

WEATHERING THE STORM

South Pacific tourism destinations anxiously wait out the first quarter of each year hoping that the cyclone season would pass them by without major damage or disruption to their businesses. The start of 2003 has been no exception, except that were major cyclones to hit the region at this time, they would be riding on the back of an industry already in turmoil internationally. The past 18 months has thrown international tourism in disarray with the terrorist attacks on New York, the Bali and Mom-bassa bombings, Anthrax scares, the war on Iraq and the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), a disease that has crossed many borders and for which a cure is yet to be found.

Whilst these disasters may appear far removed from the relatively tranquil setting of South Pacific tourism, their impact has left no destination untouched. The impact of these crises on international tourism has been enormous and the toll continues to rise each day. The linkages within the tourism sector and the interdependency of one sector on another could not be more evident.

The international aviation industry alone has already suffered losses in excess of US\$30 billion since September 11th, 2001 with a further US\$10 billion in losses projected as a consequence of the Iraq war. There have been millions of job losses through the collapse of airlines, direct and indirect tourism related businesses and services and world economies both large and small have gone into recessionary mode.

The direct impact of 9/11 on the Cook Islands saw the collapse of Canada 3000 and Ansett and the near collapse of the destination's lifeline, Air New Zealand. The country was fortunate to weather these events with a marginal decline of 2% in visi-

tor numbers for 2002 but the two major recent events in the first quarter of 2003 are indeed cause for concern, namely the impact of the Iraq war and the spread of SARS.

In excess of three million more jobs will be lost as a result of the current crisis. The increased cost of fuel, insurance and security, along with reduced traffic and price hikes, will spell the demise of more airlines as many will collapse or curtail services. This will affect all sectors of the tourism industry and countries in close proximity to "hot spots" and who depend heavily on tourism are prime candidates for economic decline.

An escalation in terrorist threats against America and its allies in the Iraqi war can be expected to have negative implications on origin traffic from these countries and on global tourism. Patterns have already emerged in global tourism as a consequence of these crises. There is considerable worry about security forcing many travellers to take more domestic holidays or more holidays in neighbouring countries (staying closer to home). Overseas travel for leisure purposes is in decline and significantly fewer business trips are being taken. There is a swing away from traditional plane trips to cheaper carriers and discount airlines creating an explosion low-cost demand. There is strong growth in last minute bookings and a swing towards on-line bookings for travel. Consumers the world-over, have been conditioned into expecting more value for less money as destinations frantically try to counteract declining demand.

The Cook Islands Tourism Corporation has actively pursued its traditional visitor source markets during the first quarter of 2003 through a broad range of marketing initiatives. An overview of pre-

vailing market conditions and activities undertaken over the first quarter of 2003 is outlined below. This has to a large extent enabled the destination to weather the storm so far, however a protracted continuation of current crises will undoubtedly challenge the destination's ability to stem declines in the longer term.

NORTH AMERICA:

- The US Market is expected to go through a slowdown in long-haul travel that could last between 3 to 6 months depending on the duration of the current crisis.
- An escalation in terrorist threats/acts against the USA can be expected to have further negative implications for both US origin and global tourism.
- The mood in the US is different from that of 9/11 or for that matter the Fiji Coup where there were mass cancellations of bookings.
- Whilst there have been very few cancellations in bookings, new bookings are slow as Americans take on a "wait and see" stance with the current crises.
- Surveys have shown East Coasters appear more concerned about security than West Coasters.
- Demand for travel to Australia has weakened more than New Zealand with travellers concerned about Australia's heightened terrorism risk.
- Tourism New Zealand is forecasting only marginal declines and anticipates they should be able to quickly recover. As many US travellers include the Cook Islands in their itinerary, this offers some comfort to us.
- On the Airline side United Airlines' withdrawal from New Zealand is expected to reduce competition and visibility particularly in the airline reservations environment and its wider contact with agents and wholesalers.
- Aloha Airlines flights from West Coast to Honolulu running at high loads. This places some restrictions on once a week Rarotonga service.
- Appreciation of the NZ dollar against the US also means consumers will also be paying more against last year's prices.
- May and June are expected to be soft from the US market.
- The Cook Islands have enjoyed 6 consecutive months of growth from the US in the back of strong leisure demand and consumer quest for safe destinations. The first quarter of 2003 has seen growth of 66% for January, 51% for February and 41% for March over the same months last year.
- Canadian visitor arrivals showed first month of growth in Feb (13%) after a whole year of decline in the aftermath of Canada 3000's collapse and poor connections. March witnessed a decline of 9% in Canadian arrivals.
- Aloha's Vancouver connections should provide much needed capacity for this market in the coming northern winter season.

