2025/26

# The Value of Cruise Tourism

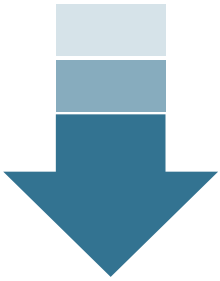
Despite record demand for cruising worldwide, New Zealand's overall cruise visitation and economic contribution continue to decline, highlighting the challenge of securing a greater share of global cruise growth. Providing long-term regulatory certainty and a more competitive operating environment is essential to securing future ship deployments, protecting Kiwi jobs and ensuring the nation benefits from strong global cruise growth.



## 2025/26 Aotearoa New Zealand Cruise Industry Economic Contribution

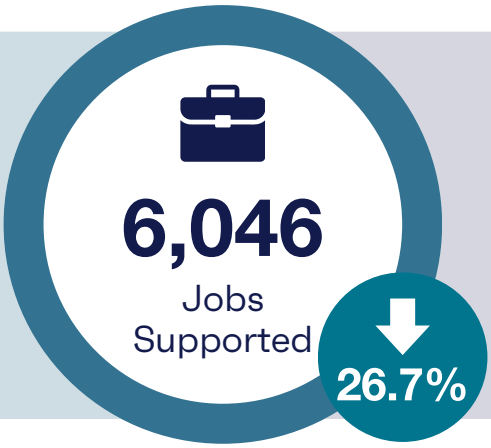


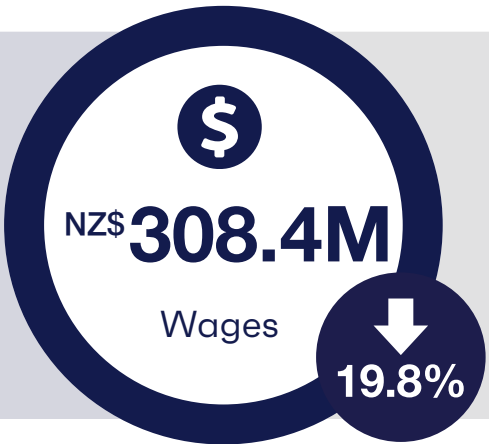

Cruise tourism generated NZ$980.1 million in total economic output across New Zealand in 2025–26, supporting 6,046 jobs and NZ$308.4 million in wages. These substantial benefits were delivered despite a further reduction in cruise ship deployments and decline in turnaround activity, against a backdrop of ongoing regulatory uncertainty and rising operating costs. The findings reinforce the importance of maintaining New Zealand's competitiveness to secure its share of global cruise growth and the economic benefits this brings to businesses and communities."



Down **20.5%** Total Economic Output on previous years




*Source: Economic Impact Assessment of Cruise Tourism in New Zealand 2025/26, prepared by AEC Group Ltd.

