



**AUCKLAND'S  
BUSINESS  
EVENTS PLAN**

**New drive for  
business events**

[aucklandnz.com/conventions](http://aucklandnz.com/conventions)

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## Acknowledgements

The support and advice from key industry stakeholders has been invaluable. Nine senior representatives of the business events sector were consulted and 22 professionals working in the sector were interviewed. ATEED also acknowledges the team at Fresh Info which provided the comprehensive research and analysis that enabled a robust *Auckland's Business Events Plan* to be developed.

# Building a world class business events sector

My vision is to make Auckland the world's most liveable city. A world class business events sector will help our city attract more visitors, more investment and new jobs – all of which will help deliver this vision.

*Auckland's Business Events Plan* sets a target of growing the business events sector's contribution to the Auckland economy from \$236 million in 2013 to \$430 million in 2023, and increasing the total number of delegate days to Auckland from 1.98 million to 2.55 million over the same 10-year period.

The Business Events Plan works in tandem with the *Auckland Visitor Plan* and *Major Events Strategy* to develop our city as a global events destination. All three plans play a key role in helping Auckland achieve its economic and social aspirations and become a true international city.

Auckland already has wonderful facilities to host small and medium-sized meetings, conferences and exhibitions. They make a valuable contribution to the Auckland economy.

The proposed construction of the New Zealand International Convention Centre will truly put Auckland on the international conventions and incentives map and create new business event hosting opportunities.

I look forward to the time when we can host large international conventions, where groups of up to 3500 delegates will at one time be able to experience our urban and business development, and Auckland's wonderful natural playground.



**Len Brown** Mayor of Auckland

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A world class business events sector will help our city attract more visitors, more investment and new jobs.

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# Foreword

## ATEED is well positioned to maximise the benefits of business events.

Auckland is well placed to significantly grow its visitor economy for the benefit of the region and New Zealand. One key way is to develop our business events sector and attract more delegates and other visitors from around the world to conferences and exhibitions held in Auckland.

Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) manages and promotes the Auckland Convention Bureau (ACB), which is focused on growing the volume and value of business events in the city. The ACB has developed a comprehensive Business Events Plan for Auckland, which includes targets of reducing the region's summer-based seasonality, growing demand in the shoulder and off-peak periods, and using business events to support growth and investment in key industry sectors.

ATEED is uniquely positioned to leverage the benefits of business events for Auckland because ACB's work is closely integrated with ATEED's Tourism, Major Events, Economic Growth, and Business Attraction and Investment teams. ATEED can deliver coordinated and aligned activity, and leverage cross-sector growth opportunities.

ATEED intends to increase the resources of the ACB as it provides industry leadership and strengthens its relationships with valued partners such as Tourism New Zealand, tertiary education institutes, Auckland venues including the New Zealand International Convention Centre, industry associations and professionals.

As an example of increased activity, ACB will in 2014 introduce the first Auckland Advocate Programme, which is designed to attract more business events and delegates to the city. Advocates are people with knowledge and standing in their field who will help represent Auckland to their international peers.

The ATEED Board is delighted to release this plan and looks forward to working with Auckland's business events sector to deliver it.



**David McConnell** ATEED Board Chairman

ATEED can deliver coordinated and aligned activity, and leverage cross-sector growth opportunities.







01

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New drive and energy  
for Auckland  
business events

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Business events bring people together to exchange knowledge and ideas, build business relationships, and over a longer term attract investment and talent flows.

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## Auckland's opportunity

Business events bring people together to exchange knowledge and ideas, build business relationships, and over a longer term attract investment and talent flows.

There are other significant benefits which play an important role in connecting people and accelerating innovation and creativity – all critical economic drivers that enhance the prosperity and wellbeing of Auckland and its 1.5 million residents.

Auckland's tourism industry is affected by seasonality as visitor numbers taper off after a boisterous summer. Business events such as conventions, meetings, seminars, conferences, trade shows, exhibitions and incentive travel can take centre stage any time of the year, and can provide extra momentum to the visitor economy.

