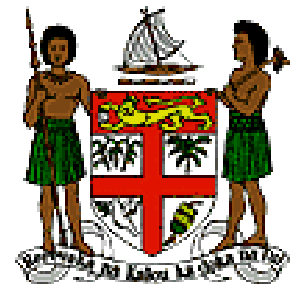


Modifying ecotourism into community-based tourism in Fiji

Fiji: a pragmatic approach to rural local- owned tourism

International Seminar on Marine Tourism
Banka, Belitung, Indonesia
21 - 22 September 2011



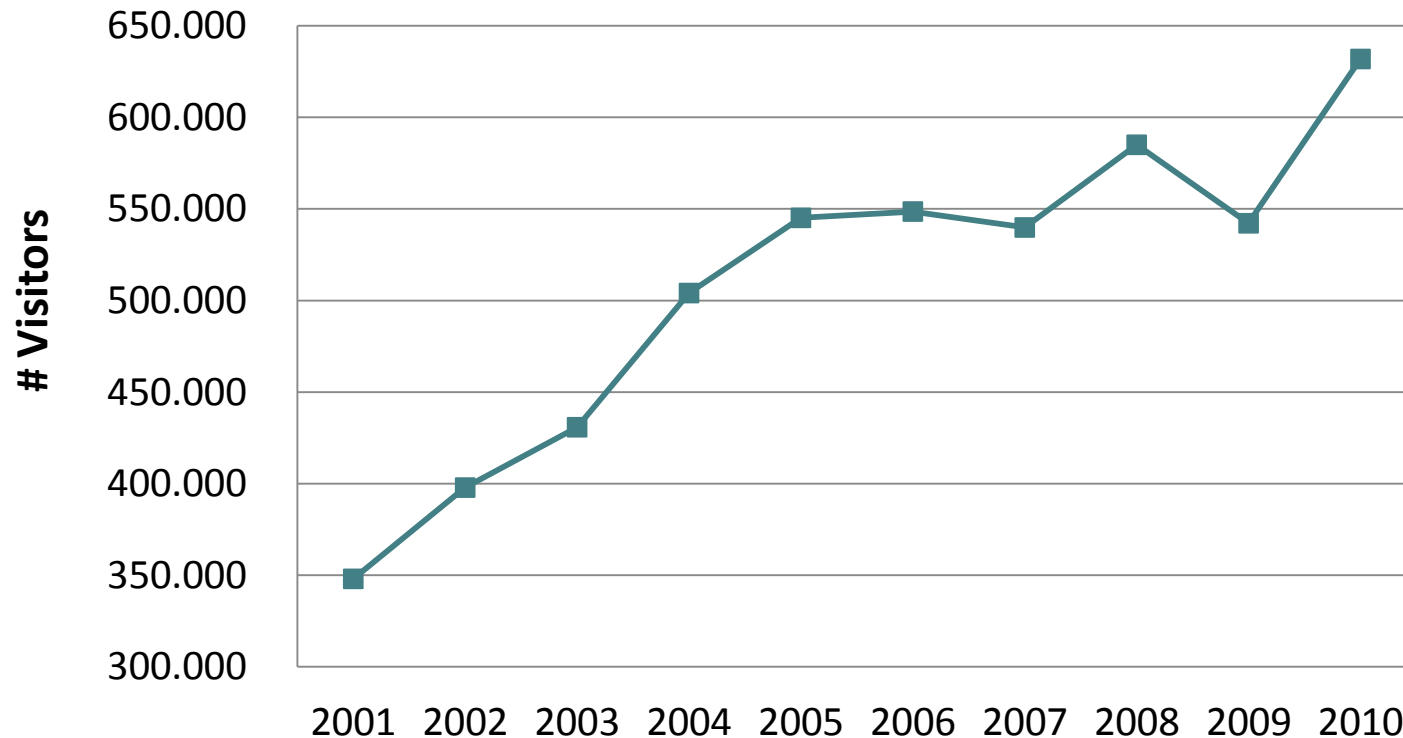
Overview

- Background & context
- Industry trends & projections
- Industry components
- Community based tourism
- Benefits & challenges
- Investment opportunities
- Government support

