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ORIGINAL RESEARCH · GOOGLE NEW ZEALAND · SEPTEMBER 2026

Google AI Overviews appear on 74% of New Zealand commercial searches

We tested 1,000 commercially relevant Google New Zealand searches across 20 industries and five search intents. AI Overviews appeared on 739 of them. When one appeared, it was the first thing on the page 88% of the time. For advice and pricing searches the feature was close to universal. For local-provider searches it was the exception.

Published 8 September 2026 **Author** [Marcos Azaro](#)

Sample 1,000 searches, locked before collection **Data** Free to reuse, CC BY 4.0

73.9%

of all 1,000 searches showed an AI Overview

739 of 1,000 searches

96.5%

of advice searches showed an AI Overview

193 of 200. Cost searches: 96.0%

16.5%

of local-provider searches showed one
33 of 200. An 80-point gap

88.4%

of AI Overviews were the first element
on the page
653 of 739 sat at position 1

KEY FINDINGS

What 1,000 New Zealand searches showed

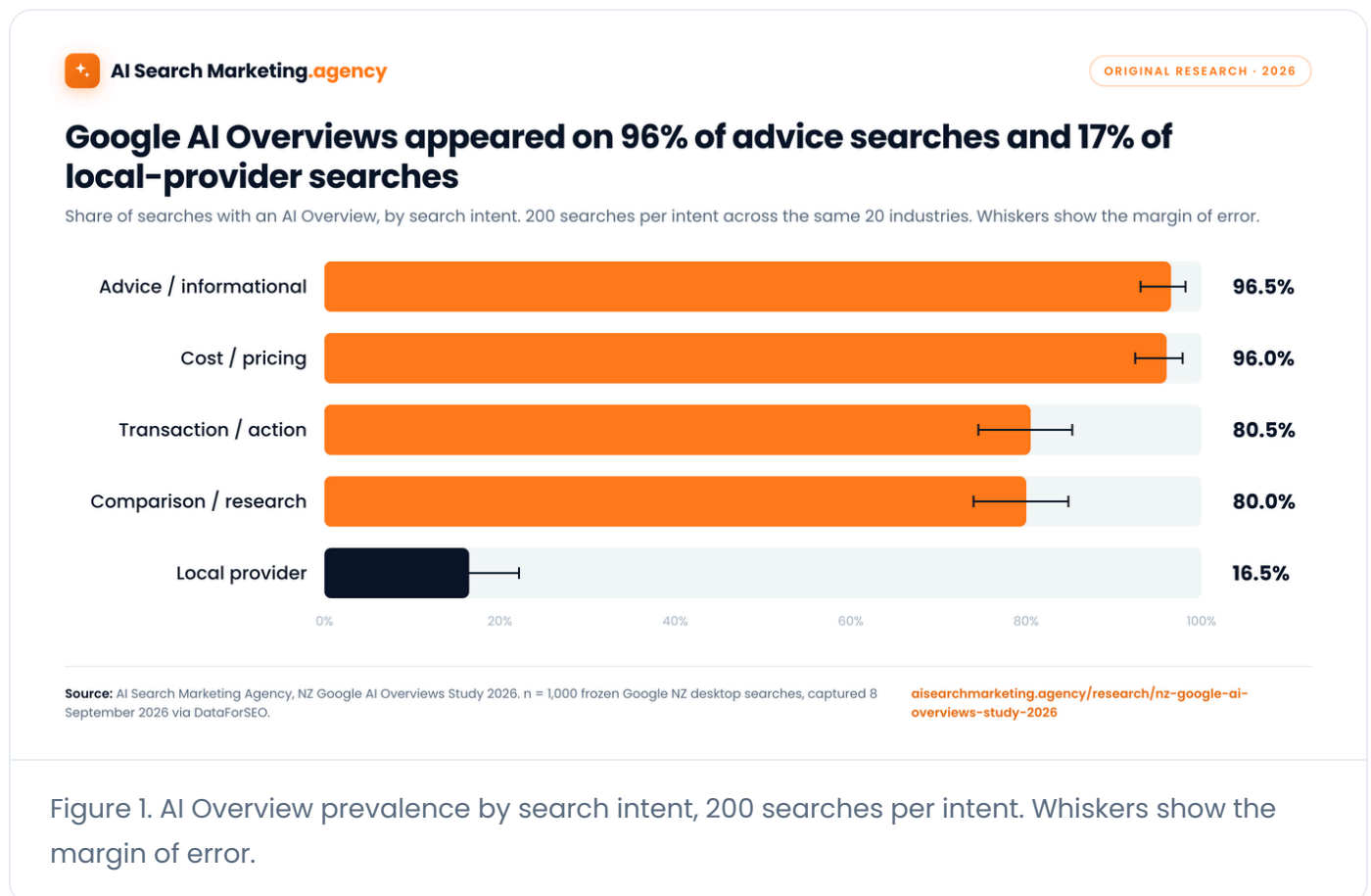
- **Overall prevalence:** AI Overviews appeared on 739 of 1,000 searches, or 73.9%. Because the sample gives every industry and intent the same weight, this is a fair comparison figure, not a claim about every search made in New Zealand.
- **Intent is the dividing line:** 96.5% of advice searches and 96.0% of cost or pricing searches showed an AI Overview. Transaction searches (80.5%) and comparison searches (80.0%) sat in the middle. Local-provider searches came in at 16.5%.
- **Position one:** the AI Overview was the first returned element for 653 searches, 65.3% of the whole sample. 660 searches (66.0%) had an AI Overview above the first conventional organic result.
- **Industry mattered less than you would guess:** rates ranged from 62% (beauty and wellness; logistics, removals and storage) to 88% (telecommunications), and the effect was statistically small next to intent.
- **Weighting changes the answer:** on the 275 searches with positive Google Ads volume, a volume-weighted rate was 27.0%, because a handful of high-volume local and booking terms dominate that subset.
- **New Zealand sites get the citations:** 80% of AI Overview citations went to .nz domains. moneyhub.co.nz, youtube.com and reddit.com were the three most cited sources.

