

Towards 2020: A Strategic Plan for Tourism in The Coromandel to the Year 2020

3rd Edition – Revised April/May 2004

Thames / Coromandel and Hauraki Districts of New Zealand

**Developed from public and industry consultation
1991-1994 / 1998 / 2004**

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**For more information on progress on the Towards 2020 Strategy and for
related documents visit <http://www.thecoromandel.com/strategy.html>**

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Executive summary

1.1 The Vision

Defining a clear and common perspective on what our region expects from tourism, is the first key step in developing a regional tourism strategy that is meaningful. This we can call a collective **'tourism vision'**. This consensus view on what type of tourism we want in the medium to longer term can help define all the **issues** (possible events that run counter to this vision), and **recommendations** (possible solutions that will help realise our vision) and **actions** (steps towards achieving our vision) that are identified in this plan.

From our public consultation and review of related plans and submissions we have summarised the region's aspirations in tourism as follows:

"To develop the visitor industry as a source of economic growth and community enhancement with minimal impacts on the special values of The Coromandel's natural environment and lifestyle."

1.2 The Challenge: Preserving the visitor experience in the face of continuing growth

The Visitor Experience

The Coromandel offers a wide range of special visitor experiences. Eight are highlighted here. Together they constitute the visitor appeal of The Coromandel - they are the reasons why people come here - and they must be retained if increased numbers of visitors are to be attracted to the region in future. The Coromandel is special for:

- A sense of exploration and re-discovery
- A relaxed, special lifestyle shared with an interesting, expressive and talented community
- Intimacy with the natural world offering personal interpretation by each individual
- Dramatic landscapes, volcanic hills and dense green forests containing ancient kauri trees
- Unspoiled recreational beaches and a clean, spectacular coastline
- Variety of marine and maritime activities for all levels of experience
- Accessible exposure to New Zealand's pioneering history and Maori heritage
- Pastoral and rural activities reflecting the values of "middle New Zealand"¹

Central to the Towards 2020 Strategy is a commitment to preserve and grow these experiences for the visitor and thereby enhance the region for the local and future populations.

Continuing Growth

Growth in visitor numbers appears certain to continue with an average annual growth rate of 2.3% to the Year 2009.² During the period to 2020 and beyond it must also be accepted that the special attractions of The Coromandel are sure to encourage further growth in the permanent resident population. Conservative estimates anticipate an increase in permanent residents from 41,940 in 2001 to 47,764 by 2020.³ This is based on a static or only slightly increasing population in the Hauraki District and a 20% increase between 2001 and 2021 in the Thames-Coromandel District.⁴

This estimate of population growth excludes the impact of "absentee owners" who own residential property in The Coromandel and occupy or rent out their properties only at popular holiday times.

¹ See Section 2.1 for a more detailed analysis of the special values and experiences of The Coromandel

² New Zealand Regional Forecasts 2003-9 p.63

³ Census 2001

⁴ Hauraki Long Term Council Community Plan (draft) p.18 / Thames-Coromandel Long Term Council Community Plan (draft) p.16

The 2001 Census recorded 19,848 such dwellings in the Thames Coromandel District. This is forecast to rise by 38% to 27,436 by 2020. This development will be faster in some areas than others, for example Mercury Bay will see a 3.5% per year increase whilst Thames will only see a 0.5% increase.⁵

The pattern of their visits is likely to match the traditional visitor trends, meaning that in peak seasons there could be as many as 28,000 people staying in these properties on any given day. These factors - resident population growth and the impact of absentee owners - could have at least an equal and possibly greater impact on the infrastructure, environment and special values of The Coromandel than equivalent growth in seasonal visitor numbers.

The present utility infrastructure of the combined regions has a total capacity able to serve around 75,000 inhabitants. This estimate is based on the number of approved residential properties multiplied by average occupancy for typical properties, with the Thames Coromandel District containing the majority. The actual permanent population currently drawing on the infrastructure is around 41,940. This suggests that overall there is significant available capacity within the infrastructure of the region. However, the critical limiting factor is the uneven distribution of utility capacity and the seasonal peaks and troughs of demand that occur in the most popular visitor locations, with an estimated Summer 2003/4 population of 106,000.⁶ This is the most significant constraint facing further tourism development in the region, and the one that demands the most careful management.

In any case, achievement of the expected increased numbers of both residents and visitors will depend on the extent to which the special experiences of The Coromandel are protected - and promoted - over that period. There is no doubt that the promise of these experiences is capable of attracting far more residents and visitors than The Coromandel can accommodate and service to an acceptable standard. Managing this imbalance of "sales potential" and "delivery capability" is probably the greatest challenge facing the regulatory authorities, infrastructure providers and visitor service industries of The Coromandel today.

The challenge of integrating increased visitor numbers amongst a growing resident population, while preserving all the features of The Coromandel's unique experience calls for a carefully integrated programme of managed development. Effective co-operation and partnership between the tourism sector, local authorities and public agencies responsible for infrastructure and environmental management will be essential if the aims and objectives of this Plan are to continue to be achieved.

1.3 Key Recommendations

These recommendations are by necessity a summary and where possible should not be read in isolation from the related issues, more detailed recommendations and actions pertaining to each section of this strategy.

- The Coromandel brand and marketing should reflect the region's commitment to sustaining the natural environment.
- All local and regional marketing should reflect The Coromandel brand, ensuring that visitors who respect the special values and experiences of The Coromandel are attracted.
- To market and manage a world-class – and thus high yield – visitor experience, The Coromandel must guarantee quality and a high level of service.

⁵ Thames Coromandel Long Term Council Community Plan (draft) p.16

⁶ Thames Coromandel Long Term Council Community Plan (draft) p.52

- Tourism Coromandel must take on a leadership rather than reactive destination management role providing the Councils with specific recommendations on future development to sustain the natural environment.
- The Councils must become the legal brokers for the Towards 2020 Strategy and enforce the recommendations of the Towards 2020 Strategy and Tourism Coromandel.
- Impact studies on changes to existing transport services must measure the effect on the nature and volume of visitors to the region and ensure that this is in accordance with the guiding principles of the Towards 2020 Strategy.
- Environmental sustainability should be enhanced through the adoption by the tourism industry of an environmental benchmarking scheme. Other industries and organizations should be encouraged to adhere.
- Investors should be attracted and opportunities seized to develop tourism infrastructure that would enhance visitor access to the special visitor experiences and values. Gaps in the market and high yield opportunities should be used to foster public/private partnership.
- The Coromandel community should continue to be encouraged to be involved in and updated on the delivery of the Towards 2020 Strategy through local media and schemes to ensure communities benefit economically, environmentally, socially, educationally and culturally from tourism.
- To ensure that The Coromandel can leverage national marketing campaigns there must be sustained development of a network of cultural, heritage, Maori and arts and crafts experiences.
- High profile events, in keeping with the special values and experiences of The Coromandel should be developed to utilize tourism capacity during shoulder / off seasons, to stimulate economic growth and to showcase the region.
- Improved business capability of the tourism sector should be supported through the provision of a central point for information on education and training and by building regional training capacity.
- In order for Tourism Coromandel to deliver on the Towards 2020 Strategy secure and increased funding must be sourced either locally, from central government initiatives or from public/private sector cooperation.
- Tourism Coromandel's role in providing strategic leadership to the region on tourism must be formalized and supported by other agencies and organizations who have the statutory right to ensure future planning respects the guiding principles of the Towards 2020 Strategy.
- An improvement in research and market information is required to enable the region to take a professional management and marketing approach to tourism. Information that is available needs to be more thoroughly disseminated to partner organizations.

1.4 The Coromandel in 2020

Subject to relative stability internationally and domestically, continued funding and the Councils' commitment to ensuring that the recommendations of the Towards 2020 Strategy are translated into statutory requirements where necessary, tourism in The Coromandel can be expected to look like this:

- The Coromandel with the continuation of its successful marketing and promotion campaign can expect a 16.9% rise in visitor numbers in the years leading to 2009, representing an additional 182,100.
- This growth will be predominantly during shoulder / off season periods due to the provision of all year round activities, facilities and events supported by targeted marketing campaigns.
- Visitor yield can be expected to have increased from \$243.6 million (2002) to \$327.9 million by 2009 as a result of successful pricing strategies, seasonal spread and the development of quality products, services and events.⁷
- The majority of these visitors will be interactive travellers interested in the culture, heritage and Maori experience of the region. They will expect The Coromandel to demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability.
- The Coromandel tourism industry will be leading business in the region in its commitment to sustaining the environment through an environmental benchmarking scheme and new tourism infrastructure will be in line with the guiding principles of the Towards 2020 Strategy – sustainable and appropriate to The Coromandel.
- The Coromandel will lead the visitor industry in opportunities to get close to nature with off shore island sanctuaries, close-up Kiwi experiences, marine reserves, all year multi-day tracks and a network of coastal walks.
- The Coromandel will offer a range of unique experiences that will ensure that visitors leave with an understanding of The Coromandel past and present through interpretation provided by Iwi, Museums, DOC and the VIN, arts and crafts trails and a heritage trail.
- The Coromandel will host a significant number of high profile events, bringing vibrancy and economic activity to the region. Infrastructure provided to support the events will benefit local communities all year round.
- The special character of traveling or exploring The Coromandel will be retained, while at the same time appropriate transport upgrades and provision of alternative methods of transportation will have reduced congestion.
- Local communities will benefit from the visitor industry through:
 - Increased employment opportunities and economic growth
 - Environmental protection guaranteed by virtue of necessity of the marketing campaign and branding of the region and an environmental benchmarking scheme
 - Provision of more facilities such as walkways and mountain bike tracks

⁷ New Zealand Regional Tourism Forecasts p.70

- Museums and other forms of interpretation bringing Maori history, natural history and European history to life
- Education and training in schools and the tertiary sector linked to tourism and as a result of growth in the arts and crafts

2.0 Background to the Towards 2020 Strategy

2.1 The Special Values and Experiences of The Coromandel

These are the findings of the extensive public consultation exercise of 1994, findings that were reinforced in the 2004 review.

Community values

There are four important values with which the community must nurture the special experiences offered to visitors by The Coromandel, and which will underpin the management of an expanding tourism industry.

- **A distinctive lifestyle:** a relaxed, rustic and distinctive lifestyle and culture with a strong connection to the natural areas of The Coromandel.
- **A natural coast and interior:** a spectacular coast and rugged interior, where development is largely absent and where present, is modest in size and impact - in keeping with the environment.
- **A clean environment:** a cared for, largely unspoilt environment, where we learn from the mistakes and excesses of the region's history and manage special natural areas in a responsible way, leading by example.
- **Personal freedom:** a community which protects what is important, but still allows people freedom to realise their aspirations in a business and lifestyle of their own choosing.

Special Experiences of The Coromandel

The special experiences of The Coromandel are defined as those experiences and elements that help make the Coromandel / Hauraki region a unique place to visit. From Tourism Coromandel research, eight features of the total experience in The Coromandel have emerged as essential to the character and appeal of the region to visitors.⁸ This is not a list of all the many and varied attractions of the region, but rather those that are essential to its character and uniqueness as a tourism destination and which distinguish it from other places.

Future tourism growth should maintain and, where possible, enhance these special experiences:

- **A sense of exploration and re-discovery:** Visits to The Coromandel bring with them a special sense of exploration and discovery. The region suits independent travellers, or those interested in exploring a little for their most special holiday experiences. The winding roads are an integral part of this 'sense of adventure', as are exploring the interesting communities of the region, and short walks in both coastal and forest environments.
- **A relaxed, special lifestyle with an interesting and expressive community:** the region has a gentle pace of life, largely free from the stresses of modern living, which give refreshment and replenishment to any visitor, even in a weekend away. The region has a diverse range of residents and communities, spread around the region, many with distinctive lifestyles or values. In total they create a special part of New Zealand society.

⁸ Much of this research was part of the design brief in the development of a Regional Logo, copies of the research summary are available from Tourism Coromandel. Central to this research was focus groups of visitors and residents held in 1993 to discuss the special experiences and values of the region. A further eleven consultation forums were held in 2004.

