

# Hospitality Insights

For a sustainable industry

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# Hospitality Insights

**Vision:** To communicate hospitality research to practitioners in the hospitality industry in order to inform their thinking, processes and practices.

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*Hospitality Insights* contains concise and accessible summaries of AUT's hospitality research. Our publication is aimed at a practitioner/industry audience, with a focus on relevant issues to help build a more sustainable hospitality industry for the future.

This journal will operate as a tangible vehicle for meaningful outreach with local and international hospitality communities. Our objective is to stimulate dialogue between academic researchers and industry practitioners, as well as with other interested members of the hospitality community. We believe such a discourse can improve business practice, sustainability and workers' wellbeing, and lead to the creation of more healthy societies, whilst also engendering impact and uptake of academic research.

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# Editorial

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**Alison McIntosh, Shelagh Mooney and David Williamson**

It is with pleasure that we share this latest issue of *Hospitality Insights* with our valued hospitality community. This issue has somewhat of an education focus. It provides short executive summaries of original research on diverse topics relating to hospitality education and knowledge. Topics covered include personal reflections by two AUT staff about a seconded teaching programme in Vietnam; how to flip academic classrooms to be hospitable and beneficial to the wider society; how to embed sustainability consciousness in hospitality and tourism tertiary education; hotel management students' impressions of a hotel; how the meaning of the word 'gourmandise' has evolved through history; and questions around New Zealand's hospitality to refugees.

The journal provides free, open access to the key implications of hospitality research for a wider readership along with opinion pieces of topical interest. We thus welcome your contributions to future editions of *Hospitality Insights* on the impact of COVID-19, as well as discussion of other issues currently testing the resilience and the sustainable future of the hospitality industry and communities.

He waka eke noa. We are all in this together.

# Good morning Vietnam

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Tracy Harkison and Sandra Goh

Tracy (third from left) is the programme leader for the Bachelor of International Hospitality Management at AUT in New Zealand. Her research passions are hospitality education and the co-creation of luxury accommodation experiences.



Dr Sandra Goh (second from left) is the programme leader and lecturer for the Bachelor of Arts Event Management at AUT. She hopes to use her academic and research skills to provide business and creative solutions to the tourism, hospitality and event sectors. Sandra's research interests include event and festival management and tourism, creative placemaking, event tourist behaviours, serious leisure, social worlds, transformational travel, and creative research approaches.

**The following is a reflection from two Auckland University of Technology (AUT) academics seconded as visiting professors to teach events and human resource management at a Vietnamese university. As this may be an ongoing project for AUT, they have provided these insights to guide other academics venturing to teach in Vietnam.**

It was a humbling experience and we recommend all academics make teaching overseas and entering into global classrooms part of their journey. Although others with experience of overseas teaching have recommended co-teaching with a translator/interpreter [1], interpreters are not always available when required. And when surprised by their absence, what do you do? Ten lessons were drawn from our experiences for you to include in your overseas teaching survival kit:

*Lesson #1.* Expect the unexpected.

*Lesson #2.* Brace yourself for culture shock – the first day you will feel like a fish out of water, which really makes you reset yourself to becoming a better teacher. Imagine you are without an interpreter and the students can only understand half of your slides.

*Lesson #3.* Adapt your materials and revise your notes to include local examples. This will involve thinking on your feet; your assessment format may undergo many changes. Try to blend in your students' local and pop-cultural interests.

*Lesson #4.* Find your allies; the class monitor and the interpreter rule! Identify the 'leaders of the pack' – those who can help lead and manage the class.

*Lesson #5.* Use language carefully. Remember that English words can have more than one meaning and that you will spend most of your time rephrasing sentences.

*Lesson #6.* Co-teaching with an interpreter means half the time is spent translating your lessons. Be realistic about your learning outcomes.

*Lesson #7.* There are no international standards in Vietnam, only regional standards. For example, the international hotel accreditation is not the same as Vietnam's hotel quality standards.

*Lesson #8.* Be prepared with multiple, fun teaching tools to engage your students in group activities. Team building is always welcome.

*Lesson #9.* Bring small souvenirs from New Zealand as little treats and rewards to encourage participation from students.

*Lesson #10.* Always travel in pairs and be prepared to ‘rough it’.

Vietnam has transformed us into instructors with a global perspective. We went to impart knowledge, but we have had returned to us many times what we gave. We stepped outside of our comfort zones and this has certainly stretched our personal and professional limits in ways conventional teaching could never achieve. Like Stachowski and Sparks [2], we now know what it is to be cultural outsiders looking in, and how to find ways to gain acceptance as ‘foreign teachers’. Now that we are back on campus comfortably teaching in English, we should still consider the students we have in our classrooms. In a university that promotes the presence of a global community, we need to be mindful that some international students in our classrooms may need help to orientate them to what, for them, is an alien learning and teaching platform in a foreign language.

