The Revenue Managers' Experience: Implementing Hotel Revenue Management in Australia and New Zealand Hotels

Atulchandra Arun Parab

(24240204)

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Primary Supervisor: **Dr Warren Goodsir**

(HOD School of Hospitality and Tourism)

School of Hospitality and Tourism
Faculty of Culture and Society
Auckland University of Technology

i. Abstract:

This dissertation examines the lived experience of hotel revenue managers implementing revenue management (RM) strategies across Australia and New Zealand (ANZ), a region under-represented in a literature dominated by European and North American case material. Three research questions guide the inquiry: the strategies and practices currently employed by ANZ revenue managers; the gaps between the academic RM literature and ANZ practice; and the challenges anticipated over the next 12 to 18 months. A qualitative, modified two-round Delphi methodology was used to explore answers to the research questions. Round 1 employed semi-structured interviews with eight experienced revenue managers (four Australian, four New Zealand) representing a cross-section of property types, and Round 2 returned to the same panel with structured validation and ranking exercises. Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis framework, generating seven themes. The findings show a discipline in active strategic recalibration. ANZ revenue managers have shifted from occupancy-driven thinking to a focus on rate integrity and a total-revenue orientation, with RevPAR remaining the dominant operational KPI alongside ADR and forecast accuracy. Forecasting is consistently layered, combining historical data, market intelligence, and tacit professional judgement, which practitioners articulated as an approximately 80/20 division between algorithmic output and human interpretation. Off-peak strategy focused on rate-floor protection and value-added packaging rather than discounting, with a national divergence between revenue-led Australian practice and cost-led New Zealand practice driven by Auckland's acute supply–demand imbalance. Individual-level personalised pricing was uniformly rejected as reputationally risky. Three challenges achieved full panel consensus for the next 12 to 18 months: 1. supply–demand imbalance, 2. geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty, and 3. margin pressure from rising operating costs. The study contributes a practitioner-grounded evidence base from a structurally distinctive market, a multi-dimensional reframing of the research–practice gap encompassing data infrastructure, organisational architecture, and professional scope, and a layered conceptual model of contemporary ANZ revenue management practice.

Keywords: revenue management; hotel industry; Australia; New Zealand; Delphi methodology; reflexive thematic analysis; research–practice gap

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ii. Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

10th of May,2026

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Artificial Intelligence Guidelines:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, including generative AI tools approved for use by AUT (AI Tool Register), can be used as learning tools when preparing to write your research proposal or research component. AI tools also have the capability to assist with data modelling, data analysis and data visualisation. However, the research component you submit for examination must be substantially your own work. AI tools cannot solely be used to generate content when writing or creating an artwork/artefact, as this constitutes plagiarism. The formal guidelines for appropriate use of AI on the AI Hub must be followed. Also refer to the Using Artificial Intelligence in your Research: Self-Assessments, Checklists, and Sample Text, for examples and sample text.

If you do plan to use AI tools, this declaration should be submitted with the initial research proposal, Confirmation of Candidature, and when you submit your research component for examination. You must complete the template below for each AI output used detailing the following:

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- Purpose of AI Use
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Specify the chapter number(s) in your research proposal/research component where AI was used.	
Chapter number(s):	Chapters 1 (Introduction), 2 (Literature Review), 3 (Methodology), 4 (Findings and Analysis), and 5 (Discussion).
Briefly explain why the AI tool was used (e.g., idea generation, summarization, data analysis, image creation, etc.).	
Purpose of AI Use:	AI tools were used to support editorial and formatting tasks during the write-up stage. Specific purposes included: proofreading for grammar, spelling, and punctuation; suggesting structural improvements to draft chapters; clarifying methodological terminology and concepts during write-up; assisting with APA 7 reference formatting checks; and programmatically generating Word document formatting (tables, headings, ranking tables) for Chapters 4 and 5. AI was not used to generate substantive research content, interpret data, or formulate findings.
Clearly state the AI tools used.	
AI Tool(s) Used:	Claude (Anthropic); Grammarly.
Prompts or queries entered into the AI tool (only the instructive portion of the prompt is required). Include all relevant variations.	
Prompts Used:	Representative instructive prompts used during write-up included: “Proofread this paragraph for grammar and NZ English spelling without changing the meaning”; “Check this section for clarity and flag any unclear sentences”; “Format this draft as a Word document with Times New Roman 12pt, justified alignment, and APA 7 heading styles”; “Generate a combined ranking table from these AU and NZ Round 2 results showing AU mean, NZ mean, and overall mean”; “Explain the difference between Braun and Clarke’s reflexive thematic analysis and Naeem et al.’s six-step approach”; “Check this reference list against APA 7 conventions and flag any formatting inconsistencies”; “Suggest a clearer structural transition between these two sections of my discussion chapter.” (Refer to Appendix F: Key Prompts Used in This Research Project)

A summary or description of the AI-generated output. (Optional: attach output in an appendix.)	
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Describe how the AI output was used, edited, or transformed.	
Post-AI Processing Methods:	All AI-generated suggestions were critically reviewed by the researcher and reworked into the researcher's own academic voice before being incorporated into the dissertation. Editorial suggestions were accepted only where they improved clarity without changing meaning. Structural and formatting outputs were verified against AUT submission requirements and APA 7 conventions. All substantive content, including the thematic analysis, interpretation of participant data, findings, discussion, and arguments, was developed by the researcher. Drafts were reviewed by supervisors Warren Goodsir and feedback was implemented manually by the researcher. NZ English spelling was verified throughout.

You may use this free text box to explain the intent for the use of the AI generated content. For example, rather than stating what prompt(s) were used, you may articulate the purpose for which the prompt was used (supported by examples) here:

The intent of using AI tools in this dissertation was strictly to support editorial, formatting, and clarification tasks during the write-up phase: not to generate research content or substitute for the researcher's own analytical work. (Refer to Appendix G: Reflection on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in This Research for further discussion and explanation on the use of AI). AI assistance was used in the same way an academic editor or formatting assistant might be used: to check grammar and NZ English spelling, to suggest clearer sentence structures, to support APA 7 reference formatting, and to build Word documents with the required academic styling (Times New Roman 12pt, justified alignment, ranking tables for Round 1 and Round 2 Delphi findings). The thematic analysis applying Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis framework, the interpretation of the eight ANZ revenue management practitioners' responses, the identification and naming of the seven themes, the discussion of findings, and all conclusions drawn are the original intellectual work of the researcher. Supervisor feedback was implemented manually by the researcher. No participant data, transcripts, or identifying information were shared with AI tools. Anonymised participant codes (AU1–AU4, NZ1–NZ4) were maintained throughout, and ethical confidentiality obligations under AUTEC reference 26/11 were preserved at every stage.

STUDENT DECLARATION

By signing you are confirming that the AI use stated in the table(s) above are accurate and follow AUT's recommended guidelines detailed in the AI Hub and Postgraduate Handbook.

Student Name: Atulchandra Arun Parab Signature: Date: 10th May 2026

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iv. List of Abbreviations

ADR	Average Daily Rate
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ANZ	Australia and New Zealand
ARI	Average Rate Index
AU	Australia
AUT	Auckland University of Technology
AUTEC	Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
CBD	Central Business District
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CRS	Central Reservation System
F&B	Food and Beverage
GM	General Manager
GOP	Gross Operating Profit
GOPPAR	Gross Operating Profit Per Available Room
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MIHM	Master of International Hospitality Management
ML	Machine Learning
MPI	Market Penetration Index
NOP	Net Operating Profit
NZ	New Zealand
OTA	Online Travel Agency
PGI	Profit Generation Index
PMS	Property Management System
QLD	Queensland
RevPAR	Revenue Per Available Room
RGI	Revenue Generation Index
RM	Revenue Management
RMS	Revenue Management System
RQ	Research Question
RTA	Reflexive Thematic Analysis
SARIMA	Seasonal Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average
STR	Smith Travel Research (now CoStar)
TA	Thematic Analysis
TRevPAR	Total Revenue Per Available Room
TRM	Total Revenue Management
VIC	Victoria

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Hotel revenue management (RM) has evolved over four decades from a tactical inventory-control tool into a strategic discipline integrating pricing, forecasting, distribution, and performance measurement (Erdem & Jiang, 2016; Zheng & Forgacs, 2017). Originating in the United States airline industry following deregulation in the early 1980s, RM was adopted by hotels in the late 1980s, drawn by shared structural features such as fixed capacity, perishable inventory, and high fixed costs (Josephi et al., 2016; Lertputtarak & Samitthikrai, 2023). What began as a system for controlling room inventory and rate availability has since broadened in scope, moving first to encompass distribution channel management and segmentation, and more recently to total revenue management, where rooms, food and beverage, and ancillary services are managed as a single integrated optimisation problem (Guillet et al., 2021).

Alongside this conceptual broadening, the technological substrate of revenue management has transformed. Contemporary practice depends on revenue management systems, market intelligence platforms, and increasingly, on machine learning and predictive analytics tools that have moved decision support from descriptive reporting toward forward-looking forecasting and prescriptive recommendations. The discipline now sits at the intersection of commercial strategy, data science, and operational management, and the role of the revenue manager has correspondingly expanded from rate-setting to cross-functional commercial leadership.

This study adopts the definition offered by Ivanov et al. (2021), who describe revenue management as

> a set of tools and actions used by managers to optimise the net revenues and the gross operating profit by offering the right product to the right customers via the right distribution channel at the right time at the right price with the right communication. (p. 1)

This definition is adopted because it captures both the multi-channel, multi-product reality of contemporary practice and the orientation toward profit rather than room revenue alone, which is consistent with the framing used throughout this dissertation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the development of RM, practice has consistently outpaced theory, producing a well-documented research-practice gap (Ivanov et al., 2021; Josephi et al., 2016). Three gaps in the existing literature motivate the present study.

First, the lived experience of practitioners navigating that gap is under-examined. The literature is rich in normative recommendations and modelling work, but comparatively thin on accounts grounded in how revenue managers actually translate those recommendations into operational decisions under real organisational and market constraints.

Second, the Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) region is markedly under-represented in international RM research. Structural conditions specific to the region, namely geographic isolation, reversed seasonality relative to the Northern Hemisphere, trans-Tasman tourism flows, and acute supply-demand imbalances in markets such as Auckland and Melbourne, generate practice patterns that are not adequately captured by the dominant European and North American literature. The absence of a regionally grounded evidence base limits the transferability of existing findings to ANZ contexts and constrains the development of locally relevant theory.

Third, few studies document how front-line revenue managers anticipate near-term challenges in a sector still absorbing the legacy of COVID-19 disruption and integrating progressively more sophisticated technology. The post-pandemic period has unsettled long-standing assumptions about demand patterns, booking behaviour, and channel economics, and the academic literature has not yet caught up with the recalibration that practitioners report.

Addressing these gaps is important for both scholarship and industry. It provides empirically grounded evidence from a structurally distinctive market and offers a practitioner-validated reference point for revenue managers, owners, and educators operating in or studying the region.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the lived experience of hotel revenue managers implementing revenue management strategies across Australia and New Zealand. The study seeks to characterise current practice, locate the points at which that practice diverges from the academic literature, and surface the challenges that experienced practitioners anticipate over the short-term horizon of 12 to 18 months.

1.4 Research Questions

Three research questions guide the inquiry:

RQ1. What revenue management strategies and practices are currently employed by ANZ hotel revenue managers?

RQ2. Where do gaps exist between the academic revenue management literature and ANZ practice?

RQ3. What challenges do ANZ revenue managers anticipate over the next 12 to 18 months?

The questions are sequenced to move from description (RQ1) to comparison and analysis (RQ2), to forward-looking interpretation (RQ3), with each subsequent question building on the empirical material generated by the previous one.

1.5 Research Approach

A qualitative, modified two-round Delphi methodology was used to address the research questions. The expert panel comprised eight experienced revenue managers, four from Australia and four from New Zealand, representing a cross-section of property types, including independent apartment, full-service luxury, select-service, multi-property, and integrated operations. Round 1 used semi-structured interviews to surface practitioner perspectives on current practice, the research-practice gap, and anticipated challenges. Round 2 returned to the same panel, with structured validation and ranking exercises designed to test, refine, and prioritise the themes developed in Round 1. Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2019, 2022) reflexive thematic analysis framework, which is detailed in Chapter 3 and applied in Chapter 4.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is positioned to make three anticipated contributions. Academically, it helps address the geographic gap in a literature dominated by European and North American case material by producing systematic, expert-derived evidence from the ANZ region. In practice, it offers revenue managers, hotel owners, and operators a practitioner-validated reference point for comparing their strategies and identifying areas for development. Instructively, it provides hospitality educators with current, regionally grounded materials to inform curriculum design and professional development at a time when the discipline is undergoing rapid change. The study is timely: the ANZ hotel sector is simultaneously absorbing the legacy of COVID-19 disruption, navigating geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty, and integrating progressively more sophisticated technology into the revenue management workflow, and a contemporary evidence base is necessary if the academic and industry communities are to engage productively with that recalibration.

1.7 Limitations

The study is bounded in three respects. First, it is geographically limited to Australia and New Zealand, and findings are not advanced as generalisable to other markets. Second, the empirical material is drawn exclusively from the perspective of revenue managers; the perspectives of general managers, commercial directors, owners, and corporate office stakeholders are referenced where participants raised them but are not directly captured. Third, the study is time-bounded: the data were collected over one month in 2026, and the 12 to 18-month forward horizon refers to that collection period. Findings should be read as a

snapshot of a discipline in active recalibration rather than as a stable account of permanent industry conditions.

1.9 Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organised across five further chapters. **Chapter 2** reviews the academic literature on the evolution of revenue management, current practices, the structural distinctiveness of the ANZ market, the research-practice gap, and the role of technology in contemporary RM. **Chapter 3** details the research methodology, including the rationale for the modified two-round Delphi design, participant selection, data collection procedures, the reflexive thematic analysis approach, and the ethical considerations underpinning the study. **Chapter 4** presents the findings, integrating evidence from Rounds 1 and 2 under each of the seven themes identified during analysis. **Chapter 5** discusses the findings in relation to the literature, organised around the three research questions and including an interpretive reflection on the Australia–New Zealand comparison. **Chapter 6** concludes the dissertation by setting out theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the academic literature underpinning the investigation into revenue managers' experiences of implementing hotel revenue management in Australia and New Zealand (ANZ). The chapter establishes what is currently known about revenue management as both a discipline and a practice, and identifies where existing knowledge falls short, particularly in the ANZ hotel sector. It begins by tracing the evolution of revenue management from its origins in the airline industry to its current application across the hospitality industry, before examining current practices in pricing, forecasting, performance measurement, distribution, and technology adoption. Subsequent sections situate the discipline within the distinctive market conditions of Australia and New Zealand and document the persistent gap between academic recommendations and operational reality. The chapter closes by synthesising these threads to identify the conceptual and empirical gaps this study seeks to address. Together, these strands of literature provide the conceptual foundation for the research questions and the methodological decisions that follow.

The chapter is organised into six sections, each building on the previous one. The first section establishes the conceptual vocabulary used throughout the chapter, drawing on Ivanov et al. (2021) to define the discipline and situate the shift toward total revenue management. The second section reviews current RM practices in the hospitality industry. It covers pricing strategies and dynamic pricing, demand-forecasting methods, performance metrics and key performance indicators, distribution-channel management, and the adoption of revenue-management systems. The section also introduces the research-practice gap, which is the recurring tension between what the academic literature recommends and what practitioners actually do, a tension that runs through the remainder of the chapter.

The third section situates the study within the ANZ market, which is the specific context of this research. It explains why ANZ is treated as a distinctive setting rather than as a sub-region of a broader international market. The section discusses trans-Tasman tourism interconnectedness, the region's distinctive seasonality and demand patterns, the divergent recovery pathways of Australia and New Zealand from COVID-19, and the structural market characteristics that shape revenue management practice in the region. This section is important because it justifies the bi-national focus of the study and signals where the existing international literature does not fully apply.

The fourth section examines the research-practice gap in greater depth. It reviews the evidence for the gap, the nature of the disconnect, and the underlying causes, including challenges in technology adoption and

integration, the skills gap and human resource pressures, and the difficulties practitioners face in responding to crises. This section directly informs Research Question 2, which asks where gaps exist between academic RM literature and ANZ practice.

The fifth section discusses the key challenges currently facing revenue managers. These include the research-practice gap itself, data quality and forecasting accuracy, distribution channel management and relationships with online travel agencies (OTAs), and crisis management and adaptability. This section provides the theoretical grounding for Research Question 3, which asks what challenges practitioners anticipate over the next 12 to 18 months.

The final section reviews the role of technology in RM. It traces the evolution of RM systems from spreadsheet-based tools to artificial intelligence-driven platforms, examines the applications of artificial intelligence and machine learning, discusses big data analytics and forecasting, and considers the move toward cloud-based revenue management systems. The section closes by returning to the research-practice gap as it specifically manifests in the adoption of new technology, linking the chapter's recurring theme back to the practical realities revenue managers face.

Taken together, these six sections provide the reader with an understanding of what RM is, how it is practised, where it is contested, and why the ANZ context warrants dedicated investigation. The chapter, therefore, prepares the ground for the methodology presented in Chapter 3 and the empirical findings reported in Chapter 4.

2.2 Current revenue management practices in Hospitality

The contemporary landscape of hotel revenue management has evolved significantly, with practitioners employing an increasingly sophisticated array of techniques and technologies to optimise revenue outcomes. This section examines the current state of revenue management practices within the hospitality industry, drawing on recent empirical research to identify key strategies, tools, and approaches that characterise modern RM implementation. Understanding these established practices provides essential context for exploring how revenue managers in Australia and New Zealand navigate their specific market conditions.

2.2.1 Pricing Strategies and Dynamic Pricing

At the core of contemporary revenue management lies the strategic manipulation of price to maximise revenue capture across varying market conditions. Vives et al. (2018) identified pricing optimisation as a fundamental RM technique, emphasising the importance of awareness of inventory scarcity, customer

segmentation, and dynamic pricing mechanisms in hotel operations. Dynamic pricing has become increasingly prevalent, with hotels adjusting room rates in real-time based on demand fluctuations, competitive positioning, and booking patterns. Abrate et al. (2019) empirically demonstrated that strategic price variability directly improves revenue per available room (RevPAR), particularly during weekends, when demand patterns are most volatile. Their research revealed that hotels employing dynamic pricing strategies achieved superior revenue outcomes compared to those maintaining static pricing structures.

However, the practical implementation of dynamic pricing varies across properties. Melis and Piga (2017) challenged assumptions about the universal adoption of dynamic pricing, finding that many hotels employ fixed-tier pricing strategies rather than truly dynamic models. This research-practice disconnect highlights that whilst dynamic pricing is widely advocated in RM literature, its practical application remains inconsistent across the industry, often constrained by technological limitations, staff expertise, or organisational resistance to frequent rate changes.

2.2.2 Demand Forecasting Methods

Accurate demand forecasting represents another critical component of effective revenue management, enabling hotels to anticipate market conditions and adjust inventory allocation accordingly. Pereira and Cerqueira (2021) examined contemporary forecasting techniques, demonstrating the practical application of time-series methods, including the Seasonal Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (SARIMA) and Holt-Winters exponential smoothing models. Their empirical analysis of hotel data from 2016-2019 revealed that logarithmic transformations improved forecasting accuracy, suggesting that methodological sophistication in demand prediction continues to advance within the industry.

The emergence of machine learning applications has introduced new possibilities for demand forecasting. Das et al. (2021) developed a multi-layered market forecast framework that continuously learns from market dynamics, representing the forefront of technological advancement in RM practices. These machine learning algorithms have the potential to make more accurate predictions by identifying complex patterns in historical data that traditional statistical methods might overlook. However, the adoption of such advanced techniques remains limited to larger hotel chains with substantial technological resources and analytical expertise, creating a capability gap between sophisticated operators and smaller independent properties.

2.2.3 Performance Metrics and KPIs

The measurement and evaluation of revenue management effectiveness rely heavily on key performance indicators (KPIs) that provide benchmarks for operational success. Rodriguez-Algeciras and Talón-

Ballestero (2017) conducted an empirical analysis of five-star hotels in Barcelona, identifying RevPAR as the predominant metric for assessing RM performance. Their research demonstrated that hotels with more sophisticated RM practices exhibited higher RevPAR growth, establishing a clear link between practice refinement and measurable outcomes.

However, Binesh et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of the hotel revenue management literature from 2013-2019, synthesising 76 peer-reviewed articles and identifying five primary research themes: pricing strategy, demand forecasting, performance analysis, inventory optimisation, and distribution channel management. Their analysis revealed that whilst RevPAR remains the industry standard, increasing attention is being directed toward more holistic profitability metrics, such as Gross Operating Profit Per Available Room (GOPPAR), which accounts for operational costs alongside revenue. This shift reflects progress in RM thinking, moving beyond pure revenue maximisation toward comprehensive profit optimisation.

2.2.4 Distribution Channel Management

The proliferation of online distribution channels has fundamentally altered how hotels reach potential guests, introducing both opportunities and challenges for revenue managers. Martin-Fuentes and Mellinas (2018) analysed hotel dependency on online travel agencies (OTAs), particularly Booking.com, revealing that many properties have become heavily reliant on third-party platforms for bookings. This dependency creates tension between the need to maintain visibility on high-traffic booking platforms and the desire to reduce commission costs by driving direct bookings through proprietary channels.

Beritelli and Schegg (2016) examined multi-channel distribution strategies, demonstrating that hotels must carefully balance their channel mix to maximise booking volume whilst managing commission expenses. Their research highlighted that successful revenue managers employ sophisticated channel management tactics, including rate parity monitoring, targeted channel promotions, and strategic inventory allocation across distribution platforms. Yang and Leung (2018) further explored this dynamic within budget hotel segments, finding that distribution channel choices significantly impact overall property performance, with direct channels delivering higher profitability despite potentially lower booking volumes.

2.2.5 Technology Adoption and RM Systems

The sophistication of revenue management systems (RMS) varies across hotel properties, influenced by factors including organisational size, technological investment capacity, and management commitment to RM principles. Ng et al. (2019) investigated the drivers of RMS sophistication, identifying key components including demand management capabilities, data analysis and modelling functions, and resource

management features. Their research revealed that hotels with more sophisticated systems achieved superior revenue outcomes, but there is significant variation in system capabilities across the industry. Many properties continue to rely on basic systems or even manual processes, particularly in the independent hotel sector, where resource constraints limit investment in technology.

