

Experience Local

Whangārei Events Strategy 2019-2024

Whangārei | Te Tai Tokerau / Aotearoa
Northland / New Zealand





Experiences

More than events.

Positive experiences are central to an event's success. They're created when we put people first. Local experiences are even more valuable as they connect those people to a place and what makes it unique.

Within this strategy we want to redefine what 'events' mean in Whangārei, placing 'local experiences' at the centre of our event development to better connect people to our place.



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Strategy

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Overview

PURPOSE

‘Amplifying the value of local’

OUTCOMES

LOCAL
CONFIDENCE



LOCAL
CAPABILITY



LOCAL
CONNECTION



PRINCIPLES

Experiences

More than events

Manaaki

Being great hosts

Outlook

Eye to the future

Know-how

Investing in us

FRAMEWORK



TASTE
LOCAL



CONNECT
LOCAL



EXPLORE
LOCAL



PLAY
LOCAL

Purpose

‘Amplifying the value of local’

This is our ‘why’, our central focus and motivation for the next five-year period. We will use this purpose statement to inform our decision-making, enable our local communities and measure our success.

Our purpose brings three key ideas together to provide an overarching description of the impacts we seek to have through investment in events:

Local

The strategy focuses on the people who make up the Whangārei community, what is distinctive in terms of our place, the way we think and what we value. By focusing on who is ‘local’ and how to make others feel like a ‘local’, events will reflect and address key demographic characteristics of the District.

(Demographic profile -Whangārei District, census data 2013 - see appendix)

The Value of Local

The strategy provides guidelines for thinking about how we can maximise this as a key factor in Whangārei’s story and success – how to build our capability, retain and attract great local talent and to enhance the sense of connection between individuals and between groups.

Amplifying

Our events should build on what we know and support events and event-makers to succeed into the future. The strategy will focus on getting better at knowing the cost, value and impact of everything we can do – so we can ‘turn up the volume’ in terms of how events contribute to our growth and wellbeing.

Outcomes

LOCAL CONFIDENCE



Local Confidence

- Grow local confidence and pride of place.
- Enhance Whangārei's place-identity and destination profile.
- Contribute to an authentic and distinctive point-of-difference – a unique Whangārei 'story'.

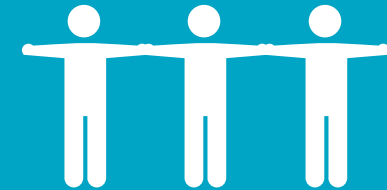
LOCAL CAPABILITY



Local Capability

- Build local capability to develop and sustain events District-wide
- Develop opportunity for local innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Activate and enable local talent and creative communities.

LOCAL CONNECTION



Local Connection

- Increase local participation and engagement in community events.
- Promote and celebrate community cohesion, local diversity and respect for the environment.
- Leverage the reciprocal exchange between locals and visitors.

Principles

Our principles support our purpose; they refine how the idea of ‘local’ will shape our delivery of events in Whangārei and direct how our outcomes of local confidence, capability and connection can be achieved.

Experiences

More than events

Making events into ‘proudly local’ experiences

In Whangārei people are proud of their unique local experiences, they #loveithere. We want to celebrate these local experiences and integrate them into the District’s events.

We want to combine local experiences together to create events that reflect and resonate with our local people and build a sense of pride in what is uniquely local to Whangārei.

Priorities:

- Locals are proud to participate in; and share, events unique to Whangārei.
- Whangārei is promoted as a place to engage with authentic local experiences.
- Perception of Whangārei is shifted from gateway/thoroughfare to a ‘proudly local’ destination.
- Local voices, local places and local practices are showcased to grow local confidence.

Manaaki

Being great hosts

Extending local hospitality, respect, and support to all

With tangata whenua as our guides in expressing Manaaki, we will take on a responsibility to honour and enrich the genuine and meaningful exchange between locals – and between locals and visitors. Manaaki is hosting; showing respect, care, generosity and kindness to one another and nurturing the reciprocal exchange of knowledge and experience.