The Tourism Corporation's activities in **North America** for the first quarter of 2003 included:

- Co-operative advertising campaigns with Air New Zealand and selected wholesalers.
- The launch of Aloha Airlines/Cook Islands co-operative Destination Marketing Campaign.
- Seminar Series/Sales Calls with local industry operators and Aloha Airlines in Honolulu and western Canada which attracted 57 trade participants in Honolulu and 386 participants in Canada
- Participation in the Orange County Travel Show,
- LA Times Travel Show
- Addison Travel Shows Eastern Canada
- Alberta Travel Show
- Aloha Travel Show Phoenix
- Further development of the Cook Islands Specialist Programme
- Assisting travel agencies in running Cook Islands Evenings for their client base.
- Co-operative advertising with Aloha Airlines and Cook Islands Holiday in Canada.
- A media visitation programme including Maui Times, Pacific Pictures, Vancouver Star, Frommers Guide, My Private Island, Fitcamp and Aloha Airlines Media.
- Thirty six trade personnel visited the Cook Islands during the first quarter representing Cook Islands Holidays, PATA Los Angeles Chapter, Fun Sun Vacations and Happy Tours

UK/EUROPE:

- Europeans took roughly 415 million outbound trips in 2002, up by 2% on 2001 making 2002 the best outbound year Europe has ever seen.
- There is likely to be less desire from passengers to travel on International flights across the Middle East region, which could impact negatively on European traffic to Australia and New Zealand and the South Pacific.
- Cook Islands saw a bounce back in the last quarter of 2002 - up 9.4% on 2001.
- Jan/Feb/Mar 2003 visitor numbers from this market were up 20%, 28% and 22% respectively.
- European suppliers report no mass cancellations of booking to the South Pacific but new bookings were slow coming in as travellers await the outcome of the war.
- New Zealand witnessed strong growth in the first two months of 2002 with big publicity through Lord of the Rings and NZ Tourism's 100% TV campaign. Cook Islands have been able to piggyback on multi—destinational travel out of this market.
- Survey of 15 UK Tour Operators, 5 airlines and 12 Media and Professional Bodies show British will continue to travel despite the war which offers some consolation for the South Pacific in general however, there could be a slowdown if the war and its resolution is a prolonged event.
- A sharp recovery in outbound travel from this market can be expected given the recent ousting of Saddam Hussein's regime.

Tourism Corporation's **UK** Representation is working hard to re-establish a Cook Islands presence in this market following the closure of SPTO representation a year ago. Activities in the first quarter of 2003 included:

- Hosting a Press Luncheon in London for 25 media personnel
- Sales Calls on Major wholesalers
- Participation at the world's largest travel trade fair – ITB Berlin.
- Conducting a mini-seminar series with 5 key German tour operators

- Participation in Sweden's largest travel show TUR
- Finalising the launch of a co-operative campaign with Selfridge's department store in London, Manchester, and Brighton.
- European Reps have conducted sales calls in conjunction with Fiji in UK and Continental Europe.
- Representatives have been monitoring the situation in this market closely and providing weekly updates to Head Office.
- The Corporation has hosted media personnel from Denmark, UK and Belgium under its Media Visitation Programme.
- Sixteen trade visitors from Germany, UK and Netherlands also visited the Cook Islands during this period.

AUSTRALIA:

- Australian arrivals into the Cook Islands for 2002 saw a drastic decline in arrivals in the aftermath of 9/11 and the collapse of Ansett and Canada 3000. Arrivals for January, February and March 2003 signalled a turnaround with increases in arrivals of 35%, 30% and 41% respectively.
- Australian outbound travel to Asia is on a huge downturn with many choosing to stay at home Due to terrorist threats and more recently SARS.
- Inter-state travel for vacation purposes is on the rise.
- General demand for travel to New Zealand remains strong as Australians find "closer to home" destinations more compelling.
- Tourism New Zealand is placing major emphasis on drawing Australian travellers to New Zealand.
- Interest in the South Pacific is very high with destinations like Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia featuring prominently with the assistance of their national carriers.
- Australia continues to hold very good potential for the Cook Islands but accessibility remains a key issue.
- Some capacity across the Tasman has been freed up by reduction in European and Asian traffic and this offers some potential for the Cook Islands.

- Connectivity from Australian Gateways through Auckland and on to Rarotonga, remain a problem.

The Corporation has been active in this market during the first quarter in a build up towards the coming winter. Activities undertaken include:

- Participation in the Gosford Travel Show, Newcastle Travel Show, Sydney Bridal Expo, AFTA Holiday Expo, Melbourne Bridal Expo, Port MacQuarrie Travel Fair, Talpacific Seminars in Fiji and Perth Travel show.
- Calls have been made on all Wholesalers to discuss co-operative marketing initiatives for the coming year.
- The Cook Islands was featured twice on Channel Nine's Getaway Programme with Catriona Roundtree in February & March
- Media visitation has included Channel 9, Courier Mail and Media East
- A total of 36 trade personnel from Sweeney Travel Shop, Coral Seas Travel, Adventure World, Jetset and Travelscene visited the destination during the first quarter.
- Co-op Campaigns already in progress with all key suppliers using metropolitan newspapers and in some cases television.
- The Cook Islands Roadshow for April had already received in excess of 650 RSVP's at the end of March.

NEW ZEALAND:

- New Zealand visitor arrivals showed exceptional growth in 2002 (+23%)
- While the overall "holiday" segment of New Zealand outbound travel fell by 7% in the March quarter, departures to the United States rose by 28% with travel to the Cook Islands up 16% and to China up 7%. "Holiday" departures to Australia declined by 7% in the three-month period, with travel to Fiji down 22% and to the United Kingdom down 6%.
- New Zealand travel to Asia has declined due to SARS
- This market holds the greatest potential for maintaining visitor flows to the Cooks in the coming months.
- ATC is mounting massive campaigns to draw New Zealanders across the Tasman. This is of concern to the Cook Islands and other tropical

destination as Queensland is a big draw-card for Kiwis.