This teaching reflection was supposed to be written upon our return from Vietnam in November 2019. However, at the time of writing, COVID-19 has brought about unprecedented changes that are transforming the way universities are teaching – bringing their lessons online to students from all over the world. Although this article is not focused on COVID-19, the unusual times have triggered questions for academics and industry trainers planning on teaching overseas in the future, to consider beyond the above lessons, particularly about the accessibility of technology. Considerations include the availability of hardware and software to students in other countries. We did not have access to WIFI in the classrooms in Vietnam; students were dependent on their phones for the additional information they needed for our group activities.

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# Bridging hospitality education and community

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**Cheryl Cockburn-Wootten and Alison McIntosh**

Dr Cheryl Cockburn-Wootten is a flipped academic whose research focuses on applying critical communication and organisational communication perspectives to tourism and hospitality.



Professor Alison McIntosh's research focuses on issues of social justice and advocacy through tourism and hospitality in the pursuit of social change.



The hospitality industry is not immune from the social issues facing our society. There are cases of hospitality initiatives for social change, including philanthropy and social enterprise [1]. In our academic work, the key driver for change is how to overcome silos in order to create engaged, meaningful relationships between hospitality scholars in academia and external community stakeholders [1–3]. We sought to move beyond the traditional confines of academic institutions in order to 'flip' mind-sets and practice hospitality for the benefit of wider society. To achieve this vision of hospitality, we needed to work with and within communities. Intervention on long-standing social issues requires wider collaboration – reaching across businesses, third-sector organisations and education institutions. The New Zealand government has been calling on academia to make meaningful relationships that “open up diverse networks of knowledge and resources” for tackling social change [2].

Universities have not always had a good reputation for sustained meaningful engagement with external stakeholders [2]. For instance, typical interactions at universities may include one-way guest lectures or advisory boards who may serve more as a performance of communication for accreditation boards than actual listening and engaging with stakeholders. Dissatisfied with these limiting relationships, “we adopted principles from critical hospitality and dialogue theories to create a long-term space for inclusion, collaboration, and transformational change” [2]. We held a series of community stakeholder meetings using tools, such as Ketso [4, 5], that facilitated co-created conversations with diverse stakeholders – many of whom would not ordinarily have the chance to think through a social problem together. During these meetings, individuals discussed the issue and gained an opportunity to hear, learn and understand each other's experiences. A recommendation emerged from these meetings [2] for the formation of a network of organisations, charities, individuals and businesses that were interested in tackling social change – called The Network for Community Hospitality (NCH).

This recommendation enabled a communication network for diverse stakeholders, ranging from corporates, funders and third sector to individual community organisations to share conversation, resources, knowledge and work on social issues facing our communities. NCH has worked with a variety of stakeholders within communities drawing on different sets of knowledge to

tackle social cultural issues related to hospitality, such as social housing, disability and employment, refugee welcome, and poverty. NCH has held 'Town & Gown' events to encourage dialogue between stakeholders who may not normally have access to decision-making and financial resources. Invitees to the dinners ranged from businesses to charities and aimed to encourage stakeholders to collectively think through how we can practice and make our communities hospitable. At these dinner events, people with similar interests were strategically placed around the tables. Between dining courses, short three-minute speeches were given by various organisations with a specific call to action for change.

Other examples include organisations working with student groups to tackle a particular hospitality issue. Active collaboration with external stakeholders involves student internships/volunteering and students pitching their intervention ideas to the stakeholder. In many cases, after the course key students or student groups will continue either working or (micro-)volunteering with the organisation to help deliver and implement the enterprise or intervention.

One of the determinants of success is the mind-set adopted during these processes. The aim is to enact participatory community development approaches that emphasise 'bottom-up', co-creation, and dialogue as important tactics for success. Many of the approaches we used were organic, even chaotic at times, inclusive, and always involved friendly conversations over a cuppa and food. Of course, issues can emerge from time to time due to differing understandings around concerns such as timeframes, focus, ownership and commitment. For education, the benefits are that we engage learners in meaningful practices that bridge students' understanding of theories and real life for a better future. For businesses, it means future hospitality graduates are exposed to real-life issues, well-prepared to manage, able to take leadership and can vision new enterprises and practices for the sector. For society, involving a range of stakeholders to tackle social issues works towards developing inclusive, safe community spaces with a strong sense of civic engagement; in short, a vision for more hospitable communities.

