



ROTORUA

EVENT STRATEGY TO 2025



1.

INTRODUCTION

Events are a major contributor to national, regional, and local economic development, tourism, and community outcomes and are an important tool for promoting Rotorua as a great place to visit, live and work.

Events support the district's growth strategy, add considerably to the destination brand and help to grow visitation.

Rotorua has a long history of investing in major events, and has grown its reputation as a major event destination hosting world-class events such as Crankworx.

In recent years, major event investment has focused predominantly on sport-based events. While these unlock some of the district's natural assets, including the forest and lakes, they have not fully delivered on the more strategic objectives that support broad economic, destination and community outcomes.

Rotorua currently supports the delivery of four types of events:

- Sporting events
- Arts and culture events
- Community and inner city events staged at Council facilities or grounds
- Business events

The significant investment in a Destination Management Plan during 2021 signalled the need for a new Event Strategy to ensure Rotorua has a thriving and future-proofed events industry.



2. OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVERAGE



The unique positioning of Rotorua

Events were identified as an area of focus in the Rotorua Destination Management Plan to help support the destination brand, and to amplify its value proposition.

While Rotorua is the home of manaakitanga, it does not yet have a signature event that talks to Rotorua's unique offerings. This will be a key opportunity to be leveraged in this new event strategy.

Balancing investment and benefits, for all

There has historically been an over-reliance on sporting events to deliver a return on investment. With arts and cultural events and facilities now emerging, there is an opportunity to re-balance the portfolio from an investment perspective, and in terms of the benefits to local businesses and the community at large.

A more diversified portfolio of events that deliver against a clearly articulated strategy and outcomes will be key to achieving these broader benefits.

A powerful portfolio of events

There are currently a few existing events and events under development in the Rotorua portfolio that can be built on and extended/refined or refreshed, to build into a powerful portfolio of events.

It will be important to ensure that these events are, wherever possible, unique in their offering and differentiated from other events in New Zealand, especially in the North Island.

3.

STRATEGY IN SUMMARY

We will have:

- Clear objectives for investment in events for the next five to ten years
- Criteria in support of investment in events, including recommended levels of investment and resource allocation
- A transition and procurement plan to achieve the desired event position and programme
- A new coordinated approach to event leadership and delivery – one team, with a clear mandate, and specialist skills
- A review of facility policy and objectives in relation to return on investment, investment in events, with consistent commercial measures
- An enhanced sales approach to bid for and host events.



4.

FOUR NEW EVENT OUTCOMES

This event strategy has identified four core outcomes that future investment in events will deliver. These outcomes align and cascade up to:

- Current Council policy and strategy including Rotorua's Strategy 2030
- The Destination Management Plan
- Sector development strategies in community, sport, arts and culture and business event development.

The NEW strategic outcomes from investment in events are:

- Economic growth
- Build brand Rotorua
- Engaging the community
- Supporting sector development.

Event owners/managers will be required to report against the measures set out in each of the relevant outcome areas as part of their event funding agreement.





1. Economic Growth

Rotorua will invest in those events that demonstrate clear and tangible contribution to the economic growth of Rotorua.

Measures of economic growth for the purpose of investment in events will include:

- Visitation as measured by visitor numbers (domestic and international), and the value they bring to Rotorua (as measured by spend)
- Employment - the number of jobs created or maintained through the staging and delivery of an event
- Sponsorship and investment – additional investment (new money) into Rotorua including sponsorship and investment from public and private sources, and ticket sales
- Net benefit of the event, as independently assessed and validated.

2. Build Brand Rotorua

In order to receive funding and support, events must demonstrate how they build Brand Rotorua, as a place to visit, live, work, study and do business.

Measures of building Brand Rotorua for the purpose of investment in events will include:

- Evidence of reinforcing the unique Rotorua character and spirit based on:
 - Active geothermal environments that inspire and nourish
 - Vibrant and expressive Māori culture at the heart of life
 - Invigorating experiences and iconic natural attractions that are accessible to all
- Satisfaction in the event delivery and hosting of events
- Positive media coverage in New Zealand and where appropriate overseas
- Engagement (not just impressions/views) with event followers via digital channels
- Visitor perceptions around living, visiting and doing business in Rotorua.

3. Engaging the Community

Community engagement outcomes are the third pillar for investment in events. In this pillar events must demonstrate their ability to contribute to building community pride, identity, cohesion and inclusion.

Measures of an engaged community for the purpose of investment in events will include:

- Resident pride
- Resident liveability
- Participation by residents in the event, in a volunteer or attendee capacity.

4. Enabling Sector Development

The final pillar for investment in events, is the extent to which they contribute to the achievement of sector development strategies. This is a new outcome for events, and reflects the importance of sector development as part of Rotorua's overall growth strategy, and the important role of events in supporting sector growth and development.

For the purpose of this event strategy, sector strategies prioritised for support include:

- Sport sector development – with a focus on the value proposition of sports events leveraging Rotorua's unique capitals, and supporting the positioning of the home of Māori sport
- Arts and culture sector development – with a focus on the performing arts sector and those events that enhance Rotorua's reputation as the heart of Māori cultural expression in New Zealand
- Business events development – with a focus on indigenous culture (including film), forestry and forest based sciences, geothermal, environmental sciences (i.e. volcanology) and health and wellness.

