

# Kaikōura Destination Management Plan Executive Summary 2022 - 2032

---





# VISION

---

We strive to develop Kaikōura in an economically sustainable way and celebrate our coastal community, which is unique in its landscapes, seascapes, people, wildlife and history. A destination loved and treasured by all - our residents, our visitors, and for those who come after us.

**Kaikōura District Council's Vision**

Moving Kaikōura forward

Nuku Kaikōura whakamua

# SCENE SETTER

---

This Destination Management Plan has been prepared by Destination Kaikōura, guided by the community, business, council and an advisory board. The aim is to improve the long-term well-being of our region and its residents by placing our environment and our community at the heart of visitor sector planning. Our aspirations for the sector extend beyond creating mutual benefits for both locals and visitors to rebuilding the sector as a resilient, sustainable and vital part of the Kaikōura community. The plan has also been guided by the 2020 Destination Management guidelines published by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment.

Kaikōura is naturally blessed with a wide variety of marine and land-based attractions and the District has a unique cultural and heritage offering. The blend of environmental, historical and cultural tourism experiences appeals to visitors from Australia, mature western markets (UK, Europe, Germany, USA), Asian markets and domestic visitors (Auckland, Wellington, Marlborough & Christchurch).

The Kaikōura tourism offering began in earnest in 1987 when Ngati Kuri elders identified an opportunity to provide marine tours for visitors to view the local resident sperm whales and other migrating whale species. Over the past nearly forty years other tourism businesses have emerged and in 2019 the annual contribution tourism made to the district economy was substantial at \$116million. Fifty percent (50.4%) of the workforce are directly employed in the tourism and hospitality sector and thirty-five (35.0%) are indirectly employed.

The November 2016 earthquake in Kaikōura District rocked the foundation of the local economy and the tourism industry. This event had a devastating effect on the South Bay Marina, and State Highway 1 (SH1), with both road and rail connectivity from Christchurch to Kaikōura, and onward to Picton being closed indefinitely. The Inland Road Route (SH70) through the Hurunui District was also affected but was able to provide temporary access while SH1 either side of Kaikōura was reconstructed and repaired.

Many of the tourism, retail and hospitality businesses suffered a loss of over seventy-five percent of visitors and revenue for a period of thirteen months. Full road access to/from Kaikōura was reinstated in December 2017 albeit with many stoppages and single lane sections for a prolonged period but since then the tourism recovery has since gone from strength to strength. The rebound of visitors showed significant growth as a result of central government's investment in infrastructure, NZTA, KiwiRail and NCTIR's (North Canterbury Transport Infrastructure Recovery) with sterling efforts on the marina and road development. The generous support from MBIE of \$650,000 specifically to fund marketing recovery post-quake was a massive boost to local businesses regaining market share. But just as Kaikōura regained pre-quake visitor numbers Covid 19 hit, decimating the tourism industry once again. It is now timely for Destination Kaikōura to develop a Destination Management Plan

---

**We have big dreams of how we make Kaikōura a better place for our own people to live and thrive, but also for our precious natural environment to be better looked after, studied, and experienced in a way that is world class. Poha Project 2020**

# KAIKŌURA DISTRICT

Population - 4,060 (Stats NZ June 2020)

## Key Tourism Statistics YE Feb 2019

Percentage % Results Compared to Pre-covid (2019)

Total Visitor Spend \$116m (+1.5%)

International Spend \$60m (-5.1%)

Domestic Spend \$56m (+9.4%)

No. Guest Nights 326,190 (-2.2%)

No. Guest Arrivals 178,021 (-8.7%)

