

## Dunedin Visitor Industry Update June 2026

Kia ora,

It is hard to believe we are halfway through the year and enjoying some crisp blue-sky winter days.

We recently wrapped up the 2025/26 summer season with strong results across our destination operations. Summer saw good year-on-year growth in guest nights with visitors staying an average two nights in Dunedin. Domestic visitors spent \$139M in the three months October to January with international visitors spending \$71.5M.

It is heartening to see increased visibility through the domestic and Australian market resulting in bookings for Dunedin businesses and an uptick in visitor nights and visitor spend. I'm sure you will agree that the summer events brought vibrancy, excitement and plenty of visitors to the city – we are looking forward to more development in the events space over the coming year.

Thank you to everyone who completed our summer visitor sector survey. It shows a strong season with 82% of respondents operating at, or mostly at full capacity during peak times, and 75% of operators reporting a return to, or almost to pre-COVID levels of business. The survey captured lots of very useful feedback that is informing our activity planning.

While the 2025/26 cruise season saw fewer ships, visitors and spend, the city still welcomed 110,000+ cruise passengers from 78 ships. Visitors enjoyed our new arrivals experience at the Port Otago Cruise terminal, created in partnership with Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou and Port Otago. Beyond the \$43.6M direct spend, cruise tourism supports local jobs and the wider regional economy returning \$93.5M+ to the Dunedin economy this season. Looking ahead there is good news for the sector - in 2026/27 Dunedin will receive more cruise visits than any other New Zealand port.

There has been strong interest in plans for the solar eclipse as we approach two-years from the event. Planning is well underway towards a week-long winter festival between Matariki and Totality, showcasing the best of Southern New Zealand. Trade partners attending TRENZ were given a taste of what's to come, with black eclipse-themed doughnuts from Precinct Food. These treats highlighted Dunedin's rich food offering with creative fillings such as blue cheese, pear and honey, or pumpkin ganache and coffee liqueur. They were complemented by a 'shot in the dark' from Quick Brown Fox. Sign up [here](#) to receive updates on event planning.

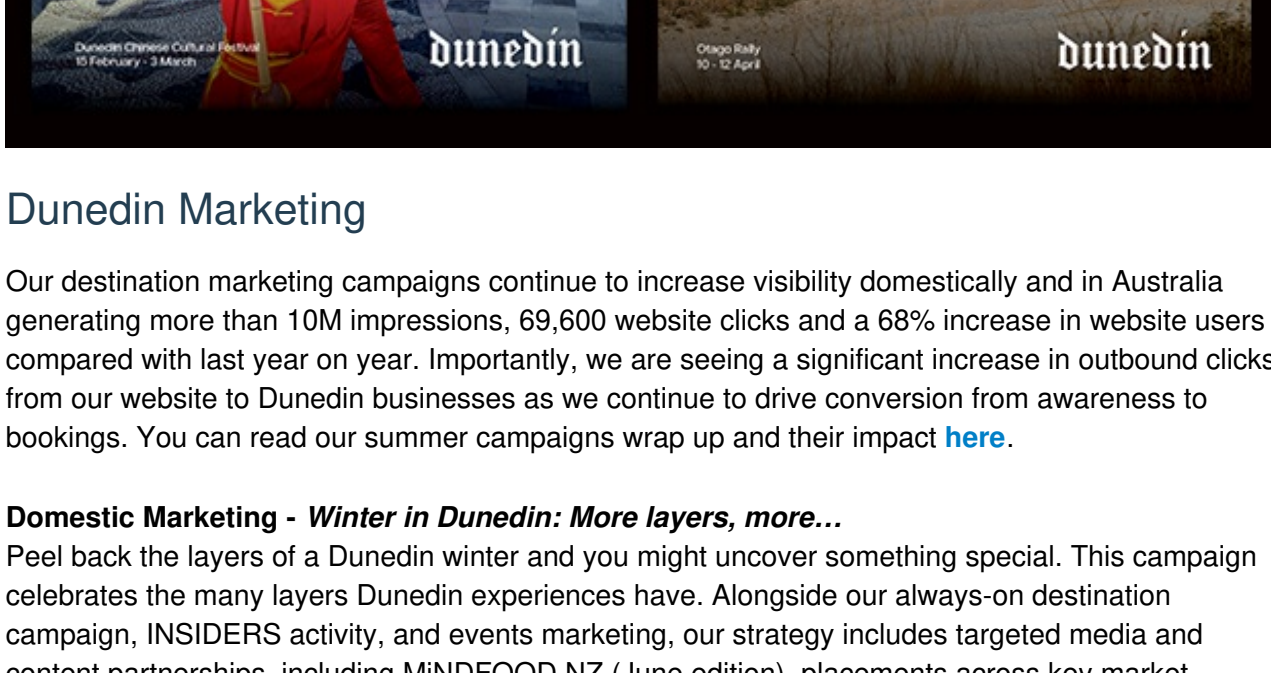
The Discover Dunedin pass has been a roaring success with more than 220 participants across front-facing roles getting out to experience the city's visitor offerings and unlock rewards. Delivered over our quieter months, the programme builds local ambassadors who can make first-hand recommendations to our manuhiri. If you or your team is interested, there is still time to sign up [here](#).

