

Quarterly Update

July - September 2021



Te Waka | Stakeholder Update | Q1 July – September 2021

Executive Summary

Te Waka marked its first 3 years in existence at the end of June. As with any new organisation, we've learnt a lot along the way – with some successes to celebrate as well as some learnings to incorporate.

Changes to our Team

We would not be here without the passion and commitment of those who contributed to Waikato Means Business strategy - and in particular our establishment Board members – Dallas Fisher, Kiri Goulter, Les Roa, Chris Joblin and Kim Hill, who alongside advisors Blair Bowcott and Rob Williams and Kaumatua Tame Pokaia shepherded the organisation through what has proved to be three years of change. My thanks in particular to Dallas, Kiri, Chris & Kim, who have all stepped down from the Board over the last year.

I'm pleased to note that we have made 3 appointments – with Leesah Murray, Cam Bagrie and Andrew West joining the Board in September. They collectively bring additional skills, expertise and networks, and join existing Directors Craig Barrett, Les Roa and me, alongside Blair, Rob and Matua Tame.

As noted below, we've also rebuilt our leadership team, with the appointment of Susanne Lorenz, Rosie Spragg and William Durning to lead the business. We also expect to commence a search for a new CEO for Te Waka in the near future.

Our Funding & Strategy

As I've touched on previously, funding has always been a challenge for Te Waka. As a small, independent organisation, we are reliant on local Government funding, business sponsorship and contract revenue to support our existence. We are grateful to the Waikato Regional Council for more than doubling their funding commitment over the next three years, and to the 10 other councils in the broader Waikato region for continuing their existing support at current levels. Likewise, we are hugely appreciative of the businesses who have chosen to support us and our programs.

Despite that support however, we remain the lowest funded Economic Development Agency in NZ when measured against GDP or population. Absent any central Government support, this means we must be ruthlessly focussed on where we direct our resources to achieve impact. This constraint led us to review our strategy towards the end of 2020, and to again refresh our strategic workplan over the last month to ensure its focussed and achievable. This refresh is shared below.

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Our Delivery

It's been a busy first quarter for our small team, with a focus on delivering against that strategic workplan. I'm pleased to say that we have continued to make real progress against that workplan, as detailed by the team below.

Our sector initiatives are gaining momentum, and we are looking at how that focus might evolve in the new year. Our Māori economic development program continues, and we are looking at how we work more closely with the Waikato Pacific Business Network to extend our focus to include Pacifika business.

Our regional engagement and business growth support continues via proactive engagement across the region, and we have now made a solid start to a more focussed strategy around investment attraction and the development of a vibrant investment ecosystem in the region.

The team is now focussed on delivery of a clear set of priorities to Christmas – amidst the ever-changing landscape forced upon us by Covid-19.

We released our Quarterly Waikato Economic Radar at the beginning of November. It suggests that while the Waikato region is better off than most, that it's time to be bold and embrace change as pressures consolidate. It also highlights the growing talent shortage, the looming impact of supply chain constraints, and growing upward pressure on inflation on interest rates. It also notes the growing attractiveness of the Waikato region to businesses and workers looking to flee Auckland in particular in search of better jobs, education and quality of life. You can read the [full report here](#).

Hamish Bell. Board Chair

Highlights of the past quarter

Senior Team in Place

As reported in our last stakeholder update, we have now completed onboarding two new members to our leadership team. In early September, while we were still in an alert level 4 situation, Rosie Spragg joined us as our new Industry & Sector Development Manager. Shortly after, William Durning completed our senior leadership team as Partnership and Investment Manager. Rosie and William joined Susanne Lorenz, our Operations Manager, who started with us in mid-July.



Despite a rather turbulent onboarding period during the lockdown and beyond, the leadership team has come together as a strong unit and have made great progress in their respective areas.