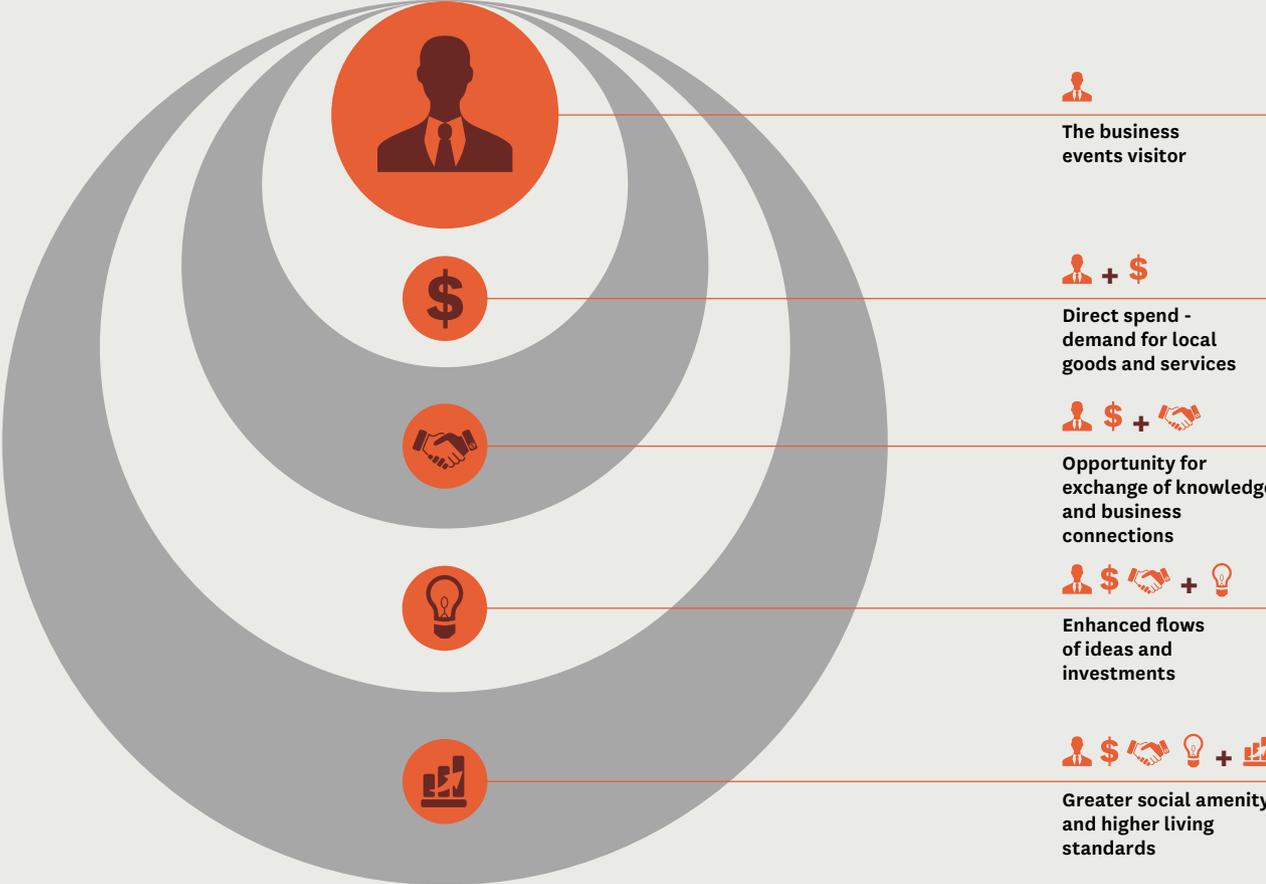
The industry must act now, together. Auckland must have a world-class business events sector that delivers compelling benefits and outcomes: growth in the visitor economy and Auckland's GDP; more jobs and higher productivity for local businesses; and an increase in Auckland's international exposure and reputation.