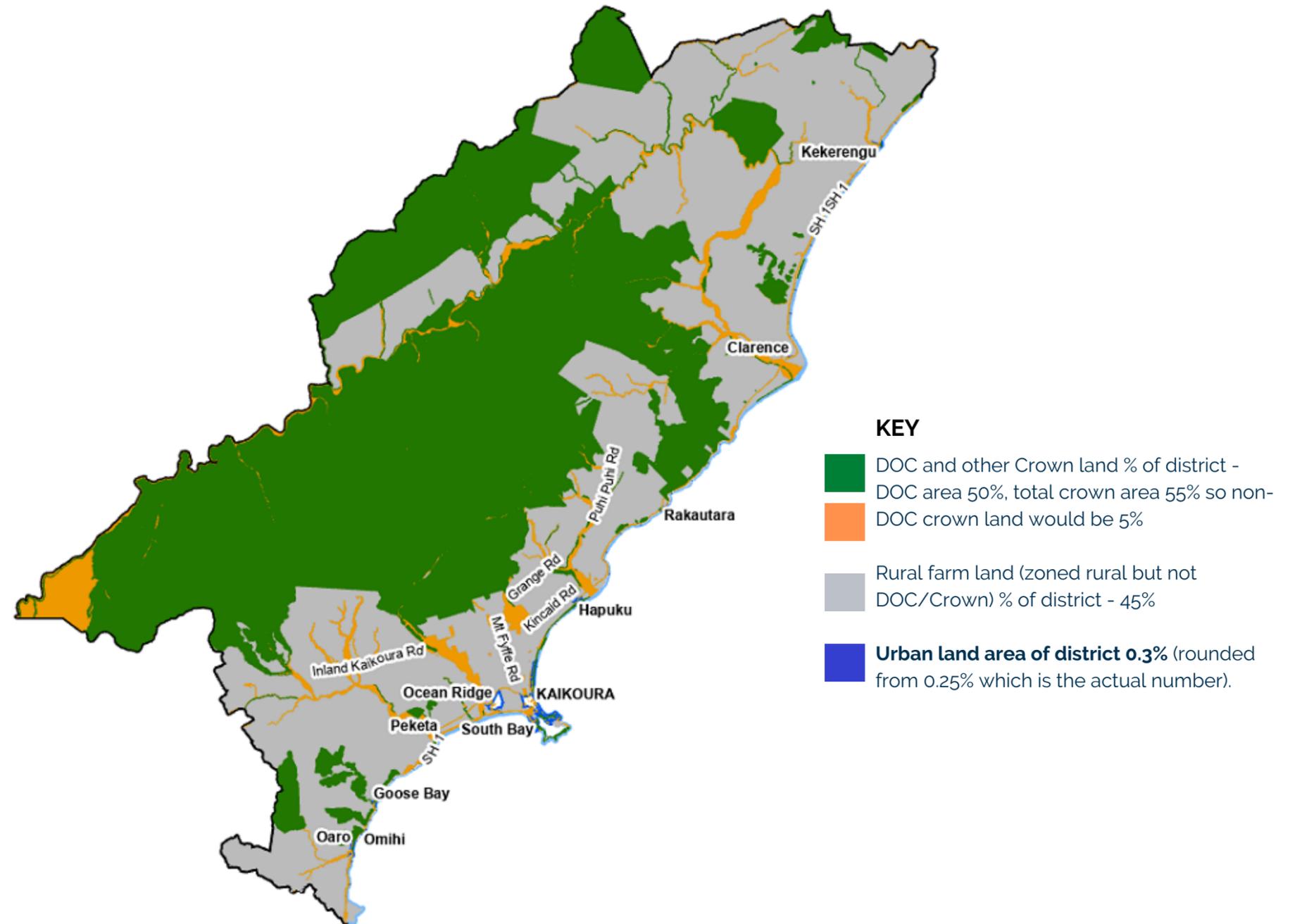
No. Cruise Ship Visits 9

## Key Economic Drivers

- Tourism
- Agriculture (dairy, sheep)
- Fishing
- Forestry
- State Highway 1
- Viticulture
- Honey

With domestic visitors, one group that is missed across multiple data collection measures are the holiday home visitors who are often habitual visitors to a destination. Kaikōura has a high proportion of holiday homes (2018 census showed 1506 occupied dwellings and 714 unoccupied). The most likely owners of these homes would be Canterbury residents. Another group of habitual domestic visitors are those who regularly stay (in caravans or camping) at the various commercial campgrounds and coastal camping areas located along the Kaikōura coast.

