

## WellingtonNZ – Wairarapa Activity Update

30 January 2025

This activity report is provided to the three Wairarapa district councils to give visibility on activities that are being delivered by WellingtonNZ in Wairarapa, that sit outside the Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy (WEDS) Work Programme.

### 1. Wellington Regional Economic Development Plan (REDP) Activities

*The REDP exists to guide the long-term direction of the economy and will help drive high-impact economic initiatives over the next 10 years. It's about futureproofing the region and making sure it thrives economically, ensuring that our region is a great place for everyone to live, including our Māori and Pasifika communities, and it's also about improving wellbeing and the quality of life. WellingtonNZ is the lead organisation for implementation of the REDP and is governed by the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee (WRLC). The WRLC membership includes mana whenua, Local Authority Members (Mayors), and Central Government Ministers. There are five Wairarapa projects included in the REDP, these are: Food & Fibre (Primary) Sector, Wairarapa Workforce Development, Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy, Five Towns Trail Network, and Dark Skies.*

#### **Dark Skies**

The Dark Skies Steering Group has been reactivated by the three Wairarapa District Councils and a part time resource has been contracted to provide coordination support. The Group held their first meeting in December with a focus on establishing a unified Action Plan for the region to deliver on, a draft has been circulated for feedback from members and the next meeting will be held in late-February.

There are a number of actions already in delivery. Masterton District Council are progressing their accreditation to join the Reserve and are working with Milky-Way.Kiwi to run a second Business Capability Course that was piloted in 2024.

WellingtonNZ continue to identify economic development opportunities to support Dark Skies work, including business activations and education engagements.

#### **Five Towns Trail Network**

WellingtonNZ has provided the Five Towns Trail Trust with funding for their branding and funding strategy projects. At a recent progress meeting, the Trustees and their Project Coordinator reported they expect to publicly launch the Trust in Q3. The Trust are formulating their funding strategy in preparation for attracting investment to start construction on new trails in the region. WellingtonNZ are proactively exploring possible avenues to source Central Government funding to progress the Five Towns Trail Network.

#### **Girls who Grow**

WellingtonNZ provided co-funding to launch the programme to the Wellington region in the 2024 school year. The Wairarapa programme ran successfully with WellingtonNZ being asked to be one of the judges at the Imagination Challenge and join the students at their on-farm fieldtrip days. In the 2025 school year, the seven groups of Wairarapa students are progressing their water projects (from the 2024 Imagination Challenge Day) through the Young Enterprise Scheme or Girls who Grow mentors (where the YES is not offered in schools) this year.

#### **Industrial Land Use Study**

The Industrial Land Study report has been updated to reflect the Working Group's feedback, recommendations, and identified next steps to progress this work. The update will be presented to the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee at their meeting in March. This meeting will determine how best to continue this work, including consideration for site readiness assessments.

## 2. Business Growth & Innovation Activities

*At WellingtonNZ, our role is to support businesses to grow and innovate, and build a stronger, more connected regional business community. WellingtonNZ's Business Growth and Innovation team works with businesses right across the Wellington region. The team work to connect businesses with the right people, advice and resources they need to grow and innovate. The team administer the Regional Business Partners Network Programme, on behalf of Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment for the region, and connect businesses to innovation and development opportunities through Callaghan Innovation.*

### **During the second quarter, support to Wairarapa included:**

Number and type of businesses supported by One:Some (small group) funding and Management Capability Funding (one-on-one):

- 4x Construction
- 4x Agriculture (and Winery)
- 4x Professional, Scientific, and Technical
- 6x Tourism and Hospitality
- 1x Education and Training

One of these businesses received funding from the Management Capability Fund on Business and Marketing planning training as the management aims to diversify the business and expand the team. Another business received Management Capability Funding for Strategic Business Planning.

There were two One:Some capability training workshops that were held in the region in partnership with Business Wairarapa, Destination Wairarapa, and professional service providers. The Sales and Marketing workshop for tourism and hospitality businesses was delivered by Perkins Coaching with 8 business attendance and the Leadership Accelerator on developing skills in self-leadership was delivered by Leadership NZ with 10 businesses in attendance.

### **Callaghan Innovation**

Three businesses in Aquaculture and high-technology industries were supported with capital education, beyond IP (intellectual property training), product market validation resources, and with enquiries on New-to-R&D grants, R&D experienced grants, Arohia Evidence Grants, Arohia Trail Blazer Grants, and Career Grants.

### **Other engagement:**

Activities by Growth Managers to network and promote business support in the region:

- Māori in Business engagement in Wairarapa.
- Engagement with Innov8 Aotearoa regarding RBPN support.
- 60-sec pitch presentation on Callaghan Innovation and RBPN support at the Aerospace Business Connect Expo.
- Gifted Toast Martinborough tickets (two tickets each) to Māori in Business and Business Wairarapa.
- Engagement at the Wairarapa Business Awards.

## 3. Screen Wellington (Film Office) Activities

*Wellington UNESCO City of Film offers a diverse range of unique locations and local expertise, all within easy reach of award-winning production facilities. Screen Wellington (part of WellingtonNZ) work closely across the region to support productions to find the perfect locations, connect to support business, keep crews and communities safe and issuing permits to film in public spaces.*

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) refresh for Film Production and Permitting is underway. The Screen Wellington team have commenced briefing meetings with council officers to give them an overview of the MoU contents and agree the preferred approach for executing the new MoUs. Destination Wairarapa have indicated they will continue to support the Screen Wellington team on location scouting for Wairarapa moving forward.

#### 4. Māori Economic Development Activities

The Māori Economic Development programme is now being led by WellingtonNZ's Business Growth Team. The team are working on how to best support the 14 projects in this programme. This includes the Wairarapa Māori Economic Development Strategy (Kākano) where the team are following up from the wānanga with businesses, business network and mana whenua to explore aspirations of Māori in Wairarapa.

The team have also contracted Mel Ahnau to lead the Programmes Procurement initiative. This project is partnering with Māori businesses and large entities who are focusing on more equitable participation in their procurement processes and policy. The outcomes from this project and its learnings will be shared with all WellingtonNZ stakeholders to help enable better procurement outcomes and more diverse business participation.

#### 5. Major Event Activities

*Major events are a key contributor to Wellington's regional economy, attracting out of region visitation, generating spending in retail, hospitality, accommodation and tourism, and creating new jobs across multiple sectors. WellingtonNZ's Major Events Team works in partnership with the event sector to maximise the economic, reputational and social outcomes to the region. We attract, invest and partner with major events to enable them to succeed and to drive outcomes for the Wellington region.*

##### **Recently, the Major Events team have been working with Wairarapa by:**

Working closely with Golden Shears and Toast Martinborough in partnership with Destination Wairarapa to support marketing and operational planning for their 2025 events. These partnerships are funded by the Regional Events Fund, which ends in September 2025.

As part of their support, WellingtonNZ has been assisting Golden Shears in finding an Event Operations resource and is currently guiding them through the NZ Major Events funding application process in preparation for hosting the 2026 Golden Shears World Shearing and Woolhandling Championships.

In November, WellingtonNZ hosted a Regional Events Hui, bringing together these stakeholders along with other regional event and transport representatives to share ideas, experiences, and plan for future initiatives.