Destination Queenstown & Lake Wānaka Tourism

Australia Roadshow 2026

September 2026

Destination Queenstown and Lake Wanaka Tourism
PO BOX 353 | Queenstown 9300 | New Zealand
Tel: +64 441 0700

1. Overview

In September 2026, Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism delivered the Queenstown Lakes Australia Roadshow alongside 44 operators from the region. Together, we travelled across Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

The roadshow brought Queenstown and Wānaka tourism operators together with key Australian travel trade and business events contacts. It provided an opportunity to showcase the region's experiences, accommodation, venues and event capabilities, while strengthening relationships with existing partners and developing connections with new buyers.

The programme included combined travel trade and business events free-flow trade shows in Melbourne and Brisbane, an industry insights morning and a business events cocktail evening followed by a free-flow trade show in Sydney, and a relaxed networking function on the Gold Coast. This free-flow format allowed buyers to move between operators and have longer, more natural conversations with a wide range of operators.

Post-event feedback from buyers and participating members indicates that the 2026 Australia Roadshow delivered strong value by strengthening existing relationships, facilitating direct engagement with Australian travel trade partners and creating opportunities for industry connection. Buyers reported particularly strong value from maintaining existing relationships and receiving product updates, while also rating the event highly for developing new business. Member feedback was strongest regarding existing relationships and connections with other operators, providing useful insight into where future roadshows can continue to build value.

2. Market Background

Australia continues to be the Queenstown Lakes region's biggest international market, supported by strong air connectivity, a favourable exchange rate and year-round demand across both the leisure and business events sectors.

As one of our closest international markets, Australia delivers a broad mix of visitors, from short-break travellers and ski visitors through to premium holidaymakers, group tours, incentive groups and corporate event organisers. The market continues to present opportunities to grow visitor value, promote longer stays and increase awareness of the wider Queenstown Lakes offering beyond traditional itineraries.

The Queenstown Lakes Australia Roadshow has become a well-established fixture within the Australian travel trade and business events calendar. Over many years, the roadshow has evolved into an anticipated event that buyers and industry partners look forward to attending. The consistency of the programme has helped build

strong relationships, maintain destination visibility and create a trusted platform for meaningful engagement between Australian buyers and Queenstown Lakes operators.

It was valuable to present Queenstown and Wānaka as a unified destination again, with increased participation from Wānaka operators this year helping to strengthen awareness and understanding of the wider region within the Australian market.

3. Event Objectives & Benefits

Objectives:

- Strengthen existing relationships between operators and Australian travel sellers.
- Maintain the Queenstown Lakes region's presence within our biggest market.
- Support operators to develop and strengthen trade-ready relationships.
- Gather market intelligence, buyer feedback and industry insights to help inform future activity.
- Showcase Queenstown and Wānaka as a united destination, highlighting the breadth of experiences available across the region.

Benefits:

- Provide participating operators with direct access to qualified buyers and decision-makers, creating opportunities to generate new business and further establish existing relationships with travel sellers.
- Increased awareness of Wānaka through the participation of a greater number of Wānaka-based operators.
- Maintain a strong and visible presence in the Australian market through a long-running and highly anticipated industry event.
- Strengthen relationships between operators and increase capability and support for those new to the travel trade.

4. Attendees

- Crowne Plaza Queenstown
- Holiday Inn Queenstown Remarkables Park
- Hotel St Moritz (MGallery) & Sofitel Queenstown
- HQNZ
- Mercure Queenstown Resort
- Millbrook Resort

- QT Queenstown
- Queenstown Catering
- Rendezvous Heritage Hotel Queenstown / TFE Hotels
- Roam
- TomTom Tours
- Coronet Ridge Resort
- Edgewater Lake Wānaka
- Alpine Luxury Tours
- Appellation Wine Tours
- Aspiring Guides
- Cheeky Kiwi Travel
- Glacier Southern Lakes Helicopters
- Glenorchy Air
- Heliworks Queenstown
- Kinloch Wilderness Retreat
- Kinross
- KJet
- Limousine Services Queenstown
- Miller Road Fragrances
- Ngāi Tahu Tourism
- NZ Bike Trails
- Over The Top - The Helicopter Company
- Oxbow Adventure Co
- Pure Tourism Group (Nomad Safaris / Pure Milford)
- Real Guns
- RealNZ
- Shadowland Expeditions
- Skyline Queenstown
- Southern Discoveries
- The Helicopter Line / Totally Tourism
- Tourism Innovation Group / Altitude Tours
- True South Flights
- Wānaka Helicopters
- Wānaka Transfers
- Watersports

- Ziptrek Ecotours
- Queenstown Airport (ZQN)
- Air New Zealand

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5. Market Insights

Overall sentiment across all four cities was extremely positive, with strong confidence in the Queenstown Lakes region and continued optimism around future visitation from Australia.

Buyer respondents rated the roadshow 4.74/5 for maintaining existing relationships and receiving updates, while members rated strengthening existing partner relationships 4.27/5. This indicates that direct, in-market engagement continues to play an important role in maintaining relationships with the Australian travel trade.

Buyer interest in the roadshow was high, with registrations exceeding expectations and attendance good across all events. Engagement levels were particularly encouraging, with many attendees remaining for the majority of each session, allowing for longer and more meaningful conversations with operators.

Australian buyers consistently expressed their enthusiasm for Queenstown and Wānaka products and experiences. Many attendees were eager to learn about new products, accommodation offerings and experiences, highlighting the importance of ongoing destination education and face-to-face engagement.

Buyers rated the roadshow 4.65/5 for developing new business, demonstrating that attendees saw the event as more than an opportunity to reconnect. It also provided value in identifying new commercial relationships and opportunities.

While overall sentiment was highly positive, some common challenges were raised during discussions. Limited accommodation availability in Wānaka continues to be a concern for some buyers. Local congestion and transport pressures within the region were also raised, reflecting the destination's ongoing growth.

6. Summary

The 2026 Queenstown Lakes Australia Roadshow successfully strengthened the region's presence across the Australian market, while providing valuable opportunities for participating operators to engage directly with key travel trade and business events buyers.

This year saw strong interest from both operators wanting to participate and buyers eager to attend, with positive engagement across all four cities. This reflected the ongoing appeal of the Queenstown Lakes region and the value placed on face-to-face industry engagement. Buyers demonstrated strong interest in the destination, actively seeking opportunities to connect with operators, learn about new products and experiences, and discuss future partnership opportunities.

Post-roadshow feedback further reinforced the value of these connections. A key highlight of this year's roadshow was the increased representation from Wānaka operators. This enabled Queenstown and Wānaka to be presented more effectively as a united destination and supported greater awareness of Wānaka and its tourism offering within the Australian market. The broader operator mix also provided buyers with a deeper understanding of the diverse experiences available across the wider Queenstown Lakes region.

Overall, the roadshow successfully strengthened existing relationships, facilitated new industry connections and generated valuable market intelligence to inform future activity for both participating operators and the Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism teams. The strong engagement and post-event feedback reinforce the importance of maintaining a consistent presence in the Australian market, while the learnings from this year provide a clear opportunity to continue refining the roadshow and increasing its value for both buyers and operators.

8. Related Event Photos





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