- Competition amongst island destination for the NZ market is fierce. Fiji, Samoa, Toga, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Tahiti all have national carriers who are offering incentives to lure the NZ traveller.
- Cooks relies on what Air NZ provides by way of nett fares to compete.
- The destination is doing relatively well considering but maintaining high profile in this market and offering competitive pricing will be critical in the coming months

Activities in this market during the first quarter of 2003 have included:

- Meetings with all key suppliers in NZ on co-op marketing campaigns for final quarter and into new financial year.
- 3 Flight Centre shows in Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch
- Sports Expo with Travelplan
- House of Travel Expo Auckland
- United Travel Expo Mt Maunganui
- Cook Islands Roadshow covering Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton and Auckland.
- Islands Travel Show in Auckland.
- Sales Calls Napier, Whakatane, Rotorua, Taupo, Matamata, Hastings, Gisborne, Whitianga.
- Major advertising campaigns were launched with key wholesalers for the coming winter months in an effort to draw New Zealanders to the Cook Islands.

Chris Wong
Chief Executive.



MARKETING

New Zealand & Australian Promotions



Cook Islands Industry Members affirm the Australia Roadshow a Success!

Cook Islands Tourism Corps Australia Manager Mereana Taruia oversee 18 participants through five cities of Australia: Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide. With the Aitutaki Dance Troupe providing superior entertainment, the Cook Islands again sets record attendance by Australian Agents!

12/17 Kathy Ombler from NZ Traveltrade Magazine

Air New Zealand assisted with a Media famil to the Cook Islands undertaken by Traveltrade Magazine in New Zealand from 12-17 April 2003. Kathy Ombler put together a supplement in Traveltrade for the Cook Islands to be published May 2003. Kathy traveled with her two daughters one of which wrote a snippet article about her experience on Pa's Cross Island Walk and Cook Islands Cultural Village which will be included in the supplement.

The section of the Cook Islands supplement was initially four pages but this has now been increased to twelve!!! Included is the usual advertising but we have a strong trade focus this year and the content will reflect this with an emphasis on accommodation (including a rundown on new properties, renovations/upgrades and private rentals - accredited only), restaurants & activities/ tours.

In keeping with last year's success, they are running more profiles, a dedicated page on weddings/ romance, as well as a small feature on the Outer Islands with Atiu as an emerging destination. Kathy writes for other magazines (e.g. NZ Wilderness) and saw an opportunity for a story there on eco-tourism related activities. Aitutaki's emphasis is again on longer stays, highlighting good

restaurants and things to do during a weeklong holiday.

Cook Islands Tourism would like to thank the following companies and individuals for their support of this famil in supplying either complimentary or discounted rates for accommodation, domestic transport, meals and tours or interviews:

David Armstrong & Talei Whippy~The Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa, Teariki Numanga & Phillip Vakatini~ Air Rarotonga, Mahiriki Tangaroa, Nga Tangaroa~ Raro Tours, Boye Nicholas, Kay & Ian George, Jack Cooper, Shona Lynch~Avana Eco Tours, Marcel Tua~ Island Hopper Vacations Limited, Maryann Strickland & Greg Stanaway~ Pacific Resort Rarotonga, Justin & Ray Rous~ Edgewater Resort, Cook Islands Cultural Village, Pa & Jillian

Frank Vetier~ Aitutaki Pearl Beach Resort, Paradise Island Lagoon Cruises, Jamie Lloyd~ Pacific Resort Aitutaki, Metu Kora~ Ministry Of Marine Resources, Nga~ Aitutaki Walkabout Tour Atiu Tourism Council, Juergen & Andrea Manske, Atiu Tours, George Matariki, Sam & the boys~ Tumunu, Atiu Villas and Kura's Kitchen

Kathy was escorted by Kelly Cook & Keren Aviu in Atiu and Aitutaki.

15/17- Paul Collins from Orbit Corporate Travel

Cook Islands Tourism coordinated Paul's site inspections of the properties requested. Thank you to all that were able to see Paul while he was here. Thank you maata to Peter & Nelia Bartlett from Crown Beach Resort for hosting Paul to lunch.

23- Jo Gasteen from Flight Centre Auckland

Jo is the Events and Conference Manager for Flight Centre in Auckland and is responsible for putting together the Flight Centre Expos in NZ. Jo works closely with CITC-NZ Manager Albert Numanga and has given great rates to Albert for the use of their conference rooms. To thank her for her continued support of the destination Cook Islands Tourism hosted her to dinner at Sails Restaurant Wednesday 23rd April.

24 April-4 May- Judy Harkness from House of Travel, Hamilton

Judy is currently visiting Rarotonga and Aitutaki on an educational with her work colleague, Michelle.

Cook Islands Tourism set up site inspections of the properties that Judy specifically requested. We would like to thank the Edgewater Resort & Pacific Resort Rarotonga for hosting them to lunch and all property owners for assisting with site inspections.