Our events will embody and promote the concepts of Manaakitanga positively impacting local wellbeing and furthermore respecting and protecting our natural environment including minimizing event waste.

Priorities:

- Work with tangata whenua to integrate Manaaki into the development of our events.
- Show leadership in expressing and advocating Manaaki in delivering events.
- Locals and visitors are encouraged to extend respect, generosity and support to one another.
- Diverse local communities are supported and celebrated within events.
- Sustainability best practice is upheld to protect and regenerate local environments and waterways.

Outlook

Eye to the future

Growing sector collaboration and leveraging opportunity

In adopting a future focused 'generative planning cycle' we can become more proactive and collaborate across the sector more effectively. By developing a measurement tool we can better understand success and audience trends allowing us to adapt and evolve events.

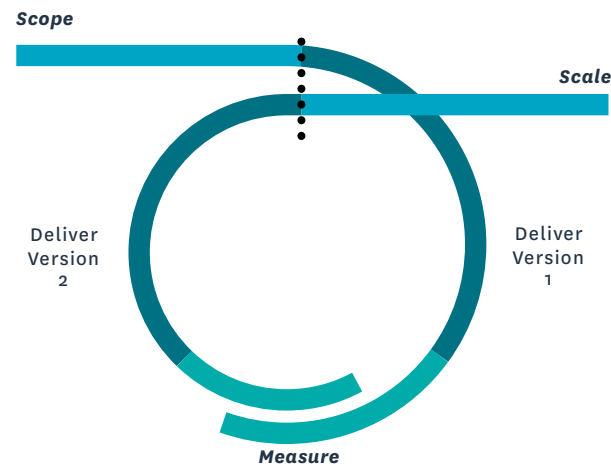
We will seek to leverage imminent change in the District before it happens, preparing and supporting local business' and communities for disruption and/or helping them embrace social or economic opportunities that emerge.

Priorities:

- A new planning cycle is implemented and impact tool developed.
- New opportunities are identified, developed and leveraged in a proactive and timely way.
- Pilot events are used to capitalize on local opportunity and guide change specifically around Hundertwasser opening and cruise ship arrivals.
- WRWC 2021 planning is used to leverage legacy benefits.
- Local entrepreneurship and innovation are supported and economic growth is created.
- Whangārei develops positive social and economic momentum to embrace change and opportunity.

The cycle requires events to be viewed in a recurring cycle with the motivation to evolve the concept through evaluation and adaptation.

Generative planning cycle



Scope - Vision + Trajectory

Goal setting, initial planning and funding application.
Delivery and debrief of Version #1 of event.

Measure - Assess + Evaluate

Evaluation of impact and success, adaption and decision to proceed.
Delivery and debrief of Version #2 of event.

Scale - Evolve + Grow

Legacy planning, identification of growth areas and sponsorship/partnerships.

