

Outdoor recreation in a superdiverse New Zealand

Diversity

New Zealand is an increasingly diverse nation – a rich cultural mix of peoples from the Pacific and elsewhere. Participation in outdoor recreation is still dominated by Pākehā. The challenge for the industry is to understand the needs of a diverse population. This includes recognising the many and varied ways that immigrants and others choose to access the great outdoors. Below are some statistics on the makeup of NZ's population, implications for delivery of programmes and services and some case studies.

New Zealand's changing population profile

New Zealand's population is increasingly [superdiverse](#) – comprising people of mixed ethnic backgrounds. Thirty-seven percent of all immigrants since 2010 are of Asian origin, being mainly from India, China and the Philippines. Of NZ's current population, 12% identify as Asian going to 22% by 2038. Fifty-one percent of New Zealanders will be Asian, Māori and Pasifika by 2038. NZ's four most common languages after English are:

- Te reo Māori
- Samoan
- Hindi
- Northern Chinese language

[Diversity Matters](#). We need to think about language, culture and values in relation to outdoor recreation.

With the range of languages, cultures, and socio-economic status amongst our community we cannot make generalisations. We need to recognise alternative value systems, calls on time and available resources.

“Many immigrants have come to NZ to improve their lives via hard work in business so giving up time to do something without financial reward doesn't make sense to many immigrants.”

- [Estella Lee](#) (from Chinese Conservation Trust) on volunteering

Cultural intelligence is vital for people working in the outdoor recreation and sport sector. Marketing and promotion needs to reflect a diverse audience. The social networks of immigrants will vary according to their socio-status and how they arrived in NZ – whether as refugees or migrants.



“I was raised in NZ but my roots are firmly planted in China”

- NZ-born son of Chinese parents

Recreation preferences

Asian migrants wanting to access outdoor recreation, identified cost, time, transport and ‘nobody to go with’ as the constraints. They value the social opportunities of spending time with family, socialising and creating contacts.

“We tour together as a family which means we can go for walks to see sights, but can't go hiking.”

For Māori, mountaineering can be perceived as an insult to the oldest ancestors, the mountains [see quote], and Māori people are more likely to go hunting or fishing in the outdoors – a purposeful activity. NZ Pacific Islanders may gather food and do other family-related activities, but the cost of outdoor activities, and a recent history of working in hard physical jobs may be part of the reasons that Pacific Island peoples rarely tramp/hike.

“From a Māori perspective, the mountains are our oldest ancestors and to stand on top of them and say you've beaten them is disrespectful.”

- Dr Ihirangi Heke

How might we do things differently?

- Management of natural areas to accommodate multi-generational groups
- Site facilities
- Leadership – guides and instructors reflecting ethnic makeup of NZ
- Information about opportunities and how to accommodate groups in a range of formats and languages
- Promotion of opportunities that are close to home
- Respond to demographic changes in numbers of people accessing outdoor recreation in NZ
- [Affordable opportunities](#) that require little or no equipment.

Current situation

Participation

Analysis of ActiveNZ (2017) data about participation by different ethnic groups in outdoor recreation reveals that with the exception of Māori fishing and hunting, all other activities have lower levels of participation.

“We’re from a hunter gatherer background...physical exertion should involve contributing to our families and communities. Going mountaineering by yourself may be seen by others as individualistic and selfish – what purpose does it serve?”

- [Michelle Schaaf](#), University of Otago



Personnel/staff

Eighty-one percent of [industry workers](#) are Pākehā/European ethnicity – compared to 77% in the total workforce. Asian workers at 6.9% are under-represented in the OR workforce. Māori make up 12.2 % and Pacific Island peoples 3.4%. Figures include tour guides¹.

¹ Sport, Recreation and Performing Arts Industries’ Workforce Scan 2018., Skills Active, NZ.

Case study

Jenny Lim from Auckland, discusses the ActivAsian programme run by Harbour Sport² – click [here](#) to listen.

Creating change

What can you do to become more inclusive of our diverse communities?

Take action on the following steps:

- Develop a mission that embraces [inclusion](#), reflecting the superdiversity of New Zealand communities
- Network with key groups and ask the right questions re [programming](#) and choice
- Develop [cultural competence](#) and inclusive attitudes – in your organisation and staff
- Seek to provide activity choices reflecting cultural differences, and use [inclusive language](#) and imagery about your event or programme

References

- [ActivAsian, Asian Community Sport Resources, Harbour Sport Auckland.](#)
- [Becoming an inclusive recreation provider, New Brunswick Association for Community Living](#)
- [Connecting migrant and refugee youth to the power of sport.](#)
- [Diverse Communities Webinar: Insights to Action on Sport Tutor](#)
- [Diversity Works helps businesses develop diverse and inclusive workplaces](#)
- [Ethnic diversity in the hills – where is it? Wilderness Magazine article, Matthew Pike, 13 Dec 2013](#)
- [Introducing the Atua Matua Māori Health framework, Dr Ihiranqi Heke.](#)
- [Meet the Walking Samoans out to change the statistics one step at a time](#)
- [Mountain Safety Council NZ, Multi-language resources](#)
- [Outdoor Attitudes-Knowledge Research Report 2015. NZSAR](#)
- [Outdoors for all: Why diversity matters to the outdoor industry, James Edwards Mills \(2016\)](#)
- [Recent immigrants’ recreation experiences of outdoor nature-based settings in New Zealand. \(2010\) Brent Lovelock, Anna Thompson-Carr, Kirsten Lovelock, Carla Jellum.](#)
- [Sport, Recreation and Performing Arts Industries’ Workforce Scan 2018, Skills Active, NZ.](#)
- [Statistics NZ](#)
- [Superdiversity has reached critical mass – it’s New Zealand’s future. NZ Herald article, 19 Oct 2015.](#)
- [Ethnicity diversity in the hills – where is it? Accessed from https://www.wildernessmag.co.nz/ethnic-diversity-hills/](#)

² harboursport.co.nz/communitysport/asian-community-sport/