

COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

SURVEY INSIGHTS // 2021

CEDA

CENTRAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

TE MAURI O
MANAWATŪ



LOCALS' THOUGHTS ON THE VISITOR INDUSTRY

IN THE YEAR TO MARCH 2021, THE MANAWATŪ VISITOR ECONOMY WAS WORTH OVER \$270 MILLION TO OUR CITY AND REGION.

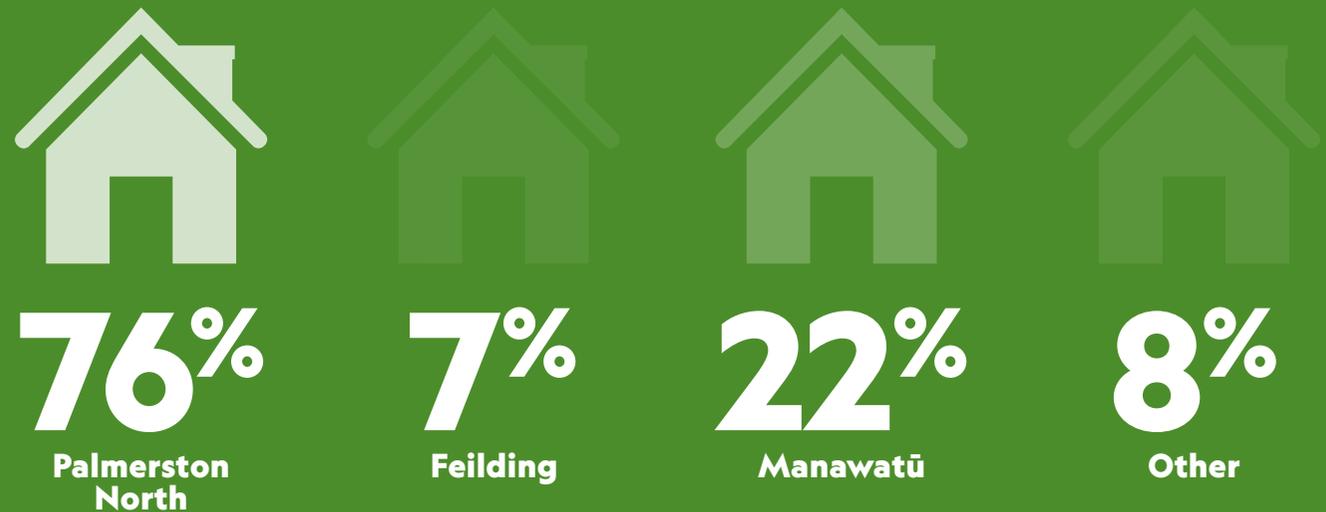
Visitors support our great facilities, including cafes and restaurants, retailers and activities, our vibrant arts scene, and experience our popular walking tracks and trails, parks and reserves, wildlife experiences and beaches.

The 2021 community sentiment survey was created to help us better understand local perceptions on the value of visitation in the region and how we can work together to grow visitor activity and value for the benefit of our community.

WHO DID WE SURVEY?

Distributed via boosted Facebook promotions and by way of CEDA's extensive electronic direct mail databases over a period of several weeks, we heard the voices of **224 locals**.

WHERE PARTICIPANTS RESIDE



AGE RANGE OF PARTICIPANTS



OUR COMMUNITY VALUES // THE VISITOR INDUSTRY

The community sentiment survey was distributed between April and June of 2021, one year into the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, the visitor industry received overwhelming support from our community.



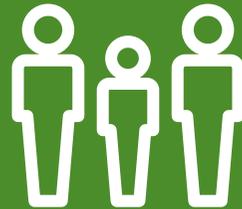
89%

of people believe the visitor sector is an important industry in Manawātū



90%

agree that the visitor sector has a positive impact on Manawātū



74%

think that the visitor sector provides good employment opportunities in Manawātū



56%

know about the [ManawatuNZ.co.nz](https://www.ManawatuNZ.co.nz) regional website

TOURISM INITIATIVES

WHEN ASKED IF THEY HAD HEARD OF ANY TOURISM INITIATIVES IN MANAWATŪ, THE MAJORITY (58%) OF LOCALS SAID NO.

Those who had, mentioned major events such as the Rural Games, or experiences such as Te Āpiti - Manawatū Gorge, The Country Road and walking and cycle trails, in particular He Ara Kotahi.

Promotional initiatives which stood out were #palmyproud and Kia Ora Magazine.

When asked why they think people visit Manawatū, locals were given a range of options.

TOP FIVE REASONS PEOPLE VISIT MANAWATŪ // ACCORDING TO LOCALS



VISITING FAMILY & FRIENDS 73%



CONFERENCE 66%



SPORTING EVENTS 54%



EDUCATION 54%



FESTIVALS OR EVENTS 41%

MUST DOS // FOR VISITORS



OUR OWN COMMUNITY ARE OUR GREATEST ADVOCATES FOR OUR REGION.

