

Mountain Places, Cultural Spaces: The Interpretation of Culturally Significant Landscapes

Anna Carr

Department of Tourism, University of Otago, P.O. Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand

This paper presents an overview of how national park interpretation in New Zealand is incorporating Māori perspectives of cultural landscapes. Since the formation of the Department of Conservation in 1987, interpretive material containing information about the relationship between local *iwi* (Māori tribal groups) and natural areas has increased. Co-operative management strategies have been instigated by the Department to ensure that interpretation conveying Māori perspectives and cultural values for the landscape is accurate and authorised by *iwi* members. The paper analyses the findings from a survey that asked visitors about their experiences of the cultural interpretation at Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. At this site, Department of Conservation staff aim to (1) increase visitors' understanding of the Māori relationship to the land and (2) direct appropriate visitor behaviour whilst in the area. Many survey respondents were unaware of the relationship between Māori and the area prior to their visit, despite reporting cultural activities and experiences with indigenous peoples as travel motivators. On-site interpretation contributed to raising visitors' awareness that the landscape has special significance to local *iwi*, thus providing a cultural dimension to the visitors' experiences at this internationally renowned natural area.

Keywords: New Zealand, heritage interpretation, landscape, Māori

Introduction

The 1996 New Zealand Tourism Board (NZTB) International Visitor Survey findings indicated that 36% of all international visitors to New Zealand attended Māori attractions or activities, affirming beliefs that 'the unique culture of the Māori people is a strong and attractive element of our national heritage' (NZTB, 1996: 6). Subsequent research has supported the appeal of Māori culture to international visitors, yet researchers have observed less demand from domestic visitor markets for traditional Māori tourism products such as cultural performances and *marae* (see glossary for terms in italics) visits (McIntosh *et al.*, 2000; Ryan, 1997, 2002; Van Aalst & Daly, 2002; Van der Scheer, 1999). Despite the unique cultural heritage of Māori, the natural areas of New Zealand, particularly national parks managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC), remain the key attraction for tourists according to international marketing campaigns and research by Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) (e.g. TNZ, 2003a). The majority of international and domestic visitors usually seek experiences that are related to sightseeing and recreational opportunities within a natural setting (Devlin &

Booth, 1998; Kearsley *et al.*, 2001; NZTB, 1996; TNZ, 2003a,b). However, it has been noted that international visitors are seeking more personal interactions with local guides when experiencing natural areas (McIntosh *et al.*, 2000; Ryan & Pike, 2003; Stafford Group, 2001; Tourism New Zealand, 2003b; Van Aalst & Daly, 2002).

In New Zealand many landscape features, primarily mountains, lakes and rivers in natural areas, are considered to be *taonga* (treasures) by Māori who are the *tangata whenua* or original inhabitants of such areas (O'Regan, 1987, 1990; Sinclair, 1992a; Walker, 1996). The Māori relationship with the land has a psychological significance known as '*turangawaewae*' which is explained by Hakopa as the 'right of a person to be counted as a member of an *iwi* or tribe and thus establishes a person's "sense of belonging" to the land and people that occupy the land' (Hakopa, 1998: 2). An area may have different levels of significance, from the mundane to the highly spiritual, depending on the individual or group perspective. Since the mid-1970s, there has been a revival of Māori self-determination in New Zealand (Sinclair, 1992a,b). The Treaty of Waitangi, signed by representatives of Māori tribes and the British government in 1840, was the founding constitutional document for the New Zealand government. Māori tribes and individuals have lodged claims with the Waitangi Tribunal based on grievances arising from the Treaty and these have resulted in the Crown returning land, providing financial compensation or instigating processes such as reinstating Māori place names as a component of various Treaty settlements. Acknowledging place names may seem a simple act but it is one that is supported by many Māori, for whom such names signify traditional ties with the land (Davis *et al.*, 1990; Walker, 1992: 179). According to Davis *et al.* (1990: 9):

Māori tradition and culture, as expressed in place names, emphasise the spiritual value of the land and provide the basis of tribal identity and sentiment. They reflect the physical features of the landscape; the gods of creation; the legendary explorers such as Kupe, Tamatea and others.

Such developments subtly change the way in which visitors and local inhabitants experience the cultural heritage of the landscape within which their activities take place. As observed by Ryan:

Any perspectives on the culture of Māori in New Zealand must involve an understanding of the relationship of Māori with the land and water, and the adverse consequences of past colonization and land deals established, to a large part, through malpractice on the part of the colonial power. (Ryan, 2002: 954)

Specific localities with protected natural area status and a mix of natural, aesthetic, scientific, recreational and cultural heritage values are under increased pressure from visitors, e.g. over one million visits were recorded at the World Heritage List site of Tongariro National Park, listed for both natural and cultural values, in the year 1999/2000 (DOC, 2001a). Many *waahi tapu* (sacred places) are located within the boundaries of national parks, and visitor behaviour, if inappropriate, can be of concern to Māori even when visitor numbers are small (Keelan, 1996; O'Regan, 1987). In the South Island, Abel Tasman, Fiordland and

Aoraki/Mount Cook National Parks have 'hot spot' areas where DOC management are concerned about negative impacts as a result of the behaviour of certain visitors or increased visitor numbers concentrated in specific locations rather than being dispersed throughout an area (DOC, 1996, 2001a). With increased visitor presence at natural areas, resource managers have recognised a need to educate visitors about the cultural significance of the landscape (DOC, 2001a,b,c; MacLennan, 2000). Many visitors could offend Māori values at natural areas through inappropriate activities, e.g. climbing to the summit of a sacred mountain or disposing of waste in fresh water sources that are *tapu* (sacred), if unaware of such values.

There is minimal academic evidence of such impacts, social science research in New Zealand national parks usually focusing on aspects such as visitor satisfaction or perceptions of wilderness (e.g. Corbett, 2001; Higham, 1996; Rogers, 1995). Little research to date has examined visitors' awareness of the cultural values of indigenous or host communities for landscape features or natural areas. Despite the lack of research, New Zealand resource managers experience challenges similar to those encountered at a range of international destinations where there is a need to balance visitor expectations with conservation of the diverse values associated with a site.

Heritage Interpretation as a Management Tool

Incorporating culturally significant landscapes into the heritage tourism resource requires active management to ensure realistic visitor expectations and appropriate behaviour (Brown, 1999; Digance, 2003; Hall & McArthur, 1996; Hinkson, 2003; MacLennan, 2000; Pfister, 2000; Shackley, 2000, 2001; Staiff *et al.*, 2002; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Interpretation is an opportunity for non-commercial experiences to provide visitors with cultural insights, although the interpretation encountered at visitor destinations is constructed and packaged, through the interpretation design process, and can therefore be argued to be a product for 'tourism consumption'. Appropriate, authentic interpretation has been regarded as a means of enhancing cross-cultural understanding and improving the quality of the visitor experience (Brown, 1999; Devlin *et al.*, 1996; Digance, 2003; Hall & McArthur, 1996; Hinkson, 2003; Keelan, 1996; MacLennan, 2000; Pfister, 2000; Prentice, 1995; Ryan & Huyton, 2000a,b; Staiff *et al.*, 2002; Tilden, 1977; Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Uzzell & Ballantyne, 1998; Young, 1999). Furthermore, researchers have observed that distinctive cultural differences acknowledged within heritage tourism attractions can contribute to visitor satisfaction at a site or operation (Hinkson, 2003; Ryan & Huyton, 2000a,b; Ryan & Pike, 2003).

National park managers in New Zealand and overseas have regularly utilised interpretation as a technique for communicating the intrinsic links between people and the environment in the hope of reducing negative cultural impacts and increasing visitor awareness of, and respect for, other cultures or significant places. Indigenous values for landscapes have been included within World Heritage nominations for areas such as Uluru-Kata Tjuta (Australia) and Tongariro (New Zealand) national parks and, once designated as World Heritage sites, managers have then incorporated cultural values within visitor interpretation.

Interpretation and story-telling, according to Pfister, may be 'a very effective way to deepen visitors' understanding and appreciation of aboriginal non-material culture' (Pfister, 2000: 122–3). Similarly, Prentice posits that interpretation has an important role in:

Communicating to people the significance of a place so that they can enjoy it more, understand its importance and develop a positive attitude to conservation. Interpretation is used to enhance the enjoyment of place, to convey symbolic meaning and to facilitate attitudinal or behavioural change. (Prentice, 1995: 55)

A number of authors have examined the effectiveness of interpretation, cautioning that managers face the paradox of presenting material to a variety of audiences who may lack genuine interest in, or understanding of, the subject matter (e.g. Moscardo & Pearce, 1986; Orams, 1995, 1997). Visitors' reactions to the 'over-educating' messages of interpretation, for example obvious disinterest or dislike of the material, may 'trivialise' the subject matter (Brown, 1999; MacLennan, 2000; Molloy, 1993; Moscardo, 1996, 1999; Moscardo & Pearce, 1986; O'Regan, 1987; Orams, 1997; Pfister, 2000; Stewart *et al.*, 1998; Staiff *et al.*, 2002). Authors have concluded that visitors' experiences are often subjective and dependent on factors including cultural background, personal upbringing, previous experiences or personal interests (Brown, 1999; McKercher, 2002; Moscardo, 1996, 1999; Moscardo & Pearce, 1986; Stewart *et al.*, 1998; Uzzell & Ballantyne, 1998). Other issues related to the effectiveness of cultural interpretation include the need to respect the privacy of traditional owners; the sacredness, accuracy or authenticity of the material; protocol and the need to obtain permission and authorisation to present host community perspectives (see Hinch, 1998; Hinch & Colton, 1997; Hinkson, 2003; Keelan, 1996; Molloy, 1993; O'Regan, 1987, 1990; Pfister, 2000; Staiff *et al.*, 2002; Upitis, 1989). Increased discussion of issues surrounding the communication of indigenous cultural values to visitors at attractions, including national park visitor centres, indicates a trend towards increased research on the subject. In addition, there is greater planning involvement and control by local community groups and indigenous hosts, whose values are presented to visitors, potentially contributing to more culturally sensitive interpretation.