2.2.6 The Research-Practice Gap

Despite the extensive academic literature on revenue management best practices, considerable gaps exist between recommended approaches and their actual implementation in hotel operations. Ivanov et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive analysis of 248 Italian hotels, documenting substantial discrepancies between academic recommendations and operational reality. Their research identified that whilst hotels recognise the importance of fundamental RM principles such as demand forecasting and dynamic pricing, practical implementation often falls short of theoretical ideals. Constraints, including limited analytical expertise, inadequate technological infrastructure, organisational inertia, and resource scarcity, frequently prevent hotels from fully adopting recommended RM practices. This research-practice gap underscores the importance of understanding not merely what revenue management should look like in theory, but how it functions within operational constraints.

Current revenue management practices in hospitality reflect a complex interplay between theoretical sophistication and practical implementation. Whilst advanced techniques such as dynamic pricing, machine-learning-based forecasting, and multi-channel optimisation represent the frontier of RM capability, practice varies across properties depending on technological resources, organisational commitment, and staff expertise. The persistent research-practice gap identified by Ivanov et al. (2021) suggests that understanding revenue management requires attention to both ideal practices and operational realities. This recognition provides an essential foundation for examining how revenue managers in Australia and New Zealand navigate their specific market conditions, which will be explored in subsequent sections that focus on the regional context and the anticipated challenges facing RM professionals in this market.

2.3 ANZ as a unique market for Revenue and Hospitality

Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) constitute a distinctive regional market for hotel revenue management, characterised by unique geographical, economic, and operational challenges that set it apart from other global hospitality markets. This section examines the key factors that make ANZ unique, including the interconnectedness of the two markets, distinctive seasonal patterns, post-pandemic recovery trajectories, and emerging revenue management challenges specific to the region.

2.3.1 Market Interconnectedness and Spillover Effects

The Australian and New Zealand tourism markets are fundamentally interconnected, creating unique dynamics for hotel revenue management. Balli and Tsui (2016) demonstrated significant tourism demand spillovers between the two countries, finding that visitor arrivals from key source markets, particularly China, Japan, and North America, exhibit interdependent patterns. Their research revealed that New Zealand's inbound tourism from Canada, Germany, and the United States is significantly affected by tourism demand from those countries to Australia, whilst Australia experiences spillover effects from Chinese and Japanese tourists initially visiting New Zealand.

This interconnectedness means that revenue managers in both countries must consider trans-Tasman market dynamics when forecasting demand, rather than treating their national markets in isolation. The proximity of the two nations and the ease of travel between them create a combined destination effect, in which international visitors frequently include both countries in their itineraries, thereby influencing occupancy patterns and pricing strategies across the region (Balli & Tsui, 2016).

2.3.2 Distinctive Seasonality and Demand Patterns

Seasonality represents one of the most significant challenges for hotel revenue management in the ANZ region. Unlike Northern Hemisphere markets, the region's reversed seasons create unique demand fluctuations that require specialised forecasting approaches. Balli et al. (2020) examined the volatility of international visitor arrivals to New Zealand across eight key source markets. They found that negative tourism demand shocks significantly increased volatility more than positive shocks of equal magnitude. This asymmetric response to demand fluctuations creates challenges for revenue managers seeking to optimise pricing during periods of uncertainty. The authors noted that macroeconomic factors contributed at varying levels across markets, emphasising the need for market-specific forecasting models rather than generalised approaches.

Furthermore, the seasonal patterns differ between the two countries. Australia's tourism season peaks during the Southern Hemisphere summer (December–February), whilst also seeing strong demand in alpine regions during the winter months. New Zealand faces more pronounced seasonality, with destinations like Queenstown experiencing dramatic swings between peak ski season demand and shoulder periods (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2022). These distinct seasonal profiles require revenue managers to develop sophisticated yield management strategies that account for regional variations within each country and differences between the two nations. The ability to accurately forecast and respond to these seasonal fluctuations directly impacts a hotel's annual revenue performance and profitability.

2.3.3 COVID-19 Impacts and Divergent Recovery Pathways

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted the ANZ hospitality sector, with both countries experiencing unprecedented disruption whilst adopting notably different recovery strategies. Gani and Rasul (2023) conducted a comparative assessment of tourism industry outcomes in both countries, revealing that whilst both markets suffered severe contractions, their recovery pathways diverged significantly due to differing border policies and domestic market strengths. Australia's larger domestic tourism market provided greater resilience during border closures, whilst New Zealand's economy, more heavily dependent on international tourism, experienced proportionally greater economic impact. By 2024, however, both markets had demonstrated robust recovery, with Australia's international visitor numbers exceeding pre-pandemic levels and New Zealand's international tourism spending approaching 98% of 2019 levels (Gani & Rasul, 2023).

Pham et al. (2021) quantified the economic devastation on Australia's tourism sector, noting that the pandemic affected a range of industries and occupations beyond tourism itself, with spillover effects throughout the economy. Their computable general equilibrium modelling demonstrated that the recovery of tourism would deliver benefits across multiple sectors and occupational categories. This interconnectedness highlights the strategic importance of effective revenue management not only for individual hotels but for broader economic recovery. The pandemic fundamentally altered consumer behaviour, with Schänzel and Yeoman (2022) identifying 15 distinct trends in New Zealand tourist behaviour, including increased domestic travel, longer stays, a preference for regional destinations, and a heightened emphasis on health and safety protocols. These behavioural shifts have created new forecasting challenges for revenue managers who must adapt their strategies to post-pandemic consumer expectations.

2.3.4 Contemporary Revenue Management Challenges

The ANZ hotel market faces several contemporary challenges that distinguish it from other global regions. Duncan and Hailemariam (2025) explored how search engine data can enhance understanding of tourism demand dynamics in Australia, demonstrating that incorporating Google Trends information improves forecasting accuracy by 5–10%. Their research emphasises the growing importance of big data analytics and real-time information processing in revenue management practice, a capability that many ANZ hotels, particularly smaller, independent properties, may lack. This creates a potential competitive advantage for larger hotel chains with sophisticated revenue management systems, whilst highlighting a capability gap across the broader industry.

Khan et al. (2020) examined the lessons from pandemic modelling for Australian inbound tourism demand, emphasising that accurate forecasting requires consideration of multiple factors, including economic policy

uncertainty, exchange rate fluctuations, and substitution effects with competing destinations. Their research underscores the complexity of demand forecasting in the ANZ context, where geographic isolation, long-haul travel requirements for most international markets, and exchange-rate sensitivity pose unique forecasting challenges. Revenue managers must balance these macroeconomic factors with property-specific considerations such as local events, competitor actions, and operational constraints.

2.3.5 Structural Market Characteristics

The structural characteristics of ANZ hotel ownership and management also create unique revenue management considerations. Turner and Gilding (2017) found that capital budgeting decisions in Australian and New Zealand hotels are significantly influenced by ownership structures, with high-net-worth private investors and hotel management companies each owning a quarter of large three- to five-star properties. Their research revealed that different ownership types apply varying investment time horizons and capital expenditure strategies, which directly impact revenue management approaches and the resources available for technology investment. This ownership diversity creates heterogeneity in revenue management sophistication across the market, with some properties employing advanced systems whilst others rely on more traditional approaches.

The research-practice gap in hotel revenue management, as identified by Ivanov et al. (2021), is particularly relevant in the ANZ context. Whilst their study focused on Italy, the findings regarding the disconnect between academic recommendations and practitioner implementation resonate with the ANZ market's unique challenges. The region's geographic isolation, smaller market size relative to European or North American markets, and the prevalence of independent operators create conditions under which the latest revenue management innovations may be adopted more slowly than in other regions.

Vives et al. (2018) conducted a comprehensive review of revenue management and price optimisation techniques, providing a theoretical framework against which ANZ practices can be evaluated. Their work highlights the gap between innovative revenue management theory and the practical constraints hotels face in diverse markets such as Australia and New Zealand, where seasonal volatility, market heterogeneity, and resource limitations may impede the adoption of sophisticated pricing strategies.

2.4 The Research – Practice gap in Revenue Management

Revenue management (RM) has evolved from a tactical pricing tool into a strategic cornerstone of hotel operations, yet a persistent disconnect persists between academic research recommendations and industry practice. This research-practice gap represents a significant challenge for the hospitality sector, particularly

as hotels navigate increasingly complex market dynamics and technological disruptions. Understanding this gap is essential for improving revenue optimisation outcomes and ensuring that theoretical advances in RM translate into tangible business benefits.

2.4.1 Evidence and Nature of the Gap

The existence of a substantial research-practice gap in hotel revenue management is well documented in recent literature. Ivanov et al.'s (2021) comprehensive study of 248 Italian hotels revealed that hoteliers utilise only a small portion of the RM practices recommended by academic research, with significant variation by hotel characteristics such as size, location, chain affiliation, and category. This finding underscores that hotels are not homogeneous in their RM adoption, and that organisational characteristics play a crucial role in determining the sophistication of RM implementation. The gap is particularly pronounced in independent properties and smaller establishments, where resource constraints and limited awareness of best practices hinder the adoption of advanced RM techniques (Lin & Wang, 2025).

The research-practice gap manifests across multiple dimensions of revenue management operations. Van Heerden and Bama (2023) discovered an often-unseen gap between theory and practice at the hotel unit level, where general managers continue to rely heavily on local market knowledge and informal decision-making processes despite the availability of automated revenue management systems. This hybrid decision-making approach, whilst pragmatic, suggests that the theoretical promise of data-driven RM has not been fully realised in practice. Hotel managers frequently prioritise their experiential knowledge over the sophisticated algorithms provided by revenue management systems, indicating a disconnect between the capabilities of modern technology and practitioners' trust in these tools.

2.4.2 Technological Adoption and Integration Challenges

Digital transformation represents both an opportunity and a significant barrier in closing the research-practice gap. Alrawadieh et al. (2021) found that whilst revenue management is undergoing digital transformation with varying levels of sophistication, the inflated cost of RM systems, inadequate technological infrastructure, and insufficient training remain substantial obstacles to adoption. These barriers are particularly acute for independent hotels and smaller properties that lack the financial resources and technical expertise necessary to implement and maintain advanced revenue management systems. The research highlights that even when hotels invest in technology, the benefits of digital transformation, including time savings, improved decision-making, and increased revenues, are not uniformly experienced across the industry.

The sophistication of hotel revenue management decision-support systems varies based on both internal and external factors. Wang et al. (2019) identified that the utilisation of electronic word-of-mouth, customer segmentation capabilities, organisational structure, differentiation strategy, and the competitive environment all serve as drivers of RM sophistication. However, many hotels struggle to integrate these diverse data sources and analytical capabilities into a systematic revenue management strategy. This challenge is compounded by the rapid pace of technological change, with artificial intelligence and machine learning offering new forecasting capabilities that many revenue managers are ill-equipped to leverage effectively (Schwartz et al., 2021).

2.4.3 Skills Gap and Human Resource Challenges

A critical dimension of the research-practice gap concerns the availability and quality of revenue management talent. The hospitality industry faces an ongoing shortage of skilled revenue managers, a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic's "brain drain" of experienced practitioners (Van Heerden & Bama, 2023). Contemporary revenue managers often lack the holistic experience necessary to navigate the increasingly complex RM landscape, with many possessing narrow technical skills in price adjustment and data analysis but lacking broader competencies in distribution strategy, production management, and multi-system operations. This skills deficit represents a fundamental impediment to closing the research-practice gap, as sophisticated RM strategies require personnel capable of translating academic insights into practical implementation.

The evolution of revenue management from a tactical to a strategic discipline has outpaced the development of appropriate organisational structures and training programmes. Lin and Wang (2025) found that only 13% of small and medium-sized independent hotels in China employ dedicated revenue managers, a finding consistent with studies in Bulgaria, Turkey, Italy, Romania, and the Czech Republic. This structural deficiency means that revenue management responsibilities are often distributed across multiple roles, general managers, front office managers, or sales and marketing staff, without the focused expertise necessary to implement advanced RM practices effectively.

2.4.4 Crisis Response and Adaptation

The research-practice gap becomes particularly evident during periods of crisis and market disruption. Santos et al. (2024) examined how Portuguese hotels applied revenue management practices during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, revealing inconsistencies between recommended crisis RM strategies and actual implementation. Whilst academic literature emphasises the importance of non-pricing tactics, strategic partnerships, and maintaining rate integrity during downturns, many hotels resorted to aggressive discounting and price reduction strategies that contradict established best practices. This disconnect

suggests that under pressure, hoteliers often revert to intuitive, short-term tactics rather than evidence-based strategies, highlighting the fragility of RM knowledge transfer from academia to industry.

2.4.5 Implications for Revenue Management Advancement

The research-practice gap has significant implications for both hotel performance and the advancement of revenue management as a discipline. Vives et al. (2018) argue that closing this gap requires attention to inventory scarcity management, sophisticated customer segmentation, and dynamic pricing implementation, areas where practical application often lags theoretical understanding. The gap also hinders innovation, as academic research on emerging topics such as total revenue management, profit optimisation, and sustainability-oriented RM fails to gain traction in operational settings (Sánchez-Medina & C-Sánchez, 2020).

Understanding and addressing the research-practice gap is particularly relevant in the Australia and New Zealand context, where unique seasonal patterns, regional market dynamics, and varying levels of hotel sophistication create distinct challenges for revenue management implementation. The current study seeks to contribute to closing this gap by exploring revenue managers' lived experiences, identifying practical barriers to RM adoption, and understanding how theoretical recommendations align with the operational realities faced by practitioners in the ANZ market. By documenting the specific practices currently employed and the anticipated challenges over the next 12 to 18 months, this research aims to provide actionable insights that bridge the gap between academic knowledge and industry practice, contributing to more effective revenue management strategies tailored to the regional context.

2.5 Key challenges for the current Revenue Manager

2.5.1The Research-Practice Gap

A significant disconnect exists between academic research on revenue management and practical industry applications, creating substantial challenges for practitioners seeking to implement evidence-based strategies. This research-practice gap manifests in several ways: academic literature often proposes sophisticated models and techniques that are impractical for real-world implementation due to resource constraints, system limitations, or organisational barriers. Furthermore, the rapid pace of industry change means that by the time academic research is published, market conditions may have evolved significantly. Wang et al. (2015) emphasise that this disconnect hampers the effective adoption of advanced revenue management techniques and limits the industry's ability to fully realise the potential benefits promised by contemporary revenue management theory. Bridging this gap requires greater collaboration between

academia and industry, with researchers focusing on practical, implementable solutions that address the real-world constraints revenue managers face in their daily operations.

Modern revenue management relies heavily on sophisticated technology platforms, yet many hotels, particularly smaller independent properties, face substantial technological challenges. The complexity of integrating multiple systems, including property management systems (PMS), revenue management systems (RMS), channel managers, benchmarking tools, and point-of-sale systems, creates significant operational difficulties for revenue managers (Lima Santos & Malheiros, 2024). Without comprehensive, interconnected software systems, conducting efficient data analysis and obtaining a holistic view of property performance becomes impossible, severely limiting the ability to make data-driven strategic decisions. Klein et al. (2020) note that the transition from manual calculations or legacy systems to modern technologies represents a major industry challenge, requiring substantial investment, development effort, and, critically, a change in organisational mindset. For many small to medium-sized properties, the financial barriers to acquiring and implementing appropriate technology create a competitive disadvantage, forcing revenue managers to spend excessive time on manual tasks rather than strategic analysis and planning.

2.5.2 Data Quality and Forecasting Accuracy

Accurate demand forecasting is fundamental to effective revenue management, yet data quality issues and forecasting challenges represent persistent obstacles for practitioners. Pereira (2016) identifies that revenue managers often struggle with insufficient, fragmented, or incomplete data, leading to inaccurate forecasts and suboptimal pricing decisions. The challenge is multifaceted as data may be scattered across disparate systems with limited integration capabilities, historical data may be outdated or irrelevant due to rapidly changing market conditions, and external factors influencing demand may not be adequately captured in existing data sets. Recognising these data quality challenges, Schwartz et al. (2016) developed recursive algorithms to improve forecasting accuracy by incorporating competitive set data, demonstrating how addressing data fragmentation and integrating external market intelligence can enhance prediction models. More recently, advances in machine learning have shown promise in improving forecast accuracy, with Pereira and Cerqueira (2022) demonstrating that machine-learning regression methods can enhance hotel demand forecasting when properly implemented. However, Webb et al. (2024) caution that the advantages of advanced forecasting techniques extend beyond mere accuracy, and revenue managers must understand the nuances of different methodological approaches to select appropriate tools for their specific contexts. The persistent challenge lies in balancing the sophistication of forecasting methods with practical implementation constraints and the need for interpretable results that support decision-making.

2.5.3 Distribution Channel Management and OTA Relationships

The proliferation of online travel agencies (OTAs) and the increasing complexity of distribution channels present substantial challenges for hotel revenue managers. Raab et al. (2018) examined the strategic relationships between hotels and OTAs, identifying that whilst OTAs provide valuable market reach and booking volume, they also present significant challenges related to commission costs, rate parity requirements, and diminished direct customer relationships. Revenue managers must navigate the delicate balance between maintaining visibility on OTA platforms whilst simultaneously reducing reliance on these high-commission channels by driving direct bookings. This challenge is compounded by the need to manage pricing and inventory across multiple distribution channels simultaneously, whilst maintaining rate integrity and avoiding channel conflicts. The cost of distribution has become a critical concern, with channel expenses potentially eroding profit margins even when topline revenue appears healthy. Furthermore, the power dynamics in hotel-OTA relationships often favour the larger OTAs, leaving individual properties with limited negotiating leverage, particularly in competitive markets where OTA visibility is essential for maintaining market share.

2.5.4 Crisis Management and Adaptability

The ability to adapt revenue management strategies during periods of crisis and unprecedented market disruption has emerged as a crucial challenge, highlighted dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lima Santos and Malheiros (2024) examined factors influencing hotel revenue management during crises, finding that traditional revenue management approaches often prove inadequate in the face of extreme demand volatility and fundamental shifts in market dynamics. The pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in forecasting models that rely heavily on historical data, as past patterns became irrelevant predictors of future demand (Vinod, 2021). Revenue managers were forced to rapidly develop novel approaches, implement more flexible cancellation policies, and fundamentally rethink pricing strategies amid unprecedented uncertainty (Piga et al., 2022; Vinod, 2021). This experience has emphasised the need for revenue managers to develop enhanced adaptive capabilities, maintain flexible strategic approaches, and cultivate resilience in the face of external shocks, whether economic crises, geopolitical events, or public health emergencies (Piga et al., 2022). These interconnected challenges facing contemporary revenue managers underscore the increasing complexity and strategic importance of the revenue management function within hotel operations. Successfully navigating these challenges requires a combination of technical expertise, strategic thinking, effective communication skills, continuous learning orientation, and organisational support to implement effective revenue management practices.

2.6 Technology in Revenue Management

The integration of technology into hotel revenue management has fundamentally transformed how accommodation providers forecast demand, optimise pricing strategies, and maximise profitability. Over the past decade, technology has evolved from basic spreadsheet-based systems to sophisticated artificial intelligence-driven platforms capable of processing vast quantities of data in real time (Ivanov et al., 2021). This technological evolution represents both an opportunity and a challenge for revenue managers, particularly in markets such as Australia and New Zealand, where the adoption of advanced revenue management systems (RMS) varies across different property types and organisational structures.

2.6.1 The Evolution of Revenue Management Technology

Traditional revenue management practices relied heavily on manual processes, historical data analysis, and the experiential knowledge of revenue managers (Vives et al., 2018). However, the limitations of these approaches became increasingly apparent as the competitive landscape intensified, and consumer booking behaviours became more complex and unpredictable. The emergence of online travel agencies (OTAs), mobile booking platforms, and dynamic market conditions necessitated more sophisticated technological solutions capable of processing multiple data streams simultaneously and responding to market fluctuations with greater agility (Antonio et al., 2019).

Contemporary revenue management systems now leverage advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and big data analytics, to enhance forecasting accuracy and optimise pricing decisions (Pereira & Cerqueira, 2024). These systems represent a significant departure from traditional approaches, offering revenue managers the capability to analyse complex patterns, identify emerging trends, and implement dynamic pricing strategies that respond to real-time market conditions. However, the transition from traditional to technology-driven revenue management is not without challenges, particularly regarding the skills required to effectively utilise these systems and the organisational changes necessary to support their implementation.

2.6.2 Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Applications

Artificial intelligence and machine learning have emerged as transformative technologies within hotel revenue management, offering unprecedented capabilities in demand forecasting and price optimisation (Ampountolas, 2025). Machine learning algorithms excel at identifying complex patterns within large datasets, enabling revenue managers to develop more accurate forecasts by analysing multiple variables simultaneously, including historical booking patterns, competitor pricing, local events, weather conditions, and macroeconomic indicators. Chen et al. (2023) found that these advanced analytical capabilities can

provide substantial improvements over traditional statistical methods, particularly in accommodating the multidimensional nature of hotel demand, though traditional methods often struggled with this complexity.

One particularly significant application of machine learning technology involves the prediction of booking cancellations, a critical challenge for revenue managers seeking to optimise inventory management and minimise revenue loss (Sánchez-Medina & C-Sánchez, 2020). By analysing booking characteristics, customer behaviour patterns, and market conditions, machine learning models can identify reservations with high cancellation probabilities, enabling revenue managers to implement targeted interventions or adjust overbooking strategies accordingly. Research by Antonio et al. (2019) demonstrated that machine learning approaches could achieve cancellation prediction accuracy rates exceeding 90%, improving upon traditional forecasting methods.

Despite these technological capabilities, the effective implementation of AI and machine learning in revenue management requires more than simply deploying sophisticated software. Revenue managers must develop new competencies to interpret algorithmic recommendations, understand the underlying logic of machine learning models, and make informed decisions about when to accept or override system recommendations (Ampountolas, 2025). This human-technology interaction represents a critical dimension of modern revenue management practice, particularly in markets where revenue managers may have limited exposure to advanced analytical techniques.

2.6.3 Big Data Analytics and Forecasting

The proliferation of digital technologies has generated unprecedented volumes of data relevant to hotel revenue management, creating both opportunities and challenges for practitioners (Yallop & Seraphin, 2020). Big data encompasses diverse information sources including property management systems, central reservation systems, online reviews, social media sentiment, web search behaviour, and competitor pricing information. The effective utilisation of these varied data streams requires sophisticated analytical capabilities and robust technological infrastructure capable of processing and synthesising information in real-time.

