



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
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Methodology Update Notice | Volumes & Flows

Volumes & Flows series | August 2026 release

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People, Places
and Patterns

1. August 2026 counts: data feed outage, 26–30 August

Daily counts for 26–30 August 2026 are not published because of a gap in the telco provider's data feed. Weekly, monthly and longer aggregates are unaffected.

Near the end of August the provider experienced a hardware fault affecting one type of network tower. The fault produced varied anomalies: some areas showed an artificial increase in counts as devices disconnected from their usual towers and connected to neighbouring ones, placing them in the wrong location, while areas with a high concentration of the affected hardware saw counts fall to zero. The provider has advised that the data cannot be recovered, so daytime counts for 27–30 August (four days) and night-time counts for 26–30 August (five nights) have been excluded from the daily series; users of the daily data should treat these dates as gaps rather than zeros. Weekly, monthly and other higher-level aggregates are not affected: they are produced with the gap-filling method described in the user guide, which takes the average of the remaining days in the period and applies it across the full period (e.g. a 30-day month with two days missing is the sum of the 28 available days $\div 28 \times 30$).

2. Revision to the Queenstown and Wānaka international series

The historic series has been revised, so year-on-year comparisons of Queenstown and Wānaka international visitors are usable again from 2024.

What has changed. International visitor series for the Queenstown RTO and the Wānaka RTO, and the Queenstown-Lakes District, Otago Region and New Zealand totals that contain them, are revised from January 2024. Measures affected: peak daytime visitors (daily), visitor days and visitor nights (all resolutions), monthly unique visitor counts, and the international rows of the Flows file. Segments affected: international visitor (short-stay), total international visitor and total visitor. Domestic series, long-stay international, local residents, all other regions and all 2026 monthly values are unchanged.

Why. The source data classifies a device as a long-term resident once it has been observed in New Zealand over a span of more than 365 days. Short-stay visitors who return each year, such as Australian visitors each ski season, accumulate a span longer than a year across their visits and were being excluded from the international total. The effect built up through 2023, was largest in the winters of 2024 and 2025, and ended when the data feed was refreshed in April 2026. Before that refresh the affected visitors cannot be separated from the long-stay segment in the source data, so they have been restored by modelling against an independent benchmark rather than by reclassifying individual records.

How. Published international visitor days were compared with Stats NZ international arrivals through Queenstown Airport, adjusted for intended length of stay, month by month. Months judged unaffected (July to December 2022, 2023, and January to August 2026) set the expected relationship for each calendar month. Where the published series fell more than 5% short of that expectation the shortfall was scaled out, capped at a factor of 1.5, and applied to daily data so that daily, weekly and monthly series remain consistent.

The result was checked against MBIE's Accommodation Data Programme, which shows the same winter shortfall in the same two RTOs, and against a screen of every RTO on the same footing, which found no comparable effect elsewhere.

Size of the revision (international visitor days, revised against previously published; winter is June–August):

	Queenstown RTO	Wānaka RTO	Queenstown- Lakes District	Otago Region	New Zealand
Winter 2024	+38%	+35%	+37%	+27%	+2.8%
Winter 2025	+29%	+23%	+27%	+21%	+2.4%
Calendar 2024	+12%	+9%	+11%	+8%	+0.8%
Calendar 2025	+9%	+5%	+8%	+6%	+0.6%

Months revised: May to October in 2024 and 2025 for Queenstown; June to September 2024 and July to September 2025 for Wānaka. Rolling-year values ending up to August 2026 carry the effect; summer months are unchanged.

What this means for users. Year-on-year comparisons of Queenstown and Wānaka international visitors are usable again from 2024; Queenstown's winter international visitor days now show steady growth (+7% in 2024, +10% in 2025, +9% in 2026) in place of the previously published fall in 2024 and 40% rise in 2026. Users holding earlier copies should replace the Queenstown, Wānaka, Queenstown-Lakes District, Otago Region and New Zealand series in full rather than combine old and new values. Monthly unique visitor counts continue to carry a discontinuity at 1 April 2026 and should not be compared across that date; a revision to the historic unique-count series is being prepared and is targeted for the next release, subject to final testing. This is an interim correction applied to the published outputs; the permanent remedy is a change to the residency classification in the source data, which is being pursued with the provider, and the same check will be run each release.