire developed by the researchers at ATEED in conjunction with TIA and included two sample groups.**

The first sample was an ATEED network based sample, which invited a number of training and educational institutions to distribute the questionnaire link to their students and those working in the tourism and hospitality industry. The bulk of the respondents from this sample were from the Auckland region (n=377). The remaining number of respondents from the rest of NZ were (n=269).

The second sample was through independent research company Research Now, involving a nationwide representation of people aged 13 to 24 years. The sample was split between respondents from Auckland (n=390) and the rest of NZ (n=463) who expressed an interest in tourism.

The quantitative online research generated 1685 completed surveys reflecting the opinions of tourism students, part-time or full-time tourism workers, students still at school and recent school leavers aged 13-24 years from the general population. The majority of the respondents across both samples were aged between 18-25 years and largely female.

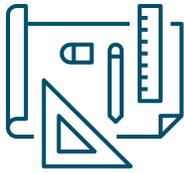
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*I actually think there's so many cool things to do in tourism, so many opportunities but my school and society in general think it's a bum subject....the way it's treated, people are definitely put off.*

*- Female, 16 - 19, Auckland*



# Recommendations Summary



## **BUILD THE TOURISM BLUEPRINT - PLAY TO STRENGTHS**

Promote tourism competitive advantages to young people and bust the myths. Reflect the proof-points highlighted by those already working in the industry namely: it's fun, offers adventure and life-changing experiences. It's a dynamic sector where people can advance and gain new skills transferable worldwide.

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## **CREATE THE BUZZ - RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE**

Develop a long-term communication campaign, largely online content-led and also through schools to attract young people when they're in the decision zone. Understand the language, social currency and landscape of student recruitment to more effectively compete for talent.

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## **ENGAGE THE INFLUENCERS - TALK UP TOURISM**

Drive a vocation awareness strategy specifically targeted at high schools and parents. Highlight the diverse pathways, end roles and ambassadors of industry to raise tourism's status. Work with curriculum strategists to broaden its exposure to more students and upskill specialist tourism educators.

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## **REDUCE CHURN AND RETAIN EXPERIENCE - FUTURE LEADERS**

Promote industry advancement opportunities to current talent. Recognise performers, identify industry ambassadors, reward and celebrate them. Ensure remuneration is competitive and balance retention investment versus the cost of attracting young people.

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## **ATTRACT AND MENTOR BRIGHT YOUNG NEW ZEALANDERS - IMPROVE CAPABILITY**

Address the industry's need for casual and entry-level skills by targeting undecided school leavers or tertiary students seeking part-time employment. Encourage employers to offer internships and on-the-job mentoring. An enjoyable 'gap-year' experience could be the bridging strategy which attracts talent into the industry long term.



# Key Findings - Young People

## Where to after school: How young people decide

Various personal and external factors influence young school leavers and the career paths they choose. These range from their inherent strengths or an involved teacher to parental expectations and even inspirational stories on social media.



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***Young people's motivations differ when considering their options.***

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They talked about their desire to work alone (artist) or with others (customer service); their desire to work with their hands (builder) or more with their minds (lawyer) and even more altruistic motivations like helping others (a nurse) as opposed to working for personal gain (stockbroker).

**At the very heart however students reflect on their abilities and innate strengths namely “is this something I could be good at?”**



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***Practical considerations also come into play.***

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This includes how much different study options will cost, availability in terms of job supply and awareness in terms of ‘jobs they know about’. Potential income is important but less so for some young people when they are entering the workforce. For others, the family’s financial circumstances means that simply finding work is the priority, regardless of what the job is.

**Young people are acutely aware that entry-level jobs pay less, whereas top-level, better-paying jobs require higher qualifications and are more highly contested.**

*Bottom photo credit: Fresh cuisine full of fire – a world-leading visitor experience from the heart of the capital! Photo: Jessica Taylor, James Cook Hotel Grand Chancellor.*



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### ***Personal experience and family values shape their views.***

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They may know someone who works in their field of interest or have insights from older colleagues through part-time work.

Social status and popular culture also come into play in terms of how their peers, parents or family will view their career choice and what it says about them. Parental aspirations have a significant impact on what young people choose to do after school.