Know-how

Investing in us

Building local capability, talent and pride

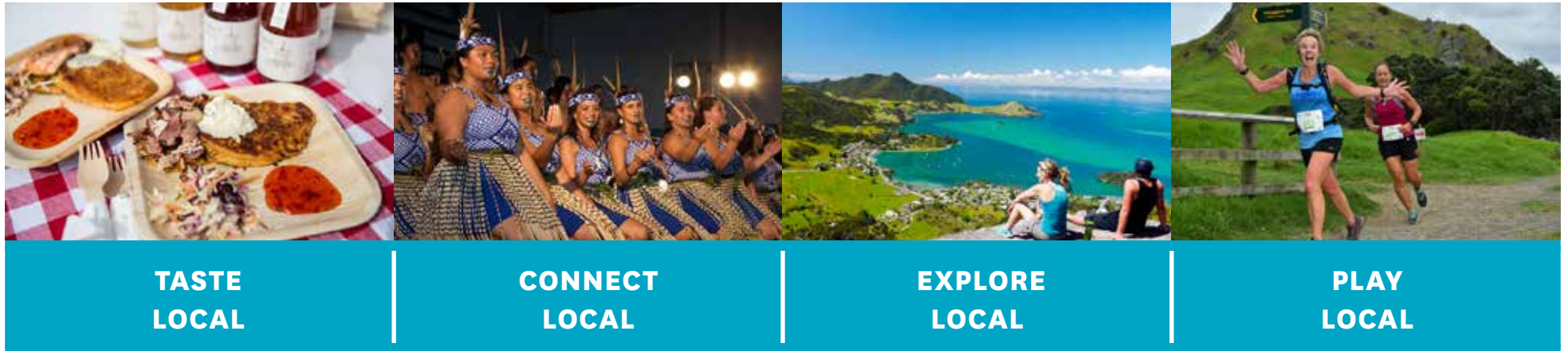
Whangārei has a proven track record of successful community and Council-funded event delivery and a host of talented locals who contribute to that success. Forthcoming major events and District-wide growth opportunities will require rapidly growing local professional capability and the pool of local talent and content producers.

Priorities:

- Council is well resourced and coordinated to develop and deliver uniquely local events.
- Community organisations are empowered and trusted industry professionals enabled.
- Local content and talent is prioritised.
- Launch initiatives to connect and support local talent and creative communities (physical/digital).
- Our world-class local talent is showcased and celebrated to build local confidence and pride.

Local World-class talent: Alien Weaponry (Musicians, Te reo advocates), Gaz Whiter (drifter, motorsport), Keith Urban (country music singer songwriter and producer), Tim Southee (cricketer), Marine Industry (World leading yachting innovation).

Lens



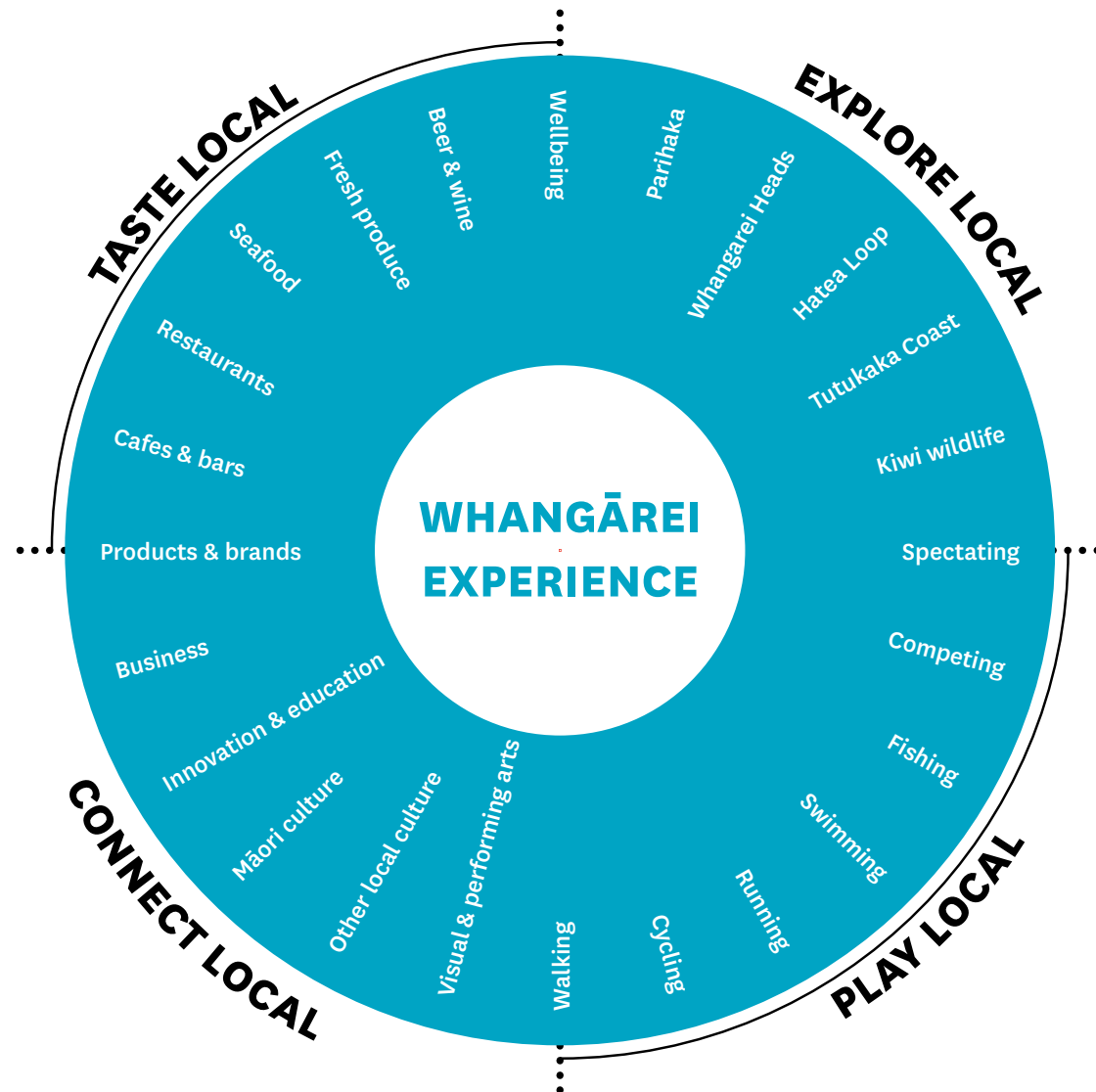
The Experience Local Lens is a system that allows us to organise elements within each of our events according to their experience type. Each type references our purpose, using ‘the value of local’ to invite and inspire participation with local Whangārei people, places and activities.

