ANZCRO x Air New Zealand

Sales Mission USA

Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas & California
27 – 12th March 2026

1. Overview

Destination Queenstown & Lake Wanaka Tourism participated in a North America sales mission in partnership with Air New Zealand and ANZCRO, engaging high-value travel advisors across Georgia, North & South Carolina, Dallas and San Francisco.

The mission targeted advisors who are not yet selling significant volumes to New Zealand but operate within influential networks such as Virtuoso, Signature Travel Network and Internova Travel Group, or are achieving strong European sales (USD $1M+ annually).

The primary objective was to shift consideration and position New Zealand, and Queenstown and Wanaka, as a premium alternative for US clients.

2. Market Background

The North American market remains a key priority for New Zealand's premium and luxury tourism growth. **Tourism New Zealand (July 2025) insights** highlight strong market value, with US holidaymakers generating $1.4bn in spend and an average leisure spend of $6,360 per trip. Accommodation accounts for around a quarter of total spend, reinforcing strong alignment with high-yield travel.

TNZ data also shows New Zealand appeals to 49% of the US online population aged 18–74 (approx. 104 million people), with 73 million actively considering a visit and 46 million identified as "active considerers" with realistic travel budgets—representing a significant conversion opportunity.

According to TNZ insights, key motivators include natural landscapes, outdoor and adventure activities, with strong interest in cultural experiences, film locations, and Māori heritage. Queenstown and Wānaka are key drawcards, with 51% of US arrivals visiting the region.

TNZ data also indicates travel patterns favour longer-stay, bucket-list itineraries, averaging around 10 days, supported by strong connectivity from major US and Canadian gateways including New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Vancouver, Chicago, Houston and Honolulu.

The market is heavily influenced by consortia networks such as Virtuoso, Signature Travel Network, TravelEdge and Ensemble, which remain difficult to access directly. As a result, airline and inbound partnerships (including Air New Zealand and ANZCRO) are critical for reaching high-value advisors.

Key TNZ-identified trends include growing demand for off-peak travel (spring/autumn) and seamless, high-end itineraries. However, perception of distance remains a barrier, particularly in mid-America regions, where New Zealand is still viewed as significantly further than Europe. Reframing travel as an efficient overnight journey continues to resonate.

3. Attendance/Attendees

The programme was delivered in partnership with Air New Zealand and ANZCRO, leveraging their established trade relationships and access to the TA Connect CRM platform.

Attendees included high-value travel advisors from leading networks such as Virtuoso, Signature Travel Network and Internova Travel Group, as well as emerging host agencies including Fora Travel.

The TA Connect platform enabled highly targeted engagement with advisors beyond traditional networks, ensuring strong alignment with the intended premium audience.

San Franscisco – 23 agents.
Georgia – 68 agents.
North Carolina (Raleigh & Fayetteville) – 24 agents.
North Carolina (Winston-Salem) – 17 agents.
South Carolina (Columbia) – 3 agents.
Texas (Dallas) – 25 agents.

4. Summary

The North America sales mission, delivered in partnership with Air New Zealand and ANZCRO, successfully strengthened engagement with high-value travel advisors across key US markets.

The programme reinforced strong opportunity within the premium and luxury segment, particularly among advisors seeking new destination alternatives to Europe and responding to growing client demand for unique, experience-led travel.

Queenstown and Wānaka resonated strongly as part of a wider New Zealand offering, with key interest in nature-based experiences, cultural depth, and seamless, high-end itineraries. Shoulder season travel (spring and autumn) continues to present strong growth potential.

While perception of distance remains a barrier in some regions, targeted messaging around efficient travel routing continues to improve consideration of New Zealand as an accessible long-haul destination.

The mission also highlighted the value of leveraging airline and wholesaler partnerships to access otherwise difficult-to-reach consortia networks, enabling more targeted engagement with high-potential advisors.

Overall, the mission supported continued positioning of Queenstown and Wānaka in the North American trade space, with clear opportunities to build on momentum in the premium travel segment.

5. Photos

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