### **When it comes to tourism, many young people feel that their parents have a limited knowledge and negative views of the industry.**

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### ***Inspirational teachers (over career advisors) are influential in young people's decisions.***

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These 'super-teachers' are the adults who have the most facetime or direct contact with students. Career advisors, who are often juggling other roles within school, are viewed as good sources of general information but not particularly helpful with specialist advice.

### **“Teachers understand us more, some have passion and inspire us”**

*Female, aged 13 - 15, Nelson*

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### ***Career expos are useful.***

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Specialised career or course presentations are well regarded as they offer insight and advice into a pathway. Older students studying in a field of interest are well received too.

### **“A girl came and talked to us and she told me about business, about what I could do, people with successful jobs”**

*Female, aged 16 - 19, Christchurch*

*Top photo credit: Auckland University of Technology*



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## ***Social media channels shape young people's worlds.***

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Young people are influenced by the portrayal of people in different careers on social media and through film, television, literature and music. This is the generation with the world at their fingertips and they heavily consume stories on:



They prefer online sources and video for career information and browse the SEEK and CareersNZ websites for job adverts to explore the requisite skills, pay rates and employer expectations. Other popular sources include Trade Me, Indeed, LinkedIn and Student Job Search. Traditional media like TV, radio, newspapers and magazines are low preference channels for young New Zealanders.

### **“Social media exposes you to more unconventional career paths”**

*Female, aged 16 - 19, Auckland*



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## ***Young people want ‘opportunities’ as opposed to jobs and careers.***

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The most top-of-mind roles under consideration were retail, followed by teaching, law, nursing and accounting (Research Now sample).

**For students currently studying tourism, the top choice was flight attendant (by a significant margin), followed by travel advisor, event management and adventure tourism roles.**

*Bottom photo credit: New Zealand School of Tourism, Air Chathams*

# THE TEENAGE MIND

## Career motivations

### USING MY HANDS AND PRACTICAL SKILLS

“It’s a bit more active, not soul destroying and behind a desk.”

*What I’ll be doing?*

### USING MY MIND & INTELLECT

“I don’t necessarily want to be a lawyer but I do want to use the degree for the skills it gives you like for analysis and that type of thinking.”

### WORKING WITH PEOPLE

“You get to see new people like everyday so that’s cool.”

*Who with?*

### WORKING ALONE

“Most of these (industries not interested in) involve having to communicate with people.”