Mr Graeme Kennedy, National Business Review (Newspaper) New Zealand

As a frequent business traveler to the Cook Islands, a 3-day trip to Rarotonga for Mr Kennedy was just what the NBR ordered when seeking alternative story angles for the NZ market. With a perspective on New Zealanders who have made Rarotonga their home and established businesses here, the trip clearly became more interesting. With the intriguing stories from some local celebrities; namely; Jack Cooper, Trevor Clarke, Reuben Tylor and Brett Porter – and the opportunity to update Graeme on the current tourism infrastructure served great purpose.

North America & Europe Promotions

TUR: The Cook Islands participated for the fourth consecutive year at Sweden's Annual Travel Show TUR in Gothenburg 20-23 February under the umbrella of long-time destination support Lars Jonsson and Tour Pacific. After celebrating the 10th anniversary of Tour Pacific one week prior to the show, indications from Island Hopper have shown that an increase in the momentum of growth and revenue generated to the Cook Islands by Lars and his team. Now sitting at Island Hoppers #3 account, a remarkable achievement for a fairly small sized company.

MINI SERIES: Cook Islands Tourism Corporation with the support of Air New Zealand, Tipani Tours and Atiu Tourism Society undertook an initiative with a handful of top German Tour Operators to further educate preferred agents with the Cook Islands Product. DERTOUR (Frankfurt), FTI Touristik (Munich), and GeBeCo (Kiel), opted for breakfast seminars which proved to be very successful with an average attendance of 20 agents per session. In house product updates were conducted with Meiers Weltreisen, Australia Pacific Travel, and Explorer Fernreisen.



Above: The presenting team (from left to right) Atiu Tourism Society - Juergen Manske, CI Tourism Corp - Karla Eggelton, DERTOUR Product Manager - Christian Schimack, Tipani Tours - Teresa Reed; Air NZ Germany—Britta Wallum and DERTOUR staff member Andrea Dorfi



Right: Eager Travel Agents from the Frankfurt area at the conclusion of the Cook Islands Breakfast Seminar in February this year supported by Air New Zealand and DER-

Media & Trade Visits Continued

Coffs harbour Travel Expo- Australia- Air New Zealand and Cook Islands Tourism sponsored the major prize for the 2001 Travel & Leisure Expo. Prize winner Ms Barbara Grennan of Boambee, NSW was absolutely thrilled with her trip. It was a fabulous week in pure Paradise Ms Grennan said - Edgewater Resort, Are Tamanu, Air New Zealand, Air Rarotonga, Island Hopper Vacations and all the people they encountered could not have been more accommodating. The media, both paid advertising and editorial, all featured the trip as the highlight for visitors to the Expo.

John Penisten, a travel writer from Hilo, Hawaii visited our shores on Aloha Airlines to write a feature on the Cook Islands. His finished piece on "The Cook Islands: Rambling Around Rarotonga" appears in the new Spring, 2003 issue of the online ezine Tropi-Ties. See it at: www.tropi-ties.com under the Spring E'zine tropical travel section.

Steen Larsen In mid-February, full time sportfishing writer/photographer working mainly for European magazines visited our shores. Spending 2 weeks in Cook Islands in order to write a story on saltwater fishing but also other aspects of the islands tourism activity. The main target being light-tackle fly fishing especially for species like bonefish, trevally but naturally any saltwater action will be targeted. For more information on Steen's work please visit his web page www.steenlarsen.net Thank you ma'ata to Jubilee in Aitutaki, Fisher's Fishin' Tours and Junior Ioaba for assisting with Steen's trip.

PATA Workshop- Towards the end of February we had a visit from 13 travel agents of the Los Angeles PATA Chapter. A first for the group who took in property inspections along with a tour of the Cultural Village and the Aitutaki day Tour. Thank you to the Pacific Resort for hosting lunch and also to The Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa for hosting an Island night dinner & show.

Tom Koppel an accomplished Journalist now has a number of articles pending following his visit to the Cook Islands. His articles focus on learning to Scuba Dive in the Cooks, including various activities and tours on Rarotonga and a third article on Aitutaki. Appreciation goes to Cook Islands Divers and The Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa for assisting with Tom's trip.

Paul Miles, a journalist contributing articles to the

Thomas Cook Privilege Club magazine also visited our shores recently. Cook Islands Tourism assisted with his visit by co-ordinating his ground arrangements and interview sessions. Thankyou to Avana Eco-tours for hosting Paul, and Danny Mataroa for taking the time to introduce Paul to the Nono industry.

Cookzmagic Famils-We had a group of dedicated travel agents visit from New Zealand throughout the month of March. While here they conducted property inspections and experienced a cross-section of activities and tours on both Rarotonga and Aitutaki. Thank you to The Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa, Edgewater Resort, Pacific Resort Rarotonga and Raro Tours for your assistance in making their visit a success.

OAS Holidays-We had 2 travel agents from QAS Holidays in Amsterdam visit our shores briefly on a famil before travelling on to New Zealand. Mr Robin Elmendorp and Mrs Jamie Scherbeijn conducted property inspections along with taking in sights and activities on Rarotonga as well as the Aitutaki Day Tour. Thank you to the Edgewater Resort & The Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa for hosting the pair.

Laurie Werner a contributing Editor for Travel for Departures recently visited the Cook Islands as part of her South Pacific feature for the American Express platinum and centurion members' magazine. A big meitaki atupaka to Pacific Resort Rarotonga and Aitutaki, the Aitutaki Pearl Beach Resort and Takitumu Villas for assisting with Laurie's visit.

