



The Mighty Waikato

Where magic runs deep

Destination Management Snapshot

JANUARY 2023

Destination Management for the Mighty Waikato

NGĀ WHAKAHAERENGA MŌ TE RIU O WAIKATO

Destination management brings together different stakeholders to achieve the common goal of building a well-managed, regenerative visitor destination. This Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the Waikato identifies a pathway towards a shared vision by, and for, local communities, iwi, visitors, tourism industry, wider business, and local and central government agencies.



VISION | TE WHAKAKITENGA

The Mighty Waikato is celebrated for providing real New Zealand experiences – where kaitiaki runs deep, mana inspires and unforgettable discoveries are just around the bend.



GOAL | NGĀ WHĀINGA

The visitor economy positively contributes to thriving Waikato communities – people, culture and the environment.



POSITIONING | NGĀ TŪRANGA

The Mighty Waikato – Where magic runs deep.

MIGHTY WAIKATO BRAND STORY

Come with us, share our waka and feel the strength and passion.

For this is a place beyond the expected, which constantly surprises with natural beauty, powerful history and out-of-this-world experiences. Always far from the ordinary, this is a magical region of villages to play, relax, connect and explore in.

Here, our Kaitiaki runs deep, our mana inspires and unforgettable discoveries are just around the bend. A welcoming place where our people keep it real – and experiences become unreal.

This is the Mighty Waikato. It's all yours to discover.

Taiao Ora Tangata Ora

If the natural world is healthy, so too are the people

Guiding Principals | NGĀ TIKANGA ĀRAHI



Instilling pride through celebrating and sharing local culture



Providing connections between visitors, local residents and industry sectors



Living our brand values – surprising, magical and authentic Waikato experiences



Embracing guests – Manaakitanga



Regenerative tourism that actively contributes to the communities and the environment