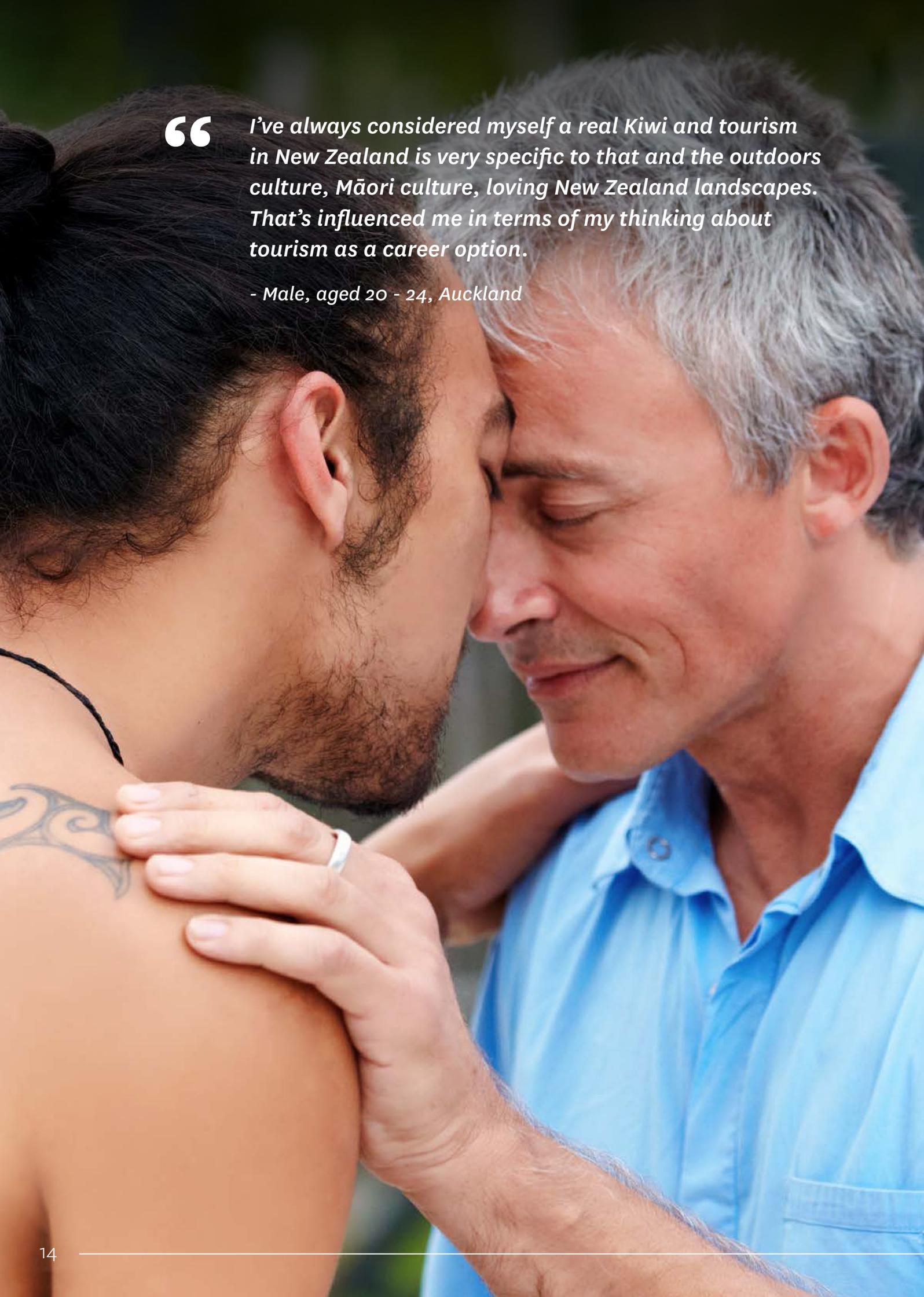
### PERSONAL GAIN

“Interested in business, because I like money, you know, who doesn’t?”

*How will I benefit?*

### HELPING OTHERS

“Seeing conflict everyday it makes me want to make a change.”



“

*I've always considered myself a real Kiwi and tourism in New Zealand is very specific to that and the outdoors culture, Māori culture, loving New Zealand landscapes. That's influenced me in terms of my thinking about tourism as a career option.*

*- Male, aged 20 - 24, Auckland*

# Let's talk about tourism: What young people think

**A career in tourism is not top of mind for most young people, despite the positive forecast, the perceived fun factor and ease of entry.**

The industry is viewed externally as very diverse, making it difficult for school-leavers to imagine their future in

tourism. It's also perceived as bottom-heavy, marked by low-paying jobs which lack status and progression opportunities.

There's a strong disconnect between high school educators, the old-world views of parents and the fresh young faces urgently needed to feed the booming visitor economy.

## TOURISM POSITIVES

### The Motivators

The positive perceptions young people hold about tourism are summarised as follows:

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**TOURISM'S GROWING AND THERE ARE LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES.**

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**YOU'LL WORK WITH OUTGOING, PASSIONATE AND EASY-GOING PEOPLE REPRESENTING NEW ZEALAND.**

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**NO QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED, YOU CAN JUMP STRAIGHT IN.**

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**YOU'LL GAIN GLOBALLY TRANSFERABLE SKILLS AND GET TO TRAVEL.**

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**IT'S AN EXPERIENCE-BASED INDUSTRY SO YOU CAN WORK YOUR WAY UP.**

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**HUGE VARIETY; YOU WON'T BE BORED OR STUCK IN AN OFFICE.**

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**OTHERS WILL THINK YOUR JOB IS FUN, INTERESTING AND EXCITING.**

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# TOURISM NEGATIVES

## The Barriers

The negative perceptions young people hold about tourism are summarised as follows:

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***A tourism career is difficult to imagine. It's a hard-sell to parents.***

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Young people struggle to define what tourism is because of its diversity. On reflection, most respondents described it as the organisation of travel, transport services, working in a hotel or at an attraction.

There are so many paths they can take but the future pathway or end game is unclear. Unlike traditional careers in law or medicine, there are few concrete examples to draw on regarding visible occupations and successful role-models.

“

**If you study medicine, there's one path, you become a doctor. If you study tourism, there's no set job at the end.**

*Auckland Parent*

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***Tourism jobs are poorly paid, low-status, anti-social hours, and temporary.***

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Tourism is viewed by young people as a bottom-heavy industry offering minimum or low wage shift work. A job in tourism is considered a short-term option, one to be enjoyed for immediate income while you decide what you really want to do.