The framework invites people to Experience Local – Whangārei, to taste our local flavours, explore our natural environment, connect with our culture and play and participate in local recreation and sports.

Our goal is to program two, or more, of the four local experience categories into each event to actively invite participation in more diverse experiences from a wider audience catchment.

This system will:

- Inspire and motivate the sector to develop multiple and varied local experiences within events.
- Inform a framework to evaluate and organise prospective and existing events.
- Promote and communicate the diversity and value of local experiences for wider audience appeal.
- Provide a language for social media engagement and public feedback.







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Positioning

To complement the adoption of this strategy the following series of directives are advised to maximize impact and grow momentum around change in Whangārei, yet are not contingent to the successful implementation of the Experience Local strategy.

1. A proactive and connected council

Front-footing events programming

Council calling for proposals, and collaborating with event partners, based on a clear future schedule, with an aim to focus energy and investment on seasonal programming and opportunities arising from tourism growth.

2. Focus on the Town Basin

A social centre not a civic centre

Implementing placemaking initiatives in and around the Town Basin to centre people's focus and engagement. The success of the adjacent Hundertwasser Art Centre and Wairau Māori Art Gallery will be a key factor in Whangārei's brand clarity and success as a destination. Investment in events should directly support this in terms of co-location.

3. Satellite initiatives district wide

Broadening reach and community cross-over

Networking our satellite centres into city-based major events through outreach programming in the lead-up to, and during, the event period - e.g. WRWC. Conversely providing a central city platform for those satellite centres who host annual events to promote and engage wider audiences in the lead-up to their events e.g.. Waipu Highland games warm-up at Hatea Loop/Town basin in the week prior to the event.

4. Our centre – the Hatea Loop

Most things are within walking distance of the Loop

Event programming to proactively promote the use of, and link to, the Hatea Loop as the central navigation device within Whangārei better connecting the proximity of all adjacent major venues (both existing and in development). Funding things in response to, or as add-ons to things being driven by others.

