

# **Waitaki Destination Management Strategy**

## **Governance Group Terms of Reference**



**Tourism Waitaki**  
**March 2021**

## Purpose

The Waitaki Destination Management Project Governance Group will:

- Provide strategic direction and leadership to develop a Destination Management Strategy (the Strategy) for the whole of the Waitaki District as part of a wider tourism journey.
  - This work overlaps with the Te Manahuna Ki Uta/Destination Mackenzie Project which will terminate at the upper Waitaki Valley. Interdependencies will be clearly identified in the plan.
- The Plan will explore options to unlock and enable sustainable growth and resilience for the District going forward. This will inform investment planning across agencies to:
  - manage pressure on infrastructure, conservation values, communities, and the environment
  - deliver on community aspirations for the district
  - deliver on the strategic priorities of the member agencies and the Crown's Treaty Partner who hold Mana Whenua status within the Waitaki takiwā
  - protect the cultural values and history within the environment as defined by Mana Whenua
  - adhere to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/Tiriti o Waitangi
  - recover from the COVID-19 event in the form of a reset to value-based tourism
- Report back to Mana Whenua and all partners on all matters regarding the project
- Protect the cultural values and history within the environment as defined by Mana Whenua
- Adhere to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/Tiriti o Waitangi
- Work directly with the Project Sponsor, the General Manager Tourism Waitaki as required.

## Background

- The Waitaki District is a territorial authority located in the Canterbury and Otago regions. The land area extends over 7,151.94km<sup>2</sup> with 59% in Canterbury and 41% in Otago. The district straddles the traditional border between the two regions with the braided Waitaki River forming the boundary in the north. The Southern Alps are to the west and its southernmost boundary lies just below the town of Palmerston on the South Pacific coast. There are four wards – Ahuriri, Corriedale, Oamaru and Waihemo.
- Waitaki had a population of 22,308 at the 2018 New Zealand census (up 7% vs 2013). Today the resident population is estimated at 23,500. Oamaru, the district seat and main hub, is home to 13,700 residents (58%). The relatively sparsely populated area contains many farms and small rural communities. Palmerston, the second largest town has ~ 900 residents, most other rural settlements have less than 300 residents.
- While mean annual earnings in 2019 remained low vs NZ average (\$54,573 vs \$62,774), housing affordability is a recognised benefit for the district attracting new residents and investors. Businesses linked to Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services have grown ahead of all other services in the last 10 years and contributed 4.2% to GDP in 2019.
- The Waitaki District is an area of significance to Mana Whenua/Nga Rūnanga and as such there is a need to encompass and recognise the cultural values. A high level of protection is expected in order to preserve and maintain those values of the tipuna that rest within the Waitaki District, where sites of significance have or are defined by Mana Whenua and are included as geosites within the Waitaki Whitestone Geopark UNESCO submission.
- Mana Whenua for Waitaki is held by Te Rūnanga o Moeraki and Te Rūnanga ki Puketeraki. Government agencies with key roles at place include Waitaki District Council, Department of

Conservation, Land Information New Zealand and Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency and Waitaki District Council.