- **Repeatable:** we re-ran 100 of the searches shortly afterwards, one from every industry and intent combination, and got the same answer on AI Overview presence 93% of the time.

SEARCH INTENT

Intent, not industry, decides whether an AI Overview appears

The single most important result in the study is an 80-point gap. Google produced an AI Overview for almost every advice and cost query in the sample, and for only one in six local-provider queries. Because every intent group contains the same 200-query allocation across the same 20 industries, this is not one sector skewing the numbers.



Search intent	Searches	With AI Overview	Prevalence	Margin of error range	AI Overvi
Advice / informational	200	193	96.5%	93.0% to 98.3%	
Cost / pricing	200	192	96.0%	92.3% to 98.0%	
Transaction / action	200	161	80.5%	74.5% to 85.4%	
Comparison / research	200	160	80.0%	73.9% to 85.0%	
Local provider	200	33	16.5%	12.0% to 22.3%	

The link between search intent and AI Overview presence was by far the strongest pattern in the data, far stronger than any industry effect. The pattern also makes practical sense. Advice and price questions invite synthesis: definitions, steps, considerations, ranges and caveats. A query for a specific nearby provider is more naturally answered with a local pack, a map or a directory. Transactional and comparison searches sit between those extremes.

That does not make local SEO safe. Local-provider searches still triggered AI Overviews 16.5% of the time, and the advice, cost and comparison searches that come earlier in the same customer journey were heavily exposed.

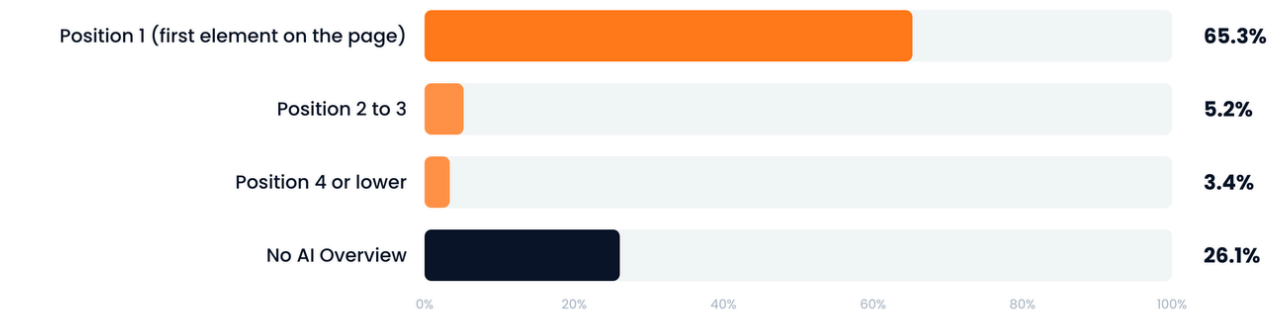
PROMINENCE

AI Overviews were usually the first thing on the page

How often the feature appears understates how visible it is. When an AI Overview appeared, it was normally the very first element on the results page.