Research by Pan and Yang (2017) demonstrated that incorporating big data sources, particularly web search behaviour and online booking patterns, could significantly improve the accuracy of short-term demand forecasts. Their findings revealed that hotels utilising big data analytics achieved forecast accuracy improvements of 15-25% compared to traditional forecasting methods, translating directly into enhanced revenue performance through more precise inventory management and pricing decisions. However, the authors also noted that realising these benefits required substantial investments in both technology infrastructure and analytical capabilities.

Wu et al. (2025) conducted a systematic review of big data applications in tourism and hospitality forecasting, identifying several key challenges that impede effective implementation. These challenges include data quality issues, integration difficulties across multiple systems, the complexity of analysing unstructured data sources such as online reviews and social media content, and the scarcity of personnel with the necessary technical skills to effectively leverage big data technologies. For revenue managers in Australia and New Zealand, these challenges may be particularly acute in smaller properties or independent hotels where resources for technology investment and skill development are more limited.

2.6.4 Cloud-Based Revenue Management Systems

The emergence of cloud-based revenue management systems has democratised access to sophisticated technology, enabling smaller hotels and independent properties to utilise advanced forecasting and optimisation capabilities previously available only to large chains (Vives et al., 2018). Cloud-based platforms offer several advantages over traditional on-premises systems, including lower initial capital requirements, automatic software updates, remote accessibility, and seamless integration with other cloud-based hospitality technologies such as property management systems and channel managers.

These systems typically incorporate AI-driven pricing algorithms that continuously analyse market conditions and automatically adjust room rates to optimise revenue performance. However, the adoption of automated pricing strategies raises important questions about the appropriate level of human oversight and the circumstances under which revenue managers should intervene in algorithmic decision-making (Chen et al., 2023). This tension between automation and human judgment represents a significant consideration for revenue managers seeking to balance the efficiency gains offered by technology with the contextual understanding and strategic insight that experienced practitioners bring to pricing decisions.

2.6.5 The Research-Practice Gap in Technology Adoption

Despite the demonstrated benefits of advanced revenue management technologies, a significant gap persists between technological capabilities and actual implementation in practice (Ivanov et al., 2021). Research conducted across Italian hotels revealed that whilst 75% of accommodation providers acknowledged awareness of dynamic pricing technologies, only 22% actively utilised these systems. This implementation gap reflects multiple barriers including cost considerations, organisational resistance to change, insufficient technical expertise, and concerns about relinquishing control over pricing decisions to automated systems.

For the Australia and New Zealand hotel markets, understanding this research-practice gap holds particular significance. The diverse nature of the accommodation sector in these markets, spanning large international

chains, boutique properties, and independent operators, suggests that technology adoption patterns and implementation challenges may vary across different segments. Furthermore, the unique seasonal patterns and regional market characteristics of Australia and New Zealand may require technology solutions that can accommodate market-specific dynamics whilst delivering the forecasting accuracy and optimisation capabilities demonstrated in international research.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework underpinning the investigation into revenue managers' experiences of implementing hotel revenue management in Australia and New Zealand (ANZ). The chapter explains why a modified two-round Delphi design was selected, how participants were recruited, how data were collected and verified, and how the resulting transcripts were analysed. It also documents two important refinements made during the study. The focus of the Round 2 instrument and the manual verification of automatically generated interview transcripts explain the academic reasoning behind each refinement. Ethical safeguards, rigour, and trustworthiness considerations are addressed in the closing sections. Together, these decisions form a systematic qualitative design intended to capture the professional experiences and forward-looking judgements of expert revenue managers across the ANZ hospitality sector.

3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

This research is situated within the interpretivist paradigm, which holds that reality is socially constructed and best understood through the subjective experiences of individuals (Saunders et al., 2019). Knowledge about revenue management practice cannot be separated from the meanings, judgements, and lived experiences of the practitioners who enact those practices each day. Pervin and Mokhtar (2022) describe interpretivism as a position that engages "people's subjective experiences" to "build the social world through sharing meanings" (p. 420). This stance is directly aligned with the study's primary aim: to understand how revenue managers personally experience, interpret, and navigate the complexities of revenue management in ANZ hotels.

The interpretivist paradigm has clear standing in hospitality research. Kirillova (2018) argues that phenomenological and interpretivist approaches are well-suited to hospitality because they capture the holistic, experiential nature of the work, while Wilson et al. (2020) demonstrate, through a bibliometric analysis of 1,541 qualitative tourism papers, that qualitative approaches are increasingly recognised as essential for understanding the human dimensions of hospitality phenomena. Although revenue management is often discussed through quantitative metrics and optimisation models, it is fundamentally enacted through human decision-making shaped by professional judgement, organisational constraints, and market interpretation, none of which is readily accessible through positivist methods.

Epistemologically, the study adopts a constructivist stance: knowledge about revenue management is understood to emerge from the interaction between researcher and participants rather than being uncovered

as an objective truth (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research design is inductive, moving from specific accounts gathered in expert interviews toward broader patterns and themes (Saunders et al., 2019). Sensitising concepts drawn from the literature inform the interview questions, but the analysis remains open to themes that existing frameworks may not anticipate. This inductive logic is particularly appropriate for examining the research-practice gap identified by Ivanov et al. (2021), as it foregrounds practitioners' own accounts rather than imposing predetermined theoretical categories.

The interpretivist position also acknowledges the researcher's positionality. The primary researcher brings dual qualifications in hospitality management and accounting, together with industry experience across food and beverage operations, event management, and retail. This background provides contextual familiarity with hospitality operations while maintaining sufficient distance from revenue management practice to engage with participants' accounts with genuine curiosity. Reflexivity, understood as continuous critical reflection on how the researcher's perspectives shape data generation and interpretation (Varpio et al., 2022), is therefore an integral component of the research process.

3.3 The Delphi Method and its Suitability for this Study

The Delphi technique is a structured communication method designed to gather and refine the judgements of an expert panel on complex, future-oriented issues where empirical evidence is limited or contested (Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Jünger et al., 2017). Originally developed by the RAND Corporation in the 1950s, the technique has since been applied widely across healthcare, education, business forecasting, and hospitality management. Its defining features are participant anonymity, iterative rounds with controlled feedback, and a movement toward, though not always to, consensus (Donohoe & Needham, 2009; Naisola-Ruiter, 2022).

Three features make the Delphi technique a strong fit for this study. First, anonymity mitigates the influence of dominant personalities and reduces concern about commercial sensitivity, which is particularly important in a small professional community where revenue strategies can be regarded as proprietary (Brady, 2015; Sobaih et al., 2012). Second, the iterative structure allows participants to refine their views once they have seen how their peers have responded, producing more considered judgements than a single interview can achieve (Nasa et al., 2021). Third, the method's orientation toward future-focused expert judgement aligns directly with the study's research questions, which include anticipating challenges and trends over the next 12 to 18 months (Thanvisitthpon et al., 2023).

The Delphi technique is well established in hospitality research. Lin and Song (2015) identified forecasting future trends as the most frequent application of the method in tourism. Janković et al. (2025) used a Delphi panel of ten experts to develop the MERMCAMP model for evaluating revenue management

implementation in the camping sector. Choocherd et al. (2022) and Samar et al. (2025) similarly demonstrate the value of the technique for capturing expert judgement on tourism futures. Ponting and Dillette (2023) provide a recent example of Delphi use in hospitality management research, applying a multi-stage design to explore diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. Collectively, these studies confirm that the Delphi method can meaningfully address professional practice questions in hospitality and that it is appropriately scaled for the ANZ revenue management context.

The method is also responsive to the research-practice gap identified by Ivanov et al. (2021), who reported notable discrepancies between academic recommendations and the actual practices of hotel revenue managers. By engaging practitioners directly as expert panellists, the Delphi technique generates evidence grounded in operational experience and is therefore well placed to investigate that gap in the ANZ setting.

3.4 Research Design: Modified Two-Round Delphi

The study employs a modified two-round Delphi design adapted to the constraints of master's-level research and the small, specialised pool of ANZ revenue managers. Sobaih et al. (2012) note that two or three iterations are sufficient for most qualitative Delphi projects in hospitality, and Shang (2023) similarly observes that classic Delphi studies are typically conducted across two to three rounds, with comparatively small homogeneous panels yielding good results. Naisola-Ruiter (2022) confirms that the Delphi method does not require large statistical samples, since it is a group decision-making mechanism rather than a sampling technique, and that panels of 7 to 15 experts are appropriate for most applications. A two-round design with eight experts, therefore, sits within established methodological norms.

3.4.1 Round 1: Open Exploration

Round 1 used semi-structured interviews of approximately 30 to 45 minutes with open-ended questions organised around the study's three research questions: current revenue management practices in ANZ; gaps between academic recommendations and practitioner reality; and challenges anticipated over the next 12 to 18 months. The semi-structured format gave participants room to foreground the issues they considered most significant while still ensuring coverage of the key research domains (Fuchs, 2022). The schedule combined broad framing questions, targeted probes, and invitations to share concrete examples, all of which are recognised techniques for eliciting rich accounts of professional practice (Thapa et al., 2021).

3.4.2 Round 2: A Refined, Prioritisation-Focused Instrument

The original protocol envisaged Round 2 as a broad validation exercise in which participants would confirm, challenge, prioritise, and elaborate on each theme constructed from Round 1. After preliminary

thematic analysis of the Round 1 data, however, the Round 2 instrument was deliberately refined into a more focused, prioritisation-style questionnaire. Rather than walking participants through all seven Round 1 themes in turn, the final Round 2 schedule comprised four targeted questions covering the issues that had generated the strongest convergence and the most consequential divergence in Round 1: strategic challenges and organisational hurdles; information gaps and forecasting anxiety; the evolution of key performance indicators (KPIs) and non-pricing profit strategies; and the efficacy and ethics of artificial intelligence and personalised pricing. Each question presented the panel's anonymised collective position from Round 1 and asked participants to take a clear stance, justify it, and identify the strongest market signal supporting their view.

This refinement is consistent with established modified Delphi practice. Sobaih et al. (2012) note that Round 2 instruments are typically narrowed to the items where consensus or contention is most consequential, and Brady (2015) similarly observes that thoughtfully designed modifications can enhance methodological rigour by focusing expert attention on the questions that most warrant it. Within the time constraints of a master's dissertation, attempting to revisit all seven themes in equal depth would have diluted participant input and produced surface-level commentary rather than the substantive prioritisation that the Delphi method is designed to elicit (Naisola-Ruiter, 2022). Importantly, the refinement preserves the iterative consensus-building logic of the technique: Round 2 still presents Round 1 finding back to participants for considered judgement, but it does so in a way that produces clearer prioritisation of the issues with the highest practical significance for the ANZ market.

3.5 Participant Selection and Sampling Strategy

The study used purposive sampling, a non-probability strategy widely recognised as appropriate for identifying information-rich cases in qualitative research (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling prioritises strategic selection of participants whose characteristics align with the research objectives rather than seeking statistical representativeness. Campbell et al. (2020) note that the strength of purposive sampling lies in the better match between the sample and the aims of the study, which improves both rigour and trustworthiness.

Eight revenue managers were recruited, four from Australia and four from New Zealand. This sample size sits within accepted Delphi norms: Hallowell and Gambatese (2010) state that at least eight panellists are needed for Delphi research, while Naisola-Ruiter (2022) considers expert panels of 7 to 15 appropriate for hospitality applications. Skulmoski et al. (2007) further note that smaller panels are acceptable when participants share a homogeneous expertise base, which is the case here. The balanced split between

Australian and New Zealand participants supports comparative analysis across the two interconnected markets, which share similar seasonality patterns and tourism flows (Gani & Rasul, 2023).

Inclusion criteria required participants to (a) currently hold, or have held within the past two years, a hotel revenue manager role, (b) possess a minimum of three years of professional experience in hotel revenue management, and (c) be employed within a 3- to 5-star hotel property of 50 or more rooms. The experience threshold ensures participants have moved beyond novice status and developed the pattern recognition and strategic judgement that characterise expert practice (Jorm, 2015). The property size and classification criteria reflect the operational reality that dedicated revenue management roles are concentrated in larger upscale properties (El Haddad, 2015). These criteria operationalise the broader expert-selection principles outlined by Jorm (2015) and Skulmoski et al. (2007).

Recruitment followed a sequential two-stage process designed to respect organisational hierarchies while protecting voluntary participation. Hotel properties meeting the inclusion criteria were first identified through internet searches and professional networks. Senior hotel executives, typically General Managers, were then contacted by email with an invitation letter and Participant Information Sheet, requesting permission for the researcher to approach the property's revenue manager. Once organisational approval was received, revenue managers were contacted directly through email and LinkedIn with their own Participant Information Sheet, inviting them to participate. This approach ensured that the decision to participate rested with the individual revenue manager while maintaining appropriate transparency with organisational leadership, consistent with ethical practice in organisational research (Xafis et al., 2020). With two interview rounds per participant, the study generated 16 interview sessions in total, which sits comfortably within the 9 to 17 interviews that Hennink and Kaiser (2022) report as typically sufficient for saturation in homogeneous samples.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Both rounds of interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams. Online video interviewing is now well established as a methodologically sound approach in qualitative research (Keen et al., 2022; Lobe et al., 2022; Thapa et al., 2021) and was particularly appropriate here given the bi-national scope of the study and the time pressures characteristic of revenue management roles. Lobe et al. (2022) found that videoconferencing platforms such as Microsoft Teams produce data quality comparable to in-person interviews, and Keen et al. (2022) note that online formats can also enhance accessibility, recruitment viability, and rapport.

Round 1 interview were conducted in February 2026, and Round 2 interviews were conducted between 31 March and 13 April 2026. The interval between rounds allowed time for preliminary thematic analysis of Round 1 data and for refinement of the Round 2 instrument, as described in Section 3.4.2. Each round began with the oral consent protocol set out in Section 3.8, followed by the interview itself, and closed with an opportunity for participants to raise any further issues, consistent with the three-phase structure recommended by Thapa et al. (2021).

3.6.1 Recording, Transcription, and Verification of AI-Generated Transcripts

All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' explicit consent. Initial transcripts were generated automatically using Microsoft Teams' built-in speech-to-text functionality, which produced a working draft of each interview shortly after recording ended. While automated transcription substantially reduces transcription time, it is recognised as imperfect, particularly for specialist vocabulary, accented speech, overlapping speakers, and discipline-specific abbreviations (Bokhove & Downey, 2018). In the present study, the automated transcripts occasionally misrendered revenue management terminology (e.g., RevPAR, GOPPAR, ADR, RGI), proper nouns associated with property management and revenue management systems, and idiomatic phrasing, potentially shifting the meaning of a participant's statement.

To safeguard interpretive accuracy, every automatically generated transcript was checked by the primary researcher against the original audio recording and corrected wherever the automated rendering diverged from the participant's spoken words. This verification step was completed before any coding was undertaken, ensuring that all subsequent analysis was conducted on transcripts that faithfully represented participants' intended meanings rather than the artefacts of automated transcription. Corrections were noted in the audit trail, and the corrected transcripts, rather than the original automated output, formed the analytical dataset. Verified transcripts were stored on password-protected, university-provided OneDrive storage, with access restricted to the research team.

3.7 Data Analysis Methods

The study employs Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2019, 2022) reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) as the primary analytical framework, complemented by the systematic six-step procedure developed by Naeem et al. (2023) for organising the analytical workflow. RTA provides the philosophical and interpretive orientation, positioning researcher subjectivity as a resource for knowledge production rather than a threat to validity (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Naeem et al.'s (2023) framework offers a transparent, sequential procedure for moving from raw data to themes through clearly defined stages of selection, coding, categorisation, identification of relationships, theme development, and conceptualisation. Used together, the two

frameworks combine the interpretive depth of reflexive engagement with the procedural transparency required for examiner scrutiny and audit.

The analytical process unfolded in four explicit stages, applied separately to the Round 1 and Round 2 data and then integrated. First, transcripts were read repeatedly to develop familiarity with the dataset, with preliminary observations recorded in reflexive memos (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Second, transcripts were coded both semantically, staying close to participants' explicit statements, and latently, capturing underlying assumptions and conceptualisations (Byrne, 2022). Third, related codes were grouped into descriptive categories, and these categories were then reviewed against the dataset and the research questions to construct candidate themes patterns of shared meaning underpinned by a central organising concept (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Fourth, themes were refined, named, and assessed for internal coherence and external distinctiveness (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

This chain of evidence, from codes to categories to themes, is documented through an audit trail of coding memos and category-to-theme mappings, enabling traceability from any reported theme back to the underlying coded extracts. Where the Findings chapter reports sub-patterns within a theme (for example, the philosophical shifts identified under Theme 1), these represent codes and categories constructed during this analytical process, rather than pre-existing constructs imposed on the data. Coding was conducted manually using Microsoft Word, a decision Fuchs (2023) supports for tourism research where close engagement with participants' words is analytically valuable and the dataset is of manageable scale. A comparative analysis of Australian and New Zealand participants was conducted in parallel with the thematic construction, examining whether and how each theme manifested differently across the two national contexts (Gani & Rasul, 2023; Turner & Gilding, 2014).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study was reviewed and approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC reference 26/11). Ethical practice was operationalised through informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and secure data management.

Informed consent was obtained through a two-stage process. Potential participants first received a Participant Information Sheet outlining the study's purpose, procedures, time commitments, potential benefits and risks, data management practices, and withdrawal rights, written in plain language and free of technical jargon (Xafis et al., 2020). Formal consent was then secured through an oral consent protocol at the start of the first interview, in which the researcher confirmed the participant's understanding of each key element and their voluntary agreement. The oral consent conversation was audio-recorded with the

participant's permission, creating a permanent record. This approach reflects contemporary understandings of consent as an ongoing process (Klykken, 2022), which is well suited to the two-round Delphi structure. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time before their interview data were submitted for analysis, but that withdrawal would no longer be possible once data had been de-identified, since individual responses could not then be located within the anonymised dataset.

Confidentiality was maintained through several practical safeguards. Communication with participants took place through individual channels rather than group settings; all transcripts were de-identified, with names, organisations, locations, and distinctive events removed or replaced with generic descriptors; and participants were assigned alphanumeric codes (AU1–AU4 and NZ1–NZ4) used consistently throughout data management and reporting. Saunders et al. (2015) caution that anonymisation can be difficult in small, specialised fields where contextual detail may enable identification. To mitigate this risk, findings are reported at an aggregated panel level rather than attributed to specific participants or organisations; illustrative quotations are edited to remove distinctive phrasing and organisational references while preserving substantive meaning; and commercially sensitive figures (specific rates, occupancy, or revenue forecasts) were not collected or reported. Microsoft Teams meetings were configured with waiting rooms and password protection, consistent with virtual research ethics guidance from Lobe et al. (2022). All recordings, automated transcripts, and verified transcripts were stored on password-protected, university-provided OneDrive storage. Following study completion, identifiable data will be retained for six years in line with university policy before being permanently deleted.

3.9 Rigour and Trustworthiness

Research quality is assessed using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness framework, which comprises credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The framework provides qualitative parallels to quantitative validity and reliability while remaining consistent with the interpretivist commitments of this study (Forero et al., 2018).

Credibility was strengthened by the iterative two-round design itself, which provided sustained engagement with participants' perspectives and enabled initial interpretations to be implicitly checked when Round 1 findings were presented back to participants in Round 2 (Varpio et al., 2022). Regular peer debriefing with supervisors offered ongoing critical scrutiny of emerging interpretations (Stahl & King, 2020), and methodological triangulation was achieved by combining the open exploration of Round 1 with the prioritisation focus of Round 2.

Transferability was supported through thick description (Younas et al., 2023): the report includes detailed accounts of participant characteristics (within the limits of anonymity), property types, geographical contexts, and the temporal context of data collection, enabling readers to assess fittingness with their own settings.

Dependability was supported through transparent methodology documentation, systematic application of the combined Braun and Clarke (2022) analytical framework, and a detailed audit trail of analytical decisions. A specific dependability safeguard in this study was the manual verification of automatically generated Microsoft Teams transcripts against the original audio recordings prior to coding (see Section 3.6.1). Corrections were logged in the audit trail, ensuring that any subsequent reader can trace coded extracts back to participants' verified words rather than to potentially distorted automated output. Although coding was conducted by a single primary coder, supervisory discussions provided a form of peer checking consistent with the interpretive (rather than mechanical) understanding of coding within RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Confirmability was supported through reflexivity. The primary researcher maintained a reflexive journal documenting assumptions, reactions to the data, analytical hunches, and moments of surprise. This journal supported critical examination of how the researcher's background in hospitality and accounting, industry experience, and theoretical reading might be shaping interpretation (Varpio et al., 2022). The iterative Delphi structure also contributed to confirmability by creating built-in opportunities for participants' Round 2 responses to refine, correct, or extend the researcher's preliminary interpretations of Round 1.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has set out a systematic qualitative design built around a modified two-round Delphi technique with an expert panel of eight ANZ revenue managers. It has explained the interpretivist philosophical position guiding the inquiry, justified the choice of method, and described how participants were recruited, how data were collected and verified, and how the resulting transcripts were analysed using a combined Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019, 2022) and Naeem et al. (2023) framework. Two refinements made during the study the focusing of the Round 2 instrument into a prioritisation questionnaire and the manual verification of automatically generated Microsoft Teams transcripts have been documented and justified within the chapter, ensuring that the methodology described here aligns with the analysis reported in Chapter 4. Ethical safeguards and trustworthiness strategies have also been detailed. The next chapter presents the findings generated through this design.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the modified Delphi study undertaken with eight experienced revenue managers across Australia and New Zealand (ANZ). The study addresses three research questions: how revenue management is currently practised across ANZ, where the gap between academic recommendations and practical implementation lies and what challenges practitioners anticipate over the next 12 to 18 months. To answer these questions, the research used a two-round modified Delphi design, in which Round 1 comprised exploratory semi-structured interviews and Round 2 comprised consensus-building interviews in which participants reviewed and prioritised the synthesised Round 1 findings. Seven themes were constructed from Round 1 and were validated, ranked, and refined through Round 2.

