

Urban Environmental Management Approaches by Tourism Organisations in Wellington, New Zealand

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Executive Summary

This industry report highlights the main findings of a study which was conducted to investigate the nature and extent of environmental management by tourism organisations in Wellington. Organisations consisted of both individual tourism operators and industry/sector organizations. A total of 60 interviews were carried out in September/October 2008, in order to obtain information on the attitudes and experiences of tourism organisations in Wellington with regard to environmental management.

This study found that tourism organisations in Wellington, regardless of sector were mainly taking an informal approach towards environmental management. Almost 50% of tourism organisations have adopted a broad range of operational practices in the areas of energy, water and waste minimisation. When investigating other important aspects of environmental management that require a greater level of environmental knowledge, it was found that 67% of tourism organisations had considered environmental initiatives or activities as part of their supply chain management, 53% were engaging in environmental staff awareness and training, but only 30% were carrying out some form of environmental interpretation.

This study also identified the main factors and barriers influencing the adoption of environmental management practices. Based on multiple responses, the main factors influencing the adoption of environmental management practices were financial (26%),

market (20%), social (17%), and personal reasons (16%). The main barriers to environmental management were financial (33%), psychological (25%), physical (22%) and social (11%). As with tourism businesses, the public and private sectors have an important part to play with regard to urban environmental management.

Tourism businesses believe the role of public and private sector organisations is one of being informative (38%), providing leadership (21%), and marketing (16%). In order to achieve urban environmental sustainability in Wellington, increased cooperation, communication and encouragement among all key stakeholders in tourism is going to be necessary.

1. Introduction

Tourism in New Zealand depends heavily on the quality of the environment. Therefore, concerted actions must be taken to ensure New Zealand's '100% Pure' image is maintained. According to the New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2015, the tourism sector's ability to take a leading role in protecting and enhancing the environment is a key priority.

Based on semi-structured interviews, research was conducted to investigate the nature and extent of environmental management by tourism organisations in Wellington. Organisations consisted of both individual tourism operators and industry/sector organisations.

A total of 60 interviews were carried out in September/October 2008, in order to obtain information on the attitudes and experiences of tourism organisations in Wellington with regard to environmental management. Table 1 outlines the breakdown of the sample population – number of tourism operators in urban Wellington (taken from Positively Wellington Tourism) and the amount of data.

Table 1: Research Sample - Data Collection

SECTOR	No. Contacted from Sector		No. of Interviews Conducted
	n	%	n
Accommodation (n=131)	52	39.7	28
Attractions/Activities (n=140)	34	24.3	21
Transport (n=40)	20	50.0	6
External Agencies* (n=10)	5	50.0	5
TOTAL (n=321)	111	34.6	60

* Estimate, not taken from Positively Wellington Tourism.

2. Study Context: Wellington, New Zealand

This study was conducted of tourism organisations located in Downtown Wellington city and the surrounding city suburbs. This area was chosen for the following reasons:

- The Downtown Wellington/city suburbs consist of a diverse range of tourism products which mainly include urban tourism yet due to the city being compact it promotes ‘nature close to the city’.
- The capital city of New Zealand is Wellington. The presence of central government may influence the behaviour and attitudes of tourism operators.
- At the local government level, Wellington City Council (WCC) has a proposed vision to become carbon neutral. This vision extends to the activities of the Council, businesses and wider community.

- At the RTO level: Positively Wellington Tourism has been noted as the most innovative in New Zealand, and is one of nine regions which has recently gained funding for a sustainable tourism advisory service ('STAR').

3. Environmental Management Approaches

Tourism organisations in Wellington showed a high level of general awareness in terms of global environmental issues and in managing their firms' impacts on the environment. Respondents were asked: 'what types of global environmental issues are you or your businesses aware of?' and in what way(s) do you think your business may have an impact on the environment. This high level of general awareness was further evident by the range of approaches being taken. Environmental management approaches consisted of:

- Formal approaches
- Semi-formal approaches
- Informal approaches

3.1 Formal Approaches

Formal approaches refer to the extent to which organisations have defined an environmental policy, developed procedures for environmental objectives, allocated responsibilities, selected and implemented environmental activities and monitored or reviewed such processes. It was found that just under one-third (18) of tourism businesses in Wellington were carrying out formal methods of environmental management. Such an approach was found among larger tourism businesses, particularly chain hotels and well-known tourist attractions.

