

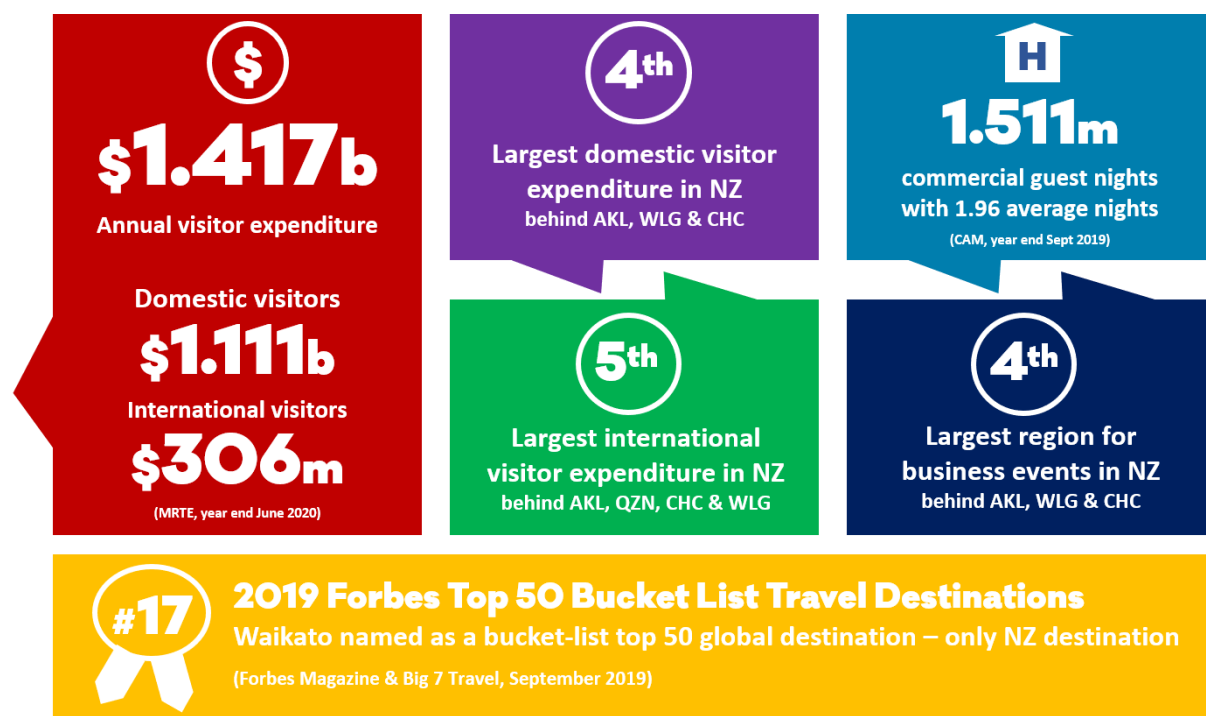
Annual Report to Matamata-Piako District Council 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism (HWT) is the region's Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) whose role is to generate competitive economic benefit through visitor sector strategies focused on increasing visitor length of stay and spend.

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism is a subsidiary company under the Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) of Waikato Regional Airport Limited. It has a commercial board with Annabel Cotton as its Chair.

HWT is funded through a public/private partnership with the region's tourism industry and seven local authorities including Hamilton City and Matamata-Piako, Ōtorohanga, Waikato, Waipā, Waitomo and South Waikato Districts.

Key highlights 2019-2020



Executive summary

Following another buoyant tourism and events season for the Waikato from July 2019 to January 2020, the visitor sector was initially impacted from 3 February when New Zealand began implementing border restrictions with China in response to COVID-19. On 19 March 2020, the borders were closed to all except returning New Zealanders. The subsequent Level 4 lockdown (26 March to 26 April) effectively stopped all international and domestic tourism, with the exception of some longer-term international visitors who had arrived before the borders closed.

Waikato's visitor economy was effectively shut down overnight and impacted a range of businesses including tourism operators, transport providers, accommodation, hospitality, retail, conference and event organisers, venues, caterers and suppliers.

On 27 April, New Zealand moved to alert level 3, partially lifting lockdown restrictions but continuing to ban inter-regional travel. On 13 May the country moved to alert level 2, which permitted inter-regional travel, allowing for domestic tourism, while retaining physical distancing and gathering size limits. The remaining domestic restrictions were lifted upon the move to alert level 1 on 9 June, but the border has remained closed to foreign nationals.

Impacts were swift, significant and severe. The region's annual visitor expenditure has declined since the March 2020 lockdown to \$1.417 billion for the year ending June 2020, an 11% decrease on the previous year. International visitors contributed an estimated \$306 million to the region, while domestic travellers injected \$1.111 billion into the Waikato's economy.

Despite the decline, our national rankings are holding with the Waikato regional tourism region maintaining fifth largest in New Zealand for international visitor expenditure behind Auckland, Christchurch, Queenstown and Wellington. We are still the fourth largest region for domestic visitor expenditure behind Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington.

Prior to COVID-19, around 75% of visitors to the Waikato region were from domestic travellers. With around 2.6 million people living within a three-hour drive radius of Hamilton and the Waikato region, we were already a significant domestic drive market for the Upper North Island.

The Waikato also scored the second highest level of domestic visitors during the recent July school holidays (4 – 19 July 2020) across New Zealand in a recently published report by Data Ventures. This followed the success of domestic travel returning into the region during Queen's Birthday weekend.

According to the report, Waikato achieved 19% growth in domestic visitor numbers during the July 2020 school holidays compared to July 2019, with an average of 55,140 domestic travellers visiting during the holidays, compared to 46,350 visitors this time last year. We were only second in the country to Auckland who attracted 79,160 domestic visitors into their region.

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism has been relentless in leading the restart and rebuild strategy for Waikato’s visitor economy. From supporting our tourism and event businesses through the initial lockdown, lobbying for additional Government support and now working hard to attract domestic visitors back to the region post-COVID, we’ve launched a number of marketing campaigns targeting the leisure, business and events market in key ‘drive and fly’ markets.





Waikato residents positively responded and supported our ‘Mighty Local’ campaign during Alert Levels 3 & 4. We are now executing an ‘Open for Exploration’ campaign in the leisure market for domestic travellers outside of the Waikato, the ‘Mighty Welcome’ campaign in the business events market and a new ‘deals’ section on our website www.waikatoz.com are helping to drive increased visitation and spend.











The only national ‘bed nights’ measurement tool, the Commercial Accommodation Monitor provided by the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment and StatsNZ, ceased in September 2019. The replacement data set called the Accommodation Data Plan (ADP) will be able to report on commercial accommodation bed nights, occupancy and length of stay. The first report will be made available in September 2020.