Managing Cultural Landscape Interpretation in New Zealand

In 1987 the Department of Conservation (DOC), New Zealand's primary manager of protected areas, was formed through the amalgamation of three government departments – the New Zealand Forest Service, Department of Lands and Survey and New Zealand Wildlife Service. The management values of DOC have been identified as primarily western in origin with a hierarchical management structure based around central government leadership (Molloy, 1993; Ruru, 2001; Te Puni Kokiri, 1998). Consequently, until the late 1980s, national park interpretation focused on early European exploration and settlement, and scientific perspectives, e.g. the geology, botany and zoology of natural areas. Māori perspectives were rare, any interpretation tending towards historical accounts, with little acknowledgement of the contemporary ties between

Māori and the landscape (Devlin, 1987; Molloy, 1993; O'Regan, 1987; Pemberton, 1993; Piddington, 1987). Protected area managers and other interested parties acknowledged that interpretive material had favoured western scientific perspectives or European history, excluding Māori perspectives, and observed the need to include marginalised perspectives (Devlin, 1987; Ernst & Young, 1996; Harper, 1991; Keelan, 1996; Molloy, 1993; O'Regan, 1987; Pemberton, 1993; Piddington, 1987). The absence of Māori cultural perspectives in national parks was in sharp contrast to the history of regular, albeit stereotypical, images of 'Māori at one with nature' observed in international tourism promotion of New Zealand (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2002; Molloy, 1993; van Meijl, 1994).

DOC has a legislative commitment under section 4 of the *Conservation Act 1987* to co-manage protected areas with *iwi*, thus fulfilling the intentions of the Treaty of Waitangi. This goal has been partially achieved through *iwi* representation on regional Conservation Boards and the national New Zealand Conservation Authority. At regional levels *Kaupapa Atawhai* managers have been appointed to assist with managerial processes by improving the official channels for informing and consulting with *iwi* members on resource management issues. Furthermore, a National Public Awareness Strategy, Conservation Management Strategies (CMS) and interpretation strategies provide guidelines for the development of visitor interpretation aimed at encouraging appropriate visitor behaviour and increasing visitor understanding of the natural and cultural significance of protected environments (Devlin *et al.*, 1996; DOC, 1996, 2000, 2001a,b,c; MacLennan, 2000).

Several events, since the establishment of DOC, have increased public and managerial support for the presentation of cultural values. The 1987 National Parks Centennial Celebrations were notable in that the Māori 'voice' was heard and during that year Stephen (Tipene) O'Regan presented the Ngāi Tahu *iwi* perspective of natural resource management in the South Island at the Centenary Seminar 100 Years of National Parks in New Zealand (O'Regan, 1987). Other presenters spoke of the need to provide a bicultural perspective in national parks through recognition of Māori heritage, Māori place names and the employment of Māori interpreters (O'Regan, 1987; Peet, 1987; Piddington, 1987). Local Māori were included in celebrations throughout the country, contributing to DOC increasing the presentation of Māori values within national parks' interpretation.

Culturally sensitive, educational interpretation was regarded as an important means of strengthening the *mana* and cultural identity of Māori whilst involving them in the management of significant areas or resources (Contours, 1992; Keelan, 1996; Molloy, 1993; O'Regan, 1987). Writing of the need for a Māori dimension within New Zealand's national park interpretation, Sir Tipene O'Regan of Ngāi Tahu stated, 'above all the tribe has stated its desire to exercise absolute authority in the Māori historical and cultural interpretation of the parks to the public' (O'Regan, 1990: 105).

By the mid-1990s DOC was encouraging the active participation of local *iwi* groups at all stages of the interpretation process from initial planning to the actual delivery of the information (DOC, 2001a,b,c; Keelan, 1996). DOC staff and some tourism concessionaires instigated consultation with appropriate *iwi* representatives to gain *iwi* consent and ensure any cultural information was accurate and appropriate to the specific geographical region before passing on

such information. Nevertheless, the provision of interpretation has been contentious at times, one interpreter reported by Molloy (1993) as referring to interpretation panels as 'an encumbrance, there for the use of the ignorant, those who cannot see with their minds, nor feel with their hearts' (Molloy, 1993: 20).

The process of deciding what information is suitable for public consumption has continued to concern Māori. One consequence of disputed Treaty settlements is debate amongst contesting *iwi* groups over which aspects of *iwi* heritage are appropriate for communication to 'curious' visitors. This means 'blank' walls have been a feature of some visitor centres, e.g. at Egmont and Urewera National Parks in the North Island, where the development of interpretive material was delayed whilst *iwi* representatives reached consensus about the suitability of the cultural values or *taonga* being presented (Keelan, 1996). Existing interpretive material focusing on *iwi* relationships commonly incorporates the explanation of place names and narration of tribal mythology or legends. Myths and legends are *taonga*, traditionally narrated orally to members of an *iwi* or *hapu* (sub-tribe or family) so that they are made aware of their own historic ties with an area. The increased use of this *taonga* as subject matter in interpretive material widens the audience from a traditional Māori one to include other community members and visitors to significant areas. An example of an international visitor destination with a cultural landscape where this interpretive material occurs is Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park.

Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park

Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park was established in 1953 and consists of 70,000 hectares of glaciated, alpine terrain the scenic quality of which makes it one of the most popular destinations in the South Island of New Zealand (see Figure 1). According to recent accounts approximately 300,000 visitors venture into the national park on an annual basis (DOC, 2001c). DOC operates a visitor centre, built between 1959 and 1961, which is located centrally in Aoraki/Mount Cook Village and provides the public with a variety of services and information concerning the national park (DOC, 1991). The centre attracted an estimated 192,868 visitors in the 1995/96 summer and annual visitor centre numbers have remained at approximately 200,000 per annum (DOC, 2000: 204; DOC, 2001c).

Aoraki/Mount Cook, New Zealand's highest mountain, is a dominant feature of the landscape and previous research asserts that visitors travelling to the national park are attracted by the alpine scenery, natural history and recreational values for the area (Contours, 1992; Corbett, 1996; DOC, 2001c; Ernst & Young, 1996; Stewart *et al.*, 1998; Westerbeke, 1995; Wilson, 1987).

Tourism activity has occurred in the area since 1884, when the first Hermitage Hotel was built at Whitehorse Hill. Interpretation at Aoraki/Mount Cook has a history dating back to the 1890s when mountain guides were 'among the first interpreters in New Zealand' (Stewart *et al.*, 1998: 55). Since 1953, the Department of Lands and Survey managed the production and delivery of interpretation. Records indicate that 1964 was the first year to offer a summer holiday programme consisting of guided walks and evening talks about the area's natural values and mountaineering history (Stewart, 1997; DOC, 2001b). Traditional holiday programme participation declined considerably from over 12,500

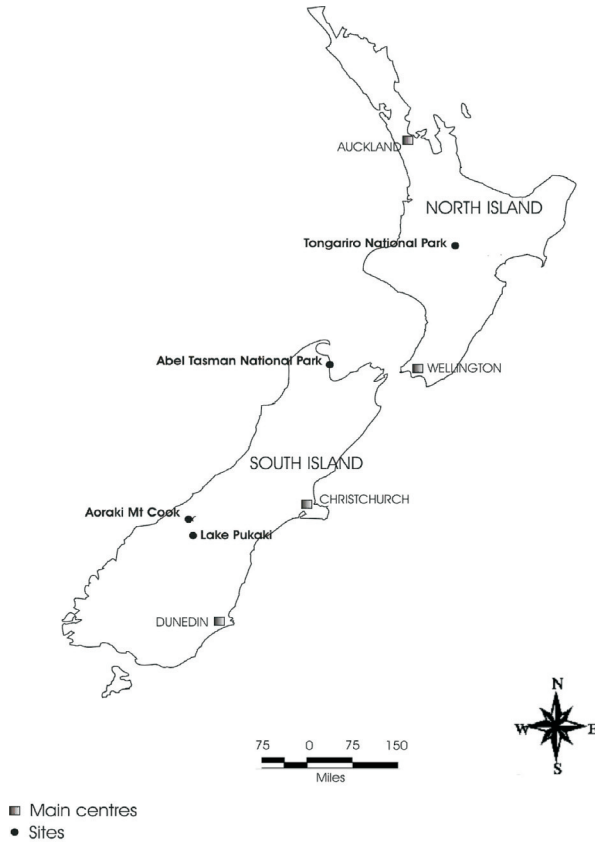


Figure 1 Sites referred to in text

participants in 1973 to fewer than 600 participants in 1991 (Corbett, 1997: 65). Corbett suggested the decline was partially due to commercial businesses offering competing guided trekking services and the result of 'minimal marketing by the park, shortfalls in funding and the growth in tourism opportunities elsewhere in New Zealand' (Corbett, 1997: 65–73).

