



VIEWS ON TOURISM RESEARCH

Queenstown Lakes

2024 - 2025

Resident sentiment toward tourism in the Queenstown Lakes district.

Destination Queenstown (DQ) and Lake Wānaka Tourism (LWT) are committed to supporting the tourism industry to be regenerative and resilient, delivering environmental, social, cultural, and economic benefits that enrich the lives of both residents and visitors. DQ and LWT conduct research annually among resident communities across the Queenstown Lakes District to understand public views and perceptions toward tourism. Research was conducted between October 2024 and March 2025 using Angus & Associates internationally respected [Views on Tourism](#) programme and methodology. For further details about methodology please refer to the information at the end of this resource.

QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT RESULTS

SUMMARY

Over the past two years, community sentiment towards tourism in the Queenstown Lakes district has stabilised to limited acceptance, only marginally above threatened and is at a level well below the NZ average. Residents have felt impact of the return of visitor numbers post pandemic, which compounds strain from rapid residential population growth. While many residents (95%) have personally benefited from tourism activity in their local area, an almost equal majority (97%) have also been adversely impacted. Three out of four Queenstown residents (73%) agree that the region needs a destination management plan. Two out of five residents knew about Queenstown Lakes' Destination Management Plan, [Travel to a Thriving Future](#).

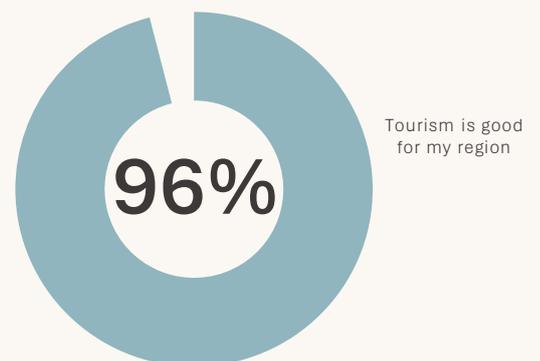
TOURISM APPROVAL RATING SCORE (TAR SCORE)

The TAR score highlights resident's overall perceptions of tourism.



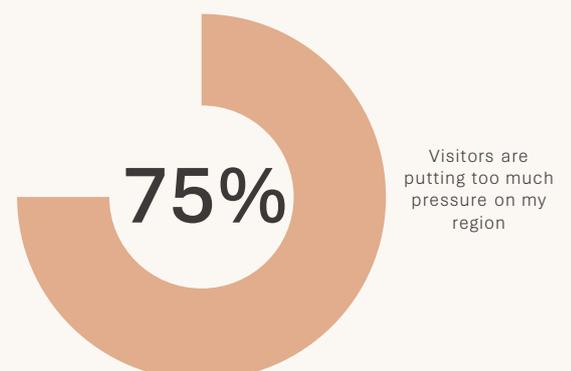
RESIDENTS CONTINUE TO RECOGNISE THAT TOURISM PLAYS A POSITIVE ROLE IN THEIR DISTRICT

Resident sentiment toward tourism remained positive, with over nine out of ten residents agreeing that tourism is good for their region, higher than the New Zealand result of 89% agreeing tourism is good for their region.



BUT EQUALLY RESIDENTS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRESSURE VISITORS ARE PLACING ON THEIR REGION

While tourism is generally seen as a force for good, concerns have been raised about the perceived amount of pressure visitors place on their region, with three out of four residents reporting that they believe that tourism is exerting too much pressure. This significantly higher than the New Zealand result of 30% believing visitors are putting too much pressure on their region.



95% OF RESIDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED BENEFITS OF TOURISM IN THEIR AREA

This proportion is significantly higher than the New Zealand benchmark (81%).

THE TOP FIVE BENEFITS ARE...

- Opportunities for employment and income
- More local businesses opening or being able to stay open
- A greater variety of goods and services being available than otherwise would be
- Community is more vibrant and friendly place to live
- Has enhanced the profile or identity of my/ our area

97% OF RESIDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED ADVERSE IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN THEIR AREA

This proportion is significantly higher than the New Zealand benchmark (71%).

THE TOP FIVE ADVERSE IMPACTS ARE...

- Takes longer to get places due to traffic and congestion
- Greater difficulty finding a car park
- Too much pressure on community infrastructure
- Higher day to day costs
- Feel less safe driving

TOURISM APPROVAL RATING SCORE (TAR)

The TAR score highlights resident's overall perceptions of tourism. It is a composite index score based on several responses about tourism's benefits and adverse impacts. TAR score is plotted on a scale from <0 to +100 ranging from advocacy to disapproval to track residents' perceptions over time, and there are separate scores for sentiment toward domestic and international visitors.

