

Destination Waitaki – Newcomers Group – LANDSAR building, Oamaru – 30.4.21

Context

- 12 participants, 3 originally from overseas – UK, China and Spain.
- 7 participants 65+; 4: 51-64 and 1: 35-50 age group.
- All living in/aound Oamaru – 4 in Kakanui, 1 in Weston.
- 2 had been here less than 6 months; 3 6-18 months; 4 18m – 3 years and 3 > 3 years.
- 7 of the participants came from the North Island originally and 5 from the South Island. A mix of locations.
- Equal numbers (5) came either alone or with a partner/spouse. 1 with a friend and 1 with family.
- The majority (8) were not working; 4 were – 1 Full time; 3 part time. One of the non-workers is currently looking for employment.
- The vast majority are drawn here for a change in lifestyle. Family connections were also noted as was retirement/semi-retirement.

Key Selling Points

“Awesome place to raise a family”

“Small town, less pressure” “more quiet lifestyle”.

Why Waitaki?

- Ease of living here; No traffic problems
- Size of town suits me - It’s not Auckland, Christchurch or Wellington

What do they like about it?

SOCIAL

Strong sense of community

- Friendliness of neighbours; friendly faces; people chat, helpful
- Welcoming locals, bubbly town. Close community, everyone knows everyone.
- Community acceptance of Newcomers; quick to make connections; word of mouth
- Always meet people you know
- Mixed community (vs other SI towns)
- Support for your passions. You get noticed.
- Having Newcomers Group as a base to start. Newcomers’ connections – to tradespeople, doctors, dentists etc

Ease of Living /Lifestyle

- Walking distance to everywhere
- Good service from builders
- Plenty of things to see and do. Each day is a bonus.
- Enough shops for the things you need but close enough to Dunedin/Timaru eg Harvey Norman
- Music – for free
- Easy access to cycling and walking tracks
- Only 1.5 hours to Dunedin
- Quiet community

- Kakanui
 - Community, quiet, beach, friendly people
- Oamaru
 - Close for other interactions like the supermarket
 - Places to visit like the museum, repertory society etc

ENVIRONMENT

- Near the mountains
- The architecture of the place – history
- Beautiful surroundings
- Next to the beach- by the beach is what we wanted
- Living close to Oamaru
- Quiet environment, neighbours
- Good parking – no traffic jams

ECONOMIC

- Plenty of cafes

What do they think of Oamaru and Waitaki?

Social	Environment	Cultural	Other
Friendly & diverse place	Starting to look a bit tired	Historical treasure	Different
Something for almost everyone	Beach front town – winter beaches - wildness		
Step back in time/ slower pace	Clean air; Rural		
A million miles from the troubles	Geological diversity		

How would they describe it?

Social	Cultural	Other
Safe	A sense of pride in the heritage	A town you pass through/past; easy to miss
Ease of living	Feeling of solidity - buildings	Quirky/Groovy/Cool
Diversity of activities	Multicultural	Small but Big/small town feeling
Affordable housing (but changing rapidly)	Authentic heritage – REAL – you step back in time	Not a young person's town
Quieter lifestyle	Sense of heritage	Art & Music community
Family friendly		

- Not a young person's town (no shopping malls, funky bars, no cinema with latest films).

What could be improved for Visitors and Locals

Social	Environment/Assets	Cultural/Assets	Economic
Communication between groups on events – events guide missing	Quality of toilets vs other towns (eg Timaru)	Clean heritage buildings – cf Forrester Gallery & Museum	Encourage Visitors to stay for more than a day
Engage locals in story telling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge sharing - Volunteering helps – WSC/ Clarks Mill 	Lack of rubbish bins for visitors; options for recycling		Optimise the A2O end of trail experience 9 cf Napier – showers at the end of the trail)
More multicultural restaurants and events - CNY	Town looks dead – main street		
	Signage is shabby/lacking – no real North and South entrance points with information		
	Oamaru Walkway (lacking signage). Needs a tidy up.		

Key assets and experiences

Environment – Moeraki Boulders - most frequented attraction in the district (9/12 had visited). Trotter’s Gorge had been visited by over 40% and a third had done the Kurow Hill walk. 2 people had walked up Puketapu hill and done the Benmore Peninsula Track walk. Two people had also camped at the Waitaki Lakes.

