

Partner Update

Hōngongi

July 2019

How to be involved in Growing Manawātū's visitor sector

CEDA is hosting five community engagement sessions around the region in August and early September to seek feedback and input from communities, iwi, business owners and representatives from local and central government to create the Manawātū Destination Management Plan.

We are leading the development of the Plan, in partnership with shareholder councils, to continue sustainable visitor growth and identify new opportunities for the region. The Destination Management Plan replaces what was originally referred to as a visitor strategy and aligns with central government's approach to growing and developing the country's visitor sector.

The purpose of a Destination Management Plan is to bring together multiple stakeholders who are invested and involved in the visitor sector, to capture collective knowledge, aspirations for growth, challenges, and different priorities and responsibilities, to collectively set the direction for where we want and need the visitor sector to go.

On completion, the plan will include everything visitor-sector related from community engagement, marketing, product development, infrastructure, council bylaws, barriers to growth, as well as sustainable and strategic growth through targeted investment. Our aim is for visitor growth to enhance and benefit Manawātū socially, culturally, environmentally and economically.

Find locations, dates and times [here](#).

Manawātū Tourism Sentiment Report

To gain an in depth understanding of visitors and residents' sentiment towards Manawātū and discover what people are sharing about the region online and how this may influence or affect a potential visitor's perception of the region, we commissioned a Tourism Sentiment Report for Manawātū. The 2018 report, which we've just received, revealed Manawātū has a tourism sentiment score of 40 out of 100, which means 40 per cent of online conversations, reviews and content are actively promoting the region. The score

was calculated from 500,000 different online sources, including websites, media sites, review platforms like TripAdvisor and social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and more. Categories analysed included outdoor adventure, amenities and entertainment, culture and history, our hospitality scene and destination services. A highlight for the region included a 50 per cent increase in tourism conversation volume, that is people talking about the region online, which illustrates the continued growth in reputation and awareness of the region's visitor offering.

We have commissioned a Manawātū Tourism Sentiment Report for the next two years to benchmark and measure our growth and identify future opportunities. The insights and data will be used to support and guide our strategic planning, marketing and visitor sector development, as well as help us to influence the way locals and visitors talk about the region, moving forward. We look forward to communicating more of the full report's findings shortly.

Attracting and retaining graduates in Manawātū

CEDA has partnered with NXTStep, a leading graduate job and internship website, for a pilot programme that's aimed at attracting and retaining tertiary talent in the region as part of our commitment to develop and grow a skilled workforce. The pilot programme will focus on graduate jobs, internships, and entry level positions in Manawātū and will be complemented by digital content that's targeted towards this age group, which showcases the lifestyle benefits and opportunities that exist here.

Companies that are already involved with NXTStep include Toyota, Fonterra, FMG, Mainfreight and more businesses are being approached before the digital platform goes live in September. This content will also be hosted on ManawatuNZ.co.nz to continue building on the extremely successful Move to Manawātū campaign.

Regional Identity

To elevate Manawātū's regional story, we need a cohesive, compelling regional identity that is informed by robust data and insights. Building on the research CEDA has already done with iwi, and the domestic visitor market, we are undertaking additional research with three key audiences: existing residents and

businesses, potential residents and talent, and potential businesses and investors. This new research will inform us of their perceptions and views of the city, district and region and their insights and feedback will help to identify our unique value proposition, personality and point of difference to other areas around New Zealand. This will ensure when our regional identity is complete, it is reflective of who we are collectively, while allowing us to dial up or down different key messages and value propositions to attract different audiences, from inward investment to new residents, talent and visitors.

New partnerships to deliver business growth services

We are pleased to announce we are partnering with [Whanganui & Partners](#) and the [Manawātū Chamber of Commerce](#) to continue delivering business growth and development services as the Regional Business Partner (RBP) for the Manawātū-Whanganui region. Through RBP, we work with hundreds of businesses across the region, supporting them in their growth journey, from startups, SMEs, to companies undertaking research and development.

