

Destination Queenstown & Lake Wānaka Tourism

TNZ Regional Showcase 2026

March 2026

1. Overview

In March 2026, Stu Cordelle - Head of Business Development, and Charlotte Green - Account Manager Australia, represented Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism at the TNZ Regional Showcase in Sydney.

This one-day event offers a unique platform for RTO's to foster and strengthen business relationships with both new and established key travel sellers in Australia. The event featured 14 minute pre-scheduled meetings with 22 product and marketing managers, complemented by a networking opportunity at an official function.

The evening prior, RTO's were also invited to a Tourism New Zealand hosted dinner which was a great opportunity to introduce Charlotte and Stu in their roles and to build relationships.

2. Market Background

Australia remains New Zealand's largest international market. In 2025, New Zealand welcomed 1.4 million arrivals with holiday makers making up 42% of those arrivals. Additionally, the Queenstown Lakes District is the most popular port of arrival and the region itself is the most also the most visited region amongst these holiday makers.

The Australian market continues to grow with factors such as New Zealand weak dollar, Australia's proximity and conflict in other parts of the world all contributing towards this continued growth.

Key Insights (July 2025):

- 1.4M annual arrivals
- Average length of holiday stay 9 days
- Total market spend: \$3.5 Billion

3. Event Objectives & Benefits

Objectives:

- Strengthen existing relationships with Australian travel sellers.

- Connect with new travel sellers and expand Queenstown’s trade network.
- Share insights on current market trends, challenges, and opportunities.
- Identify development opportunities and understand seller pinch points.
- Promote new region products and experiences to the trade.
- Gather feedback to support future trade strategies and member engagement.

Benefits:

- Built strong connections with both new and existing travel sellers.
- Gained deeper understanding of trade partner successes and challenges when selling the region.
- Successfully promoted new Queenstown Lakes products and experiences to the market.
- Facilitated introductions between operators and new sellers upon returning home, supporting ongoing relationship building.
- Strengthened the regions visibility and positioning within the wider tourism trade network.

4. Attendance/Attendees

- ANZCRO
- Australia and Worldwide Travel
- Webjet Australia
- Air New Zealand
- Flight Centre Travel Group
- Viator/ Trip Advisor
- Abercrombie & Kent
- Grand Pacific Tours
- AAT Kings
- MTA Travel
- Qantas Hotels
- Australia & New Zealand Holidays
- G Adventures
- Hopper
- Aussie Grand Tours
- Get Your Guide

- Helloworld Australia
- Infinity Holidays
- Scenic Group
- Travel Managers

5. Market Insights

A consistent trend across all trade partners was strong growth across the board. Sellers reported excellent results for their New Zealand and Queenstown Lakes sales, with many indicating plans to further expand their offerings in the region.

There was clear interest in opportunities for famil visits and partnership activities; however, when discussing the challenges sellers are currently facing, two themes stood out: capacity constraints and rising prices in the region.

A key concern raised was the volume of accommodation being built or refurbished to a 4.5–5-star standard, which may create a gap in mid-range options. Particularly impacting larger group tours. This conversation provided an opportunity to highlight the accommodation options available in Frankton, which could serve as a strong alternative for some travellers. Given that the Australian market often prefers 3–4-star accommodation, the shrinking availability of this category poses potential challenges, especially for length of stay.

Similarly, the ongoing lack of accommodation options in Wānaka remains a recurring topic of discussion among trade partners.

6. Summary

Overall, the event provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen our relationships across the Australian market, connect with new partners, and continue building rapport with fellow RTOs.

Trade partners consistently reported strong growth in their New Zealand and Queenstown Lakes sales, with many indicating plans to further expand their regional product offerings.

Across discussions, two key challenges emerged: tightening capacity and rising prices in the region. The limited availability of accommodation in Wānaka remains a notable pinch point for sellers.

Many trade partners also expressed strong interest in being connected with new products they had not previously worked with, which created valuable opportunities to introduce suppliers to potential buyers upon returning home.

Overall, attendance at the showcase strengthened trade relationships, enhanced market visibility for both the region, as well as for Stu and Charlotte as contacts in their roles and provided valuable insights to support regional capability and future planning.

8. Related Event Photos