Previous research on interpretation at Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park is limited but explored general visitor demand, motivations and satisfaction levels with interpretive material (Ernst & Young, 1996; Stewart *et al.*, 1998; Westerbeke, 1995). National park interpretation research elsewhere in the country has focused on policy formation, best practice examples, the history of interpretation policy and effectiveness of signage, particularly that signage offering directional or safety advice in wilderness areas (e.g. Devlin *et al.*, 1996; Espiner, 1999; Harper, 1991; MacLennan, 2000; Pemberton, 1993). Visitors' experiences of the interpretation of Māori cultural values had not been researched prior to this project apart from a brief mention in a study of the relationship between visitors' experiences of place and interpretive material at Aoraki/Mount Cook (Stewart *et al.*, 1998). Stewart's 1995/96 study evaluated the use of interpretive services by interviewing 64 visitors about their experiences of a wide range of marketing and

interpretation available in the park. The study authors recommended more research, such as that reported in this paper, exploring '... further intricacies between place, people and interpretation' (Stewart *et al.*, 1998: 265).

Indigenous Cultural Values in the Aoraki/Mount Cook Area

An overview of the managerial issues surrounding the indigenous cultural values for Aoraki/Mount Cook will assist readers with understanding the context within which this research took place. Ngāi Tahu is the largest *iwi* (approximately 27,000 people) in the South Island of New Zealand. *Iwi* members' rights as *tangata whenua* were affirmed with the *Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998* (NTCSA 1998).

Aoraki/Mount Cook is regarded as a 'unifying symbol' for Ngāi Tahu', Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (TRONT) and *iwi* representatives preferring climbers did not stand on the summit, which is a *tapu* area (DOC, 2001c; O'Regan, 1992; Russell, 2000; TRONT, 1998; Tau *et al.*, 1990). The mountain represents a *tipuna* (ancestor) and has been officially recognised as a *taonga* of exceptional traditional and spiritual significance for Ngāi Tahu (DOC, 2001b,c; O'Regan, 1992; Tau *et al.*, 1990; TRONT, 1998).

However, the natural values of the area are the reason why Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park was designated a national park and included within the Te Waipounamu/South Westland World Heritage Area (DOC, 1989). Promotional material highlights the natural scenery and consequently visitors to the area could be unaware of any cultural values for the landscape. There is limited information that visitors might access prior to reaching the national park, about cultural heritage or the special relationship of Ngāi Tahu to the mountain. One example of information is at Lake Pukaki, a glacial lake located on the south-eastern boundary of the national park, where visitors may encounter interpretation installed in the lake's information kiosk in 1995, about the significance of the lake and Aoraki/Mount Cook to Ngāi Tahu. Since the mid-1990s, several travel guides (e.g. the New Zealand Rough Guide and New Zealand Lonely Planet Guide) have mentioned the mountain's cultural significance, but not in detail.

In the past decade, DOC management have included Ngāi Tahu perspectives within new interpretation projects to assist with protecting the *mana* and integrity of the cultural heritage values located in the areas. Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park management plans include sections on interpretation that have undergone a series of transformations after senior DOC management and legislation began to recognise Māori values in 1987. The interpretation section of the 1989 management plan was the first to refer to 'Māori traditions' and the significance of Aoraki to 'Māori' was mentioned, but without acknowledgement of Ngāi Tahu as the *tangata whenua*. This plan was followed by the Mt Cook National Park Interpretation Plan 1991, section 4.3 of which included direct references to Ngāi Tahu:

- (1) That any interpretation of Kai Tahu histories for either public or commercial reasons must be approved by the appropriate *Rūnanga* and its members and beneficiaries. This policy includes identification of traditional place names.
- (2) Any development which physically impacts on these *taonga* must have the

approval of the appropriate *Rūnanga* and the Tribe before proceeding. (DOC, 1991: section 4.3)

In 2000, following the *NTCSA 1998*, the Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy (CCMS) identified that a Ngāi Tahu perspective within park interpretation was a priority resulting in 'increased understanding among visitors of Ngāi Tahu custom' (DOC, 2000: 209).

The *NTCSA 1998* incorporated clauses pertaining to the need for recognition of Ngāi Tahu *mana* and *rangatiratanga* in official documents such as the most recent Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Management Plan (DOC, 2001c). A *Tōpuni* or statutory cloak of *iwi* values and associations for Aoraki/Mount Cook was enacted as a result of the *NTCSA 1998* to enhance the *mana* of the *iwi* and ensure their authority to participate in management decisions (Dawson, 1998; DOC, 2000, 2001c). The *Tōpuni* included:

- a statement of Ngāi Tahu values in relation to the area;
- a set of principles aimed at ensuring the Department avoids harming or diminishing these values;
- specific actions which the Director-General of Conservation has agreed to undertake to give effect to these principles. (DOC, 2001c: 6)

A *Deed of Recognition* placed an onus of responsibility on land managers and others to consult with Ngāi Tahu over the use of the *Tōpuni* area. Consequently, consultation was a crucial step in the process of producing interpretive material that may affect the *mana* of Ngāi Tahu (DOC, 2000, 2001b,c; O'Regan, 1987, 1990; Russell, 2000). Protocols have been developed to guide DOC management of *taonga*, *mahika kai*, historic resources, visitor and public information associated with Ngāi Tahu.

Place names were officially amended to recognise Ngāi Tahu *mana*, including the dual naming of 'Mt Cook' as 'Aoraki/Mount Cook'. Until the 1990s the Ngāi Tahu name for Mount Cook – 'Aoraki' – was excluded from literature produced by the Department of Lands and Survey (until 1987) and DOC. Despite the physical presence of Māori at the Mount Cook 1987 National Park Centennial Celebrations, DOC Canterbury Conservancy failed to recognise Māori place names in brochures including the popular *Walks in Mount Cook National Park* brochure until the early 1990s. This oversight was rectified with the 1998 version of the brochure and subsequent management plans (DOC, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001c).

The intended audiences for the interpretive material are varied and include general park visitors, climbers, local residents, employees, land managers and business owners. The 2001 draft of the Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Management Plan, written after the *NTCSA 1998*, incorporated several clauses regarding the interpretation of Ngāi Tahu cultural values to specific groups. For example, section 4.2.5(b) of the plan states:

The Director-General is required to encourage respect for Ngāi Tahu's association with Aoraki, the particularly relevant actions being to provide educational material to climbers regarding Aoraki and to encourage the removal of rubbish and wastes. (DOC, 2001c: 4.2.5(b))

The acknowledgement of the mountain's cultural values by DOC resulted in some mountaineers expressing fears they may be denied access to climb the mountain (Bennion, 1997). In 1998 several members of the New Zealand Mountain Guides' Association (NZMGA) voiced concern that Ngāi Tahu would control the administration of guiding concessions and possibly prevent guided ascents of Aoraki/Mount Cook. Guided ascents of the highest peak in New Zealand assist with the commercial viability of several businesses and the recognition of cultural values were considered a threat to the activity (*Otago Daily Times*, 1998). A 1998 *hui* (meeting), attended by the researcher, was held in response to these concerns to enable DOC staff, members of the mountain guiding community and representatives of Ngāi Tahu to (1) discuss the cultural significance of the mountain, (2) identify behaviours that could impact negatively on these values, and (3) begin to negotiate an understanding of what information about the mountain could be related to guided climbing clients.

Cultural Interpretation at Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park

Since the early 1990s, Ngāi Tahu have had a physical presence in the national park with *iwi* interpreters employed on a seasonal basis to assist DOC staff with summer holiday programmes. By 1998 Ngāi Tahu interpreters were providing walks and evening talks conveying the importance of Aoraki/Mount Cook and other cultural aspects of the surrounding environment to interested members of the public. During the primary research season for this study the summer holiday programme operated for two weeks and consisted of two evening talks and daily guided walks on tracks within the park. The evening talks, presented by Canterbury DOC Kaupapa Atawhai manager Maika Mason, focused on Ngāi Tahu *taonga* and were entitled 'Pounamu, the taonga of Māori' and 'Māori values and perspectives of the mountains'.

The Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Visitor Centre consists of three large rooms and between the entrance and main reception area the majority of space is devoted to retailing souvenirs, literature, postcards, posters and other items to the public. Interpretive panels on a variety of subjects and a diorama model of the mountains are interspersed amongst the merchandise, which can contribute to a crowded atmosphere when the centre is busy. The rear room of the visitor centre houses interpretive wall panels, none of which are devoted to Ngāi Tahu or Māori in the area. Many of the existing displays in this room date from the 1960s and 1970s, when Canterbury Museum (Christchurch) staff developed the displays (DOC, 2001b, section 2.0). The displays were regarded as having 'out-lived their usefulness' since 1991 and are housed in the same room that is used for interpretive talks and the audio-visual show (DOC, 1991; 2001b,c). The year 2003 was the 50th anniversary of Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park and DOC staff anticipated a redevelopment of interpretive display areas over the next five years (Slatter, 2003, pers comm). The audio-visual show, dating from the mid-1980s, is primarily about climbing and European history of the area but the short opening segment relates the legend of Aoraki.

