



Te Kaunihera o
Te Awa Kairangi ki Uta
Upper Hutt City Council

Events Strategy

2021–2026



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Introduction

This Upper Hutt City Events Strategy 2021-2026 aims to support a diverse range of events that contribute to the local economy, enhance the City's vibrancy, have an environmental conscience and provide cultural, safe and accessible experiences that are of value to locals and visitors alike. This focus aligns with Council's Long-Term Plan.

In addition, the Local Government (Community Wellbeing) Amendment Act reinstated the promotion of social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities to the statutory purpose of local government, and Council understands the important role events play in supporting the desired outcomes of this Act.

Situation Analysis

Events improve the liveability and character of Upper Hutt, making it an attractive and enjoyable city for residents and visitors alike. Events are important for community wellbeing as they build feelings of belonging, identity and a sense of pride in our city and help to grow awareness of our diverse community.

Council currently supports local events through a contestable fund and through operational assistance by way of event promotion. In addition, they support regionally significant events and deliver a small number of Council led events such as Anzac Dawn Service and Parade and Santa Parade.

The City boasts a wide range of open spaces, including venues for large scale rugby, football and cricket competitions. There are also venues that have capacity to host events of up to 20,000 attendees.

Upper Hutt residents' views reiterate that events drive positive outcomes for the region. They see the importance of hosting major events, recognising how they bring in jobs and money to the region. 97% of Upper Hutt residents believe it is either important or very important for the Wellington region to host events, and 72% also believe that Council investing ratepayer funds in events is reasonable.

Events preferred by Upper Hutt residents include large-scale music concerts, food and wine festivals, professional sporting events, open-air cinemas, outdoor visual/lighting exhibitions, and mass participation events (individual or team).

Exhibitions and mass participation events already perform well for our City. National and school level competitions engage a large number of participants who travel to the region for a considerable number of days. School aged participants are often accompanied by parents and siblings, who further contribute to the event related expenditure spent in the region.

Covid-19 has resulted in the need for events to be much more agile and has seen many operate in a new way whilst still achieving key outcomes. The move to online forums has increased, however there is an acknowledgement that online events will never be able to replace the benefits of face-to-face interactions and in-person experiences.

Purpose

Events can deliver immediate economic results, long-term reputational benefits and support our communities to prosper. They are part of what makes Upper Hutt City a special place to live, work and visit, contributing to community connectivity and well-being.

This document outlines Council's overall approach to delivering, supporting and investing in events for the next 5 years (2021 – 2026). The approach aligns to the following community outcomes identified in Council's Long-Term Plan:

Social and Cultural

- We celebrate our whānau, heritage, and culture.
- We're a caring, safe and healthy community.

Environment

- We are immersed in natural beauty. We care for and protect our river, our stunning parks and our natural environment.

Economy

- We're a city of opportunity
- We attract new investment and offer opportunities for people and businesses to prosper.
- Our city centre is alive, attractive, and vibrant.

Infrastructure

- We have reliable and efficient networks and infrastructure that support our city.

For event organisers, this strategy provides the following guidance:

- The results and benefits Council are seeking to generate from investing in events;
- The type of events Council will invest in;
- A prioritisation framework for these results and benefits.

Principles

When preparing this strategy, it is important to acknowledge the guiding principles:

- Empower and enable the community;
- Provide opportunities for local businesses and organisations;
- Recognise and appreciate the artistic and cultural diversity within the sector;
- Increase awareness and knowledge of the value events bring to Upper Hutt;
- Acknowledge the role of Tangata Whenua and the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi;
- Take advantage of existing physical strengths and built infrastructure;
- Support and encourage collaboration and sharing for better use of resources and sustainability;
- Be accessible and inclusive, considering the views of all ages, cultures, abilities and socio-economic groups;
- Anticipate and plan for the benefit of future generations;
- Take account of technological trends that can enhance the sector.

Events Vision

To enhance the identity of our City, stimulate a prosperous, proud and vibrant community.

Objectives

- Achieve staged growth of an events portfolio designed to maximise opportunities, provide measurable economic outcomes for our City, and growing the visitor economy;
- Strengthen aspects of Upper Hutt City Council and HuttValleyNZ's brand positioning that will showcase industry, culture and community and will reinforce pride in our city;
- Encourage active community participation and engagement, therefore getting locals and visitors to try new things and discover new places;
- Supporting the growth of local talent, as well as local businesses and organisations to directly or indirectly benefit from events;
- A strong emphasis on Kaitiakitanga – guardianship of the land. Events that protect and enhance our City's natural environment;
- Generate positive legacy outcomes that benefit future generations.

Value Proposition

The beautiful natural environment, close proximity to Wellington City and diverse range of quality venues and spaces makes Upper Hutt an attractive and versatile destination for hosting events. In addition, Upper Hutt is recognised as a great place for families and for people who enjoy the outdoors.

Upper Hutt boasts some distinct and emerging advantages in the events industry to exploit. It's value proposition lies in:

- Proximity to Wellington;
- Natural assets as Wellington's Wild backyard;
- An increase in local community and businesses wanting to collaboratively support events and/or associated industries;
- The urban drift from Wellington to the Hutt Valley;
- Unique successful facilities including Wellington Racing Club, Brewtown, Whirinaki Whare Taonga, Trentham Memorial Park and Maidstone Park.

The existing strength and clear positions of Upper Hutt City Council's and HuttValleyNZ's brand and associated channels provide an attractive promotional support network for event organisers looking to reach audiences locally, regionally and nationally.

