



- **Evidence-based insight**
Destination Queenstown turned anecdotal community feedback into reliable, representative data.
- **Balancing perspectives** *Views on Tourism* helped quantify both the benefits and pressures of tourism on residents.
- **Sustainable outcomes** Insights now guide planning, advocacy and efforts to keep Queenstown welcoming for all.



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EILIDH BLANCHARD
Data & Insights Manager

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL LICENSE WITH VIEWS ON TOURISM

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE

As the Regional Tourism Organisation for one of New Zealand’s highest-profile visitor destinations, Destination Queenstown has long recognised the vital role the resident community plays in welcoming the millions of visitors hosted each year. Over time, however, it became obvious that some residents were becoming increasingly frustrated with some of the pressures of growth, suggesting Queenstown’s capacity to extend a warm welcome might be threatened.

“Anecdotally, we knew there was tension,” explains Eilidh Blanchard, Data and Insights Manager at Destination Queenstown (DQ). “We needed to understand what was truly happening beneath those signals.”

National tourism sentiment data provided a starting point, but it couldn’t capture the unique dynamics of a globally renowned tourism destination like Queenstown. DQ needed reliable, region-specific insight to understand the full picture, both the benefits tourism brings to the community and the pressures residents experience, so they could plan for a positive, balanced outcome for everyone.

THE SOLUTION

Destination Queenstown implemented Angus & Associates' **Views on Tourism**, a professional, independently conducted research programme that measures community perceptions of tourism across New Zealand.

"The implementation was incredibly smooth," says Eilidh. "The programme is very comprehensive and delivered exactly the depth needed to understand and quantify what we heard anecdotally."

The Views on Tourism programme provided DQ with population-representative, independently collected data, removing the bias that can be present in online or social-media-based samples. It offered consistent measurement over time, with the added value of benchmarking against other regions.

Eilidh explains that "Tracking your own progress is useful but understanding how we compare nationally gives us context for what's happening here."

INSIGHTS THAT DRIVE STRATEGY

The data reflected what Destination Queenstown had been sensing: while residents value the benefits tourism brings (such as jobs, support for local businesses, services enjoyed by both residents and visitors, and community vibrancy), 75% also agreed that tourism places pressure on the region, a figure well above the national benchmark.

Views on Tourism brings the community voice into the picture and gives DQ the evidence base to respond to the issues undermining tourism's social license.

The insights now underpin key areas of the Queenstown Lakes Regenerative Tourism Plan, a roadmap designed to help the region thrive into the future. They also provide evidence for DQ's advocacy efforts to council and government, particularly around infrastructure investment, areas that directly influence residents' and visitors' experiences.

ALIGNING VISITORS AND HOSTS

Perhaps most importantly, DQ uses Views on Tourism data to draw parallels between visitor experience and community sentiment.

"When we see a slip in how welcome visitors feel from our Visitor Experience Survey and that aligns with a decline in our Community Tourism Approval Rating (TAR), it's a powerful reminder that the two are interconnected," Eilidh notes. "If our community doesn't feel positive about tourism, visitors will sense that too."

THE IMPACT

Views on Tourism has helped DQ:

- Quantify and contextualise community sentiment.
- Support social license by understanding, acknowledging and addressing local concerns.
- Inform regional planning and infrastructure advocacy.
- Keep members engaged and aligned through regular insights.

"We use the data all the time," says Eilidh. "It gives us confidence in what we're hearing, and it helps us have constructive conversations about how to keep Queenstown a welcoming, thriving destination and a great place for people to live."

WHY SOCIAL LICENSE MATTERS

Local residents aren't passive bystanders, they're active participants who experience tourism's benefits and pressures every day. A welcoming host community isn't a "nice to have", it's the foundation of a thriving, sustainable destination.

When destinations overlook community perspectives, goodwill can erode, the visitor experience can suffer, opportunities to deliver economic and social benefits are missed, and long-term sustainability is put at risk.

Views on Tourism gives destinations like Queenstown the evidence, context and confidence to understand community sentiment, track change over time, and make informed decisions that work both for residents and visitors alike.