

Tourism [New Zealand](#) expects next year's Rugby World Cup to fuel the recovery in UK bookings. **Dave Richardson** reports

UK bookings recovering

THE UK market to [New Zealand](#) is starting to recover, with the 2011 Rugby World Cup expected to generate thousands of extra visitors following England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

But Tourism [New Zealand](#) has warned that UK operators and agents will have to fight harder to get their share, as more visitors buy flight-only or book all their arrangements online.

The UK market to [New Zealand](#) was down 10% last year to 258,000. But a recovery towards the end of the year meant there was only a 3.2% drop in the 12 months to March, to 255,000.

Regional manager for UK/Europe, Gregg Anderson, said: "The pick-up has come from the youth sector, and most younger travellers buy their travel arrangements as they go.

"People think they can get a bargain when they get out here. I suspect a lot more travellers are leaving the UK with only an air ticket.

"But the trade is still healthy, and we are committed to working with it."

Anderson said [New Zealand](#) was unlikely to commit funds to TV advertising this year, but its "100% Pure" brand would increasingly be promoted online.

"We need to concentrate on converting more



A traditional Maori dance welcomed visitors to the Trez 2010 trade fair in Auckland.

people who want to visit [New Zealand](#) into bookings," he added.

"We will do this with trade partners, linked to pricing and product."

London-based specialist Kirra Tours has enjoyed an upturn in demand for more active holidays, and will launch an adventure-themed brochure in January.

UK manager Nona Jackson said: "The market is good for us because we are niche. Bigger operators have to deal with so many other issues and destinations."