These communities can be readily explored through such experiences as visiting arts and crafts people, farmstays, or attending local events.

- **Intimacy with the natural world offering personal interpretation by each individual:** tourism, though in total a significant industry, is spread around the region, not concentrated in one or two communities, or in large commercial operations. Accommodation and activities are mainly of an intimate, smaller scale offering a special opportunity to meet locals, and explore New Zealand away from larger groups or major commercial operations.
- **Dramatic landscapes, volcanic hills and dense green forests containing ancient kauri trees:** rising very close to the sea are the hills. These remnant volcanoes act as a dramatic backdrop to the coastal communities - and in combination with the ocean surround and embrace the communities of the region. They also offer many opportunities to access extensive areas of native forest, in particular, remnant or regenerating stands of Kauri, one of the world's great trees.
- **Unspoiled recreational beaches and a clean, spectacular coastline:** as a peninsula, the region has long stretches of largely undeveloped, natural beaches (relative to its land area), which are accessible to many, and are largely uncrowded, even by New Zealander's standards. Natural features such as remnant coastal forest (ie: Pohutakawa), natural sand dunes and the absence of visible development from many beaches are integral parts of the coastline's tourism value.
- **Variety of marine and maritime activities for all levels of experience:** The Coromandel offers an enormous range of high quality recreation possible in relative safety in the coastal/marine environment of the region. (e.g.: boating, safe swimming, sailing, fishing, natural experiences e.g.: dolphins)
- **Accessible exposure to New Zealand's pioneering history and Maori heritage:** as one of the oldest areas of both Maori and European settlement, the region offers a unique New Zealand history - still visible, and in some cases functioning. (eg: Goldfields Steam Train, Thames or Coromandel Stamper battery, Hauraki Maritime Park). This heritage offers visitors insights into the development of modern New Zealand, and lessons we may draw from this past.
- **Pastoral and rural activities reflecting the values of "middle New Zealand":** in their transition from traditional settlement to highly productive land the wide expanses of the Hauraki Plains have become home to many of the activities for which New Zealand has become internationally famous. From the hot spa springs of Miranda and high quality gemstone factories to state-of-the-art dairy farms providing comfortable overnight accommodation for visitors the region offers a fascinating snapshot of rural New Zealand life today and a character quite unlike that found elsewhere.

Preserving these special values and features are essential to the sustainable growth of tourism in the region. It is these experiences that visitors seek in the region, not a motel or a charter boat per se. Any developments or changes to the region which threaten these experiences, will undermine the long-term growth and sustainability of tourism in the region.

2.2 The 2004 Strategy Review

This revised strategy continues to adhere to the above guiding principles and to address the above challenges. In addition it takes into account the updated views of key stakeholders, tourism operators, the local communities and recent strategic developments.

Developments on a national level:

- The creation of a national tourism strategy in 2000: Towards 2010
- Postcards From Home: Local Government New Zealand response to Towards 2010
- The national campaign targeting the Interactive Traveller
- The central point of access for quality information, research and forecasts is now the Tourism Research Council (TRCNZ)
- The redevelopment of New Zealand tourism's official quality mark, Qualmark, and a national quality assurance framework.
- The re-launch of the Visitor Information Network with a new brand i-Site.
- The Land Transport Management Act 2003
- Department of Conservation Statement of Intent 2003-6

Developments on a regional/local level:

- Thames Coromandel District Council Long Term Community Council Plan (Draft)
- Hauraki District Council Long Term Community Council Plan (Draft)
- Environment Waikato Long Term Community Council Plan (Draft)
- Local Community Board Community Plans
- Coromandel Peninsula Land Management Plan (DOC)
- Waikato Conservation Management Strategy (DOC)

2.3 The Role of Tourism Coromandel

Tourism Coromandel is the Regional Tourism Organisation for Thames-Coromandel District Council and Hauraki District Council. The Tourism Strategy 2010 defines a Regional Tourism Organisation's role as:

Destination marketing and management, domestic and international marketing and regional tourism planning and development and facilitating provision of services to operators.⁹

The Tourism Strategy 2010 called for a realignment of the tourism sector and detailed the increased role of a RTO:

- An increase in destination management activity and associated strong links with local government
- Provision of research, information and education resources to operators, local authorities and local communities.
- A greater role in coordination of tourism planning and development among local operators, local government interests and local communities
- Coordination/facilitation of events at a regional level
- Facilitation of an increased and more effective participation of Maori in regional tourism organisations.¹⁰

The Local Government New Zealand response to the Tourism Strategy clarified an RTO's destination management role, stipulating that Local Government has the mandate for tourism

⁹ Tourism Strategy 2010 p.23-5

¹⁰ Tourism Strategy 2010 p46

planning and destination management, although RTO's are well placed to feed into those responsibilities.¹¹

Tourism Coromandel does not have the statutory ability, or need, to carry out development or resource planning, but will serve to advance sustainable tourism growth by advocating the key principles laid down in this plan. Many of the issues raised, recommendations and actions suggested, fall within the responsibilities of the Waikato Regional Council (known as Environment Waikato), Thames-Coromandel District Council, Hauraki District Council (collectively referred to here as 'the councils'), Transit New Zealand, Department of Conservation and other local or central government agencies.

Tourism Coromandel's role is:

Destination Marketing:

- To raise the profile of The Coromandel internationally and domestically
- To coordinate regional marketing and branding
- To support tourism operators with marketing, education and training and standards
- To educate and work with international travel trade to encourage inclusion of The Coromandel in their travel programmes

Destination Management:

- To set guidelines to protect the special values and experiences of the Coromandel
- To advocate a sustainable tourism industry
- To advise on the need for/appropriacy of major tourism developments
- To ensure proven destination management models are considered by planners and lessons learned from communities with similar issues
- To represent the views of key parts of the visitor industry to proposed developments; notably current visitors, and tourism operators and the industry

Regional Tourism Planning:

- To provide data on tourism and its environmental and economic impact on the region
- To identify gaps in the market / areas for public and private sector investment
- To provide leadership on the strategic development of tourism planning

Regional Tourism Development:

- To ensure that the community can see the benefits of tourism to the region
- To attract funding and seed the development of tourism product
- To improve the core capability of the tourism sector.

Progress to date on the delivery of the Towards 2020 Strategy is detailed in Appendix 1.¹²

2.4 Tourism in the Region: Today and in the Future

Today

According to the TRCNZ Regional Tourism Forecasts survey the Coromandel* attracted 1.1 million visitors in the Year 2002.¹³ Domestic visitors made 857,000 trips to the area and

¹¹ Postcards From Home p.16

¹² See Appendix 1 for a summary of Tourism Coromandel's achievements to date

* This refers to the Coromandel region as defined by the TRCNZ Regional Tourism Forecasts – only incorporating areas north of Thames and Whangamata inclusive, as opposed to The Coromandel as defined in this document (TCDC and HDC areas)

¹³ Note: TRCNZ Regional Forecasts count visitors *each time* they enter the region

international visitors 220,000 trips to the area. They stayed a total of 3.6 million nights and spent \$244 million. International visitor spend averaged \$109 per head per day and domestic visitor spend \$59 per head per day.¹⁴

Domestic Visitors make up 79% of the visitors to the Coromandel*. Key to this attraction are the presence of numerous beaches and its proximity to the large Auckland and Hamilton markets. Aucklanders account for 60.5% of domestic visitor nights. Waikato forms the next highest group, with 21% of domestic visitor nights. Together with the Bay of Plenty, the Coromandel's three largest domestic markets make up 88.9% of all domestic nights spent there.¹⁵ The dominance of these neighbouring regions reflects the reduced convenience of The Coromandel from other more distant locations and the large population bases in Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga within a short drive of the Coromandel.

International Visitor numbers have increased in line with or better than most neighbouring RTO's: The Coromandel has seen a percentage increase of 102 %, whilst Northland has seen a 56% increase and Waikato a 60% increase. The Bay of Plenty region, however, has experienced a 200% increase and now has a similar number of visitors to The Coromandel.¹⁶

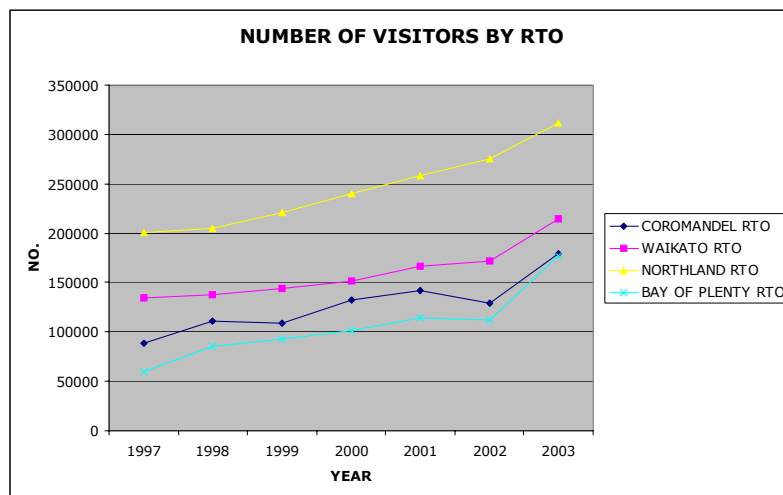


Fig 1: Figures based on International Visitor Survey Year Ending December 2003.¹⁷

A target for Tourism Coromandel has been to increase length of stay, as well as numbers of visitors, and visitor nights have increased by 156% since 1997. According to the latest International Visitor survey, a visitor now stays on average four and a half days in The Coromandel. This is an on average increase of one day since 1997. Neighbouring RTO's have seen similar advances in length of stay: the Bay of Plenty has increased its length of stay by one day and Northland by half a day. The Waikato and Bay of Plenty both saw dramatic increases in length of stay in 2002/3, although this may balance out over the years to come.¹⁸

¹⁴ New Zealand Regional Tourism Forecasts p.63

¹⁵ New Zealand Regional Forecasts p.68

¹⁶ International Visitor Survey Year Ending December 2003

¹⁷ Total number of international visitors is lower than stipulated in the TRCNZ Regional Tourism Forecast because TRCNZ include visitors under the age of 15 and count a visitor more than once if they leave and re-enter the region.

¹⁸ International Visitor Survey Year Ending December 2003 / TRCNZ Regional Forecast – Waikato & Bay of Plenty

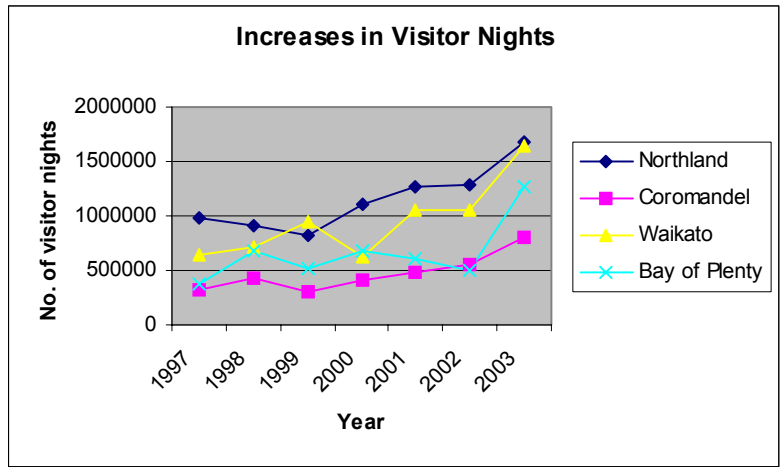


Fig 2: Figures based on the International Visitor Survey Year Ending December 2003.

The issue for The Coromandel is the seasonal nature of the visitor influx, largely due to the domestic visitor market. Figure 3 demonstrates the December / January peaks and the May to October troughs. These peaks coincide with an influx of absentee ratepayers and stretch the local infrastructure to its limits.