Fostering innovation – always looking at ways to improve and adapt

Taiao Ora Tangata Ora

If the natural world is healthy, so too are the people

Strategic Priorities | NGĀ RAUTAKI MATUA

Collaboration, partnerships
and leadership



Product and Experience: protection,
enhancement and development



Visitor infrastructure and
investment



Capability building



Targeted marketing



Regenerative and sustainable
tourism

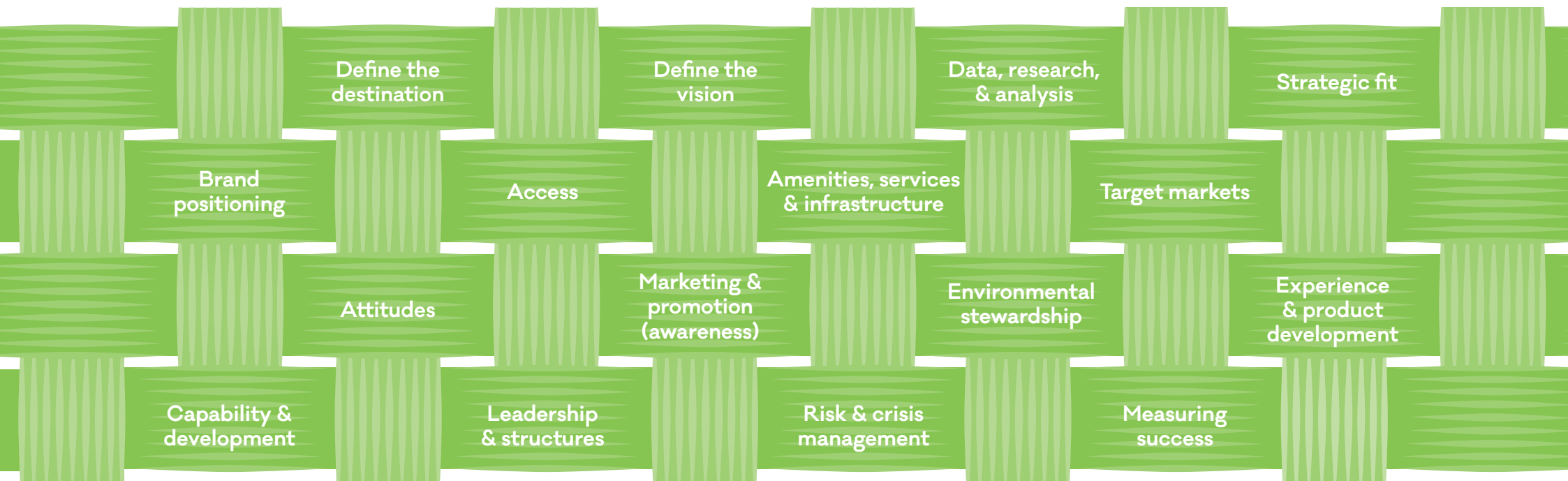


Destination Management Planning

TE WHAKAMAHERE WHAKAHAERENGA

Effective and sustainable destination management involves the management of all aspects of the destination that contribute to a visitor's experience and enhances the liveability for local resident. Below are the 16 key components outlining initiatives involved in delivering successful destination management planning.

Sixteen components of a destination management kaupapa:



The Mighty Waikato Region

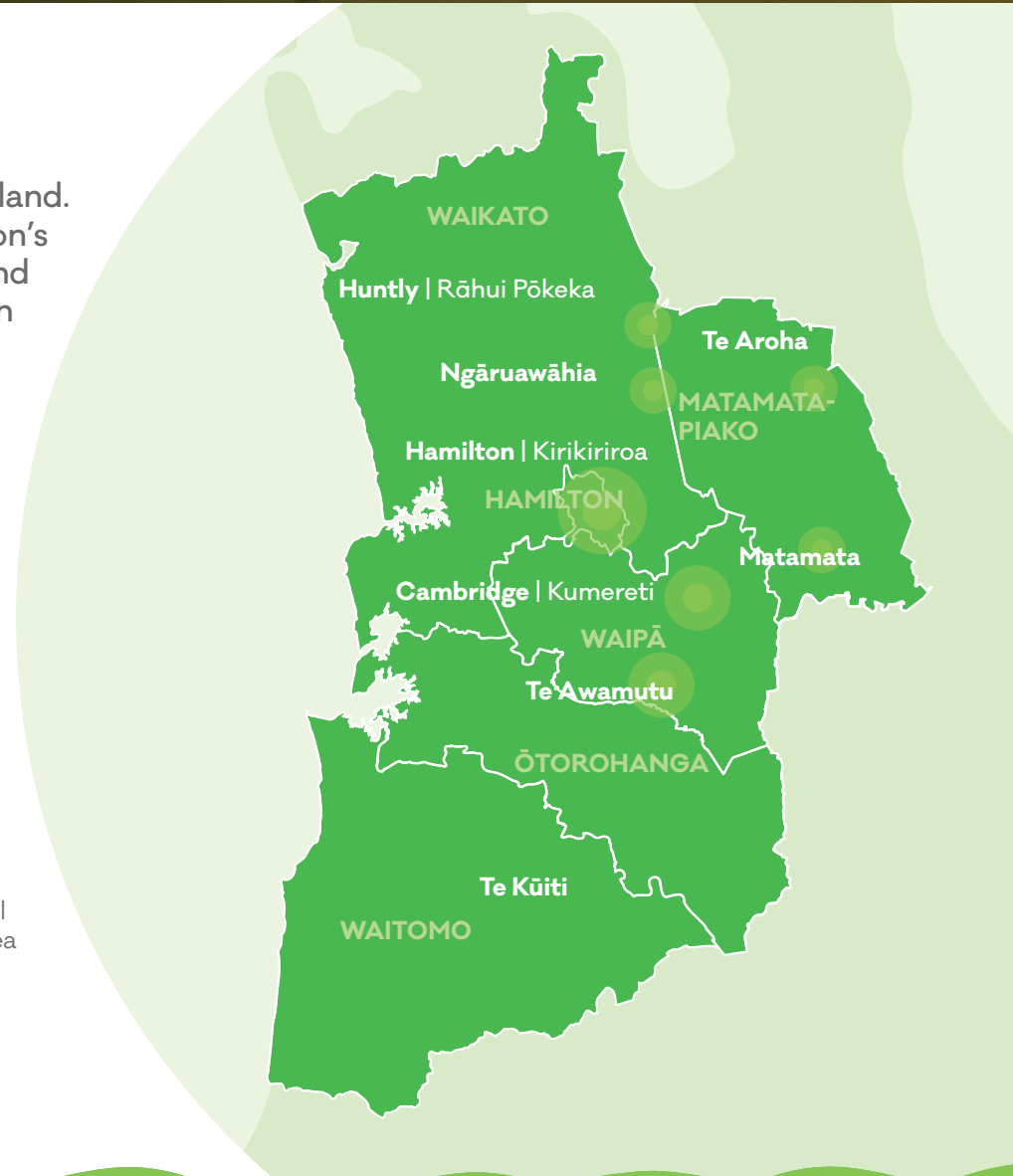
TE RIU O WAIKATO

The Waikato region is one of the most productive regions in New Zealand. Its prime location and diverse economy are at the heart of the region's competitive advantage. The region is an agricultural powerhouse and a key contributor to New Zealand's dairy industry. It has strengths in manufacturing and is well supported by strong science, research, and professional services sectors.

The Waikato RTO Region

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism (HWT) is currently funded by six districts/city and provide destination marketing, destination management, convention bureau, industry development and major event coordination services to Hamilton City, Waikato, Waipā, Waitomo, Ōtorohanga, and Matamata-Piako Districts. These six areas account for 75% of the wider Waikato's population.

The RTO region is referred to as "heartland Waikato" and is well known for hero visitor experiences of Hobbiton™ Movie Set, Waitomo Caves, Hamilton Gardens and Raglan surf beach. It is home to two Great Rides (Hauraki Rail Trail and The Timber Trail), the Te Awa River Ride and New Zealand's longest river, the Waikato River, flows through the heart of the region. We have a number of unique destinations and emerging experiences such as the original spa town of the North Island, Te Aroha with natural hot soda water, and New Zealand's only tea plantation, Zealong Tea Estate.