When an AI Overview appeared, it was the first element on the page 88% of the time

Where the AI Overview sat among the returned SERP elements, as a share of all 1,000 searches. 660 searches (66.0%) had an AI Overview above the first conventional organic result.



Source: AI Search Marketing Agency, NZ Google AI Overviews Study 2026. Position is DataForSEO rank among returned SERP elements, not pixel depth.

aisearchmarketing.agency/research/nz-google-ai-overviews-study-2026

Figure 2. Position of the AI Overview among returned SERP elements, as a share of all 1,000 searches.

- 653 AI Overviews appeared at absolute position 1 (65.3% of all searches, 88.4% of searches with an AI Overview).
- 52 appeared at positions 2 to 3, and 34 at position 4 or lower.
- Among the 739 searches with an AI Overview, 95.4% were in the top three returned elements and 89.3% appeared before the first conventional organic result.
- 261 searches had no AI Overview at all.

"Position" here means the order of elements on the results page as returned by our data provider, not how much screen space the AI Overview took up. Even with that limitation, the concentration at position one shows the feature is prominent rather than buried.

INDUSTRY

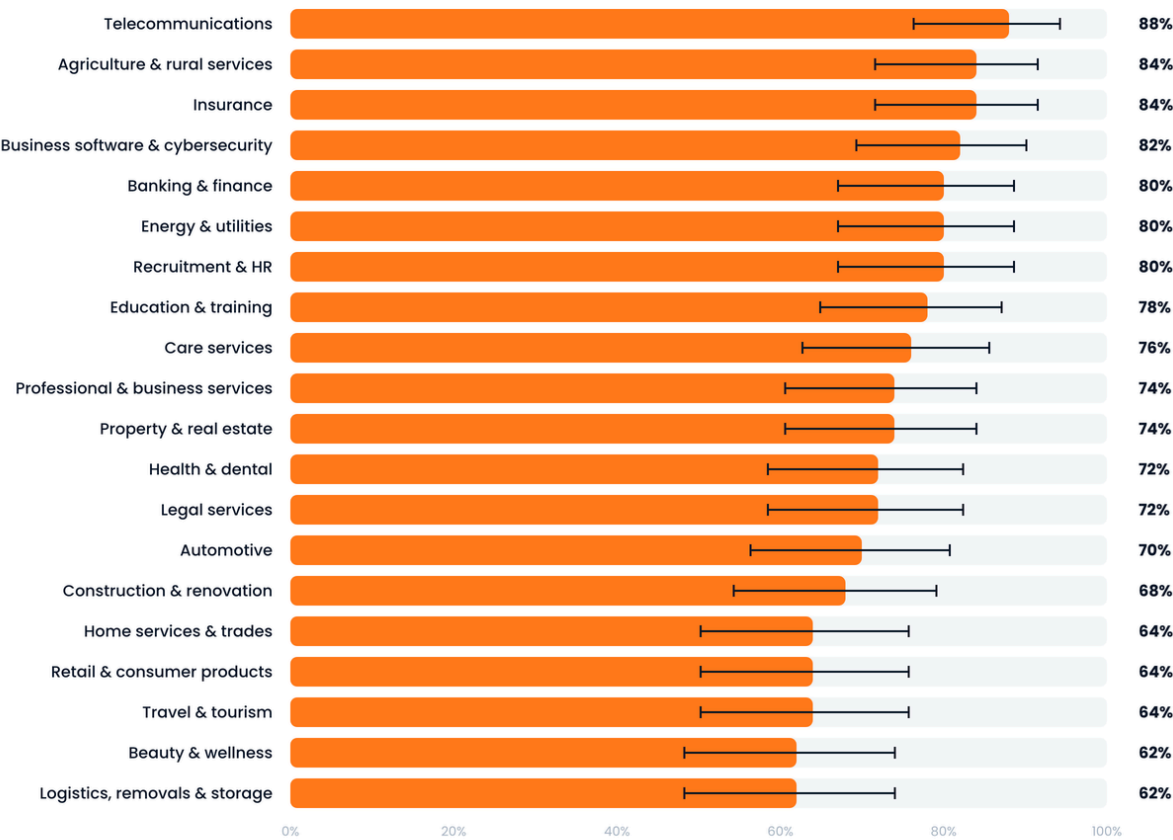
Industry rates ranged from 62% to 88%

Telecommunications had the highest observed rate at 88%. Agriculture and rural services and insurance followed at 84%, then business software and cybersecurity at

82%. At the lower end, beauty and wellness and logistics, removals and storage each recorded 62%.

AI Overview prevalence by industry ranged from 62% to 88%

Share of searches with an AI Overview, by industry. 50 searches per industry, 10 per intent. Whiskers show the margin of error. The industry effect is small compared with intent.



Source: AI Search Marketing Agency, NZ Google AI Overviews Study 2026. n = 1,000 frozen Google NZ desktop searches, captured 8 September 2026 via DataForSEO. aisearchmarketing.agency/research/nz-google-ai-overviews-study-2026

Figure 3. AI Overview prevalence by industry, 50 searches per industry. Whiskers show the margin of error.

Industry	With AI Overview	Prevalence	Margin of error range	At position 1
Telecommunications	44 of 50	88%	76% to 94%	39
Agriculture & rural services	42 of 50	84%	71% to 92%	32

Industry	With AI Overview	Prevalence	Margin of error range	At position 1
Insurance	42 of 50	84%	71% to 92%	35
Business software & cybersecurity	41 of 50	82%	69% to 90%	40
Banking & finance	40 of 50	80%	67% to 89%	30
Energy & utilities	40 of 50	80%	67% to 89%	33