The analysis follows Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2019, 2022) six-phase reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) framework. RTA was selected because it is methodologically compatible with the constructionist orientation of a modified Delphi study: themes are not pre-existing categories waiting to be discovered in the data, but analytical constructs developed through interpretive engagement (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Forbes, 2021). This compatibility matters because the Delphi methodology relies on participants' professional interpretations of their own practice, and on the researcher's interpretation of those interpretations across two rounds. RTA explicitly accommodates that double-interpretive structure, whereas more positivist forms of content analysis would treat the same material as if it were objectively coded.

A second methodological decision shapes how the chapter is presented. Multi-round Delphi studies can be reported in two ways: by round (Round 1 first, Round 2 second) or by theme (Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017; Skulmoski et al., 2007). Each theme is reported with its Round 1 and Round 2 evidence together. The thematic mode of reporting was selected here for three methodological reasons. First, in the modified Delphi design, Round 2 evidence is generated specifically to test, prioritise, and refine the constructs developed in Round 1; reporting the two rounds together under each theme therefore presents the evidence in the analytic relation in which it was produced, rather than separating it from the construct it was designed to test. Second, integrated reporting makes the consensus-building function of Round 2 analytically visible at the point where it is operative, adjacent to the Round 1 claim under examination, rather than as a separate exercise that must be subsequently mapped back to the original themes. Third, this mode of reporting aligns with reflexive thematic analysis principles, in which themes are the primary analytic unit and successive data collection events serve the development of those themes.

The chapter is therefore organised into four stages. Section 4.2 presents the participant profiles and the sampling rationale underpinning them. Section 4.3 sets out the analytical procedure, including the keywords, codes, and themes generated through reflexive thematic analysis, to make the process by which the themes were constructed transparent and methodologically traceable. Section 4.4 reports the seven themes in integrated form, with Round 1 evidence and Round 2 prioritisation and refinement combined under each theme. Sections 4.5 and 4.6 present the cross-theme points of consensus and divergence and a four-layer conceptual model that integrates the findings as a whole.

Within each theme, a consistent three-part structure is used: Round 1 evidence (the initial pattern and supporting extracts); Round 2 prioritisation and refinement (rankings, refinements, and additions arising from the consensus round); and a brief theme summary stating where consensus settled and where divergence remains. This structure is held constant across all seven themes so that the analytic relationship between Round 1 evidence and Round 2 evidence is consistent throughout. Participant extracts are attributed using anonymised codes (AU1–AU4 for Australian participants, NZ1–NZ4 for New Zealand participants), with Round 2 extracts indicated by an "R2" suffix. Consistent with the reflexive orientation, themes are understood as analytic constructs developed through interpretive engagement with the data, and not as objective categories that pre-existed the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Forbes, 2021).

4.2 Participant Profiles

The expert panel comprised eight revenue management professionals: four working in Australia and four working in New Zealand. The composition of the panel was determined by the research question rather than by convenience sampling. Three sampling principles guided recruitment, and each is reflected in Table 4.5 below.

First, the four-by-four split between Australia and New Zealand was deliberate. Where a Delphi panel is being used to compare practice across two related markets, parity of representation prevents one country from dominating the consensus-building process and supports cross-country analytic comparison without privileging either jurisdiction. Australia and New Zealand share institutional features common brand affiliations, overlapping source markets, similar regulatory structures, and high inter-country tourism flows, but differ on supply, market scale, and seasonality patterns, and the parallel four-participant panels make those differences analytically visible.

Second, the panel was constructed to span the structural variation that the literature suggests can affect revenue management practice. The eight participants, therefore, include independent apartment hotels, luxury full-service hotels within international chains, branded select-service properties, multi-property

clusters, regional portfolios, and multi-amenities precinct properties. They also span on-property revenue managers, group revenue managers, portfolio revenue managers, corporate APAC roles, and former directors of revenue who have moved into general management. This variation is important for the research question on the gap between academic recommendations and practical implementation, because the academic literature tends to be written as if revenue management is a uniform function, whereas the practitioner reality is shaped by property model, organisational scope, and reporting structure.

Third, all participants met an experience threshold of at least three years working in revenue management roles in properties of fifty rooms or more. This threshold reflects the Delphi requirement that panellists be expert with respect to the substantive content of the study; it is not a measure of seniority. In practice the panel exceeded this threshold by a substantial margin, with several participants having career experience of fifteen years or more, including experience across multiple markets. All eight participants completed both Round 1 and Round 2 interviews, which is the strongest condition for a modified Delphi study because it allows direct comparison of each panellist's Round 1 and Round 2 contributions without panel attrition between rounds.

Two limitations of the panel are acknowledged at this point because they bear on the inferential frame within which the findings are presented. First, the panel is small by survey-research standards but is at the upper end of what is typical for an expert Delphi study, where ten or fewer panellists is a common range when the participants are genuinely expert. Second, qualitative findings from a panel of this size are not intended to support statistical generalisation to all ANZ revenue managers; they are intended to support analytic transferability, in the sense that the findings can be assessed for applicability to similar contexts on the basis of the contextual detail provided (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within these limits, the panel is well positioned to address the research questions, and the structural variation across the panel is sufficient to surface contrasts among AU and NZ markets, property models, and role scopes.

Table 4.5

Round 1 and Round 2 Participant Profiles

Code	Role	Property context	Market	Experience
AU1	General Manager (former Revenue Performance Manager)	Independent apartment hotel	Brisbane	25+ years
AU2	Revenue Manager	Luxury full-service hotel within an international chain	Melbourne	Since 2008; AU since 2022
AU3	Revenue Manager (corporate APAC, formerly cluster)	Cluster of 6–9 properties; now corporate APAC	Melbourne	~4 years
AU4	Portfolio Revenue Manager	Multi-property portfolio (regional chain)	Australia	Extensive
NZ1	Director of Revenue	Select-service hotel within international brand	Auckland CBD	Since 2008
NZ2	Group Revenue Manager	Independent group of 7 NZ hotels plus a managed property	Auckland / Christchurch	Experienced
NZ3	Former Director of Revenue / Former GM	Multi-amenities integrated hotels; later airport hotel	Auckland	Extensive
NZ4	Director of Revenue	Multi-amenities integrated hotel group	Auckland / Adelaide	Career-long

4.3 The Six-Phase Reflexive Thematic Analysis Process

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2022) six-phase RTA framework, applied recursively rather than linearly (Forbes, 2021) (refer CH 3, section 3.6).

The six phases were applied recursively rather than as a linear sequence. In practice, this meant that familiarisation continued throughout coding; coding was revisited as candidate themes emerged; and theme review prompted both code consolidation and selective re-reading of the transcripts. The recursive movement is consistent with Braun and Clarke (2022) and is reported here to make clear that the linear table that follows (Table 4.1) is a summary of the process rather than a description of its temporal order. The six phases are summarised in Table 4.1, with the application in this study described in the third column.

Table 4.1

Application of Braun and Clarke's (2022) Six-Phase RTA Framework

Phase	RTA Phase	Application in this study
1	Familiarisation with the data	Repeated reading of all 16 transcripts. Initial impressions, recurring expressions, and analytical hunches recorded in a reflexive journal.
2	Generating initial codes	Line-by-line coding of Round 1 transcripts, generating both semantic and latent codes.
3	Generating initial themes	Codes clustered into candidate themes; each theme tested against the full dataset.
4	Reviewing themes	Themes refined; some merged, split, or relabelled. The Round 2 instrument was developed from the reviewed themes.
5	Defining and naming themes	Each theme defined by a central organising concept rather than a topic summary.
6	Producing the report	Themes integrated with extracts, theoretical interpretation, and Round 2 prioritisation data, with both rounds reported together under each theme.

4.2.1 Keywords Identified Through Familiarisation

The familiarisation phase served two purposes. First, it grounded the researcher in the patterns of language participants used to describe their work, which is a prerequisite for distinguishing semantic from latent meaning at the coding phase. Second, it generated a stable vocabulary that could be carried forward into coding without prematurely imposing analytic categories drawn from the literature. Repeated reading of the Round 1 transcripts identified 24 recurring keywords, which were grouped into five conceptual clusters (Table 4.2). The clusters reflect the way revenue management was discussed by the participants themselves rather than how it is partitioned in the academic literature, which is consistent with the inductive orientation of the early phases of RTA.

Table 4.2

Keywords Identified Across the Round 1 Dataset

Cluster	Recurring keywords
Strategy and pricing	ADR discipline; rate integrity; heads in beds; yielding; total revenue; profit-first; value-add; reverse-yielding
Performance metrics	RevPAR; ADR; occupancy; GOPPAR; TRevPAR; RGI; MPI; ARI; PGI; forecast accuracy
Market environment	oversupply; supply–demand imbalance; geopolitical; margin pressure; inflation; flight capacity; airline routes; bleisure
Forecasting and data	booking pace; historical baseline; forward-looking; pickup; lead time; compressed booking windows; pace report
Technology and people	RMS; PMS; CRS; IDeaS; Lighthouse; Demand360; OTA Insight; Agency360; AI; cluster; one-person function

4.2.2 Generating Initial Codes

Codes are the smallest meaningful units of analysis in RTA and are intended to capture both surface and underlying meaning. Line-by-line coding was used in this study because it is the most defensible way to ensure that no extract is excluded from analysis on the basis of an analyst's prior view of what is or is not relevant. The first pass produced 47 initial codes. These were then reviewed against the full dataset and consolidated into 23 working codes through three operations: merging where two codes captured the same underlying construct in different language; splitting where a single code spanned two analytically distinct constructs; and relabelling where the original wording was descriptive rather than analytic. The 23 consolidated codes (Table 4.3) capture both semantic content (what participants said) and latent content (what their statements implied about the structure of revenue management practice). This dual semantic–latent reading is one of the points at which RTA differs from purely descriptive coding approaches, and it provided the analytic basis for the construction of the seven themes at the next phase.

Table 4.3

Consolidated Codes Generated from Round 1 Data

No.	Code label	Brief description
1	Post-COVID rate discipline	Holding ADR rather than discounting to volume
2	Total revenue thinking	Broadening focus from rooms to F&B, conferencing, parking, ancillary
3	Counter-narrative on occupancy	Property models where occupancy remains the strategic priority
4	RevPAR primacy	RevPAR as the everyday operational metric
5	GOPPAR contestation	Disagreement over whether GOPPAR is a revenue or finance metric
6	Forecast accuracy as KPI	Using variance against actuals as the indicator of RM quality
7	Layered forecasting	Historical baseline plus forward-looking signals
8	Data integration gaps	Missing or fragmented airline, weather, event, and competitor data
9	System fragmentation	Lack of seamless connection between PMS, CRS, and RMS
10	Slow-learning systems	RMS taking months to ramp up, requiring manual overrides
11	AI as background tool	AI present in systems but not transparently driving decisions
12	Practitioner caution on AI	Concern about data sensitivity and human oversight
13	Compressed booking windows	Lead times shortening to days or weeks
14	Geopolitical exposure	Conflict, fuel costs, and flight capacity influencing demand
15	Margin pressure	Rising labour, energy, insurance, and supply costs
16	Auckland oversupply	New Zealand-specific supply growth without matching demand
17	Seasonal volatility	Severe summer–winter swings, especially in NZ
18	Cost-led off-peak strategy	Hibernation, rostering, floor consolidation
19	Revenue-led off-peak strategy	Value-add packages, partner channels, base business
20	Personalisation caution	Reluctance to use individual data for differential pricing
21	Service personalisation acceptance	Use of guest data for experience, not pricing
22	Research–practice scepticism	Practitioners questioning the academic gap claim
23	One-person function	Single revenue manager handling strategy, ops, and reporting

4.2.3 Generating, Reviewing, and Defining Themes

In RTA, themes are not summaries of topic areas; they are analytical constructs organised around a central concept that captures something important about the data in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2022). The 23 codes were therefore clustered into candidate themes by asking, for each cluster, what shared analytic claim the codes were supporting. Candidate themes were then tested against the coded extracts and against the full dataset to ensure each had sufficient evidentiary support and a clear central organising concept. Three operations were used at this phase: merging adjacent candidate themes that shared the same central concept, splitting candidate themes that contained two distinct concepts and relabelling themes whose names were descriptive rather than evocative. Theme names were crafted to be analytically evocative, often using a participant's phrase to anchor the theme in the panel's own language (Forbes, 2021).

The seven themes that emerged from this process (Table 4.4) framed the Round 2 instrument. The Round 2 interview schedule asked participants to validate, prioritise, and refine the themes constructed in Round 1; it did not invite the generation of new themes independent of that prior analysis. This is consistent with the modified Delphi design, in which Round 2 functions as a consensus-building exercise rather than a second exploratory round. It also provides the methodological condition under which the integrated reporting in Section 4.4 is justified: the Round 2 evidence operates on the same analytic constructs that the Round 1 evidence produced, rather than on a parallel set of constructs developed independently.

Table 4.4

Seven Themes Constructed from Round 1 Data

Theme	Theme name	Central organising concept
1	"From Heads in Beds to Rate Integrity": The Post-COVID Strategic Recalibration	Shift from occupancy-led to ADR-led and total-revenue-led practice, moderated by property model
2	Competing Performance Frameworks: KPI Hierarchies and the Contested Status of GOPPAR	RevPAR remains primary; GOPPAR is contested between revenue and finance domains
3	"Building on the Past, Looking Forward": Forecasting as Layered Practice	Historical baseline progressively layered with forward-looking signals and tacit knowledge
4	"Surviving Winter": Divergent Strategies for Seasonal Revenue Management	Cost-led versus revenue-led off-peak strategies shaped by market structure
5	"The Tools Are There, But…": Technology Adoption, AI, and System Frustrations	Tools sufficient in principle, but adoption uneven; AI is background, not foreground
6	Caution Over Innovation: Practitioner Perspectives on Personalised Pricing	Acceptance of segment and service personalisation; rejection of individual price personalisation
7	"The Gap That May Not Be a Gap": Practitioner Perspectives on the Research–Practice Divide	Multi-dimensional gap involving technology, data, organisation, and tacit knowledge

4.4 Thematic Findings: Integrated Round 1 and Round 2 Analysis

Each of the seven themes is presented in three parts: Round 1 evidence; Round 2 prioritisation and refinement; and a brief theme summary. Round 2 prioritisation tables are placed under the theme to which they most closely correspond. A cross-cutting Round 2 finding on upcoming challenges, which spans several themes, is presented in Section 4.4.8 immediately after Theme 1, since the upcoming challenges most directly extend the strategic recalibration discussed in Theme 1.

4.4.1 Theme 1: "From Heads in Beds to Rate Integrity" The Post-COVID Strategic Recalibration

Round 1 evidence

The most consistently articulated pattern was a shift from occupancy-driven to rate-driven and total-revenue-driven practice, catalysed by COVID-19. AU4 articulated it most directly:

> *Many hotels have moved to an ADR-driven market rather than being occupancy- or volume-driven as they were prior to COVID. Previously, most hotels were reverse-yielding, dropping rates closer to the arrival date. Now, most hotels have realised it is better to hold rates.* (AU4)

AU1 framed this as a "profit-first mindset"; with RevPAR plateauing, growth now comes through ancillary streams. NZ2 described a parallel move from "occupancy-focused thinking to total revenue focus" spanning F&B, conferencing, and ancillary services. AU2 drew the strategic lesson that rate discipline must be sustained:

> *You cannot constantly switch between Plan A and Plan B. You need to react to market signals while maintaining a long-term strategic backbone… The lesson was also not to be too greedy.* (AU2)

NZ4 presented an important counter-narrative: at multi-amenities-integrated properties the directive remains explicitly occupancy-focused, since filled rooms support spend across the wider precinct. The shift is therefore better understood as a reorientation toward profit optimisation, contingent on property model.

Round 2 prioritisation and refinement

In Round 2, participants were asked to rank the most significant shifts in revenue management philosophy. Table 4.6 reports the rankings for the full panel. Individual panellist rankings are reported alongside three aggregate measures an Australian mean, a New Zealand mean, and an overall mean so that within-panel agreement and cross-country variation are both represented in the same table. The ADR-led shift and the broadening to total revenue management received the strongest endorsement; compressed booking windows was third overall.

Table 4.6

Round 2 Ranking of Significant Shifts: Full Panel (1 = most important)

Shift	AU1	AU2	AU3	AU4	NZ1	NZ2	NZ3	NZ4	AU mean	NZ mean	Overall mean
Occupancy-led to ADR-led strategy	1	2		1	1	2		1	1.3	1.3	1.3
Rooms revenue to total revenue	3	1	1	2	3	1		2	1.8	2.0	1.9
Compressed booking windows	2		3	3				3	2.7	3.0	2.8
Guest transparency / OTA influence		3			2				3.0	2.0	2.5
Data sourcing, AI, system integration			2			3	1		2.0	2.0	2.0
Global operating environment							2			2.0	2.0

AU1 (R2) summarised the underlying logic of the ADR shift:

> *Occupancy was always seen as the strongest pillar, but the industry has now recognised that it is actually ADR that drives and protects profitability.* (AU1 R2)

AU4 (R2) anchored rate discipline in inflation, arguing that holding ADR is necessary to preserve real revenue in a higher-cost operating environment. NZ4 (R2) qualified the shift for Auckland's oversupply, where the question is now "how do I protect the rate without losing too much occupancy." The total-revenue shift drew the strongest reasoning from AU2, AU3, and NZ4 (R2), each emphasising it represents a different skill set rather than an extension of rooms revenue management. NZ3 (R2) and NZ1 (R2) chose alternative framings the global operating environment and post-COVID volatility reflecting their strategic, market-level orientations.

Theme summary

Round 2 confirmed Theme 1 as the most strongly endorsed shift in ANZ revenue management practice: ADR discipline and total revenue thinking now sit at the centre of strategic orientation. Round 2 also sharpened the property-model qualification raised in Round 1: in oversupplied markets such as Auckland CBD and at multi-amenities precinct properties, occupancy retains a structural role. The theme is therefore best read as a reorientation toward profit optimisation, mediated by market structure and property model rather than a uniform industry-wide pivot.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Competing Performance Frameworks KPI Hierarchies and the Contested Status of GOPPAR

Round 1 evidence

All eight participants confirmed RevPAR as the dominant operational KPI alongside occupancy and ADR. Beyond this, approaches diverged: AU2 prioritised competitive market-share ranking, while AU4 emphasised forecast accuracy:

> *The most important KPI is the variance between the forecast and the actuals at the end of the month. We typically aim for that variance to be less than 3%. That metric is a direct reflection of a revenue manager's quality.* (AU4)

On GOPPAR, three positions emerged. AU3 framed it as a finance metric, not revenue. AU1 and NZ2 acknowledged it as a complementary metric of growing importance. NZ3 took the most aspirational view:

> *Hotels that are further ahead in their understanding of revenue management go beyond RevPAR to focus on TRevPAR and ultimately GOPPAR.* (NZ3)

Notably, NZ1 did not raise GOPPAR at all in Round 1. The divergence correlates with role scope: portfolio-level participants (AU1, NZ2, NZ3) were more receptive, while on-property managers focused on metrics they directly control.

Round 2 prioritisation and refinement

Round 2 asked participants to rank the KPIs they rely on most. RevPAR, ADR, and forecast accuracy received the strongest aggregate endorsement (Table 4.7), confirming the Round 1 finding that traditional rooms metrics remain operationally primary. As in Table 4.6, individual panellist rankings are reported alongside Australian, New Zealand, and overall means.

Table 4.7

Round 2 Ranking of Key Performance Indicators: Full Panel (1 = most relied upon)

KPI	AU1	AU2	AU3	AU4	NZ1	NZ2	NZ3	NZ4	AU mean	NZ mean	Overall mean
RevPAR	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
ADR	2		2	3	2	3		2	2.3	2.3	2.3
Forecast accuracy	3						3	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
ARI / RGI		1	3			2	1		2.0	1.5	1.8
TRevPAR					3					3.0	3.0
GOPPAR / PGI				2			2		2.0	2.0	2.0

RevPAR was ranked first by every participant who provided rankings. AU2 (R2) elevated ARI as the only KPI that can be benchmarked against the competitive set, since GOPPAR and TRevPAR data are not shared between hotels. AU4 (R2) predicted GOPPAR will become primary as reporting matures, while NZ3 (R2) introduced PGI (Profit Generation Index) as the GOPPAR equivalent of RGI. These contributions clarify that GOPPAR's uptake is contingent on benchmarking infrastructure, not principle alone. Practitioners are not opposed to a profit-based KPI in the abstract, but they cannot benchmark it competitively in the way RevPAR can be benchmarked against a comp set.

Theme summary

Round 2 reinforced RevPAR as the universal operational anchor and confirmed forecast accuracy and ARI/RGI as established secondary metrics. The contested status of GOPPAR was sharpened rather than resolved: advocates (AU4 R2, NZ3 R2) and sceptics (AU2 R2, AU3 R2) now agree that the obstacle is the lack of benchmarking infrastructure. The new contribution from NZ3 (R2) PGI as a profit-side index point toward how the gap might be closed if industry data-sharing arrangements were extended.

4.4.3 Theme 3: "Building on the Past, Looking Forward" Forecasting as Layered Practice

Round 1 evidence

Forecasting was consistently described as a layered process: historical baseline plus progressively integrated forward signals. NZ1 articulated this most systematically:

> *Time series forecasting using historical data remains the foundation… I then layer in other factors: is there a concert this year on that date? … I check how we are sitting today versus same time last year.* (NZ1)

AU1 supplements baselines with OTA insights, booking pace, and AI-driven cancellation predictions; NZ2 uses flight search data and convention centre outlooks; AU2 wishes for weather, aviation, and currency data integration. Despite this, AU1 framed the core tension:

> *We continue to rely heavily on historical data in an environment where past performance is an increasingly poor predictor of future demand.* (AU1)

Experienced practitioners also draw on tacit, experiential knowledge AU2 described "a kind of instinct" a dimension largely absent from academic literature.

Round 2 prioritisation and refinement

Round 2 did not produce a separate forecasting ranking table; instead, the construct of "forecasting anxiety" presented in the Round 1 synthesis was tested. The discussion produced a clarifying refinement. AU3 (R2) reframed it as "forecasting uncertainty" inherent to the discipline rather than a personal emotional state. AU4 (R2) qualified the position, explicitly identifying anxiety in the current environment given disrupted trend data. NZ1, NZ2, and NZ4 (R2) endorsed the unemotional framing while acknowledging that no practitioner is fully confident at any moment. The refined position is therefore that revenue managers do not experience anxiety as personal emotion, but they do contend with structural uncertainty that has intensified post-pandemic.