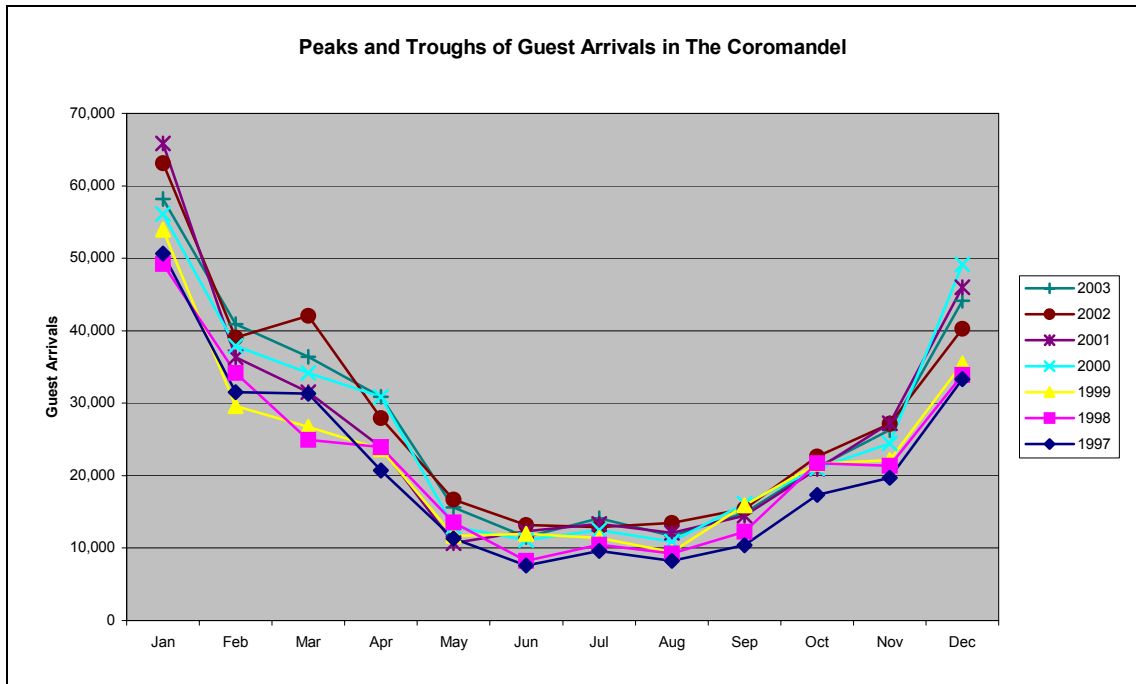


Fig 3. Figures based on the Commercial Accommodation Survey¹⁹

¹⁹ The Commercial Accommodation Survey provides regional data on the commercial accommodation sector. It measures capacity, occupancy rates and guest nights each month, and employment and guest nights by origin every month.

The Future

Total visits to the Coromandel* are expected to increase by 16.9% to 1.3 million by 2009, an average annual growth rate of 2.3%. Total nights will increase to 4.2 million and visitor expenditure to \$328 million. International visitor numbers are forecast to increase by an average of 5.3% per year, rising from 219,900 to 315,100 in 2009 (a total increase of 95,100 visitors). The major increases will be in the United Kingdom, European, Australian and American markets. Domestic visitor numbers are projected to increase by an average of 1.4% per year, rising from 856,700 to 943,600 in 2009 (a total increase of 86,900 visitors). As a result, international visitor share of total visits will increase slightly to 25% whilst the domestic share will fall from 79.6% to 75%. Nevertheless, the survey predicts that the current domestic visitor dominance of the market will be evident in the long term, sustained mainly by growth of the Auckland population and economy.

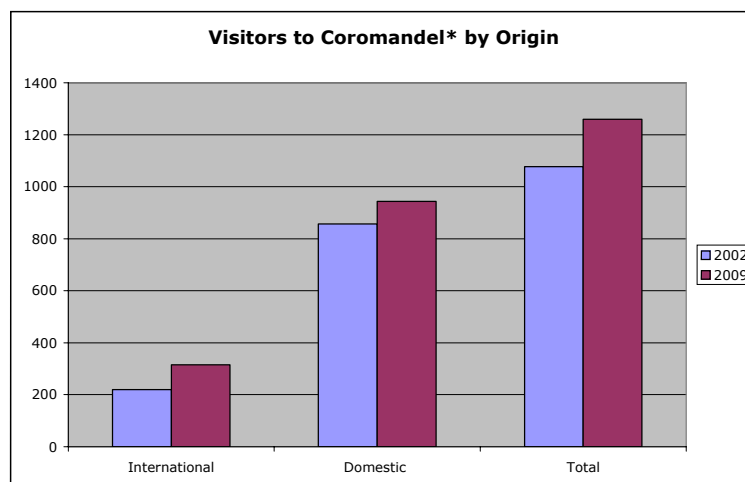


Fig 4: Chart reproduced from New Zealand Tourism Regional Forecasts 2003-9 p. 65

The visitor expenditure increase – projected to be \$84.3 million over the period, translates to average annual growth of 4.3%. At 34.6%, projected total growth in expenditure is below the national average of 57.6%, due to the dominance of the domestic market. Whilst international visitor spend is expected to increase to from \$109 to \$138 per day, domestic visitor spend is predicted to increase more slowly, from \$58 to \$61 per day. However nationally expectations are that international visitor spend will increase to \$173 per day and domestic visitor spend to \$97.52 per day.²⁰

The challenge for Tourism Coromandel and the Towards 2020 Strategy is:

- To manage this growth in tourism and protect the special values and experiences of The Coromandel – the very reason the visitors are attracted to the region.
- To address seasonal peaks and troughs by building the shoulder and off peak seasons.
- To seize opportunities to increase domestic and international visitor spend above and beyond Tourism New Zealand's extrapolations, bringing The Coromandel more in line with national expectations. A 1% increase in spend by all visitors generates the same economic result as a 12% growth in visitor numbers.²¹

²⁰ Figures derived from TRNCZ Regional Forecasts

²¹ The Tourism Strategy 2010 p.14

3.0 Destination Marketing

Destination marketing for The Coromandel is not about increasing visitor numbers but increasing the yield from and length of stay of visitors who will respect and appreciate The Coromandel's environment, culture and values.

3.1 Goals:

- To market and manage a world class visitor experience
- To leverage off Tourism New Zealand's offshore branding, marketing and trade education efforts in regard to the Interactive Traveller
- To establish The Coromandel as a leading tourism destination in target markets
- To optimise yield, seasonality and regional spread

3.2 Issues:

Branding and marketing

The interactive traveller has been identified as New Zealand's ideal customer.²² Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) focuses on marketing New Zealand to those whose motivations best match the NZ tourism offering i.e. visitors who will acknowledge the NZ culture, environment and values. This involves emphasising the unique elements of New Zealand's culture including Maori, lifestyles and environments in their brand positioning, product development and regional product development. Ensuring a match between the brand promise and the delivery of the product or service is essential. Regional Tourism Organisations are therefore expected to leverage international and product campaigns regionally and at local operator level.

Target markets in addition to the Interactive Traveller

Local tourism operators have concerns about the emphasis on the interactive traveller profile and feel that there is a need for RTO's to represent sectors of the industry who could benefit from other types of traveller and to acknowledge that there are other types of visitor who wish to be able to access the special values and experiences of the Coromandel. Groups such as school parties, campers, motor caravaners, mini-bus groups, conference and team building groups and even in some areas (Paeroa) 56-seater coach parties have been identified.

Marketing to alleviate peak seasonal pressures

The Coromandel / Hauraki region continues to experience major growth in visitor numbers. The marketing challenge is therefore not only to generate continuing growth - but to attract it at the right time of the year, for the right length of time and in the manner which best suits the region. The Coromandel's appeal to visitors must be spread across a longer season. Peak seasonal pressures are already placing impossible demands on infrastructure and services in the region for significant periods of time.²³ While visitors and their dollars will continue to be attracted, the cost of providing for all of their needs at peak times may rise to a point where further increases in volume will cease to earn additional net benefits for the region. Beyond such a point, the effects of new tourism development could be seriously negative for the region as a whole.

²² See Appendix 2 The Interactive Traveller Profile

²³ See Figure 4 p.12

Peak seasonality, and the need to translate The Coromandel 's special features into year-round attractions - thus spreading the infrastructure burden more evenly without loss of amenity or economic benefit, provides the greatest challenge to the region 's visitor industry. The challenge must be met if the quality of life and preferred local standards of living are to be preserved and enhanced.

Length of stay, yield and pricing strategies

Many regions, including The Coromandel, market themselves to high spending potential visitors. The Coromandel attracts large numbers of visitors from the UK, USA, Australia and Germany and other European countries. However, the yield of tourism in The Coromandel has historically been moderated by large numbers of budget conscious domestic visitors. National average daily spend is detailed below:

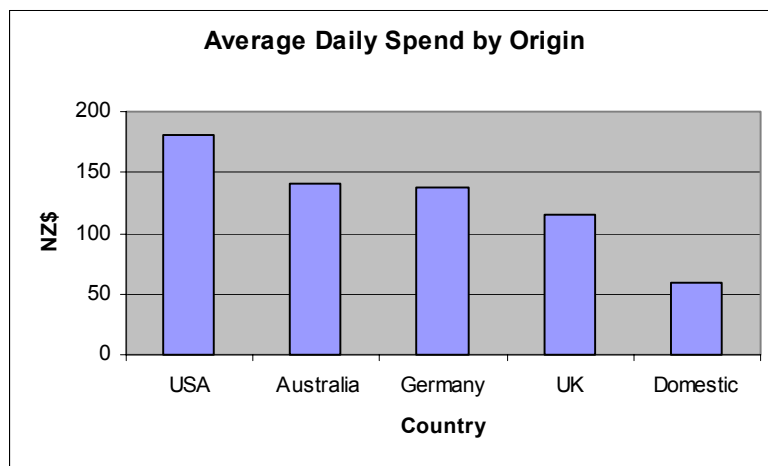


Fig 1: Figures based on International Visitor Survey Year Ending December 2003

This pattern has been encouraged by the fact that many of The Coromandel's key attractions are free to access (eg: Hot Water Beach, Karangahake Gorge). This emphasises the importance of building length of stay, utilising pricing strategies and accessing all parts of the visitor dollar (e.g. food, gifts /souvenirs, crafts and collectable art work) as key objectives in visitor growth. A 1% increase in spend by all visitors generates the same economic result as a 12% growth in visitor numbers.²⁴

Quality and standards

Key to marketing a world-class visitor experience are standards. Tourism operators working with Qualmark have found it consistently useful and a stimulus for improving standards year on year. Other operators, notably activity based outfits, have only a moderate level of acceptance of Qualmark and are concerned about duplication with existing industry standards and the level of global awareness of Qualmark, amongst other issues.

Visitor Information Network

The Visitor Information Network (VIN) links the visitors, the operators and the RTO and is key to successfully marketing the region. Some Information Centres have found it difficult to make the necessary transition from volunteer-supported, part-time organisations to becoming major contributors to the region's ability to attract and retain growing numbers of visitors. Other Information Centres have successfully made the transition but are hindered by the funding regime, which requires that they have competing roles – not only marketing the region but

²⁴ The Tourism Strategy 2010 p.14

supporting the local community or acting as agents for rental properties for example. The variety in organizational structures also leads to an inconsistent approach and image.

3.3 Recommendations:

Branding and marketing

The natural environment and sustaining that environment underpins the whole Towards 2020 strategy and hence the marketing strategy for The Coromandel. The Coromandel brand should ensure that it reflects the region's commitment to sustaining the natural environment. Marketing and promotion should build on this, paving the way to ensuring the 'right' sorts of visitors are being attracted. The huge environmental diversity in a small area (mountains, bush, beach, sea, wetlands) should be emphasized as a point of difference. Culture and heritage are seen as products of this natural environment. Local communities need to work together and with Tourism Coromandel in identifying their point of difference or 'flavour' and in ensuring that this, alongside the natural environment, underpins local marketing, bringing it into line with the regional brand. Ultimately all marketing materials across The Coromandel should reflect the Towards 2020 goals. A key element of this branding exercise will involve building on the eight special visitor experiences of The Coromandel which can also be claimed by other regions in New Zealand. The branding must ensure that The Coromandel achieves unique positioning.

