

Events Strategy

2025–2034

Draft



June 2025

Ngā hua o roto

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Nā Te Koromatua

From the Mayor

Takina te pō, takina te ao Mārama
Takina ngā wai tukukiri o Te Awa Kairangi
Tākaia ngā here, hei herenga tangata,
hei herenga kairangi
Tihei mauri ora.

Kei te Mana Whenua o te takiwa nei, e rere ana ngā maioha ki a koutou, mō koutou e kaha toutou nei i te ahi kia mura, kia whita, kia tae kōunga o te mana akiaki ki te nui e noho nei ki Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai.

As Mayor of Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, I'm pleased to introduce the Events Strategy 2025–2034.

This strategy sets a clear direction for how Hutt City Council will attract, support, and enable events that drive economic activity. We want to create opportunities for local businesses, boost visitor spending, and ensure events deliver measurable value.

We want event organisers, promoters, and partners to know that Lower Hutt is open for events. We're committed to working together to reduce barriers, streamline processes, and actively support the delivery and promotion of successful events.

Whether you're planning a large-scale festival or a niche gathering, our city is ready to host.

Through this strategy, we aim to create a thriving events calendar that draws people into the city, encourages them to stay longer, and spend locally. Events benefit the local economy including hospitality, retail, accommodation, and local services.

Thank you to the businesses, community representatives, and residents who helped shape this strategy. Your input ensures we are targeting real opportunities for growth.

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai is a city ready to welcome, host, and grow with events. Let's get to work.

Ngā mihi nui,

Campbell Barry
Koromatua
Mayor



Kupu Whakataki

Introduction

Welcome to our events strategy.

Events play a big role in shaping the vibrancy and wellbeing of Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt. They bring people together, celebrate who we are, and reflect the diversity and creativity of our community. From small neighbourhood gatherings to large city-wide festivals, events help create a sense of connection and pride.

They also bring wider benefits — supporting local businesses, attracting visitors, and boosting our city's profile.

To make sure we're making the most of these opportunities and continuing to support events that matter to our people, we're re-focusing our events strategy. Guided by the strategic direction of Council's Long-Term Plan — which outlines our core purpose, principles and priorities — this strategy will direct how we plan, support, and deliver events in the years ahead.

Our draft events strategy (the strategy) recognises the impact events can have on promoting social, cultural, and economic wellbeing. It identifies our key goals, desired outcomes, focus areas, and the action required to bring this strategy to life.

See our strategy at a glance on page 9 and read on to understand our focus areas and delivery plan.



Te Horopaki o te Rautaki Strategic Context

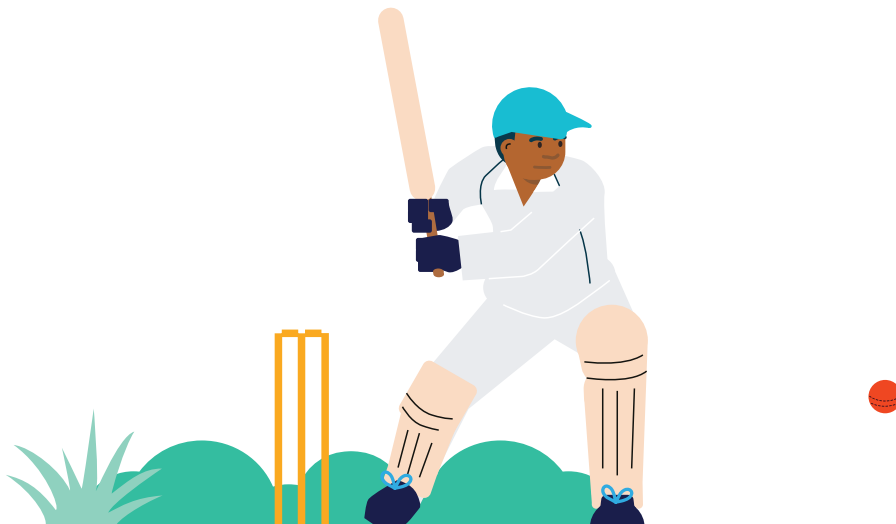
Events landscape

The events landscape has significantly changed over the last few years, shaped by the impacts of COVID-19, rising costs, and wider financial pressures, including the cost of living. In response, our events strategy is charting a new course to expand the city's festivals and events through partnerships to support and enable events rather than Council being the primary organiser.

