

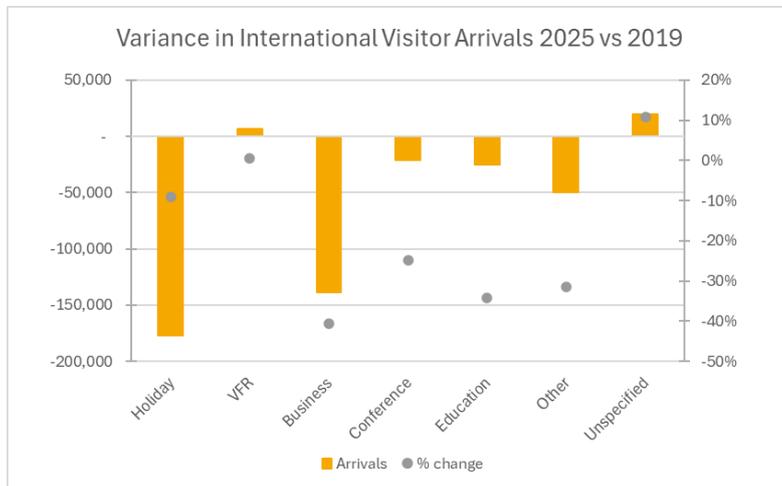
Leisure Leads, Business Lags

Inside New Zealand's 2025 Visitor Recovery

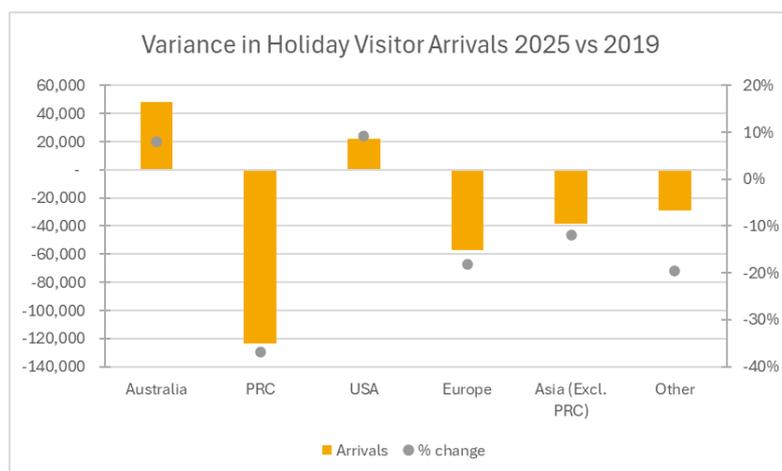
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Stats NZ's latest international visitor data showed that New Zealand's recovery in 2025 was led by holidaymakers, with business travel still well behind. Holiday arrivals reached 1.79 million, about 9% below 2019 but around 12% higher than 2024, signaling another step-up in leisure demand. Business arrivals were 203,033, about 41% below 2019 and only slightly above 2024, pointing to a slow, incremental rebuild. A relatively weaker NZD against both the AUD and USD made New Zealand feel better value for key trans-Tasman and long-haul markets.



Australia was the standout. Australian holiday arrivals reached 657,445 in 2025, about 8% ahead of 2019 and roughly 15% above 2024, supported by strong trans-Tasman air capacity and targeted Tourism New Zealand campaigns in Australia. Australian business arrivals (135,010) were about 36% below 2019 and only modestly above 2024. The data did not show any meaningful change in average length of stay to suggest more combined business-and-holiday trips.



China recovered more slowly on the holiday side. PRC holiday arrivals in 2025 were about 37% below 2019 but around 14% higher than 2024, evidence of a cautious, capacity-led recovery. Many Chinese households were still wary of spending on big overseas trips, especially long-haul journeys that require a higher budget. On the positive side, visa processes

Source: Stats NZ

for Chinese visitors have eased and airline capacity from China to Auckland increased with additional seats and higher frequencies on key routes alongside strong load factors.

The shortfall in business arrivals across markets reflected deeper structural changes. Companies have adopted hybrid working, tighter travel policies and widespread use of remote meeting technology, all of which reduce the need for frequent business trips.

In this context, the opening of the New Zealand International Convention Centre in February 2026 takes on added importance: it is expected to act as a catalyst for regional conferences, trade shows and corporate events, creating more reasons for decision-makers and teams to visit New Zealand and deepening business relationships.

For 2026, Australia still looks likely to be New Zealand's most reliable leisure engine, even though softer consumer sentiment introduces some uncertainty around demand, while the US outlook appears positive in the short term, with lower than expected inflation, a relatively strong economy and solid air links supporting further growth, alongside an expectation of continuing growth from China.



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Our clients choose us because we have earned a reputation for impartial advice that will often mean the difference between failure and success. Each project we help is different, so we need all of the experience we have gained over our 100-year history.

We are a global brand with 52 offices in 38 countries, who have successfully carried out over 50,000 assignments for private and public clients.

We are part of the Crowe Global network, a top 10 accounting and financial services network. We are the number one choice for companies and financial institutions looking to invest and develop in the industry.

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