As a region with modest financial resources it is important for The Coromandel to work with other areas to pool funding, and complement the tourism product. The following co-operative marketing strategies should be continued:

- With Auckland: to target high value, short stay overseas visitors who access the region from Auckland. e.g: Hauraki Gulf, Pacific Coast Highway, Australian Weekend Getaways, Pre / Post conference travel etc.
- Pacific Coast Highway: to offer a world-class coastal holiday region off shore, and encourage travel off the central North Island route.
- Multi-destinational marketing: The Coromandel twins with regions of similar values, tourism objectives and types of communities
- The Great Southern Touring Route Group and Victoria Tourism.

Target markets in addition to the Interactive Traveller

Whilst recognising that there is scope for visitors outside of the Interactive Traveller profile, it is imperative that these groups do not negate the special values and experiences of The Coromandel. Motor caravans, mobile homes, coach parties and school parties will need to be carefully managed, potentially using a system similar to DOC's recreational opportunity spectrum with infrastructure only being provided in areas where environmental impact will be minimal. Marketing should contribute to the management of these visitors.

Marketing to alleviate peak seasonal pressures

The region must continue to have a long-term focus in its tourism marketing strategies, seeking to spread visitor growth into the shoulder and off peak seasons, plus building average length of stay and average spending per visitor. This entails the provision of niche products for lifestyle and other groups, the promotion of off season/shoulder season events, development and packaging of year round high yield products such as arts and craft trails. The Coromandel should also promote itself as a Autumn/Winter break 'drive and relax' destination to couples without children and 'empty nesters' in the nearby population centres of Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga. This will entail an increased emphasis on domestic markets.

Length of stay, yield and pricing strategies

Tourism operators increase their use of pricing strategies to improve yield and premium price for quality and authenticity. Tourism Coromandel should leverage this high quality experience in marketing campaigns. Increasing visitor numbers is important but not the key – rather effective pricing and yield. Increasing length of stay can be achieved by co-operative marketing by local operators, VIC and RTO's. In addition Tourism Coromandel should lobby inbound tour operators.

Information on local attractions, craft, heritage, cuisine and cultural trails and rainy day activities should be available at every level.

Quality and standards

To market and manage a world-class visitor experience and to support yield and pricing strategies, wider adoption of Qualmark is recommended. Work will be needed to ensure that Qualmark exists as a viable option to operators in the region.

Visitor Information Network

A more strategic approach and recognition of the economic value of investment in professional information services will improve the effectiveness of the region's VIC. It is recommended that i-Site centres are established as the most comprehensive providers of quality independent visitor information, ensuring a uniform look and level of service across the region, preserving the role of volunteers and, with one payment, enabling operators to be promoted across the region. The i-site centres may be supplemented by additional organizations as appropriate. The VICs should be centrally funded to enable the region to take advantage of economies of scale relating to imminent ICT upgrades such as online reservation systems and in order that the central funding body can work with the i-Site organisation to ensure it continues long term to meet the needs of individual operators, the visitors and the local communities. Centralisation of funding should not impact the local flavour of the individual VIC. Any alteration in location of VIC's should be based on sound data on existing and potential visitor numbers. It is crucial that any changes to the VIN result in operational advantages and do not create another layer of management and bureaucracy.

3.4 Actions:

Branding and marketing

3a) Based on a real commitment to environmental issues, it is possible to position The Coromandel region as one of the nation's most 'environmentally friendly'. Tourism Coromandel will develop marketing programmes which make a virtue of environmental protection by necessity, promoting The Coromandel as an international model of what can be achieved by cooperation between the private and public sectors to preserve the environment without significantly reducing consumer choice and while still enabling businesses to earn reasonable profits. The branding exercise will be informed by other elements of the strategy: the cultural and heritage and eco-tourism product development, the focus on the events industry. Crucially the branding must identify and emphasize the uniqueness of The Coromandel.

3b) Tourism Coromandel will work with local communities to identify a local flavour and ensure alignment with The Coromandel brand. Tourism Coromandel will ensure this is in line with the Regional Museum Project, the Cultural Heritage Project, the Hauraki Maori Trust Board Tourism Strategy and the Ngati Maru investigation into Maori product.

3c) Tourism Coromandel will work with tourism operators and other businesses to further align marketing with The Coromandel brand and the special values and experiences of The Coromandel. Property developers and other organisations involved in the production of marketing campaigns will be encouraged to work with Tourism Coromandel thus depicting The Coromandel as a place to live and work in a manner that adds to The Coromandel brand.

3d) Tourism Coromandel will continue to work with other areas and marketing bodies to pool funding in order to access offshore markets that they would not otherwise be able to get to. Particular attention, in light of recent TNZ campaigns and the local emphasis on developing a cultural/heritage/Maori product, will be paid to partnerships based around culture, heritage, the Maori experience and the arts.

3e) Tourism Coromandel will continue to be a market leader among regions in developing "direct to the market" initiatives and exploring new distribution channels.

3f) Tourism Coromandel will continue to develop an online presence via The Coromandel web site to provide a comprehensive set of options to travel consumers and enable The Coromandel to engage effectively with a global audience.

Target markets in addition to the Interactive Traveller

3g) Tourism Coromandel will actively support initiatives to attract school parties to areas such as Waihi and the Kaueranga Valley and mini-bus parties to niche tourism attractions. Key to this is ensuring local tourism operator leadership and involvement in order that the region can maximise yield.

3h) Tourism Coromandel will encourage growth in the conference and team building industry through an audit of existing facilities, marketing and development of appropriate product.

3i) Tourism Coromandel will investigate models of how marketing can be used to support destination management issues by steering groups with a potentially high environmental impact to areas of the region where that impact can be minimised yet the visitor still has access to the special values and experiences of The Coromandel.

Length of stay, yield and pricing strategies

3j) Tourism Coromandel will market off / shoulder season attractions and ensure domestic audiences are targeted, focusing on particularly on Autumn/Winter weekend breaks to 'relax and veg' or building on out of season events.

3k) Tourism Coromandel will continue to work with tourism operators on the development of yield and pricing strategies.

Quality and standards

3l) Tourism Coromandel will continue to promote quality control through Qualmark or an equivalent appropriate to the operator. In the medium to long term, the majority of tourism operators will be encouraged to work with Qualmark in order that Tourism Coromandel can guarantee quality to international operators.

3m) Tourism Coromandel will be the mouthpiece for local operators feeding back to Qualmark to ensure that the organisation is accessible, responsive and represents added value and benefits in business and customer satisfaction. Tourism Coromandel will work with Qualmark to ensure that operators have access to training and mentors to support them in achieving Qualmark status.

3n) Tourism Coromandel will work with local business associations to ensure that businesses in the area recognise the importance of quality and standards in the provision of a world-class visitor experience and ensure both tourism operators and other service industry businesses are aware of the educational and training opportunities available for staff. [See Regional Tourism Development for details of education and training opportunities.]

Visitor Information Network

3o) Tourism Coromandel will investigate, in conjunction with local community boards, VIC staff and VIN owners, the appropriate agency to take on the role of overseeing the Visitor Information Network for the region. This will include devising a business model with a centrally coordinated system to manage funding and lead on the implementation of a regional development plan for the regional VIN network. This plan will incorporate a central networked database, the provision of an online reservation system and a centrally administered payment system for operators. This process will be supported by the nationally produced RTO operation manual.

4.0 Destination Management

Destination management encompasses district planning, management of infrastructure and site management and by implication it is not the sole responsibility of any single organisation. Local government however are the brokers with the legal mandate and their commitment to the Towards 2020 strategy is key.

4.1 Goals:

- To recognise the value of the natural environment and actively protect, support and promote its sustainability.
- All operators and organisations to actively protect, support and promote sustainability as part of what they do.
- To provide advice and guidance and to work with other agencies on the provision of appropriate infrastructure that enhances the region for residents and the visitor industry.
- To ensure that the Council provides strategic leadership and an overview of destination management in the region.
- To ensure alignment of destination marketing with destination management.

4.2 Issues:

Retaining the special values and experiences of The Coromandel and providing a sustainable infrastructure

Despite its extensive protected natural areas, and the decline of extractive industries, The Coromandel's natural environment faces continuing degradation from several fronts:

- The impact of introduced animals - notably possums browsing on plants (which indirectly affects bird life) and predatory animals, including dog attacks on kiwi.
- Introduced plants, fish and continuing threats to water tables in remaining wetland areas.
- Coastal development threats.
- Recreational and commercial fishing.
- Forestry.
- Impacts of visitors in particular pressure points.

All these issues directly or indirectly involve the visitor industry as either primary users of the resource, or a concerned constituency. The undeveloped coast of The Coromandel is the part of the natural environment most valued by visitors. Indeed there are only a handful of readily accessible, undeveloped beaches left in the region. The development threat to the coast primarily involves natural areas of land NOT in DOC or council stewardship. Permanent protection of these areas (which are extensive) is desirable but uncertain - and perhaps unlikely as coastal land prices rise.

Current district schemes emphasise concentrating future tourism developments in existing communities. A widespread consensus has emerged against strip development, and retention of the natural character of the rural / natural areas between the towns of the region. A key challenge

will be to achieve this objective while still limiting developments in towns to a scale and type appropriate to the character of the entire region.

Infrastructure is critical for visitors to experience a world-class visitor experience – roads, road signs, water and sewage systems, and public toilets. Tourism infrastructure - public and privately funded facilities and services will need to meet the expectations of progressively more sophisticated visitors. Management issues arise when visitor impacts are perceived to affect resident's quality of service. The large number of agencies involved creates a challenging environment in which to ensure the sustainable provision of core local infrastructure.

Significant investment in the development and upgrading of facilities for tourism, to accommodate this growth is necessary. Linked to this growth is the challenge of a servicing a rapidly expanding resident population. The on-going challenge for the councils is to manage these developments to ensure that they meet the social and environmental requirements of the region's communities, satisfy the tourism demand, and do not conflict with the essential elements of the region's tourism product and marketing programme. New investments in development will test the planning regulations managed by the Thames Coromandel District Council, Hauraki District Council and Waikato Regional Council.

Another test for the Councils will be to retain the hearts of these towns. One of the special experiences of The Coromandel is the lifestyle and the communities, including a diverse range of residents with distinctive lifestyles and values. Interactive travellers expect to meet and mix with the local populations. Although the absentee ratepayers certainly contribute to the mix, where this is to the extent that a permanent local community can no longer be supported and restaurants and other services close during the midweek and off-season, it will have a profoundly negative impact on the visitor industry.

Managing the thoroughfare of visitors and retaining the special values of The Coromandel

Visitors to the region are highly dependent on private and rental vehicles. Less than 5% of visitors to The Coromandel travel by other means. Combined with increasing pressure from a growing resident population, and with a rise in forestry traffic, the demand for efficient transport for visitors is placing increasing stress on the region's roading system, which is neither highly developed nor easy driving. The winding, slow roads in the area, including the unsealed routes, are both an attraction and discouraging to some target visitors. Although roading improvements are necessary and inevitable, the essential character of the roads must remain intact. Councils with Transit New Zealand must ensure that road developments are sensitive to this issue, and with Regional Council and Tourism Coromandel work on encouraging alternative forms of mass transport (ferry and small coaches for example) to minimise congestion while increasing visitor numbers.

With total visits to the region expected to increase by 16.9% to 1.3 million by 2009, a failure to divert some of this growth into mass transport will create significant problems. This percentage increase in cars on the road would see a marked deterioration in traveling times, parking freedom and dust and noise problems over the next generation. Highway congestion and parking in the region's towns are all areas where pressures will mount, requiring significant investment.