This will require a shift in the current approach and level of investment. In 2013 the business events sector contributed \$236 million of direct spend to the Auckland economy. The plan's target is to double that contribution by 2023.

*Auckland's Business Events Plan* will create new energy in the industry. It has been developed by the Auckland Convention Bureau (ACB), a designated team at Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) – Auckland Council's economic growth agency.

ACB provides leadership and high-level management within the business events sector, and works to bring more events and delegates to Auckland.

**BUSINESS EVENTS  
BENEFITS**



The business events visitor



Direct spend - demand for local goods and services



Opportunity for exchange of knowledge and business connections



Enhanced flows of ideas and investments



Greater social amenity and higher living standards

## Strategic context

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The NZICC will allow Auckland to host large and lucrative conferences, providing a significant injection into Auckland's and New Zealand's economy.

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Auckland's business events journey is at a pivotal stage. A number of factors suggest the time is right for a step change and a brighter future:

- Confirmation by the Government and SKYCITY Entertainment Group of the construction of the New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC) in Auckland. The NZICC will have a capacity of 3500 delegates and will create new business event hosting opportunities for Auckland, and New Zealand.
- The 2013 New Zealand Government Budget announced additional funding for business events (over four years), and the development of a Business Events Strategy by Tourism New Zealand.
- Strong feedback from ACB members that the bureau needs to develop a strategic focus for Auckland.

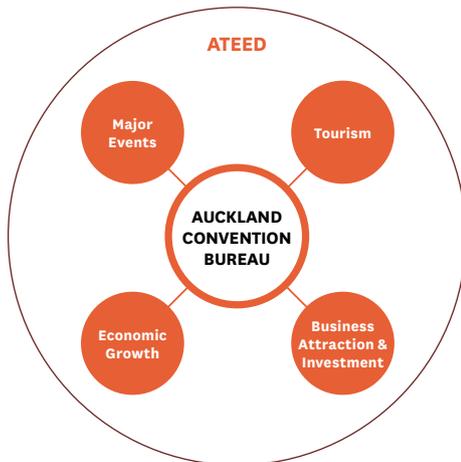
ATEED and ACB will work closely with a range of partners and stakeholders to implement *Auckland's Business Events Plan*. The plan aligns with *Auckland's Visitor Plan* developed by ATEED, Auckland Council's *Economic Development Strategy*, and other strategies from tourism partners have been taken into account – including the Tourism Industry Association's *Tourism 2025*, Tourism New Zealand's *Three Year Marketing Plan*, Air New Zealand's *Going Beyond*, and Auckland International Airport's *Ambition 2025*.

**STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR  
AUCKLAND'S BUSINESS EVENTS PLAN**



# Why business events matter

## LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN ATEED



ATEED is focused on delivering new money and new jobs to Auckland, achieved through the implementation of the strategies contained within its Growth and Competitiveness Framework.

The priorities are:

- Grow the visitor economy
- Build a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship
- Attract business and investment
- Build Auckland's brand and identity
- Enable education and talent
- Grow a skilled workforce.

Business events play an important role in achieving these priorities, presenting ATEED with a range of leverage opportunities. ATEED has adopted a whole-of-organisation approach and is using business events as a platform to facilitate and promote the following targeted growth sectors:

- Tourism
- Food and beverage processing
- Information and communications technology
- Life sciences (including health technology and biotechnology)
- High-value manufacturing
- Screen and digital content
- Construction and engineering
- International (or export) education
- High performance sport
- Marine.

# Auckland Convention Bureau

ACB's main role is to market Auckland as a destination for business events. Its major objectives are to:

- Position Auckland as a premium business events destination
- Increase business events for Auckland from both the domestic and international markets
- Deliver return on investment for stakeholders – especially ACB members
- Leverage business events for maximum economic benefit
- Advocate for industry.

ACB will undertake significant changes to meet the Business Events Plan's aspirations. It will intervene with initiatives that address market failure or require levels of co-ordination that individual businesses or organisations cannot deliver. ACB will influence and/or support third party initiatives that are likely to improve outcomes in the sector. By stepping up activities, ACB will help increase Auckland's reputation as a business events destination, grow the city's profile in key markets such as Australia, and leverage opportunities to grow Auckland's economy.