Recruitment & HR	40 of 50	80%	67% to 89%	38
Education & training	39 of 50	78%	65% to 87%	37
Care services	38 of 50	76%	63% to 86%	33
Professional & business services	37 of 50	74%	60% to 84%	35
Property & real estate	37 of 50	74%	60% to 84%	35
Health & dental	36 of 50	72%	58% to 83%	35
Legal services	36 of 50	72%	58% to 83%	36
Automotive	35 of 50	70%	56% to 81%	29
Construction & renovation	34 of 50	68%	54% to 79%	32
Home services & trades	32 of 50	64%	50% to 76%	31
Retail & consumer products	32 of 50	64%	50% to 76%	20
Travel & tourism	32 of 50	64%	50% to 76%	26
Beauty & wellness	31 of 50	62%	48% to 74%	30

Industry	With AI Overview	Prevalence	Margin of error range	At position 1
Logistics, removals & storage	31 of 50	62%	48% to 74%	27

Industry differences were real but modest. Each industry figure rests on 50 searches, so the margin of error is much wider than for the overall result and neighbouring industries overlap heavily. Use the table to spot broad patterns, not as a permanent league table.

INDUSTRY AND INTENT TOGETHER

Every industry showed the same intent pattern

The industry-by-intent view is where the story becomes hard to argue with. Cost and advice queries were saturated with AI Overviews in almost every sector. Local-provider queries were usually not, and in six industries none of the ten local queries produced one.

Advice and cost searches were saturated with AI Overviews in almost every industry

AI Overview prevalence for each industry and intent combination. Each cell is 10 frozen searches, so read the pattern, not the individual cells.

Industry	Advice	Cost	Transaction	Comparison	Local provider	All
Telecommunications	100%	100%	100%	80%	60%	88%
Agriculture & rural services	90%	100%	100%	90%	40%	84%
Insurance	100%	100%	100%	100%	20%	84%
Business software & cybersecurity	100%	100%	90%	90%	30%	82%
Banking & finance	100%	100%	100%	80%	20%	80%
Energy & utilities	100%	100%	80%	80%	40%	80%
Recruitment & HR	100%	100%	90%	80%	30%	80%
Education & training	100%	100%	100%	70%	20%	78%
Care services	90%	100%	100%	80%	10%	76%
Professional & business services	100%	100%	90%	80%	0%	74%
Property & real estate	90%	100%	90%	80%	10%	74%
Health & dental	100%	100%	80%	80%	0%	72%
Legal services	100%	100%	70%	80%	10%	72%
Automotive	100%	100%	60%	90%	0%	70%
Construction & renovation	90%	90%	90%	70%	0%	68%
Home services & trades	90%	90%	60%	70%	10%	64%
Retail & consumer products	100%	50%	70%	90%	10%	64%
Travel & tourism	100%	90%	50%	70%	10%	64%
Beauty & wellness	90%	100%	60%	60%	0%	62%
Logistics, removals & storage	90%	100%	30%	80%	10%	62%