SPTO Staff Development Programme

New Zealand

Marketing Officer Keren Aviu will soon be departing to New Zealand on a training attachment. The program developed by SPTO in conjunction with Tourism New Zealand is looking to further up skill regional tourism offices. There are also participants from Fiji and Papua New Guinea who will be joining the development program, the first of its kind in the South Pacific. In commenting on the attachment, Keren says that it is a wonderful opportunity for regional tourism office members to be given a chance to work with Tourism New Zealand.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Visitor Arrivals

VISITOR NUMBERS HOLD UP IN FIRST QUARTER

Visitor arrivals have held up well for the Cook Islands in the face of international crisis in the first quarter of 2003.

Total arrivals from all visitor markets for

March was placed at 6,090, an increase of 12.5% over March 2002. First quarter arrivals for 2003 were 18,212, up 18.5% over the same period in 2002 and just 4% short of the record 18,897 arrivals in 2001, the record year for tourism to date. All major markets performing well except Canada which continues to suffer from capacity and accessibility problems.

Of the total visitor arrivals in March, 88.4% were here on vacation, just under 3.4% were here on business, .7% were here for conferences, 5.2% were visiting friends and relatives and 2.1% came here for other reasons.

The largest group by occupational classification remains the student, children and home maker group with a total of 1,957 visitors for the month of March (32%), those in technical fields represented the next largest group with 1,572 (25.8%) and Legislators & Administrators coming in third with 666 (10.9%).

55.1% of visitors still prefer to stay in Hotels and Resorts, with 20% staying in self catering accommodation and 14.9% staying in Budget/homestay properties. The predominant age range of visitors in March was the 25-34 age bracket.

The average length of stay for March 2003 over all markets was 9.2 days.

New Zealand visitor arrivals (excluding Cook Islanders resident overseas) for March (1,390) re-

Country of Residence	March			April-March (Year to Date)		
	2002	2003	% Change	2002	2003	% Change
New Zealand	1,271	1,390	9.36	20,399	25,336	24.20
Australia	648	913	40.90	10,276	9,337	-9.14
Europe/UK	1,718	2,089	21.59	21,087	20,916	-0.81
USA	491	693	41.14	6,835	7,505	9.80
Canada	637	578	-9.26	5,345	4,540	-15.06
French Polynesia	187	70	-62.57	689	814	18.14
Other Pacific Islands	24	43	79.17	793	1,114	40.48
Asia	39	43	10.26	414	545	31.64
Cook Islanders living overseas	376	256	-31.91	4,946	5,119	3.50
Other Countries	22	15	-31.82	268	393	46.64
TOTAL	5,413	6,090	12.51	71,052	75,619	6.43

corded an increase of 9% on March 2002 taking first quarter arrivals for 2003 to 3,466 visitors, up 13% on the same period last year. The average length of stay for New Zealand visitors was 8.7 days.

Australian arrivals for March (913), were up 41%, taking first quarter figures to 2,373, up 35.9% over the first quarter of 2002 and surpassing the 2001 record year first-quarter arrival figure of 2,277 by 4%. The average length of stay was 7.6 days

US visitor numbers for March (693) also increased by 41%, taking first quarter arrivals to 2,275, an increase of 53% over the same period last year and up 26.8% on 2001 first-quarter arrivals. The average length of stay was 9.5 days.

UK/Europe recorded an encouraging 22% increase in March (2,089). First quarter arrivals from this market were placed at 6,860, an increase of 23% over the same period in 2002. The average length of stay was 8.4 days.

The Canadian market continued to struggle with numbers down 9% for March and a first quarter result of 1,758 down 13% on the same period last year. The average length of stay was 10.25 days.

Total visitor arrivals for the 12 months ending March 2003 was placed at 75,619, up 6.4% on the previous 12-month period.

Visitor Arrivals continued.....