It is the interpretation produced by DOC in collaboration with *iwi* members from the Arowhenua *marae* (South Canterbury) that provides the most in-depth information about the cultural values of the area. Table 1 indicates the type of

Table 1 Examples of cultural interpretation at Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park

<i>Interpretation source</i>	<i>Excerpt of text [description of event]</i>
Aoraki The God, card	Aoraki is not just a mountain. Aoraki is also a God. In the whakapapa that Kai Tahu inherit from the Waitaha people, who first settled Te Waipounamu, Aoraki is the first-born son of Rakinui, or Raki, the sky parent of Creation. This is his story....
Te Kopaka (The Ice), Outdoor panel, Kea Point Track.	In the world of the Māori the creation of all things begins with the separation of Raki (the sky father) and Papa (the earth mother) by their sons Paia and Tane...[Māori text with English translation].
Walks in Aoraki/ Mount Cook National Park, brochure (DOC, 2000)	At 3754 metres, New Zealand's tallest peak is known as Aoraki by Māori. According to legend, Aoraki was a young boy in the canoe Te Waka a Aoraki, which was stranded on a reef and tilted to one side...
Aoraki/Mount Cook the ancestor of Ngāi Tahu, brochure (DOC, 1999)	Tōpuni. The concept of Tōpuni derives from the traditional Ngāi Tahu custom of persons of rangatira (chiefly) status extending their mana (power and authority) over an area or person.
Ngāi Tahu Interpretive Programme brochure, January 2000	Maika Mason from the Department of Conservation's Canterbury Conservancy will give a two hour talk on Pounamu (or Greenstone) and its meaning to Ngāi Tahu... [Evening talk]
Ngāi Tahu Interpretive Programme brochure, January 2000	
	Māori values and perspectives of the mountains. This is a one-hour presentation where you can find out why Aoraki the mountain is so important to Ngāi Tahu and how their values are being respected in the modern day. [Evening talk]
Ngāi Tahu Interpretive Programme brochure, January 2000	Marlene will guide you along the track and talk about traditional use of plants, and the Ngāi Tahu values for the area. She will introduce the Ngāi Tahu stories associated with the area and the mountain....[Guided daily walk]

cultural interpretation that may be encountered in the national park. A timber carving by Māori artist Cliff Whiting, commissioned by the Aorangi Parks and Reserves Board, depicts the 'Legend of Aoraki' and is displayed above the central reception area, opposite the main entrance, where it was intended to be the gateway for an alpine museum, which was never built. The unveiling of the carving was an official event for the 1987 National Parks Centennial Celebrations and is significant as Ngāi Tahu and Waitaha representatives participated in the ceremony, one of the first official activities by *tangata whenua* in the park. A photograph of the carving is available as a greeting card for visitors to purchase and on the rear of the card is an English version of the 'Legend of Aoraki'.

A display panel about the relationship between Ngāi Tahu and Aoraki is situated at the inside of the entrance door to the visitor centre. This display panel relates the significance of the mountain in relation to its *Tōpuni* and *tipuna* status. A brochure, *Aoraki/Mount Cook: the ancestor of Ngāi Tahu*, is the most comprehensive item to convey information about the special *iwi* values. The information explains the rich cultural heritage of the area including the legend of the mountain, the reasons for the *Tōpuni* and why Ngāi Tahu would prefer people not to climb to the summit of Aoraki/Mount Cook. Elsewhere in the national park, interpretive panels relate the cultural significance of the area to Ngāi Tahu at sites visited regularly by walkers, for example the Red Tarns and Kea Point tracks.

Other publications and brochures, including the *Walks in Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park* brochure, have minimal references to Ngāi Tahu. For example, a DOC Fact Sheet provides general information on the area but has only one reference that 'Aoraki/Mount Cook has cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional values to Ngāi Tahu' (DOC, 1999: 1).

Awareness of cultural values for Aoraki/Mount Cook is being promoted through activities other than visitor interpretation. The Ngāi Tahu perspective of the mountain has been incorporated in the NZMGA training syllabus. Practices amongst climbers and guided groups are slowly changing as a result of the educational material they are encountering at the park visitor centre and in alpine huts. Although guided ascents of Aoraki/Mount Cook are not decreasing in number, few parties are reaching the true summit of the mountain due to the treacherous, physical state of the highest peak (DOC, 2001c). Climbers and mountain guides appear more aware of the need to respect the cultural significance and ecological welfare of the alpine environment by not leaving human waste or litter on the mountain (DOC, 2001c). Alternative means of waste disposal (using facilities at mountain huts) or adopting a 'carryout' waste policy are being adopted by climbers. Some guiding companies are including the Māori Tahu and English versions of the mountain's name in promotional material, thus acknowledging the Ngāi Tahu relationship with the area.

Methodology

The remainder of this paper reports on research that focused on visitors' experiences of the cultural interpretation at Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. Quantitative and qualitative methods, or a mixture of both, have been used to research visitor experiences of interpretation (e.g. Brown, 1999; McIntosh, 1998; Moscardo, 1999; Moscardo & Pearce, 1986; Prentice, 1993; Stewart *et al.*, 1998) and of Māori culture (McIntosh *et al.*, 2000). In undertaking this research, a 'multiple methods' approach and the case study site were chosen following recommendations from *iwi* and DOC representatives.

Observations of visitor behaviours, such as ascertaining participation numbers, determining which displays or activities attracted visitors and the amount of time spent consuming various types of interpretative material, gave the researcher an insight into the general visitor experience at the centre. Semi-structured interviews enabled the visitors to discuss their personal reactions to the interpretive material. The participant observations and visitor interviews were used to develop a three-page, self-completion questionnaire,

administered to explore visitors' reactions to the interpretive material that conveyed Ngāi Tahu values for the landscape.

The questionnaire included 'closed' and Likert Scale questions to collect data on aspects including visitors' demographics, satisfaction levels and preferences for interpretation themes. Participants could express their personal thoughts about the cultural interpretation in response to open-ended questions. Statistical analysis, utilising SPSS Version 11, complemented respondents' descriptions of their experiences.

The visitor survey was administered, using a 'next to pass' selection method, to 300 visitors as they departed from the Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Visitor Centre on randomly selected days between January and April 2000. Visitors were asked to complete the survey and return it within three days, either by mail (in a post-paid envelope) or handing it directly to the researcher. A response rate of 83% was achieved with the return of 250 valid questionnaires. The high response rate may be attributed to the continued presence of the researcher at the centrally located visitor centre. The majority of respondents were on overnight or full-day visits to the area and personally returned their completed surveys to the researcher. Visitors who refused to participate usually declined because of time constraints or they preferred to walk the tracks rather than view interpretation at the visitor centre. The survey responses provided a wealth of information pertaining to respondents' interest in, and awareness of, the cultural themes present in interpretive material at Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park.

Research Findings

The survey findings include respondents' demographic characteristics, general reactions to the interpretation, satisfaction with the existing material and future demand for interpretation at the area or other sites.

The majority of respondents reported academic, professional or managerial backgrounds with 70% obtaining graduate or postgraduate degrees, indicating a well-educated audience for the interpretive material (see Table 2). This finding is supported by previous studies that suggest well-educated professionals with above-average incomes dominate national park user groups (Devlin & Booth, 1998; Kearsley *et al.*, 2001). Most respondents were aged in their late 20s to mid-50s (64.4%, median 35–44 years) and resided in New Zealand (33.5%), Australia (17.2%), the United Kingdom (17.2%) and USA/Canada (13.2%). The temporal nature of the respondents' experiences must be taken into account: 72% of respondents were day visitors; 28% were staying overnight in the area. Whilst many visitors arrived with independent transportation, only six (2.4%) were on packaged tour itineraries with constraints that influenced the amount of time they had for viewing interpretation at the visitor centre.

When visitors were asked, without prompting, their motivations for visiting the national park, the importance of Aoraki/Mount Cook as an icon site was apparent, with viewing the mountain being the main motivation for 80 respondents (32%). Other reasons were walking (50.3%), general sightseeing of the alpine region (38%) and climbing/tramping (12%). Only six respondents (2.4%) reported visiting the area for the cultural experiences offered in the Ngāi

Table 2 Survey respondents' characteristics

<i>Gender</i>	%
Male	52.4
Female	47.6
<i>Age groups</i>	
15-24	13.2
25-34	26.4
35-44	18.0
45-54	20.0
55-64	16.8
65+	5.6
<i>Employment status</i>	
Professional	30.0
Academic/Educational	20.0
Student	11.6
Management	11.2
Manual/labour	10.0
Other	6.0
Retired	3.6
Unemployed	0.4
No response	7.2
<i>Educational background</i>	
Undergraduate/postgraduate degree	69.6
Secondary School/College	16.4
Vocational/trade	8.4
Polytechnic	5.2
<i>Place of residence</i>	
New Zealand	33.5
Australia	17.2
UK	17.2
North America	13.2
Europe	11.2
Asia	3.2
Other	4.5

Tahu holiday programme, five attending a guided walk and one an evening talk.

Respondents were well travelled and 63% of New Zealanders and 76% of the international respondents reported previous encounters with indigenous or 'First Nations' people. These encounters were mainly with Australian Aboriginal (31.6%) or Native Americans (16%), with a variety of cultural experiences ranging from living or working with indigenous peoples to visiting indigenous tourism attractions.