The business event insights research programme is also being redeveloped which will enable us to report on the economic impact of the lucrative meetings, conference and exhibitions sector for the region. Every conference we can secure for Hamilton and Waikato is significant for the region, regardless of the sector or size. Conference delegates are also influenced to return for a future holiday based on their positive Waikato experiences. A delegate attending a business event is worth twice as much of a leisure traveller to the region, with an average delegate per night value of \$292 per night for international delegates and \$480 per night for domestic delegates (MBIE Business Events Delegate Survey YE Dec 2019).

Performance targets

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism (HWT) have seven performance targets which are set in the ‘Schedule of Services for Local Government 2019-2020’. Due to the impacts of COVID-19 on the closure of international borders and domestic travel restrictions during lockdown, some of the performance targets were not achieved.

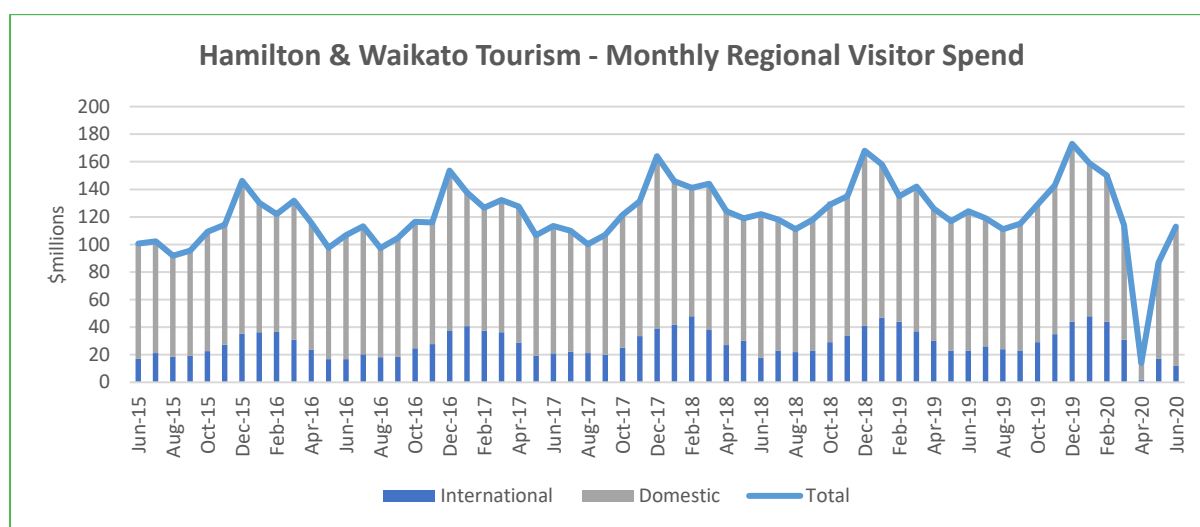
Measure	Result
 <p>Visitor nights 5% increase of total visitor nights’ vs national</p>	 <p>6.1% for Waikato 1.2% national growth rate (Year ending September 2019 – new measurement tool due September 2020)</p>
 <p>Visitor spend 5% increase in visitor spend across the region</p>	 <p>11% decrease on 2018-2019 \$1.417 billion annual expenditure (Year ending June 2020)</p>

Measure	Result															
 <p>Conventions, incentives & business events Grow market share of business events from 9% to 10%</p>	 <p>10.1% market share Fourth largest region behind Auckland, Wellington & Christchurch (Year ending June 2019. New contract commences 1 July 2020)</p>															
 <p>Visitor awareness & perception Improve by 1 point, including Waikato residents</p>	 <p>7.5/10 likelihood to recommend as a place to visit (2018 = 7.2/10; 2019 = 8/10) (Year ending June 2020)</p>															
 <p>Website & social media: waikatoz.com 5% digital engagement on 2019-20</p>	 <p>21.16% Industry engagement rate 1.5% (For the year July 2019 - June 2020)</p>															
 <p>Industry investment \$450,000 of industry contribution towards marketing activities & campaigns</p>	 <p>\$323,000 international & domestic campaigns, trade show investment, famil in-kind contributions & visitor guide sales (Year ending June 2020)</p>															
 <p>Return on investment Total visitor spend per dollar of HWT spend</p>	 <p>\$1,141 (\$1,268 June 2019) Visitor spend per dollar of council funding provided (\$1.24m) ROI return for Matamata-Piako: For every \$1 of council funding invested generates \$867 return ROI regional comparison:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>REGION</th> <th>ROI</th> <th>Council investment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Auckland</td> <td>\$307</td> <td>\$23.8m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BoP</td> <td>\$484</td> <td>\$2.1m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Taupo</td> <td>\$311</td> <td>\$1.95m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rotorua</td> <td>\$167</td> <td>\$4.3m</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(Year ending June 2020) (Year ending June 2020)</p>	REGION	ROI	Council investment	Auckland	\$307	\$23.8m	BoP	\$484	\$2.1m	Taupo	\$311	\$1.95m	Rotorua	\$167	\$4.3m
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Visitor statistics and expenditure

Compared to 2019, tourism spending dropped across all regions for the year ended June 2020. The West Coast region experienced the biggest decline, with a 20% drop in annual spend. The Hawke's Bay and Taranaki regions had the smallest declines in annual tourism spending, both down 8.0%. The entire Waikato region performed well with a decline of only 7% in Coromandel, and 10% for the rest of Waikato including Taupō. In comparison, Rotorua suffered a 16% decline in visitor expenditure.

Following a rebound in May, domestic tourism increased further in June and, in some regions, exceeded June 2019 spending. For the Waikato, we achieved a 7% increase in visitor expenditure for June 2020, compared to a 6.6% uplift for the same month last year.



Source: Monthly Regional Tourism Estimates, MBIE (June 2020)

It is important to note that while domestic tourism expenditure is doing well when compared with the same period last year, the month of June is usually regarded as part of the tourism low season, with historically lower expenditure than other months of the year.