We've analysed the current environment to understand how events can be successful. These insights, along with feedback from some of our key stakeholders, have helped shape our strategy.

Key insights

- Events support economic development and drive visitation
- Successful events are developed from within – involve local people, build on local creative, natural and community assets; have genuine connection to 'place'
- Strong community support and cultural alignment are critical to event success – focusing on local heritage, iwi partnerships, and co-design of initiatives adds authenticity and fosters pride
- A streamlined and well supported event approvals and facilitation process is essential to successful event planning and execution
- Marketing support is critical – effective digital marketing, influencer promotion, and cross-regional collaboration are needed to drive visitation
- Setting and forgetting is unsustainable – events require ongoing innovation and development to thrive
- 'Signature' or 'anchor' events help shape regional identity
- Year-round events programming reduces seasonality impacts
- Investment in venues, transport and accommodation is essential and requires solid partnerships



Market trends

To help us operate in the changing events landscape our strategic planning considered broader market trends, highlighting both opportunities and challenges shaping the events sector. These trends also reflect insights from the events landscape and our engagement.

Market Analysis – key trends

- Compliance and complexity – event organisers are struggling to navigate increasingly complex regulatory environments
- Inclusive events – ensuring events are inclusive – accommodating diverse audiences and enhancing accessibility is an increasing focus for event planners and an expectation of event consumers
- Changing artist preferences – live performance artists are prioritising limited run stadium tours over extended touring schedules
- Changing consumer preference – consumers are prioritising events that connect, transform and engage; smaller more intimate events, participation events, events that connect attendees with a 'community of interest'
- Sustainability – is increasingly a business priority and consumers are demanding that measures to eliminate waste, limit carbon emissions, amplify social, economic and environmental impacts are considered
- Cost pressures – inflation and cost of living pressures are increasing costs for event organisers and promoters and impacting consumer demand. Event organisers are looking to fewer, smaller and shorter events to maintain engagement while achieving acceptable returns. Consumers are making choices.
- Data-driven decision-making – event organisers are increasingly leveraging data to assess attendee engagement and optimise event delivery
- Technology – Artificial Intelligence is emerging as a disrupter and enabler; revolutionising event planning and delivery, enabling delivery of personalised experiences, enhancing engagement, and supporting delivery of hybrid events



Local context

Our analysis of the events landscape and market view have been applied to the local context of Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt. We looked at our strengths and weaknesses and identified a range opportunities and challenges that have helped shape our strategy.

Insights indicate that Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt currently lacks a clear 'events brand' and that there are gaps and limitations in events infrastructure, including availability of accommodation. However, our city also has some great assets, and with the right guidance, we can use them to shape a strong, sustainable events brand that stands out in the region.

Lower Hutt events landscape

- A relaxed, accessible and welcoming atmosphere
- Diverse neighbourhoods and community groups from which to foster new cultural and community events that are authentic to Lower Hutt
- A motivated audience for youth-centred live performance, sporting and lifestyle events
- A wide range of high-quality outdoor venue spaces
- A range of established and emerging urban trails suitable for new participation events
- Easy transport links to Wellington City
- An attractive precinct for business events in the city centre
- A portfolio of established events, with potential for further growth and development

Translating insights into strategy

Our analysis has helped shape our strategy by providing critical insights into the current environment and identifying what supports delivery of successful events. This comprehensive analysis highlighted key market trends and local opportunities and challenges. By understanding these factors, we can set realistic and achievable goals that focus our energy and resources on actions that will deliver desired outcomes.

Our strategy responds to the current environment while proactively positioning us to support the delivery of successful, sustainable, and community-aligned events in the future.



Mahere Rautaki

Strategic Framework

The strategic framework outlines our shared purpose, goals, outcomes, and focus areas that will guide our support and facilitation of events.



Our focus areas have been designed to deliver each of our goals and desired outcomes. The following sections explain each focus area, their rationale, what actions are recommended, and the expected benefits.