Measures in support of sector development for the purpose of investment in events include:

- GDP by sector
- Other sector specific measures, to be agreed.



5.

WHAT TYPES OF EVENTS WILL WE INVEST IN?

Going forward Rotorua will invest in four types of events:

- Sporting events – those that deliver on Rotorua’s unique positioning and natural landscape
- Arts and culture events – those that deliver on Rotorua’s position as the centre of Māori arts and culture
- Community and CBD revitalisation events – creating a sense of place, connecting and supporting communities
- Business events – leveraging Rotorua’s accommodation and venue offering.

These events will be underpinned by:

- Manaakitanga - naturally and authentically delivered and experienced events
- High quality event venues and open spaces
- A wide range of accommodation offerings and price-points
- Strategic relationships with tourism, travel, and event stakeholders
- Long-term strategy, bidding and sales leadership.

Rotorua will also prioritise events that:

- Acknowledge and support Te Arawa’s goals and vision
- Support our destination management sustainability targets and promote a carbon neutral/positive status
- Give back to the community through training opportunities, environmental regeneration or other means of community support.



In order to guide overall investment and transition from current investment in events, we propose a new investment framework. This is based on a new tier system of events, with investment criteria for each tier.

Event Investment Framework

Delivery on outcomes (Economics, Brand, Community and Sector Development)		Sports Events	Arts and Culture Events	Business Events	Community and CBD Revitalisation Events	Level of investment (% of total event funding available)
Tier 1:	Deliver on all four outcomes	One major event	One major event	N/A	N/A	40%
Tier 2:	Deliver on three or more outcomes	Up to three events	Up to three events	One event per priority sector	N/A	30%
Tier 3:	Deliver on two or more outcomes	Up to 20 events	Up to 20 events	Unlimited provided they meet revenue targets	Up to 10 unique events	30%

Underpinned by:

Event Marketing and Communications

Design, digital marketing, communications (internal within RLC, visitor within RotoruaNZ)

Event Delivery

Dedicated Event Manager from wo to go, within one event team

Event Sales/Bidding

Dedicated team to assess and recommend events for investment and to drive sales of RLC venues

Insights and Review

Impact assessment and ROI analysis via RLC event measurement tool

Rights based agreements

With obligations around destination branding, ROI, KPIs, obligations for any funding - direct and indirect

Tier 1: Events for Investment

Tier 1 is for those events that deliver on all four strategic outcomes, and in so doing:

- Position Rotorua both domestically and internationally
- Provide net benefit to Rotorua of over \$1m per annum
- Create media interest and digital following in both New Zealand and internationally
- Attract visitors, participants or attendees from around New Zealand, and overseas.

It is proposed that there are two events at Tier 1 at any one time – one sporting event, and one event in the arts and culture sector.

It is anticipated that investment in Tier 1 will comprise up to 40% of the total investment funds available, and that these funds may not only be used for investment in current Tier 1 events, but in investigating and developing events for future growth, and/or bidding for another event for succession purposes.

Tier 2: Events for Investment

Tier 2 is for those events that deliver on three or more strategic outcomes, and in so doing:

- Position Rotorua domestically with potential to do so internationally
- Provide net benefit to Rotorua of over \$.5m per annum
- Create media interest and digital following in New Zealand with potential to do so internationally
- Attract visitors, participants or attendees from around New Zealand, with high levels of Rotorua participation and engagement in the events.

It is proposed that there are up to 11 events at Tier 2 at any one time – three sporting events, three events in the arts and culture sector, and one event in each of the five priority business sectors.

It is anticipated that investment in Tier 2 will comprise up to 30% of the total investment funds available, and that these funds may not only be used for investment in the current Tier 2 events, but in investigating, developing and bidding for events for Tier 2 consideration.

Tier 3: Events for Investment

Tier 3 is for those events that deliver on two or more strategic outcomes, and in so doing:

- Position Rotorua as a great place to live or visit;
- Provide net benefit to Rotorua of under \$.5m per annum;
- Create local and regional media interest, and digital following; and
- Attract visitors, participants or attendees from around the region, with high levels of Rotorua participation and engagement in the events.

The number of events at Tier 3 is not limited in the business events sector but is limited to 20 for investment purposes in sporting and arts and culture events. Community and CBD activation events are limited to 10 unique events, for investment purposes.

It is anticipated that investment in Tier 3 will comprise up to 30% of the total investment funds available.

Other event support

It is understood that there will be a number of other events that will receive low level event facilitation and support.

While not candidates for event investment, these events will still need to demonstrate that they meet one or more of the event criteria, and that they can be delivered to an acceptable standard with appropriate event management systems, health and safety plans, and adherence to agreed event marketing and branding protocols.

In return for this low level support, these events will be required to provide details on the number of participants and volunteers (local and visitors), any local or regional media coverage secured, and the extent to which they contributed to one or more of the event outcomes.

For more information about the Rotorua Event Strategy, please contact:

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