"The environmental policy covers legislation, energy efficiency, the community, staff, environmental improvement and reporting. And this is put up, signed obviously by a general manager, put up, down in our lobby, and made public to our guests." (Accommodation provider 16)

The majority of public and private tourism industry bodies also seemed to demonstrate this notion due to their size, greater exposure to a wide range of stakeholders such as government and because of their reputation as a key player in the tourism industry. Larger establishments are more likely to be environmentally-conscious, carrying out more formal approaches as a result of having more resources available to them.

3.2 Semi-Formal Approaches

Almost a quarter of tourism businesses (13) in Wellington are beginning to seriously consider the need to become more environmentally responsible. They are in the process of employing a more formal and strategic approach towards environmental management.

“It’s starting to be developed to what we need it to be today rather than what we needed it to be 10 years ago. So the policy is changing. There’s always been one but it’s changing to suit the needs today.” (Accommodation provider 7)

“It’s developing, the policies change as more fuel efficient vehicles come about...because we’re only at the initial stages we need to look at what we’re doing, and where we need to head...” (Transport operator 4)

These tourism businesses acknowledge the importance of the environment and indicate their intentions of wanting to change in order to demonstrate their responsibility and commitment to the environment. Tourism businesses undertaking semi-formal approaches recognise the need to:

- Assess their current situation with regard to environmental considerations
- Treat change with caution
- Understand the full implications of carrying out a more formal approach and how they can measure outcomes

3.3 Informal Approaches

Informal approaches were found among almost half (29) of Wellington tourism businesses. Daily activities that require little thought and reduce a firm’s impact on the environment in the areas of energy, water, and waste are representative of less formal

approaches towards environmental management. Regardless of sector, smaller operators with less resources and informal management were likely to be carrying out such an approach.

“The B&B is actually just a side business for us. It’s sort of an extension of our own home. So you know it’s basically a lot of the domestic things...”
(Accommodation provider 5)

“OK, so to manage it, it’s a day to day ongoing thing...Although there is no formal policy that we put out to the staff with the expectations, they know my personal expectations; they know my business expectations...” (Activity operator 5)

Also, due to their limited networks within the industry, smaller businesses may be less aware of their impact on the environment. Most small businesses identify their impacts as minimal yet small-medium sized businesses dominate New Zealand’s tourism industry. Despite their perceived minimal impact on the environment they should be taking steps to becoming more formal in their environmental management approaches as they collectively form a significant part of the tourism industry.

4. Environmental Management Practices

This study found that tourism organisations in Wellington were carrying out both formal and informal (operational) environmental practices. While the purpose of this research was not to document all specific environmental practices it investigated important aspects of environmental management that tend to require a greater level of environmental knowledge:

- Supply chain management
- Environmental awareness and training
- Environmental interpretation

Such aspects tend to be considered in the design of formal approaches commonly found among larger businesses. However, all tourism businesses (regardless of size) were asked

to comment on these different aspects in order to identify and discuss further implications of both formal and operational environmental management practices.

4.1 Supply Chain Management

Supply chain management from an environmental perspective considers the management of material and information flows, and cooperation with other companies. It was found that 36 out of 55 tourism businesses and most public and private sector organisations (4 out of 5) were taking part in 'green' supply chain management practices but the extent of such practices was not surprisingly much greater among larger businesses.

“We aim in getting producers that provide us with environmental responsibility. We’ve got like health pack suppliers, that use New Zealand made 100% biodegradable products. It doesn’t come from overseas. We work with like-minded suppliers that have good policies.” (Accommodation provider 8)

Smaller tourism businesses do what they can with the money and resources available to them. For some what they do in their private lives determines whether they actively choose more environmentally-friendly alternatives.