Improved and sustainable visitor access to the special visitor experiences of The Coromandel

The natural environment of The Coromandel forms most of the important visitor attractions. Much of this land, indeed more than 40% of the region is managed by the Department of Conservation. Due to limited resources, investment in new visitor services relative to the importance of tourism to The Coromandel and its use of conservation land, has been low. The forestry business also manages a significant area of public land but due to reduction in the number of field staff has been unable to support the development of the visitor industry. However, the opportunity for

public/private sector partnership is significant but lacks leadership. Some examples are detailed below:

- **An off-shore sanctuary** for native flora and fauna (especially rare and endangered birds) is under development and other possibilities include islands off Tairua, Mercury Bay and The Coromandel Harbour areas. DOC is looking to allow visitor access but requires the provision of appropriate legislation and infrastructure such as transportation, accommodation and promotion and marketing.
- **Recreational access to the coast** is relatively poor given the extensive track systems in The Coromandel ranges, and the high value placed on coastal experiences by visitors. Unlike the Nelson / Marlborough regions, The Coromandel does not have lengthy sections of public tracks along the coast (as in the Abel Tasman National Park and Marlborough Sounds). This begs a partnership solution.
- **Wetland access** is almost non-existent, which while not currently rated as important by visitors, offers opportunity in niche visitor markets (eg: bird watchers) and increasing general appeal as the importance of wetlands is recognised.
- **Mountain biking, guided tours, kayaking, abseiling and horse trekking** are just some of the potential outfits that could operate successfully in partnership with DOC in the Karangahake Gorge or Kauaeranga Valley or with the forestry industry or on private land.

Cost of the provision of tourism infrastructure

Much of the pressure on existing infrastructure will be due to the increasing resident / absentee ratepayer populations rather than due to the visitor industry. However, there are some attractions that require infrastructure spend such as toilet upgrades (Hot Water Beach) and regular path repair (Cathedral Cove) as a direct result of the growth in visitor numbers. There is also vocal demand for the preservation of campgrounds, the provision of motor caravan parks, improved visitor information services, museums and interpretation centres.

Promoting sustainability within an SME dominated tourism industry

The natural and undeveloped areas of The Coromandel have a history of being spoiled by indiscriminate and insensitive exploitation. A major challenge for tourism is to ensure that the economic benefits of increasing visitor numbers are weighed against the potential detriment to some or all of The Coromandel's eight special visitor experiences. In exchange for the opportunity to earn valuable external dollars from the natural advantages of the region the tourism industry has an obligation to show responsible leadership to other industries and to the community in preserving those advantages for the future.

Tourism's access to natural assets, must like any other industry, conform to the objectives of 'sustainability' laid down in the Resource Management Act, and defined in this Plan. However, as an industry that relies fundamentally on the natural environment's well being for long term growth, tourism should strive to exceed statutory responsibilities where appropriate, and lead the community, and other industries by example in its responsible use of the natural environment.

Visitors increasingly expect not only a pristine environment but also clear evidence that the tourism services that they consume are contributing to keeping it that way. SME businesses in the area agree with the long-term goal but fear the additional costs and workload at a time when they are being encouraged to address quality, standards and education and training.

4.3 Recommendations:

Retaining the special values and experiences of The Coromandel and providing a sustainable infrastructure

Key to all recommendations of the Towards 2020 Strategy are effective Council District Plans that will provide the regulatory arm and empower the Towards 2020 Strategy. Recommendations of the Towards 2020 strategy must be incorporated into future district planning and the Councils' must remain committed in their adherence to the strategy. The District Plan should enable action to be taken on scenarios such as:

- Threats to the protection/management of undeveloped coastal areas. The beaches north of Waihi Beach and Whiritoa; Opoutere, Hot Water Beach, Cathedral Cove, Otama, New Chums and Papaaroha are particularly significant examples.
- Ensuring developments are low density and appropriate in size and scale to their communities and immediate built environment. Ensuring that they are designed to be in keeping with the natural character of the environment, and ideally reflect the special heritage and values of the immediate area, and wider region, not withstanding existing zoning standards. From the consultation process for this plan (reinforced in the 2004 review), there was general, though not universal, consensus that developments of higher than 2 storeys, or larger than 50 rooms (for accommodation complexes), would be unlikely to be appropriate in size or scale for the East Coast communities of the region and for Coromandel town.

In order to achieve this, the Councils require coherent recommendations from the perspective of the tourism industry that can feed into the formulation of statutory documents. Rather than the tourism industry being reactive and responding to Council/Community Plans, the industry should take a leadership role, providing information on:

- Areas that attract large numbers of visitors and will require a high level of infrastructure such as sealed road access, sealed easy access walkways, parking and superloos (your Hot Water Beaches and your Cathedral Coves).
- Areas which attract less visitors and require a moderate level of core infrastructure (limited parking and long drop toilets)
- Areas of critical environmental importance where visitor access/development should be restricted or access permitted only with a guide
- Areas which could be zoned for high-income tourism related visitor attractions such as outdoor pursuits centres or wet weather swimming complexes
- Areas where it is imperative that the 'flavour' of a town is retained and a definition of this 'flavour'
- Areas that would be appropriate from a tourism perspective for campgrounds or motor caravan parks
- Areas that could be zoned for development of accommodation due to pressure on existing accommodation

The Councils also need to address how to preserve the hearts of the local communities, particularly on the Eastern seaboard where absentee ratepayers are rapidly increasing in number. This is going to require a concerted attempt to promote the region as a place to live, work and invest, targeting not only tourism based industries but other low impact businesses such as ICT or design based companies.

Managing the thoroughfare of visitors and retaining the special values of The Coromandel

There needs to be an ongoing review of the suitability of existing transport services for the changing nature and volume of visitors to the region with particular attention paid to the following:

- The likely impact of the widening of the Kopu Bridge in terms of visitor numbers, volume of traffic on the Kopu Hikuai and parking facilities.
- While small groups of visitors can be brought into the existing facilities via the Auckland ferry service, investigation into the feasibility of a regular higher-volume service is required.
- Pressure must be maintained on central government to finish outstanding sealing tasks on main access roads in the region as soon as possible and further investigation taken as to the implications for local communities, environmental impact and economic growth of sealing other roads north of Colville. Key to this investigation is the tenet that the region must retain the special character of travelling or exploring the natural assets of The Coromandel, while at the same time encouraging investment in appropriate upgraded transport
- Encouraging co-operation between tourism industry participants to create "clusters" of appropriate activities *and* services, providing better focuses for visitor activity and reducing the volume of "random" travel by visitors in search of things to do and see. Where "clusters" of attractions and activities are feasible, encourage provision of shared transport services around the "cluster" neighbourhood
- Development and application of an effective approach to signage which links consistently into printed promotional material and directs visitors to attractions and activities by the most appropriate route (*not necessarily always the shortest*) from the point of view of traffic management and environmental sensitivity.

Improved and sustainable visitor access to the special visitor experiences of The Coromandel

The provision of visitor services and activities although ultimately left to market forces, requires leadership and coordination. There is a need for an organization to actively encourage and support the development of sustainable infrastructure, activities and facilities around the environmental attractions of The Coromandel to increase yield. Similarly the provision of larger scale visitor infrastructure such as boutique accommodation, conference venues as well as all weather/all year round attractions needs to be facilitated. Councils and other regulatory bodies must build effective means of working with priority investors to reduce consent delays and uncertainties. Publication of clearer guidelines on the information required by regulatory bodies, and the decision criteria they use, is recommended. TLA economic development units should work closely with Tourism Coromandel and the tourism sector to ascertain the gaps in the market and the high yield opportunities available in the region in order to foster public/private partnerships to begin to close these gaps. Tourism Coromandel and/or economic development units should smooth the way for potential investors to facilitate the creation of product increasing yield and length of stay.

Cost of the provision of tourism infrastructure

Funding the development of a world-class visitor infrastructure requires imagination and innovation. Visitors will need to be asked to fund some elements of sustainable tourism through mechanisms such as fees for visiting specific sites. In addition pressure on the residential ratepayer and negativity to tourism could be reduced via an economic levy on businesses in the region. It is business that benefits from the visitor industry, the work of Tourism Coromandel, the Visitor Information Network. Ongoing nationally-led research and investigation into public and private sector funding models will also need to be closely observed.

Promoting sustainability within an SME dominated tourism industry

The tourism industry's commitment to sustainability should be underpinned by the APEC/PATA Code (April 2001):

- Conserve the natural environment, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Respect and support local traditions, cultures and communities
- Maintain environmental management systems

- Conserve energy and reduce waste and pollutants
- Encourage a tourism commitment to environment and culture
- Educate and inform others about local environment and culture
- Co-operate with others to sustain environments and cultures

Sustainability should be advocated through private sector benchmarking schemes such as Green Globe 21 or industry / regional charters to promote environmental efficiency and management systems to achieve agreed international benchmarks within the tourism industry. Marketing the region as an environmentally friendly destination will require such a genuine and overt display of commitment to the environment by the tourism industry.

4.4 Action

The Natural Environment: protection and recovery of natural areas and the provision of sustainable infrastructure

4a) Tourism Coromandel will take a leadership role in a planning/consultation exercise, working with district planners, the objectives of which are three-fold:

- to inform district plans on core infrastructure needs due to increase in visitor numbers
- to identify areas of greatest environmental sensitivity
- to direct future development of amenities and services for visitors [See Action Point 4j]

This will be supported by a consultation exercise with local communities to encourage them to define the 'flavour' of the town that they are trying to retain, build on and market as a tourism attraction. This should form an integral part of the next round of consultation in preparation for the Long-term Council Community Plans 2006.

4b) Tourism Coromandel will work with other agencies and build on the work of others to define areas of The Coromandel in terms of appropriate and inappropriate tourism development. Much of the information will be available through recent work by other organisations.²⁵ This consultation exercise should avoid reinventing the wheel and build on systems and models used by other tourism destinations with similar issues and developed by organizations such as DOC. This information will feed directly into the formulation of the District Plans.

4c) Tourism Coromandel will provide a tourism overview, to a wide range of planning authorities, notably Transit New Zealand and Regional Council, on behalf of the region's tourism industry, and in line with the guiding principles and the above planning/consultation exercise This will require an understanding of the impacts of any proposed tourism developments on:

- The environment, especially the coastal precinct
- The experience of visitors from the region's target markets
- Communities (and community support for tourism)
- Tourism marketing (how the region is perceived in the market)
- Tourism investment
- Tourism growth and sustainability

Tourism Coromandel must perform as both a 'watchdog' and an agent of change. Tourism Coromandel should also encourage the development of and feed into resource packs for new developers in the area that stipulate the local community's 'flavour' providing architects with a background to work from.

4d) Regulatory bodies, and Tourism Coromandel where appropriate, should be active in working to foster environmental protection:

- Investigate sustaining local fish populations through recreational and commercial fishing management strategies, and tapping into national initiatives

²⁵ Including DOC Visitor Management Zones and priorities (Coromandel Peninsula Conservation Land Management Plan) and TCDC Landscape Identification Programme and the District Plans

- Protect green belt at roadsides and liaise with the forestry industry to reduce the impact of forestry scars
- Improve protection for coastal areas

4e) The Councils investigate successful models used in other countries and communities to maintain a permanent resident population at a time of increasing property prices and act as quickly as possible to preserve the communities of the Eastern sea board of The Coromandel.

Managing the thoroughfare of visitors and retaining the special values of The Coromandel

4f) Tourism Coromandel monitors progress on improving state highways and the provision of alternative forms of transport, not only the timing and level of investment, but to ensure that future upgrade work is in keeping with the special character of the region. The Land Transport Management Act (LTMA) 2003 has placed an increased emphasis on social and environmental factors over benefit:cost assessment and commits Transit New Zealand to increased consultation. Tourism Coromandel has an immediate opportunity to contribute to the review of the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

4g) Tourism Coromandel works with Transit NZ in line with the LTMA stipulation that Transit NZ must give full consideration of alternative transportation options. Tourism Coromandel works to ensure the introduction of a regular Auckland ferry service has a positive impact on the local township – economically, socially and environmentally.