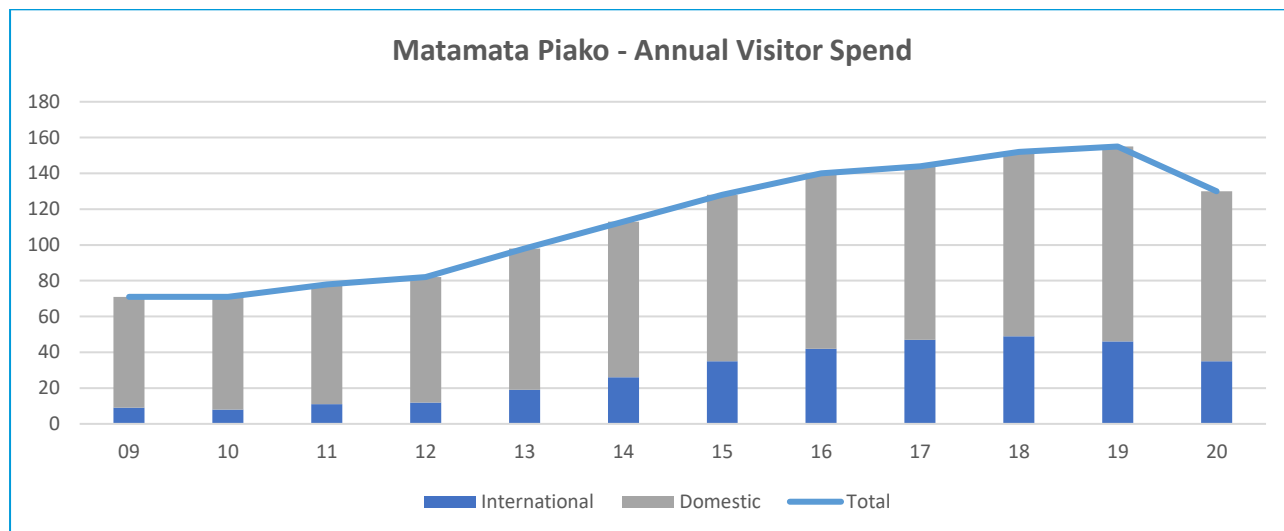
As a region, we've always bucked low season trend in June every year due to the hosting of National Fieldays at Mystery Creek which was delivered online this year. Taking this into account, our region performed well considering the loss of our region's most iconic major event and relying solely on the domestic visitor market.

Total domestic tourism expenditure for New Zealand in June 2020 was \$1.225 million, 2% below 2019 spending, although it was six times higher than during the level 4 lockdown in April.

It has been pleasing to see domestic business and leisure travellers return to the region and continue to spend, especially given the competition in overall consumer spending with consumables up 11% and motor vehicles up 26% during the month of June.

Visitor expenditure in Matamata-Piako District

Annual visitor expenditure for Matamata-Piako district suffered the largest decline for the Waikato region with 20% reduction in annual visitor expenditure. In comparison, Waitomo District declined 15% for the 2019-20 financial year, with Otorohanga District achieving the smallest decline for the region at 4.0%.

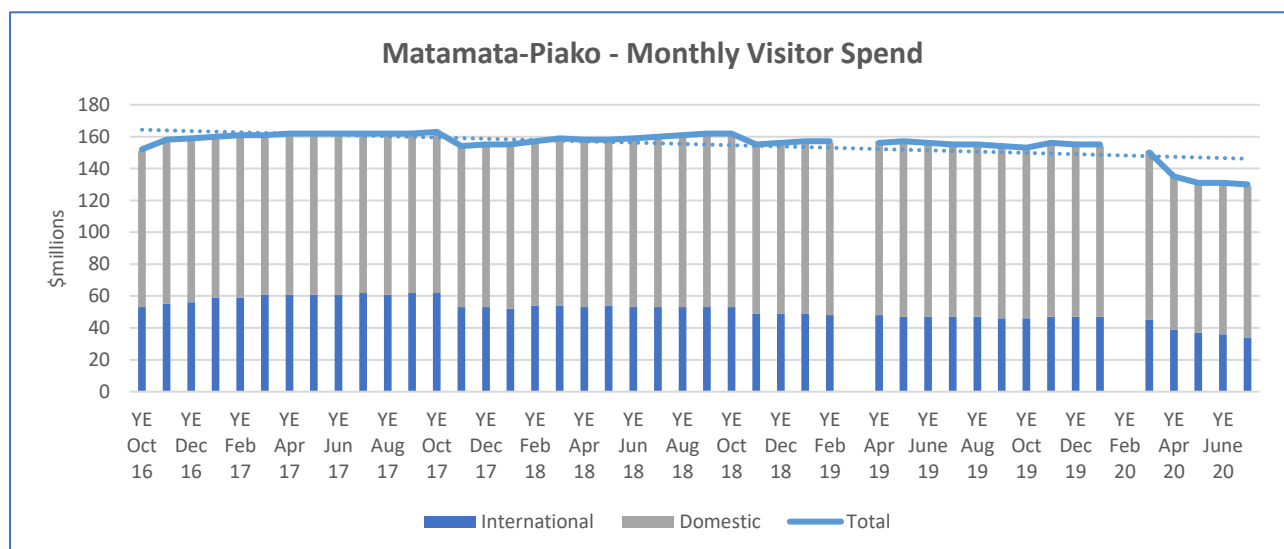


Source: Monthly Regional Tourism Estimates, MBIE (June 2020)

For the year ending June 2020, the visitor economy injected \$131 million into Matamata-Piako District's economy, with \$94 million generated by domestic visitors and \$36 million from international travellers.

Monthly visitor expenditure data is measured by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) in the Monthly Regional Tourism Estimates (MRTE).

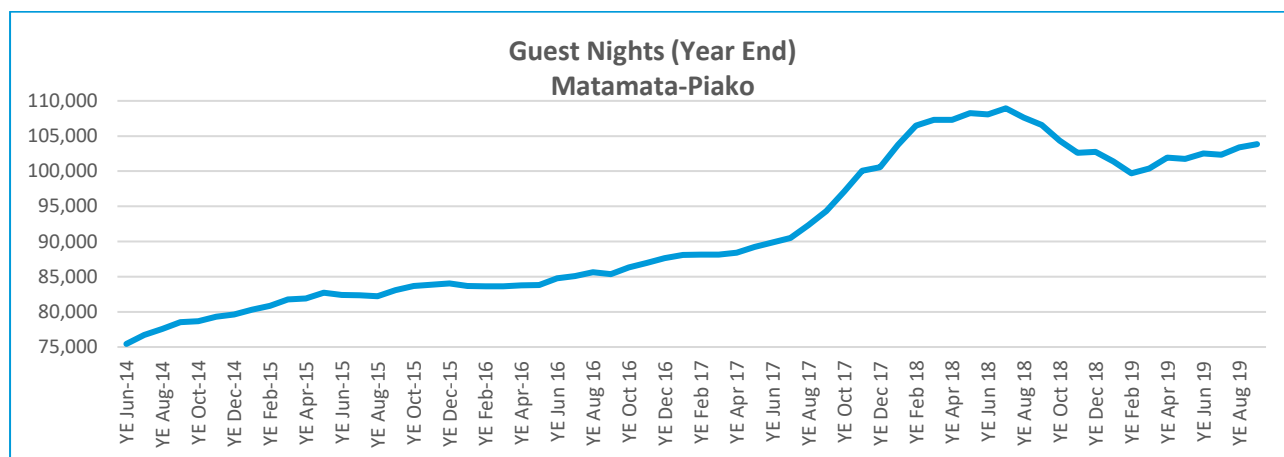
Note: There was no MRTEs for individual Territorial Authorities in March 2019 and February 2020.



