

Quarterly Update

April – June 2022



Executive Summary

It has been a busy and productive three months at Te Waka. Thank you to everyone who supported the launch of the *Waikato & Bay of Plenty Freight Action Plan*. It was a highlight of the quarter and is the first report of its kind to bring together perspectives from the region's major freight and logistics industry players on the actions needed to support the sector's growth and progress.

The freight and logistics sector is already one of the key drivers of economic development in our region and we anticipate strong future growth as freight volumes increase and key industry investments come onstream in the coming months and years.

Te Waka is proud to have led the development of this action plan, in partnership with Priority One and a wide range of key industry stakeholders. If you haven't yet read the plan, I encourage you to [download it from our website](#).

In my last update I reflected on how Te Waka adds value, with leadership in advocacy on key regional issues being a priority for us.

The action plan is a good example of this approach coming to life. With the priority actions identified, our next step will be to work with industry and local and central government partners to progress the meaningful work that will sit behind them.

Our aim is to bring this approach to other work in future. We firmly believe that anything we do in a particular sector must be informed by engagement with industry to connect leaders, identify and prioritise opportunities and issues, and to develop action plans and priorities that are supported by Te Waka but led with deliberate and vital industry participation.

I also wish to thank and warmly farewell our team of business growth advisors, who have moved on from Te Waka now that we are no longer providing the Regional Business Partner service for the Waikato. We greatly appreciate the contributions the departing team members have made in their time with us and

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wish them all the best in their new endeavours. We also congratulate Soda Inc who is the new Waikato provider for the Regional Business Partner service.

We welcomed our new Chief Executive, Fiona Carrick, to the business on 1 July. Fiona is well placed to take our strategy forward and I know she is looking forward to meeting and connecting with you.

Despite the ongoing challenges in the external environment, there is a lot to be excited about in the second half of the year. The return of Fieldays and the HSBC New Zealand Sevens tournament will be flagship events for our region over the summer. We look forward to supporting both events and continuing to deliver on our strategic pou in the coming months.

Ngā mihi,

Hamish Bell | Chair

Business & Industry Growth

Industry Leadership

Key highlights this quarter included:

- **Logistics & Distribution:** This quarter marked the launch of the [Waikato & Bay of Plenty Freight Action Plan](#), including a successful launch event on 23 June at FMG Stadium Waikato. We also presented an overview of the plan at the recent transport-themed [Grow Waikato event](#). A lot of useful feedback has been shared on both the event and the report itself, which will inform our implementation planning. Our next steps are to continue working with industry, local and central government partners to secure resources and support to progress the key actions from the report.



- **Education:** The Destination Waikato education marketing project is progressing well. A brochure and [mini-site](#) are complete, with video production and full website development underway, with a formal launch planned for August. We have secured funding for a Thailand-focused marketing campaign and are in the early stages of developing this.
- **Tech & Innovation:** As part of our support for the Cultivate Trust, Te Waka is chairing the Trust's 'Connect' subcommittee, which aims to deliver business networking events and develop a shared regional database of 'tech enabled' businesses. This quarter we formally established the Connect subcommittee and facilitated a workshop to define the strategic approach of the subcommittee. It is likely that this subcommittee will focus on delivering a few events well, anchored around a 'hero' annual summit event, and supporting others who are already active in this space, such as the kiwiSaaS community. Techweek was also a key focus for us and it was great to see a good number of Waikato tech businesses involved in events this year.

Māori & Pacific Business

The key focus of our Māori Economic Development activities at present is the development of a comprehensive Waikato Māori business directory. This is progressing well, with our Māori Economic Development Manager engaging with stakeholders at a regional and national level to build understanding and support for the project.

To complement the directory, we are also identifying the various support networks and providers that are available to support Māori businesses in the Waikato region. These networks and providers will span funding,

startup and education, professional development and mentoring, social procurement and financial assistance, support and advice services. Our intent is to present this digitally to make it easier for Māori businesses to find relevant support services in the region in one central location.

We are also working on showcasing more Māori business stories through our communication channels, to provide a platform for highlighting success stories and increasing awareness of Māori business activities in the region.

Workforce Development

The Waikato Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG) was pleased to [launch the Regional Workforce Plan](#), which has a 'farm to port' focus, spanning the primary industries, manufacturing and engineering, freight and logistics, construction and infrastructure, and digital technology sectors. The Plan calls for the establishment of a Waikato Futures Academy, to serve as a platform for supporting communities to build skills that reflect current and future needs for the farming, horticulture and aquaculture sectors.

The plan also seeks *ōritetanga* or equity, particularly in making sure Waikato rangatahi succeeded in education and have decent and rewarding employment. Related to this, another priority action is development of a pilot unique to Waikato, Tuakana-teina (The Wisdom Project), that would enable older and near-retirement workers to step back from the tools to coach rangatahi and new workers. Climate change will also have a focus around supporting sectors in the transition to a low carbon economy.

Te Waka is represented on the Waikato RSLG via our Industry & Sector Development Manager, Rosie Spragg, who will continue to be a member of the RSLG as it now shifts focus to implementation of the Regional Workforce Plan. She will be supported by our recently recruited Workforce Development Lead, Pratishtha Purohit, who joined us on 1 June. Pratishtha has a background in career coaching, youth empowerment and adult education, with extensive existing networks in the Waikato region. We are excited to have Pratishtha join the team to drive our initiatives that support workforce development in the Waikato region.

Business Attraction & Investment Facilitation

Alongside Hamilton City Council, we supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in hosting the Diplomatic Study Tour to the Waikato in early June. Around 35 diplomats attended, one of the highest attendance levels MFAT has seen for this type of visit. We used the opportunity to introduce the diplomats to a variety of businesses and highlight the vast diversity of our region in regard to industry and sectors. In total there were six individual events organised throughout the two-day visit. The visit was very well received by the diplomats and the group developed a strong understanding of investment and export opportunities in our region. We already have had several follow ups and future visits planned as a result of this event.

Secondly, we completed an online Information Session to current and incoming Edmund Hillary Fellowship (EHF) Fellows about the Waikato region and opportunities here. The Edmund Hillary Fellowship was set up in 2016 to attract and select entrepreneurs and innovators to Aotearoa through a pilot global Impact visa

programme. From August onwards there will be around 200 incoming visa holders and we hope to attract more EHF fellows to the Waikato region. Our EHF Information Session will also be made available to the Kea network (an international network of expat Kiwis and friends of New Zealand) and recipients of the Investor visa category via Immigration NZ.

Lastly, on behalf of several of our partners, we have engaged closely with Hamilton City Council and Hamilton Waikato Tourism, to submit an expression of interest to host the EDNZ Conference 2023 in Hamilton.

Connections & Partnerships

The key focus areas in Connections and Partnerships are increased levels of engagement with businesses in the region. The goal is to further understand common themes and challenges businesses are facing and use this information decision making and advocacy on a regional and national level.

Our new Regional Engagement Associate, Marcelo Mieres will be engaging with stakeholders across the region. Marcelo comes to us with a strong background in Agriculture and Agritech having worked for companies such as Shoof International and The NZ National Fieldays Society as well as for the Australian Trade and Investment Commission.

We are continuing to work with our regional partners and entities to contribute to key regional initiatives.