Visitor awareness of the cultural significance of Aoraki/Mount Cook

Visitors were asked what knowledge they had of the cultural significance of the area prior to their visit. Examples of their responses are presented in Table 3. Seventeen respondents (6.8%) were aware of the cultural values for the

Table 3 Respondents' awareness of significance of Aoraki/Mount Cook

<i>Landscape significance</i>	<i>Examples of visitor recollections</i>
Place name (<i>n</i> = 42)	In Māori they call Mt Cook Aorangi – cloud in the sky. Respondent 89, International visitor. Nothing except the name for Mt Cook in the Māori language, Aoraki. Respondent 176, International visitor. They called the Mountain Aoraki, first born son of Rakinui, the sky father. Respondent 44, International visitor.
Ngāi Tahu specified – <i>iwi</i> identity (<i>n</i> = 21), use of resources (<i>n</i> = 14)	Ngāi Tahu area and their mountain – Aoraki, Cloud Piercer. Respondent 30, International visitor. Aoraki – the symbolic mountain of the Ngāi Tahu Māori tribe in the South Island. Respondent 255, New Zealand visitor. Aoraki is a Tōpuni (for Ngāi Tahu) tradition story of Aoraki and his brothers turning to stone. Area was visited by Māori – important mahinga kai. Respondent 235, New Zealand visitor. That Mt Cook was sacred to the Ngāi Tahu. Respondent 20, New Zealand visitor. Know some of the mythology behind the Alps and the historical uses of the passes to collect greenstone from the West Coast. Respondent 3, International visitor.
Sacred site (<i>n</i> = 87) leading to behavioural guidelines (<i>n</i> = 30)	The Southern Alps, especially Mt Cook's summit are sacred sites. Respondent 107, International visitor. I understand that the mountain (called Aoraki) is a key figure to the South Island Māoris and is sacred. Respondent 222, International visitor. Aoraki, the cloud piercer, is a sacred site to the Māori, who will not climb it, and ask other people not to. Respondent 232, International visitor. Mt Cook is called Aoraki and they ask that climbers don't stand on the very top (head) of Mt Cook. Respondent 108, International visitor. Regard Mt Cook of high cultural significance, asked climbers not to step on actual summit out of respect. Respondent 76, New Zealand visitor.
Story, legend, or mythology (<i>n</i> = 39)	It is a sacred mountain and there are legends about the area – a canoe capsized and created the mountain range. Respondent 50, International visitor. Not that much except that the Māori call it Aoraki after a deity from Māori mythology. Respondent 28, International visitor. I know that Māori believe Mt Cook to be Aoraki, a young boy in a canoe stranded on a reef, they also believed the Southern Alps to be Aoraki and his brothers frozen and turned to stone. Respondent 27, New Zealand visitor. Aoraki is a boy who travelled with his te waka. It turned upside down and he (and a friend) sat on it and became stone – the mountain. Te waka is the Southern Alps. Respondent 4, International visitor. The Māori gods sat down to rest and became part of the mountain. Respondent 56, New Zealand visitor. Legends of sky and earth meeting to produce mountains etc. Gods crying to produce mist, snow and ice. Respondent 279, New Zealand visitor. Some small explanations how the landscape was created according to the ancient Māori belief, for example the glaciers in Mt Cook Park. Respondent 95, International visitor.

Multiple responses, *n* = 130

mountain prior to their visit either because of information encountered whilst planning their travel, information from previous visits or prior exposure to Ngāi Tahu/Māori culture. Many respondents (118, 47.2%) expressed surprise that the area was of significance to Māori. International visitors most often associated Māori with the North Island. Many respondents regarded the North Island town of Rotorua as the main destination for experiencing Māori culture, these perceptions being shaped by word of mouth, promotional media and guidebooks.

Seventy-two respondents (28.2%) reported that the visitor centre interpretation raised their awareness of cultural values in the area. Knowledge of the Māori place name for Mount Cook, either Aoraki or Aorangi, with a variety of English meanings were reported by 16.8% of respondents. Many visitors (38%) reported a general knowledge of Māori cultural history and the significance of the landscape, including the special nature of Aoraki/Mount Cook: 35% of respondents described Aoraki as sacred, 31% knew of the mythology/legend of Aoraki, 12% were aware of the 'no-climb' preference held by Ngāi Tahu and 8.4% specifically named Ngāi Tahu, as the local *iwī* for the area.

Satisfaction with the on-site interpretation

Respondents reported positive experiences of the interpretation they encountered, and appreciated the opportunity to gain an understanding of Ngāi Tahu values for the area. However, only 3.3% of visitors surveyed reported being 'extremely satisfied' with the cultural interpretation viewed, while a further 16.7% were 'satisfied'; 57.7% reported being 'neutral' but 23.8% were 'dissatisfied' or 'extremely dissatisfied' with the interpretation. Table 4 depicts the difference between domestic and international respondents with the latter group being less satisfied with the available interpretation than New Zealanders. This difference proved statistically significant according to cross-tabulation of data with a Pearson chi-square test ($p = 0.007$).

The survey revealed a diversity of explanations for the low satisfaction levels. The most recurrent reasons were time constraints, lack of detailed information within the interpretation that was accessed, inability to locate material or lack of interest in the subject. Visitors reported accessing one type of interpretation and being unaware of the other material available within the visitor centre. International visitors were more likely to have expressed dissatisfaction with what they perceived to be a lack of diverse interpretive material. This finding supported observations during the qualitative stage of the research where only a minority of visitors were viewed experiencing the diverse range of interpretive material available, the majority usually only viewing one item in-depth, if at all. The busy nature of the Aoraki/Mount Cook Visitor Centre at the height of the summer season (December–March) and the random dispersal of interpretive material throughout the building made it difficult for visitors to encounter the different interpretive opportunities. Locating the material was often by chance with the brochure Aoraki/Mount Cook: the ancestor of Ngāi Tahu located on the information counter, the audio-visual show screening sporadically in the rear room, the panel by the entrance door and other material dispersed amongst merchandise in the retail areas.

Table 4 Satisfaction with on-site interpretation

<i>Satisfaction level (%)</i>	<i>NZ n = 80</i>	<i>Intl n = 159</i>	<i>Examples of reasons why/why not satisfied</i>
Extremely dissatisfied (7.1%)	1	16	It seems that the area is quite significant to the Māori and there was little focus on this aspect – just one little display. Respondent 20, New Zealand visitor. Simply because there was no information available – perhaps Mt Cook doesn't have a Māori connection as that is the impression I got it being a total DOC area. Respondent 103, International visitor. The information is the same at all tourist sites, it does not go very deep ... it is time to go to a library and search a bit around. Respondent 32, International visitor.
Dissatisfied (16.7%)	12	28	Māori culture is part of the aura of the place, but not prominent in the visitor centre, Then information when we first came in was good – but it was only when I went back and looked after getting this sheet [Aoraki brochure] that I found other information. Respondent 206, International visitor. Didn't see any information on Māori except for thirty second clip in film [audiovisual]. Respondent 49, International visitor.
Neutral (57.7%)	45	93	Didn't look for Māori culture just wanted to do a track. Respondent 380, International visitor. I did not come here to experience Māori culture. Respondent 15, New Zealand visitor I circled neutral because I visited the area purely for the spectacle of the mountains, not with any expectation of Māori culture. Respondent 213, International visitor. In this area Māori concerns are minor. It is the European exploration of it that is significant, and the Europeans feeling for the mountain range. Respondent 100, New Zealand visitor.
Satisfied (15.1%)	16	20	I was familiar with the story of Rangi and Papa and I read all the information boards in the visitor centre including the story of the tipped waka [legend of Aoraki]. Respondent 114, International visitor. Good sign at end of walk about mythology – meaning behind ice, etc. Little else on it here. Respondent 113, International visitor.
Extremely satisfied (3.3%)	6	2	I didn't know much until the Māori led morning walk to Kea Point – very informative. Respondent 39, International visitor. Went to guided walk, liked explanation of medicinal uses of plants. Respondent 31, New Zealand visitor.

Number of respondents = 239

1 = Extremely dissatisfied ... 5 = Extremely satisfied

n = frequency

Popular interpretation themes

Visitors were asked to indicate how interested they were in cultural topics, which had been identified as possible themes for further interpretation development by DOC management. International visitors' interest, when compared to domestic visitors, was statistically significant when variables were cross-tabulated (Table 5). There was a higher level of interest expressed by international respondents than New Zealanders in most Māori themes. A Pearson chi-square test indicated the difference between domestic and international respondents was particularly significant for mythology ($p = 0.000$), pre-European history ($p = 0.004$) and Māori environmental issues ($p = 0.011$).

The domestic respondents, though reporting some interest in various aspects of Māori culture, were more interested in European history (mean = 3.11) than the international respondents (mean = 2.83), and this difference was statistically significant according to a cross-tabulation of data ($p = 0.028$). Sixteen respondents stated that the history of European exploration and climbing achievements in the park would be of greater interest than cultural subjects. Though experiences of Māori culture were not a major reason for visiting Aoraki/Mount Cook, visitors acknowledged that such information added value to their holiday, reporting benefits including the educational experience, opportunities to improve their personal understanding of another culture, and the cultural 'dimension' enhancing their visit.