Fiji tourism background & context

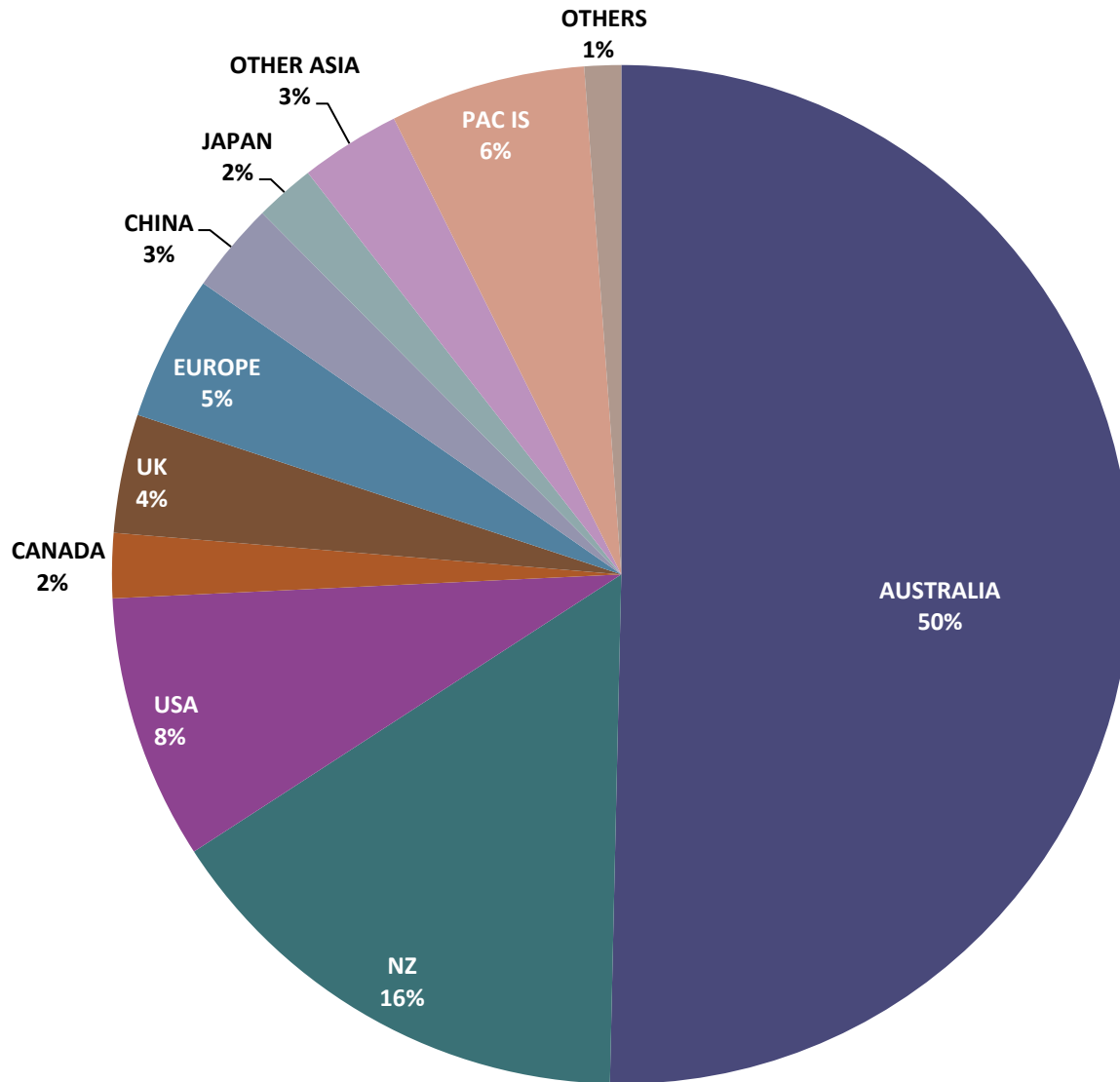
- History
 - Whalers and shipping
 - Refueling stop for airlines between AU/NZ and US
- Geography
 - Central location i.e South Pacific hub – air & sea routes, education, ITC
 - 330 islands separated by expanses of ocean
 - Pristine environment and hospitality inclined cultures
- People & cultures
 - Second largest population in South Pacific
 - Multicultural – Fijians of all races, resident communities of other Pacific island countries