The idea of serving others as opposed to being served is a status barrier. Young people want to feel important in the eyes of their peers and tourism doesn't tick that box. There's also a perception that people who work in tourism are on casual contracts with little job security and that they often have to move to where the work is.

“

**I would eventually need to move onto another industry to start a career.**

*Male, aged 16 - 19, Christchurch*

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## ***At school, tourism is viewed as a second-class ‘easy’ subject.***

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It's perceived that academic students are channeled by their school (and influencers) into more traditional subjects and pathways. There's a definite stigma associated with studying tourism at high school in that non-academic students are encouraged into tourism studies for 'easy credits' or as a 'filler subject'.

Tourism is viewed as a default or second-rate subject choice in years 12-13 and this is a further deterrent to considering a future in tourism.

The quality of teaching also varies and respondents felt that teachers without a background in the industry are less likely to deliver the subject with passion. The

subject is referred to differently between schools and young people who'd studied the subject reflected that it was the class 'where you fill out a booklet.'

“

**If you didn't get into maths or science classes, you'd just do tourism.... it's like the second choice.**

*Male, aged 20 - 24, Auckland*

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## ***Unambitious people go into tourism.***

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Tourism is seen as the easy option for those without the drive, intellect or skills to make it elsewhere. The low barriers to entry mean anyone can get into tourism. You don't have to strive for a qualification which possibly influences the negative views of the industry held by parents.

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**[About tourism] Schools don't approve, parents don't approve, and your peers don't approve.**

*Female, aged 16 - 19, Auckland*

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## ***Career advisors aren't strong tourism advocates.***

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When students inquire, career advisors respond with a limited understanding of the diverse tourism opportunities or study pathways on offer. Nor are they hugely encouraging of a tourism career if the student has a strong academic track record.

“

**I applied for the tourism class and the person running careers....said I'd be wasting my talent, wasting my potential.**

*Male, aged 20 - 24, Auckland*

A lush forest with moss-covered tree trunks and a group of people walking on a path. The scene is vibrant with green moss and foliage, creating a serene and natural atmosphere. Three people are visible on the left side of the frame, engaged in conversation. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image, separated by horizontal lines.

## **TOURISM:** The perception barriers

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*Limited understanding of what jobs in tourism are or what they look like.*

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*Reputation as a low paying and low status industry.*

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*Considered short term employment, not a career choice.*

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*“Bum Subject” at school.*

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*Career advisors have limited understanding of the opportunities and pathways available.*

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# Key Findings - what parents think about tourism

**The top four influencers on young people are (in order): parents, lecturers or teachers, career advisors and friends. Parents vary greatly in their approach to advising their children on careers.**

This can follow a continuum of no intervention or involvement through to outright insistence, often directing their children into careers they themselves wanted but were unable to pursue. In the middle ground are the caregivers who provide unquestioning support or gentle guidance. The prevalent belief is that a traditional university degree is the path to a secure future. A career in tourism is not.

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***Parents have a limited understanding of what tourism is and their view is largely negative.***

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Tourism is a 'horizon or new-age' industry to most middle-aged parents and they don't have a good grasp of what the industry entails. Their view is based on their own direct experience of the industry. While they acknowledge the industry is growing and generating opportunities, they feel it's dominated by unskilled poorly-paid service jobs without good prospects.

“

**I don't think my parents would understand what tourism was all about. They'd just think about travel guides and air hostesses.**

- Male, aged 16-19, Auckland

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***Parents feel their kids can do better - they're underwhelmed by the idea of tourism.***

---

Tourism studies at school is regarded as a subject for non-academic students or an easy option lacking rigour. Many parents prefer their children to go to university and follow a more traditional route with a clearly defined job after graduation. They want the best for their children's futures and a university qualification is viewed as the pinnacle.

“

**“I would say study something that when you finish you have a specific role and a job description.**

- Auckland parent

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***Parents want their kids to have secure futures in an insecure world.***

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What most parents hold dear is a desire for their child to succeed. To stand on their own two feet. They struggle to see the career opportunities in tourism, feel it lacks job security or progression opportunities, and is fraught with high staff turnover and possible volatility. They question a long-term future which depends on varying levels of visitor demand.

