

INTRODUCTION TO THE NZTHRC 2010 SPECIAL ISSUE

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In November 2010, the 9th New Zealand Tourism and Hospitality Research Conference (NZTHRC) was convened in Auckland, New Zealand. The NZTHRC was first held at Massey University, Palmerston North in 1994. Since its inception, the University of Otago (1996 and 2006) and Lincoln University (1998 and 2008) have each hosted the conference twice, and Victoria University of Wellington (2004) and Waiariki Polytechnic Institute (2002) have hosted once each. AUT University first hosted the NZTHRC in 2000 and for the second time in 2010. The NZTHRC 2010 conference was a joint effort and the result of a close partnership between the School of Hospitality and Tourism and the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute at AUT University.

The NZTHRC has been and will continue to be dependent on the willingness of institutions and, in particular, individuals within those institutions, to organize, promote, and host this important event. The conference is not “owned” by any specific organization, but rather continues by an informal arrangement and commitment to rotate around the various tertiary education institutions that have significant tourism and hospitality higher education and research activities.

For the 2010 conference, the local organizing committee made an early decision around the guiding philosophy that would influence the direction of the research presented. It was felt that one of the most important contributions the conference

could make was to provide an opportunity and forum for postgraduate research students and early career researchers to receive constructive feedback on their research, and to offer a supportive environment at which to present their research (including their ideas, planning, and initial results). As a result of this approach, a heavily subsidized registration fee for students (including part-time students) was provided, and a working paper stream offered, whereby works in progress and research exploration, pilot studies, and initial findings could be reviewed and presented. The local organizing committee was extremely pleased with the uptake of this opportunity and considers that the decision to support students and early career researchers (of whom there are many in our fields) was a worthy one.

The committee also decided to promote a better link between research, academia, and the tourism and hospitality industries. As a consequence, the theme for the conference was decided as “adding value through research.” To that end, three keynote speakers with strong applied research credentials and a good understanding of the importance of research for successful practice in tourism and hospitality were invited to address the delegates. They were: Kevin Bowler (Chief Executive of Tourism New Zealand), Alison Morrison (Professor of Hospitality at the University of Surrey, UK), and Norm Thompson (Deputy Chief Executive of Air New Zealand and Chair of the Tourism

Industry Association of New Zealand). Their keynote addresses provided plenty of food for thought, both in terms of industry practice and academic discovery.

The NZTHRC 2010 committee received over 100 papers, each of which was independently reviewed. Although NZTHRC is a conference with a New Zealand focus, delegates came from a diverse range of countries, including Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Cameroon, China, Denmark, Finland, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Slovakia, South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, the UK, and the US.

Presenters showed that a diverse range of research activities is undertaken in the hospitality and tourism fields. Papers submitted for the conference were considered and reviewed under three categories. Full papers (approximately 5,000 words) presented a completed research project or study, and were independently and anonymously refereed and, depending on the outcome of these reviews, conditionally accepted-revised-accepted, changed to a working paper, or rejected. Working papers representing research planned, under way, or the initial results of research completed were submitted as 250 word abstracts and reviewed by the conference Academic Review Committee and, depending on the outcome of this review, accepted, amended, and consequently accepted, or rejected. Extended abstracts were up to approximately 1,500 words, and also reviewed by the conference Academic Review Committee and amended if necessary before acceptance.

This special issue of *Tourism Review International* presents a sample of full papers delivered to NZTHRC 2010, which were (in an earlier version) also published in the conference proceedings. The Academic Review Committee attended the most promising presentations (based on the submitted full papers), and then decided on the six

best papers, which included those that had received best paper awards at the conference. The committee had a difficult task in choosing the papers to be included in this special issue, which was further restricted by limited journal space. It was therefore decided to present a healthy mix of conceptual, methodological, and empirical papers, which would provide an insight into the types of papers presented at the conference. Authors of the selected papers were invited to amend their papers based on feedback received after their conference presentations, format the papers according to the journal's style guide, and submit their revised papers to the Academic Review Committee. The papers were then reviewed once again, and authors asked to implement the final changes, before the papers were accepted for this special issue.

We believe that the variety of articles in this special issue reflects the wide array of topics covered during NZTHRC 2010. They range from sports tourism, to marine tourism, VFR tourism, tourist motivations and satisfaction, tourism investment, and job satisfaction of adventure tour leaders.

It is therefore with much pleasure that the guest editors of this special issue present the six papers nominated for inclusion, in the expectation that the New Zealand Tourism and Hospitality Research Conference will continue to be an attractive opportunity for both local and international researchers to present their work.

We thank the many reviewers who provided constructive feedback on the papers, abstracts, and summaries submitted. We hope that those who submitted their work for consideration have found these reviews helpful in improving their work. We would also like to thank Sue Beeton, editor-in-chief of *Tourism Review International*, for her enthusiastic support for this special issue.