



# **Destination Queenstown & Lake Wānaka Tourism**

## **NZ Trilogy ANZCRO Sales Mission x Delta University Trade Show (Nashville, Denver, Atlanta)**

September 2025

## 1. Overview

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From 5–16 September 2025, Destination Queenstown participated in an ANZCRO DMC–facilitated sales mission in the U.S., visiting Nashville, Chattanooga, Denver, and Atlanta. The trip provided valuable opportunities to engage with luxury travel advisors from leading consortia, including Virtuoso, Signature Travel, and Fora. The mission also reached markets beyond the core cities and regions, allowing us to connect with travel sellers who may not have been engaged in previous roadshows or sales mission events, opening new business opportunities and relationships.

Following the sales mission, Destination Queenstown attended the Delta Vacations University trade show alongside 12 New Zealand operators and RTOs. As a premier educational conference and trade show for travel professionals, Delta Vacations University enabled us to connect with 800–900 travel experts from the U.S. and Canada.

## 2. Market Background

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The United States remains one of New Zealand’s most important international visitor markets, both in terms of arrivals and overall spend.

Visitor numbers from the U.S. continue to grow, supported by strong air connectivity. Direct services from major gateways—including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, New York, Houston, and Hawaii—have made New Zealand more accessible, with the Chicago connection expected to return by the end of 2025. Air New Zealand will add more than 34,000 seats to its North America routes between October 2025 and March 2026. Recent additions, such as Delta’s year-round LAX–AKL service (launched March 2024) and Qantas’s JFK–AKL route (June 2023), further expand capacity and strengthen links to key U.S. hubs.

American travellers are increasingly seeking experience-led, immersive journeys over short, checklist-style itineraries. Feedback from agents highlighted strong interest in premium and adventure-focused products, as well as growing demand for shoulder-season travel, particularly in New Zealand’s spring and autumn. The strength of the U.S. dollar continues to make New Zealand an attractive destination. In Queenstown specifically, U.S. visitors are now staying an average of five to six nights, demonstrating the appeal of extended, in-depth itineraries.

Regional insights from the September sales mission reinforce these trends. In Nashville, agents reported that Southern U.S. travellers are increasingly prepared to invest in long-haul, curated itineraries. Denver’s market shows a strong appetite for adventure and outdoor experiences, with interest in multi-day itineraries combining hiking, scenic flights, and cultural immersion. Meanwhile, Atlanta remains a strategically important hub for accessing high outbound volumes, with agents emphasising the importance of convenient flight connections and flexible routing options into New Zealand.

Looking ahead, demand for unique, high-value travel experiences from the U.S. is expected to remain strong. Continued engagement with advisors in these key markets will be critical to sustaining momentum and ensuring New Zealand remains front of mind for American travellers.

## 4. Attendance/Attendees

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### **ANZCRO Sales Mission**

- **Chattanooga:** Registered 23, attended 23
- **Nashville:** Registered 42, attended 35
- **Denver:** Registered 32, attended 31
- **Atlanta:** Registered 40, attended 35

Across the four events, we engaged face-to-face interactions with 124 high-level agents. The quality of attendees was strong, with agents sourced via ANZCRO through taCONNECT, a sophisticated CRM platform designed specifically for the travel trade.

taCONNECT provides a verified, regularly updated database of more than 100,000 U.S. and Canadian travel advisors, allowing for precise segmentation by location, sales specialty (luxury, adventure, family travel), consortia affiliation (Virtuoso, Signature, Fora, etc.), agency size, and sales volume. This ensures that events connect us with the most relevant and high-value advisors, maximising the return on our in-market efforts.

In addition to the training and round-table sessions, other mission events were delivered in a networking format. ANZCRO provided an introduction to all sellers before agents circulated, meeting with us individually at bar leaners for more informal conversations and relationship building.

### **Delta Vacations University**

This event followed a trade show style, with exhibitors positioned at individual bar leaners within the Tourism New Zealand stand. Agents were free to move through the space, approaching suppliers of interest. Over two days, this format enabled broad exposure and high-volume interactions.

## 5. Summary

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Across the events there was quite a range in knowledge when it came to selling New Zealand. Some advisors were already confident and familiar with our offering, while others specialised in premium long-haul destinations but hadn't yet included New Zealand in their mix. This made it clear that our role was twofold:

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reinforcing what experienced sellers already know, while also opening the door for those just starting to consider New Zealand.

The sales mission format worked well. Having both networking time and the chance to engage in smaller groups, supported by a strong group of NZ sellers, meant the conversations felt meaningful and productive. The choice of cities was also key - stepping outside the core hubs proved worthwhile. In Denver and Atlanta especially, agents were genuinely hungry for knowledge about New Zealand. Many had a solid understanding of what we offer and came ready with specific client enquiries, which made for really rewarding conversations.

At Delta Vacations University, the set-up gave us great access to both ends of the spectrum. In the first hour, we met top-performing agents who were already sending clients to New Zealand and knew the destination well. Later in the day, we connected with advisors who were newer to selling New Zealand, where the focus was more on topline education and sparking interest.

Overall, both the sales mission and Delta University delivered a strong ROI - giving us the chance to build new connections, strengthen existing ones, and create fresh opportunities for Queenstown and Wānaka.

#### Key Takeaways:

- The strong USD is working in our favour, making long-haul destinations like New Zealand even more appealing.
- Interest in New Zealand is high, and some advisors mentioned “Europe fatigue,” with clients looking for new options.
- Flight times and connectivity to New Zealand are seen as comparable (or in some cases easier) than other long-haul destinations.
- Busting the myth that we are 30+ hours away and hard to get too in comparison to other popular US long haul destinations.
- Reaching cities outside the main hubs is crucial, especially with the growing appetite from U.S. travellers for something different beyond Europe.

## 6. Photos

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