Source: Monthly Regional Tourism Estimates, MBIE (June 2020)

Commercial accommodation in Matamata-Piako District

Commercial guest nights (hotels, motels, backpackers & holiday parks) for Matamata-Piako district peaked at 103,847 commercial guest nights (year ending September 19); a slight 2.6% decline from 2018.



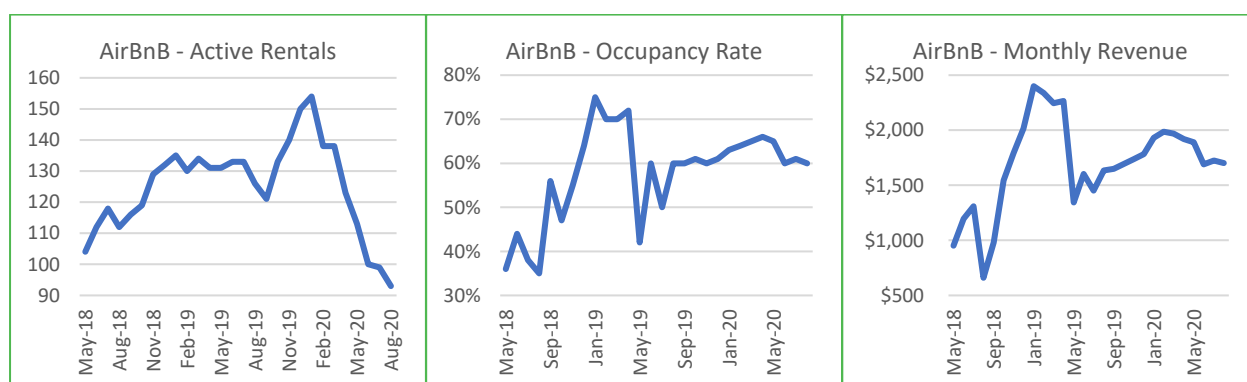
Source: Commercial Accommodation Monitor, Stats NZ (September 2019)

The only national 'bed nights' measurement tool, the Commercial Accommodation Monitor provided by the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment and StatsNZ, ceased in September 2019, which is the last recorded dataset for the region. The replacement data set called the Accommodation Data Plan (ADP) will be able to report on commercial accommodation bed nights, occupancy and length of stay. The first report will be made available in September 2020, with July data.

Non-commercial accommodation in Matamata-Piako District

Matamata-Piako district also had 100 properties listed on AirBnB during June 2020 as alternative accommodation to the traditional commercial offerings. This has declined from 133 listings (down 33) in June 2019 due to the impacts of COVID-19.

These properties experienced 60% occupancy during June 2020. For the 12 months July 2019 to June 2020, the average occupancy rate for AirBnB properties in Matamata Piako is 60%.



Trade & leisure marketing

International marketing

The 'Explore Central North Island' (ECNI) international marketing alliance (including Waikato, Rotorua, Taupō, Coromandel, Bay of Plenty, Ruapehu and Hawke's Bay regional tourism organisations) has undertaken several key activities in the July-Dec period including a North American sales mission in October to train key travel wholesalers and sellers (170 agents trained) and a joint online marketing campaign with Tourism NZ's US office.

Profile of the Waikato has continued in Tourism New Zealand's 'Good Morning World' campaign which features a 'Good Morning World' message each morning from local tourism operators and people. During this summer period regional destinations Raglan, Hobbiton Movie™ Set, Hamilton and South Waikato have been showcased. By having the Waikato featured throughout the campaign is an effective way to showcase the region and our people on a global stage, plus help inspire more travellers to visit our part of the country.

There was a concentrated period of trade training and famils towards the end of 2019. Several of Tourism New Zealand's famils originally scheduled for March 2019 were postponed due to the Christchurch Mosque attacks and reconvened in October-November 2019.

Two of these famils included the Australia mega famil (100 agents) and South East Asia mega famil (60 agents). HWT participated in these mega famils through the agent training days and famil group hosting, while also training 138 agents in Australia during December as part of a Tourism New Zealand roadshow. We also hosted a number of other Tourism New Zealand and wholesaler trade famils traveling through the region.

From late January 2020 travel to NZ from overseas markets began to be impacted by COVID. This impacted a large amount of travel trade and international marketing activity which traditionally take place in the March-June period each year. While HWT was able to attend a Tourism NZ industry event in the Australia market in March to meet with 20 key travel sellers, host three international media famils and attend the International Media Marketplace in Sydney to meet with 22 media/travel writers, other activity from the beginning of April had to be cancelled / postponed until further notice. These included the Tourism NZ KiwiLink event in London, two media famils, the Inbound Tour Operator trade event, various trade famils, the Explore Central North Island trade show, TRENZ and the Tourism NZ and North Island RTO JV marketing campaign into the eastern seaboard of Australia.

However, while borders remained closed, work has continued to keep the travel trade informed on activities, attractions and accommodation within the region. Many in the industry, both here in NZ and overseas, are seeking content and information updates from RTOs on regional product offerings. A number of NZ based travel trade have also pivoted to look at what they can offer in the domestic market and historically outbound-focussed NZ travel agents and retailers such as Flight Centre and House of Travel, are now seeking content, packages and training for their staff on NZ destinations such as the Waikato.

In response to this demand HWT has produced a range of digital collateral including videos, webinars, product update documents and e-DMs.

Domestic marketing

Locals Week Initiative

HWT's inaugural 'Locals Week' launched in September. A key action identified in our Visitor Strategy – the campaign aimed to engage our Waikato residents by making it easy for them to experience what's in their own backyard and become the biggest advocates for our exceptional tourism industry here.

The goal was to educate and inspire our local residents to become ambassadors for tourism across the region by experiencing what we have on offer. We wanted to make it easy for locals to 'give it a go', increase their pride in place and help them become tourism experts for Waikato by offering exclusive and significant 'locals-only' deals for one week.

Other destinations around New Zealand (and internationally) run these types of initiatives and find them extremely beneficial as once locals have experienced tourism products and activities they tend to have a more positive perception of said experience and will recommend our operators when they have friends and family visit.