Round 2 also surfaced a complementary point: forecast accuracy itself was endorsed as a Round 2 KPI (see Theme 2, Table 4.7), reinforcing the link between the layered forecasting practice described in Round 1 and the metric used to evaluate revenue managers' work.

Theme summary

Across both rounds, forecasting emerges as a layered, partly tacit practice in which historical baselines are progressively supplemented with forward-looking signals and experiential judgement. Round 2 refined the affective framing: structural uncertainty has intensified, but practitioners reject the language of anxiety in favour of disciplined uncertainty management. The persistent tension noted by AU1 in Round 1, heavy reliance on historical data in an environment where the past is an increasingly poor predictor, was not resolved in Round 2 and remains a defining feature of contemporary ANZ forecasting practice.

4.4.4 Theme 4: "Surviving Winter" Divergent Strategies for Seasonal Revenue Management

Round 1 evidence

Seasonality was identified by all eight participants as defining for ANZ, with a clear split between cost-led and revenue-led approaches that aligned broadly with national context. New Zealand participants highlighted winter severity (NZ1 reported occupancy moving from 90% to under 50%), with NZ3 describing off-peak as a period when "revenue management is essentially done." Australian participants highlighted increasing revenue and protected margins by adding value through bundles, bonuses, or premium services rather than reducing prices, length-of-stay incentives, country-specific OTA promotions, and upselling. AU2 captured the underlying logic:

> *If you sell at $300 per night, you need two rooms to generate $600. If you drop to $200, you now need three rooms. Keeping rates up and adding value through inclusions is far more efficient.* (AU2)

The divergence reflects market structure: Auckland's oversupply constrains top-line growth, while Australian markets retain greater demand-side flexibility.

Round 2 prioritisation and refinement

In Round 2 participants were asked to validate and prioritise off-peak strategies. Value-add packages were endorsed as most important by AU2, AU4, NZ2, and NZ4 (R2). Cost management was prioritised by NZ4 (R2), consistent with the Auckland market position. Three substantive refinements emerged. NZ2 (R2) added OTA campaign management as a missing lever region-specific campaigns and strategic OTA partnerships had not been explicitly named in Round 1. NZ3 (R2) flagged the absence of revenue streams beyond rooms (F&B-led packages, function space, and partnership revenue) as a gap in the original Round 1 list. AU2 (R2) noted that peak-season strategy was missing from the off-peak focus, arguing peak

preparation is itself an off-peak activity. AU1 (R2) qualified the geographic frame by reminding the panel of Brisbane's reverse seasonality (winter as peak), which inverts the logic for parts of subtropical Australia.

Theme summary

Round 2 confirmed value-add over discount as the dominant off-peak orientation across the panel, while validating the Round 1 cost-led/revenue-led divergence. The new contributions OTA campaign management, ancillary revenue streams, peak-season preparation, and reverse seasonality extend rather than overturn the Round 1 picture. Off-peak strategy in ANZ is best characterised as a portfolio of revenue-led and cost-led levers, weighted by national market structure (NZ tilted to cost levers under oversupply, AU tilted to revenue levers) and locally inverted in subtropical climates.

4.4.5 Theme 5: "The Tools Are There, But…" Technology Adoption, AI, and System Frustrations

Round 1 evidence

Tools are widely available but practical effectiveness is constrained by integration failures and slow learning cycles. AU3 identified PMS–CRS–RMS fragmentation as a fundamental impediment, calling for a "fully integrated ecosystem." NZ4 noted systems "often do not talk to each other." AU2 described RMS taking "four to five months to ramp up." NZ1 dissented:

> *Revenue management as a field is quite well-served by technology now… 60 to 70 percent of branded hotels may use the same RMS, yet some still outperform others. Why? Because of location, strategy, and the risk appetite of the revenue manager.* (NZ1)

On AI, all participants positioned it as a background capability rather than a transparent decision-driver. AU1 estimated AI gets "approximately 80 percent right." NZ1 was most explicit: no hotel company, to his knowledge, currently uses AI directly to drive revenue decisions.

Round 2 prioritisation and refinement

Round 2 invited participants to validate the technology stack and the position on AI. A clear hierarchy emerged: a competent RMS as the indispensable core; market intelligence platforms (Lighthouse/OTA Insight, Demand360, Agency360) as essential complements; and the PMS providing operational data. Round 2 added two clarifications: NZ4 (R2) introduced STR / CoStar as a routinely used market intelligence layer; AU3 (R2) and NZ2 (R2) confirmed that Lighthouse and OTA Insight are now the same platform following industry consolidation.

On AI, the panel reached a consistent position: AI is embedded in established platforms (notably IDeaS G3 and increasingly Lighthouse) but is not yet autonomous. AU4 (R2) noted AI is only as effective as the data fed in. NZ3 (R2) and NZ4 (R2) emphasised that the bottleneck is communicating the investment case upwards through finance and senior leadership. NZ1 (R2) argued AI is unlikely to overturn day-to-day RM within 12–18 months because what AI improves is the speed of data work, not strategic judgement. The gap is therefore not between practitioners and technology, but between technology-aware practitioners and organisational decision structures.

Theme summary

Round 2 sharpened rather than altered the Round 1 picture: the toolset is mature, integration remains uneven, and AI is genuinely embedded yet bounded by data quality and organisational sponsorship. The most analytically significant refinement is the Round 2 reframing of the AI gap as an organisational rather than a technological problem. Practitioners can describe what AI could do, but the constraints lie upstream in capital allocation, data governance, and senior leadership understanding rather than in the tools themselves.

4.4.6 Theme 6: Caution Over Innovation Practitioner Perspectives on Personalised Pricing

Round 1 evidence

The panel was uniformly cautious about individual-level personalised pricing. AU2 articulated the risk most vividly:

> *If a guest suspects that their personal data is being used to show them a higher price, and they log out or use a VPN and find a different rate, the negative brand impact could be significant… for hotels, I would be cautious about it.* (AU2)

NZ1 distinguished segment-level pricing (standard practice) from individual-level pricing (not used). Where participants saw value in guest data, it was for experience personalisation (AU1, NZ2). NZ4 raised a structural concern about rate-parity conflicts. AU3 and AU4 placed personalisation in the marketing domain itself a finding relevant to the research–practice gap.

Round 2 prioritisation and refinement

No discrete Round 2 ranking table was produced for personalised pricing because the Round 1 position was already uniform. Round 2 confirmed and slightly extended the position. Participants reaffirmed the segment-versus-individual distinction and the rate-parity constraint. Two clarifications emerged. First, the boundary between “service personalisation” (acceptable) and “price personalisation” (not acceptable) was confirmed as a stable practitioner principle rather than a temporary concern that might be revisited as technology matures. Second, the placement of personalisation as a marketing function (AU3, AU4) was reaffirmed in Round 2, with the implication that calls in the academic literature for revenue managers to lead price personalisation are misaligned with how the function is actually organised in ANZ hotels.

Theme summary

Both rounds together establish a strong, unified panel position: segment-level differentiation is standard practice and welcomed; service personalisation using guest data is welcomed; individual-level price personalisation is rejected on the grounds of guest trust, brand risk, rate parity, and organisational boundaries. The Round 2 reaffirmation indicates this is a stable practitioner stance, not a transitional caution awaiting technological resolution.

4.4.7 Theme 7: "The Gap That May Not Be a Gap" Practitioner Perspectives on the Research–Practice Divide

Round 1 evidence

The research–practice gap (Ivanov et al., 2021; Josephi et al., 2016) produced the most philosophically divergent responses. NZ1 challenged the premise directly:

> *I would not say there is a significant difference between revenue management as taught in school versus what is done in hotels. Revenue management is an extremely specific, scientific field… these are not really up for debate*. (NZ1)

Other participants implicitly demonstrated the gap. AU2's "instinct," NZ3's observation about clustering eroding on-property knowledge, and AU1's data gaps all describe a reality of incomplete data integration. AU3 surfaced an additional dimension:

> *The more commonly raised frustration is actually around people management and cross-departmental communication. Revenue management is often a one-person function.* (AU3)

The gap is therefore multi-dimensional: technology, data, organisational, and philosophical.

Round 2 prioritisation and refinement

Round 2 sharpened the multi-dimensional reading. The technology/AI discussion (Theme 5, Round 2) explicitly shifted the gap from "practitioners versus tools" to "technology-aware practitioners versus organisational decision structures" (NZ3 R2, NZ4 R2). AU3 (R2) introduced a further organisational dimension by elevating revenue management talent retention as a Round 2 challenge, which compounds the one-person-function constraint identified in Round 1. AU2 (R2) added the negotiation-intensive nature of new source markets, which sits at the interface of revenue management, sales, and marketing once again pointing to organisational design rather than analytic technique as the binding constraint. NZ1's original Round 1 scepticism was not formally retracted, but the Round 2 detail provided by other panellists made

clear that even where the formal techniques of revenue management are well taught, the conditions under which those techniques are deployed in practice, fragmented data, single-person teams, finance-led capital allocation, and cross-functional friction are under-represented in the academic literature.

Theme summary

The two rounds together support the reading that the research–practice gap is real but multi-dimensional. The technical gap (data integration, AI deployment) is genuine but narrowing. The organisational gap (one-person function, talent retention, finance–revenue interface, cross-departmental communication) is wider and was the dimension most consistently emphasised across both rounds. The philosophical position varied: NZ1 minimised the gap; the broader panel implicitly evidenced it. The implication is that closing the gap requires academic attention to the organisational and tacit dimensions of revenue management, not only to its technical content.

4.4.8 Cross-Cutting Round 2 Finding: Upcoming Challenges Over the Next 12–18 Months

A second Round 2 prioritisation exercise asked participants to rank the most important challenges anticipated over the next 12–18 months. Because these challenges cut across several themes: Theme 1 (strategic recalibration), Theme 4 (seasonality), Theme 5 (technology), and Theme 7 (organisational dimensions of the research–practice gap), they are reported here as a cross-cutting finding rather than under any single theme. Geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty, supply–demand imbalance, and margin pressure received the strongest endorsement (Table 4.8). The challenges are reported as a single full-panel table with separate AU, NZ, and overall means, in line with the structure used for the other Round 2 prioritisation tables in this chapter.

Table 4.8

Round 2 Ranking of Upcoming Challenges: Full Panel (1 = most important)

Challenge	AU1	AU2	AU3	AU4	NZ1	NZ2	NZ3	NZ4	AU mean	NZ mean	Overall mean
Supply–demand imbalance	1		1	3		1		1	1.7	1.0	1.4
Seasonal demand volatility	2	1						2	1.5	2.0	1.7
Margin pressure (rising costs)	3	2	3	2	3			3	2.5	3.0	2.7
Geopolitical/macroeconomic uncertainty		3		1	1		1		2.0	1.0	1.5
Retaining skilled RM talent			2						2.0		2.0
Technology/forecasting limitations					2	3	2			2.3	2.3
Demand uncertainty/shifting source markets						2	3			2.5	2.5

Supply–demand imbalance was ranked first by four participants (AU1, AU3, NZ2, NZ4 R2). NZ4 (R2) connected this directly to constrained pricing power; AU1 (R2) noted that Auckland mirrors Melbourne's last five years. Geopolitical uncertainty was ranked first by AU4, NZ1, and NZ3 (R2), citing fuel costs and flight capacity changes. Margin pressure appeared in six of eight rankings. Two new challenges were added in Round 2: AU3 (R2) elevated revenue management talent retention (linking back to Theme 7); AU2 (R2) introduced negotiation-intensive new source markets, which extends the source-market discussion in Theme 1.

Read across the themes, the upcoming challenges aggregate into a systematic demand-and-cost squeeze: external pressures (geopolitical, supply-side, margin) intersect with internal pressures (talent, organisational design) to constrain the strategic recalibration described in Theme 1. The challenges, therefore, reinforce rather than displace the thematic pattern.

4.5 Cross-Theme Points of Consensus, Divergence, and New Contributions

Drawing the integrated themes together, four points of strong consensus emerged from Round 2: the post-COVID shift toward ADR-led and total-revenue-led practice (with property-model qualifications); RevPAR as the dominant operational KPI; value-add over discount as the prevailing off-peak orientation; and AI as a background capability rather than a decision-driver.

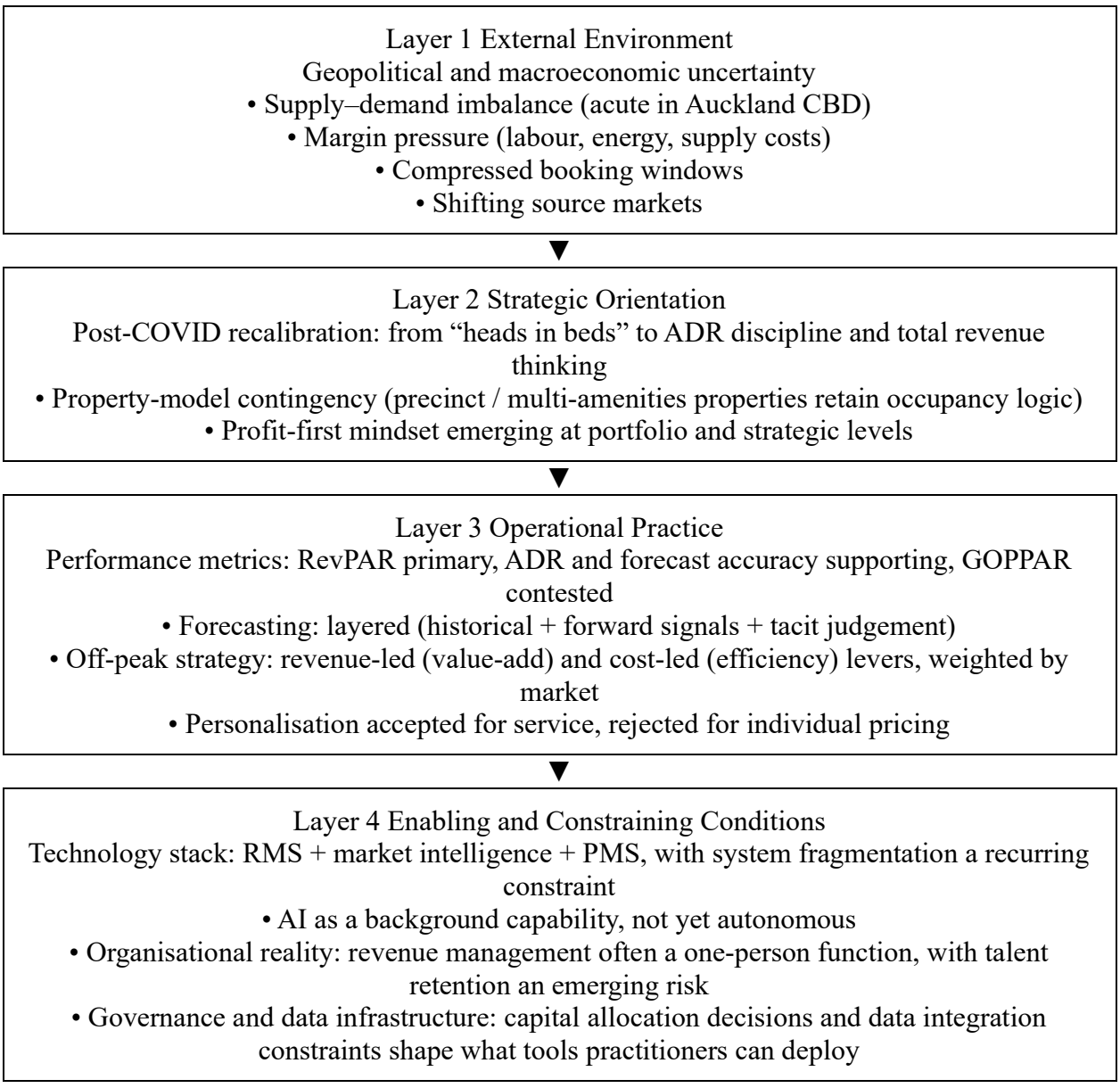
Three points of divergence persisted at the close of Round 2. First, the status of GOPPAR remained contested between advocates (AU4 R2, NZ3 R2) and sceptics (AU2 R2, AU3 R2, citing benchmarking limits rather than a principled objection). Second, the cost-led versus revenue-led weighting in off-peak strategy remained broadly aligned with the national context (NZ tilted to cost levers under oversupply, AU tilted to revenue levers). Third, the source of forecasting uncertainty differed between NZ panellists, who attributed it primarily to supply, and AU panellists, who attributed it primarily to geopolitical conditions and rising costs.

Round 2 also produced four substantive new contributions that did not appear in the Round 1 synthesis: (a) AU3 (R2) on revenue management talent retention as a strategic risk; (b) AU2 (R2) on negotiation-intensive new source markets as an emerging skills demand; (c) NZ3 (R2) on the Profit Generation Index (PGI) as the profit-side counterpart to RGI; and (d) NZ2 (R2) on OTA campaign management as a missing off-peak lever. These contributions extend the conceptual model presented in Section 4.6 and inform the Discussion chapter that follows.

4.6 Conceptual Model: Revenue Management Practice in the Contemporary ANZ Context

Drawing both rounds together, Figure 4.1 presents a four-layer descriptive model of revenue management practice in the contemporary ANZ hotel sector.

Layered Conceptual Model of ANZ Revenue Management Practice



The model reads top-down as influence and constraint, and bottom-up as enablement. Three analytical claims follow. First, the contemporary ANZ environment is best characterised as profit-optimising rather than rate- or occupancy-maximising; the post-COVID shift is a reorientation toward profit composition mediated by the property model. Second, the upcoming challenges are not independent; they aggregate into a systemic demand-and-cost squeeze. Third, the research–practice gap is real but multi-dimensional: closing it requires attention to data integration, organisational structure, and tacit professional knowledge as well as to technology. These findings prepare the ground for the Discussion chapter.

4.7 Comparative Analysis: Australia and New Zealand

Consistent with the study's bi-national design, this section examines how the Round 1 and Round 2 findings manifest differently across the Australian and New Zealand contexts. The comparison is presented descriptively here; the interpretive significance of these differences for the research literature is addressed in Chapter 5.

4.7.1 Market Structure and Supply–Demand Dynamics

The most significant descriptive divergence between the two markets concerns the supply–demand balance. New Zealand participants, particularly those operating in Auckland, consistently highlighted an acute oversupply condition. NZ1 quantified this as 30 to 40 percent year-on-year increases in room supply, while NZ2 specified 1,400 to 1,500 new rooms added within one to two years. NZ4 described a significant oversupply of hotel rooms and not enough demand to fill them. This supply pressure was identified as the primary driver of ADR erosion and competitive price-cutting behaviour in Auckland.

Australian participants, whilst acknowledging new supply entering their markets, did not characterise it with the same urgency. AU2 noted that new hotel supply continues to enter the market in Melbourne but described the market as still ramping up nicely. AU1 described marginal growth continuing, with the post-COVID explosive recovery now plateaued, but fundamentals remaining sound. Round 2 added an important cross-market observation: one Australian participant noted that the conditions currently affecting Auckland had already played out in Melbourne over the preceding five years and, earlier still, in Brisbane around 2013.

4.4.2 Seasonal Severity and Strategic Response

Both markets experience seasonality, but the severity differs markedly. NZ1 described Auckland as an extremely volatile market where during summer occupancy can sit in the 90s, but in winter it struggles to reach 50 per cent. NZ4 confirmed that the seasonal pattern is well understood but criticised the industry for

managing it reactively rather than proactively. Australian participants described seasonality as meaningful but less extreme. This difference in seasonal severity maps directly onto the strategic divergence identified in Theme 4: Australian participants advocated revenue-generation strategies during soft periods, while New Zealand participants emphasised cost management and operational efficiency as the primary survival mechanism during winter months.

4.4.3 Technology Adoption and Regional Pace

A consistent sub-theme among New Zealand participants was the perception that the New Zealand market lags behind in technology adoption. NZ4 explicitly stated that New Zealand is a slower adopter of technological change, particularly in the hospitality industry and that the country is behind its counterparts in Australia, and certainly behind the United States and Europe. NZ3 attributed this in part to organisational inertia and legacy-system dependency. In contrast, Australian participants described a more active engagement with emerging technologies: AU1 was trialling an AI-automated pricing system, AU2 described sophisticated algorithmic systems already embedded in operations, and AU3 noted the development of brand-specific internal AI tools.

4.4.4 The North–South Island Divergence

An important finding from the New Zealand data is that the New Zealand market is not monolithic. NZ1 was emphatic about the need to distinguish Auckland CBD from other regions:

If you go to Queenstown or the South Island market, it is a completely different story they have seen near double-digit growth for the past five to six years. Your research should account for that significant divergence between the North and South Islands. (NZ1)

NZ2 extended this observation by noting that Christchurch Airport's increased airline capacity is enabling international travellers to bypass Auckland altogether and fly directly to the South Island, further eroding North Island hotel demand.

4.4.5 Summary of Findings Across Round 1 and Round 2

The integration of Round 1 and Round 2 findings within the seven themes yields a set of consolidated observations that address the study's three research questions and provide the foundation for the interpretive discussion presented in Chapter 5.

Points of consensus across both rounds. The post-COVID shift from occupancy-driven to rate- and total-revenue-driven strategy was consistently articulated across both markets and validated as the most operationally significant shift of the past five years. Booking window compression was elevated in Round

2 to an operationally critical shift not fully captured in Round 1. RevPAR remains the dominant operational KPI, supported by ADR, occupancy, and following Round 2 forecast accuracy to a tolerance of approximately three percent. Rate integrity during off-peak periods, supported by value-added packaging, was affirmed as the foundational off-peak strategic principle. Individual-level personalised pricing was uniformly rejected in both rounds as commercially and reputationally risky; guest data was affirmed as valuable for experience personalisation rather than pricing. AI integration was described as already underway at the system level but invisible at the practitioner level, with the 80/20 framing offering a concrete articulation of how human judgement continues to add value alongside increasingly sophisticated systems. The three most pressing challenges for the next 12 to 18 months' supply-demand imbalance, geopolitical uncertainty, and margin pressure from rising operating costs achieved consensus across all eight participants in Round 2.

