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FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

1 What languages are spoken in New Zealand?

New Zealanders all speak English, and some are also able to speak the indigenous Maori language. Few New Zealanders speak other European or Asian languages.

2 What currency do we use in New Zealand?

The only currency used in New Zealand is the NZ dollar(\$). Money may be changed at banks or at currency exchange points at major airports. Both Debit and Credit cards are widely used throughout N.Z. There are terminals in all towns that will accept most cards. However, non-New Zealand Debit cards may not work at some local centres. Some locations will charge a small percentage addition for use of Credit cards.

3 Is the water safe to drink in New Zealand?

Water from the tap at the Totara Springs venue is safe to drink. This also applies throughout New Zealand. However, there are supplies of bottled water at supermarkets.

4 Can I bring food into New Zealand?

No, you cannot bring fresh food into New Zealand. New Zealand has strict bio-security regulations, and there are heavy fines for attempting to bring fresh food into our country. However, packaged foods, such as chocolates, may be considered. If in doubt, declare what you bring in upon arrival.

5 What power points and voltage operates in New Zealand?

New Zealand electric power is 230Volts, 50Hz. The power plug type is "I" as shown in the website <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/> You will need to bring suitable adapters for your devices. The venue will have power charging points for you to use.

6 What weights and measures are used in New Zealand?

New Zealand uses kilograms (kg) and metres(m). All road signs are in kilometres(km)

7 Which side of the road do we drive on in New Zealand?

We drive on the **left** side of the road.

8 How can I find out about tourism opportunities in New Zealand?

You can visit the Tourism New Zealand website: www.newzealand.com or www.tourism.net.nz/tours
For Lord of the Rings/Hobbit tours, visit: www.redcarpet-tours.com

See also our information sheet on **Tourism opportunities in New Zealand before and after the Conference**

9 What accommodation is there in New Zealand?

We have more than 280 Servas hosts located throughout New Zealand. **See our Servas NZ website for information on "Where are our Hosts"**. New Zealand has a range of other accommodation for tourists. These include hotels, motels, bed-and-breakfast, hostels, backpackers, and motor camps. Motels are self-contained units where you can cook your own meals. Motor camps have camping facilities available, with power points for campervans, as well as basic cabins, studio units, and motels. You can visit: www.motorcamps.com or www.kiwiholidayparks.com



10 What are the climate and temperatures like in New Zealand?

Climate in New Zealand varies from mild maritime in the north to cooler in the south. New Zealand consists of small islands in the Southern Ocean, and our weather (both temperature and rainfall) is subject to rapid variation. We have a saying: "You can get all four seasons in one day in New Zealand". Areas further inland can be both hotter and colder than the coastal areas. There is no particular rainy season or dry season. The average historical temperature in mid October in Matamata; High; 17° C. Low; 11° C. or High; 62° F. Low; 51° F.

For weather forecasts, you can listen to radio or TV reports, read the newspapers, or visit: www.metservice.com or www.weatherzone.co.nz

11 How can I get from the airport to Auckland City?

From Auckland International Airport, you can get the Airport bus to the City. Or you can get a shuttle bus, or a taxi. Ask at the Airport Help desk where to find these. If you are being hosted before the Conference, please discuss this with your host.

12 Mobile phones in New Zealand.

You may have "roaming" capability on your mobile phone, or you can purchase a New Zealand SIM card at the Airport.

13 Is there free Wifi at the Airport?

Auckland International Airport has free Wifi throughout the building - but only for 30 minutes at a time.

14 What places of interest are there in Auckland?

Sky Tower, Waiheke Island, Auckland Domain

15 Will I need to bring a Servas Letter of Introduction to New Zealand?

Most participants have requested hosting before or after the Conference, so you will need an LOI for that. You will also need an LOI if you are intending to travel more widely in New Zealand to stay with Servas hosts. You will **not** need an LOI at the Conference venue itself.

16 Is transport provided from Auckland to the Conference venue?

The venue Totara Springs is about 2 hours by road from Auckland - but there is no routine public transport system to get you there. The Conference organisers are arranging buses to take you to the venue on 10 October - you will have chosen these in your registration.

17 How do I get from Auckland City to the Conference venue (288 Taihoa N Rd) by private car?

Drive south on the Auckland motorway (State Highway 1), turn left onto State Highway 2 towards Thames and Coromandel, at Mangatarata take State Highway 27 south for 73km, in Matamata take State Highway 24 south, after 4.6km turn left into Taihoa N Rd, to arrive at the Conference venue, Totara Springs.

18 Are we expected to tip for services in New Zealand?

Tipping is not required or expected at Totara Springs, or elsewhere in New Zealand.

19 Is bedding provided at the GA venue?

Totara Springs will provide towels and all bedding needs (pillows, sheets, blankets, duvet) for all rooms.

20 Can special food requirements be catered for at the Conference venue?

In your registration for the Conference, you can choose between vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, or no restriction. The kitchen staff at the venue are very flexible, and will do their best to cater for your needs. If you have other special requirements, please note them in your registration, and discuss them with the kitchen staff when you reach the venue.



21 **What activities will there be for those not involved in the GA meetings?**

There will be an information pack for partners of GA participants available on arrival at Totara Springs. This will provide a wide variety of options including day walks, scenic places to visit, a visit to a dairy farm, tour options, such as a tour to Hobbiton, and art and craft venues. These will be on a "user-pays" basis. Local hosts have offered to assist with transport.

22 **Will there be a Day Outing at the Conference?**

Yes, a day outing for everyone is being planned by bus, accompanied by local New Zealand guides. This will give a brief "taste" of some of the North Island areas. Food and drink will be provided on this outing. See our separate guide to the **Day Outing**

If you have further questions, please contact the SICOGA organisers at: sicoga2015@servas.org

Wishing you a pleasant trip and a wonderful stay in New Zealand.

SI EXCO and the SICOGA 2015 Organizing Team