TOURISM (OVERALL) TAR

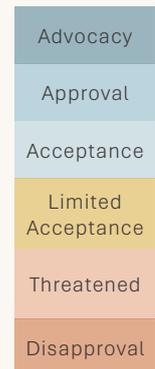
QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT	21
OTAGO	39
NEW ZEALAND	48

DOMESTIC TAR

QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT	44
OTAGO	57
NEW ZEALAND	57

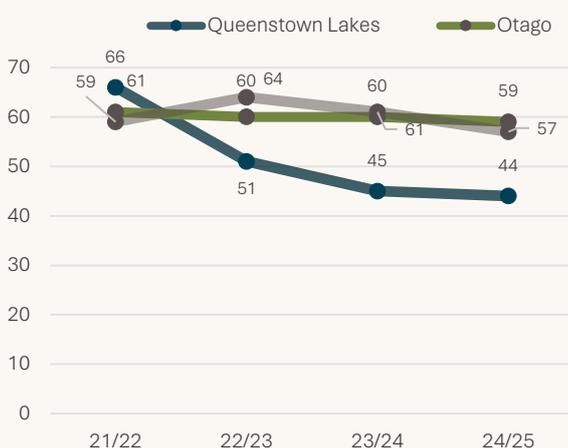
INTERNATIONAL TAR

QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT	22
OTAGO	34
NEW ZEALAND	47

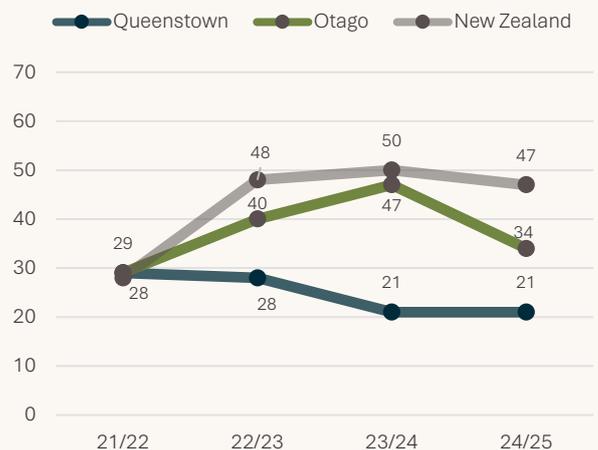


TOURISM APPROVAL RATING SCORE (TAR) COMPARED TO NEW ZEALAND

DOMESTIC TAR



INTERNATIONAL TAR



WHAT DO OUR RESIDENTS WANT FROM TOURISM?

AREAS OF FOCUS FOR TOURISM

Looking to the future residents would like the local tourism industry to focus most on improving community infrastructure. Other priorities include attracting higher quality visitors, encouraging visitors to travel outside of the peak season and reducing the impact of visitors on the local environment.



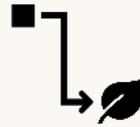
Improving infrastructure



Attracting higher quality visitors



Encourage visitors to travel outside of the peak



Reducing the impact of visitors on the local environment



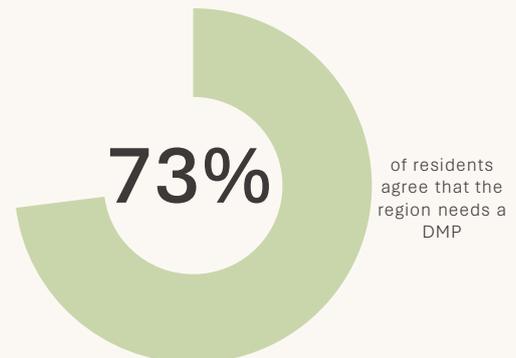
Promoting sustainable travel practices



Encouraging visitor dispersal to benefit more communities

RESIDENTS RECOGNISE THE NEED FOR AN EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (DMP).

Three out of four Queenstown Lakes district residents (73%) agree that the region needs a destination management plan.



WHY THIS RESEARCH IS CONDUCTED

The success of a regenerative and sustainable destination depends on both the benefits tourism brings and the strength of local community support.

The Queenstown Lakes District tourism industry is committed to ensuring its operations are regenerative and resilient, delivering benefits environmentally, socially, culturally and economically, enriching the lives of the people who live here and the people who visit.

A welcoming community and ability to provide authentic Manaakitaka (hospitality), is vital. Monitoring resident attitudes and perceptions towards tourism through this research is key to guiding the industry's ongoing development.

INTERESTED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT?

Learn more about [Queenstown Lakes' Destination Management plan](#), [Travel to a Thriving Future](#).



This is the district's roadmap to ensuring our district remains a special place for future generations, and a place we can continue to be proud to share with visitors for years to come.

METHODOLOGY

This report presents findings from research conducted in the Queenstown Lakes District between October 2024 and March 2025. It builds on three previous waves of research conducted during the same period over the past three years.