“

**“I just want a stable career  
for our kids.**

- Christchurch parent

“

*They (parents) question a long-term future which depends on varying levels of visitor demand.*



# Key Findings - what young people working in tourism think

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*The qualitative research indicated that there was a stigma associated with studying tourism in New Zealand high schools and pursuing a tourism career.*

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The quantitative research drilled down to understand the perceptions of young people recently engaged in the tourism industry, either through study or tourism roles relative to the general school/school leaver population. A series of statements was presented to respondents to test their agreement.

This summarises the major quantitative themes and findings from the online tourism youth perceptions research.

Young people who study tourism at school enjoy it. Information about job opportunities is regarded as easily accessible.

Two thirds of respondents indicate they had studied tourism and hospitality (T&H) at school.

They perceive the subject as fun, interesting and fulfilling. They chose the subject largely to gain more knowledge about travelling and to help achieve their goal of working in a dream career. Around the same proportion of respondents agree that information about job opportunities is easily sourced.

Tourism industry workers experience a high level of job satisfaction. There are plenty of job opportunities for young people and the skills are highly transferable.

Around three quarters of the sample believe there are plenty of job opportunities and regard working in T&H as very appealing.

Again, for the fun factor but also the chance to travel, meet new people, interact with international visitors, learn new cultures and for the varied work and lifestyle. The opportunity to make visitor experiences more meaningful is also motivating. On the whole, they are happy with their chosen career path and the opportunities presented.

Over three quarters of respondents agree that the skills learned in tourism are transferable and will improve their own personal marketability.

Career paths in tourism aren't clear cut. There was ambiguity over this between the two research clusters.

Nearly half of young people felt they didn't have a clear picture of what a career path in tourism looked like. This audience currently sits outside 'the tourism tent'.

**A significant proportion of people working in the industry consider the pay too low or average.**

One in five ATEED sample respondents felt that the pay they received was insufficient to keep them in tourism over time. Sixty per cent of sample respondents from the Research Now general population sample

considered that the pay in the industry is average or enough to retain them and, a further quarter considered pay to be too low to retain them over time.

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**Quantitative Research: Who responded**

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**TOTAL RESPONDENTS:**



**1685** online surveys

**LARGE PROPORTION AGED:**



**18-24** years female

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**ATEED SAMPLE**

Students and those working in the tourism and hospitality industry aged 18 - 24 years. Mainly Auckland region.

**RESEARCH NOW SAMPLE**

National cross section aged 13 to 24 years through independent company Research Now. Split between Auckland and the rest of New Zealand and screened for a general interest in the T&H industry.

“

*At the heart of a new tourism  
employment brand is what the industry  
can deliver to young school leavers.*



# Recommendations

*The findings from the Tourism Youth Perceptions Research support the following recommendations:*

## PLAY TO STRENGTHS

Build the employment brand blueprint.

At the heart of a new tourism employment brand is what the industry can deliver to young school leavers. These are:

### NEW TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Learn teamwork, communication and leadership capabilities relevant to employers globally.

### CAREER ADVANCEMENT

An industry where young ambitious people can progress and develop.

### ADVENTURE

Excitement and life-changing experiences are there for the taking.

### FUN

Experience and learn from a diverse range of people in an enjoyable industry.

### PRIDE

The opportunity to share the best of Aotearoa-New Zealand with visitors.

Young people highlighted these features as influential factors unique to tourism. Importantly people working in tourism validated these factors; namely what they value most about their jobs. The tourism industry can confidently promote these proof-points to attract and develop a workforce of capable young New Zealanders.

## CREATE THE BUZZ

Promote tourism opportunities at the right time, right place.

To create cut through, the industry needs to directly target young school leavers and the people that influence them. Employers can improve their youth recruitment outcomes by:



CONNECTING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND SHARING SUCCESS STORIES OF TOURISM RECRUITS WHO ARE “LIKE ME”.



BEING VISIBLE WHERE YOUTH ‘HANG OUT’ – ON SOCIAL MEDIA, PLACES LIKE LIBRARIES WITH FREE WI-FI OR TRANSPORT HUBS.



PROMOTING THE PROOF POINTS OR STRENGTHS TO ADDRESS NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS.



INSPIRING YOUTH BY SHOWCASING DIVERSE CAREER POSSIBILITIES – THERE’S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.