“Biodegradable detergents, energy-efficient light bulbs, are all part of the consideration that we have. And it’s part of living in New Zealand. It’s less so a business option, it’s more a lifestyle option for most Kiwis. So it just flows onto the business.” (Activity operator 2)

A small number of tourism businesses also indicated that they had not considered this aspect or they were at the initial stages of looking into their supply chain and how they could possibly manage it in a more environmentally-friendly way.

“I’ve never thought about it because we don’t really use – the only real supplier is for some of our cleaning products but I don’t really know where they have come from.” (Accommodation provider 25)

“We’re approaching this very much incrementally rather than in one go because of the significant expenditure we’d want to try and get it as right as

we can, without potentially going down the wrong track and then having to spend a lot of money to get back on the right track.” (Transport operator 2)

As an aspect of environmental management that requires greater knowledge, some tourism businesses are only in their planning stages so they may not have all the answers to fully implement such practices. Well-designed environmental supply chain management systems may improve a firm’s environmental performance, reduce costs, and assist in forming stronger linkages between suppliers and the wider community.

4.2 Environmental Awareness and Training

Larger businesses with formal approaches had implemented a much greater number of activities or initiatives pertaining to employees than their smaller counterparts. Out of 60 respondents, just over half of all tourism businesses (29) and three industry organisations expressed their efforts in providing their staff with environmental knowledge and training. For most of these businesses, particularly larger ones, these activities are undertaken via a formal approach as they are likely to be part of a firm’s overriding environmental policy or strategy.

“Everyone that works here knows what our mission is, what our goals are. It’s part of our environmental policy - we communicate the reasons as to why we do things.” (Transport operator 1)

“It’s part of our overall policy. We make sure staff are aware of our environmental commitment, and as best as we can, we communicate this message to them...” (Accommodation provider 9)

Tourism businesses recognise the importance of communicating their environmental values and commitment to their staff. Employees are vital to the smooth operation of a business and therefore such environmental values need to be shared among all. Common ways in which larger and medium-sized Wellington tourism businesses seem to be approaching this issue are through:

- Regular staff meetings – establishment of ‘green’ teams/environmental managers
- Staff incentives

- Staff induction and training programmes

Proper communication, training and enforcement of behavioural changes among staff may lead to significant saving options as expected attitudes and behaviours are well informed. Smaller tourism businesses in Wellington are implementing such staff awareness and communication programmes where they can. While such methods are much less formal as a consequence of size, smaller businesses seem to recognise the need to spread their environmental initiatives to include all employees.

However, due to a lack of information or proper framework in which to guide them, some businesses struggle to put their intentions into action. Nonetheless, firms are increasingly realising the need to follow the 'green path' as a result of where the market is heading. Businesses need to consider their environmental impacts and the potential impacts of such change on existing business processes as it is important to get staff on board at all levels so that there is a shared environmental vision right across the company.

4.3 Environmental Interpretation

Tourism businesses should strive to communicate and interpret their environmental values to tourists as it may reduce negative impacts by generating a greater understanding of environmental issues. Well less than half of all businesses interviewed (18 out of 60) are engaging in environmental interpretation. Large tourism businesses particularly chain hotels consider environmental interpretation an important part of their overall environmental policy or strategy.

“We have the environmental policy that’s available at the reception area. On there it’s got information about Green Globe and also about our environmental strategy. Also in the rooms we promote what we’re all doing and it’s pretty much about if they want to join us then they can do.”
(Accommodation provider 22)

By way of displaying environmental policies in public areas where guests can see them and providing information pertaining to the environmental values of the business in guest rooms, visitors are made aware of the various ways in which tourism businesses are

trying to actively reduce their negative impacts on the environment. It also invites guests to ask for further information if they wish to find out more about such initiatives. Environmental interpretation requires businesses to identify ways that are both interesting and entertaining to the audience. Smaller businesses that take on a less formal approach to environmental management are finding more creative ways to express their views.