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ACB is using business events as a platform to facilitate and promote targeted industry growth sectors, and help grow the regional economy.

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# The Auckland numbers

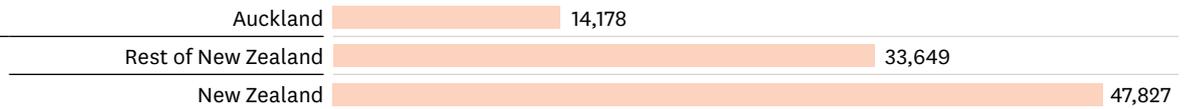
## National context

In 2013, Auckland hosted **30 per cent** of business events in New Zealand, **37 per cent** of delegates and **35 per cent** of business event delegate days  
(Source: CAS - Convention Activity Survey, year end December 2013).

### AUCKLAND'S SHARE OF NATIONAL BUSINESS EVENTS IN 2013

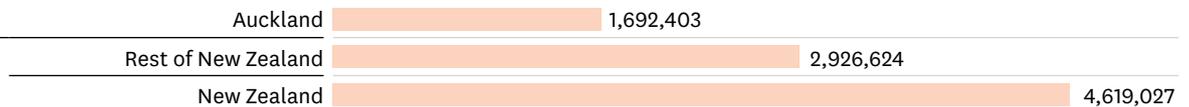
**30%**

#### Business events



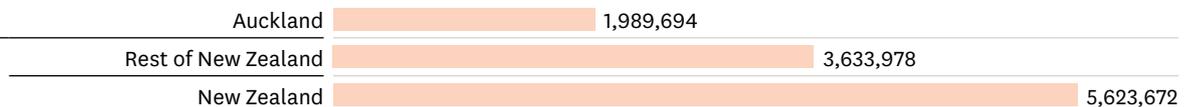
**37%**

#### Delegates



**35%**

#### Delegate days





### Delegates

**32 per cent** of Auckland's 1.69 million business event delegates in 2013 attended meetings/seminars, and 32 per cent attended special social occasions such as weddings and gala dinners.

**82 per cent** of delegates at 2013 Auckland events lived in the region, with 15 per cent from elsewhere in New Zealand, and 3 per cent from overseas.



### Delegate days

**31 per cent** of 1.98 million Auckland delegate days in 2013 were generated by meetings/seminars, 27 per cent by special social occasions such as weddings and gala dinners, and 13 per cent by multi-day conferences.

**83 per cent** of Auckland delegate days in 2013 were generated by Auckland residents, 13 per cent by domestic visitors and the remaining 5 per cent by international visitors.



### Visitor nights

**33 per cent** of 585,000 visitor nights generated by Auckland business events in 2013 were from multi-day conference delegates and 28 per cent from meeting/seminar delegates.

**61 per cent** of Auckland business event visitor nights in 2013 were generated by domestic visitors, and 39 per cent by international visitors.



### Value (regional exports)

Business events generated **\$236 million** of Auckland's regional exports in 2013, made up of visitor expenditure and sponsorship dollars from outside Auckland. Multi-day conferences accounted for 33 per cent of this amount, meetings/seminars 30 per cent and trade shows/exhibitions 26 per cent.

**61 per cent** of this value can be attributed to the domestic market and 39 per cent to international.





02

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# The aspiration and actions

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# The aspiration and actions

This plan will establish a prosperous, world-class business events sector in Auckland by delivering four key outcomes:



## Grow value

Grow the value of business events from \$236 million in 2013 to **\$430m by 2023**



## Grow volume

Grow the volume of delegate days from 1.98 million in 2013 to **2.55m by 2023**



## Reduce seasonality

Reduce seasonality by growing demand in shoulder and off-peak periods



## Support growth

Using business events to support growth and investment in key industry sectors

## BUSINESS EVENTS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

*Auckland's Business Events Plan* will help deliver greater social amenity – such as public assets, restaurants and entertainment facilities – and higher living standards in Auckland. The adjacent chart shows how the aspiration will be achieved.