4h) Tourism Coromandel, regulatory bodies, and business in the region should continue to encourage coach operations (notably Murphy Buses and Intercity) to develop and market a consistent and quality small coach service to potential visitors. Support of seven day, year round comprehensive services, and the development of a quality regional travel centre would be examples of such development. Whangamata notably lacks an intercity service at present.

4i) Tourism Coromandel with Transit New Zealand co-ordinates a signage pilot in the Karangahake region comprising internationally recognizable tourism signs and incorporating The Coromandel branding. Market research from the pilot should be used to inform the roll out across the region ensuring complete commonality between the two districts.

Improved and sustainable visitor access to the special visitor experiences of The Coromandel

4j) Tourism Coromandel encourages and advises regional councils on taking a leadership role in directing future development of amenities and services for visitors, particularly those that may serve as benchmarks for the industry and those that support conservation initiatives. Tourism Coromandel identifies gaps in infrastructure and services, which if filled, would enable more effective management and marketing of the region's appeal to visitors consistent with the guiding principles of this strategy and the planning/consultation exercise. Tourism Coromandel provides the Councils with details of feasible areas for tourism investment and the actions necessary to attract this investment. The Councils use this to inform their respective strategies for economic development.

4k) Tourism Coromandel closely follows the 2003-6 research project led by the Ministry of Tourism to produce high quality understanding about future tourism infrastructure requirements and ensures that research informs the above.

4l) Tourism Coromandel will support The Coromandel Coastal Walkways Society and The Coromandel Independent Living Trust and any future trusts by providing advice and guidance on the infrastructure required to support the proposed network of walks and on marketing and promotion.

4m) Tourism Coromandel in conjunction with DOC and the Councils, in light of the aging population, likely increased demand for campervans/motorhomes and the need for careful management to reduce environmental/visual impact considers appropriate provision of powered campground sites and unobtrusive sites where certified self-contained camper vans can freedom park.

4n) Tourism Coromandel will lobby to the effect that DOC and the Councils undertake an investigation into the future of camping and campgrounds in The Coromandel, with both DOC and the Councils making a commitment to provide a number of camping facilities as warranted by a cost:benefit analysis. Tourism Coromandel can potentially improve the cost:benefit ratio through off / shoulder season promotion with schools and other groups.

Cost of the provision of tourism infrastructure

4o) Tourism Coromandel encourages robust debate on funding projected infrastructure requirements of the tourism industry. Tourism Coromandel encourages partnerships between local authorities, local and central regulatory agencies and other parties with power over assets and resources to write and publish guidelines for visitor access, applying price mechanisms in selected pilot situations to manage volumes and timing of visits. The feedback on the pilots is used to inform future roll out of visitor charging. Potential pilot sites would be Cathedral Cove or Hot Water Beach.

4p) Tourism Coromandel encourages ongoing research, in conjunction with national-led initiatives, to investigate other financial tourism management initiatives such as bed taxes, a tourism eco-taxation system, hiving off developer fees to mitigate the development's impacts and to enhance recreational and tourism assets to offset these impacts. Tourism Coromandel ensures research findings inform Council decision-making.

Promoting sustainability within an SME dominated tourism industry

4q) Tourism Coromandel investigates models for benchmarking environmental standards such as Green Globe 21 or a locally developed industry charter in conjunction with the Ministry of the Environment. In line with national government targets the region will have a benchmarking system in place by the year 2010.

5.0 Regional Tourism Development

Key to the strategy of increasing yield and length of stay is the tourism product. The Coromandel has it all – arts, crafts, heritage, Maori culture, cuisine and a burgeoning events industry. Joined up thinking is needed now to ensure every visitor leaves The Coromandel with an understanding of The Coromandel past and present.

5.1 Goals

- To have the communities of Coromandel and Hauraki understand and actively support tourism
- To ensure Maori participation and that the Maori culture and identity is protected
- Creation of a regional cultural, heritage and Maori product that is distinctive and aligned to the visitors needs and wants
- To counter shoulder/off season slumps with proactive development of the events industry
- To improve the capability of people working in the tourism sector and develop higher standards of presentation and brand awareness

5.2 Issues

Community support for tourism

Tourism, more than any other industry, relies on community support to prosper. A visitor's experience is shaped very significantly by their interaction with locals. The community also invests time, money and people to support the industry with the infrastructure it needs. Without community support, a tourism industry is unlikely to be sustainable. However parochialism and self-interest remain strong in The Coromandel. The community is protective of its special lifestyle and can be expected to resist significant change, especially where conflicts between natural and built environments are perceived. This is understandable - the very factors which make The Coromandel uniquely attractive are those most under threat from uncontrolled or mismanaged development. The 1992 Ministry of Tourism's research into community attitudes towards tourism reported that Whitianga (the only Coromandel location surveyed) showed a modest amount of support for tourism compared to many other centers measured.

The community must recognise that collectively they are important beneficiaries of tourism's growth. Such benefits should be clear from a well-managed tourism industry, and Tourism Coromandel has a role in highlighting these benefits such as more community services, employment prospects and bringing younger people to live in the area. However, a number of the local community are not motivated by economic growth and development and it is important to emphasize the environmental benefits of tourism. Tourism is a powerful argument in favour of environmental protection and a source of funding for environmental protection. The developments in terms of museums, arts and crafts and heritage and culture are also all set to benefit the local communities.

Tourism Coromandel and the Visitor Information Network, funded by the community need to increase public awareness of their role.

Interactive Traveller and a cultural / heritage / Maori product

Although a small percentage of overall global tourists, interactive travellers are key to The Coromandel. They are environmentally and culturally aware and seek authentic experiences. It is estimated that around 6-10% of international visitors gross expenditure was on cultural goods and services, between \$282 million and \$470 million nationally. Job creation in the cultural sector also increased at rates much higher than traditional occupations.²⁶ Regions that have established their cultural tourism product are receiving assistance from the Government's strategy implementation fund. However until recently The Coromandel lacked a coherent approach to the cultural and heritage drawcard. Pioneering and especially Maori heritage of the region is generally poorly interpreted, poorly managed and barely marketed. The Coromandel has a lot to offer: Maori history, Cook's landing, European settler history, mining as well as arts, crafts and cuisine. Iconic product(s) could form a key part of this initiative.

Eco Tourism

One of the main strands of the destination marketing strategy is to rebrand The Coromandel to make more of the environmental wonders of the region. In order for the rebranding to be successful, The Coromandel needs to ensure that it provides not only the free of charge opportunities to explore the environment but also product linked to these experiences, allowing the Interactive Traveller to access interpretation and educational information. Again, The Coromandel should be aiming to provide iconic product that would draw people to the region and that every visitor would expect to partake in / purchase.

Development and management of events

The development of high profile events can utilise tourism capacity during shoulder and off seasons; stimulate economic activity; showcase the region and add to the vibrancy of small towns. A major event can also act as a catalyst for infrastructure development. At present in The Coromandel, there are a number of successful events and many others that fail to target visitors from outside the region. To one degree or another, all the events at present are held back by an over reliance on volunteers, a lack of infrastructure, a lack of sponsorship, a need for coherent publicity outside the region and the need for a long term strategy.

Improving the core business capability of the tourism sector

The majority of tourism operators in The Coromandel are SMEs and this results in sector wide organisational inefficiencies and diseconomies of scale. Although there are training packages available, it is difficult for small operators to access these. There is a need to build core business capability. Alongside this, all members of the international marketing group need to understand the principles of working with the international travel industry and operators generally need to be made aware of The Coromandel brand. Not only is there a need for support for the business operators, but also for their staff. Tourism operators are concerned that there has been no replacement for the Kiwi Host scheme, leaving them without an economically viable and effective scheme for ensuring service standards are maintained and local knowledge is absorbed.

Improving core business capability and levels of service could be hampered by a lack of staff due to increasing property prices particularly on the Eastern seaboard making it difficult for people to move to the region. Short-term peak season employment may be less of an issue due to the availability of students but long term and shoulder / off peak season vacancies may prove harder to fill.

²⁶ Heart of the Nation Report

5.3 Recommendations

Community support for tourism

Tourism Coromandel, councils and the industry must continue to build and maintain community support for balanced and well-managed tourism growth. They must work hard to demonstrate a responsible approach to growth and a commitment to build and maintain community support for its efforts.

Some members of local communities do not regard economic growth as a benefit of increased tourism. Tourism Coromandel must reinforce the idea that tourism can contribute to natural environment or wildlife protection and that tourism can be a strong argument for protection as in the case of Kauri National Park in Northland and extensions to Whanganui National Park.

The tourism sector needs to ensure that the local community benefits from the development of tourism attractions – museums working with schools, local people having access to learning arts and crafts, to local cuisine or to the cultural and heritage attractions.

Current research shows a greater awareness of Tourism Coromandel in the community and Tourism Coromandel must build on this and ensure that the community and councilors are aware of Tourism Coromandel's multifaceted role.

Interactive Traveller and a cultural / heritage / Maori product

There needs to be a sustained effort to increase Maori participation, capability and investment in tourism, including closer partnerships between Maori and Tourism Coromandel for regional tourism planning and marketing. The recent initiative focusing on the development of a heritage and cultural product for the region is an opportunity to seek active participation by Maori enterprises.

There should be further enhancement of the relationship between Tourism Coromandel and arts, culture and heritage organisations to better enable The Coromandel to deliver high quality product and gain leverage from the TNZ marketing campaign targeting the Interactive Traveller visitor market. The region should continue to develop better off-season options in the areas of food and wine, arts and crafts, gardens and hot pools, especially in international markets.

Councils and other organizations should assist in more professional management and marketing of the region's museums, in particular by encouraging co-operative advertising and focusing on different aspects of the region's heritage (eg: Paeroa: Maori heritage, Waihi: gold mining heritage, Whangamata: surf / beach culture, Whitianga: kauri logging).

There is a need to research and promote the advantages of extending the traditional visitor season and create industry partnerships to market off-season attractions and activities based on touring the wider Hauraki / Coromandel region in addition to, or instead of, "fixed-base" visiting.

Development and management of events

The Coromandel region needs to retain and develop events which are unique to the region and that showcase the reasons why visitors come to the region outside the timeframe of the event itself. The events must build on the eight special visitor experiences of The Coromandel. Running parallel to the growth in the events industry, public/private investment into facilities and infrastructure must be sourced to maintain the quality of the visitor experience.

Growing events in the region will also require professional events coordinators who can successfully attract public/private sponsorship. The Councils at present use different models – Hauraki funds town promoters, whilst Thames-Coromandel rely on individual event organizers, often volunteers, and fund an Events Manager based within Tourism Coromandel who facilitates the development of events across the region. The communities require clarity on who has

responsibility for fund raising, attracting sponsorship and retaining the services of an events coordinator and where it is to remain in the hands of volunteers, training and support must be provided.

Improving the core business capability of the tourism sector

The region requires a central point for information on and access to education and training for tourism operators, an organization to build regional training capacity and to ensure the region benefits from national developments in this area. The Ministry of Tourism has initiated a range of schemes to provide a framework of education and training for the sector: TIANZ Business Builder CD-ROM; He Kete Tapoi Maori, a resource kit for Maori operators (CEG) including case studies of successful Maori tourism operations and the Modern Apprenticeship scheme. TIANZ are also conducting research assessing the skills the industry will need over the coming decade with suggestions of how these can be supplied. Feedback from visitor surveys should also lead to targeted training. Tourism operators require nationally accredited courses to be available locally or via distance; more apprenticeships and a replacement for Kiwi Host supplemented by a local module.

Tourism Coromandel again needs to assume a leadership role and rather than react to a staffing crisis in the tourism industry due to rising costs of housing, pre-empt it by working with the Councils to ensure a supply of labour.

5.4 Actions

Community support for tourism

5a) Tourism Coromandel maintains a weekly presence on the radio and in the regional newspapers providing the community with an insight into the multifaceted role of Tourism Coromandel including marketing and promotion successes, work on destination management issues and details of regional tourism development such as growing events. Tourism Coromandel considers the expansion of the circulation of the Bush Telegraph to include new partners such as local industry and public groups. Attendance at citizen group, ratepayer, and business association meetings will further ensure increased awareness amongst the local community. Tourism Coromandel disseminate the benefits of tourism - environmental, economic, educational, social and cultural – as appropriate.