“We try and make it a little bit of fun. We have green days once a month where we decorate the reception area green and all the staff wear green. We put up big notices saying to people the reason we’re doing this is because, we’ve got to protect the environment.” (Accommodation provider 7)

Key aims of such environmental initiatives are to hopefully change people’s perceptions about the value of the natural environment and teach individuals how to become more environmentally responsible. Tourism operators who conduct their business in natural areas of Wellington recognise the importance of being environmentally responsible and communicate this to their visitors as much as they can. This is mainly carried out by providing information to guests on appropriate behaviour and informing visitors on how they can minimise their direct impacts on natural areas. Despite the examples above, small tourism businesses in particular currently lack environmental interpretation practices.

5. Influences and Barriers to Environmental Management

It is important to examine the influences and barriers to environmental management as it provides another means to explore and better understand environmental management.

5.1 Main Factors Influencing Adoption

The main factors influencing the adoption of environmental practices among tourism organisations in Wellington are identified as:

- Financial
- Social

- Market
- Personal

5.1.1 Financial

Tourism businesses in urban Wellington recognise the economic incentives in undertaking environmental management practices. Not only does employing various environmental initiatives reduce the amount of resource consumption e.g. water and energy, it can result in long-term savings for the future of the organisation.

5.1.2 Social

Pressures from consumers and the wider tourism industry have an influence upon the adoption of environmental practices. Tourism businesses highly value their customers and acknowledge the fact that public awareness of environmental issues is much higher and so they are being pushed by their clientele to adopt environmentally-friendly practices. Some tourism businesses also indicate part of their reason in adopting environmentally-friendly practices is due to their linkages with government and within the corporate sector.

“We do a lot of work for government and corporate businesses, and a lot of them are trying to reduce the emissions too. So by us being able to offset ours helps them out too.” (Transport operator 4)

This notion is very relevant due to Wellington being the capital city of New Zealand. Government departments and those within the corporate sector make up a large majority of customers for some of the larger inner-city hotels and transportation companies in Wellington. As a result of this relationship, businesses feel an even greater push by these clients to commit to being eco-friendly.

Social pressures on tourism organisations also extend to the wider tourism industry. Some businesses commented on the overall constant pressure from the industry as a whole due to expectations from Tourism New Zealand and the latest New Zealand

Tourism Strategy 2015, others have noted specific industry pressures arising as a result of the newly introduced 'green' rating from Qualmark.

5.1.3 Market

The role of the market also proved an influential factor among tourism businesses in Wellington. In recognition of the growing social pressures facing tourism businesses to become more environmentally responsible, many firms identify having environmentally-friendly practices can provide a marketing edge and boost one's corporate image within the marketplace.

It gives us an edge over our competitors. If I'm doing things to protect the environment I can go out and speak and promote myself, which is always an advantage." (Accommodation provider 12)

For tourism businesses, gaining a competitive advantage over others is also good for business. Some Wellington tourism businesses, particularly chain-affiliated hotels have adopted environmentally-friendly practices in the hope of attracting the ever growing green market segment. They may be seen as the business of choice if they can demonstrate their environmental commitment to their customers.

5.1.4 Personal

Personal reasons were also found to be a quite popular response among tourism businesses in Wellington in adopting environmental management practices. Individuals' knowledge of the environment, their own beliefs and values towards protecting it, education and a sense of 'doing the right thing' are all factors which play a role in the decision-making process by businesses to adopt environmentally-friendly practices. Other less common factors influencing the adoption of environmental practices were those more internal to the firm, regulatory requirements and health. Table 2 summarises the main factors of adoption.