Sector and Industry Leadership

- **Logistics & Distribution:** Ernst & Young submitted the full draft of the Freight Action Plan at the end of October. This industry-funded report has been circulated to the industry working group for review and discussion in early November to finalise and publish the report before the end of the year.
- **Construction:** We have been engaging with industry stakeholders to develop a Construction talent attraction campaign for the region. Initial costing and a high-level proposal for a pilot has been sent to key industry stakeholders. We are awaiting confirmation of their willingness to fund the initiative.
- **Education:** Three core workstreams are ongoing:
 - *Destination Waikato* – working with an agency partner (King St) to develop a campaign concept and collateral for Waikato education providers to use when they are ready to promote their international education services again (pending Government decisions on allowing international students into the country). The discovery phase of this project is near completion.
 - *Student Retention & Pathways* – supporting Priority One as lead delivery agency for a series of initiatives to support the retention and pathway opportunities for international students in the region.
 - *Regional Stories* – working with a PR agency (Anthem) to support the creation of regional stories about international education in the region. The [first story](#) was published in mid-September.
- **Tech & Innovation:** Te Waka has helped lead the establishment of the Cultivate Trust, a collective of private businesses, education providers, and public entities who are passionate about growing the Waikato's tech ecosystem and reaffirming the region as a centre for investment and education in the technology and innovation sector. This collective meets monthly and is currently at a formative stage. In partnership with the Cultivate Trust, we will continue to support networking events for the sector. We are also engaging closely with NZTech to support their upcoming launch of the NZ Tech Story. We will be providing regional content to promote the strengths and opportunities for the Waikato Innovation & Tech sector to an international audience.

Māori & Pasifika Business

- *Social Procurement* – we are engaging with Iwi across the region to understand their readiness to pursue supplier diversity opportunities and are engaging with Te Puni Kōkiri to encourage investment in an FTE resource to develop capability development pathways that would enable more Māori businesses to pursue social procurement opportunities.
- *Collective Models* – we have been engaging closely with the Waikato Trade Collective (WTC), including facilitating engagement with Kāinga Ora to explore opportunities for the WTC to bid for substantial housing build projects.
- *Māori Data* – we have brought together a working group to develop a Māori Economic Dashboard for the region, including Waikato Regional Council, Te Puni Kōkiri, Statistics New Zealand, Waikato Tainui, the Waikato Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG), MSD and IRD.
- *Impact Projects* – we are supporting Nikau Group for their intended investment in a concrete recycling plant in Meremere, including coordinating engagement with central and local agencies to explore support options (funding, consent, employment).
- *Pasifika Business* – we have been engaging with the Waikato Pacific Business Network (WPBN) to establish a formal partnership, including the opportunity for WPBN to join Te Waka's shared working space at Perry House. We are awaiting confirmation from WPBN on their funding to proceed with the shared working proposal.

Regional Business Growth

- The Regional Business Advisory Team continues to see a strong rise in demand for Callaghan Innovation and Regional Business Partner Capability funding across the Waikato Region.
- We are mindful of the recently announced Auckland Business Support funding to assist with the difficult trading conditions that Auckland businesses are experiencing. We have plans to quickly advise the region's business community and process inquiries should additional funding be allocated to the Waikato.
- Business Mentors continues to grow under the care of Tony Kane our regional coordinator. Currently the Waikato sits as the 2nd best performing agency in the country. A little-known fact about Business Mentors New Zealand is that it started here in the Waikato 30 years ago, by local businessmen Dr Grahame Craig & Bill Hall, who had founded the successful business Woolrest New Zealand and were looking for a way to give back.
- Peter Davey and Hayley Smith, two of our Regional Business Advisers, were involved as judges in the recent Hauraki Coromandel Business Awards. We congratulate the Coromandel Distilling Company for taking out the Supreme Winner award.
- The Regional Business Network contract is again open for tender. Te Waka is currently finalising our proposal to retain the regional agency contract, allowing us to continue the work that we started over a decade ago of providing SMEs a 'one stop shop' for building business management capability for business growth and productivity inclusivity and sustainability.

Business Attraction & Investment Facilitation

- Following research and stakeholder engagement a clear set of actions has been defined for us to better articulate and support business attraction across the region, complementing the great work already underway like that of South Waikato's The Space to Grow campaign.

Connections & Partnerships

- *Sub-regional engagement* – Working with our Local and Central Government Partners Te Waka has been reviewing various Regional Projects and how they contribute to the economic themes of our region being; location advantage, growing global industries, making business easier, maximising value from primary production, and leveraging the Māori economy.
- *Government connector* – Ongoing liaison with officials across key Ministeries (MBIE, NZTE, TPK, MSD, MPP, Kanoa); ongoing involvement in regional initiatives (Kanoa Regional Strategic Partnership Fund); and ongoing liaison with Waikato region MPs (across Parliament) and with key Ministers.

Regional Voice

- *Intelligence & Insights* – our [Q3-21 Economic Radar](#), produced in partnership with the Waikato Regional Council, was recently published. This is the first in our new quarterly insights reporting framework.
- *Regional Projects* – Te Waka continues to be an active participant on several key regional forums, including the Waikato Regional Skills Leadership Group, the Waikato Plan (Strategic Partners Forum and Leadership Committee), the Waikato Wellbeing Project, and the Waikato Housing Initiative.

