

# Rangitoto – Motutapu visitor experience survey



## Executive Summary report

Department of Conservation (DOC) and Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) are working in partnership with local iwi (Ngai Tai, Ngati Whatua o Orakei and Ngati Paoa), and stakeholders in the development of an 'island journey experience' product for Rangitoto and Motutapu islands, in the Hauraki Gulf. The 'island journey experience' product refers to the visitors' experiences during a three-day walk of the Rangitoto-Motutapu islands. Each day of the walk will be designed to be unique and will emphasise the distinctiveness of the two islands. Visitors will have the option to undertake a one-day walk instead of the complete three-day walk of the Rangitoto-Motutapu islands. The 'island journey experience' product can be considered as an alternative or a follow-up activity from the present half-day Rangitoto Summit excursion.

A web-based pilot survey was designed to understand Aucklanders' and visitors' perspectives on the proposed Rangitoto-Motutapu visitor experience tourism product. The online survey was promoted to Facebook users through the AucklandNZ Facebook page. Also, an email invitation to participate in the survey was sent to the Auckland Council's People's Panel database that has a total of approximately 11,000 registered Auckland-based residents. In addition, intercept surveys were conducted around Auckland's waterfront area and on-board Fullers' Rangitoto ferry service. A total of 2,706 survey responses were received. The survey period ran from 24 April to 14 May 2013.

The online survey highlights the perspectives of potential visitors to Rangitoto and Motutapu on the proposed 'island journey experience' product.

- Nearly all (99%) of the survey respondents came from New Zealand. The remaining 1% of the respondents came from USA, France, China, Germany, Spain, Australia, Canada, Netherlands, Scotland, and Switzerland. The majority (97%) of the New Zealand based respondents came from Auckland. Forty two percent of the respondents are aged between 56 and 75 years, followed by those aged between 35 and 55 years (40%). Sixty percent of the survey respondents were females. A significant number of survey respondents have visited Rangitoto (80%) and Motutapu (54%) at least once before.
- Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of interest on a scale from 1 'very interested' to 5 'not at all interested' in visiting Rangitoto-Motutapu to participate in the 'island journey experience' product. More than 70% (73%) of the people indicated their level of interest in the 'island journey experience' product as 'interested' and 'very interested'. For 11% of the respondents that indicated they were 'not interested' and 'not at all interested' in the 'island journey experience' product, their reasons include: a lack of interest in Maori culture (n=72), not being physically able to complete the experience (n=61), already having a sound knowledge about the history of Rangitoto-Motutapu (n=55) and having little desire for walking and tramping (n=55).
- Respondents are most likely to complete the 'island journey experience' with their partner (46%), with family (41%), with a group of friends (35%), or with a friend (22%). Three quarters of the respondents have 'little' or 'very little' knowledge about the significance of Rangitoto and Motutapu to Maori. The majority (76%) of the respondents are 'interested' or 'very interested' to learn about the cultural heritage of Rangitoto and Motutapu.
- A significant number of respondents stated that the most appealing factors of the 'island journey experience' product include the opportunity to find out more about Motutapu (73%), followed

by the islands' proximity to Auckland City for a multi-day trip away (70%), the opportunity to explore Rangitoto (69%) and the ability to participate in a simple, non-strenuous multi-day walk (64%). The types of activities that respondents would like to see offered on Rangitoto-Motutapu as part of the 'island journey experience' consists of guided walks (77%), the opportunity to learn about the history of Rangitoto-Motutapu (69%), the ability to engage in volunteer activities (68%) and kayaking (62%).

- The survey proposed three different day walks, with options to complete them separately as individual days or combined over 2-3 days. Respondents chose the option of a one day walk, returning to complete the other 2 days at another time (37%), followed by those that opted for a two day walk, staying overnight on Rangitoto/Motutapu (31%) and a 3 day walk, staying on Rangitoto/Motutapu for the 2 nights (24%).
- Respondents were asked to indicate what they would like to pay for an all-inclusive 3 day 'island journey experience' on Rangitoto-Motutapu, including accommodation, meals, ferry tickets and guide. Nearly a third (32%) of the respondents indicated that they would like to pay between \$300 and \$500 for an all-inclusive experience. Under a quarter (23%) of the people stated that they were willing to pay between \$500 and \$750. Twenty percent of the respondents indicated a price range of \$201-\$300. The average price that people are willing to pay for the all-inclusive 'island journey experience' product is \$331.
- The top 5 options that people would like to see offered during the 3 day 'island journey experience' are: hot showers, a knowledgeable guide, flush toilets, camping and other equipment and transportation of one's luggage. The types of accommodation that respondents would like to see offered on Rangitoto-Motutapu include lodges/cottages (61%), followed by huts (48%), rent-a-bach (40%) and campsites with equipment provided at the site (31%). Although visitors to Rangitoto and Motutapu are not looking for a luxury 5-star accommodation experience it is important to provide a range of accommodation options from campsites for people who are satisfied with little amenities to lodges/cottages for those that prefer a bit of comfort such as basic amenities, linen and kitchen appliances.
- Respondents provided useful suggestions and thoughts on the proposed Rangitoto-Motutapu 'island journey experience'. The most common theme mentioned by more than half of the respondents (53%) was their concern for the environment and over-commercialisation of the place. Visitors to Rangitoto and Motutapu want to see minimal impact on the islands' landscape and its wildlife. Another critical theme was the affordability of the 'island journey experience' product for all New Zealanders.

It is clear that while people are in favour of the proposed Rangitoto-Motutapu 'island journey experience' product they want it to be reasonably priced for someone with an average household income as well as not destroy the islands' environment.