Partnership

The Council is only one player in delivering a vibrant calendar of events which will achieve the ambitious objectives identified by this strategy. The City has a wide and varied range of stakeholders directly and indirectly linked to the events sector. They encompass individuals, iwi, not-for-profit organisations and commercial operators as well as the Council.

The Council recognises and acknowledges the important part played by:

- Individuals who volunteer their time and energy in a wide range of events and related activities;
- Individuals and businesses who provide commercial services that support participation in the sector;
- Iwi, individuals, groups and societies that contribute in a wide range of activities providing rich knowledge and experiences;
- The nationwide events eco-system and WellingtonNZ who play a lead regional role in major events;
- Funders, both financial and in kind;

Our Commitment

To achieve the vision of this strategy for Upper Hutt, Council will enable, empower and advocate for the following action items with the support of internal and external stakeholders.

- A healthy partnership between events sector, the community and Upper Hutt City Council.
- Showcasing and supporting local talent, organisations and businesses.
- Secure staged investment in events to rival comparable regional cities.
- Work with all internal touchpoints with a view to provide the most nimble and user-friendly event hosting and support process of any Council in New Zealand.
- Ensure Council's investment in events is transparent with a clear investment criteria and selection process. Consistent accountability for event results in order to increase confidence amongst rate payers. Transition to event investment being approached as strategic investment that delivers a very significant return on investment for a broad range of key stakeholders.
- Demonstrate regional leadership and advocacy, including being a contributor to regional initiatives which support the industry and align with this strategy.
- Build and retain a skilled, motivated and healthy workforce and volunteer base.
- Review of current Council led and supported events to align with this strategy.

Event Categories

In order to make sound support and investment decisions Council have identified four event categories, each with its own unique assessment criteria weighted to achieve desired outcomes and objectives. The categories are:

- Signature Events
- Large Events
- Regional Events
- Local Community Events

Separate to these event categories lie the Civic Events and other events currently led by Council such as Anzac Dawn Service and Parade and the annual Santa Parade.

Whilst Council recognises the growing online events sector and its value, at this stage it is not an area of focus for investment. If an online event is being planned that benefits Upper Hutt and aligns with the Events Strategy objectives, support in other ways like promotion may be available via an application to the Event Fund.

A balanced events portfolio will include a mix of recurring and one-off events in the city, recognising that both play a vital role in growing city vibrancy, reputation and diversity of experiences.

Each event will be assessed under the category to which it naturally aligns to by way of its characteristics or objectives.

At a minimum, all events receiving support from Council must:

- Support Councils long term vision and principles identified in this strategy;
- Build a sense of community or city pride;
- Commit to reasonable environmentally sustainable practices;
- Demonstrate a good fit with the existing events calendar by way of event date, geographical spread and event type/offering;
- Take advantage of and highlight existing city infrastructure and/or natural assets.

Each category can be defined as:

Signature Events

A Signature Event aligns strongly with five or more of the strategy objectives, with measurable economic outcomes and growing the visitor economy being at least one of the five.

The opportunity to secure a Signature Event won't come along every day, but when it does the Council may choose to provide increased support and/or investment to secure the opportunity and reap the benefits accompanying this event for the City.

A partnership approach with measurable key performance indicators will be set, and reporting requirements put in place to monitor delivery of progress and ensure Council support and possible investment is protected.

At a minimum, a Signature Event must:

- Attract a minimum of 20,000 attendees for a free public event, or 10,000 for a ticketed or niche event;
- Demonstrate a combined social and economic ROI of 20:1 or greater;
- Have an existing out-of-town audience who would be attracted to attend;
- Have the potential to attract positive regional, national and/or international media coverage;
- Demonstrate a national promotional reach;
- Align with Upper Hutt City Council and HuttValleyNZ's brand positioning.

NOTE:

Signature Event funding decisions are made by passing a resolution at meeting of the full Council.

The Signature Event category treated on a case-by-case basis and not in the annual Event Fund round.

Large Events

A Large Event must align with four of the six strategy objectives, with measurable economic outcomes and growing the visitor economy being at least one of the four objectives.

At a minimum, a Large Event must:

- Attract at least 5,000 attendees;
- Demonstrate a combined social and economic ROI of 10:1 or greater;
- Have the potential to attract local and/or regional media coverage.

Regional Events

A Regional Event is one that aligns with three of the six strategy objectives but doesn't necessarily fully have to take place in Upper Hutt.

Whilst benefits that aligns with the strategy objectives are derived for the City, the core of the event may be physically based somewhere else in the region. However, an event with Regional appeal based in Upper Hutt will carry a higher support weighting.

At a minimum, a Regional Event must:

- Be regionally significant;
- Have some physical presence in Upper Hutt and provide opportunities for Upper Hutt's community and/or local businesses and organisations;

- Demonstrate a combined social and economic ROI of 10:1 or greater;
- Have the potential to attract local and/or regional media coverage.

Local Community Events

A Local Community Event is largely community led with a targeted appeal or focus on a special interest area, sector of the community or geographical space. This also covers the delivery of not for profit events and has an expectation of being accessible and inclusive.

- A Local Community Event must align with at least three of the following strategy objectives:
- Encourage active community participation and engagement, therefore getting locals and visitors to try new things and discover new places;
- Supporting the growth of local talent, as well as local businesses and organisations to directly or indirectly benefit from events;
- A strong emphasis on Kaitiakitanga – guardianship of the land. Events that protect, enhance and celebrate our City's natural environment;
- Generate positive legacy outcomes that benefit future generations.