Snow Travel Expo Melbourne & Sydney 2026

May 2026

Destination Queenstown and Lake Wanaka Tourism
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1. Overview

In May 2026, Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism attended the Snow Travel Expo in Melbourne and Sydney, providing an opportunity to engage directly with Australian consumers actively considering or planning winter travel to New Zealand. The Melbourne event was held on 17 May, while the Sydney Snow Travel Expo took place at the Hordern Pavilion on 24 May 2026

Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism represented New Zealand alongside NZSki, RealNZ, Whakapapa, Porters, AJ Hackett Bungy New Zealand, Pure Tourism Group and Chill Pass supported by Toursim New Zealand. Across the events, we engaged with hundreds of consumers, many of whom had already booked their Queenstown & Wānaka winter holiday or were strongly considering travel.

Conversations demonstrated strong interest in Queenstown and the wider region as a winter destination. Importantly, discussions were not limited to skiing and snowboarding, with consumers showing interest in the breadth of activities and experiences available away from the ski fields. This highlighted the importance of continuing to position Queenstown as a complete winter holiday destination, particularly for groups with varying interests and for visitors looking to combine skiing with other experiences.

Alongside the consumer events, the trip provided an opportunity to strengthen trade relationships through sales calls with Abercrombie & Kent, Grand Pacific Tours, Viva Holidays, Jetstar, APT, Qantas, Air New Zealand and My Dream Adventure. I also attended the TravelPlan Expo alongside Treble Cone and Cardrona, providing further opportunity to engage with the Australian travel trade and maintain destination visibility across both consumer and industry channels.

2. Market Background

The Australian Market continues to have the largest market share throughout our winter seasons as Queenstown Lakes continues to be a well-established destination for Australian ski and winter travellers, offering accessible international travel alongside a diverse range of ski fields, alpine experiences and activities beyond the slopes. Queenstown and Wānaka are particularly well positioned within this market, providing access to four major ski areas across Coronet Peak, The Remarkables, Cardrona and Treble Cone.

For the Australian market, proximity and connectivity are important strengths. Queenstown provides a convenient gateway to the Southern Lakes ski areas, while the ability to combine skiing with adventure activities, dining, sightseeing and other experiences strengthens the appeal of the region as a broader winter holiday destination with an extended length of stay.

This broader offering is particularly important for groups with varying interests and abilities, allowing visitors to build an itinerary that is not solely dependent on time on the mountain. It also provides an opportunity to encourage visitors to experience more of the destination during their stay.

3. Event Objectives & Benefits

Objectives:

- Maintain Queenstown and the wider region's visibility within the Australian winter travel market.
- Engage directly with consumers actively planning or considering a New Zealand ski holiday.
- Increase awareness of Queenstown's broader winter offering beyond skiing and snowboarding.
- Understand consumer questions, interests and considerations when planning a Queenstown winter holiday.
- Strengthen relationships with key Australian airline, wholesale, touring and travel partners through dedicated sales calls.
- Support Members as well as New Zealand's collective presence within the Australian snow market alongside other New Zealand operators and ski areas.
- Gather market insights to help inform future Australian travel trade and winter marketing activity.

Benefits:

- Direct consumer engagement, helping build destination awareness and support travel planning.
- Showcased the wider winter offering
- Supported conversion of existing interest for members
- Generated valuable consumer insights:
- Strengthened key trade relationships through meetings and sales calls.

- ## 4. Attendees
- NZSki
- RealNZ
- Whakapapa
- Porters
- AJ Hackett Bungy New Zealand
- Pure Tourism Group
- Chill Pass

5. Market Insights

Engagement across the Snow Travel Expo demonstrated strong interest in New Zealand winter travel. A significant number of the consumers we spoke with had either already booked travel or were actively considering a trip, allowing conversations to move beyond general destination awareness towards practical holiday planning.

One of the strongest observations from consumer conversations was that Queenstown's appeal as a winter destination is not solely driven by its access to ski fields. Consumers were interested in the range of experiences available outside skiing, reinforcing the value of positioning the destination around the complete winter holiday experience.

The expo format provided an opportunity to speak directly with consumers at different stages of the booking journey. Conversations with both booked and prospective visitors helped provide insight into the information consumers are seeking when planning a New Zealand winter holiday and created opportunities to provide relevant destination recommendations.

Combining the Snow Travel Expo with dedicated sales calls and the TravelPlan Expo provided engagement at different points in the customer journey. Consumer engagement provided insight into demand and traveller interests, while the trade activity supported ongoing relationships with organisations involved in selling, packaging and providing access to the destination.

6. Summary

The May Snow Travel Expo activity provided valuable direct engagement with Australian consumers across Melbourne and Sydney, while complementary sales calls and attendance at the TravelPlan Expo strengthened the trade component of the trip.

Engagement with hundreds of consumers highlighted strong interest in New Zealand and Queenstown winter travel, including among travellers who had already committed to visiting. A key insight from conversations was the importance of Queenstown's breadth of offering, with the destination appealing not only for access to ski fields but also for the variety of activities and experiences available throughout a winter holiday.

The trip also provided an opportunity to maintain and strengthen relationships with key Australian travel partners through dedicated sales calls, while representing the destination alongside other New Zealand winter operators helped reinforce New Zealand's collective presence in the market.

Overall, the activity reinforced the importance of maintaining a direct presence in Australia across both consumer and travel trade channels, while highlighting the opportunity to continue promoting Queenstown as a diverse winter destination offering significantly more than skiing alone.

8. Related Event Photos







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