VISITOR ARRIVALS TO THE COOK ISLANDS BY COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE 2003

MARKET AREA		Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL
New Zealand	No. of Visitors, 2003	979	1097	1390	3,466
	No. of Visitors, 2002	979	812	1271	24,932
	No. of Visitors, 2001	1000	741	1225	20,303
	Change 2003/2002	0%	35%	9%	
	Market share 2003	16%	18%	23%	19%
Cook Islanders resident in New Zealand	No. of Visitors, 2003	352	195	176	723
	No. of Visitors, 2002	353	137	269	3,909
	No. of Visitors, 2001	460	262	209	4,025
	Change 2003/2002	0%	42%	-35%	
	Market share 2003	6%	3%	3%	4%
Australia	No. of Visitors, 2003	779	681	913	2,373
	No. of Visitors, 2002	576	521	648	8,709
	No. of Visitors, 2001	641	633	1003	10,808
	Change 2003/2002	35%	31%	41%	
	Market share 2003	13%	11%	15%	13%
Cook Islanders resident in Australia	No. of Visitors, 2003	82	53	80	215
	No. of Visitors, 2002	58	47	107	1,243
	No. of Visitors, 2001	42	51	44	1,018
	Change 2003/2002	41%	13%	-25%	
	Market share 2003	1%	1%	1%	1%
U.S.A	No. of Visitors, 2003	847	735	693	2,275
	No. of Visitors, 2002	509	486	491	6,716
	No. of Visitors, 2001	562	547	665	7,143
	Change 2003/2002	66%	51%	41%	
	Market share 2003	14%	12%	11%	12%
Europe/UK	No. of Visitors, 2003	2312	2459	2089	6,860
	No. of Visitors, 2002	1934	1922	1718	19,630
	No. of Visitors, 2001	2409	2602	2292	22,816
	Change 2003/2002	20%	28%	22%	
	Market share 2003	38%	41%	34%	38%
Canada	No. of Visitors, 2003	566	614	578	1,758
	No. of Visitors, 2002	826	544	637	4,789
	No. of Visitors, 2001	1029	913	990	6,270
	Change 2003/2002	-31%	13%	-9%	
	Market share 2003	9%	10%	9%	10%
Tahiti	No. of Visitors, 2003	52	30	70	152
	No. of Visitors, 2002	60	27	187	936
	No. of Visitors, 2001	52	31	40	538
	Change 2003/2002	-13%	11%	-63%	
	Market share 2003	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other Pacific Islands	No. of Visitors, 2003	93	47	43	183
	No. of Visitors, 2002	42	48	24	1,045
	No. of Visitors, 2001	34	130	67	910
	Change 2003/2002	121%	-2%	79%	
	Market share 2003	2%	1%	1%	1%
Asia	No. of Visitors, 2003	34	50	43	127
	No. of Visitors, 2002	18	28	39	503
	No. of Visitors, 2001	27	59	44	459
	Change 2003/2002	89%	79%	10%	
	Market share 2003	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other	No. of Visitors, 2003	45	20	15	80
	No. of Visitors, 2002	24	10	22	369
	No. of Visitors, 2001	38	17	18	285

European Breakdown by top 6 performing markets.

MARKET AREA		Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL
Europe/UK	No. of Visitors, 2003	2312	2459	2089	6860
	No. of Visitors, 2002	1934	1922	1718	19,630
	Change 2003/2002	20%	28%	22%	
	Market share 2003	38%	41%	34%	
England/UK	No. of Visitors, 2003	1336	1512	1167	4015
	No. of Visitors, 2002	1073	1125	992	10,612
	Change 2002/2001	25%	34%	18%	
	Market share 2003	58%	61%	56%	
Germany	No. of Visitors, 2003	280	292	335	907
	No. of Visitors, 2002	363	429	343	3,298
	Change 2002/2001	-23%	-32%	-2%	
	Market share 2003	12%	12%	16%	
Italy	No. of Visitors, 2003	47	44	40	131
	No. of Visitors, 2002	38	34	58	895
	Change 2002/2001	24%	29%	-31%	
	Market share 2003	2%	2%	2%	
Norway	No. of Visitors, 2003	77	69	66	212
	No. of Visitors, 2002	89	32	43	643
	Change 2002/2001	-13%	116%	53%	
	Market share 2003	3%	3%	3%	
Sweden	No. of Visitors, 2003	164	137	92	393
	No. of Visitors, 2002	128	113	61	1183
	Change 2002/2001	28%	21%	51%	
	Market share 2003	7%	6%	4%	
Switzerland	No. of Visitors, 2003	102	134	108	344
	No. of Visitors, 2002	70	50	76	771
	Change 2002/2001	46%	168%	42%	
	Market share 2003	4%	5%	5%	

Europe/UK

Visitor numbers from the UK/Europe have again improved with increases of 20%, 28% and 22% for the first 3 months of the year. Market share is down slightly from 41% in February to 34% in March.

Visitors from the UK still represent our biggest segment in this market with 56% market share.

Our next biggest European market, Germany provided 335 (16%) visitors in March followed by Switzerland with 108.

45% of Europe/UK visitors choose to stay in Hotels and Resorts with 28.8% choosing Budget accommodation and 20.6% self catering.

In majority of European visitors were in the 25-34 and 55-65+ age groups. Visitors from this market stayed on average 8.4 days in March.

What's New: Hotel & Industry Development

Sonya Kamana recently met with members of the **Budget Accommodators Association** to discuss the accreditation scheme and its benefits. Those present were keen to get the association strength-

ened as they have not met regularly in the past. They also plan to only have accredited budget accommodators advertise in the customs hall where they have a stand.



Castaway Beach Villas new reception, and 6 rooms overlooking the pool is well under way and they hope to complete construction by end of June. The deck overlooking the beach is another improvement . (pictured left)

Kura's Kabana also have a lovely deck straddling the stream that runs in front of their property and looking out to Motu Oneroa. Its a great place for guests to BBQ, have cocktails and generally relax looking at the lagoon.

Aitutaki Update

Corporate Fishing Charters in Australia have recently set up a package for bone fishing in Aitutaki. According to organizers, flyers like the one below, have been distributed to 3,500 agencies around Australia. Visitors that are keen on bone fishing will start arriving in Aitutaki from June the 11th until the 3rd of March, 2004. Each month from June through to November and again in February and March 2004 will be made up of 6 people.

Bone fishing is becoming more popular and recently a Belgium journalist also visited Aitutaki with the plan to introduce this type of tour in the Belgium market.

At the moment there are only two operators who actively promote this type of activity, they are Jubilee Reu and Lawton Story. With the increased interest in Bone Fishing, we can expect to see more organised fishing tours starting up on Aitutaki.