5. Unlocking accommodation and transport

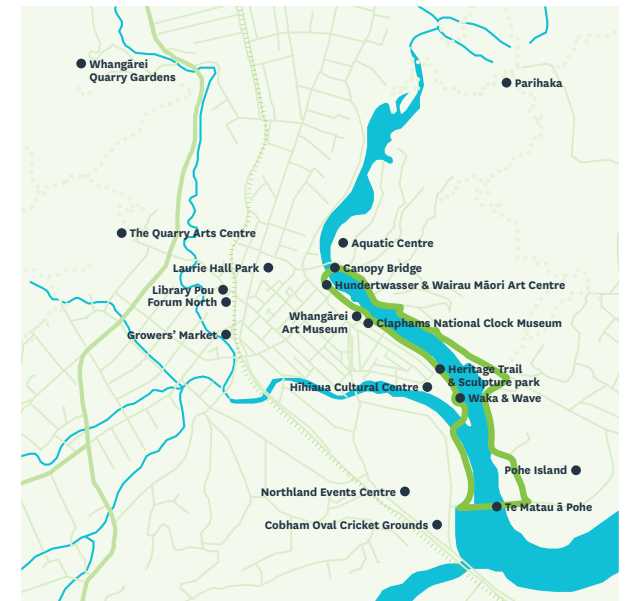
Sharing economy and tech solutions

Investment in events provides a strategic, focused opportunity to engage 'sharing economy' platforms to address shortfalls in local accommodation and transportation; extending the manaaki/hosting concept through Airbnb, NativeXP, Bookabach, marae stays; and sustainability transport including ride share options.

6. Piloting the changes ahead

Events that embrace change

Developing introductory event experiences in advance of significant changes to build momentum and highlight the associated opportunity surrounding them. Examples: Hundertwasser Art Centre and Wairau Māori Art Gallery, cruise ship arrival, WRWC, hotel and conference centre development.



Hatea Loop proximity map

Events

When assessing any particular event, the characteristics will guide which event category it fits into. While few events will ever fit neatly into a particular box it is important to establish a framework to be used as a basis for assessing investment and measuring success.

An event will have all or most of the distinguishing characteristics as defined:

Major events

- Event generates significant District and/or region wide benefit – both social and economic.
- Generates significant national and/or international profile. e.g. Women’s Rugby World Cup 2021.
- Generally involves large audiences in excess of 10,000 people.
- Event may not be unique to the city and may be able to be replicated.
- Event can be a one-off.

Outcomes

- Primary driver is economic impact.
- Economic return of 4:1 or greater.
- Contributes to one or more key strategic principles.

Council events

- Event generally developed and delivered by Whangārei District Council.
- More targeted appeal but still attracts a large audience. e.g. Fritter Festival.
- Events unique to Whangārei and have wide recognition and involvement by the community.
- Regular – ideally annually.
- Attracts regional and/or national visitors as well as District-wide residents.

Outcomes

- Event generates significant city and/or District-wide benefit and regional and national media profile.
- Generates high levels of media awareness.
- Major contributor to the city’s vibrancy and identity.
- Has mass appeal with social and/or economic outcomes.
- Contributes to one or more key strategic principles.

Community events

- Typically delivered by third parties.
- May be sponsored by, or receive grant from, Whangārei District Council.
- Predominantly community-led requiring local input and ownership.
- Typically targeted at a niche part of the community or geographic area. e.g. Wild Kiwi.
- Event can be a one off. e.g. 100 Years of Northland Rugby.
- Event is not unique to the city and may be able to be replicated.
- Event is often not for profit.

Outcomes

- Primary drivers are celebrating identity, community entertainment but may deliver some economic benefit.
- Provide support for fringe artists, performers, craftsmen.
- Major contributor to city pride and identity realising social and cultural benefits.
- Builds a shared sense of local community and identity.