### Organising ourselves for success



### World-class business events sector



### Greater social amenity & higher living standards







## Grow value

The aspiration is to grow the value of the business events sector in Auckland **from \$236 million in 2013 to \$430m by 2023**, representing average annual growth of 6.2 per cent. Growth will be strongest in the multi-day conference segment at 9 per cent a year, and in international demand at 8.5 per cent a year compared with domestic demand at 4.5 per cent a year.

Value is measured in terms of regional exports – the visitor expenditure and sponsorship that business events bring to Auckland.

### Priority actions

- Establish an Auckland Advocate Programme to target activity in high-value sectors. An advocate/ambassador programme is a set of activities, tools and support services to assist advocates to attract conventions to a city or country and assist them to create a legacy benefit for the destination and/or the local hosts of the conventions.
- Develop a stronger focus on incentive activity particularly in North America and South East Asia. For example, ACB will work with destination management companies and inbound tour operators to strengthen Auckland's incentives offering. Also, ACB will identify key in-market incentive houses to promote Auckland.
- Use multiple digital channels to ensure business visitors can access relevant and up to date information about Auckland.
- Highlight Auckland's value proposition as a business events destination through the Auckland global story.

# \$430m

2023



## Grow volume

Growth in volume will drive an increase in the sector's value by bringing more people to Auckland and keeping them in the region for longer periods. The aspiration is to grow the volume of delegate days **from 1.98 million in 2013 to 2.55 million by 2023**, representing growth of 2.4 per cent a year.

Growth will be strongest in the multi-day conference segment at 4.6 per cent a year, and in international demand at 8.2 per cent a year compared with local demand at 1.9 per cent a year and domestic demand at 2.7 per cent a year.

### Priority actions

- Use the Auckland Advocate Programme to increase the level of the city's advocacy offshore, to increase business opportunities, and to secure more business events for Auckland.
- Partner with tertiary institutions and Crown Research Institutes to develop academic links and increase events activity such as congresses.
- Partner with Tourism New Zealand to ensure bid activity for Auckland is co-ordinated and city led.
- Develop an Auckland-based anchor international business event which returns to Auckland on a regular basis. ACB will research and identify a significant and innovative conference/event which could return regularly and showcase Auckland's world-class expertise in a targeted growth industry sector.

# 2.55m

2023



## Reduce seasonality

Growing business event activity in the shoulder and off-peak periods will help increase visitor demand across the year, leading to enhanced asset use and productivity for local businesses. The aspiration is to grow the percentage of international business event delegates who arrive outside Auckland's peak tourism period from 70 per cent in 2013 to 75 per cent in 2023.

### Priority actions

- Focus on attracting business events into the Auckland shoulder and off-season.
- ACB, in particular, will take an innovative and flexible approach with its marketing and promotional support to encourage large scale conventions to Auckland in the off-season.



## Support growth and investment in key sectors

Business events can showcase local businesses and sectors, bring people together to exchange knowledge and ideas, build relationships and in the longer term enhance investment and talent flows. They play an important role in connecting people and accelerating innovation, which is a critical driver in economic growth and prosperity.

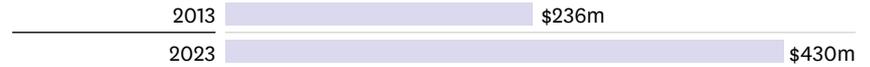
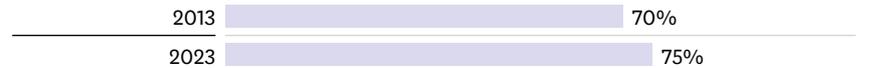
The aspiration is for ATEED to leverage all the 'significant' business events ACB is involved with. A 'significant' event involves at least 500 people or aligns directly with one of Auckland's targeted industry sectors.

