

Highlights

- This quarter a new set of questions has been included in the RVM to track changes in market demand for environmentally sustainable tourism products, and to gauge visitors' perceptions of the regions' environmental performance. From visitors' perspective, early indications are that the environmental performance of Dunedin lags behind that of other regions - 39% rated the overall environmental management of Dunedin as world-leading (compared with 46% of all RVM respondents).
- The past year has seen a significant increase in the proportion of RVM respondents travelling to Dunedin on business. In the year ending June 2008, 12% of respondents indicated this as the main reason for their visit. This is higher than the benchmark of 9%. Dunedin also sees a relatively higher proportion of Education and VFR visitors than other regions.
- As holiday motivators, Dunedin's uniqueness and natural/other attractions remain its key points of difference from other regions. However, in the most recent year a lower proportion of visitors were motivated to visit by the "uniqueness" of Dunedin.
- Expectations are growing that visitors will find friendly people, beautiful scenery, unique history/heritage and unique wildlife in Dunedin, and these factors are also key to the region's competitive differentiation.
- Visitors are increasingly hungry for (pre-trip) information about Dunedin's accommodation and activities and attractions. However, demand at this point remains lower than in other regions, as does the proportion of visitors pre-booking these services.
- RVM results suggest that a growing proportion of Dunedin's visitors are travelling in twos, while the proportion of visitors travelling in large groups (five or more people) is declining. Compared with other regions, Dunedin also hosts a higher proportion of visitors travelling alone.
- The intended length of stay of visitors to Dunedin is trending upward over time but remains below the benchmark for the international market. Almost half (49%) of respondents from the domestic market in the most recent year indicated that Dunedin was their sole destination.
- RVM respondents were particularly favourable in their satisfaction ratings of a range of Dunedin's historic and natural activities and attractions – including museums, beaches, historic sites and historic buildings. All of these assets were rated above their relevant benchmarks.
- Asked to rate their satisfaction with a range of destination attributes, visitors to Dunedin were particularly complimentary with regard to Dunedin's heritage and wildlife attributes, as well as the hospitality they received. These attributes continue to set Dunedin apart from other regions.
- In the most recent year (ending June 2008) Dunedin has maintained its rating for overall visitor satisfaction at 8.3 out of 10. This remains ahead of the benchmark (8.0 out of 10).
- When canvassed for particular highlights or lowlights of their visit this quarter, visitors to Dunedin were impressed by the opportunity to visit friends and family living locally, and also in their encounters with friendly local people. The weather and difficulties with parking were the most common 'lowlights'.
- At \$158 per person, average daily expenditure by visitors to Dunedin sits well below the benchmark of \$193 for the year to June 2008. Average expenditure on accommodation, food/meals/drinks, and local transport eased slightly in the most recent year, while expenditure on shopping increased. Expenditure on sightseeing and attractions in Dunedin remains well below the benchmark, as does expenditure on gifts/souvenirs.
- When asked what makes Dunedin different from other regions of New Zealand they have visited, respondents' during the months April - June 2008 commented most frequently on the region's historic buildings and architecture, and it's history and heritage more generally. Dunedin's status as a University town was also commonly mentioned as a differentiating factor, along with the unique wildlife that is found in the region.