

20 January 2023

IMA grouping	Canterbury & West Coast
RTOs covered	ChristchurchNZ, Venture Timaru, Hurunui Tourism, Development West Coast, Destination Kaikōura, Mackenzie Tourism, Selwyn, Ashburton, Waimakariri
Reporting period	1 July 2022 – 31 December 2022

Summary report of five key achievements from the IMA grouping during the reporting period

1. Across this reporting period (01 July 2022 – 31 December 2022), 22 events proceeded, 2 events were postponed.

Final figures are still coming in from event organisers but to date approximately 70,000 attended the 22 events, attracting approximately 28,000 visitors to the region.

The postponements of events in this reporting period due to COVID –19 was significantly lower than the previous reporting period.

2. Ashburton: The REF Panel approved to fund an Events Advisor role in partnership with Ashburton District Council. This will be a two-year role with both parties funding equal amounts of \$45,000 annually. The intention is that the role will be self-funding with that timeframe by attracting events into the region that come with a budget for event management.

Christchurch: Hosting MEETINGS 2022 in Christchurch (funded in FY21/22) generated a huge amount of interest for the region, attracting 300 New Zealand and 110 Australian meetings industry buyers. This generated over \$200,000 estimated media coverage, showcased our new infrastructure, and positioned the region as a world-class destination for business events.

Successful bids to host three significant business events – attracting up to 2500 international delegates and generating over \$4M estimated visitor spend to the region.

Over the last 6 months the focus has been on developing the Major Events Implementation plan and prospecting plan which aligns to the Major Events Strategy. This has involved refining our processes for attracting the right events that drive visitation, identifying key thresholds which events need to meet to be considered for funding and working out our unique selling point as a city. This has allowed Christchurch to become proactive in the prospecting space and has supported Christchurch with its long-term planning required for the Council annual plan and LTP process – which will support Christchurch post REF.

In terms of business events, 2022 has been focussed on establishing a framework for funding decisions to achieve priority outcomes identified in the regional investment plan and provide legacy benefits for Christchurch growth industries. The focus for 2023 will shift to proactively seeking opportunities for allocating the Business Events funding.

Hurunui: In its second year, the Alpine Winter Festival was held; it would not have gone ahead without REF funding.

The Hanmer Springs Fete and Hurunui Garden Festival, held during the same week, significantly impacted the local economy.

Support for the North Course, a new (non-ticketed) food and beverage event was also provided.

Kaikoura: Strategic Business events planning is underway. In the first half of 2023 hosting of a Business Events capability workshop for local operators interested in working in this space is being considered. With the opening of the new Sudima Hotel in Kaikoura (which has conference space) this a pivotal

time to be attracting Business Events to Kaikoura. Having attended MEETINGS in 2022, a lot of positive feedback was received from this market interested in Kaikoura. However, there is a lack of knowledge / experience in this space with Kaikoura operators and its essential to ensure they are well equipped to understand these buyer's needs so further attraction of these events can happen. This market has been identified as important for Kaikoura, and an area of events that is believed to have capacity for real growth in terms of increasing visitor spend and stays.

Further to this is consideration of how to grow local event organiser event capability (across the board for all events). Many of the event organisers locally are volunteers and have limited resource. As part of REF, the cost of mentorship & to attend workshops/ seminars for some of our event organisers (provided they meet a certain criteria) can be met. This would be the most cost effective and time effective way of growing our event organisers capability.

Destination Kaikōura has also been able to continue to employ the Marketing & Events Engagement Manager through this funding. This has allowed Destination Kaikōura consistency in the management of regional events funding at a regional level and work with event organisers to seek new and develop existing events.

Mackenzie: Race Tekapo, a new event for the region, was held in September and intentionally aimed to stimulate domestic visitation over the shoulder season.

The event received \$25k investment from REF. Tekapo township was at full capacity for the event weekend, and the event attracted media interest including national TV. Extremely positive feedback was received from community stakeholders and businesses, who loved seeing a vibrant town again – and having a domestic focused event that showcased their region at its best.

The third contestable event funding round was held in November 2022 – this was a minor round with the main round taking place in April/May. This round received two event applications which were both successful in securing funding – including specific capability support package tagged to one event.

The event investment into Twizel Salmon and Wine Festival has enabled Twizel Promotions (the owner of the event) to contract an event professional company to reimagine the popular festival that enhances the region's profile as leaders in salmon farming. The region is already seeing great benefits come from the event partnership including a new brand, sponsorship partners and refined offering. This new direction would not have happened without the REF funding.

Selwyn: All funding was granted in the 21 May 2021 to 31 December 2021 period. No further funding awarded during this period. Planning is underway for an events capacity building programme early 2023.

Timaru: The success of the inaugural Brews on the Bay, that attracted a large number of local attendees and strong out of region visitation (1600 in total). The event proved to be an excellent fit for the regional demographic, appealing to the beer drinking enthusiasts, who are prepared to spend money.

This is a great foundation - establishment of the new event, Brews on the Bay, is one on which future Brews events can now build. Following the event, interest is already high from stallholders and attendees eager to secure their space/tickets for 2023.