### Priority actions

- Use the Auckland Advocate Programme to target activity into sectors of comparative advantage for Auckland.
- Support targeted industry sectors to ensure relevant business event activity is leveraged from an economic growth perspective to maximise sector benefits.
- Ensure investment opportunities associated with business event activity are identified and maximised.
- Identify exhibitions and trade shows that align with key sectors, and contribute to economic growth.



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**KEY BUSINESS EVENT  
OUTCOMES TO BE  
DELIVERED BY ACB**
**Value of business events****Volume of delegate days****Share of visitor arrivals outside peak****Share of significant business events leveraged**

## Portfolio approach

Auckland needs to take a portfolio approach to business events, instead of evaluating them on their individual merits. It needs to focus less on the stand-alone expected outcomes of an event and more on how the expected outcome of a single event could combine with others. Some business events may attract significant volumes of delegates but their relative value may be low. Others may be smaller but present unique showcasing and investment opportunities for an industry sector.

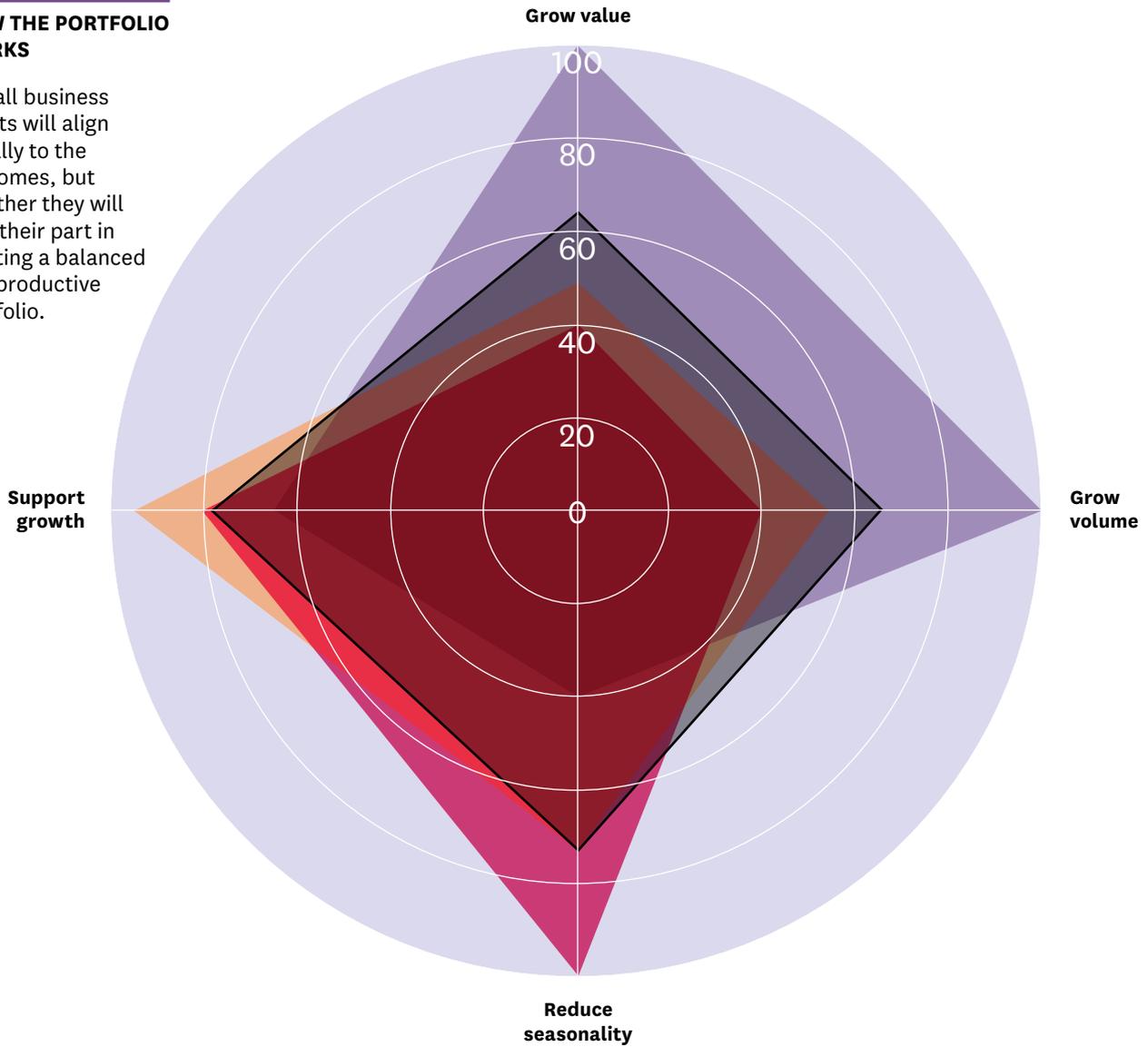
A balanced portfolio will help achieve each of the plan's key aspirations of growing the value of business events in Auckland, growing the volume of delegate days, reducing seasonality by boosting demand in shoulder and off-peak periods, and using business events to support growth and investment in key industry sectors.