**We recognise tourism is not like other industries: it depends on the destination - a place where people live**



The nature of Kaikōura District's topography and location make it a distinct community of interest.

Kaikōura community is different to the community of many districts within NZ, in particular because:

- the majority of Kaikōura's population is located in the coastal area and accounts for only **.3% of land use**
- a high proportion of Kaikōura residents live in Kaikōura township itself
- Kaikōura is serviced by both Marlborough and Canterbury based central government agencies and non-government organisations
- The rugged landform and location of Kaikōura District contribute to most residents' sense of a distinct Kaikōura identity



# WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR KAIKŌURA DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN?

---

- Enhancing the lives of the local community
- Increased land based offering
- Change the marketing narrative to celebrate all our offerings
- Cluster promotion of smaller operators
- Celebrate our local champions
- Regional projects established that will enhance the local environment supported by Tourism spend
- Low carbon opportunities
- The Mayfair Arts and Cultural Centre is a vibrant hub for the arts, conferencing and entertainment
- Increased winter activities such as sports and other events
- Longer localised itineraries
- 'Explore More' campaign for 'The Coast with the Most'
- More activities of National significance

**Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari kē he toa takitini**  
Success is not the work of an individual, but the work of many



# KAIKŌURA'S VALUES

---

## **Manaakitanga – Hosting and looking after our visitors**

As businesses develop, we need to ensure that they are customer facing, ensuring that all the appropriate tikanga aspects are catered for so that operators can safely focus on the visitor as they will be the ultimate experience promoters or detractors.

## **Kaitiakitanga – Guardianship of natural resources**

In all aspects of business development, we will ensure that product and visitor experience development truly reflect sustainability at its core, ensuring that we are guardians of the land, the people and the business opportunity (socially, environmentally and economically).

## **Kotahitanga - Strength is not that of an individual but that of the collective working together**

The only way that Kaikōura will effectively grow is if we all work together. Paddling together in the same direction – around a common goal providing value to our people.

## **Whaihua – Focus on Increasing Value**

The true opportunity for Kaikōura in terms of tourism is in value over volume - it is more than that, visitors that engage, connect with community, environment and are respectful, give back. Authenticity by hosts is so important as it allow visitors to safely interact and connect - this leads to a natural focus on more value as opposed to more volume.

## **The Tiaki Promise**

The New Zealand tourism industry developed The Tiaki Promise as a commitment to share with visitors an approach to encourage them (visitors) to care, guard, protect and conserve our turangawaewae (home) for now and for future generations.

# KAIKŌURA DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN GOALS

Rebuilding Business - Restoring Community - Respecting our Environment



To slow the  
visitor down



To increase the length of  
stay



To activate the visitor's  
want to spend more  
money in region



Lessen seasonality



Ensuring that our  
environment and  
community continue to  
thrive

# OUR PLAN AND ACTIONS

The following actions represent the combined insights from engagement and consultation. These actions have been grouped into seven overarching focus areas with importance to destination management: Experience Development, Marketing, Environmental Stewardship, Infrastructure, Capability, Leadership and Insights.

## EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

- Culture – identify and support iwi or Māori led businesses to develop products that attract both domestic and international visitors.
- Cycling – support the Whales Trail Trust & Kaikōura Cycle Club work that is underway.
- Seafood + Farm to table experiences that tap into the diverse offering in Kaikōura
- Events – Develop a Kaikōura events strategy and secure funding, continuing the good work established with REF funding.
- Astro Tourism - Start to develop business ideas in this space working with the Kaikōura Dark Skies Trust.
- Walking – promote the great day walks we have in region, work with Dept of Conservation.
- World Heritage Status – investigate what it would take for Kaikōura to achieve this.
- Education – Develop itineraries that suit school groups needs and budgets.