The research was based on Angus & Associates' Views on Tourism® methodology¹. Core questions explored residents' views on the value of international and domestic tourism, as well as tourism's positive and negative impacts on the community. These were supplemented with a small set of questions tailored to the Queenstown Lakes District.

Queenstown Lakes District residents' responses are compared with those of a nationally representative sample of New Zealanders aged 18 and over (the NZ Benchmark¹), who completed the Views on Tourism® survey during the same period. The national sample comprised of n=1,516 participants.

The Queenstown Lakes District sample included n=519 residents (Queenstown residents n=251; Wānaka residents n=268). Participants were recruited through intercepts at various local sites, including libraries, recreation centres, supermarkets, retail stores, and markets. Experienced Angus & Associates' researchers conducted the fieldwork, with site selection ensuring broad community representation across the Queenstown Lakes District.

Residents were invited to complete the survey on-site or receive a link via email. They could scan a QR code to use their own device or complete the survey on a tablet provided. This approach aimed to maximise accessibility and convenience.

As an incentive, participants could enter a prize draw to win their choice of either a Lasting Legacy Pack (five native trees planted in the Queenstown Lakes District on their behalf with Trees that Count and a \$150 donation made in their name to Love Queenstown / Love Wānaka), or a selection of organic wines from Amisfield shipped to their door. All respondents were aged 18 or older. Following quality control and data cleaning, the final sample was weighted to reflect the Queenstown Lakes District's adult population by sub-area, age, and gender, using 2023 Census usual resident counts.

Throughout the report, blue and red arrows/font highlight statistically significant differences between Queenstown Lakes District results and the national benchmark, and year-on-year changes. Significance is reported at the 95% confidence level.

Tourism Approval Rating: A Tourism Approval Rating (TAR) is calculated for both international and domestic tourism, using a combination of tourism perception scores. The TAR is plotted on a six-section scale (Advocacy, Approval, Acceptance, Limited Acceptance, Threatened Acceptance and Disapproval) to highlight residents' perceptions of tourism on an ongoing basis.

1. Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism use Angus & Associates' [Views on Tourism](#) Research Methodology

SAMPLE PROFILE

	Queenstown Lakes District
Gender	
Male	42%
Female	57%
Gender Diverse	1%
Prefer not to say	1%
Age	
18 – 19 years	1%
20 – 29 years	10%
30 – 39 years	28%
40 - 49 years	20%
50 – 59 years	16%
60 – 69 years	13%
70+ years	13%
Travel in Past 12 Months	
Travelled in New Zealand	68%
Travelled outside New Zealand	61%
Have not travelled	6%
Base: Total Sample (unweighted)	n=519

	Queenstown Lakes District
Occupation	
Employed full-time in paid work	47%
Employed part-time in paid work	16%
Unpaid/volunteer work	4%
Self-employed	22%
Studying	1%
Looking after family and/or home	5%
Looking for work or unemployed	1%
Retired	16%
Beneficiary	1%
Other	1%
Household Composition	
My husband, wife or partner	74%
My mother and/or father	2%
My child/children aged under 5	11%
My child/children aged 5 - 14	20%
My child/children aged 15+	8%
Other family/relatives	4%
Other person(s)	18%
None of the above - I live alone	8%
Prefer not to say	3%
Base: Total Sample (unweighted)	n=519

	Queenstown Lakes District
Queenstown Lakes District	
Central Queenstown	14%
Arrowtown, Arthurs Point, Whakatipu Basin	12%
Frankton and surrounding suburbs	22%
Outer Whakatipu	1%
Wānaka	39%
Lake Hāwea	8%
Outer Wānaka	5%
Ethnicity	
New Zealand European	65%
Other European	21%
New Zealand Māori	3%
South American	3%
Latin American	1%
North American	2%
Chinese	2%
Other	7%
Prefer not to say	2%
Base: Total Sample (unweighted)	n=519

	Queenstown Lakes District
Queenstown Lakes District	
Administrative and support services	10%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3%
Arts and recreation services	4%
Construction	11%
Education and training	7%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	1%
Financial and insurance services	3%
Health care and social assistance	11%
Information media & telecommunications	3%
Manufacturing	2%
Mining	0%
Professional, scientific & technical services	9%
Public administration and safety	2%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	2%
Retail trade	10%
Tourism incl. accommodation & hospitality	25%
Transport, post and warehousing	2%
Wholesale trade	2%
Other	8%
Base: Employed (paid) or Self-employed	n=519

Disclaimer: The data sets, research, insights, and related resources provided are confidential to Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism and its membership base only and select stakeholders and are not for publication or dissemination with out permission from Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism . DQ and LWT assumes no liability for any actions taken based on supplied information or insights.