New tourism related businesses on Aitutaki include:

Kia Orana Cruise is a lagoon cruise which goes to honey moon island. Andrew Katu is the owner and already his cruise has been busy. As he is a seventh

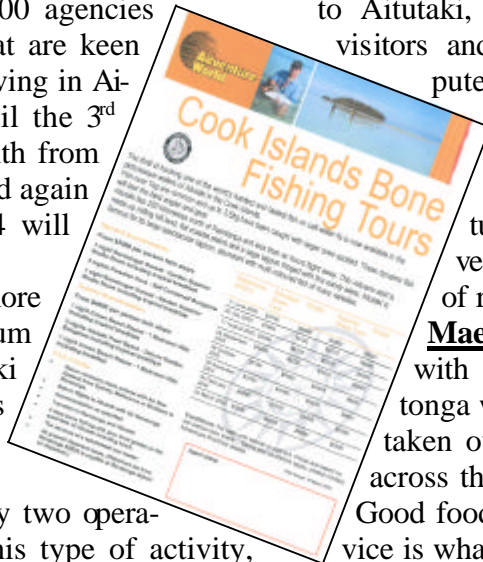
day Adventist the cruise does not operate on Saturdays but does operate on Sundays.

Spider Internet lounge. A much needed addition to Aitutaki, the Spider Internet Lounge offers visitors and locals internet and general computer access. So far it has proved a very popular spot for visitors to communicate with their families and friends and tell them of their adventures in Aitutaki. The Lounge is conveniently located on the main stretch of road on the town side of Vonnia's.

Mae Joe's Restaurant – Those familiar with the Mae Joe's restaurant on Rarotonga will be pleased to hear that they have taken over the former Fletcher's nightspot across the road from the new Pacific Resort. Good food at a reasonable price with fast service is what they are promoting.

Aituaki Walkabout – A very popular way to see the island of Aitutaki– take a leisurely stroll along the back streets of Aitutaki and learn all about the history, agriculture and culture of the island.

Popoara Seaside Bungalows. When finished this property will have 6 self contained units. It is located on the main island of Aitutaki right across the waterway from the Pearl Beach Resort.



Accreditation

Every now and then when we have a tourism forum or a gathering of members of the tourism industry the question comes up "what do I get for being accredited" or "why should I join the accreditation scheme". I thought it would be timely to remind ourselves of what accreditation means and why we actively ask all those in the tourism industry to support the scheme.

WHAT IS THE TOURISM ACCREDITATION SCHEME?: It is a voluntary scheme designed by the local tourism industry to ensure good standards in all aspects of the tourism industry

WHY BE TOURISM ACCREDITED?: To show your commitment to the promotion of the Cook Islands as a quality destination, helping our country to maintain a good reputation for its hospitality, facilities, service and environmental practices.

WHO CAN JOIN?: Membership is available to operators in every sector of the tourism industry ie; Accommodation, Activities, Tours & Transport, Food & Beverage, Retailers and Services.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF A MEMBER?

- ◆ To give good customer service and treat all customers with equal respect and consideration.
- ◆ Advertise correctly
- ◆ Train your staff well in all aspects of customer service
- ◆ Maintain high standards and fair practice in all business transactions.
- ◆ Handle all enquiries, complaints, refunds and return of goods promptly, properly and reasonably.
- ◆ Maintain and enhance the natural beauty of the Cook Islands.
- ◆ Contribute to the reputation of the Cook Islands as a quality destination

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND BENEFITS OF BEING ACCREDITED?:

- ◆ Only accredited properties can advertise with the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation Information Centre.

- ◆ Only accredited properties are included in the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation destination brochures. We print approximately 150,000 copies of each. The Cook Book & Appetiser alone cost the corporation over \$123,000.00 per year to produce, and we also contribute \$40,000 annually to the What's On handbook
- ◆ Only accredited businesses are included in the Fact Sheet which is updated regularly and included on our website.
- ◆ Only accredited businesses are included in our website. Listing is free but to have a hyperlink to your own website is currently \$112.50 for 1 year. The Corporation's website gets on average 75,000 hits per month, more than all the other Cook Islands Websites combined. The Corporation maintains the website with no direct financial contribution from accredited properties apart from the hyperlink charge which is optional.
- ◆ The distinctive accreditation logo indicates that the property meets or exceeds basic standards in cleanliness, safety and service. You can use this logo on all your advertising, promotional material, stationery. The logo enables customers to make an informed decision on their choice of accommodation, tours and activities etc. Customers can also register comments, suggestions or concerns through the co-ordinator which can be acted upon.
- ◆ Your property/business is inspected annually from an independent and unbiased perspective to ensure you meet these requirements and the feedback is valuable to you to improve your business.
- ◆ You have free access to visitor statistics from Cook Islands Tourism Corporation.
- ◆ This is a commitment from you to provide good standards therefore enhancing your business.
- ◆ A video has been produced for showing at the airport encouraging visitors to use only accredited businesses
- ◆ You will be able to participate in Cook Islands Tourism Corporation promotional activity domestically and internationally.
- ◆ You will benefit from the promotion and publicity that Cook Islands Tourism Corporation will give to the accreditation scheme as your participation will be highlighted.

Outer Island Experiences.....

Atiu.....