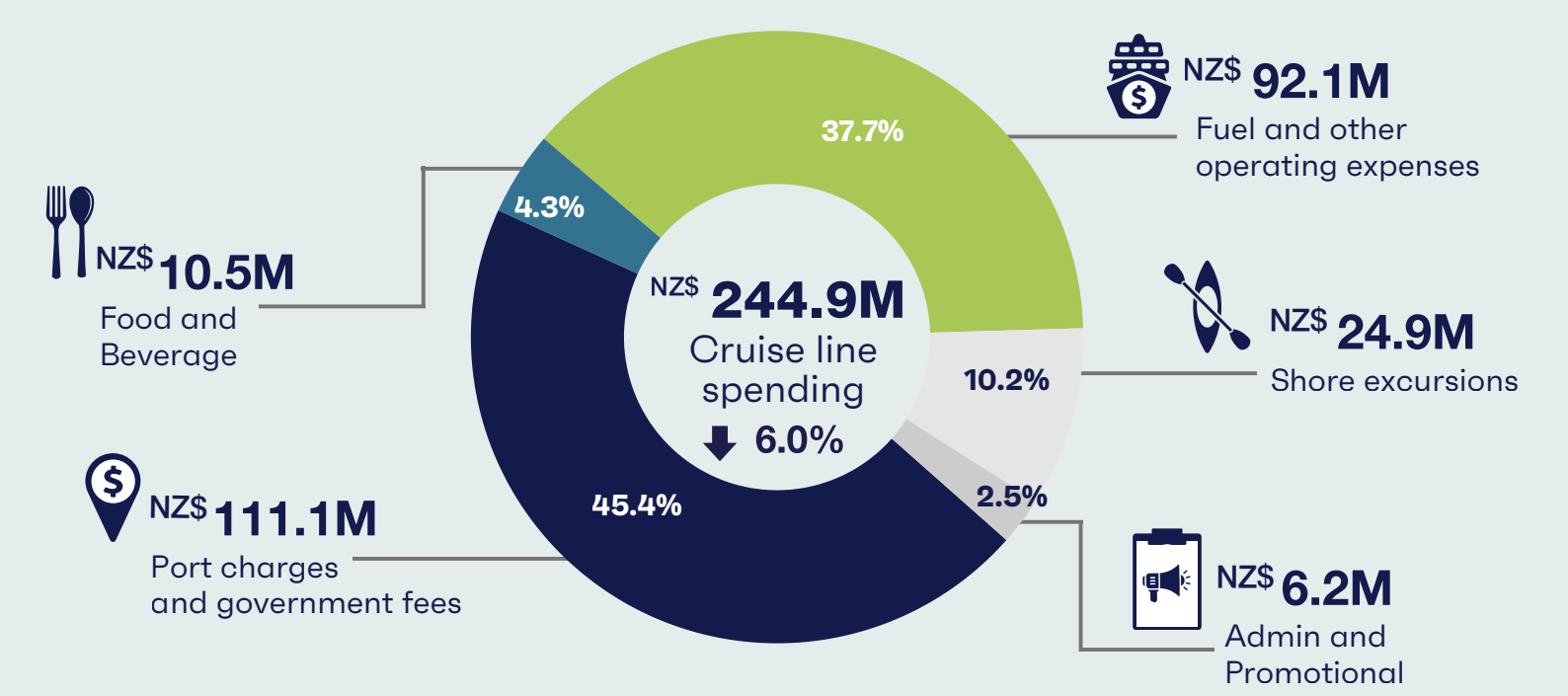
## Cruise ship visits around New Zealand

New Zealand recorded 673 cruise ship visit days across 23 ports and destinations in 2025–26, generating 989,703 passenger visit days. Total ship visits declined 27.7%, including a 27.2% reduction in transit calls and a 32.5% reduction in turnaround calls. Despite this reduction in activity, cruise tourism continued to support businesses and communities throughout the country."