Christmas 2019

HWT undertook two Christmas focussed campaigns towards the end of 2019. The first focussed on Christmas functions. Targeted at local businesses, the October campaign showcased HWT's domestic partners as well as convention bureau partners to promote their Christmas function ideas and events. Following on from this in early December HWT then ran a mini 'Christmas Gift Guide' campaign to promote vouchers for tourism operator partners' experiences and upcoming events as ideal Christmas gifts to Waikato residents.

Explore Your Own Backyard

The Summer Explore Your Own Backyard campaign which aimed to encourage locals to explore the Waikato over the festive holiday season launched in late December and ran through January. The online campaign featured domestic operator partners and focussed heavily on profiling region's natural assets such as walks, waterfalls, beaches and cycleways as well as summer events and school holiday activities.

1day.co.nz

HWT partnered with Hamilton-based business 1day.co.nz on a month-long marketing promotion in October to promote our amazing region and the fantastic things there are to see and do here. An iconic NZ brand and consumer purchasing portal with a significant audience and reach, 1-day are passionate local advocates and are keen to help spread positive messaging about the Waikato.

As part of the campaign we offered 1-day's customers the chance to win one of four regional prize packages which showcased a range of Waikato tourism businesses relevant to the themes - Adventure Mad, Culture Vulture, Fanatic Foodie and Crazy Kids.

The promotion, which featured Te Awamutu-born James McOnie, was profiled through both organisation's channels including 1-day's email database of 800,000 and we received around 6,000 entries and email addresses to add to our consumer database.

Short Escapes

HWT's Short Escapes campaign ran from early Feb-late March (when lockdown occurred) profiling regional attractions, activities, accommodation and events. Targeting the region's key drive markets (Auckland, BoP and Taranaki) and fly markets (Wellington and Christchurch) the campaign ran across digital channels including GDN, search, social media, cinema and OnDemand advertising.

Mighty Local

Partnering with Te Waka (the regional economic development agency) and working with Waikato councils, the Waikato Chamber of Commerce, local business associations, Waikato Regional Civil Defence and our i-SITE visitor information centres, HWT developed a campaign to promote and profile everything local across the Mighty Waikato region during the COVID-19 lock-down period. The campaign aimed to encourage Waikato residents to support local businesses through the various levels of COVID-19 and adapted to the market depending on what level we were at – from online retail, virtual experiences and takeaways at Level 4 and 3 to visiting our Waikato attractions, dining and accommodation at Level 1.

Post-Lockdown Campaign - Open for Exploration

As an initial domestic market activation when regional travel opened up post COVID-19 lockdown HWT created a series of videos with local tourism operators to welcome visitors back to the Waikato. These videos were utilised through our organic social media platforms, consumer e-DMs and also later campaign activity.

HWT's post-lockdown campaign 'Open for Exploration', targeted the key drive markets for the Waikato (Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Rotorua, Taupo and Taranaki) inspiring them visit the Mighty Waikato and help to stimulate demand and visitation to local tourism operators and communities. The campaign which launched in late June is designed to complement the 'Do something new, New Zealand' campaign from Tourism New Zealand by encouraging visitors to see new things in familiar places and explore the unknown as well as the known and loved adventures of the Waikato. The campaign creative has included user generated content (UGC) imagery and the 'Do Something New, New Zealand' device.

Tourism NZ - Do Something New, New Zealand campaign

Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) launched the first phase of their national campaign at the end of May. This has been an extensive campaign utilising all forms of advertising from out-of-home to digital and TV inviting New Zealanders to do something 'new' that they wouldn't normally do for a short break or holiday. HWT is working in partnership with TNZ to leverage this activity, particularly in the media space. HWT's marketing manager is also part of the TNZ Domestic Advisory Group along with five other RTO representatives which meets virtually every two weeks to help inform and shape the direction of the TNZ's ongoing domestic campaign activity and also act as liaison for a wider group of RTOs.

Major Events

HWT supported local organising committees and event promoters in the promotion and marketing of major events during July 2019 – January 2020 including All Blacks vs Tonga, World Darts, Great Britain Rugby League Lions Tour and the HSBC NZ Sevens, as well as Women’s Cricket World Cup 2021. This support includes prepping team and media welcome packs, team activity options, event landing pages on waikatoz.com, media and player promo event opportunities and support for bids. Many of the region’s key events in the Feb-April period that HWT would normally promote and support through marketing channels had to be cancelled due to COVID-19.

Annual Visitor Guide

100,000 copies of the 2020 official Regional Visitor Guide were distributed in late December 2019, featuring the new Mighty Waikato branding. Distributed nationally through i-SITES and airports, national and international trade shows and conference delegate packs, the guide is a cost-neutral project with advertising sales funding production and distribution.

Media

Excluding lockdown, HWT had a successful year for domestic travel media coverage. Highlights include working on an insta-meet for International Hobbit Day with Hobbiton Move Set, hosting top influencer Liz Carlson and securing a range of travel stories and articles with publications such as NZ Herald, Sunday Star Times and Stuff. Post-lockdown HWT has been working on a number of media pitches and famils. Domestic media platforms and publications are hungry for content and we have been quick to take up this opportunity. Coverage so far includes content in three NZ Herald Travel Supplements and Breakfast TV where the Waikato was the first region to be covered in their national roadshow with Tourism New Zealand.

Marketing activity for Matamata-Piako

A summary of specific trade and leisure marketing for the district is detailed below.

Target market	Campaign or activity	Matamata-Piako experiences profiled
Media – domestic & international famils	Media hosting and famils profiling Matamata-Piako: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• TNZ Global Media Agency• Social Influencer -Young Adventuress• International Hobbit Day influencers• Freelance writer – Tim Richards• Yahoo Editor AU• Social Influencer – Zanna Van Dijk• Bronte Coy & Matt De Groot	Hobbiton Movie Set, The Red Barn, Villa Walton

Target market	Campaign or activity	Matamata-Piako experiences profiled
Domestic – consumer media	Matamata-Piako was profiled as part of regional promotions in the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RV Travel – NZ Motorhome Show special edition • Avenues Magazine • Family Times • Go Travel • Life & Leisure • Regional News 	Hobbiton Movie Set, Herd of Cows?, Matamata township, Matamata Tower Run, Opal Hot Springs, Wairere Falls, Firth Tower, Wild Rose Interiors, Jersey Girl Organics, The Coffee Gallery, 64 Coffee & Kitchen, Hauraki Rail Trail, Mt Te Aroha,
Travel Trade - famils	Matamata-Piako profiled in following trade famils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South East Asia Mega Famil - India • South East Asia Mega Famil – SEA • South East Asia Mega Famil - Indonesia • TNZ Premium Famil • ECNI UK Roadshow Winner #1 • ECNI UK Roadshow Winner #2 • ECNI UK Roadshow • Manaakitanga Famil • Australia Mega Famil • AOT/ATS Mega Famil • Flight Centre Canada 	Internationally trade-ready product: Hobbiton Movie Set, The Red Barn
Travel Trade – events	Trade Training events and sales calls to ITOs and wholesalers throughout the period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNZ AU mega famil (100 agents) • TNZ South East Asia mega famil (60 agents) • TNZ North Island Welcome (138 agents) • TNZ RTO Trade Workshop (24 wholesalers) 	Internationally trade-ready product: Hobbiton Movie Set, The Red Barn, Villa Walton, Rural Tours/Hobbiton Movie Set Farm Stays, Hauraki Rail Trail