- Water has had a significant impact on the Waitaki valley and plays a key part in its social and cultural identity. Waitaki hydro power stations generate over a third of New Zealand's electricity. This renewable energy source provides enough electricity for >800k average New Zealand homes through a series of interconnected canals and lakes. Otematata township was developed in the 1950's to house dam workers at Aviemore and Benmore, and the world's first social welfare system developed from the township of Kurow to support workers at Waitaki dam. Benmore is the largest earth dam in the southern hemisphere and the southern portal for the inter-island DC link. The lakes are also popular with locals and visitors for camping, fishing and water sport activities.
- The Waitaki District is unique and diverse, rich in geological, historical and cultural assets. It has been endorsed by the NZ National Commission for UNESCO to become a UNESCO Global Geopark. This would be a first for New Zealand and would give worldwide status to Waitaki as an area of international significance.
- 42 sites of outstanding geological significance have been identified across the Waitaki District reflecting huge geo-diversity. Karst landforms, braided rivers, features of submarine volcanic and tectonic plate forces and fossils of an ancient marine world feature. Natural and coastal landscapes include the Ahuriri valley, Ohau moraines, Te Kaihinaki, Elephant Rocks, Puketapu and Clay Cliffs. In addition, rare glacial derived ecosystems due to the moraines provide habitats for several threatened species. The Geopark creates a unifying platform to showcase and celebrate Waitaki's unique identity and geological, historical and cultural diversity and ensure key sites are accessible, protected and enhanced for current and future generations.
- In addition, Oamaru is one of five places being proposed by Heritage New Zealand (HNZ) for national historic landmark status. The purpose is to promote an appreciation of places of greatest heritage value to the people of New Zealand. It is also to promote the conservation values of these places including protection from natural disasters. The Victorian Precinct, made from locally quarried limestone, is New Zealand's best preserved Victorian commercial streetscape and is a strong drawcard for the district.
- Two key touring routes – State Highway 1 and 8 – border the Waitaki district supporting travellers journeying from and to Christchurch, Queenstown and Dunedin. SH 83, crosses through the Waitaki valley and provides an alternative scenic drive through the Waitaki North Otago Wine region and the Lakes district via Omarama to Wanaka and Queenstown.
  - Daily traffic movements along State Highways 1, 8 and 83 are showing growth over the last five years (2015-2019). Traffic near Moeraki on SH1 is up 12.5%, while Duntroon/Kurow (SH83) and Omarama (SH8) are showing growth of ~20% and ~34% respectively as increasing numbers of visitors explore beyond Oamaru and into the Waitaki valley.

### Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

- In 2019, the Waitaki District contributed \$1,705m towards New Zealand's GDP (+3.9% vs 2018). Mining and Agriculture were the biggest contributors to economic growth (>40% of the total) with Electricity, Gas and Water Services third, contributing 13% of growth.
- ~11,500 people are employed in the Waitaki District. 18% of these are self-employed (vs 16.2% in NZ). Manufacturing and Construction also play a valuable role in the economy together contributing ~14% of GDP in 2019.
- Tourism in Waitaki grew strongly in 2019 (+11.2%) contributing \$ 95.1m (5.6% of the total GDP). The Waitaki district is heavily reliant on Domestic visitors (>75%) and post COVID-19 expenditure is relatively stable. An estimated at \$163 million was spent on tourism in the

year ending September 2020 (down 8% vs previous year). Nationally spend was down 17% over the same period.

- Post COVID-19, several key data sources are being reviewed by MBIE to ensure accuracy given changes in spending patterns, visitor profiles and industry make up. The Accommodation Data Programme is now providing more stable data. Waitaki had 50 establishments registered in October 2020 (1.7% of NZ total). Guests are staying on average 1.8 nights (vs 2.2 nationally). Mackenzie district had 30 establishments registered in this period.
- The Alps2Ocean Cycle Trail®, the longest of NZ's Great Rides, is growing in popularity as a sustainable outdoor holiday experience. Traversing more than 300km across the Aoraki-Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve and the Waitaki Whitestone Geopark, the cycle trail is attracting new businesses and residents and creating sustainable tourism business opportunities. New accommodation and hospitality outlets are opening across the Waitaki valley to service the increased visitor flow. Protecting, maintaining and enhancing the environment and the cultural values along the trail through appropriate interpretation, signage and facilities is a recognised gap today. Giving effect to the Rangatiratanga of the Mana Whenua/Nga Rūnanga with the District and the kaitiaki status they hold will be an important part of the Destination Management strategy. Enhancing geosites on the trail provides a collaboration opportunity.
- Recent Domestic Customer Segmentation research - New Zealanders in the Outdoors - conducted in March 2020 by DOC reconfirmed the mental and physical benefits of participating in outdoor experiences and connecting to nature. It also showed New Zealanders mostly want activities that are accessible in time, cost, physical ability, and location. Developing new short/day walks, picnic spots and swimming options linked to key geosites and cultural/heritage sites could encourage greater participation in outdoor activities for both locals and visitors.
- Climate change is impacting across the district with increased threats from pest species, wildfire, storms and glacier retreat, and natural disasters such as earthquakes and pandemics. Coastal erosion is of concern, especially at Moeraki and flooding in the Waitaki valley regularly impacts the cycle trail. Recent fires at Lake Ohau and Livingstone are also testament to the draught conditions to which the region is prone.
- Visitors to Waitaki are welcomed by locals and overall public sentiment is positive towards them. As visitor numbers increase, however, there is a need to ensure fit for purpose facilities at key geosites and appropriate conservation measures are in place at popular locations (e.g. Te Kaihinaki/ Moeraki Boulders and the Waitaki Lakes). The strategic location, provision and servicing of parking, e-charging stations, camping, toilets, rubbish facilities and food & beverage along the state highway network is critical to managing the cumulative impact and quality of the visitor experience.
- Border closure and the lack of international visitors is impacting tourism everywhere. In Oamaru, businesses reliant on visitors from Asia have been negatively impacted. Several shops in the CBD are struggling or have closed and the Blue Penguin Colony has been significantly impacted. Overall job losses have, however, been contained due to the strength of the agricultural, mining, manufacturing and construction industries in the district.
- In the short to medium term tourism in New Zealand will be very different with consequences for tourism towns like Queenstown and small communities like those in the Waitaki District. However, as the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment has shown in his report 'Pristine, Popular and Imperilled', unless we make significant and deliberate changes, in the long-term the same issues will likely return with even greater impacts for communities and the environment.
- Re-imagining tourism is a government priority. The New Zealand Tourism Futures Taskforce is an independent public private partnership set up in June 2020 by the Minister of Tourism