Table 5 Respondents' interest levels in interpretation themes

<i>Variable</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>NZ mean</i>	<i>Intl. mean</i>	<i>Significance (p value)</i>
Māori Mythology and Legends	41	42	70	49	40	2.59	3.26	0.000
Pre-European Māori History	41	44	71	57	27	2.59	3.13	0.004
Spiritual and Cultural Values	48	40	70	48	36	2.60	3.12	–
European History	31	52	89	53	21	3.11	2.83	0.028
Post-European Māori History	39	53	76	53	19	2.66	2.93	–
Māori Environmental Issues	49	48	70	54	21	2.43	2.99	0.011
Traditional Māori Land Uses	47	52	71	51	22	2.46	2.96	0.020
Contemporary Land Uses	58	60	70	37	15	2.26	2.70	0.032

Number of respondents ranged from 240–246

1 = Not at all interested...5 = Extremely interested

n = frequency

Interpretation media preferences

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had a preference for the medium by which interpretation was presented. More visitors accessed the audio-visual show or display area at the visitor centre (55%), than were aware of or purchased the Aoraki brochure (11.5%), and only a small number (2%) attended guided walks offered during the holiday programme. Visitors who expressed interest in learning more about Māori culture in the area were asked which types of interpretive media they could be interested in during future visits. International visitors supported all types of interpretive media to a greater extent than domestic visitors, with New Zealanders attaching far less importance to opportunities to interact personally with Māori tour guides on guided walks or at tourism operations (see Table 6).

Table 6 Respondents' preferences for interpretive media types

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	NZ mean	Intl. mean	Significance (p value)
AV show	10	32	73	65	58	3.04	3.58	0.02
Guided walks	15	48	82	47	39	2.86	3.38	0.005
Indoor displays	11	35	90	51	50	3.07	3.79	0.001
Brochures	14	36	96	51	40	2.99	3.44	0.045
Outdoor signs	12	30	83	65	43	3.10	3.58	0.015

Number of respondents ranged from 229–239

1 = Not interested...5 = Extremely interested

n = frequency

Interview participants had mentioned the audio-visual show as being 'good for family groups' or a 'bad weather alternative' and this medium remained an important interpretive experience, alongside displays and interpretive signs, for survey respondents. Clear preferences emerged for interpretive material in the form of brochures and displays that were easily accessible, inexpensive and could be taken away from the site, especially as most visitors had limited time in the area. This highlights the need for visitor centre managers to investigate whether providing layers of interpretive material in a range of media would meet the diverse visitor preferences for interpretation.

Interest in future experiences of Māori culture

Previous research has suggested that tourism demand for specific indigenous cultural tourism products is limited, particularly amongst domestic markets (Ryan & Huyton, 2000a,b, 2002; Ryan, 2002; Ryan & Pike, 2003). Ryan suggests that the integration of Māori within New Zealand society has created a situation where cultural proximity and familiarity between Māori and non-Māori has resulted in weakened demand for experiences with Māori tourism attractions by the predominantly *pakeha* domestic tourism market (Ryan, 2002: 958). Reasons behind this are unclear but could be due to lack of travel opportunities, with New Zealand's geographical isolation from other countries, despite both Māori and

Table 7 Respondents' interest in Māori culture

Interest level*	NZ mean = 2.9	Intl. mean = 3.26	Examples of responses	Main reasons specified (n)
1 (12.1%)	16	14	I do not want a foreign culture rammed down my throat...I'll choose what I'm interested in NOT from a manipulating government decisions. Respondent 17, New Zealand visitor. I am not that interested at present, as I believe we are experiencing a 'forced' Māoridom. Cultural experiences one should experience when they are open to learning and wanting to learn. Respondent 63, New Zealand visitor. I am interested but would prefer less commercialised opportunities to meet and talk to Maoris. Respondent 373, International visitor.	Not main interest (39) Politics (10) Too commercial (8)
2 (20.2%)	20	30	I feel that we have a lot of Māori education at school and that it was not relevant to me for more education re: same. I think that the information should be available and interesting to visitors to our country that can easily access that information as they want to. Respondent 111, International visitor.	
3 (29.1%)	22	50	I don't find the Māori an interesting group, personally, but I do think their culture should be represented to visitors because they are an important part of New Zealand today and an awareness of their traditions/history/lifestyle is relevant. Respondent 65, International visitor.	Represents NZ (16) Not main interest (15) NZ is multicultural (12)
4 (22.7%)	15	41	I am an environmentalist and mountaineer, so any culture that values the natural environment is of interest to me, and important examples for the world facing environmental crisis. Respondent 115, International visitor.	Learning (39) General interest (28) Heritage (28) 'difference' (26) Represents NZ (9) Personal growth (14)

Table 7 (cont.) Respondents' interest in Māori culture

<i>Interest level*</i>	<i>NZ mean = 2.9</i>	<i>Intl. mean = 3.26</i>	<i>Examples of responses</i>	<i>Main reasons specified (n)</i>
5 (15.8%)	11	28	<p>Interesting to learn about how the land is perceived and valued by another culture – very different to European views of land and place. Respondent 52, International visitor.</p> <p>Learning about their culture and history adds an important dimension to touring New Zealand. Respondent 239, International visitor.</p> <p>When travelling in a different country it's the differences that make it interesting and exciting. Learning how these differences came about it important to me while I am here in New Zealand. Respondent 103, International visitor.</p> <p>Part of the NZ experience for visitors to your country – I love your outdoors but I'm glad to put more to N.Z. than great mountains and scenery. Respondent 59, International visitor.</p>	

* 1 = Not interested...5 = Extremely interested
n = frequency

Pacific Island cultures residing in many New Zealand cities, particularly urban Auckland. Other research findings have revealed varying demand for Māori cultural experiences, particularly amongst New Zealand residents (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000; McIntosh *et al.*, 2000; New Zealand Tourism Board, 1996, TNZ, 2003a, b). Nevertheless, domestic visitors have been observed to be an important market segment for some Māori tourism operations (McIntosh *et al.*, 2000; Warren & Taylor, 2001).

Table 7 illustrates the respondents' diverse attitudes towards opportunities for experiencing Māori culture. International visitors (mean = 3.26) were slightly more interested in Māori culture than their domestic counterparts (mean = 2.9): 30% of the New Zealand respondents in this sample wanted to experience Māori culture, particularly outside a commercial attraction, in a setting such as that provided by interpretation within a national park environment.

A small group of survey respondents in this study were 'extremely interested' in Māori culture, reflecting previous studies' findings of limited visitor demand for indigenous or ethnic cultural experiences (McKercher, 2002; Moscardo & Pearce, 1998; Ryan & Huyton, 2000a,b). When asked about their general interest in experiences with Māori, 95 respondents (38.5%) were interested in learning more about Māori culture. Surprisingly a cross-tabulation did not reveal any significant difference ($p = 0.791$) in interest levels between visitors who had experienced other cultures and those who had not, with a fairly even distribution of interest amongst all respondents. Age was the only other demographic characteristic that appeared to influence visitor interest, with younger visitors aged between 15–34 years more likely to be interested in Māori culture than respondents over 55 years of age ($p = 0.002$).

The respondents' comments regarding future interest in Māori culture expressed diverse attitudes and viewpoints that ranged from a desire for 'personal growth' by 'learning about another culture' to more antagonistic feelings with some respondents expressing displeasure with government management of Treaty settlements. Some respondents perceived interpretation about Māori perspectives for the environment as 'propaganda' and DOC succumbing to 'political correctness'. The viewpoints of public groups opposed to *iwi* representation and involvement in the management of New Zealand natural areas emerged in several participants' comments (see Table 7).

Alternatively, management interviewed during the course of this research identified a need for greater consultation with other community members and individuals, who had enduring relationships to the area, to ensure the diversity of attachments to the landscape is represented in the interpretive media. Several international and domestic visitors who were interviewed expressed supportive viewpoints that European and western scientific perspectives were over-emphasised in interpretation to the detriment of Māori relationships to the environment or landscape features.

Summary and Conclusions

This paper has reported on the provision of cultural interpretation at Aoraki / Mount Cook National Park and provided analysis of a survey investigating respondents' experiences of the cultural interpretation. The cultural history of

the Aoraki/Mount Cook area has been restructured in the past ten years as interpretation focusing on Ngāi Tahu values for Aoraki/Mount Cook influences public perceptions of the area. The past emphasis on the mountaineering and natural history of the park has been balanced by the inclusion of traditional Māori cultural values. The material, produced by DOC staff in collaboration with *iwi* representatives, has assisted the Department with fulfilling management plan objectives and policy reflecting the 'spirit' of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The provision of cultural interpretation at Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park is primarily intended to raise visitors' awareness of such values; the research findings indicate that this was achieved to a certain extent. The legend of Aoraki/Mount Cook was the subject most often recalled by respondents and 'mythology' or 'legends' were the preferred themes for any future material encountered on travels. Myths or legends may appear politically neutral when compared to contemporary issues relating to land ownership, yet this material is a significant *taonga*. Myths and legends have a story-like quality and such narratives may assist with establishing, in the visitors' minds, that *iwi* such as Ngāi Tahu have a rich heritage with, and ongoing relationship to a significant landscape.