## MARKETING

- Work at securing more business events that align well with our regional offering, partner key stakeholders such as Sudima, CHCNZ, Kiwi Rail and others.
- Continue to build regional profile by managing the region's collective online presence i.e. website and social plus coordinating domestic & international media visits.
- Resume international travel trade and media training (prioritise niche markets and segments as borders reopen - Australia focus first).
- Collaborate with other regions where this strengthens the regional proposition. EG: Alpine Pacific Touring Route, Top of the South, Explore CHC.
- Work closely with CHC International Airport
- Promote Kaikōura as a great place to work for digital nomads



## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- Support and work alongside the following conservation groups: The Hutton's Shearwater Trust, Te Korowai, Marine Guardians, Dotterels Survey, the Love the Lyell Group, Kaikōura Water Zone Committee and Dark Skies Trust.
- Establish a operator led Sustainability Committee with a region wide focus.
- Promote the Sea Spotter App + The Annual Great Kaikōura Whale Count.
- Work with DOC and Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura on the predator free work they are undertaking.
- Encourage and support tourism businesses to adopt the Tiaki Promise ethos as well as join collectively in the towns sustainability framework.
- Advocate for more EV charging stations for vehicles and bikes
- Work with local council and tourism operators on the Kaikōura Climate Change framework.
- Endorse and support the Kaikōura District Council freedom camping by law.



# OUR PLAN AND ACTIONS

The following actions represent the combined insights from engagement and consultation. These actions have been grouped into seven overarching focus areas with importance to destination management: Product Development, Marketing, Environmental Stewardship, Infrastructure, Capability, Leadership and Insights.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Support the outcomes of the infrastructure projects in the KDMP such as the Dark Skies Initiative, the Whales Trail, Wakatu Quay Development and the South Bay Harbour Project.
- Create physical and digital story-telling platforms along the State Highway 1 coastal corridor and town based link pathway. Using existing iwi, council; and government owned assets.
- Work towards Kaikōura being a town that is accessible for all
- Work with DOC on developing visitor infrastructure on the Kaikōura Peninsula as a priority and consideration of those areas of public conservation land associated with the Kaikōura Coastal Highway journey and the Mt Fyffe area



## CAPABILITY

- Create story telling content: Māori, European, Sealing / Whaling, Earthquake, Agriculture, Tourism
- Prepare for the return of cruise to Kaikōura
- Continue to support businesses to achieve Qualmark
- Continue to provide upskilling and training opportunities to tourism businesses
- Explore education partners opportunities.
- Create a toolbox of resources available to assist operators eg: Tiaki Promise, How to work with Trade guide etc...
- Marine training + research centre of New Zealand
- Workplace labour shortages



## LEADERSHIP

- Establish and strengthen a Leadership Advisory Group with KDC, iwi + hapu and tourism business plus external stakeholders.
- Work with KDC in investigating a variety of user-pay scenarios eg: Harbour, Airport
- Investigate and establish long term funding for the outcomes of the KDMP
- Foster strong partnerships between the local visitor sector and national organisations e.g. DOC, MPI, Air NZ, TNZ, Waka Kotahi etc



## INSIGHTS

- Collaborate with Kaikōura District Council and their annual Satisfaction Survey of Kaikōura residents
- Undertake annual operators satisfaction survey
- Provide regular insights to our operators e.g. visitor flows, event impact, local sentiment and forward bookings or travel intentions. Also provide updates to local and central government to inform their decision making
- Utilise data collected from MBIE, Stats NZ, CHCNZ in our decision making..



**Mā te rongo, ka mōhio. Mā te mōhio, ka mārama.  
Mā te mārama, ka mātua. Mā te mātua, ka ora.**

From listening comes knowledge, from knowledge comes understanding.  
From understanding comes wisdom, from wisdom comes well-being.

