



Speakers at the Tourism Export Council's Christmas Symposium on Wednesday...
Scott Tasker, Auckland International Airport; Lynda Keene, TEC NZ; George Robertson, Singapore Airlines

Capacity gap may hamper full tourism recovery, says Auckland Airport executive

Making a full recovery in international tourism back to pre-covid levels in New Zealand may be restricted by a lack of airline seats at least in the short term, according to Scott Tasker, chief customer officer at Auckland Airport.

He says the airport is up to 89% of 2019 passenger volumes and, with a busy summer ahead, that is likely to reach 93%.

Tasker, who was a speaker at the Tourism Export Council of New Zealand's Christmas Symposium points to issues affecting airlines' ability to meet market demands, which he says may lead to a 10% 'capacity gap'.

'There is a delay in deliveries and at the same time

Capacity gap may hamper full tourism recovery, says Auckland Airport executive

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maintenance issues are impacting the in-service fleet. The geographic remoteness of New Zealand remains challenging as well.'

He says it is concerning that Australia, Canada, Singapore and USA have all fully recovered in terms of air capacity and New Zealand still has a gap to close.

'I think we will see close to every seat on every flight (into AKL) full this summer. I don't see any capacity announcement coming and that's

where growth could flatten.'

Fellow speaker at the summit, George Robertson, GM New Zealand Singapore Airlines, notes that the airline has four flights a day (in conjunction with partner Air New Zealand) into Auckland over the summer, and two services into Christchurch – one daily and the other three times a week.

'Wellington is still paused but we are regularly reviewing that. At the moment we are concentrating on Auckland and Christchurch.'

Beware fees 'tipping point' say inbounders

New Zealand's inbound trade is concerned about the cumulative effect of fees and taxes on international tourists and remains opposed to 'access charging' on some Department of Conservation land.

At the Tourism Export Council Christmas Symposium on Wednesday, the organisation's CEO Lynda Keene told delegates the organisation welcomed the government discussion around concession and

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planning to provide more flexibility around managing conservation land.

However she says the message to government is that the inbound sector is concerned about 'the raft of cost increases' affecting international visitors, including the now \$100 International Visitor Levy.

'We are a bit worried about this. We need to be mindful (if the trend continues) that at some point in time

the international visitor may be paying \$400 to \$500 in extra fees and this may be the tipping point where people are discouraged to come here.

She notes that DOC will pilot paid parking at three South Island visitor hotspots in the summer of 2025-26 – Punakaiki Pancake Rocks, Franz Josef Glacier and White Horse Hill at Aoraki Mount Cook National Park.



Debbie Summers, ID Tours; Martin Horgan, Southern World New Zealand; Sam Peate, Entrada Travel Group; Briar Nash, Christchurch Airport



Michel Adolphe, Sudima Hotels; Michelle Caldwell, Destinate NZ; John Gregory, Terra Nova Tours Limited