Many survey respondents had experienced other cultures but most associated the natural setting of Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park with mountains, glaciers and related outdoor activities, not Māori, and the cultural information encountered was unexpected in the context of their visit. Any further development of interpretation at Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park could result in a more integrated collection of diverse subjects, including a distinct area in the visitor centre for Ngāi Tahu to present their culture. Such developments could improve the visitors' learning experiences and increase visitor satisfaction with the interpretation of the cultural landscape. Previous authors support the development of interpretation or tourism attractions that present distinctive, regional differences within indigenous cultures as opposed to general stereotypes of indigenous values (Hinkson, 2003; Ryan & Huyton, 2000a,b; Ryan & Pike, 2003). Respondents to this survey were more likely to associate Māori with North Island areas, including urban environments such as Rotorua, than natural areas in the South Island. The low awareness amongst visitors of Māori values for other natural areas, particularly in the South Island, may slowly change as tribal histories, legends, mythology and traditional values for natural resources are presented, with the consent of the *iwi* involved in visitor centres, commercial tourism operations or through publications including travel guides or brochures.

This study revealed a common problem experienced by heritage managers of resources that have diverse values. Whilst DOC management and Ngāi Tahu interpreters aim to convey the cultural importance of Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park to visitors, the visitor audience in this study were not always interested in indigenous cultural heritage. Other researchers have observed a 'mismatch' between management objectives and visitors' demands for cultural interpretation or cultural experiences (Digance, 2003; Hinch, 1998; Ryan & Huyton, 2002; Staiff *et al.*, 2002). Such mismatches could lead to the visitor audience not fully appreciating the cultural landscape interpretation, their reactions potentially trivialising the importance of the cultural values (Brown, 1999; Pfister, 2000). The paradox of visitors not respecting the values of other cultures at significant sites, despite interpretation being provided to educate the visitors,

has been found to contribute to misunderstandings between indigenous hosts, site managers and visitors (Brown, 1999; Digance, 2003; Hinch, 1998; Staiff *et al.*, 2002). This research suggest that a small, but noteworthy, segment of both domestic and international visitors were genuinely interested in Māori culture and experiences of the cultural interpretation provided in national parks.

Finally, the implications of this paper's findings for interpretation, in both New Zealand and international national parks, are that whilst park management may perceive the need for interpretive material representing indigenous cultural values, the success of how such material is received by a public audience depends on the level of visitor demand for, and acceptance of, such content. Visitor demand and satisfaction for cultural interpretation, in comparison to management objectives, deserves further study.

This paper supports previous findings from international and national studies that visitor demand for cultural experiences when visiting natural areas can be limited (Ryan, 2002; Ryan & Huyton, 2000a,b, 2002; Ryan & Pike, 2003). Ascertaining visitor demand or interest levels whilst developing cultural interpretation could partially resolve differences between management, host community and visitor expectations. Meanwhile, the niche demand that does exist lends support for a measured approach to the future development of interpretation at national parks and nature-based tourism attractions providing cultural perspectives in New Zealand.

Glossary

Aoraki – Mount Cook (also known as Aorangi)

Hapu – sub-tribe, family group

Hui – meeting

Iwi – a Māori tribal group

Kaupapa Atawhai – Department of Conservation (DOC) Māori liaison officer

Kawa – protocol; correct ways of doing things

Mana – power, prestige, authority

Maunga – mountain

Māori – indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand

Marae – community buildings and area associated with *iwi*

Ngāi Tahu – South Island *iwi/tangata whenua* (also known as *Kai Tahu*)

Pakeha – non-Māori, European

Pounamu – greenstone, nephrite jade, a treasured stone

Rānanga – assembly, council, decision makers appointed to administer tribal affairs

Rangatiratanga – sovereignty, authority in decision making (often help by *iwi* and *hapu*)

Tangata whenua – original inhabitants of the land, indigenous peoples, Māori

Taonga – things of value, treasured

Tapu – sacred

Te Waipounamu – South Island of New Zealand (also known as *Te Wahipounamu*)

Tipuna – ancestor

Tōpuni – a statutory cloak of authority – acknowledged in legislation

Turangawaewae – standing place from where one gains the authority to belong

Wahi Tapu – sacred place (plural *Waahi Tapu*)

Waka – canoe

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank the DOC staff and representatives from Ngāi Tahu who assisted with this research, Department colleagues, particularly Eric Shelton and supervisors Dr James Higham and Professor Michael Hall.

Correspondence

Any correspondence should be directed to Anna Carr, Department of Tourism, University of Otago, P.O. Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand (acarr@business.otago.ac.nz).

References

- Ateljevic, I. and Doorne, S. (2002) Representing New Zealand: Tourism imagery and ideology. *Annals of Tourism Research* 29 (3), 648–67.
- Bennion, T. (1997) The Ngāi Tahu Settlement: What does it mean for climbers? *Climber* 22, 28–9.
- Brown, T.J. (1999) Antecedents of culturally significant tourist behaviour. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26 (3), 676–700.
- Contours (1992) Aoraki national alpine museum and visitor centre proposal: Scoping paper. Unpublished Report. Christchurch: Contours Conservation Tourism Consultants.
- Corbett, R. (1996) Lake Pukaki information kiosk. *Canterbury Conservancy News* (May), 2.
- Corbett, R. (1997) An institutional analysis of tourism in Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand, 1970–1997. M.App.Sc. Thesis, Lincoln University.
- Corbett, R. (2001) *Social Impact Issues Among Visitors to Franz Josef Glacier, Westland National Park*. Science and Research Internal Report 186. Wellington: Department of Conservation.
- Davis, T.A., O' Regan, T. and Wilson, J. (1990) *Nga Tohu Pumahara: The Survey Pegs of the Past. Understanding Māori Place Names*. Christchurch: New Zealand Geographic Board.
- Dawson, J. (1998) A constitutional property settlement between Ngāi Tahu and the Crown. Unpublished paper. Faculty of Law, University of Otago.
- Department of Conservation (1989) *Nomination of South West New Zealand for Inclusion in the World Heritage List*. Wellington: Department of Conservation.
- Department of Conservation (1991) *Mount Cook National Park Interpretation Plan August 1991*. Department of Conservation, Mount Cook.
- Department of Conservation (1993) *South-West New Zealand Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Area*. Wellington: Department of Conservation.
- Department of Conservation (1996) *Visitor Strategy*. Wellington: Department of Conservation.
- Department of Conservation (1998) *Walks in Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park*. Christchurch: Department of Conservation.
- Department of Conservation (1999) *Aoraki/Mount Cook Fact Sheet*. Christchurch: Department of Conservation.
- Department of Conservation (2000) *Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy*. Christchurch: Department of Conservation.
- Department of Conservation (2001a) *Visitor Strategy*. Wellington: Department of Conservation.
- Department of Conservation (2001b) *Interpretation Strategy, Canterbury Conservancy 1991–2001*. Christchurch: Department of Conservation.
- Department of Conservation (2001c) *Draft Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Management Plan*. Christchurch: Department of Conservation.
- Department of Conservation (2003) On WWW at <http://www.doc.govt.nz>.
- Devlin, P. (1987) The changing role of interpretation in New Zealand parks. In W. Croll (ed.) *Centenary Seminar: 100 Years of National Parks in New Zealand*. University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 24–28 August 1987.
- Devlin, P. and Booth, K. (1998) Outdoor recreation and the environment: Towards an

- understanding of the recreational user of the outdoors in New Zealand. In H. C. Perkins and G. Cushman (eds) *Time Out? Leisure, Recreation and Tourism in New Zealand and Australia* (pp. 109–26). Auckland: Longman.
- Devlin, P., Espiner, S., Hutchings, R. and Parkin, E. (1996) *Department of Conservation Visitor Management Information Needs: Scoping the State of the Knowledge*. Christchurch: Lincoln University.
- Digance, J. (2003) Pilgrimage at contested sites. *Annals of Tourism Research* 30 (1), 143–59.
- Ernst & Young (1996) Analysis of visitor information/interpretation needs at Mount Cook Village. Unpublished report. Wellington: Tourism and Leisure Consulting Group, Ernst & Young.
- Espiner, S.R. (1999) The use and effect of hazard warning signs: Managing visitor safety at Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers. Unpublished report. Wellington: Department of Conservation.
- Hakopa, H. (1998) The Māori world view. Unpublished manuscript, University of Otago, Dunedin.
- Hall, C.M. and McArthur, S. (1996) Managing community values: Identity–place relations: An introduction. In C.M. Hall and S. McArthur (eds) *Heritage Management in New Zealand and Australia* (pp. 180–84). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Harper, R.K. (1991) Interpretation in the national parks of New Zealand: The evolution and development of a management practice. M.Appl.Sci Dissertation, Lincoln University.
- Higham, J. (1996) Wilderness perceptions of international visitors to New Zealand. PhD Thesis, University of Otago.
- Hinch, T. (1998) Tourists and indigenous hosts: Diverging views on their relationship with Nature. *Current Issues in Tourism* 1 (1), 120–24.
- Hinch, T. and Colton, J. (1997) Harvesting tourists on a Cree trap line. In J. Higham and G. Kearsley (eds) *Trails on the Third Millennium* (pp. 115–24). Dunedin: University of Otago.
- Hinkson, M. (2003) Encounters with Aboriginal sites in metropolitan Sydney: A broadening horizon for cultural tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 11 (4), 295–305.
- Kearsley, G., Russell, S., Croy, W.G. and Mitchell, R.D. (2001) *Recreational and Tourist Use of New Zealand's Accessible Natural Areas. Activities, Motivations and Social Impacts Research Paper No 9*. Department of Tourism, University of Otago.
- Keelan, N. (1996) Māori heritage: Visitor management and interpretation. In C.M. Hall and S. McArthur (eds) *Heritage Management in New Zealand and Australia* (pp. 195–201). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- MacLennan, P. (2000) *Visitor Information as a Management Tool*. Science and Research Internal Report 180. Wellington: Department of Conservation.
- McIntosh, A.J. (1998) Mixed methods: Putting the tourist at the forefront of tourism research. *Tourism Analysis* 3 (2), 121–7.
- McIntosh, A.J., Smith, A. and Ingram, T. (2000) *Tourist Experiences of Māori Culture in Aotearoa, New Zealand*. Research Paper No 8. Centre for Tourism, University of Otago.
- McKercher, B. (2002) Towards a classification of cultural tourists. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4, 29–38.
- Molloy, L. (1993) Natural heritage interpretation in New Zealand. In S. Olsson and R. Saunders (eds) *Proceedings of the Open to Interpretation Conference* (pp. 15–20). Melbourne: Interpretation Association of Australia.
- Moscardo, G. (1996) Mindful visitors: Creating sustainable links between heritage and tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research* 23 (2), 376–97.
- Moscardo, G. (1999) *Making Visitors Mindful: Principles for Creating Sustainable Visitor Experiences Through Effective Communication*. Champaign: Sagamore.
- Moscardo, G. and Pearce, P.L. (1986) Visitor centres and environmental interpretation: An exploration of the relationships among visitor enjoyment, understanding and mindfulness. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 6, 89–108.
- Moscardo, G. and Pearce, P.L. (1998) Understanding ethnic tourists. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26 (2), 416–34.
- New Zealand Tourism Board (1996) *International Visitor Survey*. Wellington: New Zealand Tourism Board.