5b) Tourism Coromandel will investigate other models around the country for encouraging local community appreciation of the visitor industry. For example: off season promotional days with half price access to residents at major attractions or all year free entry for local residents accompanying out-of-town guests.

Interactive Traveller and a cultural / heritage / Maori product

5c) Tourism Coromandel will continue to lead the Cultural and Heritage Project focusing on capability building existing and new cultural and heritage products. By 31st December 2004, the following projects will be under development:

- A town-based heritage trail integrated with other attractions and tourism products wherever feasible in the region
- A "Gold Heritage Park" concept based around key facilities in Thames (notably the School of Mines" and Goldmine / Stamper Battery) and Waihi / Waikino / Karangahake (Victoria Battery site, Mackay Town)
- A partnership lead by Maori to develop the interpretation of Maori sites and history, especially coastal pa sites
- A community arts network to provide a strategic lead to arts and crafts in the area

This will be linked to the development of iconic product.

5d) Tourism Coromandel will support the development of the Mercury Bay Regional Museum. The Mercury Bay Regional Museum Development Project team aim to create a Coromandel experience that will be an additional drawcard for tourism operators in Whitianga, and by supporting local museums across The Coromandel, creating a network of linked museums that work to their strengths be it mining, natural history or Maori History.²⁷

5e) Tourism Coromandel will investigate the provision of a network of interpretation centres through a combination of the museums, information centers, cultural/heritage attractions and the DOC visitor centre to guarantee that every visitor can access The Coromandel past and present.

5f) Tourism Coromandel will integrate the cultural and heritage products into existing international marketing and look to market co-operatively with other historic towns such as Reefton, Ckyde and Russell. The above project includes a branding exercise and Tourism Coromandel will encourage operators to build on the region's historic towns and the heritage trail through initiatives such as a "Shop Front" programme (historic street front restoration by retailers.)

5g) Tourism Coromandel will lead on the development of eco-tourism product to support the rebranding exercise and consider development of associated iconic product for the region.

5h) Tourism Coromandel will advise and guide, support and ultimately promote the outcomes of the Golden Legacy Project responsible for the rehabilitation of the Martha Mine. Following transformation into a lake it will provide leisure and tourism opportunities, both heritage and sporting.

Development and management of events

5i) Tourism Coromandel will actively promote, attract and provide support for self-starting events that meet the following criteria:

- Are held annually, not one-off events
- Showcase the unique selling points of The Coromandel, both nationally and overseas
- Draw most event participants in from outside the region
- Have some form of regional coordination
- Involve interaction with the landscape, people, culture and industry
- Provide a high economic yield without impacting negatively the community
- Are held outside peak population period
- Are run by professional event organisers/clubs/committees
- Have the potential to attract international competitors and visitors
- Provide exposure for the region and the event sponsors
- Have a publicity plan in addition to Tourism Coromandel's activity to support the event

5j) Tourism Coromandel will ensure that the community retains ownership of the events through consultation and recognition of the role of volunteers. All the events will adhere to the guiding principles of the Towards 2020 Strategy.

5k) Tourism Coromandel will help grow the top 3 events in The Coromandel into major events and seed the development of a month long festival combining all the TCDC towns, using the Pohutakawa Festival as the platform. In addition Tourism Coromandel will support the development of three new events in the region, including an event to build on the work done as part of the Cultural Heritage project. Tourism Coromandel will coordinate a regional events calendar supported by an interactive events web site to help promote the events.

²⁷ For a copy of the strategy contact Mercury Bay Regional Museum-Project Office, c/o LDPS NZ LTD, PO BOX 302 WHITIANGA 2856 New Zealand Tel 07 866 4615 Fax 07 866 5137 e-mail project@mercurybaymuseum.co.nz

5l) Tourism Coromandel and the Councils will clarify the organizational structure for events coordination and development in the region establishing the amount of public support that can be expected and the amount of private sponsorship that must be raised. Key to this is a decision regarding public or private sector employment of professional events coordinators / town promoters.

Improving the core business capability of the tourism sector

5m) Tourism Coromandel will help promote a culture of education, training and professionalism by ensuring that national developments from organisations such as Aviation, Travel and Tourism Training Organisation (ATTTO) reach local operators; by working with local and national providers to ensure that a range of courses are available including apprenticeships and tertiary level qualifications and that these courses can be accessed via distance in addition to face to face. Tourism Coromandel will use nationally led research into the future skills needs for tourism sector workforce planning to inform the development of courses with providers.

5n) Tourism Coromandel will identify if nationally accredited courses need to be supplemented by a local 'Coro-module' to ensure a good level of local knowledge amongst staff in addition to the development of customer service skills. This would include input from DOC and from the Museums. The eight special visitor values and schemes will form a fundamental part of the programme. The 'Coro-module' will need to be available locally across The Coromandel.

5o) To help keep school leavers in the region, a programme of work experience in tourism firms is proposed (run in partnership with local schools and the Ministry of Education). The intention is to provide students with an insight into the industry for making career choices, keep more young people in the region and build community support for tourism. Tourism Coromandel will initiate the project but it will sit within existing high school work experience programmes. The work experience programme should be linked to building a greater awareness of international tourism in schools.

5p) Tourism Coromandel must conduct research into ways and means of dealing with labour shortages in the tourism industry stemming from rising costs of housing, looking at overseas models and use this information to direct Council.

6.0 Regional Tourism Planning

The Towards 2020 Strategy represents The Coromandel community's view of the long-term development of tourism in the region. Implementing this plan requires financial commitment, formal acknowledgement by Councils and other organisations of the steps required to achieve this Plan and established channels of communication to drive the Plan forward.

6.1 Goals

- To provide strategic, directional leadership to the region on tourism
- To foster public/private commitment to the tourism strategy
- To implement and deliver the Towards 2020 Programme
- To provide accurate and meaningful data to inform other agency decisions

6.2 Issues

Adequately funding the Towards 2020 Strategy Implementation

The role of Tourism Coromandel Inc. as a marketing organisation has historically been well defined and understood. However, it is less generally accepted that Tourism Coromandel also has a management role to play in the development of a sustainable tourism and visitor services industry which complements, and does not conflict with, the quality of life enjoyed by permanent residents in the region and which preserves the natural and man-made attractions of the region to be enjoyed by future generations. This management role was reinforced in the recent realignment of the tourism sector.²⁸ However, more formal recognition and appropriate resourcing from the regulatory bodies of the region is required to enable Tourism Coromandel to undertake this role with the level of commitment it deserves.

Implementation of the Towards 2020 Strategy: Destination Management

To date Tourism Coromandel has successfully implemented many of the recommendations of the original 1994 Towards 2020 document, particularly those relating to international marketing or which involved working with local tourism operators.²⁹ It has recently, due to increased resources, been able to move on some regional development issues such as the creation of a cultural / heritage product and the facilitation of the development of the events industry in The Coromandel. Other recommendations, often involving a number of agencies and hence a greater coordination commitment have not yet been addressed. Many of these pertain to the destination management role and unfortunately include achieving regulatory enforcement of the principles of the Towards 2020 Strategy through appropriate agencies.

Communication between organisations:

- **Tourism Coromandel and Hauraki District Council (HDC)**

²⁸ Tourism Strategy 2010 p.31

²⁹ See Appendix 1 for more information on achievements to date

Tourism Coromandel is funded by both Hauraki District Council and Thames-Coromandel District Council. Although Tourism Coromandel has successfully marketed the region under the brand 'The Coromandel', there remain concerns in Hauraki that Tourism Coromandel could do more to promote attractions in the HDC area.³⁰ It is recognised that these concerns may stem more from inadequate feedback and a lack of quantitative data than any lack of support on the part of Tourism Coromandel.

- **Economic development organisations**

Sustainable economic growth is one of the most important issues to both communities and Tourism Coromandel has contributed significantly by successfully promoting the region as an international and domestic visitor destination. Tourism Coromandel is now, through increased resourcing, also seeding regional tourism development through the Cultural and Heritage Project and the Events Coordination role.

The Towards 2020 Strategy also calls for leadership on proactively encouraging and smoothing the way for investment in the tourism industry.³¹ It is unclear where this leadership lies. Alongside Tourism Coromandel sit the Hauraki Coromandel Development Group, the Community Promotion Committees in Paeroa and Waihi and the Visitor Information Centres, all funded by Councils. Together these organisations see business attracted, assisted and sustained in the region, encourage employment opportunities, actively promote the region and create and maintain an improved image for the region. Clarification is required as to which organisations are responsible for promoting the region as a place to live and work and for attracting and facilitating investment.

- **The tourism industry and other private sector resource users**

The tourism industry in general, and Tourism Coromandel, in particular, lacks clear lines of communication with other industries, making discussion and co-operation on mutual problems difficult. This will be a growing problem as tourism expands and more potential for conflict emerges. Channels of communication do not exist for working together on issues such as forestry scars and logging trucks or alternatively supporting the diversification of industry into tourism, including opportunities to learn about aquaculture, farmstays, mussel barge trips and mountain biking in the forests.

- **Within the tourism industry**

Self-interest and a failure by tourism operators to co-operate hinders many initiatives in the tourism industry. Parochialism undermines sound ideas and actions, and fetters our ability to respond to issues which are most effectively dealt with on a regional basis. Joined up thinking such as dive schools working together when they are fully booked or restaurants providing rosters during the off season so the visitor knows who is open enhances the visitor experience and benefits the region as a whole.

- **The tourism industry and direct Maori involvement and partnership**

Involvement from Iwi is via the Hauraki Maori Trust Board or with individual Iwi on an issue of mutual interest. This tends to be on a project-by-project basis with links waning in between times. There is a need for these links to be revitalized and maintained in order to ensure Maori involvement in regional tourism planning and to ensure that the Maori dimension of The Coromandel region is expressed to visitors.

³⁰ See Appendix 1 for more information on achievements to date

³¹ Recommendation for Improved and sustainable visitor access to the special visitor experiences of The Coromandel p.16

Improving the quality of research

Tourism Research Council New Zealand data set does not provide the data required by the key stakeholders of Tourism Coromandel. The Coromandel needs breakdowns for The Coromandel region as defined by the RTO. At present the region is incorporated as part of Waikato, with a statistical breakdown for the area north of Thames and north of Whangamata (inclusive).

Tourism Coromandel recognises the need for improved research and market information to show how new developments may impact on the existing tourism industry; to provide data for economic development units to encourage investment in the region; to inform councilors of Tourism Coromandel progress against targets; to gain feedback on pilot projects such as road signs and visitor charging and to inform future development. At present Tourism Coromandel lacks the resources to enable effective research and information gathering on the tourism industry, which in turn hinders a professional management and marketing approach to tourism.

Challenges include:

- Lack of long-term tracking data (partly corrected with the regional visitor monitor).
- Lack of good quality or up-to-date research on motives and attitudes of domestic travellers.
- Lack of accurate estimates of employment and economic activity resulting from tourism.
- These issues must be addressed and research programmes, including household surveys, implemented.

6.3 Recommendations

Adequately funding the Towards 2020 Strategy Implementation

There will be a need to commit additional funding if potential benefits of tourism are to be achieved – commitment beyond one year funding cycles. This will entail leveraging local and central government funding. To leverage government funding, the sector will need to develop stronger public/private sector partnerships. Public/private partnerships will be required in the following areas: education and training, initial start up financial support, facilitation of local approval processes, pro-active economic development, joint marketing programmes and the hosting of significant sized events.

There should also be an investigation into appropriate rating systems, with an economic levy potentially providing Tourism Coromandel and the Visitor Information networks with a more secure, three-year funding cycle.

Implementation of the Towards 2020 Strategy: Destination Management

The circumstances, nature and status of Tourism Coromandel's input on 'significant' tourism developments or management issues need to be agreed with other organisations. Tourism Coromandel should consult with these bodies regularly to achieve recognition as an authoritative and professional representative of the tourism and visitor services industry sector in the wider context of the economic and environmental wellbeing of the region. In respect of Tourism Coromandel taking less of a reactive role and more of a leadership position on destination management strategy, where possible more formal links should be established.