Fiji visitor arrivals 2001 - 2010



- 2010 visitor arrival record 631,868 +16.5% YOY
- 2007 (post change in Government) and 2009 (floods) quick recovery

2010 Visitor Arrivals by Origin



Tourism projected economic contribution 2011-2021

Travel & tourism	2011 E	2021 F
GDP total contribution	27.8%	40.6%
Jobs (direct & indirect)	79,000	138,000
Export earnings % of total	35.5%	37.1%
Investment % of total	22.9%	34.8%

Source : WTTC Fiji Travel and Tourism Economic Impact Report 2011

Government commitment to tourism

- \$23.5m annual investment in international marketing through Tourism Fiji plus \$3.0m operations
- Infrastructure improvements
 - Airport upgrades – international and outer island
 - Rural roads

Fiji's visitor industry – ownership

Sector	Composition	Ownership of major players
Hotels	Types and star rating	International brand chains
Air	Domestic, aircraft type and charter vs scheduled	Locally owned and operated
	International	Air Pacific & foreign
Ground	Rental	Global franchises and local
	Transport services	Local
Sea	Domestic: ro-ros, cruises, cargo boats	Local, primarily
Service providers	Inbound operators, destination marketing operators/agents, GSAs, tour operators	Local
	Travel agents – consumer bookings (brick & mortar plus online)	Foreign

United Nations World Tourism Organization ecotourism definition

Forms of tourism which have the following characteristics:

- Is nature-based tourism, where visitors' main motivation is observation and appreciation of nature and traditional cultures.
- Includes educational and interpretation features
- Organised by specialised tour operators for small groups.
- Service provider partners at the destinations are small, locally owned businesses.
- Minimises negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment

UNWTO ecotourism definition contd.

Supports the maintenance of natural areas which are used as ecotourism attractions by:

- generating economic benefits (host communities, plus organisations and authorities managing natural areas) with conservation purposes
- providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities
- increasing awareness towards the conservation of natural and cultural assets, both among locals and tourists.

Source: World Tourism Organization (2001). The British Ecotourism Market. Special Report. p19.

Ecotourism in Fiji

- Only five or six of the 300+ licensed hotel and resort operations may qualify as ecotourism resorts
- Mostly foreign owned as involve investment in sustainable energy and waste management, visitor and local education, processes and often expensive construction that minimizes impact on the environment
- What is often labelled “ecotourism” in Fiji is actually “community-based tourism”
- Ecotourism increasingly a loose marketing label

Community-based tourism in Fiji

- Allows international visitors
 - access to the local community and
 - the opportunity to learn about our way of life, culture and environment
- Locally owned and operated
- Includes accommodation, tours, arts & crafts, small transport operations, etc

How community-based tourism differs from ecotourism

- Minimal investment in increasing awareness of conservation of natural and cultural assets
- Educational and interpretation of nature is unstructured, if included at all
- Little ability or effort to minimize negative impacts upon natural and socio-cultural environment.

Community-based tourism – benefits

1. To the host community

- Little investment required – have access to readily available natural locations
- Exchange with visitors increases learnings
- Social contribution to village life, entertainment
- Improves standard of living
- Revives cultural performances and practices

2. To the nation

- Spreads the tourism dollar to remote rural locations
- Employment for local communities

Community-based tourism challenges

Host community challenges

- Understanding the international visitor
 - Their general interests
 - Language
- Satisfying their needs & expectations – where local acceptance may be different to international visitor acceptance
 - Health, expectations of cleanliness
 - Truly local food
 - Basic comfort and safety

Other challenges

- Licensing of operations – lacking at moment
- Controls and standards – minimal and difficult to monitor due to remoteness of some locations
- Exposure to Western values
- Intrusive
- Opportunities for local communities to be taken advantage of by possibly unscrupulous visitors
 - Innately hospitable culture
 - Trusting of and elevation of visitors
- Controlling the scale of possible development

Recap

- Tourism continued growth & resilience
- Government
 - Continued support
 - Drive to increase local ownership
- Minimize socio-environmental impact
- Ecotourism in modified into community-based tourism in Fiji
- Need for controls, education and monitoring to ensure benefits outweigh costs



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