There has also been the successful completion of the second SCOFF festival, celebrating South Canterbury's growers, producers and artisan creators. This year, the festival was extended to 15 days, as requested by participating eateries and the public. Enthusiasm for the event is growing, with increased awareness by locals and people from the wider region.

Waimakariri: A funding round was held in this period during August 2022 with one application. The North Course.

The event that was funded – The North Course ran in this period – the month of October 2022. The event was a huge success and was co-funded with Hurunui's REF funding of \$10,000 and a further \$5000 from the North Canterbury Wine Growers. A full report is available.

It has also been a boon for the region having Zoe Williams join the team at Visit Waimakariri/ENC to enable growth of the events sector in the region.

Development West Coast: DWC contracted One Picture Event Evaluation (\$35k) covering an entire year of event evaluations for any event happening on the West Coast – with access to emails. Granting event promoters, the ability to outsource the event evaluation and DWC a platform to extract an overall NPS per event and determine the value of events to drive visitation on the West Coast.

The Regional Event Strategy was also finalised and will be published in Feb 2023. The regional event strategy sets a framework to drive events and capability in the region.

Fresh Info, who complete major event evaluations, conducted the evaluation of AGFEST 2022 the second largest event on the West Coast. Fresh Info will also be conducting an event Evaluation for Wildwoods 2023. This unique piece of research is vital to better understand the role of events, their impact on visitor segments and motivations and flow through.

3. 22 events proceeded in this reporting period, as noted in the attached Event Register. Some events highlighted included:

Ashburton:

- The inaugural Glow In the Park occurred in July. This was a rescheduled event that was due to run in 2021. The event attracted approximately 9600 attendees over the three nights and was a wonderfully successful free family run event.
- August saw the return of WhiteOut to Methven for the third year in a row. Growth in this event saw an increase in attendees to nearly double that of 2021 (2021 – 1,500 attendees, 2022 – 2,500 attendees). A third performance stage was added and an additional 6 Dj's from the previous year. 24.9% of attendees came from outside the Canterbury district.

Christchurch:

- Tri Series (cricket) at Hagley Park brought a lot of international visitation with 2 international teams plus the BLACKCAPS plus a variety of fans from round the country. TV coverage was also a strong outcome for this event series too.

Hurunui Tourism:

- Supported the Alpine Winter Festival, the Hanmer Springs Fete and the Hurunui Garden Festival with funding from REF, with over 16,000 attendees at these three events (approx. 7,000 out of region)

Kaikoura:

- Supported Crayfest 2022. Results haven't yet been received as the final report is not due until late January 2023 and the event organiser is currently unwell.
- Supported Kaikoura Whale Run – Event organisers reported 428 total number of attendees, with 353 of these from out of region. With an average daily expenditure of around \$88 of visiting attendees.

Mackenzie:

Mackenzie Half, Race Tekapo, Twizel Hard Labour, Mackenzie Buckle Series all completed successful events in this period.

Selwyn:

- No events in past 6 months – concentration over next 6 months on capability building.

Timaru:

- The success of the inaugural Brews on the Bay, that attracted a large number of local attendees and good out of region visitation (1,600 in total). The event proved to be an excellent fit for the regional demographic, appealing to the beer drinking enthusiasts, who are prepared to spend money. Establishment of the new event, Brews on the Bay, on which future Brews events can now build. Following the event, interest is already high from stallholders and attendees eager to secure their space/tickets for 2023.
- Successful completion of the second SCOFF festival, celebrating South Canterbury's growers, producers, and artisan creators. This year, the festival was extended to 15 days, as requested by participating eateries and the public. Enthusiasm for the event is growing, with increased awareness by locals and people from the wider region. (15,000 attendees, 5,000 from out of the region)

Waimakariri:

- The North Course held in October 2022 was a huge success and was co-funded with Hurunui's REF funding of \$10,000 and a further \$5,000 from the North Canterbury Wine Growers. With over 500 attendees at the event.

West Coast:

- No events in past 6 month - with Development West Coast receiving eleven event applications in the September 2022 funding, nine new events are being funded from.

4. Development West Coast, Mackenzie, Waimakariri, Destination Kaikoura & Ashburton ran funding rounds during this period. Christchurch's funding round intends to open April/May 2023.

5. Up till now, a lot of the tagged REF has been rolled to future financial years. This was largely due to consumer confidence, COVID –19 restrictions and lockdowns making event organisers hesitant or unable to run events or apply for funding. Staffing is also a massive issue which has a flow on effect to event organisers, especially those that rely on local food and hospitality staff to deliver, meaning some KPIs between RTO/ event organiser won't be met, but understandable during such a difficult period.

On the positive side, REF has enabled the region to plan for more capability building of Event Organisers with the intention of increasing:

- Knowledge around technology – event evaluation, event promotion, and ticketing;
- Professional marketing through social, and digital channels;
- Connection with other Event organisers, thus increasing cross selling, and promotion;
- Volunteers, vendors and overall resources within the region to support events;
- Cultural events– especially Māori cultural events – increasing capability and resources.