Table 2: Factors Influencing Adoption of Environmental Management Practices

Factor Of Adoption*	n	% (n=69)
Financial	18	26.09
Market	14	20.29
Social	12	17.39
Personal	11	15.94
Organisational Culture	3	4.35
Other	11	15.94
TOTAL	69	100.00

*Based on multiple responses

5.2. Barriers

The section above identified a number of key factors influencing the adoption of environmental management practices. At the opposite end, there are factors which hinder the adoption of environmental management practices, known as barriers. The main barriers to environmental management identified by Wellington tourism businesses are:

- Financial
- Psychological
- Physical
- Social

5.2.1 Financial

Financial barriers relate to the amount of money available in the business and the cost of implementing environmental initiatives. A number of tourism businesses recognise that the initial cost of undertaking environmentally-friendly systems is relatively high. Also, costs increase for businesses that have had to spend money renovating old properties in order to become more eco-efficient. This is further compounded by the fact that environmentally-friendly products such as energy-efficient lights or recycled paper also tend to be more expensive.

“The only barrier would be in terms of cost, I don’t think there would be any others. It’s about the cost of products and services, and weighing this up. Recycled paper is more expensive than the normal paper we use.”
(Accommodation provider 13)

Tourism businesses are not as willing to invest in environmental management practices if they are unable to see a return on investment. While the introduction of environmentally-friendly practices such as solar heating may seem attractive, it may not be economically viable for a tourism business if the costs seem to outweigh the benefits. Tourism businesses already have to consider a number of other costs, and if environmental management is not deemed a central focus of the organisation then it is much more difficult to obtain the money for implementing such practices.

5.2.2 Psychological

Psychological barriers refer to those present in the attitudes, values and behaviours of tourism businesses. For tourism businesses in urban Wellington, many seem to battle with not only the fact that they cannot see an immediate outcome but also the amount of time taken to plan for and implement environmental management practices.

“It’s very easy to spend time on banking or making a reservation because you know you’re going to get an immediate outcome. With this you’re not getting an immediate outcome. Sometimes you feel like you’re doing all these things but you’re not seeing the results straight away so it’s a little bit frustrating.”
(Accommodation provider 7)

Tourism businesses are practicing environmental management yet the barriers which may face them refer to the time that they have available to commit to their environmental initiatives as they already have other paid roles and responsibilities within the organisation. Also, a small number of tourism businesses wanting to actively engage in environmentally-friendly practices were dealing with issues of confidence or trust in ‘getting it right’.

“It took me a long time to figure out the right business to go with. I mean you’re spending a lot of money and a lot of it is trust based, [in] that you actually get what you want at the end...” (Transport operator 4)

Because tourism businesses believe there is no easy road map available to them in becoming more environmentally-friendly they have a lot of questions and doubts as to which path they should follow in becoming 'green'. There seems to be no single 'right' way to becoming green with a large number of organisations currently providing products, services and advice on environmental issues. While time taken or issues of trust can prove a barrier it may be seen as a better way of doing business as one wants to be assured that they are 'getting it right' the first time, thus making a wise decision for the long-term benefit of the organisation.

5.2.3 Physical

Tourism businesses expressed physical barriers in terms of location and size, relative to the limited space or land and existing buildings they operate within. Some businesses feel they are limited to the amount of what they can do from the perspective of environmental management, trying to do what they can with the space and resources available to them. This feeling was common among businesses that operated in older buildings as part of operating in an older building was essential to the historical character of the business therefore they did not want to tamper with this. Consequently, tourism businesses such as this face the issue of whether to implement environmental practices in order to follow the 'green' trend at the cost of upsetting or damaging the reputation on which their business is founded upon. In addition, there may also be a cost factor as seen with those businesses wanting to upgrade or renovate existing structures.

5.2.4 Social

Social barriers refer to those in the form of resistance to change by employees, visitors, and in general society; and a lack of knowledge, education or support for the environment. If visitors in particular do not possess enough awareness or support for the environment it may prove very challenging for a tourism business who may want to go 'green' to actually enforce such an approach.

“The main one is other people not caring. Just because you care about something, you can't force someone else to care about it, especially guests

that check in, you can't force them to care about something that you're trying to do.” (Accommodation provider 7)

Visitors pay for a service so environmental issues are unlikely to be at the top of their minds. The last thing visitors may want to do is consider how long they should spend in the shower or whether they should separate out their rubbish. As much as tourism operators indicate their interests in protecting the environment, their main aim is to ensure the comfort and relaxation of the guest at the expense of such resources as energy or water. The barriers to environmental management need to be addressed by identifying possible solutions that will require greater communication and cooperation among key stakeholders. Table 3 illustrates the main barriers to environmental management.