Target market	Campaign or activity	Matamata-Piako experiences profiled
Travel Trade – Explore Central North Island Alliance	<p>HWT are part of the Central North Island RTO alliance known as ‘Explore Central North Island’ which includes the two touring routes – The Thermal Explorer Highway and the Pacific Coast Highway. Key activities Jul-Dec:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECNI North America Roadshow, Oct 19 • UK In-market representation • PATA UK agent webinar 	<p>Internationally trade-ready product: Hobbiton Movie Set, Rural Tours/Hobbiton Movie Set Farm Stays, The Red Barn, Villa Walton, Hauraki Rail Trail</p>
Domestic consumer - Local, Hamilton & Waikato	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Locals Week” – Sept 2019 • ‘Explore Your Own Backyard’ campaign Dec 2019 -Jan 2020 • Mighty Local – April – June 2020 	<p>Wairere Falls, Mokena Geysler, Hobbiton Mid-Winter Feast, International Hobbit Day, Villa Walton, Adventure Te Aroha, Herd of Cows?, Hauraki Rail Trail, The Red Barn, Pukemokemoke Bush Loop Track, Te Miro Mountain Bike Park, Te Aroha Mineral Spas, Morrinsville River Walk, Wairongomai Valley</p> <p>MIGHTY LOCAL: Range of Matamata-Piako district cafes and restaurants offering takeaways during Alert Level 3, and online retail, fitness classes etc during Alert Level 3 and 4. The tourism sector was promoted from Level 2 and the site profiled feature stories on Frank’s Sausages and Annah Stretton.</p>
Domestic consumer – Chinese New Zealanders	<p>Ongoing campaign activity has continued through our Weibo social media channel, blogs, forums etc</p>	<p>Hobbiton Movie Set, International Hobbit Day, Herd of Cows, Mt Te Aroha, Mega Cow, Hauraki Rail Trail, Howarth Memorial Wetland walk.</p>

Target market	Campaign or activity	Matamata-Piako experiences profiled
Domestic & International consumer and trade	2020 Hamilton & Waikato Regional Visitor Guide	Matamata Piako district and towns profiled in 'Regional highlights' section and 'Te Aroha', 'Morrinsville' and 'Matamata' sections. Matamata Piako-based tourism operators have advertised in their relevant sections of the guide.
Domestic & international consumer, travel trade and media	Quarterly e-newsletters are distributed to our consumer, trade and media databases	Hobbiton Movie Set, Villa Walton, International Hobbit Day, The Red Barn, Good Merchant, Taste of Waikato, Hobbiton Mid Summer Celebration, Hauraki Rail Trail, Mt Te Aroha.
Domestic & International consumer	Online profile through HWT's website and various social profiles including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & YouTube.	Wairere Falls, Te Aroha Mineral Spa, Waiorongomai Valley, Howarth Memorial Wetlands, Mt Te Aroha, Te Tapui Loop Track, Pukemokemoke Bush Loop Track, Morrinsville River Walk, Te Aroha township, Te Aroha Leisure Pools, Herd of Cows?, Hobbiton Movie Set, Good Merchant, Sculpture Park, Villa Walton, Hobbiton Beer Festival, Hobbiton Summer Solstice, International Hobbit Day, Taste of Waikato - The Red Barn, Summer Harvest Festival at Hobbiton™ Movie Set, Mega Cow, A Day in the Domain, Aroha Cruise In

Conferences, incentives & business events

The Hamilton & Waikato region was the fourth largest region behind Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch for conferences and business events for the period ending June 2019. There has been no data collection or reporting of business events data during FY20. A newly named Business Events Venue Survey will commence from 1 July 2020, Fresh Info has been contracted to collect and report data.

Conference leads and rehousing

During May and June, the Business Events Waikato team managed 36 leads, compared to 27 for the same period last year. Our Business Events team successfully relocated 16 business events after Jet Park Hotel Hamilton Airport became a designated Managed Isolation Facility. We were able to re-house most of the events within the Waikato.

We are fortunate the Waikato is predominantly a domestic conference destination and easy to get to from key markets. Our marketing activity is focused on multi-day association and corporate conference market.

Unfortunately, with three of our largest commercial accommodation providers now unavailable as they are Managed Isolation Facilities has impacted on the conference market, significantly reducing our offer. Hosting some of the larger conferences is now very challenging due to limited accommodation availability.

In addition to our limited accommodation inventory, the biggest threat to the conference market is uncertainty. Organisers cannot confidently book conference venues and accommodation, they are afraid of the force majeure clauses in contracts. Currently venues are experiencing short lead-in times which brings its own challenges.

Mighty Welcome / Mighty People – business events campaign

During lock-down, the Business Events Waikato team held focus group meetings via Zoom with selected business event suppliers in the Waikato to agree on our unique selling point. The outcome was unanimous, it is our people. The people working in the conference industry in the Waikato already had a reputation for being professional, responsive, flexible, and willing to work with organisers and colleagues to achieve the best outcome for our clients. This informed our 'Mighty People' / 'Mighty Welcome' restart campaign for the business events sector which is utilising our new website.

Business Events Waikato Showcase

The BE team is currently organising the Business Events Waikato Showcase on 24th September 2020 – an exhibition including all Waikato Business Events Partners. The target market for the event is local organisers, and meeting planners domiciled within driving distance of the Waikato, and predominantly corporates who organise one day meetings and events.

Convention Bureau activity

Summary of specific trade & conference marketing activity (1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020).

