

VIEWS ON TOURISM RESEARCH

Queenstown

2025 - 2026

Resident sentiment toward tourism in the Queenstown region.

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 respected Views on Tourism programme and methodology. For further details about methodology please refer to the information at the end of this resource.

QUEENSTOWN RESULTS

SUMMARY

Community sentiment towards tourism in Queenstown has improved over the past wave and is tracking closer to the NZ average. Residents continue to recognise the value tourism brings while remaining mindful of the pressures that come with high visitor volumes and rapid population growth. Almost all Queenstown residents (98%) have personally benefited from tourism activity in their local area, while a similar proportion (99%) have also experienced adverse impacts. More than three out of four Queenstown residents (76%) agree that the region needs a destination management plan, and just over a third of residents are now 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.

28

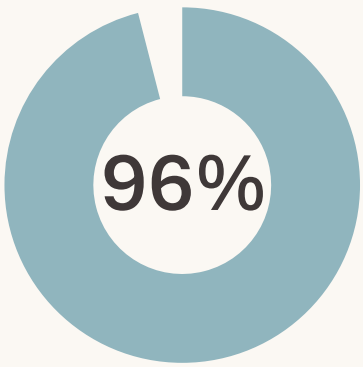
INTERNATIONAL TAR

59

DOMESTIC TAR

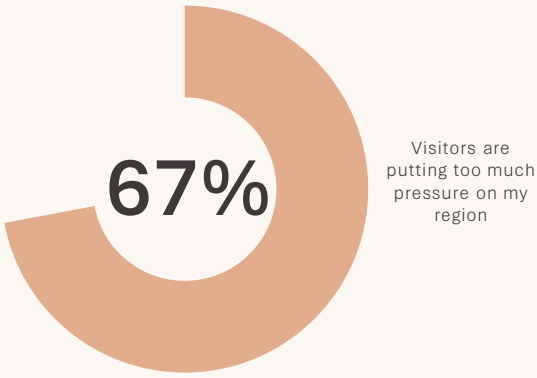
RESIDENTS CONTINUE TO RECOGNISE THAT TOURISM PLAYS A POSITIVE ROLE IN THEIR REGION

Resident sentiment toward tourism strengthened, with 96% of residents agreeing that international tourism is good for their region, well above 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, 67% of residents believe international visitors are placing too much pressure on their region (down from previous waves), compared with 34% of New Zealanders nationally. Domestic visitors are seen as far less of a strain, with only 35% agreeing they place too much pressure on the region and 52% disagreeing.



98% 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 (71%)
- More local businesses opening or being able to stay open (59%)
- Community is more vibrant and friendly place to live (47%)
- Opportunity to learn about other cultures (45%)
- Inspired to travel domestically (40%)

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 (75%)
- Greater difficulty finding a car park (75%)
- Higher day to day living costs (68%)
- Too much pressure on community infrastructure (64%)
- Increased housing prices (59%)

TOURISM APPROVAL RATING SCORE (TAR)

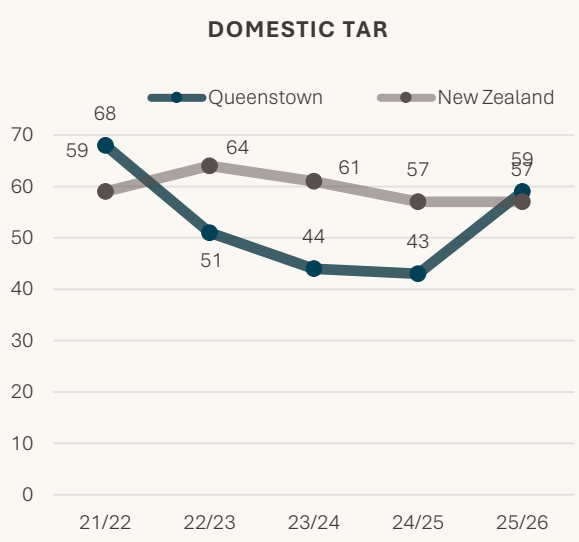
The TAR score highlights resident's overall perceptions of tourism. It is a composite index score based on several responses about tourism's benefits and adverse impacts. TAR score is plotted on a scale from <0 to +100 ranging from advocacy to disapproval to track residents' perceptions over time, and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

