

...but is it value for money? An operator's view of how TNZ's focus should change

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One notable tourism operator has questioned the value of Tourism New Zealand's efforts in Australia, calling the *Everyone Must Go!* campaign poor value.



TNZ should change its focus to sell more in markets like Australia, says The Rees' Mark Rose

With the [early results of the campaign expected today](#) in Stats NZ's release of its latest visitor arrival numbers, The Rees Hotel Queenstown executive director Mark Rose said the investment in the promotion could have been better spent.

"Australians are going to come or they're not going to come," Rose told the Ticker.

"You're going out there with a short-term campaign that's going to make me wake up in the morning and go, 'oh, you know what, I might go to Ohakune tomorrow.'"

Rose said he was concerned that TNZ does too much marketing and was not focused enough on selling and working on the ground with the travel trade overseas.

"It comes down to throwing money at walls and the walls that they use so often are Facebook and the other social media."



The Rees' Mark Rose

He spent about a third of the year offshore and he understood how trade bookings worked. Just over a third of his bookings came through trade, which books around four months out, meaning there was certainty around bookings and cash in advance.

“[What] that allows me to do is to yield my business as it goes forward. I’m a yielding business rather than an occupancy business, which is pretty much what what Tourism New Zealand’s been saying for a number of years is what they want New Zealand to be,” Rose said.

He questioned why more TNZ staff were not based overseas, with 64 of its 165 staff based in New Zealand.

The agency has seen total funding grow to \$130.8m this year but its baseline funding is \$106m – a cut from recent years.

TNZ international general manager Angela Blair said it needed to be careful about overcommitting overseas, given funding levels can change.

There have been short-term contract appointments, including a campaign manager in Australia to work on the new Amazon Prime campaign, working specifically with the industry and trade.

Mirroring Rose’s push, she said across TNZ there has been discussion about being broader than just marketing.

“That’s still a key part of what we’re doing,” Blair said.

“But there is this more commercial element which has seen us look at how we can make sure we build out that capability within our organisation.

“We’ve also looked at where we can upweight some of our skill set because our targets for this year are significant. With our marketing, it has more of a conversion focus.”

Blair added that there was more of a trade focus.

“Trade will be vital when we look at conversion. And in terms of offshore, we’ve definitely dialled up the number of partnerships we have.”

In the current financial year this means more airline partnerships.

Influencers funded by TNZ were not only about building appeal, but breaking down barriers such as concern about the weather, internal travel and how welcoming Kiwis are.

TNZ would also be present at big commerce events, such as the Amazon Prime event running this week, and 11/11 and 12/12 days in Asia.

“We’re looking at how do we show up at scale to be able to convert with strong offers, and also (have a) strong preference for New Zealand.”

Blair also pushed back on criticism of TNZ’s use of around 140 million-plus ‘active considerers’ as a measure. She said the six-month rolling average from December to May 2025 showed 18% of TNZ’s active considerers were in a booking mindset, or around 28 million people.

Rose joked that he would “actively consider” going to the moon but that was not going to happen and wondered why TNZ continued to use the terminology.

Blair said TNZ will continue to use the term but change the emphasis: “We’re probably focussing not on growing that pool any larger, but pulling more of them down to the booking mindset.”

This meant getting five million more people into the booking mindset.

Tourism Export Council chief executive Lynda Keene welcomed any more trade marketing overseas.

“We’re very supportive of that,” Keene said.

“We believe that there should be more trade marketing done and we also hope that UK and European markets get some additional resources and focus over the next short to medium term.”