Table 3: Barriers of Environmental Management Practices

Barriers*	n	% (n=72)
Financial	24	33.33
Psychological	18	25.00
Physical	16	22.22
Social	8	11.11
Other	6	8.33
TOTAL	72	100.00

* Based on multiple responses

6. Role of Public and Private Sector Organisations

Effective urban environmental management can only be achieved through the cooperation of all stakeholders. Various concerns of tourism stakeholders need to be considered. To investigate the role of tourism organisations in Wellington such as the RTO, Wellington City Council and other industry/sector organisations as a source for environmental management, tourism businesses were asked: *‘what do you believe their*

role should be regarding environmental management?’ Tourism businesses believe the role of public and private sector organisations is to:

- Provide information and guidance (Informative)
- Lead by example (Leadership)
- Promote environmentally-friendly operators (Marketing)

6.1 Informative

Most tourism businesses believe the role of the public and private sector with regard to environmental management should be to give advice to tourism businesses and guide them in their approaches towards being environmentally-friendly. Public sector agencies and public-private partnerships such as the RTO need to encourage tourism businesses as well as provide relevant information and guidelines in becoming more environmentally-friendly. This could be achieved through the sharing of knowledge and ideas of other businesses in the area that have already been recognised as leaders in sustainable tourism practices.

Tourism businesses feel that these public bodies need to be doing much more than they are at present by establishing such networks so that businesses can share ideas openly and work towards a more sustainable future for Wellington. Also, individual businesses believe that the information being provided by the likes of the RTO and other tourism bodies need to be aimed at educating operators in understanding the cost implications of undertaking environmentally-friendly practices, that in fact they can save money in the long-term. In examining the responses of tourism organisations, each expressed their role was to offer support to tourism businesses and provide advice to those wanting to become more sustainable.

“We see our role as being primarily about promotion and advocacy – part of that moving forward is that we’ve identified that the promotion of environmental sustainability is going to be an important issue going forward.” (Tourism organisation 2)

Public and private sector organisations are able to direct businesses to environmental ‘best practice’ guides (see www.tourism.govt.nz/sustainability) for the various sectors of the tourism industry and inform them on other sustainability related information and websites such as Green Globe and the Sustainable Business Network. Tourism industry/sector organisations in Wellington are striving to put out sound information to the rest of the industry in recognition of the importance of the environment and actively working towards the key outcomes related to the environment and sustainability as outlined in New Zealand’s Tourism Strategy 2015.

6.2 Leadership

Tourism businesses believe the role of public and private sector organisations is one of leadership with regard to environmental management. Tourism businesses felt they need to take more action due to the importance of sustainability within New Zealand and to the industry itself. The Tourism New Zealand Strategy 2015 outlines the significance of sustainability to the tourism industry and therefore businesses expressed the need for the public sector to administer what has been set down as a high level of guidance is required.

“I think they should set a standard. I think that they should like enforce it probably a little bit more than they do. I don’t know whether our formal approach to this has come about because it’s been told it has to, but I don’t feel like it has. I think that if we really want to change, the change could be made. And everyone could make change. But I feel like sometimes that the approach is sort of: Oh we don’t have to do it! So if we don’t have to do it, why should we do it?” (Accommodation provider 7)

Tourism businesses believe that the public and private sector organisations’ place within the tourism industry hierarchy reflects their potential as a leader to develop a clear message for where the sector is heading and guiding them in achieving pro-active environmental management. Two out of five industry/sector organisations believe their role is one of leadership.