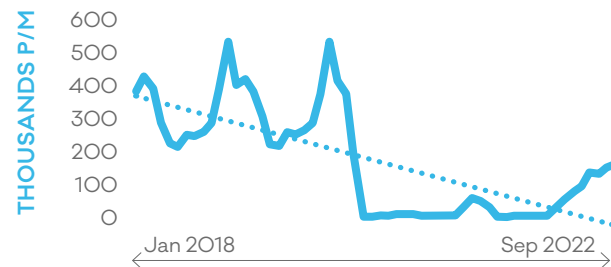


The Visitor Economy

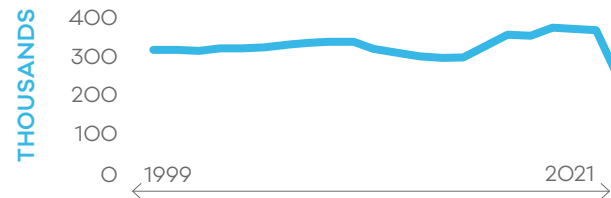
TE ŌHANGA MANUWHIRI

National

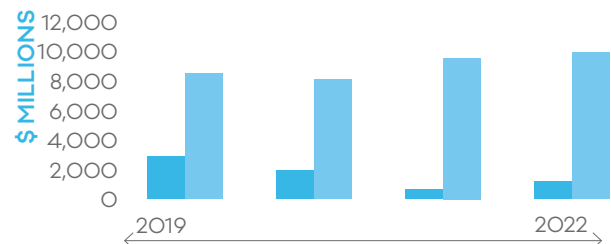
International Visitor Arrivals



Tourism Satellite Account Total employed in Tourism

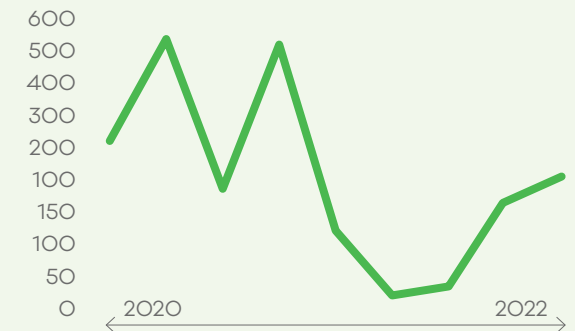


National Expenditure Year ending October 22

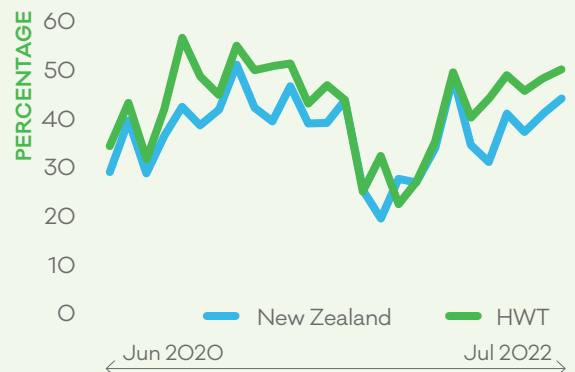


Waikato

Number of Waikato Business Events



Commercial Accommodation Occupancy rate for NZ and HWT region



Domestic Expenditure within the HWT Region



International Expenditure within the HWT Region



Community and Stakeholder Aspirations

NGĀ WAWATA O TE HAPORI ME NGĀ KAIPUPURU

To capture the aspirations of the Waikato community, the perspectives of the community, stakeholders, industry and iwi were captured. These aspirations help to identify the vision for the destination plan and articulate the priorities and opportunities that exist within the region.



Social Wellbeing TE ORANGA HAPORI

Opportunities that enabled the local communities within the Waikato region to benefit from the visitor economy was a shared aspiration from many within the community. Providing opportunities for visitors both domestic and international to engage with the local people through real and authentic engagement was identified as imperative to achieving this.

The implication from Covid is that the social licence for tourism to operate is more important than ever. Tourism needs to give back to communities and their environment, not take away.



Environmental Wellbeing TE ORANGA TAI AO

A desire for environmental wellbeing was shared throughout the consultation period. At the very heart of this aspiration was the desire for locals and visitors to the region to respect the environments they are in, and to educate people on how to engage with them in the least harmful way possible (or to give back). It should be noted that this was not about limiting access to natural assets throughout the region (such as rivers, caves, wetlands, and coast), but rather enhancing the experiences available within them.



Cultural Wellbeing TE ORANGA AHUREA

Cultural aspirations for the region came through from an engagement perspective but also in terms of visitor experiences. The Waikato region is home to a rich tapestry of cultural stories that breathe life into the histories and landscapes of the region. The ability for visitors to engage with these stories will be important to the future success of the visitor industry.



Economic Wellbeing TE ORANGA OHAOHA

Tourism provides the opportunity to create quality secure employment for all ages and build community wealth within the region. For iwi it can also lead to bringing whanau home, a leading aspiration for iwi within the region. As with all the community well-beings, economic strength within the community can help to bolster and support the other three well-beings providing multiple positive impacts and benefits throughout the region.

ASPIRATIONS IDENTIFIED

- Increased Employment
- More Events
- Diverse Community
- Diverse Experiences
- Authentic Experiences with Real People
- Placemaking

ASPIRATIONS IDENTIFIED

- The Rivers are Our Lifeblood
- Sustainability is Key
- Utilising the Waterway Assets
- Building Purpose into Brands
- Mitigating and adapting to Climate Change

ASPIRATIONS IDENTIFIED

- Maori Tourism Experiences
- Early European History
- The Battle for Land
- Kingitanga
- Better Engagement with Iwi
- Heritage, Arts and Events
- A multi-cultural lens

ASPIRATIONS IDENTIFIED

- Economic Benefit Derived from Natural and Cultural Assets
- Primary Production Cross Sector collaboration
- Events as Economic Enablers
- Education

Turning Strategies into Actions

WHANAKETANGA

Six priority areas have been identified to achieve the vision for Waikato as a visitor destination. Within each of these six priority areas are several actions that provide direction for stakeholders and partners of tourism in Waikato to assist in achieving the vision and goal.