By working together, employers and industry, with support from education and training providers, can reinforce the opportunities in tourism, address the recruitment challenges and build a capable workforce that can deliver high-value visitor experiences.

Photo credit: International students - Abel Tasman National Park. Photo: Scott Henderson, New Zealand Educational Tours

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## ***Engage the influencers - talk up tourism.***

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**Young people's most important influencers are whanau and teachers. The research showed that teachers often have limited or outdated information about what the industry offers, so awareness-building is an important strategy.**

Employers and industry groups could collaborate to increase awareness of employment opportunities, for example by working with local high schools or Kāhui Ako (communities of learning). This would help to promote a range of specific careers and pathways within tourism and also showcase less well-known options.

Employers can also forge a strong presence at careers expos or similar information-sharing events and invite parents to learn more with their high school-aged children. This would give parents, teachers and career advisors the opportunity to hear from real people succeeding in the tourism industry.

Opportunities exist to engage with schools using project-based learning or to support curriculum development and delivery. Tourism can be integrated into core subjects like geography and business studies to illustrate its relevance and broaden its exposure to more students. These opportunities to profile tourism will support young people and their influencers to understand the visitor economy and boost relevancy when they are considering their vocational choices.

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## ***Reduce churn and retain experience - industry ambassadors and future leaders.***

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**This research confirmed that many young people don't know about the quality career paths that the industry can offer.**

Employers who do offer good advancement opportunities, mentoring or internships from school can stand out by communicating their opportunities to youth.

In a competitive labour market, employers need to reward young people with micro progressions and development opportunities, celebrate top performers, and remunerate capable team members to retain and reduce employee turnover.

Young people like to hear from people like themselves. They want to meet relatable ambassadors whether online or face-to-face. The YoungTEC programme which is focussed on developing the industry's future leaders is a great initiative that showcases the industry, while also providing development opportunities for young tourism professionals.

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## ***Attract bright young New Zealanders - improve capability.***

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**Young people know the skills learned in the tourism and hospitality industry are valuable and increase their employability. Casual and entry-level roles in tourism and hospitality are often their first jobs.**

Many capable school leavers are undecided on a path when they leave school. An entry-level tourism role

may offer the bridge to work they need. Not every candidate is set on a career in tourism. However, once they experience it, there's a greater possibility they may stay on the path. Especially if employers recognise their contribution and engage them through training, mentoring and advancement opportunities.

The tourism industry can benefit from attracting young people who are still undecided and perhaps considering a 'gap year' to further assess their options.



*Photo credit: Crowne Plaza Queenstown*

# Next Steps

The Tourism Youth Perceptions Research findings will be shared by ATEED and TIA with key industry stakeholders to help develop strategies aimed at attracting more school-leavers into tourism and hospitality.

Understanding what young people think about a future in tourism will help shape more effective recruitment and retention strategies.

TIA and ATEED will share the research insights in the following ways:



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## REGIONAL PARTNERS

ATEED is working with its regional partners and a steering group on a plan to attract more young Aucklanders into tourism careers.



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## PROVIDE INSIGHTS FOR EMPLOYERS

To provide TIA along with the People and Skills Forum insights to help advise their association members' own recruitment strategies, with a goal to attract more young people into tourism across New Zealand.



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## TO ADVISE NATIONAL STRATEGIES

To advise employers and other industry stakeholders nationally to help shape short and long-range policies targeted at addressing tourism skill shortages. These include government agencies, high schools and training providers.

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# Acknowledgments

*Thank you to the following individuals and organisations for their contribution to the tourism youth perceptions research.*



**PAUL EDWARDS**

ATEED Senior Research Specialist



**DR. ANDREA HOOI**

ATEED Principal Advisor – Economic Development



Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) is the economic growth agency, regional tourism organisation and major event delivery agency for Auckland.

[aucklandnz.com](http://aucklandnz.com)



Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) is the only independent association that represents all sectors of New Zealand's tourism industry. They advocate to ensure tourism gets recognised as a vital contributor to New Zealand's economic and social wellbeing.

[tia.org.nz](http://tia.org.nz)



The Tourism Industry New Zealand Trust (TINZT) supports the growth and education of New Zealand's \$36 billion tourism industry.

[tinzt.org.nz](http://tinzt.org.nz)

# TOURISM YOUTH PERCEPTIONS

AUG 2018

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*For additional information, please contact ATEED or TIA.*

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