

## ***Daily Telegraph newspaper in the UK named New Zealand the best country in the world***

University of Canterbury **December 3, 2013**

New Zealand needs to target tourists that spend more and have the shortest stay, a University of Canterbury tourist researcher says.

Dr Girish Prayag says he is not surprised readers of *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper in the UK named New Zealand the best country in the world in the newspaper's annual travel awards.

But, he says, for a sustainable tourism future New Zealand should look at targeting tourists that spend more money but do not stay too long.

China is the single largest source market of tourist arrivals (8.1 percent) to New Zealand followed by the UK (7.3 percent).

“The Chinese, on average, have the shortest length of stay while the Germans have the longest, followed by the British. The longer tourists stay, the more negative impacts they have on a destination,” Dr Prayag says.

“The Japanese spend far more than the Chinese market so, purely from an economic point of view, more tourists will certainly benefit the New Zealand economy.

“From a sustainability perspective, tourists that spend more are desirable. Given the clean and green image that NZ sells, the sustainability perspective makes more sense. Also, tourism research has shown that more tourists lead to less friendly residents over time.

“Given that friendliness is a key appeal for the British and other travellers to New Zealand, it makes more sense to target tourists that spend more and have the shortest stay. Clearly, having Air New Zealand as a runner up for the travel awards can only add to the attractiveness. After all, the staff and service provided by a national carrier is often a good proxy for friendliness of the general population and service levels at the destination.

“Based on statistics, Chinese tourists would seem to be among those having the lowest impact given their short stay and being among the highest spenders. One market that clearly stands out on length of stay, and the spend, is the Japanese market. They have the second lowest length of stay while spending more than the Chinese but less than the British.”

Dr Prayag says tourism issues are not just related to numbers and money but also the type of activities tourists engage with during their trip. Some activities have a higher negative impact than others. It is time the social and cultural impacts are also assessed considering the environmental footprint of tourists.

He says it is better for New Zealand to attract responsible tourists that leave the smallest footprint. Looking only at tourist numbers and dollars spent may be a myopic view of the impact that tourists have on communities.

Dr Prayag is researching tourist emotions and behaviour, and UC has the No.1 university department in marketing and tourism in New Zealand.