Heritage & Social assets – Totara Estate, Clarks Mill and Benmore Dam– were visited ~60% and two thirds had visited Whitestone City. Only one person had visited Kurow Museum.

Our Arts & Cultural facilities were on the radar. 75% had been to an event at the Opera House and 50% had visited the Gallery. 1/3 had also visited the Museum.

Food & Beverages - Scott’s Brewery was the most visited bar/restaurant (>80%) and 50% had visited Riverstone Kitchen. Del Mar, Fleur’s Place and Cucina had been visited by one third of newcomers. 40% had visited Craftwork Brewery.

There is an opportunity to promote our hero destinations more overtly – 50% had visited Steampunk HQ and ~40% the Blue Penguin Colony and River T winery.

Of the experiences listed, only Omarama Hot Tubs had not been visited by any of the participants. Over 40% had been on the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail.

Highlighted Product and Asset Improvement Opportunities

Social/ Food & Drink	Environment/Geology	Cultural /Heritage	Economic
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Tiki tours – Riverstone Castle	Hampden Beach	Totara Estate – link to current day farming. Publish Farm stay register.	Overnight camping spot by the harbour
More multicultural restaurants and events – Chinese New Year/ Diwali		Harbour St	
		Tiki tour- Riverstone Castle; Kuraheka; Elephant Rocks, River T	
		Friendly Bay Train Dunedin Train Trip	
		Steampunk HQ – needs energy and life, more experiential assets; it's grubby	
		Maori history	
		Church histories/story telling	

Most memorable experiences to date

Social	Environment	Cultural/Heritage
Jazz Festival	Walks with Wednesday Walkers	Clarks Mill
Scott's Brewery – meeting place	Cycle Trail	Totara Estate – Scones and Tea
Events - Steampunk		Victorian Heritage Week
Brydone - coffee		
Opera House		
Esplanade – kid's playground		

How are visitors viewed?

- **Benefits**
 - Word of mouth promotion for the town and district
 - Bring \$\$
 - Bring vibrancy
- **Feedback**
 - Surprised by how much there is to see and do
- **Barriers**
 - Lack of transportation options
 - Rubbish – nowhere easy to dump

Sustainability ideas

- Protect for the future

- Respect
- Develop a sense of civic pride
- Take responsibility for waste management etc – integrate into the culture
- Celebrate

Who are our Newcomers?

Newcomers are actively involved in social activities, groups and clubs and a number were volunteers.

- **Sports, Health & Wellbeing**
 - Yoga x2
 - Badminton x 2
 - Line dancing x2
 - African dancing
 - Book Club
 - North Otago Tramping Club x 2
 - Coffee Riders Club
 - Wednesday Walkers/Newcomers Walking Group x 3
 - Awamoa Croquet Club (comment - very cold and too competitive. I just wanted companionship and fun. Gave up as they have many others).
 - Oamaru 4WD Club
 - Gym
- **Industry Groups**
 - Accommodation Providers
 - Waitaki Tourism Association
 - Tourism Waitaki
- **Specialist/Social Groups**
 - Grey Power
 - Toast Masters
 - MENZ Shed
 - Creative Fibres
 - Weston Community Church
 - Mum's Coffee Group
 - Oamaru Plant Exchange
 - Newcomers Group
 - English conversation group x 2
 - Community Gardens
 - Penguin Club
 - Oamaru Club
 - University of the third age (U3A)x3
 - Singing – Age Concern
- **Volunteers**
 - Opera House volunteer
 - Whitestone City volunteer x 2
 - Clarks Mill volunteer
 - Age Concern Volunteer
 - English conversation volunteer
 - Heritage Celebration committee

- Multicultural Council

How do they keep connected?

- Oamaru Mail
- Telegram
- Newcomers
- Facebook
 - Oamaru Today
 - Waitaki Voice
 - Gary Kircher
 - Waitaki Whitestone Geopark
 - Opera House
 - Waitaki Link
 - Waitaki Kids Collective
 - Rose's General Store

Who does Oamaru and Waitaki suit?

- Young families and retirees