Share of the 10 searches in each cell with an AI Overview: 0% 10 to 20% 30 to 40% 50 to 60% 70 to 80% 90 to 100%

Source: AI Search Marketing Agency, NZ Google AI Overviews Study 2026. n = 1,000 frozen Google NZ desktop searches, captured 8 September 2026 via DataForSEO.

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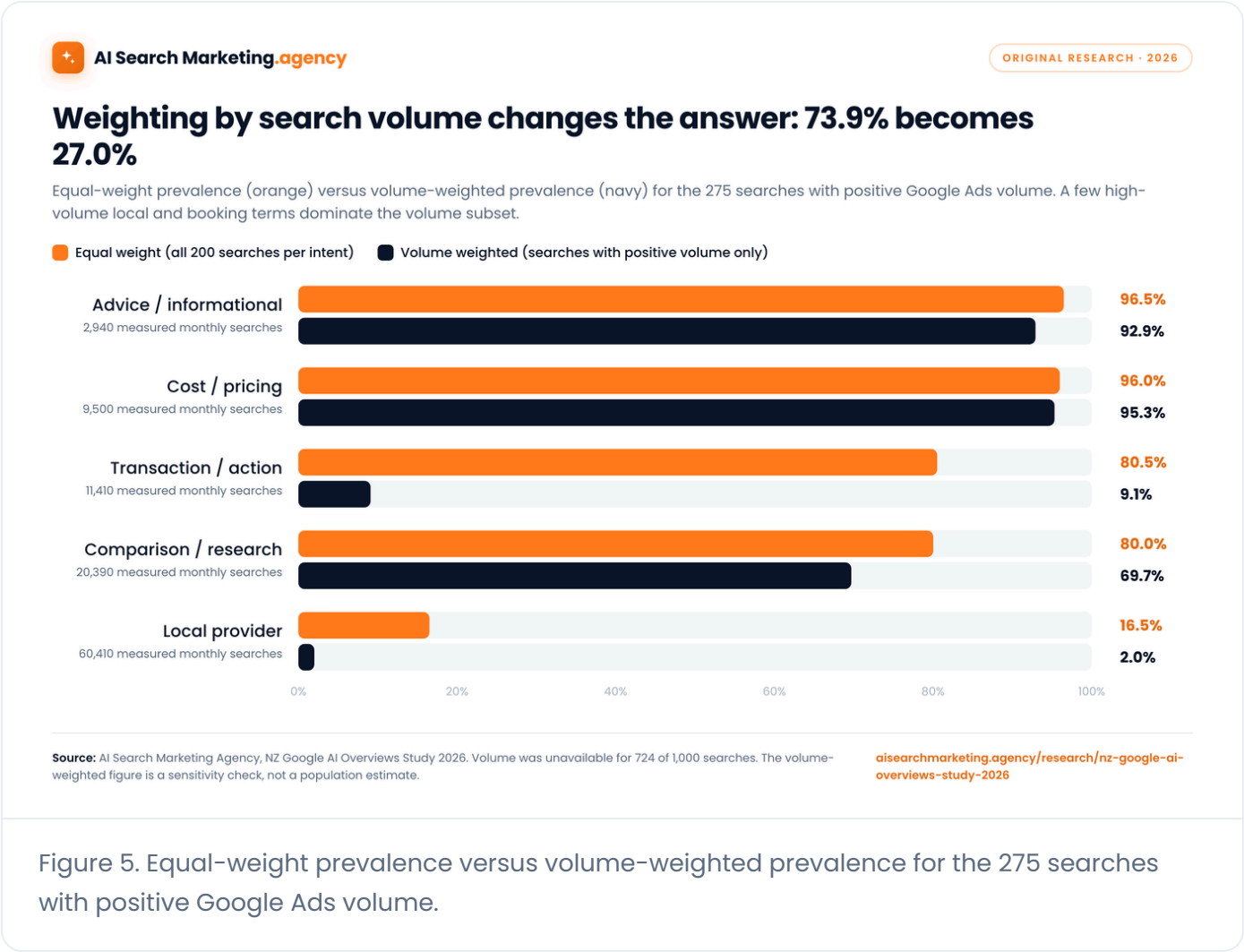
Figure 4. AI Overview prevalence in each of the 100 industry and intent cells. Each cell is 10 searches, so read the pattern rather than individual cells.

