

CASE STUDY 2.3W

The establishment of the first National Tourism Organization, the New Zealand Tourist and Health Resorts (THR) in 1901

In 2001, the New Zealand Tourism Board celebrated 100 years of public service to tourists (see Plate 2.6) emphasizing its long history and associations with tourism and indigenous people, being the first country in the world to market and promote itself formally overseas. The country was receiving international visitors after the establishment of the country in the 1840s, with domestic tourists travelling north of Auckland to Wairewa to the hot springs and making visits to the thermal resort area of Rotorua in the central North Island to see one of the wonders of the world – the Pink Terraces (destroyed by an earthquake in 1886). Much of the hospitality and tour guiding was provided by the local Maori iwi (tribe) – of the Te Arawa.

In 1901, the New Zealand government established the New Zealand Tourist and Health Resorts (THR), the forerunner of the New Zealand Tourism Board, to encourage and develop tourism, particularly the facilities, marketing

and publicity necessary to attract overseas visitors. Its success can be gauged in the development of international arrivals as shown in Table 2.1W: international tourism now represents a NZ\$4 billion industry. This is a major achievement for a country so distant from many of the world's major tourism-generating regions and whose primary means of transport prior to mass jet travel was sea. In 1902 the THR also established a network of tourist information centres to advise and help tourists in Auckland, Rotorua, Wellington, Christchurch, Invercargill and Dunedin. In 1903, revenue from international tourism had reached £5490, 10d, and by 1913 this had grown to £28 000. In 1927, the THR also established a network of overseas offices to promote the country in the UK, USA, South Africa, and Australia, which were key source markets, and offered links for visiting friends and family and for business travel.

TABLE 2.1W The evolution of tourist arrivals in New Zealand 1903–2002

1903	5 233
1921–22	8 050
1935–36	17 297
1945	4 580
1963	100 000
1970	154 991
1980	445 195
1992	1 000 000
2000	1 800 000
2001	1 900 000
2002	2 000 000
2003	2 100 000

Source: Statistics New Zealand; New Zealand Tourism Board