April was a month of Island Hopping for Marketing Officer's Kelly Cook and Keren Aviu. Their first stop was an overnight stay in Atiu on Tuesday 15 April whilst escorting Kathy Ombler from NZ Traveltrade Magazine. Kelly and Keren wanted to familiarise themselves with Atiu and experience first hand what the "Island of the Birds" has to offer in terms of tourism.

First stop once they arrived was Are Manuiri their home for the night. This was great for those on a budget and wanting to mix-in with the local community in a totally relaxed and safe environment.

The first tour was the Anatakitaki Cave Tour which is run by the Humphrey's family. Tour guides Sarah & James took them on a half hour trek over Makatea before descending into the cave.



The highlight of the tour was definitely the swim in the fresh water cavern which refreshed the body and made the walk back that much fasterand bearable! Straight after, they quenched their thirst at the local Aretou Tumunu with Sam and the boys for some songs, local chit-chat and a good cup of homebrew. Exhausted they went to dinner at Kura's Kitchen in Atiu Villa's for a plate of fresh marlin and veges followed by dessert . A delectable meal to top off their day. They had no trouble sleeping that night!

Up at the crack of dawn, the girls waited for George Mateariki-the Birdman for his Nature Tour. They were very impressed with his skill at "calling" the Kakerori~Rarotonga Flycatcher as if

they were good mates and his knowledge of native flora and fauna. George prepared a sumptuous lunch at the end of the tour and the girls unswayed



by the strong current and large waves on Taungororo Beach both leapt into the waves to cool down. Who says Atiu has no beaches? Keren also found the time to catch-up with relatives residing in Atiu.

Last stop for the day before boarding their flight was a Tour by Juergen Manske of the local Coffee plantation, Coffee Factory and Fibre Arts Studio. A quick stop at the local Women's centre to buy some crafts and mementos and site inspections of accommodation properties preceded their trip to the airport for their flight home. The girls also managed to squeeze in Mitiaro briefly on transit to Rarotonga.

Kelly and Keren would like to thank Juergen & Andrea Manske, The Humphrey's family, George Mateariki, Taparere Lodge, Kopekia Lodge, Vaine Kiki, Kura & Roger Malcolm and members of Atiu Tourism for their hospitality.

Mangaia.....

Next was a trip to Mangaia for a couple of nights. Having planned many a famil trip to Mangaia for visiting travel agents and travel writers they decided to experience first hand, the green island for themselves. Staying at Babe's Guesthouse in Oneroa and with the assistance of the island secretary they ventured out to discover its secrets.

A circle island tour began the first day with visits to the Moumoukura cliff lookout to the Tamarua

Valley, Aramoana Hotel and lookout in Ivirua. Followed by a stop at the harbour, Te-Vai-O-Rongo water hole, marketplace, Mangaia Lodge, Mangaia College, and the old pineapple processing factory. Working up a good appetite for one of Babe's delicious homemade meals prepared by Mata. The next day sees the pair visiting the market for some Tiromi (pounded taro) and trying out



The girls go exploring and uncover some beautiful beaches and stunning coral formations!



Local resident, Charlene Moeara shows Keren & Kelly the sights (Tamarua swampland in the background)

two cave tours "Te ana o Ngauru" and Clarke's "Tuatini" cave (not recommended for the unfit!). Finished off by a cross island safari tour with Clarke. A big meitaki ma'ata to Babe for providing accommodation and meals, Island Secretary Tuaine Tuara and Tekea Moeara for their time in organising a fantastic itinerary, Clarke and Tere-manuia Tauakume for the cave tours.

Hospitality & Tourism Training Centre

During the month of April the Hospitality & Tourism Training Centre conducted Tour Guiding, Bar & Service of Drinks and Customer Service. We received a good response for each course with requests for refresher and/or further studies.

Eight participants completed the Tour Guiding module. These students were comprised of personnel from Raro Tours and Cook Island Divers. Sixteen participants completed the Bar & Service of Drinks course with nine of them being IHCS students and the remainder from Palm Grove, Shekinah Services and private enrollees. Eighteen students completed Customer Service and this group was comprised of staff from Bermuda Trust, Moana Gems, Pacific Resort, Mama Ru's Beach house, Shekinah Services, Air Rarotonga and Stationary Supplies.

Our overseas tutor, Mr. Rohan De Silva conducted the Tour Guiding and Bar course while Mrs. Yvonne Marsters conducted the Customer Service Skills course.

During this time the Basic Commercial Cookery (BCC) and Introduction to Hotel and Catering (IHCS) course continued since commencement in

February of this year. The nine BCC students are currently in their 11th week with participant's progressing well. The Hospitality and Tourism Training Centre recently hosted a day with two outer islands students, Eikura Henry from Aitutaki and Utia Kae from Atiu. They both gained awareness in the field of commercial cookery by joining the BCC students.

The nine IHCS students have completed their theory work at the school and have progressed onto their practical work attachments. The students have been placed at Edgewater, Pacific Resort, the Rarotongan Resort and Club Raro. We thank each property for their involvement and allowing our students to work with them.

During the month of May we welcome Mr. Colin Moore to the school, as he will be conducting the "Fare Construction and Ticketing" course. This course is slated to be conducted in late May. Dates to be confirmed.

If you would like further information about upcoming courses or would like to talk about your training requirements, please phone Jeanette on 22-682.