Kā manaakitanga,

- Teresa Fogarty, Dunedin Destination Manager (interim)

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### Dunedin Marketing

Our destination marketing campaigns continue to increase visibility domestically and in Australia generating more than 10M impressions, 69,600 website clicks and a 68% increase in website users compared with last year on year. Importantly, we are seeing a significant increase in outbound clicks from our website to Dunedin businesses as we continue to drive conversion from awareness to bookings. You can read our summer campaigns wrap up and their impact [here](#).

#### Domestic Marketing - Winter in Dunedin: More layers, more...

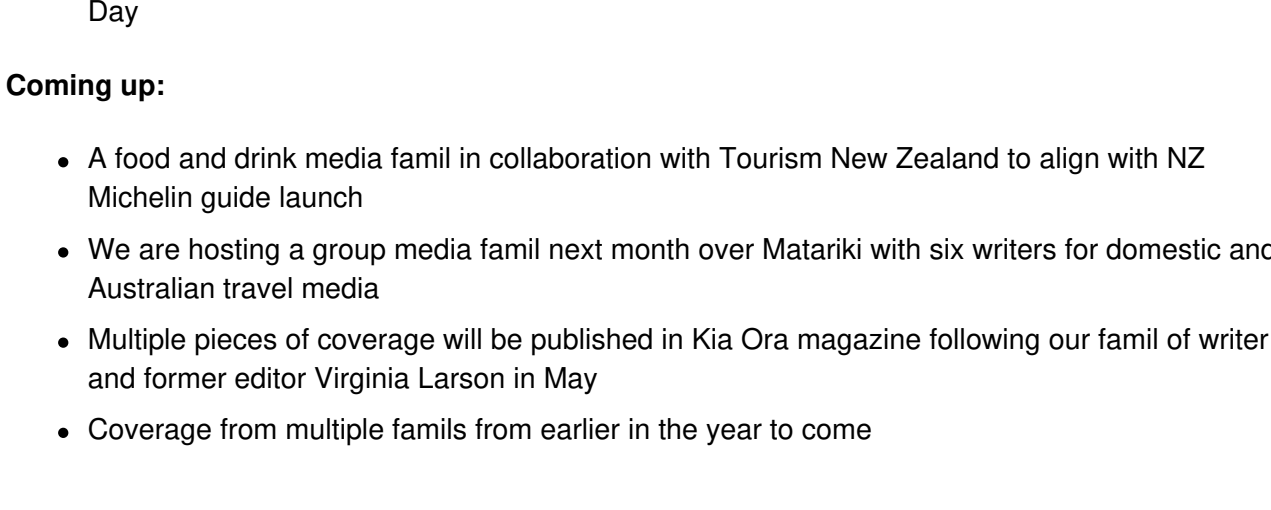
Peel back the layers of a Dunedin winter and you might uncover something special. This campaign celebrates the many layers Dunedin experiences have. Alongside our always-on destination campaign, INSIDERS activity, and events marketing, our strategy includes targeted media and content partnerships, including MINDFOOD NZ (June edition), placements across key market publications, and a three-month presence with NZ Herald Travel. This is supported by our owned-channel approach, combining audience targeting, engagement and remarketing to keep Dunedin front of mind throughout the season.

#### Australia Marketing

Our always on Australian activity combined refreshed destination content with a mix of paid, earned and owned channels to keep Dunedin front of mind. This included a three-month campaign with [GC Magazine](#), content and advertising in MINDFOOD NZ (June edition), Vacations and Travel, digital out-of-home activity, and ongoing owned-channel marketing designed to broaden awareness and drive consideration.

