

Mackenzie Tourism Insights

September 2024



- Data for September 2024, marking the start of Spring, showed a mixed performance for Mackenzie's tourism sector. Visitor card spending and accommodation occupancy rates declined, while international visitor guest nights and employment earnings in select tourism-related industries saw increases.
- In the international visitor market, electronic card spending dropped by -5% YoY, while international guest nights rose by +4% YoY, suggesting a possible decrease in average spend, reduced day-trip visitation, or both.
- Australian visitors continued to lead international card spending, though their expenditures dropped sharply by -25% YoY. Among the top five international markets, spending by visitors from the 'Rest of Europe' (excluding UK and Germany) and 'Rest of Asia' (excluding China, Japan, and Korea) saw moderate growth at +9% and +7% YoY, respectively. Although overall international visitor card spending declined, spending in 'Retail F&B' and 'F&B Serving' categories rose significantly, by +31% and +28% YoY.
- Domestic visitor card spending decreased significantly by -28% YoY, along with a moderate drop in domestic guest nights (-12% YoY), indicating either a reduction in average spend, lower day-trip visitation, or a mix of both. Among the top five domestic markets, Otago (ranked 2nd in domestic visitor spending) saw the smallest YoY drop at -20%, while visitor spending from Canterbury, Mackenzie's largest domestic market, declined by -30% YoY.
- Occupancy rates slightly decreased, with commercial accommodations down by -3%pt and short-term rentals down by -6%pt YoY. The dip in commercial occupancy was influenced by a +5% YoY increase in active stay units alongside a -5% YoY decline in guest nights.
- Tourism-related employment remained stable (+1% YoY), though sector-specific job growth varied. 'Transport Services' experienced the largest rise in filled jobs, up +20% YoY, while employment earnings saw the strongest increase in the 'Accommodation and Food & Beverage Services' industry, with a +12% YoY gain.
- Daily occupancy rates in short-term rental accommodations held steady throughout September, with weekends showing higher visitor activity. Peak occupancy occurred on Friday, September 20th, and Saturday, September 21st, reaching 85% and 84% respectively, aligning with the Merrell Race Tekapo event.

Note: The monthly Tourism Data Insights are provided by Vistr who are contracted by Mackenzie Tourism (part of Mackenzie District Council).