Activity	Detail
Enquiries	101 leads received and managed
Buyers Hosted	35 buyers hosted to the region
Famils	5-7 December 2019: Annual multiday Mega Famil attended by 20 buyers from Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, and Palmerston North for two nights. Attendees included professional conference & event organisers, in-house corporate event managers, personal/executive assistants, association event organisers, marketing managers and a journalist.
TNZ Famils	All TNZ planned famils were cancelled due to COVID-19
Bespoke Famils	Nine bespoke famils organised. 15 buyers were hosted and shown 20 venues and operators across the Waikato, including Hobbiton™ Movie Set and The Red Barn.
Trade Shows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2019: Regional stand Australasian Society of Association Executives (AuSAE) Linc Conference, Napier. December 2019: Exhibited with Tourism NZ and CINZ (Conference & Incentives NZ) at the Professional Conference Organisers Association Conference held in Sydney.
Hosted Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 2019: Wellington function, attended by over 50 buyers. Co-hosted with six Business Events Waikato Partners, including Hobbiton™ Movie Set, October 2019: Meet North South dinner, attended by five guests. Hosted by Business Events Waikato and Dunedin Business Events. November 2019: Co-hosted event with Tourism New Zealand/Project Waikato Group to create awareness about the CAP and recruit ambassadors.
Sales Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 2019: Sales call in Christchurch January and February 2020: Sales calls in Hamilton March 2020: Sales calls to Wellington
AuSAE NZ Networking Activity	AuSAE – Australasian Society of Association Executives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> August 2019: Wellington September 2019: Conference – Napier November: Wellington January 2020: Wellington July 2020: Auckland

Activity	Detail
Tourism NZ Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2019: co-hosted table with Tourism NZ at The Kudos Awards to create awareness about the Conference Assistance Programme and recruit ambassadors. • Project Waikato group meetings – business incubator group to seek opportunities for Australasian and international conferences for the Waikato region. Specific focus given to conferences that respond to the needs of the community by creating a social, environmental, or cultural impact on the Waikato region.
Partner Communication & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 3rd: Google DMO breakfast for Business Events Waikato Partners • November 6th: Website Workshop, open to Platinum and Gold Partners • November 28th: Spring Symposium • December 3rd: Christmas Partner Breakfast • February 25th: Henley Hotel Open Home – Partner Event • February 28th: BE 101 • March 6th: Platinum and Gold Partner Catch-up • Weekly BEWAIS Connect – Zoom Partner meetings • May 20th: BE Working Group for Campaign • May 21st: BE Partners Virtual Quiz • June 11th: BE Waikato Reunite Dinner at The Atrium <p>74 Business Events Waikato Partners: Including Hobbiton™ Movie Set, The Red Barn, and Matamata-Piako District Council.</p>

Rebuilding the Waikato visitor economy

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism has been instrumental in leading the response, restart and rebuilding of the regional tourism and events sector. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were swift and severe for the entire visitor economy which includes tourism businesses, activities and attractions, accommodation providers, retail and hospitality, transport operators, conferences and business events, major events and venues, education institutions, plus the many suppliers who partner with the sector.

There are a number of key initiatives underway to support the rebuild and reimagining of Waikato's tourism sector.

Strategic Tourism Assets Protection Programme (STAPP)

The \$230m Strategic Tourism Assets Protection Programme (STAPP) was announced in the Government's budget in May to protect the assets in the tourism landscape that form the core of our essential tourism offerings to ensure their survival through the disruption caused by COVID-19. Grants and loans were allocated to tourism businesses, Inbound Tour Operators and Regional Tourism Organisations.

TOURISM BUSINESSES

Tourism businesses will receive a total of \$261m in support comprised of a mix of grants and loans. The Waikato region were successful with initial funding support provided to the following tourism businesses:

- Discover Waitomo: up to \$4m over two years (year one will be a grant and year two will be a loan if required)
- Ōtorohanga Kiwi House
- Waitomo Adventures
- Spellbound Glowworm and Cave Tour, Waitomo
- Caveworld Waitomo

We are awaiting confirmation of the other impacted businesses who were part of the initial 300 tourism businesses who applied.

REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATIONS

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism successfully applied for a maximum of \$700,000 to address the significant shortfall in industry investment. The criteria for applying for the grant was to retain existing local government investment.

The financial support can only be used to enhance work from the Aotearoa New Zealand Government Tourism Strategy in the following three priority areas:

1. domestic marketing;
2. industry capability; and
3. adopting a destination management approach.

Out of the 27 programmes of work we are looking to undertake under the three tagged areas listed above, 11 are collaboration projects with other regions which border the Waikato. Examples include touring route development with Ruapehu and Taranaki, partnering with Auckland on a joint venture campaign, plus rolling out a regenerative tourism programme across the Central North Island.

Specific STAPP projects we will deliver for the Matamata-Piako District in 2020-2021 include:

- Development of an Ambassador programme for the district:
www.nzambassador.com
- Review and refresh of touring routes (collaboration project with Visit Ruapehu and Destination Rotorua)

- Co-curate and development of food tourism experiences, including itineraries, marketing initiatives and product development (collaboration project with Tourism Bay of Plenty, Destination Rotorua and Visit Ruapehu)
- Domestic marketing to build demand and attract visitation to Matamata-Piako District, including event promotion and a joint Auckland drive market campaign with ATEED
- Participation in the national and Central North Island domestic marketing campaigns driving visitation into Matamata-Piako District
- Regional tourism marketing advisory services for Matamata-Piako district tourism businesses
- Launching a regenerative tourism leadership programme to enhance sustainability initiatives for Waikato tourism operators, including the Matamata-Piako District

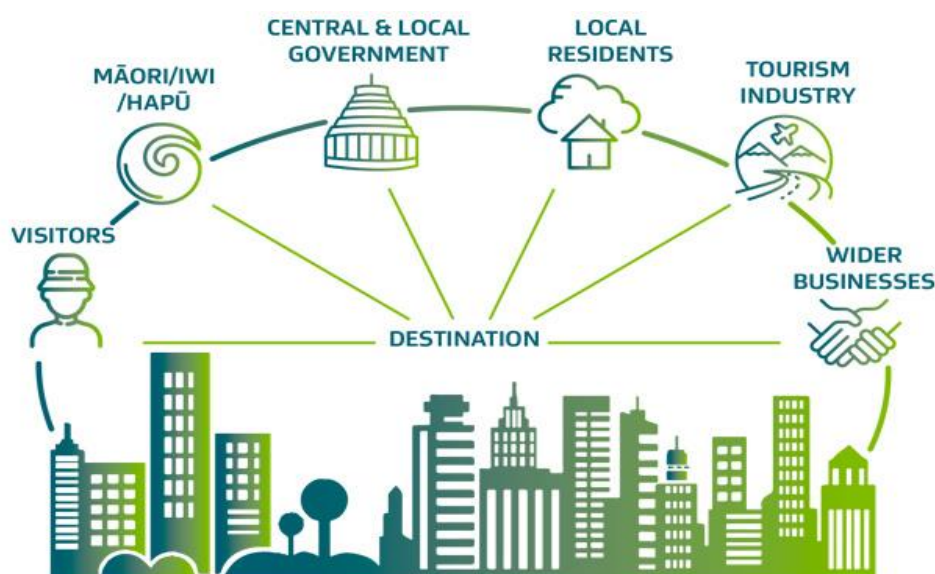
All other projects from participation with Tourism New Zealand’s national domestic marketing campaign, partnerships with AA Traveller and the NZ Motor Caravan Association through to procurement of visitor travel data, will benefit the Matamata-Piako district and wider region as well.