SENSITIVITY CHECK

Weighting by search volume gives a very different number

The 73.9% figure answers a comparison question: how often did AI Overviews appear across this balanced set of commercially important search types? It is not a share of search traffic.

Google Ads search-volume data was available for 275 of the 1,000 searches. When we weighted only those 275 by their monthly volume, the AI Overview rate dropped to 27.0%. The reason is concentration: a few big local-provider terms make up most of the measured volume, and AI Overviews appeared on only 2.0% of that volume. Advice terms had far less measured volume but a 92.8% rate.



How to read this. Volume was unavailable for 724 queries, and the measured subset is dominated by a few broad local and booking terms such as "car rental auckland". The 27.0% figure is a check on how much the answer depends on weighting, not a competing national estimate.

The honest conclusion is that AI Overview exposure depends both on the type of query and on how a keyword portfolio is weighted. A balanced customer-journey portfolio can show heavy exposure even while a handful of high-volume local terms stay dominated by traditional results. We report both numbers because hiding either one would invite a misleading conclusion.

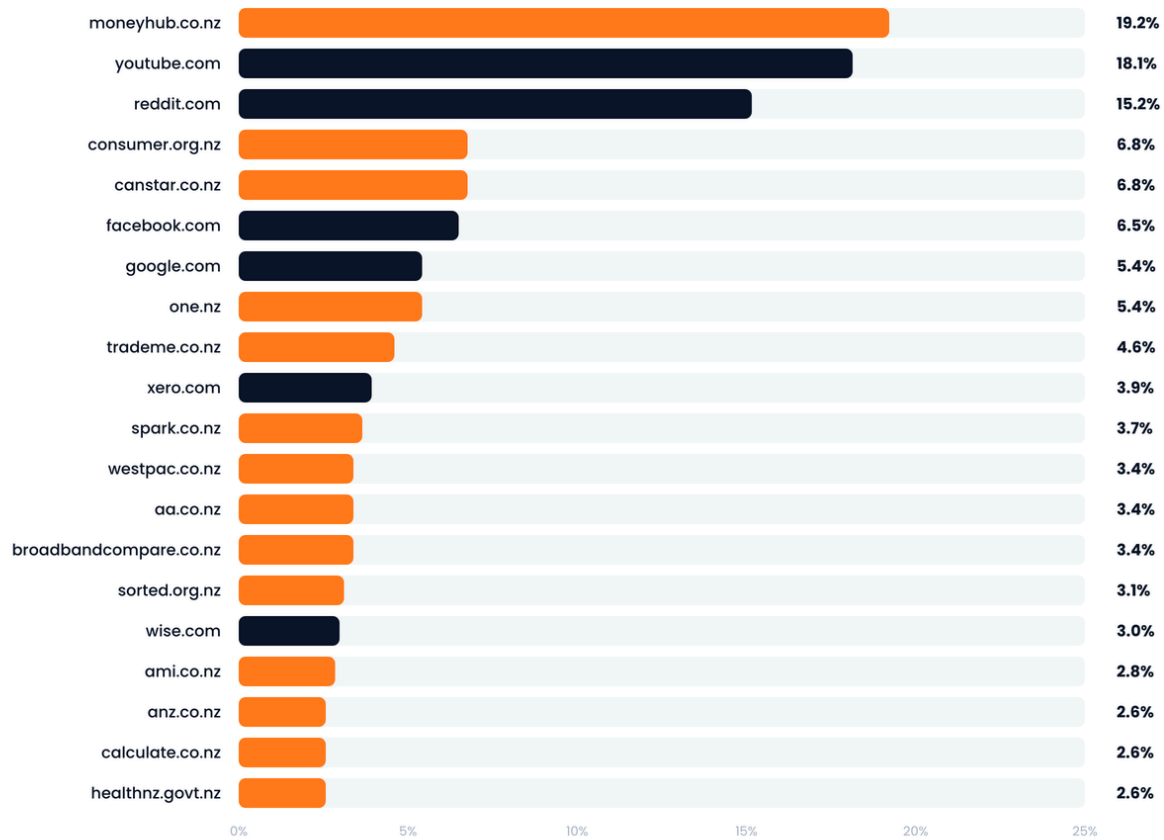
CITATIONS

Who Google's AI Overviews cite in New Zealand

Each AI Overview in the dataset carries the list of domains it linked to. Across the 739 AI Overviews, 2,117 distinct domains were cited, with a median of 8 reference links and 7 distinct domains per answer. 80% of all citations went to .nz domains. This section is a descriptive look at that reference data rather than one of the study's planned tests.

The 20 domains Google's AI Overviews cited most often in New Zealand

Share of the 739 AI Overviews that cited each domain at least once. 2,117 distinct domains were cited in total; 80% of all citations went to .nz domains.



Source: AI Search Marketing Agency, NZ Google AI Overviews Study 2026. Orange = New Zealand domain. Navy = overseas domain. Descriptive analysis of the study's reference data.

aisearchmarketing.agency/research/nz-google-ai-overviews-study-2026

Figure 6. Share of the 739 AI Overviews that cited each domain at least once. Orange is a New Zealand domain, navy is overseas.

