NEWS RELEASE

Brand USA selects The Walshe Group to lead PR in Australia and New Zealand

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SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA (January 21, 2026) — Brand USA, the official destination marketing organization for the United States, has appointed The Walshe Group as its public relations representative for Australia and New Zealand, effective immediately.

The appointment reinforces Brand USA's commitment to two of its most important international source markets. Australia and New Zealand consistently rank among the top overseas contributors to U.S. visitation and play a critical role in driving tourism-related economic impact.

"We're pleased to appoint The Walshe Group as our new public relations representative for Australia and New Zealand. Their deep expertise in destination storytelling and strong media relationships make them the ideal partner to help us elevate the USA's presence in these vital markets," said Chris Heywood, Senior Vice President, Public Relations & Chief Communications Officer at Brand USA. "I'm looking forward to expanding our PR opportunities as we harness all of the mega-events and endless 'demand generators' that will inspire Australians and New Zealanders to choose the USA in the years ahead."

Working as an extension of the Brand USA team in market, The Walshe Group will deliver a strategic PR program focused on increasing awareness of the breadth and diversity of U.S. travel experiences, inspiring visitation and strengthening Brand USA's positioning as a leading global destination brand for Australian and New Zealand travelers.

Kristine George, who brings more than 30 years' experience in tourism public relations, will lead the account as PR Account Director.

The Walshe Group, which will mark 50 years in business in 2026, is one of the most established tourism representation agencies in Australia and New Zealand. The agency is the long-standing representative for New York City Tourism + Conventions and Hawai'i Tourism Authority (Hawai'i Tourism Oceania), with deep expertise in destination storytelling and driving visitation growth in this market.

Jacqui Walshe, CEO and Managing Director of The Walshe Group, said: "Following a highly competitive RFP process, we are thrilled to be appointed as Brand USA's PR representative for Australia and New Zealand. As we celebrate 50 years in business in 2026, welcoming a client of Brand USA's calibre to The Walshe Group's portfolio is particularly meaningful for our team.

As two of the most vital international markets for the United States, we look forward to working closely with Gate 7, Brand USA's in market travel trade representative, to raise awareness of travel offerings in the U.S. to media and travel professionals in Australia and New Zealand through compelling storytelling surrounding key U.S. moments from Route 66's Centennial, FIFA World Cup 2026 and America250."

Since joining The Walshe Group in 2022, Kristine George has led PR strategy for New York City Tourism + Conventions and Delta Air Lines, securing extensive top-tier coverage across Australia and New Zealand. She was also a finalist for PR of the Year at the 2023 Women in Travel Awards.

Kristine commented: "I'm very proud to be taking on this high-profile role with Brand USA and bringing nearly 30 years of destination PR experience to one of the world's most iconic travel brands. As a dual Canadian-Australian citizen with deep ties to North America, I am uniquely positioned and excited about the opportunity to connect with my top tier media contacts to share compelling stories that inspire travel to the United States from Australia and New Zealand."

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About Brand USA
Brand USA is the nation's destination marketing organization, dedicated to attracting legitimate international inbound travel to strengthen the U.S. economy, increase exports, create quality jobs, and promote community prosperity. By running data-driven campaigns and unifying messaging across industry and government, Brand USA positions the United States as a top global destination while providing current visa and entry information.

Over the past 13 years Brand USA has driven 11.3 million additional international visitors who spent $38.1 billion in the United States, leading to $82.9 billion in total economic impact and sustaining an average of more than 40,000 jobs each year. These efforts have generated nearly $11 billion in attributable tax receipts at the federal, state, and local levels.

Media Contacts

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