A Business Growth Advisor position will soon be based in Whanganui & Partners' office to service Whanganui, Ruapehu and parts of Rangitikei. A wider team of Business Growth Advisors will continue to be based in Palmerston North, servicing the city, Manawātū, Tararua, Horowhenua and the remainder of Rangitikei districts. We are also partnering with the Manawātū Chamber of Commerce to deliver the Business Mentors New Zealand portion of the programme while our Business Mentor Coordinator is on maternity leave. To discover more about how we can support businesses, [click here](#).

Business Growth and Development

In July we engaged and supported more than 45 businesses across the Manawātū-Whanganui region. This includes businesses which attended the CEDA Startup Clinic, plus the allocation of \$27,000 worth of funding for businesses to develop their skills in areas such as business planning and systems, governance, leadership development and sales.

More Projects & Outcomes

Connecting businesses with tertiary students and graduates

To showcase how businesses can access research, development and innovation support through Callaghan Innovation Student Experience Grants, a regional workshop was held in July. Student Experience Grants are funded by Callaghan Innovation and facilitated by CEDA across the Manawatū-Whanganui region. The grants connect local businesses with tertiary students and graduates to work on specific research and development projects over the university summer break. Local agritech company Levno has benefitted from multiple Student Experience Grants, hear more about the impact they had via this [video](#).

If you know of a business who could benefit from applying for a student experience grant [get in touch](#) with one of our Business Growth Advisors today. Applications close 31 August.

Construction Sector presentation with NLA

To provide insights on the level of regional growth underway in Manawatū and information on how companies in the construction sector can prepare their business to make the most of the growth opportunities, we partnered with Naylor Lawrence and Associates (NLA) for a Construction Sector Seminar in July. While we showcased the regional economic growth and investment underway and how CEDA can support their businesses, NLA focused on the importance of financial forecasting, good governance and understanding financial systems and profitability, so business owners can make the most of the growth that's ahead for the region.

Regional welcome for Korean international education students

As a result of our strategic relationship with Education New Zealand, Manawatū was selected to host 25 Korean secondary school students for the first time because of our region's reputation as a centre of agri-excellence. The exchange takes place during term three and the students are studying at five secondary schools around the region, with another 125 students studying elsewhere in New Zealand. The exchange is part of New Zealand's Free Trade Agreement with Korea and is designed especially for students from farming families to gain international experience and a deeper understanding of New Zealand's primary industry sector.

To welcome the students, the Korean Ambassador to New Zealand and senior government officials from Korea, CEDA organised a Mayoral Welcome with Palmerston North Mayor Grant Smith, in partnership with Education New Zealand.

Support for Brave New Thinkers

Creating opportunities for bright young people to grow is an essential part of CEDA's commitment to talent and skills development, and we were a proud supporter of the Brave New Thinkers programme in Manawatū during New Zealand Business Week. Our sponsorship of the event ensured that students from across Manawatū, New Zealand and the Pacific could participate in a high value and impactful development week and were exposed to some of Manawatū's most innovative businesses and organisations. With all students receiving a scholarship to study at Massey University and experiencing the opportunities that exist in the region, we look forward to seeing many of them return to Palmerston North for their tertiary studies.

Manawatū's journey to becoming a top global agrifood hub

To shine a light on the depth of expertise and capability in the region's agrifood and agritech industries and reveal what impact the level of growth and investment the sector is having on the wider region, CEDA held the first Manawatū Growth Series event in June.

If you couldn't make it, [read a highlight](#) of what our panelists had to say and the challenges and opportunities the region faces as we aim to be recognised as one of the top three agrifood hubs in the world.

Further regional signage development

To ensure visitors to the region are met with accurate and insightful information that looks consistent across the region and that adds value to their experience, CEDA works with Manawatū District Council and communities along The Country Road experience, on signage projects. The latest update was the Stormy Point lookout sign, which featured a new design, imagery and information on the area's history and geological formation.

Growing the profile of our business support services

To continue raising businesses' awareness of the support that's available via CEDA and to get them engaged in the Regional Business Partner programme, two business events were held in July. The Palmerston North event also featured a presentation from Palmerston North City Council's Planning Manager David Murphy on how the council's revitalisation of the city centre will help to increase the number of people, businesses and vibrancy to the city. The second event was held in Ruapehu, in partnership with Ruapehu District Council and Visit Ohakune. These follow a business event that was held in Feilding in May.

CEDA in the Media

[Why you should Move to Manawatū](#)

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