“We take on a leadership role, as we need to be more on the front foot about what is happening in the industry, so we can drive behaviour and hopefully

change the way that businesses operate in keeping with the environment.”
(Tourism organisation 3)

“Our role is to take a lead and ensure that tourism businesses are operating in an environment that is profitable to them.” (Tourism organisation 5)

While few tourism industry organisations recognise their role regarding environmental management for tourism businesses is one of leadership; there remains somewhat of a mismatch between business concerns for what organisations such as the RTO should be doing by what they actually say they are doing. Even though two tourism organisations indicate the need to take the lead, the responses by tourism businesses show that they do not see a clear leader. This finding suggests that because there seems to be no clear leader; businesses may act in their own interests in wanting to protect the environment. Even though there is external pressure for businesses to become more eco-friendly, without a clear message and someone from within the industry to enforce it and guide the tourism industry, there is less likely to be change.

6.3 Marketing

A similar number of respondents recognised the marketing role agencies such as the RTO need to play in environmental management. Market image is a key factor in influencing the adoption of environmentally-friendly practices for tourism businesses in Wellington. Therefore, tourism businesses believe that the RTO should promote the movement of visitors to New Zealand who are seeking or wanting ‘green’ or sustainable experiences. Moreover, tourism businesses indicated the need for the public sector to be promoting the sustainable aspect as a result of the ‘100% Pure’ New Zealand branding. If New Zealand is supposed to be promoted as being clean and green to the rest of the world then businesses who are actively engaging in environmentally-conscious initiatives should be recognised for their efforts and more importantly all tourism businesses should be making sure they are living up to the ‘100% Pure’ identity.

Other marketing activities that the public and private sectors need to be engaging in include market research on sustainable trends as well as monitoring and communicating this information back to individual businesses as they feel they do not have the resources

to undertake such data collection. As the trend for those seeking ‘green tourism’ products increases, tourism businesses believe that efforts being made to become environmentally sustainable need to be acknowledged and promoted by the wider industry.

Other responses revealed that the public sector should play a financial, an infrastructural and regulatory role particularly in the case of local government. The financial role refers to providing support and incentives in the form of grants or a subsidy scheme to businesses that go down the ‘green’ path. Financial incentives may provide the means for other businesses especially smaller ones with limited resources and funding to realistically implement practical ways which minimise their firm’s impact on the environment. Public and private sector organisations also stated they had a financial role to play. The region’s tourism industry recently received government funding to put towards sustainable tourism.

Respondents also felt the local city council in particular should be playing a bigger in role in providing infrastructure to support the city’s goal in becoming sustainable by:

- Increasing recycling services - allowing more grades
- Providing more efficient public transport
- Ensuring there are enough recycling facilities around the city.

Table 4 summarises the role of the public and private sector organisations as identified by tourism businesses.

Table 4: Public and Private Sector Role Regarding Environmental Management

Role of Public and Private Sector	n	% (n=68)
Informative	26	38.24
Leadership	14	20.59
Marketing	11	16.18
Financial	10	14.71
Infrastructural	6	8.82
TOTAL	68	100.00

*Based on multiple responses

7. Conclusion

This study was conducted in order to explore the reality and extent of approaches towards environmental management by tourism organisations in Wellington. It has sought to provide a better understanding of such approaches by recognising the actions and attitudes of individual tourism operators and tourism industry/sector organisations.

The results of this study show that tourism businesses in Wellington, regardless of sector are mainly taking an informal approach towards environmental management. With the exception of large tourism businesses e.g. chain hotels in Wellington that operate at a multinational (global) level, the majority of tourism businesses have adopted a broad range of operational practices in the areas of energy, water and waste minimisation. Whilst such an approach was expected, employing a qualitative and more open method of enquiry revealed that tourism businesses in Wellington were slowly moving towards change. This was evident from the number of businesses that indicated they were undertaking environmental activities related to supply chain management, employee awareness and training, and interpretation.

The main factors influencing the adoption of environmentally-friendly practices also provided reasons for this change. Tourism businesses are able to see the financial benefits such as saving money in the long-term, the positive impact on positioning from a marketing perspective and as a result see a potential increase in consumer demand. However, due to a lack of resources and guidance, tourism businesses continue to face a range of difficulties or barriers, which again affects the pace of change. The main barriers to environmental management were financial, physical, psychological and social.