Aronga 1

Focus Area 1 – Make it easier to work with us

1



We will create an environment that is welcoming and supportive of events. We will streamline processes, reduce barriers, and provide clear guidelines to make it easier for organisers to plan and execute their events.

What will this look like?

This Focus Area involves:

- Improving our communication and processes to provide clarity for access to funding
- Developing event guidance to support more streamlined processes for event organisers utilising Council venues
- Developing toolkits to support event planning and help to navigate red tape
- Facilitating One Council approach to make planning and executing events easier

How will the city benefit?

This Focus Area will achieve:

- + Increased event and economic activity because Lower Hutt is a more attractive place to host events
- + Greater variety of events hosted
- + Stronger community engagement
- + Organisers and attendees more likely to return leading to greater sustainability of events calendar
- + Improved accessibility and inclusivity for events
- + Improved reputation as a place to host events

Aronga 2

Focus Area 2 – Actively seek sustainable partnerships



We will build strong, collaborative relationships with event promoters and communities that encourage long-term commitment and secure annual or regular events. We will work effectively with partners to find ways to build sustainable relationships.

What will this look like?

This Focus Area involves:

- Proactively socialising the events strategy
- Developing multi-year agreements with key partners to provide certainty for events support
- Review funding strategies and investigating options for accessing other sources of events funding
- Committing annual budgets to specific community events, including Matariki Puanga
- Building networks to help connect promoters, businesses, and our communities
- Utilising engagement insights to target attraction of popular events
- Working with partners to innovate and develop multi-year events

How will the city benefit?

This Focus Area will achieve:

- + Greater economic benefits for more businesses
- + Greater collaboration fosters a sense of belonging and pride
- + Encourage organisers to bring larger and more diverse events
- + Greater certainty of regular/annual events in the city
- + Stronger community engagement and better social connections
- + Improved reputation as a place to host events
- + More events that people want to attend
- + Regular events continue to thrive

Aronga 3

Focus Area 3 – Attract and grow events in the city



We will attract and grow events that contribute to a liveable city, vibrant neighbourhoods, and are inclusive and accessible to all. We'll build on our strengths to develop a thriving calendar of events that attracts visitors and offers opportunities for residents and businesses.

What will this look like?

This Focus Area involves:

- Collaborating with partners to develop a thriving calendar of events
- Investigating expanding the use of SOLUS as the platform for an annual calendar
- Developing year-around programming of events
- Engaging with regional partners to participate in regional event planning
- Coordinating opportunities to leverage regional opportunities in Lower Hutt
- Utilising engagement insights to target attraction of popular events
- Supporting a One Council approach to promote activation of the city centre


How will the city benefit?

This Focus Area will achieve:

- + Enhanced reputation as a host city
- + Improved accessibility and inclusivity for visitors and residents
- + Opportunities for businesses to align activities with scheduled events
- + Opportunities to host events that complimentary regional activities
- + More coordinated approach to delivery of events and opportunities to target new events to fill gaps
- + More events that people want to attend
- + Greater vibrancy in our city and neighbourhoods
- + Greater pride in our identity

Aronga 4

Focus Area 4 – Enable and support grass-roots activities



We will collaborate with communities to support their efforts in delivering inclusive, accessible and diverse events that showcase our identity. This is an opportunity to apply the initiatives of focus areas 1, 2, 3 and 5 specifically for community-led events, supporting our culture, identity, diversity and empowering all communities to thrive.

What will this look like?

This Focus Area involves:

- Working collaboratively with local people to build on local creative and community assets that strengthen connection to our place
- Identifying appropriate channels for communicating with diverse communities
- Facilitating mentorship for community organisations that want to grow their events
- Ensuring funding for community events are accessible to all
- Developing toolkits and guidance to support community event planning and help to navigate red tape
- Supporting events that celebrate our cultural diversity and showcase our identity
- Telling our stories

How will the city benefit?

This Focus Area will achieve:

- + Empowering communities to more easily organise events
- + Improved accessibility and inclusivity to events for communities
- + Enhanced sense of belonging and pride, better social connection and cohesion
- + Improved collaboration among different community groups, leading to stronger and more resilient communities
- + Greater opportunities to showcase local talent
- + Celebration of diversity of our communities
- + Building our events brand through showcasing things that make our place unique

Aronga 5

Focus Area 5 – Enhance the marketing and promotion of events



We will raise the profile of events to attract larger, more diverse audiences. We will develop a clear plan for marketing and promotion, and work with our partners to understand how Council can support the promotion of individual events.

