

Adjusting to the new normal

Aucklanders enjoy post-lockdown wining and dining as shoppers across the nation adjust to the Traffic Light system, building pre-Christmas retail momentum

AUCKLAND, 13 December 2021 – Aucklanders have enthusiastically returned to cafés and bars since moving out of lockdown on 3 December, while momentum for pre-Christmas retailing continued to grow steadily amidst the national shift to the Traffic Light system.

Spending through Worldline’s payment network at café, restaurant, bar, and pub merchants in Auckland / Northland (\$66.9m) jumped 41% in the first seven days of operating under the Traffic Light COVID protection system (Friday 3 December to Thursday 9 December) but declined 6% across the rest of the country (down to \$105.8m) over the same period. In both cases spending was below 2019 and 2020 levels, and these patterns continued over the weekend.

Spending amongst these hospitality merchants over the latest seven days – for the week ending Sunday 12 December – was \$71.4m through Worldline in Auckland / Northland, above lockdown levels but 18% below the same 7 days in 2020, and \$110m in the rest of the country, less than before the traffic light system and 9% below year-ago levels.

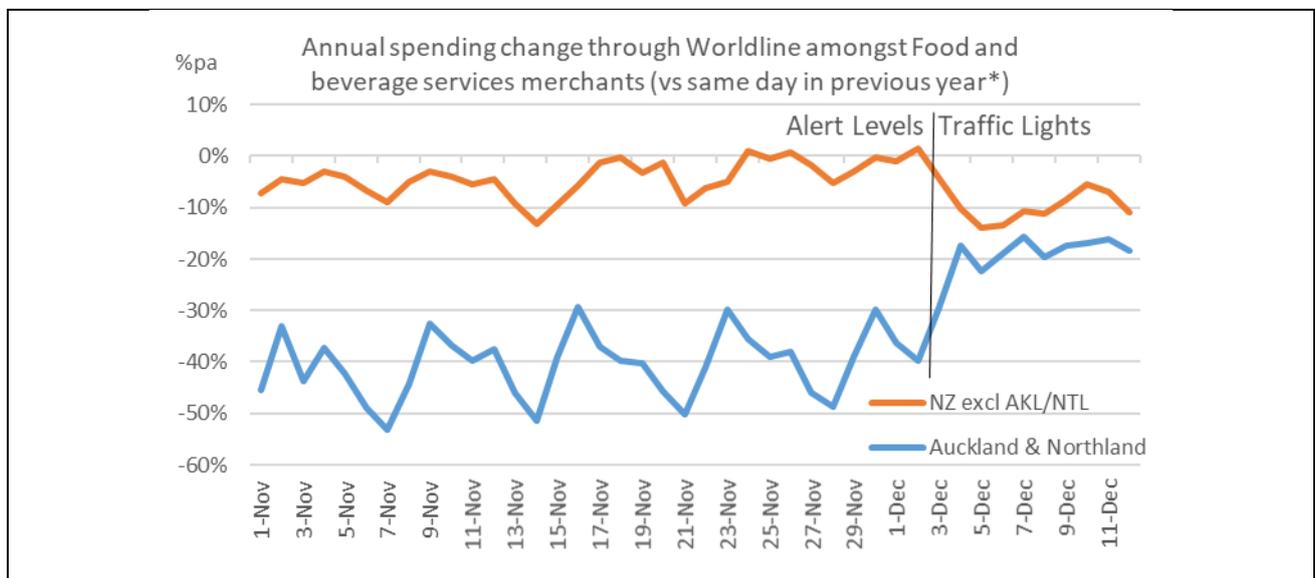


Figure 1: All Cards NZ underlying* annual spending change per day through Worldline food and beverage services merchants (* Underlying excludes large clients moving to or from Worldline)

Meanwhile, Kiwi shoppers have maintained the growth momentum of recent weeks following the surge of Black Friday sales, which now appears to be steadying, following the usual pre-Christmas pattern – suggesting there will be some very busy retail days later this week and the next.

Spending amongst core retail merchants, excluding hospitality merchants, was \$312.3m in Auckland / Northland in the week ending Sunday 12 December, up 6% on last year and up 9% on 2019 levels, and was \$500.2m in the rest of the country, up 4% and 8% respectively.

The national annual growth rates remain highest amongst the large group of merchants selling housing goods such as hardware, furniture, appliances and garden supplies (\$144m, +11% on 2020).

Nationally, the average daily spending last week amongst the core retail excluding hospitality merchants was \$116m per day. This was similar to the previous week and slightly below the average during the Black Friday sales.

“It would appear that New Zealand shoppers are adjusting quickly to the new normal of the Traffic Light system, putting the nation on track for the usual very busy few days ahead of Christmas,” says Worldline’s Head of Data, George Putnam.

“It has been typical in recent years for spending to steady a little after the Black Friday sales – not surprisingly – and then ramp up again from around Thursday this week, which continues towards a peak on either the Thursday or Friday before Christmas Day.”