#### Overall Results (February–April)

- Website users increased 105% year-on-year during the Autumn Events campaign period, with sessions growing even faster. The additional 12,000 sessions compared with users highlights strong repeat visitation, with returning visitors accounting for 15% of traffic.
- Traffic to event landing pages increased 46% year-on-year, while total website sessions grew 89%, demonstrating strong audience interest in both events and wider destination content.
- Google activity generated more than 253,000 video and image impressions, with 96.5% of viewers watching video content through to completion.
- META delivered 227,400 impressions and strong engagement, resulting in 4,700 landing page visits.
- More than 11,000 outbound clicks were driven to local events and businesses, with featured events generating the highest level of referral traffic.

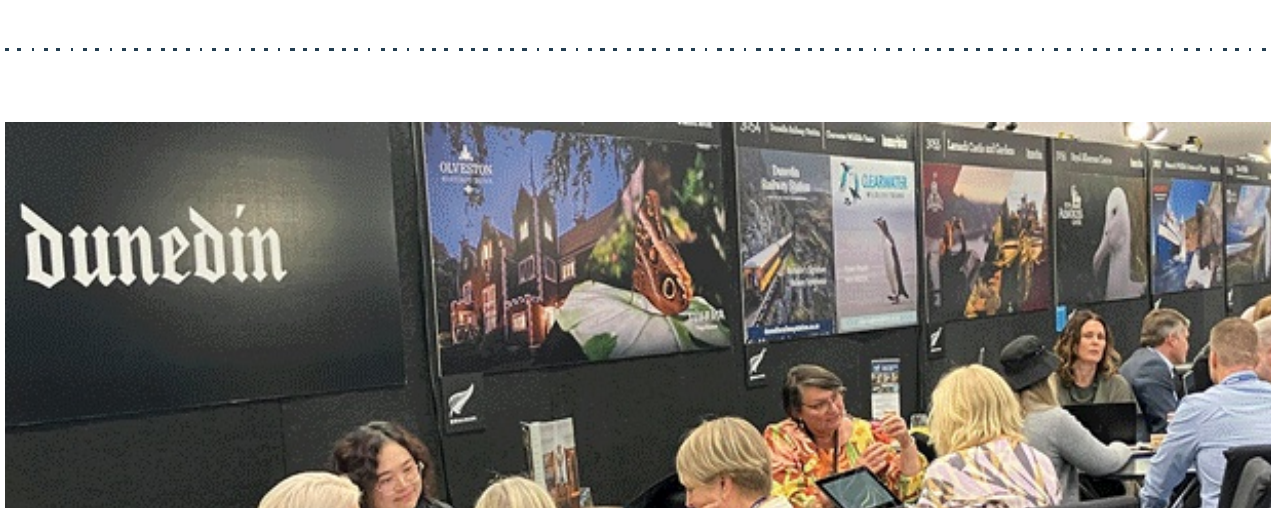


### Dunedin in the Media

- Dunedin's wildlife experiences have been showcased in a fantastic 3-page article in Wanderlust magazine, following our famill of UK writer Mark Stratton in February
- A digital article [The ultimate long weekend in and around Dunedin and Oamaru](#) was published by Lonely Planet following our famill of their Oceania editor Jessica Lockhart in December
- Sydney Morning Herald's Traveller published a journey and station review of the Mainlander and Dunedin Railway Station following our famill of writer Julie Miller in April
- Submitted several businesses for coverage in the NZ Herald's [end of summer experiences](#) article published in April
- Submitted several businesses for coverage in the NZ Herald's [arts experiences](#) article published in May
- Events coverage for Midwinter Carnival in Kia Ora magazine May
- Multiple food and drink businesses covered in June Kia Ora magazine after suggesting spokesperson to writer
- Arranged interview of Mayor Sophie Barker with Chinese Central Television for World Oceans Day

#### Coming up:

- A food and drink media famill in collaboration with Tourism New Zealand to align with NZ Michelin guide launch
- We are hosting a group media famill next month over Matariki with six writers for domestic and Australian travel media
- Multiple pieces of coverage will be published in Kia Ora magazine following our famill of writer and former editor Virginia Larson in May
- Coverage from multiple famills from earlier in the year to come



### Events and Key Dates

Get ready to celebrate the Māori New Year with a spectacular line-up of events during next month's Puaka Matariki Festival – including the return of the much-anticipated Matariki mā Puaka drone light show, with iconic Aotearoa musician Tiki Taane confirmed as this year's headline act.