Adopting a destination management approach for Waikato

As a region, we are fortunate to have developed our regional Tourism Opportunities Plan in 2016 which was based on conversations to redefine Waikato as a new visitor destination. We worked together to prioritise our five regional game-changers through to identifying emerging opportunities for our region that increased the ‘value’ of tourism, rather than the ‘volume-based’ model.

This will help inform the next evolution of our industry to develop a Destination Management Plan bringing together a wider range of stakeholders to help our communities thrive.

Destination management brings together different stakeholders to achieve the common goal of developing a well-managed, sustainable visitor destination. It is an ongoing process that requires destinations to plan for the future and considers the social, economic, cultural and environmental risks and opportunities.



Adopting a destination management approach enables communities and destinations to respond to changing conditions and determine the type of tourism they would like to have and the benefits they would like to receive, taking an active role in managing these. Destination management requires a holistic and integrated approach with three interdependent components:



1. **Visitor Experience:** the Waikato's experience offering, including activities, attractions, supporting infrastructure, services and amenities
2. **Marketing and Promotion:** the destination's marketing and promotional activity, creating demand and enabling the destination to be competitive, productive and sustainable
3. **Resource Management:** the region's strategy, policy and regulatory frameworks, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, co-governance arrangements, organisational structures and the investments that support the destination.

We have managed to successfully attract funding from the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment to undertake this work. Local government are a key partner in creating a destination management plan for Waikato and we look forward to working together on this national initiative.

Major and regional events

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism see major and business events leading the economic and social recovery of region.

Major Events Strategy

In 2018, Hamilton & Waikato Tourism developed the region's first Major Events Strategy to ensure the spotlight continues to shine and grow on our region, as we work to develop a full calendar of events, especially outside of our peak summer period.

We continue to promote the Waikato region to event promoters as/when we are able and have applied for external grants to secure external funding to fully enable this work. The Major Events Strategy will be used as a framework to apply to the Government's \$50m Regional Events Fund to help drive domestic tourism and visitation into the regions.

Domestic Events Fund

The \$10m Domestic Events Fund was established to support the events sector which has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a contestable fund that provides funding to events that deliver the greatest flow-on benefits to regional economies. Applications have closed and we were part of the regional evaluation panel.

Infrastructure and Provincial Growth Funds

We worked with our local government partners and visitor attractions to provide tourism projects for the Crown Infrastructure Partners \$3 billion 'shovel-ready' infrastructure fund and updated applications to the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF).

As part of the application process, we provided endorsement for the following tourism-related projects:

- Hamilton Zoo & Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park – shared entry plaza
- Tourism connectivity – Hamilton Gardens & Waikato Museum
- Waikato Regional Theatre and South End Precinct
- Waikato Strategic Tourist Route Upgrades
- Hamilton Airport Transport and Infrastructure Enabling Project
- Te Awa Cycleway – Hamilton to Cambridge section (\$6.2m secured)
- Sealing of the Hauraki Rail Trail extension between Te Aroha & Matamata (\$640,000 secured)

We provided support to Waikato District Council's \$2.5m application to the Provincial Growth Fund for the Whaingaroa/Raglan Wharf development to improve safety, access and capacity. The Government funding announced in May will fast-track this project.

Working with Ōtorohanga District Council and the Ōtorohanga Kiwi House, we were grateful for the \$2m grant from the Government's \$3 billion infrastructure fund as part of its COVID-19 Response & Recovery Plan. The redevelopment is an \$8m project which includes a new nocturnal house and visitor centre, including a \$2m loan from the Ōtorohanga District Council.

We also supported Matamata-Piako District Council to finalise their investment business case for the Te Aroha Mineral Spas development. This project was identified in our Tourism Opportunities Plan 2016.

Tourism Futures Taskforce

In June 2020, the Minister of Tourism set up the New Zealand Tourism Futures Taskforce (the Taskforce) following the significant change to global travel and tourism in New Zealand as a result of COVID-19.

The main purpose of the Taskforce is to advise on what changes New Zealand can make to the tourism system, so that tourism enriches both New Zealand and the wellbeing of New Zealanders.

The Taskforce is co-chaired by Rotorua Mayor Steve Chadwick and Grant Webster from Tourism Holdings Limited. It will make recommendations to address the long-standing productivity, inclusivity and sustainability (environmental, social and economic) issues present in some parts of the tourism sector.

The Taskforce will use a design-thinking approach to draft recommendations, which will be aligned with the four capitals – economic, environmental, social and cultural – set out in the Treasury’s Living Standards Framework.

The Taskforce will provide an initial report on the future of tourism in New Zealand in December 2020, with final recommendations and steps for implementation in April 2021.

Conclusion

As we continue to lead the rebuilding and reimagining of our tourism industry post-COVID, our key focus areas for the next 6-12 months include:

- continuing to work with our industry to stimulate domestic demand between now and the September/October school holidays, plus the lucrative spring/summer season;
- enhance partnership with Tourism New Zealand’s national marketing campaign;
- support the industry through the impacts of the COVID-19 and lead industry capability building;
- adopting a destination management approach and merge our existing Visitor Strategy and Tourism Opportunities Plan;
- investigate, review and enhance existing and new touring routes around the region and across borders;
- promote the hero domestic traveller experiences of our region, including our three great rides and cycleways
- support event organisers, venues and suppliers to restore our market share in the business events sector;
- support the development of large-scale commercial accommodation to increase average length of stay;
- assist new visitor experience development across the region;
- deliver the additional 27 programmes of work funded under STAPP to boost our economic and social recovery; and
- develop an Investment Plan and distribute the Regional Events Fund; and
- continue to lobby and advocate for the tourism sector with Government.

On behalf of the board and management of Hamilton & Waikato Tourism, we would like to thank Matamata-Piako District Council, our local government partners and the industry for their continued support, especially as we continue to work our way through the long-term impacts of COVID-19.

Your proactive and supportive approach during COVID-19 has been greatly appreciated by the tourism sector. Your ongoing support is more important than ever as we rebuild and reshape the visitor economy to create a resilient Matamata-Piako District destination.

Jason Dawson

Chief Executive | Hamilton & Waikato Tourism
September 2020