The overall performance of the portfolio will depend on both the outcomes and attributes of the business events within it. Therefore careful consideration must be given to:

- Origin of the event
- Event frequency
- Time of the year
- Extent to which the event can promote local industries
- Potential for the event to generate long term legacy benefits.

**HOW THE PORTFOLIO WORKS**

Not all business events will align equally to the outcomes, but together they will play their part in creating a balanced and productive portfolio.



Event 1    Event 2    Event 3    Portfolio average



# Key target markets

## Domestic

This market provides Auckland with a steady flow of business event activity, including corporate meetings and seminars, special occasions (such as gala dinners, weddings, balls, graduations, cocktail parties, birthday parties), trade shows and exhibitions. Volume is high but value per head is relatively low and clients generally know what they want.

ACB can play an important role in facilitating linkages and ensuring that domestic events stay in Auckland or come to the city. These linkages can also open international opportunities.

## Australia

A study of the Australian market estimated more than 316,000 business events are held there annually and attract more than 22 million participants. If Auckland can capture one per cent of this market, it would boost Auckland's activity by more than 10 per cent.

Many large organisations in New Zealand have formal links with Australia, increasing the likelihood of Auckland being considered as a host for trans-Tasman business events. Auckland can be included in the state rotations of major conferences.

## International

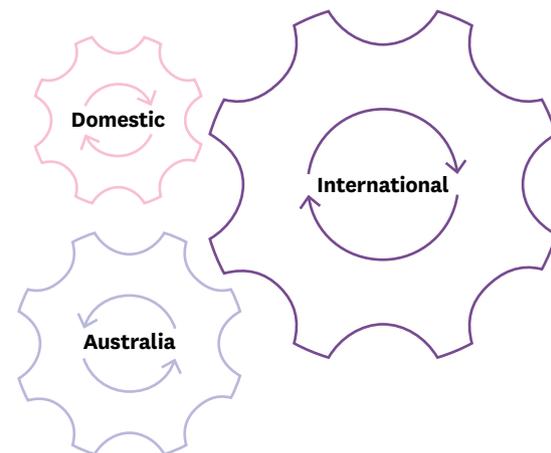
The international market comprises corporate meetings, international association meetings and incentive travel.

**Corporate meetings** typically include other activities such as team building, sightseeing and tourism experiences like golf, sailing or food and wine tours, which increase visitor spend.

**International association meetings** are considered the most desirable for the business events sector. They attract high spending delegates and have the potential to deliver wider benefits through knowledge exchange and business networking. About 23,000 association meetings are regularly held throughout the world each year.

**Incentive travel** is a reward for superior performance, and has long been recognised as a powerful business tool for helping organisations achieve key business objectives. Incentive groups generally number 15-150, although some international groups have more than 2000 participants. Partners and spouses are often included, which increases visitor numbers.

Many large organisations in New Zealand have formal links with Australia, increasing the likelihood of Auckland being considered as a host for trans-Tasman business events.