Points of divergence and unresolved tension. The status of GOPPAR and total revenue metrics remains contested: some participants position profit-level metrics as the appropriate strategic frame for modern revenue management, whilst others retain a clear distinction between revenue management (topline) and finance (bottom-line) functions. The perceived adequacy of current technology varies significantly by property tier and organisational complexity. Off-peak strategy diverges along a revenue-led (Australian) versus cost-led (predominantly New Zealand) axis, shaped by market structure rather than individual preference. The very existence and nature of the research–practice gap is contested, with one participant arguing for close alignment between academic and practical revenue management whilst others implicitly demonstrated significant gaps through their accounts of practice.

Extensions surfaced in Round 2. Four elements emerged or crystallised in Round 2 that had been less clearly articulated in Round 1: (a) the distinction between recoverable and irrecoverable forecasting errors, (b) the role of partner relationships with airlines, destination marketing organisations, and tourism bodies in off-peak strategy, (c) the concept of the Profit Generation Index (PGI) as a profit-level benchmarking counterpart to RGI, and (d) the characterisation of the research–practice gap as a structural constellation data infrastructure, organisational architecture, system governance, temporal responsiveness, and professional scope rather than a single divide. Chapter 5 discusses what these findings, taken together, mean in relation to the existing scholarly literature on hotel revenue management.

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets the findings presented in Chapter 4 by placing them in dialogue with the academic revenue management literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The chapter is organised around the study's three research questions, with each question addressed through the relevant themes constructed in Chapter 4. This hybrid arrangement, in which themes are grouped under research questions, preserves the thematic logic of the analysis while ensuring that each research question receives focused interpretive attention.

The discussion pursues three objectives. First, it identifies where the study's findings confirm, extend, or challenge the existing literature on hotel revenue management. Second, it considers how the specific characteristics of the Australian and New Zealand market structure, seasonality, and the pace of technology adoption require the existing revenue management literature to be contextualised to local conditions rather than applied uncritically to the ANZ setting. Third, it develops an empirically grounded reinterpretation of the research–practice gap that extends the foundational conceptual work of Ivanov et al. (2021) and Josephi et al. (2016).

5.2 Research Question 1: Current Revenue Management Practices in the ANZ Market

Research Question 1 sought to identify the revenue management strategies and practices currently employed by hotel revenue managers in Australia and New Zealand. Three themes from Chapter 4 primarily address this question: Theme 1 (the post-COVID strategic recalibration), Theme 3 (forecasting as layered practice), and Theme 4 (divergent off-peak strategies), with Theme 2 (KPI hierarchies) and Theme 5 (technology adoption) also contributing relevant evidence of contemporary practice.

5.2.1 The Post-COVID Recalibration and the Total Revenue Management Trajectory

The findings confirm, in a specifically ANZ setting, the trajectory documented in the international literature toward total revenue management: a shift from rooms-focused optimisation to the integrated management of all hotel revenue streams (Zheng & Forgacs, 2017). Zheng and Forgacs (2017) characterised total revenue management as an emerging but not yet universal practice. The present study's consensus across both rounds suggests that, within the ANZ context, this shift has moved beyond emergence and is now central to how experienced practitioners conceptualise their role. Participants' use of TRevPAR as the metric that captures the full revenue picture encompassing food and beverage, minibar, parking, conferencing, and ancillary streams operationalises the broader theoretical framework in a concrete ANZ context.

The related shift from occupancy-driven to ADR-driven strategy is consistent with the economic logic articulated in the literature on rate integrity and pricing discipline (Noone, 2016), but the present findings add an important nuance: the shift is not universal but is moderated by the commercial architecture of the property. The integrated resort model articulated by NZ4, in which rooms function as a conduit to precinct-wide spend, demonstrates that an occupancy-led strategy remains rational where rooms revenue is not the primary driver of organisational profitability. This observation refines the rate-versus-occupancy dichotomy that features in much of the international literature by demonstrating that the post-COVID recalibration is better understood as a shift toward profit optimisation than as a simple preference for rate over occupancy. The distinction between profit optimisation and rate primacy is not consistently highlighted in the existing literature, and the ANZ findings suggest it is analytically important.

Booking window compression, surfaced in Round 2 as a shift of comparable significance to the ADR recalibration, extends rather than simply confirms the existing literature on post-pandemic demand behaviour (Gani & Rasul, 2023; Lima Santos & Malheiros, 2024; Schänzel & Yeoman, 2022). The compression of booking lead times across business, corporate, and leisure segments, with formerly long-lead bookers now booking within seven to fourteen days or at the last minute, has concrete operational consequences that academic accounts of post-pandemic booking behaviour have tended to treat descriptively rather than operationally. The present study contributes practitioner evidence that compression has altered pricing, inventory, and staffing decisions in ways that reduce the reliability of the forward view on which revenue management practice has traditionally depended.

5.2.2 Forecasting as Layered Practice: Confirming and Extending the Hybrid Model

The layered forecasting practice documented in Theme 3 is broadly consistent with the hybrid forecasting model described in the literature, in which historical time-series analysis is supplemented by forward indicators and expert judgement (Schwartz et al., 2021). Participants' descriptions of combining historical baselines with OTA extranet insights, booking pace comparisons, flight search data, convention centre outlook reports, and tacit local knowledge operationalise the hybrid model in ANZ-specific terms. The Round 2 articulation of the 80/20 framing that algorithmic systems generate approximately 80 per cent of the answer and human judgment contributes the remaining 20 per cent provides a concrete practitioner formulation of the human–system integration that Schwartz et al. (2021) argued tends to outperform either source in isolation.

Two extensions of the literature emerge from the findings. First, the Round 2 distinction between recoverable and irrecoverable forecasting errors between marginal pricing errors that can be corrected through subsequent rate adjustments and the wholesale failure to identify and capture a major demand event

before its booking window closes is a practitioner contribution that the literature has not previously articulated with this clarity. The distinction reframes the concept of forecasting accuracy from a statistical preoccupation with variance minimisation to a strategically differentiated framework in which some errors are tolerable, and others are not. Second, the panel's widespread rejection or reframing of the concept of forecasting anxiety, with experienced practitioners preferring the language of uncertainty, or of emotional intelligence applied to market understanding suggests that the literature's framing of forecasting as a high-pressure activity prone to error and operational stress under volatile conditions (Ivanov et al., 2021; Lima Santos & Malheiros, 2024) may be more applicable to novice or under-resourced practitioners than to experienced professionals operating with robust systems and accumulated tacit knowledge.

5.2.3 Off-Peak Strategy: Rate Integrity, Value-Add Packaging, and the Ecosystem Dimension

The consensus on rate integrity as the foundational off-peak principle affirms Noone's (2016) theoretical argument that protecting perceived price-value relationships is a critical dimension of sustainable revenue management strategy. The associated use of value-added packaging, including breakfast inclusions, dining credits, room upgrade opportunities, and extended-stay incentives as the mechanism for maintaining revenue without discounting the published room rate is consistent with the literature on price bundling in hospitality, which suggests that packages enable revenue managers to differentiate value propositions without triggering competitive rate wars (Vives et al., 2018).

The partner-relationships dimension that surfaced in Round 2, however, extends the literature in a direction that the existing scholarship has not fully developed. The argument that active collaboration with airlines, destination marketing organisations, tourism bodies, and package operators constitutes a core off-peak strategy rather than an optional supplement repositions off-peak revenue management from a property-level pricing activity to an ecosystem-level relationship-management function. This ecosystem framing has implications for how revenue management competencies are conceptualised: stakeholder cultivation, partnership structuring, and inter-organisational coordination should be added to the conventional capabilities of analysis, pricing, and system operation. The literature's traditional framing of revenue management as an internal optimisation function, therefore, underestimates the extent to which effective ANZ practice depends on external relationships.

The New Zealand–specific finding on active OTA campaign management during off-peak periods qualifies the direct-channel orientation of some academic strategy frameworks and supports Martin-Fuentes and Mellinas's (2018) observation that OTA dependency varies significantly by market context. In markets where OTAs remain the dominant booking channel, even for properties affiliated with major international brands, running targeted value-add promotions on Booking.com, Expedia, and HotelBeds during winter

months is essential rather than optional, a practitioner position at some distance from literature that positions direct booking as a universally preferred strategic orientation.

5.2.4 KPI Hierarchies and the Benchmarking Infrastructure Gap

The study's findings on KPI practice engage directly with a persistent tension in the literature. Academic commentary has increasingly positioned GOPPAR and total-revenue metrics as strategically superior to RevPAR because they capture profitability rather than top-line revenue alone (Ivanov et al., 2021; Zheng & Forgacs, 2017). The present findings confirm that this advocacy has been received by ANZ practitioners and that all participants understood the conceptual arguments for GOPPAR. Moreover, several endorsed it as a forward direction, but operational adoption remains constrained. The Round 2 clarification is important: the reason RevPAR retains primacy is not that practitioners fail to appreciate profit-level metrics but that the reporting infrastructure and data-sharing conventions that would make GOPPAR benchmarking possible across a competitive set do not yet exist in the ANZ market. This reframes the issue from one of practitioner awareness to one of industry-level data infrastructure, a distinction that the literature advocating for profit-based KPIs has not consistently drawn.

The Profit Generation Index (PGI) surfaced in Round 2 as a profit-level benchmarking counterpart to RGI and represents an important marker of where the industry trajectory may be heading. The metric is not new to the practitioner community but has received limited attention in the academic literature. The present finding, therefore, identifies PGI as a candidate for future scholarly attention and as a potential bridge between academic advocacy for profit-level KPIs and the infrastructure limitations that currently constrain their adoption.

5.3 Research Question 2: Gaps Between the Literature and ANZ Practice

Research Question 2 addresses the study's central theoretical motivation: where do gaps exist between the academic revenue management literature and the practices employed by ANZ revenue managers? The research–practice gap is an established finding within the literature (Ivanov et al., 2021; Josephi et al., 2016) that motivates the present study rather than constituting a finding of it; the study's contribution is to characterise the specific form and internal structure of the gap in the ANZ context. Four themes from Chapter 4 bear directly on this question: Theme 2 (KPI hierarchies and GOPPAR), Theme 5 (technology and AI adoption), Theme 6 (personalised pricing), and Theme 7 (the gap debate itself).

5.3.1 The Data Infrastructure Gap: GOPPAR, Benchmarking, and Total Revenue Management

The first dimension of the gap, addressed in Section 5.2.4, is a data infrastructure gap rather than a knowledge or awareness gap. Academic literature advocating for GOPPAR as the appropriate strategic frame for contemporary revenue management (Ivanov et al., 2021; Zheng & Forgacs, 2017) implicitly assumes a data-sharing and benchmarking infrastructure that does not currently exist for profit-level metrics in the ANZ market. This structural observation refines the literature's positioning of the issue: the gap between advocacy and adoption cannot be closed through knowledge transfer alone but requires coordinated industry-level investment in data-sharing conventions of the kind that STR (now CoStar) has provided for RevPAR benchmarking over several decades. The contribution here is to make visible the structural precondition that the GOPPAR advocacy literature has tended to leave implicit.

5.3.2 The AI Adoption Gap: Between Capability and Implementation

The second dimension of the gap concerns AI and advanced analytics. The academic literature has characterised AI, machine learning, and big data analytics as transformative forces in revenue management forecasting and pricing optimisation (Alrawadieh et al., 2021; Sánchez-Medina & Diaz-Pichardo, 2020). The present study confirms that AI is already embedded within the RMS platforms and market intelligence tools used across the ANZ market, consistent with Alrawadieh et al.'s (2021) observation that digital transformation in hotel revenue management is often experienced as the incremental embedding of sophisticated algorithms within existing platforms rather than as a discrete adoption event.

Where the present findings depart from the literature is in characterising the pace of direct, deliberate human–AI interaction as significantly slower than the literature's transformational framing might suggest, for reasons that are structural rather than attitudinal. Round 2 identified data sensitivity as the most significant barrier: to generate genuinely useful AI outputs, tools must be supplied with significant volumes of cost and revenue data that organisations treat as commercially sensitive. Without a licensed, brand-controlled AI environment, there is a fundamental reluctance to submit proprietary financial and guest data to third-party systems, a reluctance that owners and senior stakeholders actively maintain and that practising revenue managers cannot independently override. This observation extends Ng et al.'s (2019) framework on drivers of sophistication in revenue management decision support systems by identifying data governance and proprietary sensitivity as underappreciated structural barriers to AI adoption. It also complicates the narrative of universal AI transformation by specifying the organisational conditions under which AI capability translates into revenue management practice.

The flight-data integration gap identified by participants, reliable flight demand data exists, and segment-mix data exists separately. However, the two have not yet been combined into a single integrated demand

signal, which points to a concrete direction for both product development and scholarship on integrating external demand signals into revenue management decision support. This finding extends the literature on forward-looking demand indicators by identifying a specific, technically tractable gap that current platforms have not closed.

5.3.3 The Personalisation Gap: Between Academic Advocacy and Practitioner Caution

Contemporary literature has increasingly advocated for data-driven personalisation at the individual guest level as a mechanism for revenue optimisation (Abrate et al., 2019). The present study's findings on personalised pricing (Theme 6) document a meaningful divergence between this direction of academic advocacy and practitioner attitude. Near-universal caution was expressed in both rounds regarding individual-level personalised pricing, grounded in three specific concerns: brand-equity risk arising from perceived price discrimination; rate-parity obligations with OTAs that make individualised pricing difficult to implement consistently across channels; and the distinction between segment-level pricing (accepted as standard practice) and individual-level pricing (rejected).

This divergence is analytically important because it suggests that the direction of academic advocacy has underestimated the structural constraints of hotel distribution architecture. The rate-parity concern is not an attitudinal resistance that better data or clearer evidence can overcome; it is a contractual obligation embedded in the core relationships between hotels and their distribution partners. Research that advocates for individual-level pricing without engaging with these structural constraint's risks positioning practitioners as unreceptive when the issue is more accurately characterised as a structural impediment that cannot be removed without fundamental change to the distribution architecture. The finding supports a redirection of scholarly attention from individual-level pricing toward experience personalisation, in which guest data was consistently identified as valuable and which carries fewer structural impediments and fewer brand risks.

5.3.4 Reconceptualising the Research–Practice Gap

The cumulative finding of Themes 2, 5, 6, and 7 is that the research–practice gap in ANZ revenue management is best understood not as a single divide between academic theory and practitioner reality, which is the framing common in the literature, but as a constellation of specific gaps, each with a distinct structural character. This reconceptualisation extends the foundational work of Ivanov et al. (2021) and Josephi et al. (2016), whose studies identified the gap but did not fully map its internal structure in a context-specific market.

The constellation of gaps identified in this study comprises: (a) a data infrastructure gap, in which profit-level benchmarking is prevented not by practitioner awareness but by the absence of industry-wide data-sharing conventions; (b) an organisational gap, in which revenue managers understand what technology or system upgrades are needed but lack the organisational authority to procure them independently, requiring the navigation of approval processes involving finance directors, general managers, and owners; (c) a governance gap, in which data-sensitivity concerns actively held by senior stakeholders prevent the submission of proprietary data to third-party AI tools; (d) a structural gap, in which rate-parity obligations and distribution-channel realities constrain the implementation of personalisation strategies advocated in the literature; and (e) a temporal gap, in which scholarly frameworks that attempt to codify best practice must contend with a discipline that has repeatedly reinvented its tooling within professional careers. For example, a participant observed that two decades ago the industry lacked a channel manager, whereas AI-enabled systems characterise the current environment.

The analytical implication of this multi-dimensional characterisation is that closing the research–practice gap requires differentiated rather than uniform intervention. A data infrastructure gap requires industry-level coordination; an organisational gap requires governance reform within hotel ownership and management structures; a governance gap requires trusted licensing and brand-controlled environments for AI deployment; a structural gap requires engagement with distribution partners; and a temporal gap requires scholarship that prioritises durable conceptual contributions over detailed technical specifications that may be obsolete by the time they are published. The present study contributes a contextually grounded account of where, how, and why the gap persists in ANZ practice, enabling more precisely targeted scholarly and practitioner responses than a single-gap framing would support.

A further observation strengthens this concept. AU3 surfaced in Round 1, the cross-functional dimension of revenue management, noting that the role is often a one-person function expected to monitor systems, manage email correspondence, produce reports, and communicate upwards to general managers, owners, and other stakeholders. This observation adds an organisational and human capital layer to the gap that the existing literature has tended to treat separately from the technical and infrastructural dimensions. This suggests that revenue management competency in the ANZ context cannot be reduced to analytical and technical capability alone, as it necessarily encompasses stakeholder management, cross-departmental communication, and the organisational navigation that translates analytical insight into implemented decisions. The implications of this human capital dimension are developed further in Section 5.4.4.

5.4 Research Question 3: Anticipated Challenges Over the Next 12 to 18 Months

Research Question 3 asked what challenges ANZ revenue managers anticipate over the next 12 to 18 months. The Round 2 prioritisation rankings reported in Chapter 4 (Table 4.8) form the empirical basis for this section. Three primary challenges achieved consensus across the panel: supply-demand imbalance in key hotel markets, geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty, and margin pressure from rising operating costs, alongside an additional human capital challenge concerning revenue management talent retention. Each is discussed below in dialogue with the relevant literature.

5.4.1 Supply–Demand Imbalance as a Predictable Market Lifecycle Stage

Supply–demand imbalance was ranked as the primary challenge by several participants and was contextualised in Round 2 through a cross-city lifecycle observation: the conditions currently affecting Auckland had already played out in Melbourne over the preceding five years and, earlier still, in Brisbane around 2013. This reframes the Auckland oversupply condition from a locally anomalous crisis into a predictable stage in the lifecycle of developing hotel markets, where pricing strategy alone cannot compensate for a structural demand deficit. The finding corroborates the structural analysis provided by Turner and Guilding (2014) regarding ANZ hotel ownership and investment dynamics and extends it by suggesting that oversupply cycles recur across ANZ markets in sequence rather than representing isolated events. The implication for both the literature and for practitioner strategy is that forward-looking analysis of oversupply should attend to the development pipeline and typical absorption period in comparable markets rather than treating each local oversupply episode as sui generis.

5.4.2 Geopolitical Uncertainty and the Limits of Algorithmic Prediction

Geopolitical uncertainty was ranked first or second by most Round 2 participants and was consistently framed as a challenge that is both significant and beyond the revenue manager's capacity to influence. One participant's illustrative account that when Emirates suspended flights to Brisbane at the onset of the recent regional conflict, approximately five hundred passengers per flight per day required immediate alternative accommodation demonstrates that geopolitical events produce demand shifts that lie outside the predictive capacity of algorithmic systems trained on historical patterns. This finding extends Lima Santos and Malheiros's (2024) identification of external macro-environmental factors as critical determinants of hotel financial performance during periods of crisis, grounding the academic observation in the contemporary professional experience of ANZ revenue managers. It also supports the broader argument developed in Section 5.2.2 that the human–AI integration characterised in the 80/20 framing is not a transitional limitation that AI maturation will eventually close, but a structural feature of revenue management under conditions of persistent geopolitical and macroeconomic unpredictability.

5.4.3 Margin Pressure and the Expansion of Revenue Management Scope

Margin and cost pressures encompassing rising labour costs, energy expenses, insurance premiums, and the compounding effect of geopolitical shocks on supplier pricing were ranked second or third by multiple participants across both markets. The finding reinforces the cross-departmental orientation that characterises the total revenue management shift discussed in Section 5.2.1: revenue managers are increasingly required to integrate profitability considerations into decisions that were previously framed as pricing and volume optimisation exercises alone. This observation sits in dialogue with Zheng and Forgacs's (2017) conceptualisation of total revenue management, specifying that scope expansion is driven not only by strategic choice but also by external cost pressure, requiring revenue managers to collaborate with finance and operations to identify cost-efficient responses. The expansion of scope, therefore, has structural as well as strategic causes, a distinction that the literature advocating for total revenue management has tended to understate.

5.4.4 Talent Retention and the Human Capital Dimension

Talent retention emerged as an additional challenge raised explicitly by one participant and implicitly acknowledged by others. The account of revenue management as a discipline characterised by significant knowledge accumulation, extended onboarding timelines, and high burnout risk with one participant estimating that replacing an experienced revenue manager could take six months to identify a successor and a full year to bring that successor to competency is consistent with Bilgihan and Wang's (2016) identification of knowledge, skills, and abilities as core determinants of revenue management effectiveness. The combination of broadening role scope, high burnout risk, and extended onboarding timelines creates a structural vulnerability in the ANZ revenue management talent pipeline that individual organisations cannot fully mitigate without sector-level investment in professional development, mentorship, and career-pathway visibility. This human capital observation reinforces the organisational dimension of the research–practice gap identified in Section 5.3.4 and suggests that the human capital and organisational-positioning dimensions of revenue management may be more significant in the ANZ context than the existing literature has previously acknowledged.

5.5 Interpretive Reflection on the Australia–New Zealand Comparison

Section 4.4 of Chapter 4 reported the comparative AU and NZ evidence within each theme, and Section 4.5 summarised the cross-theme points of consensus and divergence between the two national groups. The interpretive significance of these differences for the research literature warrants a brief reflection here. The literature has often treated ANZ as a single analytical unit (Ivanov et al., 2021), an aggregation that the present findings complicate in two specific ways.

First, the sub-regional divergence within New Zealand between Auckland and the South Island tourism markets suggests that country-level comparisons may mask more important regional dynamics. The observation that Christchurch Airport's increased airline capacity is enabling international travellers to bypass Auckland altogether is a structural-shift observation that cannot be captured in a national-level analysis. Literature that treats New Zealand as a single market, therefore, risks mischaracterising the conditions under which North Island and South Island revenue managers operate.

Second, the cross-market lifecycle observation that the oversupply conditions currently affecting Auckland have already played out in Melbourne and, earlier, in Brisbane suggests that the ANZ markets should be understood as related through a lifecycle logic rather than as independent parallel cases. This framing has implications for how comparative research in the ANZ context is designed: rather than treating each city as a discrete case for comparison, research should attend to the sequential relationship between markets in different stages of the development cycle. The contribution of the present study at this point is to surface this lifecycle logic as a candidate analytical framework for future ANZ-focused revenue management scholarship.