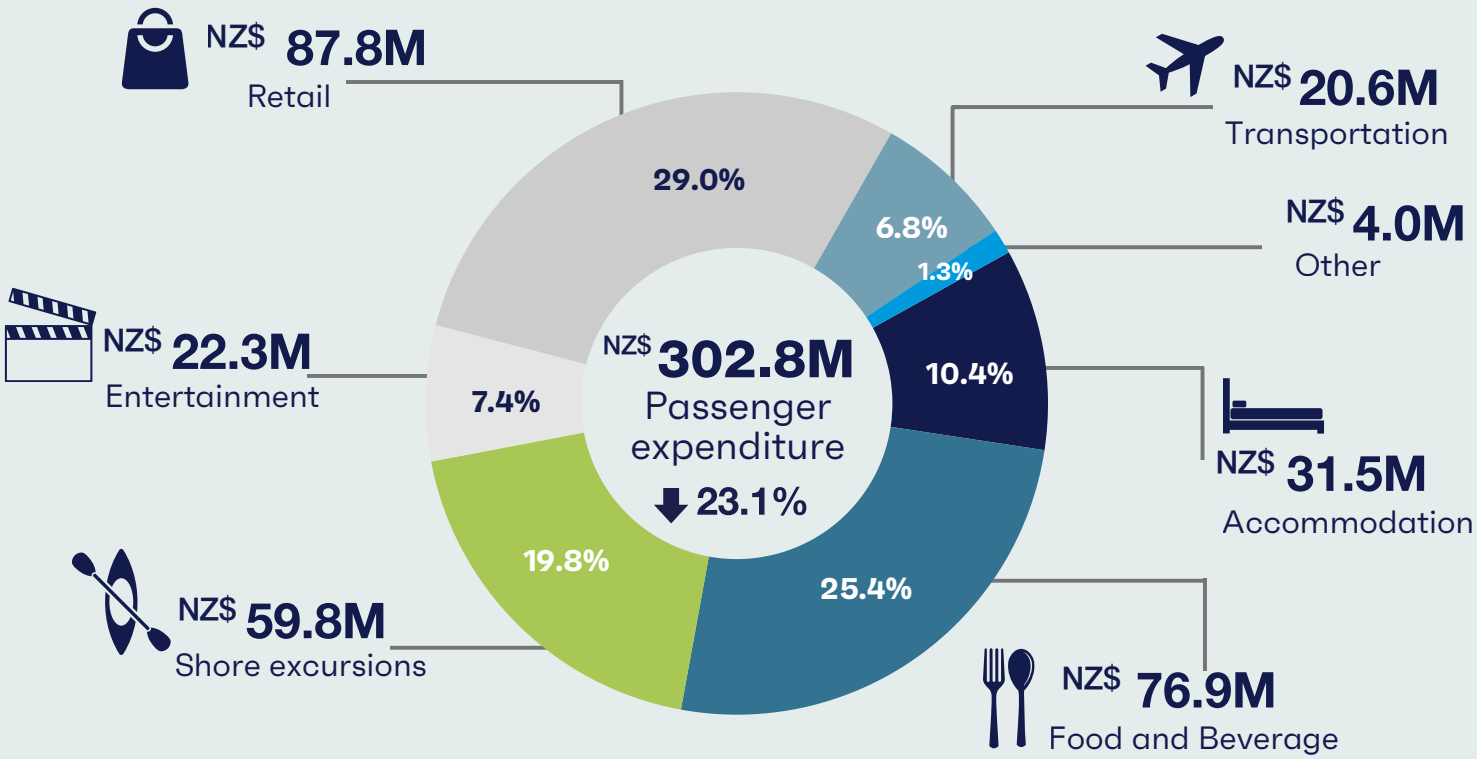

## Cruise line expenditure in New Zealand

Cruise lines spent NZ$244.9 million in New Zealand in 2025–26, supporting ports, local suppliers and tourism businesses across the country. This included NZ$111.1 million in port charges and government fees, representing 45.4% of total cruise line expenditure. Although cruise line spending declined 6.0% from the previous year, its continued contribution highlights the breadth of businesses and services supported by cruise operations.



## Passenger expenditure in New Zealand

Cruise passengers spent an estimated NZ$302.8 million onshore in New Zealand during 2025–26, supporting accommodation providers, restaurants, retailers, tour operators and transport services. Total passenger expenditure declined 23.1% as passenger visit days fell 21.4%, highlighting the consequences of reduced cruise visitation for local businesses and regional communities.




## Average passenger spend per day: NZ$ 306

### Turnaround Ports

| Domestic pax | International pax |
|---|---|
| NZ$ 694 | NZ$ 735 |

### Transit Ports

| Domestic pax | International pax |
|---|---|
| NZ$ 252 | NZ$ 252 |

## Crew expenditure in New Zealand

**NZ$ 14.9M**
Total crew spend

**NZ$ 87.0**
Crew member average spend per day

# Regional breakdown

Cruise tourism delivers economic benefits across regional New Zealand, supporting local businesses, employment and visitor dispersal beyond the major cities. Auckland remains the country's principal cruise gateway, while destinations throughout the North and South Islands benefit from cruise visitation. Reduced ship deployment and fewer port calls reinforce the importance of maintaining New Zealand's competitiveness as a cruise destination.




*Fiordland visits generally involve scenic cruising only, without disembarkation.

Notes: The Value of Cruise Tourism economic impact assessment for New Zealand was prepared by AEC Group on behalf of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and the New Zealand Cruise Association (NZCA), covering the 2025–26 financial year (1 July to 30 June). Year-on-year economic impact comparisons reflect updated Stats NZ March 2024 input-output tables. Direct cruise tourism expenditure declined 16.3%, while total modelled economic output declined 20.5%; changes in economic output therefore do not reflect changes in cruise activity alone.