

## **Tourism for the wellbeing of Aotearoa/New Zealand - is Sustainable Tourism enough?**

Associate Professor Christian Schott  
Tourism Management Group  
Wellington School of Business and Government  
Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington  
[christian.schott@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:christian.schott@vuw.ac.nz)

The presentation initially positions where Aotearoa is located on its path towards socially, culturally, and environmentally sustainable tourism. This research-based overview highlights that, despite many sustainability achievements, there are significant tourism costs that negatively impact Aotearoa's environmental, cultural and social wellbeing. While then positioning the country's pre-Covid tourism on an 'exploitative to regenerative tourism continuum', where regenerative tourism creates the conditions for the natural environment, society, and the economy to enjoy increased wellbeing after tourist visits, it is concluded that Aotearoa is far enough advanced on the continuum to make the transition towards a regenerative approach a feasible option; despite some sustainability shortcomings. When examining a range of internal and external factors, including recent government reports and strategies as well as regenerative tourism's consistency with Te Ao Māori (Matunga et al, 2020) and the Mauriora Systems Framework (Matunga, 1993), it follows that a regenerative approach to Aotearoa's tourism is the most appropriate and indeed necessary way forward to address the tourism costs and to ensure the country's overall short and long term wellbeing; needless to say that the impacts on wellbeing need to be viewed through a holistic lens (Pasanchay & Schott, 2021).

While a wide range of approaches and mechanisms will be needed to transition towards a regenerative approach to tourism, the presentation focuses on the need to educate prospective tourists prior to travel in order to align their expectations with the experiences offered in a regeneratively focused Aotearoa. Drawing on innovation and research from the Education for Sustainability field (Schott & Marshall, 2018, 2021), the strengths and weaknesses of embracing increasingly popular Virtual Reality technology to meaningfully and emotionally educate tourists about Aotearoa, its unique cultures, unique natural environment as well as Kiwis concerns about negative tourism impacts, is explored.

The presentation concludes that we are uniquely positioned to be a/the global leader in Regenerative Tourism – culturally, socially and owing to our innovative mindset. As we are already in a period of many transitions, the move toward a regenerative approach to tourism appears most opportune now.

**Relevant resources:**

Matunga, H., Matunga, H. P., & Urlich, S. (2020). From exploitative to regenerative tourism: Tino rangatiratanga and tourism in Aotearoa New Zealand. *MAI Journal*, 9(3), 295-308.

<https://doi.org/10.20507/MAIJournal.2020.9.3.10>

Matunga, H. (1993). Generic framework for Maori cultural and spiritual values. In C. Blackford & H. Matunga, Social, cultural and spiritual effects of hazardous substances and new organisms [Unpublished report] (pp. 12–20). Ministry for the Environment.

Pasanchay, K., & Schott, C. (2021). Community-based Tourism homestays capacity to advance the Sustainable Development Goals: a holistic Sustainable Livelihood perspective. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 37(1) 100784. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100784>

Schott, C., & Marshall, S. (2021). Full-Immersion Virtual Reality for Experiential Education: An Exploratory UX Analysis. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* 37(1), 96-110.

<https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.5166>

Schott, C., & Marshall, S. (2018). Virtual reality and situated experiential education: A conceptualization and exploratory trial. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 34, 843–852.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12293>