5.6 Integrative Summary

Taken together, the discussion in this chapter supports four overarching claims. First, the post-COVID recalibration documented in the ANZ panel confirms the international literature's trajectory toward total revenue management while refining the rate-versus-occupancy dichotomy as a shift toward profit optimisation moderated by the property's commercial model. Second, the 80/20 practitioner framing of human–AI integration, supported by the distinction between recoverable and irrecoverable forecasting errors, operationalises the hybrid forecasting model of Schwartz et al. (2021) in a form that is both analytically precise and pedagogically useful. Third, the research–practice gap is best characterised not as a single divide but as a constellation of specific gaps in data infrastructure, organisational, governance, structural, and temporal, each requiring distinct interventions, which extends the foundational work of Ivanov et al. (2021) and Josephi et al. (2016) in a specifically ANZ register. Fourth, the anticipated challenges of oversupply, geopolitical uncertainty, margin pressure, and talent retention position the revenue management function as increasingly cross-functional and increasingly dependent on external conditions that lie outside the revenue manager's direct control, requiring that the profession continue to develop the stakeholder-management and organisational-navigation capabilities that sit alongside, rather than behind, its analytical and technical core. The implications of these claims for theory, practice, and future research are elaborated in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Overview

This dissertation examined how hotel revenue managers in Australia and New Zealand experience the practical implementation of revenue management strategies, with particular attention to the relationship between academic frameworks and operational practice, as well as the challenges anticipated over the next 12 to 18 months. Employing a modified two-round Delphi methodology with a panel of eight experienced practitioners, four from each country, the study has generated a contextually grounded, practitioner-derived account of contemporary ANZ revenue management. This chapter proceeds by reflecting on how the research addressed its stated purpose and what the study has substantively demonstrated, before discussing the study's theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

6.2 Addressing the Research Purpose

The purpose of this study, as articulated in Chapter 1, was to examine the lived experience of hotel revenue managers implementing revenue management strategies across Australia and New Zealand, with particular attention to the predictive strategies they are planning to employ over the next 12 to 18 months, the relationship between academic recommendations and applied practice, and the contextual factors that shape professional decision-making in the region. The study set out to generate actionable, practitioner-grounded insight in a market segment that has been underrepresented in a literature dominated by European and North American contexts, and to do so at a moment when the ANZ hotel sector is simultaneously absorbing the legacy of COVID-19 disruption, navigating geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty, and integrating progressively more sophisticated technology into the revenue management workflow.

The modified two-round Delphi methodology was selected as it permits exploratory engagement with expert practitioners in Round 1 and structured consensus-building in Round 2, which together produce both the depth required to surface the lived experience of the role and the analytic discipline required to identify where that experience converges and diverges across the panel. The eight participants engaged across the two rounds represented a deliberate cross-section of the ANZ market, including independent apartment, full-service luxury, select-service, multi-property, and integrated properties across both countries. The reflexive thematic analysis of their accounts (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2022) generated seven themes that were subsequently tested, ranked, and refined in the consensus round. The outputs of this process, reported in Chapters 4 and 5, collectively address the purpose set out at the start of the study by providing a rich, contextually situated, and analytically structured account of contemporary ANZ revenue management practice and its anticipated trajectory.

The principal outcome of the research is a systematic, evidence-based picture of a discipline in active strategic recalibration. The panel's accounts demonstrate that, in the post-pandemic period, ANZ revenue managers have transitioned from occupancy- and rate-driven thinking toward a more deliberate, profit-oriented orientation that prioritises rate integrity, total-revenue thinking, and the strategic management of booking-window compression. Forecasting practice across the panel is consistently layered, combining historical data, market intelligence platform outputs (principally Lighthouse, Demand360, and Agency360), competitive set positioning, and the practitioner's tacit market knowledge. RevPAR remains the dominant performance indicator, supported by ADR, occupancy, and forecast accuracy, with TRevPAR and GOPPAR gaining traction in properties whose organisational structure permits expanded revenue accountability. Off-peak strategy converged on four consistent principles: protecting the rate floor, building base business through advance contracting and segment campaigns, cultivating partner relationships, and continuously monitoring booking pace against prior-year benchmarks. The Round 2 validation across anticipated challenges highlight supply and demand imbalance in key urban markets, geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty, margin and cost pressure, and the structural talent challenge, produced a forward-looking framework that is both empirically grounded and directly usable by industry stakeholders.

Beyond producing a descriptive account, the research substantively demonstrated three claims that contribute to the academic and applied conversation about hotel revenue management. First, the study established that the post-pandemic strategic shift in ANZ is not a short-term trend or rhetorical positioning but is operationally embedded across diverse property types and organisational structures.

The convergence on rate integrity, the resistance to discounting as a demand stimulus, and the deliberate cultivation of value-added packaging and direct channel revenue are practices that the panel reported in concrete operational terms, not as aspirational positions. Second, the study demonstrated that the research-practice gap, while real and consistent with the conceptual framing established in the prior literature (Ivanov et al., 2021; Josephi et al., 2016), takes a specific structural form in the ANZ context that is not adequately captured by knowledge-transfer models. The gap is shaped by data infrastructure constraints that prevent GOPPAR benchmarking at the competitive set level, by data governance and procurement structures that delay AI and advanced analytics adoption, by distribution and brand-equity constraints that limit the feasibility of personalised pricing, and by organisational positioning that frequently restricts revenue managers' cross-functional authority. This finding reframes the gap as a problem of industry-level coordination and organisational design, rather than as a problem of practitioner awareness or competency. Third, the study produced empirical support for a structurally integrated model of human and algorithmic judgement in revenue management. The 80/20 framing surfaced in the panel, in which algorithmic outputs are positioned as approximately 80 percent of the answer and human interpretive judgement as the

remaining 20 percent, provides a concrete practitioner-derived articulation of how human and machine decision-making cohabit in contemporary revenue management work. This framing is consistent with Schwartz et al.'s (2021) evidence that human-system forecast combinations outperform either source in isolation, and it advances the conversation by grounding the model in the lived language of working practitioners rather than in laboratory or simulation contexts.

Taken together, these outcomes confirm that the study has fulfilled its stated purpose. The research has produced a forward-looking, expert-validated framework of current practice and anticipated challenge in ANZ revenue management; it has documented the specific shape of the research-practice gap in the regional context; and it has offered a concrete, practitioner-grounded model of human and algorithmic integration that can inform both future research and applied professional development. The findings are positioned to be of practical use to revenue managers, hotel owners and operators, industry associations, and the academic community concerned with how the discipline of revenue management is evolving in the distinctive economic, geographic, and competitive environment of Australia and New Zealand.

6.3 Theoretical Contributions

This study makes several contributions to the academic literature on hotel revenue management and the research-practice gap. First, it provides systematic empirical documentation of revenue management practice and anticipated challenges in the ANZ hotel sector through a modified Delphi methodology, addressing a significant geographic gap in a literature dominated by European and North American contexts. The ANZ market's distinctive characteristics, reversed seasonality relative to the Northern Hemisphere, geographic isolation, acute supply-demand imbalances in key urban markets, sub-regional sequencing of supply-demand cycles across Brisbane, Melbourne, and Auckland, and the interconnected Australia-New Zealand tourism relationship, generate practice patterns and challenges that do not map straightforwardly onto extant findings and that warrant dedicated scholarly attention.

Second, the study extends the research-practice gap literature by identifying multiple structural dimensions of the gap that go beyond the knowledge-transfer framing typically employed. The data infrastructure gap, the organisational authority gap, the temporal gap between academic theorisation and market change, and the data governance barriers to AI and personalisation adoption represent specific, actionable findings that invite further empirical and theoretical development. These structural dimensions suggest that reducing the research-practice gap requires not only academic dissemination but industry-level coordination on benchmarking data availability and organisational redesign to expand the revenue manager's scope of authority.

Third, the study contributes a concrete practitioner-derived framing of human-AI integration in revenue management, the 80/20 division between algorithmic output and human interpretive judgement, that provides a useful conceptual anchor for future research on decision support system effectiveness. This framing positions human judgement not as a fallback when systems fail but as a structurally necessary component of the revenue management decision process, and it has direct implications for how professional training and system design should be approached.

Fourth, the study contributes to the Delphi methodology literature in hospitality research by demonstrating the utility of a two-round modified design for building expert consensus in a small, specialised professional community. The design employing semi-structured interviews in Round 1 and structured validation in Round 2 proved effective in generating both rich exploratory data and a reliable consensus picture within the practical constraints of a master's level research project, consistent with the methodological guidance of Sobaih et al. (2012) and Naisola-Ruiter (2022).

6.4 Practical Implications

For industry practitioners, this study affirms that rate integrity, total-revenue thinking, and a proactive off-peak strategy represent the professional consensus on effective revenue management in the current ANZ environment. Revenue managers operating in highly competitive or oversupplied markets, particularly Auckland CBD, should resist the temptation to discount rates as a demand stimulus, focusing instead on value-added packaging, direct channel cultivation, partner relationship development, booking pace monitoring, and active OTA campaign management as the primary off-peak revenue tools. The ancillary revenue dimension of off-peak strategy, encompassing food and beverage, function space, and other non-rooms revenue streams, merits greater deliberate attention than it currently receives in many properties.

For hotel owners and operators, the study highlights the strategic importance of supporting revenue managers' technology procurement requests. The barriers to AI adoption and advanced analytics identified in this research are not attitudinal or competency-based; they are structural. Organisations that invest in licensed, brand-controlled AI environments and provide revenue managers with the authority and resources to act on their analytical expertise are likely to achieve meaningful competitive advantages over those that delay these investments. Equally, investment in data infrastructure that enables GOPPAR benchmarking would significantly expand the strategic utility of the revenue management function.

For industry associations and professional bodies, the talent challenge identified in Round 2 warrants sustained attention. The combination of broadening role scope, high burnout risk, and extended onboarding timelines creates a structural vulnerability in the ANZ revenue management talent pipeline. Investment in

professional development frameworks, mentorship structures, and career pathway visibility for emerging practitioners is likely to generate long-term returns for the sector. The panel's collective closing insight that successful revenue managers are those who stay adaptable, maintain the human element, and refuse to rely on set templates offers a succinct professional development orientation that training and mentoring programmes can usefully adopt.

6.5 Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the sample of eight participants, whilst methodologically appropriate for a modified Delphi design (Hallowell & Gambatese, 2010; Naisola-Ruiter, 2022), limits the diversity of perspectives captured. The study's inclusion criteria, requiring a minimum of three years' experience in properties with fifty or more rooms, necessarily exclude the experience of revenue managers in smaller, independent, or budget-tier properties, where the challenges and practices may differ meaningfully from those documented here.

Second, the study's temporal scope is inherently forward-looking: participants' accounts of anticipated challenges reflect their professional judgements in April 2026, a period of significant geopolitical and economic uncertainty. The actual trajectory of the ANZ hotel market over the subsequent 12 to 18 months may diverge from these expert projections in ways that are not predictable at the time of data collection. This limitation is intrinsic to the study's forecasting orientation and acknowledged as an inherent feature of future-oriented Delphi research (Lin & Song, 2015).

Third, whilst the study's bi-national design enables comparative analysis, it does not capture the full diversity of the ANZ hotel market. New Zealand participants were disproportionately concentrated in the Auckland context, which, as documented in the Round 1 comparative analysis, is a significantly different market from the South Island tourism centres of Queenstown and Christchurch. Australian participants were concentrated in Melbourne and Brisbane, with limited representation of other major markets. Future research should extend the sample to include revenue managers from these sub-regional markets to provide a more comprehensive picture of ANZ revenue management practice.

6.6 Directions for Future Research

Several directions for future research emerge from this study's findings. First, a longitudinal study tracking how ANZ revenue managers adapt their strategies as geopolitical conditions evolve and as major convention infrastructure generates sustained demand in the market would provide valuable insight into the dynamic relationship between external conditions and practitioner strategy. Second, comparative research examining how the research-practice gap manifests across different property tiers, including luxury, select-

service, and budget, within the ANZ context would extend this study's findings and address the sample's current concentration in upper-scale properties. Third, future research examining the organisational structures and governance frameworks that enable or inhibit revenue management authority and technology adoption would help translate the structural gap findings documented here into actionable organisational design recommendations for hotel owners and operators.

Fourth, the flight data integration gap identified in Round 2 points to a specific and technically tractable research direction: examining how external demand signals, the airline bookings, route capacity changes, search behaviour on OTA platforms, and event announcements can be integrated with segment-mix data to generate more accurate forward demand forecasts than historical data alone can support. Fifth, as AI integration within revenue management platforms accelerates, research examining how practitioners develop the competencies needed to interpret, challenge, and augment AI-generated pricing recommendations, rather than simply accept or reject system outputs, also represents an important emerging frontier for both scholarship and professional development curriculum design. The 80/20 practitioner framing surfaced in this study offers a useful empirical starting point for such work.

6.7 Concluding Statement

Hotel revenue management in Australia and New Zealand is a discipline navigating significant and compounding pressures: recovering from the structural disruption of COVID-19, managing the consequences of geopolitical instability and acute market oversupply, and integrating progressively more sophisticated technology whilst maintaining the quality of human judgement that remains central to effective practice. The revenue managers who participated in this study demonstrated a level of strategic sophistication, analytical rigour, and professional self-awareness that challenges simple narratives of a discipline lagging its academic literature.

The research-practice gap motivating this study is real, but it is not primarily a gap in knowledge or awareness. It is a gap of data infrastructure, organisational authority, and governance and structural conditions that experienced practitioners understand precisely but cannot unilaterally resolve. Closing this gap will require not just academic knowledge transfer but sustained investment in the systems, structures, and talent pipelines that enable revenue managers to translate their expertise into business outcomes. As one participant observed in closing, the discipline rewards those who know their market, remain open to learning, and refuse to treat the role as a template to be followed. This study contributes a contextually grounded, practitioner-centred account of what that learning should prioritise in the distinctive environment of the Australian and New Zealand hotel sector, and it does so at a moment when the decisions taken by

owners, operators, and the profession itself are likely to shape the competitive landscape of ANZ hotel revenue management for years to come.

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Chapter 8: Appendix

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

23 February 2026

Warren Goodsir
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Warren

Re Ethics Application: **26/11 The Revenue Managers' Experience: Implementing Hotel Revenue Management in Australia and New Zealand**

Thank you for your responses to AUTEC's conditions.

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 23 February 2029.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Include in the Information Sheet how the potential participant was identified and where the contact details were obtained from.
2. If the interview topics creep from personal experience into discussing specific information about an organisation, then Organisation permission is required.

Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC unless requested but must be completed before commencing your study.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research and as approved by AUTEC.
2. All public facing documents must have the AUTEC approval number and be of a high standard of spelling and grammar. Dates on the Information Sheet(s) and Consent Form(s) must be consistent.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented.
4. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date.
5. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project.
6. Any serious or adverse events must be reported to AUTEC, this includes unforeseen issues that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
7. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management permission for access from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

The application number and title need to be referenced on all correspondence related to this project.

All forms are available online http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics

For any enquiries, please contact the Secretariat at ethics@aut.ac.nz
(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: srv6518@autuni.ac.nz; andrew.emery@aut.ac.nz

Auckland University of Technology, D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, New Zealand.
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316: E: ethics@aut.ac.nz: www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

An Invitation request to Participate in Hospitality Research to The Revenue manager

Kia Ora,

My name is Atulchandra Parab and I am a master's student at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), completing a Master of International Hospitality Management. As part of my dissertation, I would like to invite you to participate in student research on **The Revenue Managers' Experience: Implementing Hotel Revenue Management in Australia and New Zealand Hotels.**

Your daily operational insights as a Revenue Manager are invaluable. This study focuses entirely on your personal experience managing RM systems, data, and market pressures.

Research Purpose: Daily Practice & Operational Challenges

The sole purpose of this research is to explore the approaches and major hurdles faced by front-line Revenue Managers in the Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) market.

CRITICAL NOTE ON DATA: The research is purely qualitative, focused on opinion and lived experience. We are not requesting, and will not gather, any commercially sensitive data such as specific rates, occupancy figures, software logs, or financial statements. Your participation is confidential and focuses only on your role's operational challenges.

The key aims of this research are to document:

Current Practical Tactics: The specific, hands-on RM practices you currently apply, and the tools or metrics you use to manage demand.

System and Data Gaps: The discrepancies between current RM literature/theory and the practical limitations you face with systems, data quality, and forecasting.

Future Operational Pressure: The anticipated technical and operational challenges for your role over the next 12 to 18 months.

Next Steps

To be eligible, participants must be currently working as a hotel revenue manager with a minimum of three years of experience in a 3–5 star hotel in Australia or New Zealand. Participation involves two online interviews of approximately 30–45 minutes each, conducted via Microsoft Teams. A detailed Participant Information Sheet is attached to this email for your review.

If you are interested in participating, please reply to this email and I will be in touch with next steps.
This research has been reviewed and approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC), Reference Number 26/11.

Participant Information Sheet for Revenue manager

Date that data collection will start: _____

Project Title: The Revenue Managers' Experience: Implementing Hotel Revenue Management in Australia and New Zealand Hotels

Kia Ora,

This is a research study on the topic of hotel revenue trends in Australia and New Zealand. The study is being conducted by Atulchandra Arun Parab as a requirement for a Master of International Hospitality Management at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Other research team members include AUT supervisors Dr. Warren Goodsir and Dr. Andrew Emery.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research aims to explore the approaches and challenges faced by Revenue Managers like yourself in Australia and New Zealand.

Specifically, the study will:

- Identify prevailing RM practices currently applied in the region
- Assess how these operational realities align with academic recommendations
- Explore anticipated challenges that the RM profession in this region foresees over the next 12 to 18 months

This study seeks to address a gap in existing literature, focusing on aggregated and conceptual RM practices. The findings are expected to provide non-proprietary, actionable insights for industry professionals and contribute meaningfully to the limited academic literature on regional revenue management practices in the Australian and New Zealand hotel sector. Results are intended for academic publications and presentations.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You were identified as a potential participant via LinkedIn, where your professional profile indicated that you meet the study's inclusion criteria. This includes having a current role as a hotel revenue manager, a minimum of three years of experience, and working in a 3- to 5-star hotel in Australia or New Zealand. Your contact details were obtained through LinkedIn following approval from your organisation's General Manager to contact their revenue management team. The study is using purposive sampling to ensure a diverse range of expertise and geographic representation.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Choosing to participate will not advantage or disadvantage you in any way.

You can agree to participate by confirming your willingness via email and completing the consent process before the first interview. You will be asked to read this Participant Information Sheet and sign a Consent Form prior to your first interview. Evidence of your informed consent will be recorded via your signed Consent Form, a copy of which you are encouraged to keep for your own records.

You may withdraw from the study at any time up until the point at which your interview data has been incorporated into the aggregated analysis, without having to give a reason and without any negative consequences. If you wish to withdraw, please contact the researcher and any information you have provided will be destroyed and not included in the research. Please note that as interviews are conducted online via Microsoft Teams and are not anonymous, once your data has been included in the aggregated findings following your interview, it may not be possible to withdraw your individual contribution.

What will my participation involve?

Your participation will involve two online interviews via Microsoft Teams as part of a modified Delphi method. The entire study is expected to take approximately 4 weeks in total. Round 2 will take place approximately 2 weeks after Round 1, to allow time for thematic analysis of Round 1 responses.

- **Round 1:** You will take part in a semi-structured online interview with open-ended questions about what you believe will impact hotel revenue in your market over the next 12-18 months. This interview is expected to take **30-45 minutes** to complete.
- **Round 2:** Based on the aggregated findings from Round 1, you will take part in a second interview. This round focuses on building consensus, prioritizing factors, and gathering strategic recommendations. This interview is expected to take **30 minutes** to complete.

The research is being conducted remotely, and all communication and data collection will be undertaken online. No proprietary, financial performance data or commercially sensitive information will be collected from your hotel.

What are the benefits and costs?

The study's findings will provide actionable insights for revenue management professionals and contribute to academic literature on the Australia-New Zealand hotel market. Participants will also **receive a summary of the research results** at the end of the study.

The primary cost of participation is your time. Each round of the online interview is estimated to take between

30-45 minutes. There are no other costs, such as travel or parking, since the research is conducted online.

Will the results of the study be published?

The results of this research will be published in a master's thesis. This thesis will be available to the general public through the AUT library. Results may be published in peer-reviewed, academic journals. Results will also be presented during conferences or seminars to wider professional and academic communities. **You will not be identifiable in any publication** (i.e., your name, hotel, or specific location will not be revealed). All data, including interview recordings and transcripts, will be securely stored on a password-protected AUT OneDrive account for a period of six years following completion of the research, after which all data will be permanently deleted.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any initial concerns about the project should be directed to the Project Supervisor, Warren Goodsir, via email or work phone. Concerns about the conduct of the research should be reported to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC via email at ethics@aut.ac.nz or by phone at (+649) 921 9999 ext. 6038.

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr. Warren Goodsir, warren.goodsir@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC,

ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext. 6038.

Who do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

For more information, you can contact the research team:

- Researcher: Atulchandra Arun Parab (srv6518@autuni.ac.nz)

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

- Project Supervisor: Dr. Warren Goodsir (warren.goodsir@aut.ac.nz)
- Co-Supervisor (Advisor): Dr. Andrew Emery (andrew.emery@aut.ac.nz)

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23rd February,2026 final ethics approval was granted, AUTEC Reference number 26/11.

Interview Questions Round 1 for Modified Delphi methodology study

Project Title: The Revenue Managers' Experience: Implementing Hotel Revenue Management in Australia and New Zealand Hotels

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Region: Australia / New Zealand

Age: _____

Number of years' experience:

1. In the hospitality industry: _____

2. As a hotel manager/revenue manager: _____

Interview code: _____

The following structure is an *initial exploratory phase* of my dissertation (Delphi Round 1), which requires, detailed narratives to fully capture the complexity of the ANZ hotel market from the revenue managers personal viewpoint.

Duration: 45 Minutes

Opening questions: (5 minutes)

I. **Please briefly outline your current role and responsibilities.**

II. **What are the two most significant shifts you have personally experienced in the philosophy and practice of revenue management across the ANZ market over the past five years?**

III. What are the anticipated challenges for revenue managers in New Zealand and Australia over the next 12 to 18 months? (5 minutes)

Sub questions: (12 minutes)

1) What would you say are the most significant challenges – top 2-3?
    a) What external factors (e.g., shifts in consumer behaviour, inflationary pressure, or geopolitical events) do you believe will have the most significant impact on hotel RM in your region?
2) Looking ahead 12 to 18 months, what revenue trends do you anticipate for the Australia and New Zealand hotel industry?
3) What is missing from the current revenue management system/process that would help most in forecasting revenue?
    a) What do revenue managers complain about?
    b) What are the gaps in information or the ability to process/interpret the available information?
    c) What new, non-traditional data points are you personally focusing on to improve RM accuracy beyond historical occupancy/ADR?
4) As a revenue manager, what causes you the most anxiety/worry when forecasting and setting room rates?
    a) What would help to alleviate your concerns?
5) Which approaches do you think will be the most effective to help manage revenue streams during off-peak periods?