- O'Regan, S. (1987) The bi-cultural challenge to management. In W. Croll (ed.) *Centenary Seminar: 100 Years of National Parks in New Zealand*. Christchurch: University of Canterbury.
- O'Regan, S. (1990) Māori control of the Māori heritage. In P. Gathercole and D. Lowenthal (eds) *The Politics of the Past* (pp. 95–106). Cambridge: University Press.
- O'Regan, T. (1992) The case from Ngai Tahu. *Climber*, 4, 11–12.
- Orams, M.B. (1995) Using interpretation to manage nature-based tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 4 (2), 81–94.
- Orams, M.B. (1996) A conceptual model of tourist-wildlife interaction: The case for education as a management strategy. *Australian Geographer* 27 (1), 39–51.
- Orams, M.B. (1997). The effectiveness of environmental education: Can we turn tourists into 'greenies'? *Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research* 3, 295–306.
- Otago Daily Times* (1998) Mountain guides oppose Ngai Tahu move. (20 August), 3.
- Peet, K. (1987) Interpretation of Māori values. In W. Croll (ed.) *Centenary Seminar: 100 Years of National Parks in New Zealand*. Christchurch: University of Canterbury.
- Pemberton, J.M. (1993) Perspectives in the interpretation of New Zealand's cultural heritage. M.Ed. Dissertation, University of Canterbury.
- Pfister, R. (2000) Mountain culture as a tourism resource: Aboriginal views on the privileges of storytelling. In P.M. Godde, M.F. Price and F.M. Zimmerman (eds) *Tourism and Development in Mountain Regions* (pp. 115–36). Wallingford: CABI.
- Piddington, K. (1987) The national parks of Aotearoa – New Zealand: The Crown Jewels or the jewels in the crown? In W. Croll (ed.) *Centenary Seminar: 100 Years of National Parks in New Zealand*. Christchurch: University of Canterbury.
- Prentice, R. (1995) *Tourism and Heritage Attractions*. London: Routledge.
- Prentice R. (1996) *Tourism as Experience. Tourists as Consumers. Insight and Enlightenment*. Edinburgh: Queen Margaret College.
- Rogers, K. (1995) The effect of aircraft overflights on visitors to Mount Cook National Park. Dip. Tour. Dissertation, University of Otago.
- Ruru, J. (2001) Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the management of National Parks in New Zealand. M. Law thesis, University of Otago.
- Russell, K.J. (2000) Landscape perceptions of Kai Tahu I Mua, Aiane, A Muri Ake. PhD Thesis, University of Otago.
- Ryan, C. (1997) Māori and tourism: A relationship of history, constitutions and rites. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 5 (4), 257–78.
- Ryan, C. (2002) Tourism and cultural proximity: Examples from New Zealand. *Annals of Tourism Research* 29 (4), 952–71.
- Ryan C. and Huyton, J. (2000a) Who is interested in Aboriginal tourism in the Northern Territory, Australia? A cluster analysis. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 8, 53–87.
- Ryan, C. and Huyton, J. (2000b) Aboriginal Tourism – a linear structural relations analysis of domestic and international tourist demand. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 2, 15–29.
- Ryan, C. and Huyton, J. (2002) Tourists and Aboriginal people. *Annals of Tourism Research* 29, 631–47.
- Ryan, C. and Pike, S. (2003) Māori-based tourism in Rotorua: Perceptions of place by domestic visitors. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 11 (4), 307–21.
- Shackley, M. (ed.) (2000) *Visitor Management: Case Studies from World Heritage Sites*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Shackley, M. (2001) *Managing Sacred Sites*. London: Continuum.
- Sinclair, D. (1992a) Land: Māori view and European response. In M. King (ed.) *Te Ao Hurihuri: Aspects of Māoritanga* (pp. 65–84). Auckland: Reed.
- Sinclair, D. (1992b) Land since the Treaty. In M. King (ed.) *Te Ao Hurihuri: Aspects of Māoritanga* (pp. 85–105). Auckland: Reed.
- Slatter, S. (2003) Department of Conservation, Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park.
- Stafford Group (2001) *He Matai Tapoi Māori: A Study of Barriers, Impediments and Opportunities for Māori in Tourism*. Wellington: Office of Tourism and Sport.
- Staiff, R., Bushell, R. and Kennedy, P. (2002) Interpretation in national parks: Some critical questions. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 10 (2), 97–113.

- Stewart, E.J. (1997) The 'place' of interpretation: An evaluation of provision, use and role of interpretation at Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand. MA Thesis, Lincoln University.
- Stewart, E.J., Hayward, B.M. and Devlin, P. (1998) The 'place' of interpretation: A new approach to the evaluation of interpretation. *Tourism Management* 19 (3), 257–66.
- Tau, T.M., Goodall, A., Palmer, D. and Tau, R. (1990) *Te Whakatau Kaupapa: Resource Management Strategy for the Canterbury Region*. Christchurch: Aoraki.
- Te Puni Kokiri (1998) *Māori Tourism Directory*. Ministry of Māori Development Te Puni Kokiri, Wellington.
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (TRONT) (1998) *Te Karaka Special Edition, Crown Settlement Offer: Consultation Document from the Ngāi Tahu Negotiating Group*. Christchurch: Ngāi Tahu.
- Tilden, F. (1977) *Interpreting Our Heritage*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Timothy, D.J. and Boyd, S.W. (2003) *Heritage Tourism*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) (2003a) *Tourism New Zealand Three Year Strategic Plan 2003–2006*. Wellington: Tourism New Zealand.
- Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) (2003b) *New Zealand's Ideal Visitor: The Interactive Traveller*. Wellington: Tourism New Zealand.
- Uptis, A. (1989) Interpreting cross-cultural sites. In D. Uzzell (ed.) *Heritage Interpretation: Volume 1, Natural and Built Environment* (pp. 142–52). New York: Belhaven.
- Uzzell, D. and Ballantyne, R. (eds) (1998) *Contemporary Issues in Heritage and Environmental Interpretation*. London: Stationery Office.
- Van Aalst, I. and Daly, C. (2002) International visitor satisfaction with their New Zealand experience: The cultural tourism product market – a summary of studies 1990–2001. Unpublished Report, Tourism New Zealand, Wellington.
- Van der Scheer, D. (1999) Destination image of New Zealand as perceived by Dutch university students and the general Dutch population. M.Tour. Thesis, University of Otago.
- Van Meijl, T. (1994) The Māori as warrior: Ideological implications of a historical image. In T. Van Meijl and P. van der Grijp (eds) *European Imagery and Colonial History in the Pacific* (pp. 49–63). Saarbrücken: Nijmegen Institute for Comparative Studies in Development and Cultural Change.
- Walker, R. (1992) The relevance of Māori myth and tradition. In M. King, (ed.) *Te Ao Hurihuri: Aspects of Māoritanga* (pp. 171–84). Auckland: Reed.
- Walker, R. (1996) Contestation of power and knowledge in the politics of culture. *He Pukenga Korero Ngahura* 1 (2), 1–7.
- Warren, J.A.N. and Taylor, C.N. (2001) *Developing Heritage Tourism in New Zealand*. Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment, Wellington.
- Westerbeke, P.G. (1995) Department of Conservation visitor and information centres: Understanding visitor satisfaction. MA thesis. Victoria, University of Wellington.
- Wilson, A. (1997) Interpretation at Mount Cook. In W. Croll (ed.) *Centenary Seminar: 100 Years of National Parks in New Zealand*. University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 24–28 August.
- Young, M. (1999) The relationship between tourist motivations and the interpretation of place meaning. *Tourism Geographies* 1 (4), 387–405.