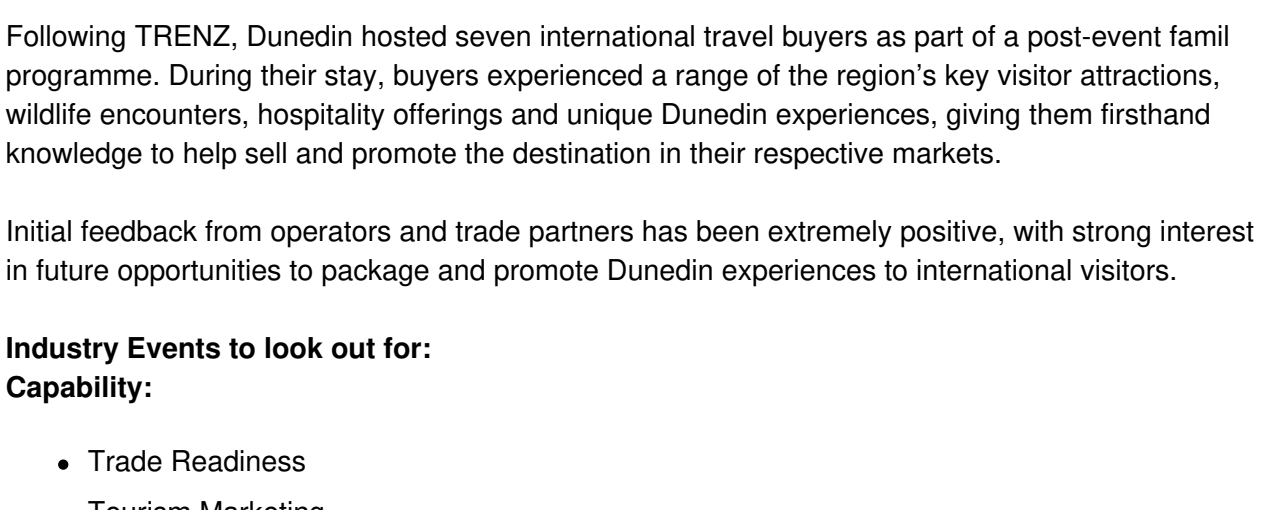
With Matariki falling on Friday 10 July this year, a range of events and festivities will take place throughout the month, grounded in the themes of remembrance, reflection, celebration, and connection.

At the heart of the celebrations is the free Matariki mā Puaka community festival at Logan Park, featuring cultural performances, workshops, kai, live music, and two large-scale drone shows inspired by the stars of Puaka and Matariki.

#### Upcoming Events:

- [Matariki mā Puaka](#) 10 July
- [NZ International Science Festival](#) 15 - 19 July
- [Dunedin's Craft Beer Marathon](#) 13 September
- [Dunedin Craft Beer and Food Festival](#) 27 - 28 November

[Click here for more upcoming events.](#)



### Destination, Trade and Business Events

#### TRENZ 2026

Enterprise Dunedin recently attended TRENZ, New Zealand's largest international tourism trade event, alongside eight Dunedin tourism operators, providing a strong regional presence and an excellent opportunity to showcase our city to international travel buyers and media.

Over the three-day event, the Dunedin team and participating operators held a significant number of appointments with key trade partners from international markets, highlighting Dunedin's unique wildlife, heritage and visitor experiences.

A highlight of Dunedin's presence at TRENZ was the Eclipse activation, designed to build awareness of the total solar eclipse that will pass over Dunedin on 22 July 2028. As one of only two main centres in New Zealand within the path of totality, and the final location on Earth to experience the eclipse before sunset, Dunedin is uniquely positioned to attract visitors from around the world for this rare astronomical event.

Building on the success of last year's Dunedin-inspired ice cream activation, Enterprise Dunedin partnered with local food designer Liz Christensen of Precinct Food and Quick Brown Fox founder Arjun Haszard to create a memorable "surprise and delight" experience for buyers. A Dunedin-branded food cart served limited-edition eclipse-themed bites and coffee liqueur tastings, showcasing local flavours, producers and hospitality while sparking conversations about Dunedin's plans for the 2028 eclipse. The activation generated strong interest among international buyers and provided an engaging way to promote both Dunedin's food story and its future event opportunities.

Following TRENZ, Dunedin hosted seven international travel buyers as part of a post-event famill programme. During their stay, buyers experienced a range of the region's key visitor attractions, wildlife encounters, hospitality offerings and unique Dunedin experiences, giving them firsthand knowledge to help sell and promote the destination in their respective markets.

Initial feedback from operators and trade partners has been extremely positive, with strong interest in future opportunities to package and promote Dunedin experiences to international visitors.

#### Industry Events to look out for:

##### Capability:

- Trade Readiness
- Tourism Marketing
- Event Governance
- Confidence and Commercialisation in Tourism

##### Sector Discussion:

- Transport and Wayfinding
- July Destination Hui
- Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Visit