



Christchurch update – Canterbury region

May 2019

Canterbury is home to a diverse people, a varied landscape and a range of experiences unparalleled in Aotearoa. It is a region of exploration, a basecamp from which to launch South Island adventures.

The region continues to increase its visitor offering, maximising the increased number of visitors travelling into Christchurch, who can expect a complete New Zealand experience within Canterbury.

Nearly seven million passengers passed through Christchurch International Airport in the 2018 financial year. International visitor numbers grew 8.5 per cent to 558,000, more than double the average increase across New Zealand of 3.9 per cent.

In late 2018, more than 60 Canterbury vineyards united under the North Canterbury Wine Region name. The region spans from just south of Kaikōura to north of the Rakaia River, including Banks Peninsula, and encapsulates more than 1500 hectares of vines.

Further south in Lake Tekapo village, Earth & Sky continues to wow visitors with their views of the pristine night sky. The Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve, implemented in 2012, heavily restricts light pollution in the area, ensuring researchers and visitors unobstructed views into our universe.

Earth & Sky are close to opening their new multi-million-dollar astronomy facility in Lake Tekapo, which features the 124-year-old Brashear Telescope, as well as a restaurant, bar, and retail area. The centre was set to open in late 2019. They currently runs tours to their observatory on nearby Mt John.

The Youth Hostel Association (YHA) Lake Tekapo opened in 2019, bringing a further 128 beds to the busy tourist town. It was expected the increase in bed numbers would bring in an extra \$6.5 million into the Lake Tekapo economy, and increase the chance of visitors spending more than a single night in the town.

The Alpine Pacific Touring Route is being touted as an ideal way to explore the best of Canterbury. The route takes in the wide-open Canterbury plains, the surf beaches and wineries of North Canterbury, and hot pools and alpine beauty of Hanmer Springs, and the rugged and wildlife-filled Kaikōura coast.

The Banks Peninsula is Christchurch's remote wilderness playground. With more than 40 individual bays, many with tourist attractions and accommodation options, it is a veritable smorgasbord of visitor offerings.

Of interest is the Pohatu Marine Reserve, offering tours and the chance to help the continued protection of the White-flipped Penguins that nest there, Canterbury's own variety of the Australasian Little Penguin. Operating from a booking office in Akaroa, this family-run farm offer a range of visitor attractions, with all proceeds returned to the conservation of this important penguin colony.

[Facts cheat-sheet:](#)

- **More than 550,000 international visitors came through Christchurch International Airport in 2018**, an increase of 8.5 per cent on the same period the year before. They made up part of the seven million passengers that came through the airport in the 2018 financial year.
- **The North Canterbury Wine Region became official** in 2018, uniting more than 60 vineyards.
- **Earth & Sky are set to open their multi-million astronomy centre this year**, including a 124-year-old telescope.
- **YHA Lake Tekapo opened in early 2019**, increasing the village's accommodation offering by 128 beds. The hostel is expected to pump an extra \$6.5 million into the local economy every year.