IV. What specific RM practices are currently applied by hotel revenue managers in New Zealand and Australia? (5 minutes)

Sub Question: (12 minutes)

1. Which key performance indicators (KPI) do you focus on most intensely when forecasting revenue?
2. Are there any new/different KPIs such as GOPPAR (Gross Operating Profit Per Available Room) that are becoming more important?

3. Beyond pricing, what is the most effective strategy for keep profits high during slow periods?

a) What surprising new information, beyond historic data, is available for RMs? For example, AI or new tools.

b) How are you using your current technology to handle big market changes, and what's a recent example of a new tool that improved your forecasting?

c) Are you aware if guest data is being used to offer personalised customer deals or pricing within the industry, and if so, what are your thoughts about this tactic?
    a. What are the benefits and/or issues with using guest data to personalise pricing strategies?

V. Is there anything else you would like to comment on? (5 minutes)

Interview Questions Round 2

Project Title: The Revenue Managers' Experience: Implementing Hotel Revenue Management in Australia and New Zealand Hotels

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Region: Australia / New Zealand

Interview code: _____

The purpose of this stage is to **present the anonymous, combined results** from Round 1 questions.

The round 2 questions will explore in detail the collated results and key themes identified from the round 1 participant responses. The aim of these questions is to confirm the accuracy of the round 1 analysis and identified themes and to refine the results to achieve consensus.

Duration: 45 Minutes

I. Significant shifts in the philosophy and practice of revenue management (10 minutes)

Could you please rank from most important to least important the identified shifts in the **philosophy and practice of revenue management** from the round one questions?

Why have you chosen the top three shifts as the most significant?

Are there any identified shifts that you believe are not very important? Why?

II. Anticipated challenges for revenue managers (20 min)

Do you agree or disagree with the collated list of challenges identified from the participant responses?

Could you please rank from most important to least important the identified **challenges for revenue managers** from the round one questions?

Why have you chosen the top three challenges as the most significant?

Are there any identified challenges that you believe are not very important? Why?

From the identified causes of revenue manager anxiety/worry, which ones create the most anxiety/worry when forecasting and setting room rates?

Sub questions:

1) Looking ahead 12 to 18 months, what revenue trends do you anticipate for the Australia and New Zealand hotel industry would be the top 3 from the one we discussed?
2) From the discussion, what are the top 3 most important systems/tools that are currently missing from the revenue management system/process that would help most in forecasting revenue?
3) What would be one specific approach to employ to help manage revenue streams during off-peak periods?

III. RM practices currently applied by hotel revenue managers (10 minutes)

The following practices have been identified from round one questions:

1. Among the identified key performance indicators (KPI) , which 3 do you rely on most when forecasting revenue?
2. Among the identified practices, which, according to you, will be the most effective revenue management strategy during off peak or slow periods?

a) Beyond the use of historic data, what three RM practices, do you find most useful ? Why?

IV. Is there anything else you would like to comment on? (5 minutes)

Key Prompts Used in This Research Project

About This Section

This document is a curated list of the most important prompts used during the development of this research project. It is intended as a personal reference and methodological audit trail showing how artificial intelligence assistance was directed throughout the dissertation journey, from the application of ethics through to the final write-up.

Prompts are grouped by the project stage at which they were used: research design and literature review, ethics and recruitment, interview design, fieldwork support, analysis and write-up, and supervisor liaison. Each entry shows the prompt as it was issued and a short note on its purpose. The prompts are paraphrased only where they have been cleaned up for clarity; the substantive content reflects what was actually asked.

The actual research data: that is, the interview prompts presented to the participants, sit in Appendices H and I of the dissertation and are referenced in Section 3 below for completeness.

1. Research Design and Literature Review

Prompts in this section were used to scope the dissertation, develop the methodology chapter, and structure the literature review. They were issued early in the project, before fieldwork commenced.

1.1. Framing the methodology section

"I’m using a modified Delphi methodology for my dissertation. Help me frame seven headings for my research methodology section."

Purpose: Used to establish the seven-section structure of Chapter 3 (Research Methodology), covering philosophy, design, sampling, data collection, analysis, ethics, and rigour.

1.2. Drafting the methodology chapter

"Can you help me make content for all seven of them. Also you need to add APA 7 style of references, also keep it NZ English and word count of 5,000 words. Also give me a reference list at the end."

Purpose: Used to generate a full first draft of the methodology chapter with academic referencing, in NZ English, at the required length.

1.3. Framing the literature review

"I'm starting my literature review now. For this can you help me frame seven questions on what the heading should be and what I should be working on, considering all the attached documents. Keep the questions simple and easy so that I can work on them."

Purpose: Used to derive the seven guiding questions that became the structural backbone of the literature review chapter.

1.4. Selecting an analysis framework

"Help me choose a thematic analysis framework that fits a modified Delphi study with eight participants."

Purpose: Used to settle on Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) and to identify the supporting Naeem et al. (2023) six-step framework.

2. Ethics, Recruitment, and Participant Communication

Prompts in this section supported the AUTEC ethics application (reference 26/11) and the recruitment of the eight expert panellists. They include drafting participant-facing material, recruitment messages, and liaison messages.

2.1. Drafting the project description for participants

"Based on what I have searched and based on my ethics application form, help me write 200 words on what exactly my project is. This is to explain it to one of my potential participants."

Purpose: Used to create the short, plain-language project summary attached to recruitment emails, emphasising that no commercially sensitive data would be requested.

2.2. Adapting the participant information sheet

"It's a Participant Information Sheet for the General Manager. Help me change it for a Revenue Manager."

Purpose: Used to adapt the GM Participant Information Sheet into a parallel version for the Revenue Manager participant pathway, retaining structure but adjusting voice and scope.

2.3. Outreach to a hospitality contact

"Help me write an email to the Executive Assistant Manager at Park Hyatt, asking him to help find participants for my research. He used to work in Grand Hyatt Melbourne before; asking for his help to connect the Revenue Manager there."

Purpose: Used to draft a referral request leveraging an existing professional contact to reach an Australian revenue manager for the Delphi panel.

2.4. LinkedIn recruitment outreach

"Help me write a 150-character message to send on LinkedIn for research participation. … Increase to 200 characters."

Purpose: Used to develop short, professional LinkedIn outreach messages within platform character limits, for cold-contacting potential revenue manager participants.

2.5. Responding to supervisor feedback on participant materials

"The attached are the feedback received from my professor. All you need to do is accept those changes and make a new document. For the interview question, can you please help me frame the question similar to Interview Question Round 1."

Purpose: Used to incorporate Warren Goodsir's editorial feedback on the Round 2 instrument and the General Manager Information Sheet, while keeping consistency with Round 1 design.

3. Interview Design Delphi Round 1 and Round 2

Prompts in this section relate to the design of the two-round Delphi interview instruments. The actual interview questions issued to participants are documented in Appendices H and I of the dissertation.

3.1. Designing Round 2 from Round 1

"Based on Round 1, help me frame interview questions for Round 2, which should be consistent with Round 1. It's a part of qualitative research studies for a dissertation on revenue management in Australia and New Zealand."

Purpose: Used to translate Round 1 exploratory questions into Round 2 prioritisation and consensus-building questions consistent with modified Delphi practice.

3.2. Anchoring Round 2 in Round 1 outputs

"The following practices have been identified from Round 1 questions … I want to make a second round of Delphi methodology, based on these questions. With the help of the documents attached, help me write the questions please."

Purpose: Used to ensure that the Round 2 instrument was constructed directly from the validated Round 1 themes (KPIs, AI adoption, off-peak strategy, guest data) rather than being designed in isolation.

3.3. Simplifying Round 2 wording

"These are the questions from Round 1 change them to Round 2 please based on the document attached. Please keep them simple."

Purpose: Used to revise the Round 2 wording for clarity and accessibility, ensuring the prioritisation prompts could be answered concisely within the 45-minute interview window.

4. Fieldwork and Transcription Support

These prompts supported the data collection and preparation phase: cleaning Microsoft Teams transcripts, formatting Q&A versions of interviews for review, and preparing material for analysis.

4.1. Formatting an interview transcript

"Make it a proper transcript between Warren and Atul."

Purpose: Used to convert raw Microsoft Teams output into a clean, speaker-attributed supervision meeting transcript with action points captured separately.

4.2. Producing a participant-friendly Q&A version

"Help me make a clean PDF in question and answer format."

Purpose: Used to convert a Round 2 interview transcript into a clean Q&A document for record-keeping and ease of review during analysis.

5. Analysis and Dissertation Write-Up

These prompts directed the analysis and write-up of Chapters 4 (Findings and Analysis) and 5 (Discussion), as well as the conclusion, acknowledgements, and supporting front-matter.

5.1. Building the Findings and Analysis chapter

"I have to write a Finding and Analysis section for my dissertation using the six-step process as mentioned in the article attached, with all the transcripts of Round 1 and Round 2. Can you make this section: introduction first, followed by the keywords, codes, themes, then the Round 1 findings and Round 2 findings, conceptual model."

Purpose: Used to construct the full first draft of Chapter 4 following Naeem et al. (2023) six-step thematic analysis applied to the eight transcripts.

5.2. Restructuring per supervisor feedback

"Warren wants me to put both Round 1 and Round 2 under themes and not as separate sections. Can you help me do that, and also keep the rest of the part as it is, and make sure it’s quite straightforward for the examiner to read the whole dissertation and this section too."

Purpose: Used to integrate Round 1 and Round 2 evidence under each of the seven themes, replacing the previous split-section structure following Warren Goodsir’s feedback.

5.3. Combining findings and discussion logic

"Warren has recommended me to combine the discussion and finding and analysis together, in which both Round 1 and Round 2 method should be discussed. And in discussion it should be about the comparison between what I found in both rounds with the literature review, and this comparison shouldn’t be in the finding and analysis section."

Purpose: Used to confirm the structural separation between Chapter 4 (data presentation, no literature) and Chapter 5 (literature comparison only), aligning with supervisor direction.

5.4. Drafting the conclusion chapter

"From the Round 2 transcripts understand the feedback, and go through my dissertation final project and then ethics approval, understand the primary question I want to draw a final conclusion as I come to an end of my research, so now help me frame my next section."

Purpose: Used to construct the conclusion chapter directly answering the three research questions, with theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and future research directions.

5.5. Drafting the acknowledgements

"Help me write a draft acknowledgement for my dissertation, thanking my supervisor Dr Warren for continuous support, my family (Anagha and Arun Parab) for sending me abroad for education, my partner Anshi Arun for emotional and medical support, Auckland City Hospital, AUT Student Hub, and Red Bull and Monster drinks for keeping me awake. Acknowledgement should be around 400 words."

Purpose: Used to produce the first version of the acknowledgements page, later revised to expand the supervisory acknowledgement, add elder sister Apurva Parab, and limit to Monster Energy.

5.6. Producing front-matter lists

"Help me make a list of abbreviations, list of articles in appendix, and also a list of tables in this dissertation please. Make a Word document of these three in Times New Roman font size 11 without any blocks plain simple list."

Purpose: Used to compile the front-matter (Abbreviations, Tables, Appendices) needed before the dissertation could be submitted in its final form.

5.7. Translating dissertation into a journal article

"Can you make a peer-reviewed journal article from this project?"

Purpose: Used to condense the ~33,000-word dissertation into a journal-article-length manuscript following IMRaD structure for potential publication.

6. Supervisor Liaison and Feedback Implementation

These prompts supported the iterative supervision process with Warren Goodsir, including interpreting comments, drafting professional emails, and responding to specific editorial feedback on the dissertation.

6.1. Drafting a formal supervisor email

"Kindly find the attached Ethics application form along with the supporting documents. I'm almost done working on the comments on my dissertation draft. Change it to a more formal tone and keep the NZ English please."

Purpose: Used to convert a casual update message to Warren Goodsir into a formally toned email with NZ English conventions and culturally appropriate Māori greetings (Kia Ora / Ngā mihi).

6.2. Interpreting supervisor feedback from a screenshot

"Review this image and help me what changes can I make?"

Purpose: Used repeatedly to interpret screenshots of Warren Goodsir's tracked-change comments and translate them into specific revisions to the dissertation text.

6.3. Implementing a specific editorial change

"Help me make the change as advised."

Purpose: Used to action specific Warren Goodsir comments, such as indenting block quotations longer than forty words in line with APA 7 conventions.

6.4. Repositioning a finding as literature-based

"What change should I make? and can you help me write down what changes I should make in the paragraph."

Purpose: Used to reframe the research-practice gap as a literature-established finding (Ivanov et al., 2021; Josephi et al., 2016) that motivates the study, rather than as the present author's own finding.

7. Public-Facing Communications

Prompts in this section supported professional dissemination of the research progress on LinkedIn during the dissertation journey.

7.1. Drafting a LinkedIn post on the research-practice gap

"Help me write a LinkedIn post about the gap between the literature on revenue management and the current practices in the same in Australia and New Zealand region."

Purpose: Used to translate the research-practice gap framing into an industry-facing LinkedIn post during the literature review phase.

7.2. Follow-up LinkedIn post

"Based on my literature review I'm working on, help me write a LinkedIn post of about 300 words along with a relevant photo to attach. … This is the post I have made so far make a follow-up post."

Purpose: Used to maintain a consistent voice and progression across a series of LinkedIn updates documenting the research journey.

Closing Note

This list captures the prompts that most directly shaped the dissertation. Many shorter, follow-up prompts and refinements have been omitted for brevity. The prompts above are the ones whose outputs materially appear in the final dissertation, ethics application, recruitment material, or supervisor correspondence.

Across all prompts, the standing instructions were New Zealand English spelling and conventions; APA 7 referencing; participant anonymity using AU1–AU4 and NZ1–NZ4 coded identifiers; and

a careful separation between the researcher's own prose (where em-dashes were avoided as a possible AI-writing indicator) and verbatim participant quotations (preserved as spoken).

Appendix: G: Reflection on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in This Research

1. Introduction

The integration of generative artificial intelligence into postgraduate research has prompted considerable scholarly debate regarding academic integrity, authorship, and the appropriate boundaries of AI-assisted writing. In line with the principles of transparent disclosure and the standards expected of postgraduate research at the Auckland University of Technology, this reflection documents the use of an AI assistant in preparing this dissertation. Its purpose is to clearly delineate the boundary between the researcher's intellectual contributions and the operational support provided by the AI tool, thereby enabling examiners and supervisors to assess the work with a transparent understanding of the production process.

The position taken in this reflection is unequivocal. The conceptualisation, methodological design, analytical interpretation, theoretical engagement, and substantive intellectual content of this dissertation are the work of the researcher. Artificial intelligence assistance was confined to three specific functions: structural organisation, proofreading, and refinement of written English. No analytical decisions, theme constructions, interpretations of participant data, or original arguments were generated by the AI.

2. Purpose and Scope of AI Assistance

Artificial intelligence assistance was used as a writing aid, comparable in principle to the use of grammar-checking software, citation management tools, or professional proofreading services. Its application in this study was deliberately scoped to three functions.

The first was structural organisation. The researcher developed the substantive content, arguments, and analytical decisions independently, but used AI assistance to organise that content into coherent chapter structures, section hierarchies, and logical sequencing. For example, when restructuring the Findings and Analysis chapter to integrate Round 1 and Round 2 evidence under each theme, a decision was made by the researcher in response to supervisory feedback that AI assistance was used to mechanically reorganise the existing material rather than to generate new analytical content.

The second was proofreading. As an English-as-an-additional-language researcher, the use of AI for grammatical refinement, sentence-level clarity, and identification of typographical inconsistencies represented an extension of standard proofreading practice. All substantive ideas and arguments existed in the researcher's own draft prose before being passed through this proofreading function.

The third was refinement of academic English register. AI assistance was used to elevate the formality and consistency of expression, ensuring alignment with the conventions of New Zealand English, APA 7 referencing, and academic prose appropriate to a Master's-level dissertation. This function corresponds to the legitimate use of AI as a language and writing development support, comparable to the kind of assistance an English-language editor might provide.

Operationally, AI was also employed to produce formatted Microsoft Word output programmatically, ensuring consistency in heading hierarchy, font, and layout across a long document. This is a technical document-production function and does not affect the intellectual content of the work.

3. Limitations of AI Assistance

The limitations of AI assistance reinforced rather than diminished the researcher's analytical role. Generative AI tools cannot access primary qualitative data, possess no situated knowledge of the Australian and New Zealand hotel sector, and cannot perform the interpretive work required by reflexive thematic analysis. Theme construction, coding decisions, and the comparative reading of Australian and New Zealand participant accounts were undertaken by the researcher and could not have been delegated.

Stylistic limitations were also apparent. Supervisory feedback identified the overuse of em-dashes as a stylistic marker associated with AI-assisted prose, requiring a manual editorial pass to remove them from the researcher's own writing while preserving them in verbatim participant quotations, which were not subjected to any AI editing under any circumstance. The integrity of participant voice was protected throughout the analytical process.

Domain accuracy presented a further limitation. Where AI-generated suggestions touched on revenue management terminology or the academic literature, the researcher cross-checked all such

content against primary sources from the established reference list of the dissertation. The AI was not relied upon as a source of academic knowledge; it was relied upon only for the phrasing and structuring of knowledge that the researcher had already acquired through reading and analysis.

Finally, AI assistance carried no continuity of memory across sessions and required the researcher to repeatedly establish context. This operational limitation reinforced the principle that the researcher remained the sole holder of the project's intellectual coherence.

4. Contributions of AI Assistance to the Research Process

Within the scoped functions described above, AI assistance contributed to three areas of the research process. First, it supported structural consistency across an extensive document of approximately thirty thousand words, helping to maintain coherent heading hierarchies, abbreviation lists, appendix labels, table numbering, and reference formatting across multiple revision rounds. Second, it accelerated the operational production of supplementary research material, including participant information sheets, recruitment communications, and the Round 2 interview instrument. All such material was derived from the researcher's own design decisions and reviewed against ethics requirements before use. Third, it provided a responsive proofreading function that compensated for the absence of dedicated editorial support and reduced the linguistic burden associated with writing extended academic prose in a second language.

These contributions did not alter the substantive content of the dissertation. They reduced the time required to produce, format, and refine that content, allowing the researcher to direct greater attention to the intellectual demands of the project: engaging with the literature, conducting interviews, analysing transcripts, constructing themes, and interpreting findings.

5. Concluding Statement

This dissertation represents the researcher's own intellectual work. Every research question, every methodological choice, every theme, every interpretation, and every conclusion was developed by the researcher through engagement with the literature, the eight expert participants, and the supervisory process. Artificial intelligence was used as a tool to structure, proofread, and refine the expression of that work, comparable in function to a grammar checker, a structural editor, or a proofreader, and was not used to generate ideas, perform analysis, or substitute for original

thought. This disclosure is offered to ensure that the assessment of this dissertation may proceed with full transparency regarding the production process and full confidence in the academic integrity of the work.

Appendix H: Selected Reflexive Journal Extracts

Note: The following extracts are selected entries from the reflexive journal maintained throughout the data collection and analysis phases of this study (September 2025 – April 2026). Entries are presented chronologically and have been lightly edited for clarity. They are included here to demonstrate the confirmability safeguard described in Section 3.9, specifically, how the researcher's background in hospitality management and accounting was monitored for potential interpretive bias.

Entry 1 Pre-fieldwork, February, 2026, *Before Round 1 interviews begin*

I am aware that I come into this research with a hospitality background food and beverage, events, retail but not directly from revenue management. This feels like an advantage in terms of curiosity: I genuinely do not know what these practitioners will say. But I also notice an assumption forming already: that revenue management is primarily a data and systems problem. My accounting background probably drives this. I need to watch whether I am hearing participants through that lens and missing the relational or strategic dimensions they might emphasise.

Entry 2 Post Round 1, February,2026 After *completing the first four interviews*

AU4's framing surprised me. I expected revenue managers to speak primarily about tools and forecasting models, the algorithmic side. Instead, AU4 anchored the whole conversation in human judgment: "the most important KPI is the variance between the forecast and the actuals." That is not a systems claim; it is a professional accountability claim. I realise I was mapping my accounting-trained instinct for measurement onto a role that participants describe as far more interpretive. This is a moment to step back from what the literature says revenue management *should* be and to listen more closely to what these practitioners say it *is*.

Entry 3 Mid-analysis, March 2026 *During coding of Round 1 transcripts*

I notice I keep wanting to code the COVID references as "context" background noise rather than as analytically substantive. But looking across AU1, AU2, AU4, and NZ2, COVID is not background: it is the explanatory hinge for every strategic shift they describe. The "from heads in beds to rate integrity" framing makes sense only because the pandemic revealed the fragility of occupancy-led revenue. I am adjusting the code from "post-COVID context" to "catalytic event" This feels more honest to what participants are actually saying.

Entry 4 Post Round 2, April 2026 *After completing Round 2 interviews*

The NZ4 comment about Auckland's oversupply has been on my mind since Round 1, and Round 2 has made it harder to ignore. My initial instinct was to treat the NZ picture as a minor variation on the AU themes a regional footnote. But NZ4 (R2) framing it as "how do I protect the rate without losing too much occupancy" points to a structurally different market condition, not just a different emphasis. I think I was underplaying this because the AU data arrived first and set my interpretive frame. The Australia–New Zealand comparison deserves more analytical weight than I had originally given it.

Entry 5: Theme construction, April 2026 *Reviewing candidate themes*

Theme 7 “The Gap That May Not Be a Gap” is the one I feel least settled about. Part of me wants to resolve it: either the research-practice gap exists, or it doesn't. But participants are genuinely ambivalent, and I think that ambivalence *is* the finding. My discomfort with leaving it open is probably an accounting-discipline instinct for resolution. The journal has been useful here, writing this down helps me see that the discomfort is mine, not a signal that the theme is under-evidence.

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxTHE ENDxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx