



Study shows NZ\$1.23 billion windfall from cruise tourism in New Zealand

December 10, 2025 – Cruise tourism has delivered more than NZ\$1.23 billion in economic benefits to the New Zealand economy during 2024-25, according to an economic impact report commissioned by Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and the New Zealand Cruise Association (NZCA).

Released today, the assessment provides a detailed analysis of cruise tourism in Aotearoa, quantifying its full economic impact alongside the employment it supports.

It shows that cruise tourism supported 8,253 jobs in locations around New Zealand last financial year, generating NZ\$384.2 million in wages for New Zealand workers.

CLIA Managing Director in Australasia Joel Katz said the assessment confirmed the enormous economic importance of cruise tourism in communities around New Zealand, where almost 1.3 million passenger visit days had been recorded during 2024-25.

“Each cruise passenger spends hundreds of dollars per day on shore in New Zealand, creating a huge economic impact not just in the major cities but also in dozens of regional ports and destinations all over the country,” Mr Katz said. “Cruise tourism is dispersed widely around the coast, ensuring the benefits extend far beyond the gateways to reach almost every region in New Zealand.”

NZCA Chief Executive Officer Jacqui Lloyd said this year’s assessment underscored the importance of creating the right environment to attract cruise ships to New Zealand.

“These figures prove how significant cruising is to the New Zealand economy and show why we need to safeguard the thousands of jobs that it supports,” Ms Lloyd said. “Cruising’s total value to the New Zealand economy is huge, but it has fallen 9.8% since the previous year and so more work is needed to restore growth.”

CLIA and the NZCA have welcomed efforts by the New Zealand Government to create a whole-of-government approach to developing cruise tourism and overcoming regulatory hurdles that discourage cruise lines from visiting. The industry has warned that red tape and high costs make New Zealand less competitive among cruise destinations and that action is needed to achieve the growth and prosperity being enjoyed in other locations worldwide.

“An incredible range of Kiwi businesses benefit from cruising, including tour operators, travel agents, hotels and restaurants, retailers, transport providers and port operators,” Ms Lloyd said. “Cruising is also supported by an extensive supply chain, creating benefits for New Zealand farmers and food producers, winemakers, providers and maritime service providers – all of whom suffer if we don’t attract ships to our shores.”

The Value of Cruise Tourism economic impact assessment for New Zealand was prepared by AEC Group on behalf of CLIA and the NZCA. Its key findings for 2024-25 include:

- A total economic output of NZ\$1.23 billion nationally (down 9.8% from the previous year), including direct* output of NZ\$574.6 million and indirect/induced* output of NZ\$657.5 million.

- Total employment of 8,253 people nationally (down 15.3%), with total wages of NZ\$384.2 million (down 9.8%) generated for New Zealand workers.
- A total of 25 New Zealand ports and destinations were visited, welcoming 882 ship visit days (down 13.9%) and 1.3 million passenger visit days (down 19%).
- Total direct passenger expenditure of NZ\$393.7 million (down 10.4%) and direct crew expenditure of NZ\$17.6 million (down 25.4%).
- An average passenger spend per day on shore of NZ\$313 per person. Average crew spend per day on shore NZ\$86 per person.
- The largest beneficiary of direct passenger expenditure was the retail shopping sector which received NZ\$108.4 million, or 27.5% of passenger spending. Other beneficiaries included the food and beverage sector (NZ\$99.6 million, 25.3%), shore excursions (NZ\$71.2 million, 18.1%), hotels and accommodation (NZ\$52.1 million, 13.2%), transport providers (NZ\$28.7 million, 7.3%), and entertainment (NZ\$27.6 million, 7.0%).
- Direct cruise line expenditure totalled NZ\$260.0 million (down 17.9%), including NZ\$131.6 million paid to ports and government as fees and charges (50.5% of cruise line spending).
- The top regions for cruise tourism were:
 - Auckland (inc Great Barrier Is, Tiritiri Matangi Is, Waiheke), NZ\$600.6 million, 3930 jobs;
 - Otago (inc Dunedin), NZ\$128.7 million, 893 jobs;
 - Canterbury (inc Akaroa, Christchurch, Kaikoura, Timaru), NZ\$116.7 million, 806 jobs;
 - Bay of Plenty (inc Tauranga, Whakatane, Rotorua), NZ\$101.6 million, 669 jobs; and
 - Wellington (inc Kapiti Island), NZ\$73.6 million, 526 jobs.

[Note: figures are available for other regions, including Gisborne, Hawkes Bay, Northland, Taranaki, Marlborough, Nelson and Southland].

*Direct expenditure: total expenditure by passengers, crew, and cruise lines.

**Indirect & induced expenditure: total expenditure generated by the spending of the direct expenditure, by businesses (indirect) and their employees (induced).

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About Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) is the world's peak cruise industry trade association – the unified voice and leading authority of the global cruise community. On behalf of its members, affiliates and partners, the organisation supports policies and practices that foster a secure, healthy, and sustainable cruise ship environment, promoting positive travel experiences for the more than 30 million passengers who have cruised annually. The CLIA community includes the world's most prestigious ocean, river, and specialty cruise lines; a highly trained and certified travel agent community; and a widespread network of stakeholders, including ports & destinations, ship development, suppliers, and business services. CLIA represents more than 90% of the world's ocean-going cruise capacity, as well as 54,000 travel agents and 15,000 travel agencies worldwide. The organisation's global headquarters are in Washington, DC, with regional offices located in North and South America, Europe, and Australasia. For more information, please visit cruising.org.au or follow @CLIAustralasia on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

About the New Zealand Cruise Association (NZCA)

New Zealand Cruise Association is the industry body and leading voice of New Zealand's cruise sector. NZCA provides leadership, advocacy and facilitation to ensure a visitor focused cruise sector that makes New Zealand a better place by contributing to, and growing the value of economy, environment & community. www.newzealandcruiseassociation.com.