

VIEWS ON TOURISM RESEARCH

Queenstown Lakes

2025 - 2026

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 2025 and March 2026 using Angus & Associates internationally respectedViews 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 three years, community sentiment towards tourism in the Queenstown Lakes district has stablised 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, with this waves results reflecting a normalisation of perceptions and attitudes toward tourism activity. While many residents (97%) have personally benefited from tourism activity in their local area, an almost equal majority (99%) have also been adversely impacted. 76% of Queenstown residents agree that the region needs a destination management plan. 34% of residents are at least somewhat familiar with 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.

27

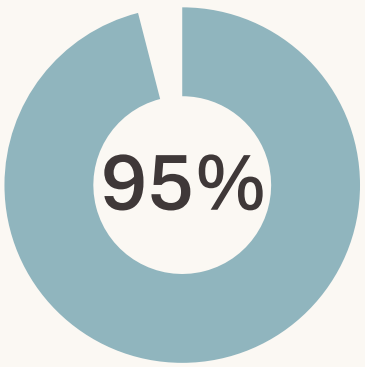
INTERNATIONAL TAR

58

DOMESTIC TAR

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

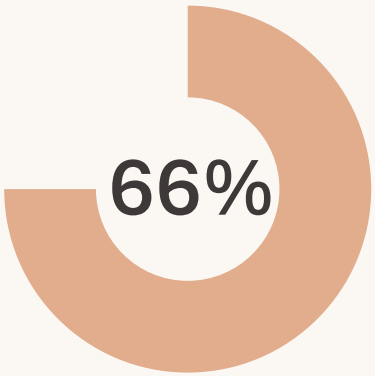
Resident sentiment toward tourism remained positive, with over nine out of ten residents agreeing that tourism is good for their region, higher than the New Zealand result of 89% agreeing tourism is good for their region.



Tourism is good for my 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 amount the perceived amount of pressure visitors place on their region, with two out of three residents reporting that they believe that tourism is exerting too much pressure. This is significantly higher than the New Zealand result of 34% believing visitors are putting too much pressure on their region.



Visitors are putting too much pressure on my region

97% OF RESIDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED BENEFITS OF TOURISM IN THEIR AREA

This proportion is significantly higher than the New Zealand benchmark (82%).

THE TOP FIVE BENEFITS ARE...

- Opportunities for employment and income
- More local businesses opening or being able to stay open
- A more vibrant and friendly community
- Opportunities to learn more about other cultures
- Inspiration to travel domestically

99% OF RESIDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED ADVERSE IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN THEIR AREA

This proportion is significantly higher than the New Zealand benchmark (74%).

THE TOP FIVE ADVERSE IMPACTS ARE...

- Takes longer to get places due to traffic and congestion
- Greater difficulty finding a car park
- Higher day to day living costs
- Strain on infrastructure (roads, wastewater etc.)
- Feeling less safe when 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.

DOMESTIC TAR

QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT	58
OTAGO	43
NEW ZEALAND	57

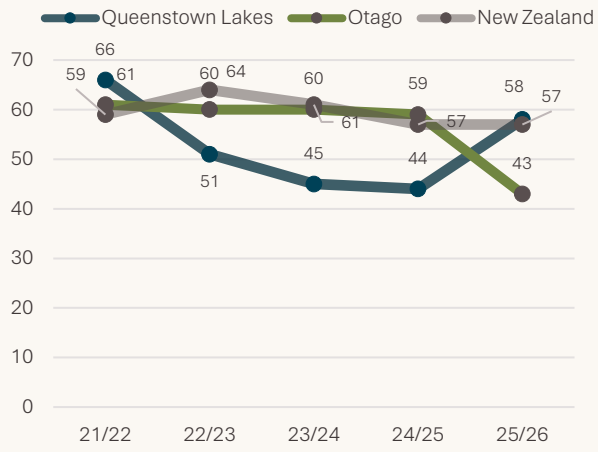
INTERNATIONAL TAR

QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT	27
OTAGO	30
NEW ZEALAND	46

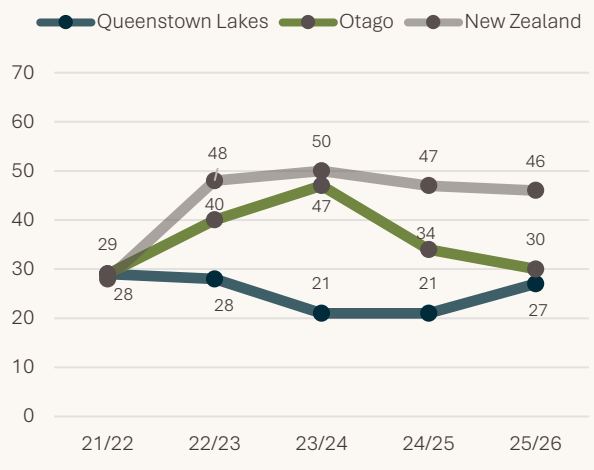
Advocacy
Approval
Acceptance
Limited Acceptance
Threatened
Disapproval

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, creating employment for people in the community, reducing the impact of visitors on the local environment and encouraging visitors to travel outside of the peak season.