The original research on which this article is based is available here <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2018.1476519>

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# Finding a point of reference to inspire a sustainability consciousness

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## Maree Stansfield

Maree (Ree) is a researcher at the New Zealand School of Tourism. Her research is focused on how to inspire and facilitate sustainability consciousness and uptake in tourism, hospitality and education.



An educated workforce armed with sustainability-savvy worldviews, competencies and actions to counter our industry's waste output and resource use are assets for future businesses poised to respond to the sustainability call. The newcomer workforce released into industry every year offer hope, and a space to intervene and inject change. This article reports findings on a study designed to acquire the knowledge needed to inspire sustainability consciousness in staff and students at a hospitality and tourism tertiary education facility. It was encouraging to discover that the people who chose to participate in the study possessed promising skills valuable in the move towards sustainability.

This article reports on Phase 1 of a three-phase study with the final goal of imbedding sustainability practice and consciousness into the tertiary education research site. The study responds to the industry's lack of sustainability education and the workplace demand for this knowledge [1]. Frameworks to help progress sustainable change require settings in which to test and refine their design and worth; places of education have been recommended [2].

Phase 1 responds to research recommendations (e.g. [3]) and considers an individual's sustainability-focused worldview, competency level and self-reported actions. As such, a questionnaire was tailored to identify a snapshot of the research participants' ideas and actions around sustainability. The findings provide information to help prepare the design of Phase 2 and to plan for change.

The findings detail four themes that divide the respondents into four groups according to the traits they exhibited. The range of skill sets now identified can be tapped into, enhanced, encouraged and stimulated in the next two phases.

*Theme 1* participants are value-laden and action-orientated collaborators who envision the future based on a reasonable knowledge base. They subscribe to intergenerational equity, understand cause and effect and will act in accord with an internal locus of control. These individuals have the capacity to reflect, process ideas and offer solutions. They offer promise as leaders and knowledge sharers.

*Theme 2* individuals want to be involved, find solutions, and aspire to be part of a progressive sustainability group. Although they showcase unexpected and at times undeveloped thought processing in the face of sustainability-



related issues, they are eager, outside-the-box thinkers. Armed with accurate knowledge, *Theme 2*'s people will generate buy-in amongst peers with their enthusiasm.

The people that make up *Theme 3* respond to influence and stimulus; they can be led and will likely follow. Given the right information, tools and inspiration they represent a good-sized group that may buy-in to positive change. The findings indicate they can make the transition towards sustainability thinking if supported with some well-formed narratives and resources.

*Theme 4* is represented by people who appear disinterested in sustainability. They exhibit an external locus of control and do not contribute beyond the bare minimum. The follow-up research project (Phase 2) will be created to ignite buy-in among this group, and to inspire and educate them, in order to foster them as better informed and active individuals.

The research team now have a reference point from which to move to Phase 2. The focus groups in Phase 2 will include the participants from Phase 1. The purpose will be to engage the people involved, inform them of Phase 1 findings, and encourage them to offer ideas for crafting a pathway towards sustainability uptake at the research site. Previous research tells us that engaging people to inspire buy-in and providing a space where they become the key players in crafting a new way forward are key factors in a move towards a sustainability-centric future [4]. Critically, the student participants will then enter the hospitality and tourism workforce armed with a sustainability consciousness that can instigate positive change.

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# Forming impressions of hotels: the subtle power of words

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## Robin Hill

Robin Hill joined the Pacific International Hotel Management School (PIHMS) in 2015. He is an organisational psychologist and at PIHMS specialises in postgraduate research and is research stream leader. His previous research has focussed on emotionally toxic workplaces and applications of Personal Construct Psychology.



The aim of the study was to investigate the potential power that subtle wording changes may have in altering the impressions that potential guests gain from brief descriptions, such as on the home pages of hotel websites or in online reviews.

The intention was to determine whether the findings of earlier psychological research on the formation of impressions of people could be replicated regarding impression formation of hotels. In the psychological experiments, students first read a brief biography about a guest lecturer, then later attended a discussion led by him. They then rated their impressions of the man on a number of dimensions. All of the respondents experienced exactly the same discussion and received exactly the same biography. The words were identical except for one word. In one version a sentence said people who knew this man described him as **cold**. In the other version he was described as **warm**.

The change of this one word alone had significant effects on people's ratings on some dimensions and very little effect on others. For example, those who received the warm version rated the man as more generous than those who received the cold version.

The current study was designed to see if this effect would occur when hotel management students formed an impression of a hotel, especially when there was limited information available – such as on the home page of a hotel's website.