Rank	Domain	AI Overviews citing it	Share of the 739	Origin
1	moneyhub.co.nz	142	19.2%	New Zealand
2	youtube.com	134	18.1%	Overseas
3	reddit.com	112	15.2%	Overseas

Rank	Domain	AI Overviews citing it	Share of the 739	Origin
4	consumer.org.nz	50	6.8%	New Zealand
5	canstar.co.nz	50	6.8%	New Zealand
6	facebook.com	48	6.5%	Overseas
7	google.com	40	5.4%	Overseas
8	one.nz	40	5.4%	New Zealand
9	trademe.co.nz	34	4.6%	New Zealand
10	xero.com	29	3.9%	Overseas
11	spark.co.nz	27	3.7%	New Zealand
12	westpac.co.nz	25	3.4%	New Zealand
13	aa.co.nz	25	3.4%	New Zealand
14	broadbandcompare.co.nz	25	3.4%	New Zealand
15	sorted.org.nz	23	3.1%	New Zealand
16	wise.com	22	3.0%	Overseas
17	ami.co.nz	21	2.8%	New Zealand

Rank	Domain	AI Overviews citing it	Share of the 739	Origin
18	anz.co.nz	19	2.6%	New Zealand
19	calculate.co.nz	19	2.6%	New Zealand
20	healthnz.govt.nz	19	2.6%	New Zealand

Three things stand out. Comparison and consumer-advice publishers (MoneyHub, Consumer NZ, Canstar, Broadband Compare, Glimp) are cited far more often than the brands they compare. YouTube and Reddit are the only overseas sources in the top three, which mirrors what Google does elsewhere. And large NZ incumbents (One NZ, Spark, Westpac, ANZ, AA, Trade Me) earn citations for their own categories, but no single brand reaches 6% of answers. The full top 50 is in the download package.

CONTEXT

What else was on the page

- **Local packs:** a local pack appeared on 285 of the 1,000 searches, including 182 of the 200 local-provider searches (91%). Only 20 local-provider searches had both a local pack and an AI Overview.
- **People Also Ask:** present on 921 searches (92.1%), which makes it more common than the AI Overview itself.
- **Classic featured snippets:** not one of the 1,000 searches returned a classic featured snippet. In this sample the AI Overview has taken over that slot.
- **Answer length:** the median AI Overview ran to 2,878 characters of text (range 340 to 8,885), so these are substantial answers, not one-line snippets.

WHAT IT MEANS

What this means for New Zealand marketers

1

Audit by intent, not by total keyword count

An overall visibility percentage can hide an 80-point split. Separate advice, comparison, cost, transaction and local-provider queries before you judge exposure. That is how we run every [AI Visibility Audit](#).