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Evaluation

In order to better understand what impact the strategy is having over time we can look to a mixture of qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure our effect on local people, business, events themselves and our place – Whangārei.

Key performance indicators:

Social

- Whangārei residents' sense of local pride is increased.
- Communities are actively involved in event priority-setting, planning, development and delivery.
- Whangārei's demographic make-up is reflected in event planning, development and delivery priorities.
- Increased levels of connection and collaboration within and between community and social groups that have traditionally been siloed.
- Whangārei retains local talent.
- Increase in retention/attraction of 20-45 years old residents.
- Increased instance of locals hosting those from outside the District.
- More visitors say they feel like locals when they visit.
- Increase in level of digital engagement and active social media participation which support the success of events.

Economic

- Increased number of sponsors and partnerships engaged and retained (including Northland Events Centre naming rights sponsor).
- Successfully innovating and developing products and services that meet the community and customer needs.
- Offering suitable products and services in an accessible way, ensuring excellent customer and client experience including the uptake of at least one sharing-economy transport provider.
- Increase in Airbnb, Bookabach and NativeXP listings District wide.
- Building trust with our community and customers, such that they are happy to welcome visitors and recommend us to others.

Place

- Whangārei 'place identity' develops and local brand recognition increases.
- Hatea Loop becomes a local and nationally known iconic 'place to be'.
- Hatea Loop is activated through events more regularly and seen as a connector between major events and events locations.
- Activation starts to occur in smaller centres in the District linked to major events
- Visitor foot traffic in the Town Basin and Hatea Loop is increased year on year – 15% by 2020, an additional 20% by 2022.
- More of our public spaces and waterways are accessible and used more frequently.

Events

- Key Council staff are retained in events roles.
- Increase in event funding applications which meet the strategy criteria submitted to Council.
- Council funding is used to incubate recurring self-funded events.
- A new local signature event is developed and delivered.
- A majority of events are held more than once (recurring events).

Roles

Whangārei District Council plays a vital part in the success of individual events due to its role as organiser, funder, partner and promoter of the District's many and varied events.

Council's role may include one or more of the following:

Owner/provider:

Council provides quality public spaces and venues that are used to host events.

Direct supplier:

Council directly undertakes the initiation, planning and delivery of events to the community.

Facilitator:

Council supports events by providing a regulatory and advisory role (e.g. consents, road closures, liquor licensing, sustainability advice etc). Council will also give programming advice to event organisers so that the economic constraints of our community are taken into account.

Promoter/communicator:

Council communicates and promotes events in Whangārei District through a variety of channels.

Funder/leader:

Council sponsors, collaborates, invests in and provides funding support to events organised by others via contestable funding schemes. Council also has a role in championing and advocating for events, regardless of Council funding.







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Action plan

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Adopt the Experience Local / Whangārei Events Strategy (2019-2024)	Elected Members	ASAP
Coordinate Council staffing toward implementation of the strategy across management, event administration, marketing/communications and facilities.	WDC + External	ASAP
Council to develop 1) event proposal forms 2) pre-event evaluation criteria 3) post-event impact measurement tool – all based on the new strategic framework.	WDC + External	ASAP
Council to assess all currently funded and proposed events against newly developed pre-event evaluation criteria prior to proceeding.	WDC	ASAP
Audit existing event operators and collaborators within our District to understand collaboration and partnership potential.	WDC	2019
Proactively socialise the strategy to prospective and existing event makers, promoters, funders, sponsors and service providers.	WDC	2019
Release an EOI seeking input for 'Pilot Projects' focused on major events and transformational change in the District.	WDC	2019
Establish an 'events broker' role to organise, administer and build capability across sector, from community through to events professionals.	WDC / HR	2020
Review M.O.U's with ATEED and Northland Regional Council to increase partnering opportunities.	WDC	2020
Develop a sponsorship strategy to facilitate connections between public/private sponsors/funders and event makers, promoters and venues.	WDC + External	2020
Review related parts of Council with a view toward enabling event growth i.e. licensing, zoning, Council-owned property, urban design and planning.	WDC	2020

Timeline

The following is a sequential progression of key themes that build upon one another and will direct the strategy over the five-year period.