to lead the thinking of the future of tourism in New Zealand. The Taskforce purpose is to advise on what changes NZ can make to the tourism system so that tourism enriches both New Zealand and the wellbeing of New Zealanders. An initial report is due in December 2020 and final recommendation in April 2021. Post the election, the new Minister of Tourism is visibly supporting community led Destination Management delivered through Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs).

- The Destination Management Strategy will be cognizant of the Futures Taskforce work and the changing tourism context. In addition, it will explore opportunities to promote the cultural context within the Waitaki District, share stories with visitors, shape its reputation as a destination, create value for the District and its communities, and strategically target investment.
- The long-term goal is to achieve a vibrant, dynamic and sustainable future for the Waitaki District based on high quality visitor experiences, its natural landscape, historic, cultural and community values. This project will enable the key partners to work together collaboratively to manage the pressures, take advantage of the opportunities and achieve that future.

### What is Destination Management?

- Destination Management is a coordinated management of all aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience, including visitors, residents, business and industry and Iwi.
- The purpose is to create sustainable growth and resilience for the benefit of the local community including:
  - Environmental, economic, social, and cultural outcomes
  - Co-ordination of "the system" horizontally (across government, Mana Whenua, and partners) & vertically (throughout the visitor journey)
  - A Plan that has vision and strategy that reflects Mana Whenua and stakeholders' aspirations
  - Alignment between national, regional and local tourism frameworks
  - A commitment to Kaitiakitanga and environmental stewardship as part of a sustainable approach to tourism development.
  - Adoption of the UNESCO Sustainable Development framework by the Waitaki Whitestone Geopark.

### Why is a Destination Management Plan required?

The short to medium term is uncertain due to COVID-19, while in the long-term growth in visitor arrivals is forecast to continue with impacts on the environment and community. To address this, we need:

- A shared and clear long-term vision for the District
- To recognise, protect, maintain, and enhance the values of Mana Whenua
- A clear strategy to sustainably manage growth and associated impacts, or sudden changes in demand, the environment, or external shocks
- Integrated spatial, visitor and Geopark management plans and resources to address pressure on the environment, conservation land and waters and Council reserves
- High quality, safe visitor experiences
- Communities to value and support the tourism sector, hosting visitors and treating them like locals.
- Long-term regional planning and investment to manage visitor growth that meets international and New Zealand best practice standards.

There are important lessons we must apply to re-shape the way we plan for and manage visitors to the Waitaki District in the long-term so that the system:

- Is inherently sustainable socially, environmentally, culturally and financially
- Is resilient to external shocks, including global economic crises, pandemics, and the wide-ranging effects of climate change
- Enables Mana Whenua and the community to shape opportunities to achieve their aspirations
- Protects the cultural, environmental and community values that are at the heart of our wellbeing and success

### Partnership with Ngāi Tahu

Co-design with Mana Whenua is crucial to the process so that the planning work is informed by Mana Whenua values and aspirations for Waitaki, Te Manahuna and Aoraki.