As with tourism businesses, the public and private sectors have an important part to play with regard to environmental management. They need to take a much more proactive role and administer what has been set down at the national level. Although there has been a lack of leadership and guidance, the public and private sectors have begun to recognise the importance in becoming an environmentally responsible leader.

8. Recommendations

In formulating the overall research problem it was hoped that this research might also assist in providing possible solutions to real problems by way of industry recommendations. These are described below with reference to both the individual tourism businesses, and the public and private sector.

8.1 Tourism businesses

Tourism businesses in Wellington are undertaking mainly informal approaches towards environmental management. The biggest hurdle for these businesses, the majority of whom are small-medium sized, is to overcome the barriers. While financial barriers in particular can cause a huge strain on businesses to becoming more environmentally responsible, the introduction of the Sustainable Tourism Advisors in Regions (STAR) programme is likely to alleviate some of the burden. Tourism businesses serious about wanting to make a change need to embrace programmes such as this as they represent a key step forward.

Tourism businesses, if they have not already done so, need to actually document their environmental initiatives so that they have a realistic idea of their efforts so far. By way of monitoring these, they then may be able to set realistic targets to achieve in areas such as water, energy and waste to begin with. Getting into good practices can lead to greater performance which in turn, may result in an increase in efficiency.

Iconic tourist attractions and large chain hotels within the region could also play an important role in leading the tourism sector by example. Based on their public reputation they may have an influence on other tourism businesses to follow them in becoming environmentally responsible. In addition, they may have the ability to enhance tourist's perceptions of Wellington as an environmentally sustainable tourism destination which leads to an overall positive image. Some tourism businesses in Wellington are responsible for the running of big events and because of the high degree of public exposure that such events bring; future events should be focused on environmental

sustainability. Encouragement and assistance from public and private sector organisations is likely to be necessary.

8.2 Public and Private Sector Organisations

The need for greater cooperation between key stakeholders of tourism will be essential to the development of urban environmental sustainability. The public and private sector needs to be taking on a more proactive role with regard to urban environmental management than they have in the past. The introduction of Qualmark Green and the STAR programme have seen the RTO embracing and facilitating these environmentally-focused programmes; indicating there is a move towards changing the RTO's role of marketing to putting a greater emphasis on destination management. This move will be crucial in working towards the ultimate goal of sustainability in tourism with regard to the company's and Wellington City Council's overall vision for the future. Due to the importance of the environment, at the regional level in line with the Council's vision, the tourism industry should act as a lead agent in working towards this goal.

Public and private sector organisations in Wellington need to take on a leadership role and guide the industry. With the exception of providing information, there is a need to engage more with tourism businesses in terms of environmental issues, communication and providing more encouragement. Tourism businesses already proactive in managing their impacts on the environment could provide a means to facilitate a networking system within the tourism industry. Business to business networking could be encouraged so that tourism operators could engage with other operators and learn from others' experiences. Public and private sector organisations will also need to provide training for smaller businesses in particular, in developing more formal or strategic management skills that are related to environmental management.

Tourism businesses that are practising environmental management could also be featured in an environmentally sustainable tourism business section of the RTO's website. Other advantages or benefits of practising environmental management also need to be communicated within the industry, particularly in relation to the financial implications of

adopting environmental management practices. Businesses need to understand that they can realistically save money in the long-term. The provision of information and communication of these benefits may encourage businesses to take-up such practices. Actual case studies based on real scenarios or stories of where tourism businesses have actually saved money may serve as a further way in which to inform businesses of the long-term financial benefits.

In achieving urban environmental sustainability in Wellington, greater provision of specific information regarding environmental sustainability, increased communication, engagement and encouragement among all key stakeholders in tourism is likely to be necessary. For tourism, an industry that relies heavily on the environment; it is undoubtedly clear that tourism businesses cannot simply ignore environmental issues. Environmental management will represent a key contribution to ensuring that New Zealand's unique environment is actively managed and maintained for the benefit of future generations.

Sources:

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