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Adapt existing / activate Town Basin <p>Promote the Town Basin and Hatea Loop in parallel to all central Whangārei events through messaging, signage and minor activations to expand public appreciation for the areas.</p> <p>Adapt existing events (examples):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whangārei Growers Market – expand experiences, extend duration and relocate. • InnoNative Festival – build 2018 market day success into a wider festival. • Rally Whangārei – promote Hatea Loop / link to local motorsport. 	Pilot change / focus Town Basin <p>Focus off-site additions to large scale events on the Town Basin and Hatea Loop i.e. Rally Whangārei and Fritter Festival warm-up events/activations to engage broader use of these spaces for community and commercial use.</p> <p>Pilot events (examples):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Basin arts/crafts activation – Hundertwasser Centre pilot. • Harbour and Hatea River water based activation – cruise ship pilot. • Hatea Loop cultural activation – Hihiaua Cultural Centre pilot. • Satellite District centre activation – e.g. Waipu Highland Games expanded pilot. 	Critical mass / Town Basin legacy <p>Build in event infrastructure for the Town Basin and Hatea Loop to best capitalise on opportunity and development in the area during major events, openings and arrivals.</p> <p>Leverage legacy benefit from (examples):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WRWC for wider development of the Town Basin public space infrastructure. • Hundertwasser Centre opening toward Whangārei's destination profile. • Cruise ship arrival for international tourism growth and economic investment. 	Signature event / destination profile <p>Using event and economic data captured in the prior year, and in collaboration with the business community, develop and deliver an event concept unique to Whangārei that cements the District's destination status.</p> <p>In parallel, assess and support events occurring in satellite District centres that best align to Whangārei's emergent destination profile.</p>	Review strategy <p>Assess and evaluate the strategy against legacy benefit, social wellbeing indexes and economic growth patterns.</p>





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Assessment template

The below template is a basic example of how our strategic principles can be framed into a questionnaire. Requiring event makers to complete a form such as this will better enable them to align their event concept to our strategic outcomes.

Experience local: Whangārei Event Proposal Assessment Form
Please fill in the below describing your event proposal.

Local value

How will the event amplify the **Value of Local** in Whangārei?

Local experience

Under which local experience categories does the event fall?

☐ TASTE LOCAL ☐ EXPLORE LOCAL ☐ CONNECT LOCAL ☐ PLAY LOCAL

Please specify the local experiences offered.

Local capability, knowledge and expertise

What local capability, knowledge and expertise will be utilised and/or developed?

If so, how will it be developed?

Hosting / manaaki

Who is the event host?

How will local hosting (manaaki) be expressed within the event?

Audience

Who are the people that will gather at the event?

What is the unique quality of the gathering and exchange between people within the event?

What is the expected number of local attendees / visitor attendees?

Venue

How does the event location reflect local experiences?

Local talent

How is local talent fostered and/or showcased within the event concept?

Outlook

What is the longer-term view and future potential for the event?

Feedback

How could Council assist your event team to embrace local experiences further?

INTERNAL COUNCIL ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (Internal use only)

How can this event grow local pride and livability?

How can the event promote the Hatea Loop / Town Basin?

How can this event collaborate with other event programs?

How can this event engage audiences from outside the District?

Census data

Whangārei District is less ethnically diverse than the New Zealand population, with just 7.5% of the District's population identifying with an ethnic group other than NZ European or Māori (compared with 21.2% for New Zealand).

28% of the Whangārei District population identify as being Māori (compared to 16% for New Zealand as a whole).

The Māori population is markedly younger than NZ European – with 35% of Māori being under the age of 15 compared with 20% for NZ European.