### General Goals and Objectives

General goals and objectives of the project are:

- A long-term goal around achieving a vibrant, dynamic, resilient, and sustainable future for the Waitaki District based on high quality visitor experiences and its natural landscape, historic, cultural and community values.
- To develop, in collaboration with Mana Whenua/Nga Rūnanga, the community and across agencies, a shared and clear vision and direction for the Waitaki District over the next 10 years through a Destination Management Strategy that will:
  - assist master planning for separate consideration for community processes to articulate accompanying infrastructure and high-level spatial planning needs as outcomes
  - advise decision makers and investors' lead priorities for how to invest wisely
  - arrive at a shared vision to take all partners forward
  - address a variety of immediate and longer-term needs
  - improve conservation and awareness of climate change impacts
- We want to foster a future where the threads of social wellbeing, economic prosperity, environmental protection, recognition of culture and heritage, and promoting sustainable futures, binds Mana Whenua, communities and local businesses together in harmony to make our place, our home special, where visitors are treated as locals.
- The Strategy will clearly articulate:
  - How Mana Whenua will give effect to their aspirations for whānau through opportunities to educate and inform visitors and the community on the cultural landscape of the Waitaki District and support for UNESCO Global Geopark deliverables.
  - Aspirations, goals and objectives for tourism, community, conservation, business, and employment, as well as Mana Whenua cultural values including economic development and stimulating economic resilience in small communities.
  - In collaboration with Iwi and DOC provide guidance to address challenges at Te Kaihinaki/ Moeraki Boulders and other significant geosites, transport to the district and tourism sector sustainability.
  - The connections between the tourism flow from Christchurch to Queenstown and Dunedin, present and future experiences in the District, and the infrastructure that supports them.

- Spatial view of the District, Region, and inter-regions
- The proposed mechanisms to manage impacts and derive benefits of growth
- Priorities for action in the short, medium, and longer-term to achieve these aspirations, goals, and objectives (including infrastructure)
- Roles, responsibilities, and inter-relationships to deliver these actions
- Provide guidance as to how to work in co-management with our Treaty Partner.
- Key relationships or can establish functional networks and strong relationships in the District with Mana Whenua and the wider community and be able to foster new relationships where required.

## Facilitator Capacity and Capability

The Facilitator will have the capacity and capability to:

- Commission the programme of work outlined in the Scope of Works and in accordance with the requirements in the Facilitator's brief
- Develop for approval of project briefs and plans for projects and/or studies in consultation with Project Sponsor and with the support of the Working Group
- Prepare and submit Facilitator programme level reports, project reports, governance group reports, working group reports, ministerial and agency briefings, and reports
- Prepare and monitor Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plans
- Prepare and monitor risk and issues registers
- Monitor progress and completion of projects as per approved project plans.
- Build relationships or establish functional networks and strong relationships in the Waitaki and Mackenzie Districts with Mana Whenua/DOC and the wider community and able to foster new relationships where required.
- Have a strong background and track record working within the tourism sector.
- Have specific experience in destination management matters and development of relevant strategies.
- Facilitate workshops comprising participants from both the public and private sector.
- Understand central and local government planning processes.
- Have commercial and political acumen.

## Communication and Results

- Internal project related communications between the Governance Group, Working Group and contractors will be managed by the appointed Facilitator under supervision of the Project Sponsor.
- All external communications will be the responsibility of the Chair of the Governance Group and after consultation with and approval by all partners in the Governance Group.
- The Facilitator will prepare for approval by all partners, all written material to be communicated externally by the Chair on behalf of the Governance Group.
- External communications will be supported and managed by the Facilitator through a Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan, supported by an approved Key Messages document for use by partners outside of formal communications.
- The Facilitator will prepare Ministerial and Contract Briefings for communication by the Project Sponsor.
- The Governance Group will ensure that all requests to prepare and communicate material are made in a timely manner and will maintain a 'no surprises' approach with Tourism Waitaki Board and Waitaki District Council.

