

OCEANIA: NEW ZEALAND

1. What is the latest spa and wellness news in your country?

New hot pool facilities are being planned for Rotorua and Queenstown, New Zealand's premier tourist destinations. Media coverage and interest in spas as health, wellness and luxury 'must do's' has been increasing. This exposure has profiled spa businesses as well as New Zealand's free public experiences such as Hot Water Beach and naturally occurring thermal hot pools in national parks and wilderness locations.

The national tourism organisation, Tourism New Zealand, is placing more focus on aspects such as indigenous Maori culture, geothermal resources, and spa and hot springs experiences in addition to the country's stunning scenic and adventure experiences.

Rotorua's Maori people have lived amongst active geothermal fields, and used natural mineral hot pools for bathing, heating and cooking for many centuries.

Rotorua was historically recognised as a spa destination more than a hundred years ago and has been visited by international visitors, including royalty, ever since.

2. The industry is buzzing about wellness technologies. How do you see spa and wellness establishments in your country using wellness technologies now and in the future?

In our city of Rotorua we are very excited about spa and wellness becoming much more of a mainstream cultural activity for health maintenance, general wellbeing, rehabilitation and of executive stress relief. We view this as a key focus area for Rotorua as the city is close to New Zealand's large metropolitan centres and east coast Australia which offer a ready market. We see promising signs of the government being prepared to consider spa and hot springs treatments to support the wellbeing of the increasingly ageing population and the resultant growth in healthcare costs.

3. What is happening in your country in terms of wellness tourism?

Wellness tourism is not currently a prime driver of tourism in New Zealand but is growing. The key reasons people come to New Zealand includes outdoor adventure experiences, the country's stunning landscapes, friendly people and safe environments that simply make people feel great. However there is growth and investment at both local and national levels into what is termed 'special interest' tourism. This includes golf, food and wine, mountain biking, education and increasingly, luxury experiences and pampering. It is intended to link spa and wellness tourism strategies to those more established primary tourism drivers.

4. Please provide one sentence that best describes the latest developments in your country for each of these categories: hotel spas, destination spas, hot springs spas, medical spas, wellness living communities and corporate or employee wellness programs:

Hotel spas: These are seen as essential facilities for higher rated hotels although not always regarded as a major profit generators.

Destination spas: There are relatively few destination spas but there is considerable potential for developments in this area.

Hot springs spas: Interest and developments in this area are gaining momentum and this is seen as having considerable potential in New Zealand. In the next few years a number of new high quality developments are expected.

Wellness living communities: This is a new area for New Zealand that is seeing some development, mainly driven by the larger listed retirement lifestyle village companies offering an 'active retirement' business model.

Corporate or employee wellness programs: These are increasingly part of employment arrangements for company personnel. Insurance companies are starting to offer premium discounts for people engaging in fitness and wellness programs, and many major employers are looking at 'rest & recreation,' and health and wellness programmes for their staff members.

5. Fast-forward five years and tell us what you think the spa and wellness industry in your country will look like.

New Zealand will certainly see some new major world-class spa and wellness complexes being developed – and Rotorua is a prime location for these. We expect to see a movement toward spa and wellness as a much more mainstream culture, driven by general health and wellness awareness. We will see more programmes for executive stress relief and rehabilitation driven by corporates and healthcare organisations. There will be growing interest at a government level in spa and wellness programmes to reduce health care costs and keep the ageing population actively contributing to society well into their latter years. We expect all of these developments to be mainly driven out of Rotorua as New Zealand’s premier destination for health and wellness in the South Pacific region.

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