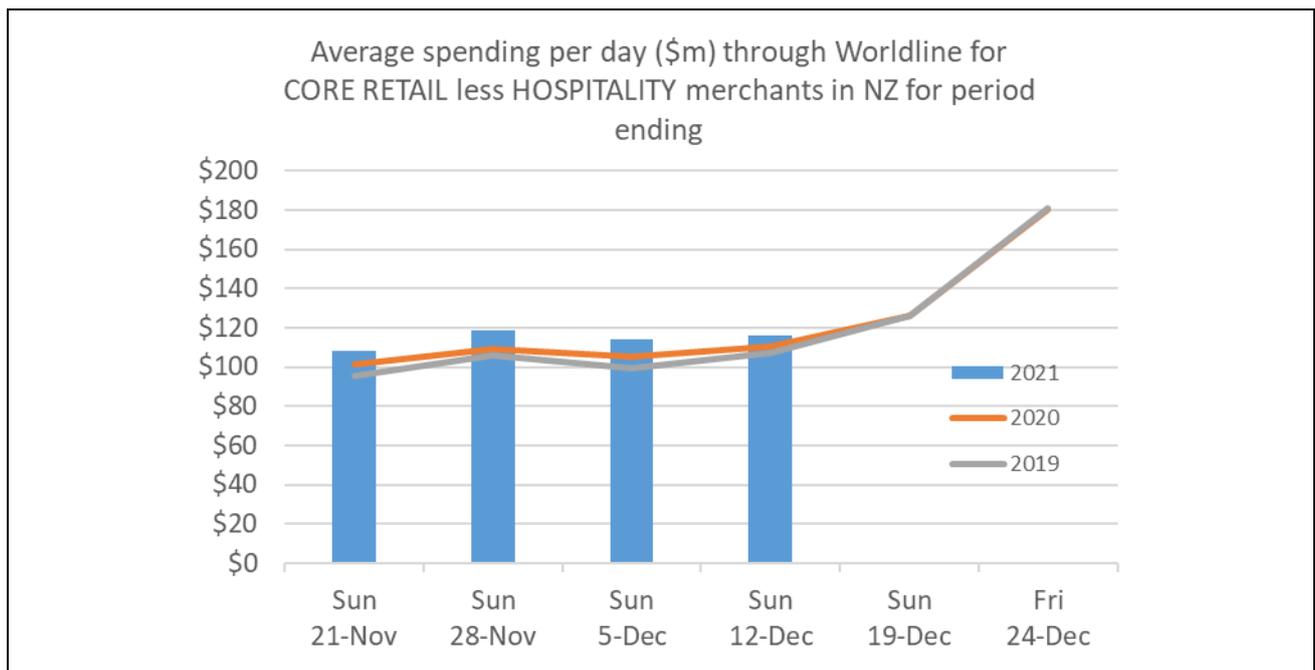


Figure 2: All Cards NZ underlying* spending through Worldline for NZ core retail excluding hospitality merchants (* Underlying excludes large clients moving to or from Worldline)

“However, we will also be watching closely how the regional spread of spending evolves once Aucklanders are able to travel beyond the city borders again, starting this Wednesday,” says Putnam.

At this stage, fastest annual growth pre-Christmas, taken as the 28 days since 15 November, is in Wanganui (+12%), Taranaki (+11%), Palmerston North (+10%) and Waikato (+10%). Lowest pre-Christmas spending growth to date has been in Wellington (+2%), Otago (+3%), Marlborough (+3%) and Nelson (+3%).

WORLDLINE All Cards underlying* spending for Core Retail merchants excluding Hospitality for 28 days ending Sun 12-Dec-21

Region	Value transactions \$millions	Underlying* Annual % change on 2020	Underlying* Annual % change on 2019
Auckland/Northland	1,240.4	9%	13%
Waikato	251.8	10%	17%
BOP	216.3	7%	14%
Gisborne	30.1	5%	11%
Taranaki	69.0	11%	19%
Hawke's Bay	108.3	7%	14%
Wanganui	38.3	12%	20%
Palmerston North	94.0	10%	17%
Wairarapa	38.2	9%	17%
Wellington	308.5	2%	9%
Nelson	60.5	3%	5%
Marlborough	37.2	3%	3%
West Coast	19.1	6%	8%
Canterbury	372.3	7%	13%
South Canterbury	50.5	5%	9%
Otago	152.2	3%	0%
Southland	69.8	5%	6%
New Zealand	3,204.5	7%	12%

Figure 3: All Cards NZ annual underlying* spending growth through Worldline over 28 days for regional core retail excluding hospitality merchants (* Underlying excludes large clients moving to or from Worldline)

*** ends ***

Note to editors:

These figures reflect general market trends and should not be taken as a proxy for Worldline's market share or company earnings. The figures primarily reflect transactions undertaken within stores but also include some ecommerce transactions. The figures exclude transactions through Worldline undertaken by merchants outside the Core Retail sector (as defined by Statistics NZ).

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