What will this look like?

This Focus Area involves:

- Developing a marketing plan for major events in Lower Hutt
- Identifying how we can support local businesses to benefit from planned events
- Developing our website to support the marketing and promotion of events
- Collaborating with our communities to understand how best to communicate and support marketing of community-led events
- Create collateral that promotes Lower Hutt to event organisers and attendees
- Exploring best channels for communication of events

How will the city benefit?

This Focus Area will achieve:

- + Attract more visitors who will spend money in the local economy
- + Enhanced reputation as a host city
- + Improved accessibility and inclusivity for visitors and residents
- + Providing opportunities for businesses to benefit from planned events
- + Raised awareness of the diverse range of events that are promoted in the city and potential for greater social connection
- + Opportunities to attract sponsors and investor
- + More events that people want to attend

Mahere Mahi Action Plan

This section outlines how we will deliver our focus areas through actions. Some actions are funded through the events budget for FY 2025/26, while others will be prioritised in future financial years.

We recognise that not all the work can happen at once, so we'll be taking a staged approach over the next three years. Where actions are intended to be implemented in FY 2025/26 the plan indicates the quarter the work will take place. Beyond FY 2025/26, the plan will be reviewed and updated timescales confirmed.

Some actions are fully within our remit, while others require collaboration with different agencies and partners. This list is not exhaustive and does not include all actions to deliver the events strategy. It focuses on the most significant initiatives and will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure continued delivery of strategic outcomes.



1



**Make it
easier to
work with us**

Action	Timeframe	Delivered by
Develop Communication & Engagement Plans for all event fund budgets	FY25/26 Q1 & Q2	HCC Events & Corporate Communications Teams
Develop web page to support event funds	FY25/26 Q2	HCC Events & Customer Teams
Create event guides and prospectus for Council venues to support logistics of hosting events	FY25/26 Q3 & Q4	HCC Events, Parks & Reserves, Libraries & Hubs Teams
Develop toolkit to support events planning	FY25/26 Q2 & Q3	HCC Events with support from relevant HCC Teams
Coordinate Council and agency partners to support delivery of events, including providing key contacts and liaising with external agencies	Ongoing	HCC Events, Regulatory Services and external agencies such as Metlink





Actively seek sustainable partnerships

Action	Timeframe	Delivered by
Proactively socialise HCC events strategy to prospective and existing event promoters, funders, sponsors, service providers and community groups	FY25/26 Q1	HCC Events Team, Business & Economy Team and Connected Communities Team
Develop a major events framework to provide a clear framework for event prioritisation and investment, including criteria that prioritises focus areas	FY26/27	HCC Events Team
Identify opportunities for multi-year agreements with key partners to provide certainty for events support	FY25/26 Q3 & Q4	HCC Events Team
Implementation of Communications & Engagement Plans for community events	FY25/26	HCC Events Team and Corporate Communications Team
Work in partnership to identify collaborative funding opportunities where mutually beneficial outcomes can be achieved	FY26/27	HCC Events Team, WNZ, SportNZ, Nuka Ora
Work with Mana Whenua to identify and support opportunities to grow and develop events that reflect Māori culture including Te Rā o te Raukura and Matariki Puanga	FY25/26 Q1 & ongoing	HCC Events Team, Te Tira Māori & Te Ātiawa
Create opportunities for events promoters to support community-led event organisation through workshops	FY27/28	HCC Events Team, Connected Communities Team and key partners
Develop marketing and visitor attraction material to support event promoters operating in Lower Hutt	FY25/26 Q3 & Q4	HCC Events Team, Business & Economy Team and key partners

