

Book review

100% Pure Future – New Zealand Tourism Renewed

*Edited by Sarah Bennett
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Sarah Bennett's "100% Pure Future – New Zealand Tourism Renewed", published in 2020, is a collection of viewpoint essays that describes itself as a "rallying call for a genuine tourism 'reset'", prompted by the common re-imagination of tourism induced by Covid-19. This is not an academic work, instead a short book that aims to make important topics accessible to a wider audience without prior knowledge.

In this, "100% Pure Future" succeeds. If a friend or relative with neither an academic nor a tourism background would express interest in the state of New Zealand tourism, this is what I would send their way. In fact, the review copy is currently being enjoyed by my neighbour and prompts the occasional discussion. Contributing authors represent a variety of tourism stakeholders, including academia, conservation, governance and industry, reflect on past developments and current states of New Zealand tourism, and question the suitability of past approaches moving forward into a future increasingly focussed on not only sustainable but also regenerative tourism. This includes, for example, the still neglected role of indigenous peoples and culture (Te Ngāhe Wanikau), carbon emissions (Susanne Becken), natural resource management (Dave Bamford) and tourism policy (Raewyn Peart). In doing so, the complexities of managing tourism emerge clearly, as do the existing gaps in policy, legislation,

values, business and behaviour – all presented in an easy-to-read and at times entertaining format, written for non-academics and also of interest to readers outside of New Zealand in which many challenges are all too common across the globe. But what this book often falls short on is its future perspective.

It does part of what it claims to do on the jacket – it highlights existing industry challenges, examines barriers to achieving truly sustainable tourism, it even at times presents a vision, but more often than not fails to show how the widely discussed problems "can be overcome". With the notable exceptions of Bamford, proposing specific measures for managing outdoor recreation in New Zealand's natural parks, and Becken, outlining a pathway towards carbon zero tourism, most contributions end where they could and arguably should become most interesting. A vision is presented, but how it can or should be achieved? This often remains unclear, perhaps reflecting Lonely Planet founder Tony Wheeler's uninspiring and quite ironic lack of engagement with measures to manage over-tourism: "None of them are going to make you very popular". This is the elephant in the room which the book does not address: the problems presented can certainly be solved, but this would require uncomfortable discussions, resulting in uncomfortable decisions, subsequently having uncomfortable implications for many. Only few, it appears, are willing to acknowledge and face the discomfort that the envisioned renewal of New Zealand tourism would require.

Its desire to avoid the inconvenient reduces a book that could have been

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innovative and inspiring, an actual “rallying call”, to a predominantly descriptive publication that presents the state of New Zealand tourism at a point in time and ponders its shortcomings. This is fine, in fact it is excellent as such succinct yet comprehensive introductions to tourism challenges are otherwise near impossible to find. Its title is simply not quite accurate – it is not about presenting a vision of and pathway to the future, instead it is an accessible and sobering account of where and how we have gone wrong,

how important it really is to make the most of the opportunity Covid-19 has presented to Aotearoa New Zealand and how we need to work together, as one, prioritising our natural environment and holistic wellbeing over profit and, at times, people.

Ina Reichenberger

Ina Reichenberger is based at the School of Management, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.