

Tourism New Zealand Is Still Ignoring the Older Market

Tourism New Zealand, which markets NZ to the world, continues to ignore the older market. At least, that is what it seems like on looking at the three videos being used in their latest marketing campaign (“100% Pure You”) in Australia. The videos feature three young women, a young couple, and a young father with his son. Not a silver hair in sight. This in spite of the fact that according to the research figures of Access Tourism New Zealand, almost 50% of visitors in and to New Zealand are 45 and older. It is also in spite of the fact that the demographic reality is that populations are ageing worldwide. In Australia for example, NZ’s most important international market and the one this campaign is initially aimed at, the only age group increasing is that of people 65 or older, Baby Boomers are turning 65 at the rate of 200,000 a year, and the population over 65 is predicted to double over the next 40 years.



And it is older Australians who are predicted by social researchers to be the ones who will spend on travel. In caravan parks around the country they are known as the SKI Club – Spending the Kids’ Inheritance – and their vans have bumper stickers saying exactly that. In fact, in a 2009 report informing the Australian national long-term tourism strategy, it is predicted that to 2030, the only source of increased domestic tourism activity will be in the 50+ age group, and the only increase in dollar value will

be in the 60+ age group. Why is New Zealand not targeting this growing demographic by having at least some older models in the video promotions released in Australia? Tourism New Zealand intends to broaden this campaign to other countries. Populations are ageing in our other traditional target markets also. In the UK for example, it is estimated that the population of those 65 or older will grow from 16% currently to 23% by 2034, while in the USA, more than 7000 will turn 65 every day for the next 20 years. In Japan, the population over 65 is currently 22% or about 27 million, those aged 61 to 63 number 18 million (Invest Japan), and ageing in Japan is happening at a greater rate than elsewhere (Reuters). The mean and median age in years is about 44.5 (IPSS). According to an article in the Nikkei last year, Japanese aged 60–70 are emerging as an important source of economic vitality, as they are proving to be active spenders keen on making the most of their post-retirement years (Silver Group Asia). Data clearly shows that older consumers are more eager to spend than those younger than them.



Even in markets that Tourism New Zealand has only recently begun to turn their attention to, like China and South America, populations are ageing. When will New Zealand begin to consistently appeal to the older demographic in these markets by at least showing them in its promotions? Surely it is an economic imperative to do so in order to maintain a sustainable tourism industry.

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