

Everybody has a story

Young South Americans on working holidays are an increasing presence on the island. We see them working in the hospitality sector, socialising at the beach and playing for the senior football teams, but beyond that what do we know about them? Manuela Irianni gives us her personal account of how and why she is here.

Some days ago I was at the shop in the vineyard where I work, and a woman said "everybody has a story." I thought, yes, everybody definitely does have one and probably we travel to know others' stories, but most of all to understand our own.

Let me introduce myself, so that we can connect: I am Manuela, but my friends call me Manu. I'm a 30 year old Argentinian who came to Waiheke on 28 December 2018. I am one of all the travellers who, day after day, clean your houses, carry out your removals, serve your coffee and take care of your plants and pets.

Why are we here? What are we looking for? Why are we so far away from home?

I come from a town of 150,000 inhabitants, called Tandil, which is about 200 kilometres from the sea. On Waiheke I have shared a house with five Argentinian guys. One is from Misiones, one from Neuquen, one from Dorrego, and just two from Buenos Aires. It is good to know that we don't all come from Buenos Aires. Argentina is a very big and beautiful country, with many different regions.

Most of us are here on Waiheke with a work and holiday visa that allows us to work for one year in this country. That is the point in common, but then each person's experience is different.

There are people who want to go back to Argentina, some others would like to stay here, and others are thinking of travelling as a way of life, so they are thinking about going to Australia, Denmark, Holland and other countries.

In my case, I've been working as a jour-

nalist in Argentina for about 10 years, and I want to go on with my career. But there are also travellers who are not linked to a specific profession. So it is impossible to



Manuela Irianni has put her journalism career on hold while she travels.

generalise. What definitely connects all of us is the passion to travel, make friends, meet people, visit places, speak another

language and discover the world. That is what truly unites us, beyond the particular experience of each person.

I've heard that New Zealanders are very used to the idea of an extended working holiday. For decades when young they have gone all over the world, especially to Australia and Britain.

In Argentina the idea of working and travelling at the same time is not so old. It has become more usual in the last 10 years, so it is a new phenomenon. Our parents definitely did not have this possibility. So we are one of the first generations that has this goal to travel.

Maybe that's why we come to Waiheke as we know it's a beautiful place where we can get a job and find other Argentinians who can help us take the first steps. There's a great community of South American people living here.

In my case, I heard about Waiheke for the first time in my life last year. A friend of mine was coming to New Zealand and told me she would probably go to an island called Waiheke because one of her friends had said it was possible to work there and it was a really nice place. I googled it. I remember I wrote it in the wrong way the first time and I found another part of the world. Then I found it, but I did not find much information.

Months later I arrived in Auckland with no plans. The first person I met in the hostel was an Argentinian who was going back to Argentina that day. He told me about Waiheke and he was the first person who mentioned to me that there are vineyards here. I really liked the idea so a few days later I took the ferry and went. I really did not know what I was going to find. It was the first time in my life that I was going to an island.

When I arrived people were so nice to me. I especially remember three people. They were a Rwandan taxi driver who took me for free and explained to me some things about the island, a cashier from the Countdown who recommended

Business deals. Property developments. Family dramas.

We've got a lawyer for that.

At Hauraki Gulf Law we specialise in commercial, property and family law. We can help you with the basics, like wills trusts and conveyancing, right up to the tricky stuff, including business sales and acquisitions, construction contracts, financing, and matrimonial property. Whatever you're doing, you'll get expert advice from your straight-talking local legal team.

HAURAKI GULF LAW
Straight Talking Lawyers

09 372 8188 · www.hglaw.co.nz