2

Treat cost content as AI search content

Price, fee and cost queries produced AI Overviews almost as often as informational questions. Clear pricing methodology, inclusions, exclusions, examples and region-specific caveats now matter in both organic results and AI-generated ones.

3

Protect the whole journey

Local-provider searches were less exposed, but the research and pricing steps immediately before them were not. A business can stay visible in the map pack while losing influence earlier in the decision.

4

Build source-worthy pages, not AI filler

Google says the same foundational SEO practices apply to AI features and that there is no special schema or technical requirement for inclusion. Pages still need to be indexable, snippet-eligible, useful and reliable. See [Google Search Central's guidance on AI features](#). The citation table above shows who is currently clearing that bar.

5

Measure citations and conversions separately

Presence at the top of a results page establishes exposure, not traffic loss. This study did not observe impressions, clicks, leads or revenue. Google's [generative-AI performance reporting in Search Console](#) can be combined with analytics and conversion data to close that gap.

HOW IT WAS BUILT

About the study

We built the sample from 20 industries and five search intents, with 10 searches in every industry and intent combination, so that every category carries the same weight. Every search was written and locked in before a single result was collected. A small pilot was set aside, and nothing was added, removed or reworded after we saw the results.

The results were captured on 8 September 2026 through DataForSEO, an independent search-data provider, using Google New Zealand, English-language, desktop settings. Only a genuine AI Overview at the top of the results page counted. Nested AI answers inside "People also ask" boxes did not.

We designed and directed the study. An OpenAI research model executed it under a fixed protocol, from locking the search list through collection, analysis and quality checks, and every step is logged. To test repeatability we re-ran 100 of the searches shortly afterwards and got the same answer on AI Overview presence 93% of the time. The entire data cost was about US\$3.76.

What it cannot tell you. This is a balanced sample of commercial searches, not a survey of everything New Zealanders type into Google. It is a single-day desktop snapshot. It measures whether an AI Overview appeared and where, not clicks, traffic, revenue or whether the answer was accurate.

[Read the complete methodology](#) →

DOWNLOADS

Download the data, workbook and charts

Everything is free to reuse under CC BY 4.0. Credit AI Search Marketing Agency and link to this page. Every CSV row carries source and licence columns, and every chart carries its source line.



Complete package (ZIP)

All data, the workbook, six charts, README and media release · 3.8 MB



Research workbook (Excel)

Eleven tabs: summary, intent, industry, cells, prominence, cited domains, raw results, search list, re-run check, cost ledger · 374 KB



1,000 results, row level (CSV)

One row per search with AI Overview presence, position, length, cited domains and search volume · 879 KB



Full 1,000-search list (CSV)

The exact searches, as locked before collection, for replication · 272 KB



Analysis by intent (CSV)

Prevalence, confidence intervals and prominence per intent · 1 KB



Analysis by industry (CSV)

Prevalence, confidence intervals and prominence per industry · 4 KB



Industry x intent cells (CSV)

All 100 cells · 25 KB



Most cited domains, top 50 (CSV)

Citation counts and share per domain · 9 KB



Re-run check (CSV)

The 100 searches we ran a second time, with both results · 30 KB



DataForSEO cost ledger (CSV)

Every API charge, US\$3.762 in total · 1 KB



Full report (PDF)

This page as a print-ready, branded PDF · 1.7 MB



Media release (text)

Publication-ready release for journalists and editors · 4 KB

Charts: use the "Download full-size PNG" link under each figure, or take all six from the ZIP. [Read the package README.](#)

Cite this study

Reference

AI Search Marketing Agency (2026). New Zealand Google AI Overviews Study 2026: a 1,000-query balanced desktop snapshot. Auckland, New Zealand.
<https://aisearchmarketing.agency/research/nz-google-ai-overviews-study-2026>

In running text

According to AI Search Marketing Agency's 2026 study of 1,000 New Zealand Google searches, AI Overviews appeared on 74% of commercial queries, including 96% of advice and pricing queries but only 17% of local-provider queries.

Journalists: the media release is in the downloads, and Marcos Azaro is available for comment at marcos@aisearchmarketing.agency.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Questions about the study

Does this mean 74% of all Google searches in New Zealand show an AI Overview? 

Why do local-provider searches trigger so few AI Overviews? 

Is the industry ranking reliable?



Can I reuse the charts and data?



Will the study be repeated?



What did the study cost to run?