We asked locals to share with us their three 'must do' activities for visitors. While a range of responses covering the great outdoors, through to events, motor racing and places of interest were put forward, some activities really stood out.

He Ara Kotahi has become hugely popular, with many respondents stating it as a 'must do', along with river walkways and cycle ways. Neighboring attraction, Victoria Esplanade, was strongly recommended, with many mentioning that it was a great spot for families.

We have a fantastic hospitality sector, with a wide range of restaurants, bars and cafes on offer. Numerous recommendations came through to visit one, or many 'hot spots' in Palmerston North and surrounds.

As a community, we are also proud of our big backyard, with 'must dos' including hiking and bush walking, mountain biking, driving country roads and visiting our west coast beaches.

The variety of responses indicates that Manawatū has something for everyone whether its families, outdoors enthusiasts, foodies or petrol heads.

"Check out the river walks, the new bridge and the esplanade, especially the wildlife centre."

"The Pohangina Valley and Rangiwahia areas for a drive and walks. The new foot bridge. Our inner cafes. Plaza shopping. Gorge walk."

"Hikes, walks, and more hikes! Nature around the Manawatū is outstanding, and so worth exploring."

"Walk the new He Ara Kotahi bridge and cycleway, many amazing food places, Genghis, Little Savanna to name a few. There is always something going on, the farmers markets are awesome too."

"Wildbase, the Gorge and the windmills."

MOST POPULAR MANAWATŪ MUST DOS // AS RECOMMENDED BY LOCALS.

>> **WALKING OR
CYCLING ALONG THE
MANAWATŪ RIVER**

>> **VISITING THE
ESPLANADE**

>> **EATING AND
DRINKING OUT**

>> **TE ĀPITI -
MANAWATŪ GORGE**

HOLIDAYS AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19



WE WELCOME VISITORS TO OUR REGION



94%

of locals are comfortable with domestic visitors

58%

of locals are comfortable with international visitors once borders open

APART FROM THE SHORT-LIVED TRANS-TASMAN BUBBLE, NEW ZEALAND BORDERS WERE CLOSED TO THE REST OF THE WORLD FOR THE WHOLE OF 2021.

These closures impacted our ability to travel, while also creating an opportunity to explore our own backyard.

We asked a series of questions around how likely Palmerston North city and Manawatū locals were to take holidays domestically or internationally, along with

their thoughts on visitors holidaying in our region. The majority of respondents (81%) were likely to take a holiday in New Zealand within the next 12 months, with 33% having already planned their getaways. The most popular types of holidays planned were visiting family and friends and getting into nature.

We also welcome visitors to our region, with 94% of locals comfortable with domestic visitors, and 58% comfortable with international visitors once borders open.

That said, locals were worried about the risks of COVID-19 and potential exposure in the community, with 45% saying that COVID-19 had changed their views on visitation. Several also said that the COVID-19 pandemic has made them think more about supporting local businesses.

GROWTH OF OUR VISITOR INDUSTRY



Locally, there was some concern (21% have concern, 43% unsure) for the growth of our visitor industry, particularly in relation to the provision of visitor infrastructure and promotion of Manawatū as a tourist destination.

“Feel like there are limited activities, harder to compete with higher profile destinations.”

“Just no ‘wow’ factor to attract visitors.”

“More needs to be done in a promotional way to attract visitors to Manawatū. We have a lot to offer but we are invisible to the market.”

When asked what would make Manawatū an even better visitor destination, repeated themes came across. These ranged from hosting more major events, to having a key big attraction, to greater promotion of our offerings and access to visitor information. Other popular ideas put forward included opening the old Manawatū Gorge Road for cycling and walking, making Victoria Esplanade an even greater destination with more food options and infrastructure, and making the Palmerston North CBD more pedestrian friendly.

“Better promotion of ALL that Manawatū has to offer, not just the same few things always promoted.”

“More trendy eating places. More outdoor eating spaces.”

“Keep expanding the path/walkways network. Create a city centre ‘must do’ attraction. Attract more functions.”

“Seriously upgrade the Esplanade and have more connection to the river. Have more cafes there and make it a total destination to spend time in.”

“I am glad The Country Road has been developed. It is very scenic and not many people realise we have such scenery here.”

TE MAURI O
MANAWATŪ



WEBSITE //
MANAWATUNZ.CO.NZ

FACEBOOK //
**PALMERSTON
NORTH CITY &
MANAWATŪ**

INSTAGRAM //
@MANAWATU.NZ

EMAIL //
INFO@CEDA.NZ

PHONE //
+64 6 350 1830