Data were collected from 60 students from a hotel management college who were familiar with hotels either as guests, students on industry placement, or both. The students were in their early twenties and represented a number of different nationalities.

Information from the home pages of two New Zealand hotel websites was adapted and edited to form a description of a fictitious hotel. The brief description of the hotel was followed by a survey containing 15 items, each describing a dimension of the hotel. The students gave each item a score of between 1 and 6 (see Table 1).

Respondents received exactly the same descriptions of the hotel except for the change of one word. In one version a sentence said, "Guests who have stayed at the hotel generally describe it as having a **cold** ambience." The same sentence

in the other version said, “**warm** ambience.” Thirty students read the **warm** version and the other 30 read the **cold** version.

**Table 1:** Statistically significant dimensions of ‘warm’ versus ‘cold’ hotel

<b>Hotel dimension</b> (scored 1→6)	<b>‘Warm’ mean</b>	<b>‘Cold’ mean</b>	<b>t-test result (p)</b>
Popular → Unpopular	2.0	3.3	0.002
Busy, bustling → Not busy, inactive	2.5	3.6	0.011
Quiet → Noisy	2.6	3.5	0.019
Tidy, well-kept → Untidy, run-down	2.0	2.8	0.035
Environmentally friendly → Not environmentally friendly	2.4	3.1	0.040
Modest → Extravagant	3.9	3.1	0.042
Knowledgeable staff → Not knowledgeable staff	2.9	3.3	0.050

Note: mean=average score (between 1 and 6); p=probability

Statistical analysis of the group averages revealed seven statistically significant dimensions. Table 1 shows that the ‘warm’ group perceived the hotel as more likely to be more popular, busier and bustling, quieter, tidier and well kept, environmentally friendly, extravagant and with more knowledgeable staff than did the ‘cold’ group.

Having rated the warm ambience as more likely to be bustling it might be expected that it would be rated noisier. That was not the case. Revisiting some students and further questioning them revealed that a cold ambience was perceived as more likely to have harsh surfaces such as tiles and glass that would echo noise. A warm ambience was perceived to be more likely to be carpeted, curtained and with décor that absorbed sound.

The findings show that the warm-cold effect could be replicated regarding impression formation of hotels and may suggest that some dimensions are core for forming an impression and others are peripheral. It appears ambience described as warm and cold may be among the core dimensions. The current study was an initial exploration of this phenomenon and further research would be required to identify whether other dimensions are core or peripheral. However, a more recent replication of the study by the current author using “welcoming – unwelcoming” produced five statistically different dimensions and hence may also be a core dimension. Whatever the case, the findings suggest that care needs to be taken when hoteliers choose wording to include in descriptions on the home pages of their websites.

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# From glutton to gourmet: is gourmandise still a deadly sin?

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## Gilles Petit

Gilles is a recent Master of Gastronomy graduate from Auckland University of Technology. He holds the role of senior lecturer in culinary arts (pâtisserie) at the School of Hospitality and Tourism where he lectures on the first year of the Diploma in Pâtisserie. His research interests include the wider field of pâtisserie, recently looking at the historical importance of French gastronomy in the culinary arts.



Drawing from historical literary works and contemporary French literature, this study [1] explored the evolution of the meanings of 'gourmandise' as a concept, from its early characterisation as a cardinal sin to a contemporary notion merging with visual textualisation. Furthermore, it argues that the twentieth century paved the way for a transformation in the meaning of gourmandise: its definition now emphasises a visual refinement characteristic, while retaining the element of excess as part of its appeal, thus making 'gourmandise' symbolic, accessible and acceptable to the general public.

Although the word 'gourmandise' appeared in written documents at the end of the Middle Ages, its history is much older since its use dates back to the early days of Christianity, to the first monastic communities of the third and fourth centuries. In addition, while the term still exists today, its significance has had many variations over the centuries.

While contemporary lexicographers define it as "the aptitude to appreciate the quality and delicacy of dishes" and the "excessive taste for the pleasure of the table" [2], its meaning has varied over the centuries [3] and is still contested. Philosophical, spiritual and social debates exist over whether the word depicts excess or moderation.

In Western society, gourmandise refers to three denotations roughly corresponding to three historical periods. The earliest meaning refers to the big eaters, the heavy drinkers, and all the excesses of the table. Strongly negative, the word 'gourmandise' qualifies a horrible vice, one of the seven deadly sins codified by the Christian Church.

Gradually, gourmandise was enriched by a second, positive sense, which would triumph in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and introduce the word 'gourmet' into European languages. While still reprobated by the Christian Church and moralists, gourmandise became a respectable epithet characterising amateur appreciators of good food, good wines and good company.