Communication between organisations:

- **Tourism Coromandel and Hauraki District Council**
Tourism Coromandel should continue to ensure that the Hauraki region is encompassed in all marketing / promotion initiatives and that quantitative data is provided at regular intervals on the success of these initiatives. There are also elements of the region that

can be linked to the name 'Hauraki'. Examples of this are the farming history of the region, and Maori tourism experiences or heritage sites.

- **Economic development organisations**

Tourism Coromandel, Councils and the other organisations involved in economic development need to clarify roles and establish leadership. This information and appropriate procedures need to be made available to communities and other agencies. Tourism opportunities such as those created by DOC concessions or the forestry industry should be used to attract investment and employment to the region or brought to the attention of appropriate local businesses. The role of promoting the region, not to domestic or international visitors, but to encourage a skilled workforce and investors to move to the region also needs to be clarified.

There are two types of communication channels that need to be operating with the following parties. Both Tourism Coromandel and the party concerned need to have an appointed liaison that as a matter of course keeps the other informed of developments. There also needs to be the opportunity for more focused groupings working together towards discernable outcomes.

- **The tourism industry and other private sector resource users**

Appointed liaison links with Tourism Coromandel supplemented by industry attendance as appropriate to the tasks forces tackling the above mentioned destination management projects should provide a consistent link between the tourism industry and other industries in The Coromandel.

- **Within the tourism industry**

Within the tourism sector, contact can be maintained through the Tourism Coromandel membership scheme, through the need for mentoring and best practice dissemination of Qualmark. Tourism Coromandel will also need to ensure that all members of the tourism industry, including new businesses are aware that Tourism Coromandel is available for help and support. In addition specific working parties should be established to work on building networks to support the cultural / heritage project or to investigate the most appropriate form of environmental benchmarking for The Coromandel region.

- **The tourism industry and direct Maori involvement and partnership**

Tourism Coromandel Board membership can continue to provide a means of liaising with Maori to gain input on the future development of tourism. In addition Tourism Coromandel should ensure that individual Iwi are aware of Tourism Coromandel's advice and guidance role on marketing, promotion, training and education. Iwi should also be encouraged to invite Tourism Coromandel to work with them on the development of Maori product.

Improving the quality of research

Participation in the Commercial Visitor Monitor as an accurate data tracking system for visitor trends is a key activity. Tourism Coromandel should continue to address qualitative research weaknesses in such areas as travel motivation and satisfaction. The region also needs a better understanding of tourism employment figures and tourism's economic impact. The proposed sequence of research projects is:

1. Continuation of Regional Visitor Monitor and Annual Summer Surveys.
2. Tourism Economic Impact Study (visitor expenditure including value of the holiday home market)
3. Initiate Household Surveys to capture data not available from other sources
4. Support establishment of National Surveys of Visitor Intentions and Preferences

The surveys should also be a tool for capturing feedback on Tourism Coromandel's progress on the achievement of the Towards 2020 objectives – both from visitors and local residents.

6.4 Actions:

Adequately funding the Towards 2020 Strategy Implementation

6a) Councils and Tourism Coromandel need to work together to tap into centrally available funds to support the development of tourism, re-examine the rating system and funding mechanism for Tourism Coromandel and the Visitor Information Centres and investigate successful models of public/private partnership.

Implementation of the Towards 2020 Strategy: Destination Management

6b) Tourism Coromandel will organise a one-day retreat with representatives from all agencies present to kick-start suggested initiatives around the development of facilities and activities for visitors, to extend the seasons and yet ensure minimal environmental impact, in the medium-long term leading to an environmental benchmarking scheme. Multi-agency task forces will be appointed to deliver on issues highlighted in this strategy document reporting back to Tourism Coromandel. Tourism Coromandel will be the driving force.

Communication between organisations:

6c) Tourism Coromandel and Hauraki District Council

Tourism Coromandel works with designated tourism advocates in Council to ensure that the Towards 2020 perspective and the work of Tourism Coromandel informs council decision making processes. Tourism Coromandel implements a two-way process with Council to ensure that the tourism advocates are working effectively. This is supported by quarterly presentations to Councils.

6d) Economic development organisations

Action on economic development will depend on scale. Smaller projects such as bringing together a representative of the forestry industry, DOC, a mountain bike hire shop and Tourism Coromandel to provide a mountain bike outfit in the region could be managed using the task force approach above. Attracting larger investors such as accommodation providers will need to be undertaken by an economic development unit, supported and advised by Tourism Coromandel. The formal relationship between Tourism Coromandel and the Hauraki-Coromandel Economic Group on long term planning will need to be established.

6e) The tourism industry and other private sector resource users

Tourism Coromandel will endeavor to establish a point of contact with each major industry. Alongside this relationship, Tourism Coromandel will ensure that members of the appropriate industry are invited to work on projects that directly concern them and Tourism Coromandel will be the driving force.

6f) Within the tourism industry

Tourism Coromandel will continue to encourage membership and to communicate regularly with the industry through the Bush Telegraph and training and development sessions. Tourism Coromandel will examine the need for 'clinics' across The Coromandel to ensure that two-way communication is a reality and will encourage an open door approach to its central office. This will be supplemented by ongoing liaison with operators working on destination management issues or regional tourism development projects.

6g) The tourism industry and direct Maori involvement and partnership

The Hauraki Maori Trust Board will be producing a regional Maori strategy for the development of Maori tourism. Tourism Coromandel will assist in any way it can, notably on marketing,

promotion, education and training. Similarly, for any other Maori initiatives in the region. Leadership of the development of Maori tourism will rest with the Maori.

Improving the quality of research

6h) Tourism Coromandel will lobby the Ministry of Tourism for appropriate regional breakdown of core tourism data.

6i) Tourism Coromandel will lead on the provision of a sound database of tourism operators and associated businesses in the region. This information could potentially be provided via the VIN or via the central government web based database. This should form the basis of information on the number of people working in the sector, the nature of employment and sector income.

6j) Tourism Coromandel will endeavour to measure progress on the achievement of the Towards 2020 quantifiable targets and qualitative objectives by obtaining an ongoing research fund and instigating house to house surveys and more extensive visitor surveys.

6k) Tourism Coromandel will improve dissemination of this information via the media, through presentation to Councils and by informing future planning.

7.0 Glossary

APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ATTTO	Aviation, Travel and Tourism Training Organisation
CEG	Community Employment Group
DOC	Department of Conservation
HDC	Hauraki District Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LGNZ	Local Government New Zealand
LTMA	Land Transport Management Act
NZ	New Zealand
PATA	Pacific Asian Tourism Association
RTO	Regional Tourism Organisation
SME	Small – Medium Sized Enterprise
TIANZ	Trade and Industry New Zealand
TLA	Territorial Local Authorities
TNZ	Tourism New Zealand
TRCNZ	Tourism Research Council New Zealand
VIC	Visitor Information Centre
VIN	Visitor Information Network

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Appendix 1: Progress since 1994 on delivering the Towards 2020 Strategy

Regional marketing

Summary of Key Recommendations	Projects Undertaken / Achievements
Regional marketing to attract investment dollars and visitor spending to benefit the local economy	<p>Inclusion of The Coromandel in tour operator programmes</p> <p>40 overseas tourism operators developed and educated to an expert level</p> <p>High levels of understanding from international marketing group of workings of the international travel industry</p> <p>Raised awareness in target markets – UK, Australia and USA</p>
Developing direct to the market programmes	Billboard campaign created national and international news coverage
Encouraging Quality Management for the region's tourism industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiated work with Qualmark and consistent promotion of service and quality relating to tourism ○ Ran Kiwi Host 1994 – 2000 and achieved high levels of accreditation
Developing co-operative marketing programmes	<p>Instigator of the touring route concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of Pacific Coastal Highway ○ Development of Joint Australian-New Zealand touring campaign
Supporting and developing VIN	Supported VICs in fundraising and through Board representation

Destination Management

Summary of Key Recommendation	Projects Undertaken / Achievements
Lobbying local government to recognise the relationship between tourism and conservation management	Raised destination management awareness of Councils through Council member visits to offshore locations (e.g. Noosa, Cairns) to investigate and study other community approaches to destination management.
Assisting in project fund raising for conservation programmes	Support for the Kauri 2000 programme and, through the Pohutakawa Festival, Project Crimson

Transport and Roothing

Summary of Key Recommendation	Projects Undertaken / Achievements
Monitor progress on improving state highways	Tar sealing of Pacific Coast Highway Tar sealing of Whangapoa Hill
Encourage Coach Operators	Murphy's / Intercity / Kiwi Experience and Magic Bus all now include The Coromandel.
Engender regional approach to signage	Ongoing work with Transit NZ culminating in proposed pilot scheme in the Karangahake Gorge

Tourism Infrastructure

Summary of Key Recommendation	Projects Undertaken / Achievements
Links with other industries / agencies	Established credibility of the organisation and provided a structure for development of tourism and associated networking
Increase utilisation of heritage and Maori Experience assets / targeting shoulder and off season travellers in the areas of food and wine, arts and crafts etc.	Cultural / Heritage Project to seed tourism product in arts, crafts, heritage, culture and Maori Experience
Seasonality: Develop a programme of events which build on 8 special visitor experiences	Appointment of events manager and development of events web site; increased promotion of events and seeding events particularly relating to Adventure Racing in The Coromandel
Target potential investors	Catalyst for establishment of economic development group

Appendix 2: The Interactive Traveller

What is an Interactive Traveller?

Interactive Travellers are regular international travellers who consume a wide range of tourism products and services. They are travellers who seek out new experiences that involve engagement and interaction, and they demonstrate respect for natural, social and cultural environments.

How do you recognise an Interactive Traveller?

Interactive Travellers come from a range of countries around the world. They are more likely to fall into one of two age groups - 25-34 or 50-64. Younger Interactive Travellers probably haven't had children yet, while older interactive Travellers are likely to be 'empty nesters' (their children have left home). Both groups are more likely to have discretionary income available to spend on travel. From our research into the habits and characteristics of Interactive Travellers, we have discovered that they are more likely to...

- Read newspapers and magazines. They make a point of staying informed following business news, current affairs and travel publications.
 - Research travel destinations thoroughly. Interactive Travellers like to know about where they're going and what they can do when they get there. They research destinations using the internet, guide books, word of mouth and travel agents.
 - Have liberal attitudes. Interactive Travellers have open minds. They're tolerant of beliefs that don't match their own, and they're prepared to listen to new ideas.
 - Enjoy fine cuisine and wine.* Food and wine adds essential flavour to travel, as far as the Interactive Traveller is concerned. They expect hospitality of an international standard, but they also want to try authentic local delicacies and cooking styles.
 - Go to the cinema, theatre, galleries and museums. They pursue culture at home and when they're away on holiday. They appreciate both contemporary and historical cultural experiences.
 - Be high users of technology. Interactive Travellers have fully embraced computers, the internet, digital cameras, pay TV and other forms of lifestyle information technology.
 - Take risks. Challenging situations, both mental and physical, appeal to Interactive Travellers. They enjoy the sense of accomplishment that comes with doing something they haven't done before.
 - Have influence in their peer group. Interactive Travellers share travel stories, both at home and while they're travelling.
 - Aim to be healthy. Interactive Travellers are more likely to exercise regularly and eat healthy foods. Some of them also prefer organic foods.
 - Entertain at home. They enjoy cooking and socialising with friends at all times of the year. Travel is a likely topic of conversation.
 - Have a high disposable income. Interactive Travellers have enough money to travel regularly and purchase high-value travel experiences. They're also willing to pay more for experiences that are authentic or exclusive.
- They follow word of mouth recommendations from people they respect, and they share their own travel experiences.

[Adapted from Toursim New Zealand flyer: Interactive Traveller: Who are they?
http://www.newzealand.com/library/y42301_23.pdf]