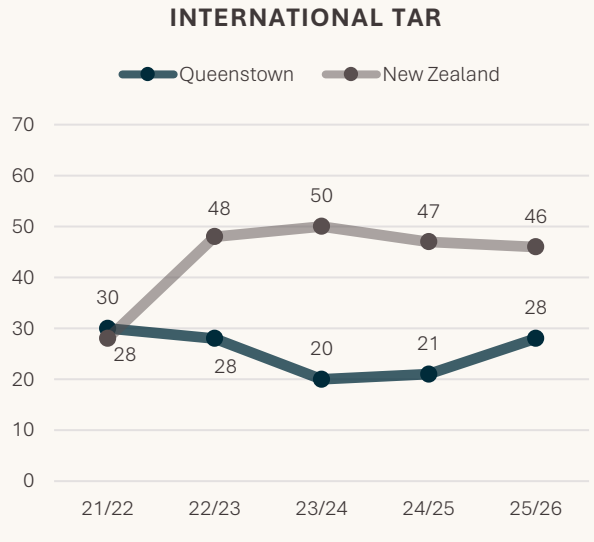
INTERNATIONAL TAR	
QUEENSTOWN	28
OTAGO	30
NEW ZEALAND	46

DOMESTIC TAR	
QUEENSTOWN	59
OTAGO	43
NEW ZEALAND	57

Advocacy
Approval
Acceptance
Limited Acceptance
Threatened
Disapproval

TOURISM APPROVAL RATING SCORE (TAR) COMPARED TO NEW ZEALAND





WHAT DO OUR RESIDENTS WANT FROM TOURISM?

AREAS OF FOCUS FOR TOURISM

Looking to the future, three out of five Queenstown residents (59%) would like the local tourism industry to focus most on improving community infrastructure. Other priorities include encouraging off-peak travel, creating employment for people in the community, attracting higher quality visitors, and reducing the impact of visitors on the local environment.

Improving community infrastructure (59%)

Encouraging off-peak travel (25%)

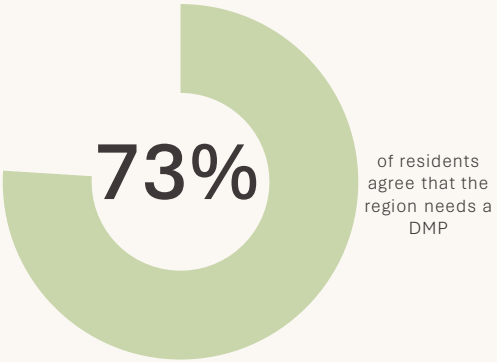
Attracting higher quality visitors (19%)

Creating employment for people in the community (19%)

Reducing visitor impact on the environment (18%)

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

More than three out of four Queenstown residents (76%) agree that the region needs a destination management plan, while just over a third of residents are at least somewhat familiar with Queenstown Lakes' Destination Management Plan, Travel to a Thriving Future. Travel to a Thriving Future.



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=1,508 participants.

The Queenstown Lakes District sample included n=500 residents (Queenstown residents n=250; Wānaka residents n=250). 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	Queenstown Lakes District
Gender		
Male	33%	34%
Female	66%	66%
Gender Diverse	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%
Age		
18 – 19 years	5%	3%
20 – 29 years	27%	23%
30 – 39 years	28%	23%
40 - 49 years	17%	18%
50 – 59 years	7%	13%
60 – 69 years	10%	12%
70+ years	7%	9%
Travel in Past 12 Months		
Travelled in New Zealand	73%	75%
Travelled outside New Zealand	63%	59%
Have not travelled	6%	6%
Base: Total Sample (unweighted)	n=250	n=500

	Queenstown	Queenstown Lakes District
Queenstown Lakes District		
Central Queenstown	30%	15%
Arrowtown, Arthurs Point, Whakatipu Basin	18%	9%
Frankton and surrounding suburbs	51%	25%
Outer Whakatipu	1%	1%
Wānaka	-	38%
Lake Hāwea	-	10%
Outer Wānaka	-	2%
Ethnicity		
New Zealand European	48%	60%
Other European	28%	23%
New Zealand Māori	2%	4%
South American	3%	2%
Latin American	4%	2%
North American	3%	3%
Chinese	4%	2%
Other	17%	13%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%
Base: Total Sample (unweighted)	n=250	n=500

	Queenstown	Queenstown Lakes District
Occupation		
Employed full-time in paid work	62%	56%
Employed part-time in paid work	12%	14%
Unpaid/volunteer work	2%	3%
Self-employed	16%	18%
Studying	5%	3%
Looking after family and/or home	2%	3%
Looking for work or unemployed	2%	1%
Retired	7%	10%
Beneficiary	1%	1%
Other	1%	0%
Household Composition		
My husband, wife or partner	52%	59%
My mother and/or father	5%	5%
My child/children aged under 5	5%	5%
My child/children aged 5 - 14	11%	15%
My child/children aged 15+	6%	7%
Other family/relatives	6%	6%
Other person(s)	34%	26%
None of the above - I live alone	12%	11%
Prefer not to say	1%	2%
Base: Total Sample (unweighted)	n=250	n=500

	Queenstown	Queenstown Lakes District
Administrative and support services	5%	8%
Agriculture, foresty and fishing	2%	2%
Arts and recreation services	7%	7%
Construction	5%	5%
Education and training	4%	4%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	0%	1%
Financial and insurance services	1%	2%
Health care and social assistance	5%	7%
Information media & telecommunications	2%	3%
Manufacturing	0%	1%
Mining	0%	0%
Professional, scientific & technical services	4%	4%
Public administration and safety	1%	1%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	2%	3%
Retail trade	30%	29%
Tourism incl. accommodation & hospitality	33%	28%
Transport, post and warehousing	3%	2%
Wholesale trade	0%	0%
Other	8%	8%
Base: Employed (paid) or Self-employed	n=221	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.