3



Attract & grow events in our city

Action	Timeframe	Delivered by
Develop a plan for engaging with Wellington NZ and Council's within Wellington region to participate in regional event planning	FY26/27	HCC Events Team and WNZ
Develop annual calendar of events to be published on Council's web site. Investigate options for utilising HCC Event Management App (SOLUS)	Commence FY25/26 Q3 & Q4	HCC Events Team, Connected Communities Team and key partners
Utilising the calendar of events and our measures of success, identify gaps and target events that complement our calendar	FY26/27	HCC Events Team, Connected Communities Team and Business & Economy Team
Establish working group with HCC Business & Economy Team to support activation in the city centre	FY25/26 Q2 & ongoing	HCC Events Team and Business & Economy Team
Develop strategy to coordinate opportunities to leverage events hosting in Wellington	FY27/28	HCC Events Team and WNZ



4



Enable & support grass-roots activities

Action	Timeframe	Delivered by
Identify appropriate channels for communication with communities of interest	FY25/26 Q2	HCC Events Team, Connected Communities Team and key partners
Develop toolkits and guidelines to support community events	FY25/26 Q2 & Q3	HCC Events Team and Connected Communities Team
Develop clear criteria and application processes for community event funding	FY25/26 Q1	HCC Events Team and Connected Communities Team
Create opportunities for events promoters to support community-led event organisation through workshops	FY26/27	HCC Events Team, Connected Communities Team and key partners
Establish working group with HCC Connected Communities Team to enable partnership approach to community-led events	FY25/26 Q3	HCC Events Team and Connected Communities Team
Tell our stories; work in partnership with HCC's Connected Communities team and our communities of interest to help instil pride in the community and support for community-led events	FY26/27	HCC Events Team, Corporate Communications Team and Connected Communities Team



5



Enhance the marketing & promotion of events

Action	Timeframe	Delivered by
Develop a marketing plan for major events in Lower Hutt to promote events to Lower Hutt residents, including actions to benefit local businesses and an audience development plan to build connections with harder to reach communities	FY26/27	HCC Events Team and Corporate Communications Team
Develop the Council website to support the marketing and promotion of events in Lower Hutt	FY25/26 Q3	HCC Events Team and Customer Service Team
Develop a plan for investing in Flagtrax and an annual plan for the display of flags across the city	FY27/28	HCC Events Team and Corporate Communications Team
Attend trade events	FY26/27	Events Team
Implement social media campaigns in accordance with Communication & Engagement Plans	Ongoing	HCC Events Team and Corporate Communications Team
Investigate opportunities to utilise Hutt Valley NZ to promote events and related experiences to broaden the economic impact	FY25/26 Q2	HCC Events Team and Business & Economy Team



Te tātari i te kairangi o ngā mahi

Measuring Success

We want the strategy to be successful, so we are establishing clear qualitative and quantitative metrics to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of our events. This will help us identify areas for improvement and ensure that our events consistently achieve positive outcomes for our communities.

Post-event reporting will be required for events that receive Council funding. We will collaborate with all event organisers to gather data from events hosted in our city, enabling us to assess their success effectively.

Measuring and evaluating the success of events will:

- Enable opportunities to strengthen the local economy through targeting events that deliver economic benefits
- Direct Council funding to events that improve the social and cultural wellbeing of our communities
- Assist us to allocate resources more efficiently and focus on the most impactful activities
- Enable us to adapt our strategy and be responsive to change

Additionally, enhanced baseline data, including an annual calendar detailing the number and types of events, will enable us to more effectively target new opportunities and report on improvements. This approach will enable us to continually improve and enhance the contribution of events to making Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt a thriving community for all.

Tātari me te Arotake

Monitoring and Review

Successful delivery of the outcomes in this strategy relies on regular evaluation, monitoring, and review of progress.

To ensure that the strategy remains 'fit for purpose' and responsive to change, a full review of the strategy will be undertaken every three years. Due to the close link between funding and delivery, the action plan will be reviewed and updated each year.

Āpitihanga 1

Appendix 1: Reference documents

Mahere Tekau Tau Our 10 Year Plan 2024–2034 (Long Term Plan)

Rautaki Whakatipu Sustainable Growth Strategy 2025 – 2055

Te Herenga Kairangi the Interwoven Ambition to Thrive

Hutt Valley Tourism Action Plan, 2021 – 2024

Events Strategy Engagement Report, March 2025

Hutt City Council Events Strategy Environmental Scan, March 2025

Angus & Associates



huttcity.govt.nz

