

# Webinar report

Eliza Raymond

## 100% Pure Future – New Zealand Tourism Renewed

20 April 2021, 11.30 a.m.–12.30 p.m.

Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnPVBhbBEaQ&t=2955s>

A webinar calling for a radical rethink of the tourism sector was hosted by Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand on 20 April 2021. The webinar, opened by Associate Professor Christian Schott, provided the opportunity to hear from four of the contributors of a new BWB Text published in November 2020: *100% Pure Future – New Zealand Tourism Renewed* (Bennett, 2020). The speakers, including Sarah Bennett, David Simmons, Susanne Becken and Dave Bamford, outlined their vision for a future tourism industry that puts the environment first and creates more meaningful exchanges between visitors and their hosts.

### Why now?

The webinar's four speakers all communicated a sense of urgency when discussing the importance of radically rethinking New Zealand's tourism sector. From the economic issues imbedded within much of the sector to the human lives, species and ecosystems at stake if we do not work to decarbonise the industry, there was consensus that the problems being caused by tourism prior to Covid-19 are severe and widespread. In addition, the recent announcement from Minister Stuart Nash that the Tourism Futures Taskforce will be shut down (Jamieson, 2021) was mentioned by several speakers with concerns raised regarding how the Taskforce's interim report recommendations will be implemented.

The urgent need for action was also discussed through a positive lens. Covid-19 has enabled New Zealand to better understand the value of the domestic tourism market, and simultaneously, New Zealanders have increased their connection with their own backyard and their sense of collectivism. This, combined with the fruitful debate occurring across academia, industry and politics about the future of the tourism industry presents a unique opportunity for positive change. Indeed, there are already indications that changes are occurring, for example through the increased priority being placed by regional tourism organisations on engaging with their communities.

### A path forward

Sarah Bennett, travel writer and editor of *100% Pure Future – New Zealand Tourism Renewed* (Bennett, 2020), began the webinar by describing the increasing challenges she has faced through her career in reconciling the costs and benefits of tourism. She outlined why now is the perfect time to harness New Zealand's current sense of collectivism for the greater good, and she called on those fortunate enough to travel to be mindful of the privilege inherent in travelling.

Subsequently, David Simmons, Emeritus Professor of Tourism at Lincoln University and a specialist in destination management and economic yield, outlined opportunities to "find new compass bearings" for the tourism industry. He discussed four compass bearings, including the

Eliza Raymond is based at the School of Management, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.

© Eliza Raymond. Published in *Journal of Tourism Futures*. Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>.

opportunity to use tourism as a purposeful development tool, redirecting visitors to areas and regions with the greatest need. He called for new models of governance and new roles for government, including local authorities and the Ministry of Tourism.

Susanne Becken, Professor of Sustainable Tourism at Griffith University in Australia and the Principal Science Investment Advisor (Visitors) for the New Zealand Department of Conservation (DOC), then focused on the pressing need for a decarbonisation strategy for tourism in New Zealand. Alongside highlighting the importance of government support to address aviation fuels, she also shared examples of practical actions being taken by DOC to reduce their emissions by 3.3% every year through “measuring to manage”, innovation, working with others and regulatory processes.

Finally, drawing on more than 30 years of experience in sustainable tourism development, Dave Bamford charted a path forward to balance the use and protection of New Zealand’s national parks. He called for an end to the overly permissive approach to tourism in protected areas, which in the five years pre-Covid-19 was resulting in over-crowding, environmental degradation, cultural impacts and concession problems. He advocated for the proactive management of our protected areas and offered eight solutions, from limiting visitor numbers to specific sites, to the opportunity for DOC concessionaires to serve as conservation partners.

In summary, the webinar was a call to action for policymakers, industry stakeholders, concerned citizens and tourists. By drawing on their distinct areas of expertise, the four speakers collectively demonstrated the vital importance of accelerating action towards rebuilding a more regenerative tourism industry in New Zealand.

## References

Bennett, S. (Ed.) (2020), *100% Pure Future New Zealand Tourism Renewed*, Bridget Williams Books.

Jamieson, D. (2021), “Minister shuts down Tourism Taskforce after releasing ‘bold’ draft report”, *Stuff*, available at: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/12466626/minister-shuts-down-tourism-taskforce-after-releasing-bold-draft-report>.

---

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

[www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm](http://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm)

Or contact us for further details: [permissions@emeraldinsight.com](mailto:permissions@emeraldinsight.com)