The European population is considerably older than the Māori population – with 21% of those over age 65 being NZ European and 6% being Māori.

If our population is to continue to grow we must retain and/or attract people to the District, particularly those in the working age/reproductive age cohorts (20-45 years). If Whangārei cannot achieve this, the population will likely go into decline sometime after 2045. This has serious implications for funding of infrastructure and services and maintaining economic growth and prosperity.

Around 95% of population growth between 2013 and 2043 will be at 65 plus years of age.

Source: Demographic Profile for the Whangārei District June 2013, Whangārei District Council



Background

Whangārei is on the cusp of transformational change offering the region a significant growth opportunity. Our challenge is to capitalise on this pivotal moment and through events create a new and lasting momentum for the District.

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Whangārei is in direct competition with other New Zealand centres that have adopted strategic approaches to events in their regions. This strategy aims to enhance Whangārei's regional relevance and contribute to the development of a unique point-of-difference for the District.

Through a people-first and place-led approach this strategy seeks to address underlying challenges to best enable the realisation of the opportunities ahead.

The Strategy notes the Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Bill (2019) which will return Local Government's purpose to being "to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities".

A strategic approach to events – what they are, how they are developed and the impacts sought through investment – will allow Council and the communities of the District to work together to realise wellbeing outcomes.



Process

Through a customised 4D Co-design process, Fresh Concept has worked alongside Whangārei District Council (Council) and the District's event-making community to question, provoke and prototype a future framework for Whangārei's growing events sector.

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The completed strategy is the result of a focused process of listening and insight gathering, engaging the people closest to; and vested in, the District's event ecosystem and with their input and co-designing a strategy unique to Whangārei.

The development of this resonant and readily implementable strategy is based upon prototyping through the co-design process, grounded by evidence-based research and tested against council and industry feedback throughout the consultation period.



Methodology

Research

Comprehensive background research has been utilised as the basis of the workshop design and underpins core elements of this strategy. This is comprised of benchmarking – against three relevant national centres; trend forecasting – utilising domestic and international tourism data; and an audit and analysis of Whangārei District's current event program and Council venue assessment.

Workshops

4D Co-design Process – Discover / Define / Design / Deliver

A creative and participatory group process giving voice to a broad range of Whangārei's event related communities. Initially discovering local insight, defining both challenge and opportunity, prototyping through a design phase and testing findings through a delivery process.

Consultation

Engagement with community representatives, Elected Members and industry leaders, in parallel to the workshop process, has enabled an evidential basis upon which to formulate, test and adapt strategic directives. Accumulated findings from each engagement were captured and distilled to create a comprehensive understanding of the landscape in which this strategy is to be implemented.



Key findings

Opportunities

- Whangārei has a slow-growing but authentic sense of local pride.
- Locals and visitors are actively engaged with Whangārei's landscape and waterways.
- Council's #loveithere campaign resonates well with local people.
- The Hatea Loop is a much loved addition to the city centre.
- Private investors are engaging in Whangārei's central city development.
- International cruise ships are scheduled to arrive in 2020.
- The Hundertwasser Art Centre and Wairau Māori Art Gallery will open in 2020.
- Whangārei will host a major event – Women's Rugby World Cup 2021.

Challenges

- Whangārei currently lacks a positive identity, a fundamental barrier to growth in the District.
- Whangārei has a siloed event sector.
- Council operates reactively and has not established its 'why' (purpose) relative to events.
- Council is perceived to have a divided Council creating uncertainty around future development and investment.
- Whangārei's urban centre is split between the CBD and Town Basin.
- Whangārei lacks high-end accommodation to cater to tourism and major events.

Insights

'We want experiences not just events'

'We aren't sure about how welcoming we are'

'We're not keen to share our paradise'

'Our diverse and growing ethnic communities are not well connected'

'We're surrounded by water'

'Whangārei has an active and mobile local population who #love it here'



Ngā mihi