## Results

- The Strategy will be publicised in such a form and manner that it is publicly available including the supporting data and final reports.

## Risks

- Risks will continually be monitored by the Facilitator in consultation with the Project Sponsor, reported regularly and all partners will be notified / communicated with as appropriate operating on a 'no-surprises' basis.

## Governance Structure, Roles and Principles:

The project will have the following functional groups:

- Governance Group
- Project Working Group

### Role of the Governance Group

- Provide overall direction for the project.
- Ensure clearly defined and detailed objectives for the project are delivered on.
- Be strong advocates for the project – locally, regionally, and nationally.
- Ensure there is a high level of communication with all significant interest groups.
- Ensure the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are adhered to at all times.

### Role of Project Working Group

- Provide a consistent 'day to day' point of contact for the Facilitator on behalf of the Governance Group.
- Maintain oversight of the project's progress and report back to the Governance Group.
- Undertake cross-agency work as required: – Partners ensure their representative and staff are task orientated.
- Ensure resources are made available and there is access to those resources from those agencies respectively, including staff time.
- Ensure all information is circulated in a timely manner.
- Identify risks in consultation with the Project Sponsor.

### Role of Project Sponsor

- Drives and keeps project aligned with Waitaki District Council strategy and plan.
- Oversight of investment against programme.
- Manages the outputs/results and delivery of the Facilitator's work programme against the project milestones and reports back to MBIE.
- Manages project risks and frequently reports these to Tourism Waitaki board and Waitaki District Council.
- Advises Waitaki District Council elected members on the project.
- Requires reporting and monitoring information from the Facilitator.

### Role of the Facilitator

- Project oversight and delivery.
- Liaison with all partners and stakeholders in consultation with the Project Sponsor.
- Manages budget in consultation with the Project Sponsor.
- Project Management / Co-ordination.
- Project Communication.
- Project Reporting.
- Reports to the Project Sponsor.



## Operating Principles

The Governance Group will:

- Engage proactively and effectively with all partners, commit to the sharing of information and resources across partners to best support the development and implementation of the Strategy, including but not limited to attending meetings, sourcing information, reviewing documents and delivering programmes, projects and strategic interventions.
- Commit to use 'best endeavours' to share knowledge and information in a timely manner and meet project timelines specified by the Governance Group.
- Commit to a 'no surprises' approach and philosophy.
- Promote a co-operative culture, encourage robust discussion and effective working relationships through acting in good faith and working together in a spirit of open and transparent collaboration.
- Bring all issues and differences of opinion to the Governance Group for resolution and be clear when and how they have been resolved or be clear that a difference of opinion remains.
- Seek consensus in its decision making wherever possible. Where, despite the best endeavours of members unanimous agreement is not achieved, a decision may be taken if in the view of the significant majority it represents the best interests of all partners. In the event of a vote, a majority of 6 is required.
- Seek assistance jointly from the Chief Executives of all agencies to further Governance deliberations if neither unanimous agreement is reached, nor a significant majority formed.
- Frequently report back to the Tourism Waitaki board and Waitaki District Council with recommendations for final decision making and adoption of the Waitaki Destination Management Strategy.
- Be active in the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and observe tikanga Māori at all times.
- Protect the IP of all partners at all times.

## Engagement principles

- Be culturally aware and sensitive, observing tikanga Māori at all times.
- Identify stakeholders, form a stakeholder reference group and prepare a stakeholder engagement and communication strategy.
- Engage frequently and effectively with all stakeholders.
- Advocate for the importance of the Waitaki District as a unique destination of national significance for its natural, cultural, tikanga Māori and landscape values, which provides a range of opportunities through tourism for the Waitaki District and its neighbours.

## Accountability

The Governance Representatives of the Waitaki District Community and the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment will monitor the activities and performance of the Governance Group. The Facilitator will report to the Project Sponsor, GM Tourism Waitaki. The Governance group will ratify the Strategy. A full Destination Management Plan will be developed as Stage Two of the project once the Strategy has been ratified.

## Timeframes

The Governance Group will meet at six weekly intervals following appointment of the Facilitator until the Strategy is concluded.