The eighteenth century brought about a redefinition of the notion of gourmandise, all the more so as the influence of the Christian Church declined considerably. The works of Grimod de la Reynière and, a few years later, Brillat-Savarin saw a semantic change in the meaning of gourmandise, which

has been attributed to the transition of an economy of scarcity to one of abundance [4, 5].

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries brought a new era for gourmandise. With the advent of digital communication, people began to talk about their experiences more rapidly and to a wider audience. Eating out has become a social event, one which must be shared instantly. Gourmandise has become digital and focuses both on quality and quantity, retaining some of its original meaning but with a new visual dimension [5].

Gourmandise is now part of everyday and professional life. It still includes the implications of excess, sharing and exchange, but now denotes transference in an increasingly seductive and interactive way. This rediscovered gourmandise is now voyeuristic instead of the gourmandise of the stomach.

The findings of this study suggest that, while the meaning of gourmandise has evolved over a period of two millennia, the aspect of excessive food consumption has been retained from its beginnings right through to the twenty-first century. Paralleling its growing prestige within popular culture and social media, the discourse on gourmandise is thriving. Amidst the 'explosion' of food-related blogs, vlogs, websites and television programmes, gourmandise has become an engaging form of entertainment, trying to satisfy the appetites of a contemporary 'food-crazed' culture.

The original research on which this article is based is available here <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/12964>

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# How hospitable is Aotearoa New Zealand to refugees?

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**Alison McIntosh and Cheryl Cockburn-Wootten**

Professor Alison McIntosh's research focuses on issues of social justice and advocacy through tourism and hospitality in the pursuit of social change.



Dr Cheryl Cockburn-Wootten is a flipped academic whose research focuses on applying critical communication and organisational communication perspectives to tourism and hospitality.



Following the tragic events of the Christchurch shooting on 15th March 2019, New Zealanders projected a national image of hospitality towards Muslim New Zealanders, involving an Islamic call to prayer in Parliament, and women wearing hijab in solidarity – unique public demonstrations of compassion and inclusion. In 2020, the New Zealand government will raise its refugee quota to 1,500 refugees per year as part of its United Nations obligations and remove its race-based aspects [1]. Globally, there are vast displacements of people fleeing persecution and economic oppression [2]. Arguably, despite its small refugee resettlement quota, New Zealand appears *hospitable*. Yet our study reveals a context within which negative economic, social and political factors dominate policy and practices. It similarly highlights ways in which New Zealand's hospitality towards refugees is paternalistic and interventionist, even if not deliberately [3].

'Being hospitable' is typically defined as a social relation that accompanies the ideologies and unconditional practices of 'welcome' [4]. As an act of welcome, hospitality gives ethical recognition to the stranger. This practice of hospitality enables and resonates a feeling of belonging and inclusion. However, the intrinsic nature of hospitality may foster *exclusion* as well as *inclusion*. The Christchurch incident arose from an act of unwelcome and a false sense of security from authorities as previous discrimination reported by the local refugee Muslim community was ignored. As such, key questions remain about how hospitable New Zealand is to refugees.

When refugees are resettled into a destination, refugee-focused service providers (including not-for-profits, community groups and NGOs) offer frontline services to ease refugees' experiences of trauma and marginalisation. They provide advocacy and welcome through reception processes, translation services and multicultural centres. We facilitated a national think tank attended by 34 refugee-focused service providers to examine how they practice a hospitable welcome through their advocacy and frontline services and how the welcome could be improved.

Participants identified the need for greater collaboration and communication between refugee-focused service providers to enhance trust, relationships, to enable former refugees to feel safe in voicing their concerns and access services, and to reduce the competition and duplication of service provision in the face of scarce funding. They also recognised the need to increase attention to the notion of welcome and advocacy by adopting practices from non-



interventionist actions that draw on the notion of welcome as empathetic, warm and connecting, with minimum rules, and to centre refugee voices with their active participation in policy development, service delivery and social inclusion activities. Participants also advocated continued efforts by the media and wider community to reduce discrimination and negative social dialogue around refugees and to encourage their social inclusion. To achieve these outcomes, participants raised the need to address the important issues of underfunding and strategy underpinning the delivery of refugee-focused service provision.

Overall, our findings suggest that beneath the initial welcoming surface, an alternative perspective may be concealed that restricts us from providing a broader inclusive hospitality and welcome into Aotearoa New Zealand. To bridge this potential impasse, a more humanistic approach is potentially required, where refugees actively co-create the critical framing of hospitality [5, 6] to better support their resettlement.

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