

The New Zealand Herald

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ethical traveller



Photo / Getty Images

THE NUMBER:

132

TONNES

Air New Zealand's latest recycling initiative has seen more than 132 tonnes diverted from landfill since it began in August.

How to see the world without leaving a footprint

The final straws

The elimination of plastic is a major talking point across the travel and hospitality industries, with many establishments taking baby steps towards eradication. The Hilton Waikoloa Village has taken the ban a step further, and is planning to introduce edible seaweed straws later this year. The straws will have different flavours, such as strawberry, to match what you are drinking. Hilton Hotels & Resorts aims to halve its plastic use by 2030, the first steps being the edible straws, energy-efficient in-room technology and locally sourced produce.

To travel or not to travel?

Despite the views of the US administration, here at *Travel* we believe climate change is real. Weekly international journal *Nature*, which analyses data on the Antarctic ice sheet as an important indicator of climate change, reports that Antarctica's ice has been melting at three times the rate that was predicted. So, should tourists still be visiting the continent and adding extra stress to an already precarious situation?

Latin America travel specialist Viva Expeditions, which has added vessels to its fleet that feature technology allowing them to conserve fuel, lower emissions and adapt to changing conditions to ensure the least impact on the environment and wildlife, believes tourism to Antarctica should continue, to spread awareness of its plight. "One of the best ways to create awareness is for

people to see for themselves the beauty of Antarctica and the challenges it is facing. They can then go home and encourage others," says founder Rachel Williams. The company is advocating for the continent to co-opt a large group of "Antarctica ambassadors" before 2048, people who have visited the region and who will help educate others about the problems it faces.

Vinaka Vakalevu

The people of Fiji are known for their generosity of spirit, and staff at the Coral Coast's Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort continue to give back to their local community with their Community Tourism initiative. Recent projects include a new kindergarten named after former AFL player Eddie Betts, who helped fund the project, and two new classrooms, a computer room, a library and a meeting hall for Sigatoka Valley's Conua School. Other projects the hotel has helped fundraise for include facilities for Sigatoka District Hospital.

Guests of the hotel have the opportunity to participate in these events or volunteer their time to the resort's engineering team for a range of tasks. This gives them a chance to spend some time with the "real Fiji" and give something back to the island nation that welcomes so many of us with open arms.

Help yourself.

No, really!

Hotels have realised that it's in their best interests – and that of the environment – if they encourage their guests to take home the half-empty bottles of tiny toiletries following a hotel stay. The alternative sees the hotel having to dispose of the bottles itself. However, if guests take the toiletries home, not only will they use up all the products or save them for future trips, but they could potentially keep the mini bottles as refillable containers.

Locally, Heritage & CityLife hotels are providing recyclable goodie bags in their hotel rooms so guests can take home partially used hair and body products to finish them up. Great initiative.

Top tip

Paul Hellier (pictured), currently riding from Hanoi to Bangkok with Intrepid Travel on the Peloton Against Plastic, has a tip for reducing your use of single-use plastic.

"Change your sweet tooth. When you're looking for a sugar rush at the end of the day, be aware that the chocolate bars you enjoy at home might be wrapped in plastic. Choose a local alternative – check out the amazing fruit."