Refresh of our Strategy

As we entered the new financial year, we have reviewed our strategy to ensure it is fit for purpose in a changing landscape, and to ensure we are able to consistently communicate our focus to all stakeholders. Our aim has been to be able to display our strategy in a clear and easy-to-read format.

Our strategy has four Pou (pillars) and four Tumu (foundations). While we have renamed and reorganised some of the Pou and Tumu, the content of the overall plan on a page has not materially changed from the previous strategy document.

Our Plan on a Page

Our Purpose:

To lift economic performance across the Waikato region
and by doing so, to improve the wellbeing of Waikato Communities

OUR FOUR POU	<p>Business & Industry Growth</p> <p>Sector & Industry Leadership:</p> <p>Partner with industry to support sector development and impact projects in priority industries</p> <p>Regional Business Growth:</p> <p>Drive regional business growth by supporting SMEs via the RBP and Business Mentor programs</p> <p>Māori & Pasifika Business:</p> <p>Proactively support growth and resilience amongst Māori and Pasifika enterprise</p>	<p>Business Attraction & Investment Facilitation</p> <p>Business & Investment Attraction:</p> <p>Identify targets and undertake focused campaigns to attract business and investment to the region</p> <p>Vibrant Investment Ecosystem:</p> <p>Champion an effective ecosystem which matches people, capital and opportunities</p>	<p>Connections & Partnerships</p> <p>Connected Business Networks:</p> <p>Proactively build networks and connect business</p> <p>Sub-Regional Engagement:</p> <p>Proactively engage across the region to build strong relationships with and understanding of local stakeholders</p> <p>Government Connector:</p> <p>Serve as an effective channel between business and both local and central Government</p>	<p>Regional Voice</p> <p>Gather Intelligence & Share Insights:</p> <p>Continue to gather and share intelligence and insights</p> <p>Regional Advocate:</p> <p>Serve as an authoritative voice of and advocate for business and economic growth in the Waikato region; champion the Waikato Story</p> <p>Contribute to Regional Projects:</p> <p>Support regional initiatives which grow skills, lift employment and improve wellbeing (Waikato Plan, WWP, RHI, RSLG etc)</p>
	TUMU	<i>Proactive delivery of a focussed yet agile work programme which creates impact</i>	<i>Ensuring a collaborative approach to all we do, and working in partnership to build trust and mutual respect</i>	<i>Embracing our region's rich cultures and the importance of environmental and economic sustainability</i>

Key points of focus for the upcoming quarter

As an organisation with a small team and finite resources it is important that we stay focussed to maximise our impact and support for the region. We do this by ensuring we operate within our four Pou and have clear priorities in place. With the end of year approaching fast and the added challenges of the Covid environment, clear prioritisation is critical for the organisation.

Below are our key priorities that will see us through to the end of the year:

Key Priorities to Christmas

<p>Business & Industry Growth</p> <p>Sector & Industry Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalising and executing on sector plans for existing priority sectors (Construction, Education, Technology, Logistics/Distribution) Plan for next priority sectors <p>Regional Business Growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit RFP tender for Regional Business Network Submit tender for Business Mentors Regional representation <p>Māori & Pasifika Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery against Māori Economic Development plan Implementing partnership with Waikato Pacific Business Network 	<p>Business Attraction & Investment Facilitation</p> <p>Business & Investment Attraction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish InvestWaikato (including web presence and promotion) Form an Investment Advisory Group and identify other ecosystem connections <p>Vibrant Investment Ecosystem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop simplified 'Why the Waikato' collateral 	<p>Connections & Partnerships</p> <p>Connected Business Networks:</p> <p>Build / enable networks and people connectivity in priority sectors</p> <p>Sub-Regional Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly Economic Development Managers (EDMs) Forums Sub-regional Stakeholder Forums <p>Government Connector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing liaison with central Government – MPs and Ministers Develop clear plan for managing Government agency relationships Representation on the Regional Strategic Partners Group (Kānoa) looking at regional investment 	<p>Regional Voice</p> <p>Gather Intelligence & Share Insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly Radar (Oct) Preparing for sentiment survey <p>Regional Advocate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing development of the Waikato Story Sector advocacy and lockdown response issues as they arise <p>Contribute to Regional Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waikato Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG) Waikato Plan Waikato Wellbeing Project Waikato Housing Initiative
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