1 Collaboration, Partnerships & Leadership

The success of a sustainable destination is in the holistic management of a destination. The visitor industry is made up of many facets including core infrastructure, visitor experiences including events, supporting services and amenities, and natural and cultural resources which are owned and/or managed by a range of partners. Unity across all sectors will provide a well-integrated visitor experience that builds on the unique strengths and competitive advantage of a regional visitor destination.

Actions

1. Effective leadership and management of the destination
2. Focus on the environmental wellbeing of natural assets
3. Develop strong and mutually beneficial relationships to ensure positive impacts for the community and growth of the visitor economy for Waikato
4. Iwi engagement
5. Measuring progress

2 Product and Experience: protection, enhancement and development

There is significant scope to build on existing assets and experiences to establish Waikato's positioning as a destination. This involves the development, diversification, and improvement of places, products and experiences for visitors (and locals). Tourism will be different post-covid and our sector needs to transition to operating and learning to live with covid. Domestic and international travellers will have different degrees of comfort and need to travel and experience the Waikato in a safe manner.

Actions

6. Protection and enhancement of current experiences and investment
7. Develop product and experiences for the journeys that enhance the positioning of the region
8. Identify placemaking opportunities for communities
9. Develop opportunities for communities to come together in their unique spaces
10. Invest in an events programme that builds on the positioning of the region
11. Develop food tourism product, journeys and events
12. Develop infrastructure and services to support the experiences and product being developed

Turning Strategies into Actions

WHANAKETANGA

3 Visitor Infrastructure and Investment

Local and central government is a significant enabler of tourism through the provision of infrastructure for both residents and visitors. Attracting investment in infrastructure that supports tourism and the visitor experience will enable better utilisation of existing infrastructure. Planning and investment, with a mix of public and private investment, levers to support, enable or incentivise, plus user-pay options are also worth considering to assist in developing new visitor infrastructure.

Actions

- 13. Identify accommodation needs throughout the region
- 14. Invest in data insights to help inform all activity across the region
- 15. Identify areas of constraint for the visitor economy (and local communities) within the region
- 16. Improve connectivity within the region

4 Capability Building

Capability building of new and established businesses includes upskilling in the areas of storytelling, environmental practices, carbon management, use of innovation and technology, quality accreditation, customer service and hosting, and an all-round sustainable business model. Additionally, tourism and event staff shortages are an issue New Zealand wide; thus, it is critical to reset and rebuild the tourism sector and attract new and returning talent to the local workforce.

Actions

- 17. Ensure connectivity between destination marketing and individual operators
- 18. Tourism and event businesses are encouraged/supported to develop capability
- 19. Education providers within the region providing career pathways into tourism

Turning Strategies into Actions

WHANAKETANGA

5 Targeted Marketing

HWT undertakes a range of domestic and international marketing activities to position the region as a destination for business, events, and leisure travellers. The below actions will build on, and feed in to, HWT's consumer, business events, media and travel trade promotional workstreams.

Actions

20. Develop the journey and travel routes positioning outlined within this plan
21. Develop campaigns specific to the positioning pillars
22. Develop higher profiles for hero/iconic experiences within the positioning pillars
23. Attracting/curating value-add business events aligned to our positioning pillars

6 Sustainable Tourism

The region holds a wealth of natural land, water and coastal assets that could provide benefit to the tourism industry and the community. Covid-19 has accelerated the regenerative tourism movement in New Zealand, creating momentum to rethink the visitor sector's purpose, the principles by which we operate and how we measure success in Waikato. An aspiration is to achieve carbon neutral status as a visitor destination and that as travellers explore, prompting visitors to work together in contributing to a carbon positive future.

Actions

24. Create movement of regenerative tourism pioneers within Waikato sector
25. Develop products and experiences aligned to regenerative tourism principles
26. Tackle climate change head-on for Waikato's visitor