Improving infrastructure

Attracting higher quality visitors

Encourage visitors to travel outside of the peak

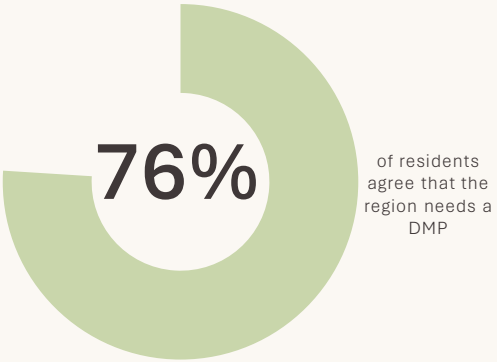
Reducing the impact of visitors on the local environment

Creating employment for people in the community

Encouraging visitor dispersal to benefit more communities

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

76% of Queenstown Lakes district residents agree that the region needs a destination management plan.



WHY THIS RESEARCH IS CONDUCTED

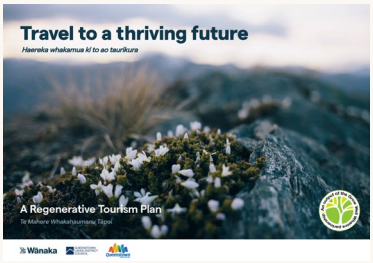
The success of a regenerative and sustainable destination depends on both the benefits tourism brings and the strength of local community support.

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 2025 and March 2026. It builds on four previous waves of research conducted during the same period over the past four years.

The research was based on Angus & Associates' Views on Tourism® methodology[1]. 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 Benchmark'), 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=500 residents. 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

Gender	QLD
Male	34%
Female	66%
Gender Diverse	0%
Prefer not to say	0%
Age	
18 – 19 years	3%
20 – 29 years	23%
30 – 39 years	23%
40 – 49 years	18%
50 – 59 years	13%
60 – 69 years	12%
70+ years	9%
Travel in Past 12 Months	
Travelled in New Zealand	75%
Travelled outside New Zealand	59%
Have not travelled	6%
Base: Total Sample (unweighted)	*n=500*

Queenstown Lakes District	QLD
Central Queenstown	15%
Arrowtown, Arthurs Point, Whakatipu Basin	9%
Frankton and surrounding suburbs	25%
Outer Whakatipu	1%
Wānaka	38%
Lake Hāwea	10%
Outer Wānaka	2%
Ethnicity	
New Zealand European	60%
Other European	23%
New Zealand Māori	4%
South American	2%
Latin American	2%
North American	3%
Chinese	2%
Other	13%
Prefer not to say	1%
Base: Total Sample (unweighted)	*n=500*

Occupation	QLD
Employed full-time	56%
Employed part-time	14%
Unpaid/volunteer work	3%
Self-employed	18%
Studying	3%
Looking after family/home	3%
Looking for work/unemployed	1%
Retired	10%
Beneficiary	1%
Other	0%
Base: Total Sample (unweighted)	*n=500*
Household Composition	
Husband, wife or partner	59%
Mother and/or father	5%
Child/ren aged under 5	5%
Child/ren aged 5–14	15%
Child/ren aged 15+	7%
Other family/relatives	6%
Other person(s)	26%
Lives alone	11%
Prefer not to say	2%
Base: Total Sample (unweighted)	*n=500*

SAMPLE PROFILE

Employment (Industry)	QLD
Administrative and support services	8%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2%
Arts and recreation services	7%
Construction	5%
Education and training	4%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	1%
Financial and insurance services	2%
Health care and social assistance	7%
Information media & telecommunications	3%
Manufacturing	1%
Mining	0%
Professional, scientific & technical services	4%
Public administration and safety	1%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	3%
Retail trade	29%
Tourism incl. accommodation & hospitality	28%
Transport, post and warehousing	2%
Wholesale trade	0%
Other	8%
Base: Employed (paid) or Self-employed	*n=428*

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.