03

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# Organising for success

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## Organising for success

ATEED will make changes to ensure ACB is aligned and resourced to maximise opportunities and better deliver the plan's aspirations. Key focus areas include:

- Governance and leadership
- Partnerships and programmes – such as developing an Auckland Advocate Programme
- Funding and resources – expand ACB's capacity and capability, and increase its presence in Australia
- Brand and identity – integrate Auckland's brand into the business events story
- Measurement and insights on the level of influence in the sector.

### **Governance and stronger leadership**

ATEED is governed by a single board with a broad mandate across multiple functions, allowing the directors to operate at a high level.

As a team within ATEED, ACB's work is closely integrated with the activities of ATEED's Tourism, Major Events, Economic Growth, and Business Attraction and Investment teams. ATEED can leverage cross-sector growth opportunities, and ACB has strong backing from ATEED's board to drive the business events sector.

A Business Events Advisory Group (BEAG) will be established to provide strategic guidance, leadership and assistance to ACB. Membership of the BEAG will comprise key players in the Auckland business events sector including central government, private sector contributors to the ACB's operation, and a representative of ATEED's board.

### **Partnerships and programmes**

ACB wants to bring the Auckland business events sector together. ACB has built a strong network of productive partnerships and relationships across New Zealand and internationally, but further work has to be done. It needs to have the backing of all ACB members to deliver tangible results for the benefit of Auckland.

ACB, in particular, will concentrate on further developing its partnerships with key stakeholders such as: Tourism New Zealand (Tourism NZ), Conventions & Incentives New Zealand (CINZ), universities and tertiary institutes, multi-nationals, ACB members and the future New Zealand International Convention Centre.

ATEED and ACB recognise that only through the principle of kotahitanga – building partnerships of mutual benefit – can these goals be maximised.

### **Auckland Advocate Programme**

Advocates will play an important part in growing business events in Auckland – helping to make successful bids. Business events advocate/ambassador programmes work well around the world. Melbourne and Sydney convention bureaux credit much of their recent success to their advocate programmes.

An advocate is a person of knowledge and standing in his or her field who represents a destination, and works with local meetings professionals to secure business events business.

ACB and Tourism NZ will launch a national and city-led advocate programme following research to determine the respective roles of the programmes to avoid duplication.

### **Funding and resources**

ACB is funded by both the public and private sectors. Auckland Council, through ATEED, is the main funder. ACB members make a contribution to the business events sector through their membership fees.

The actions outlined in this plan demonstrate further public and private sector investment will be required to achieve the desired outcomes and to grow the visitor economy. ATEED's investment demonstrates its commitment to business events in Auckland. Auckland business events are also supported by Tourism NZ's commitment.

Further investment will be required from the private sector to bring the plan to fruition.

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Advocates will play an important part in growing business events in Auckland – helping to make successful bids.

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As Auckland increases its presence in the international marketplace, it is important that it focuses on an innovative and flexible approach for financial support to business events.

### Supporting business events

As Auckland increases its reputation and presence in the international marketplace, it is important that it focuses on an innovative and flexible approach to financial support for business events.

If the business case is compelling, Auckland will explore options for raising the funds required to win significant business events. This could culminate in a partnership approach between local and central government and the private sector.

To date, Auckland has supported the attraction of business event activity through telling the story of the city as a business events destination and providing funding to support the development of bids for significant international conferences. These bids are frequently undertaken in conjunction with Tourism NZ.

On occasions, the event may be supported through the sponsoring and leverage of a specific delegate function. In future this type of activity may be seed funded and then provided to an association to kick start delegate marketing on the basis that the funding is repaid as delegate registrations reach a certain level.

Support type	Cost	Examples	Mechanisms
Branding / promotion	\$	The Auckland story Destination promotion Sector promotion	Imagery Marketing collateral Digital
Bid funding	\$\$	Bid production Travel sector collaboration	Grants
Event support	\$\$\$	Delegate marketing Delegate functions Local transport	Grants Seed funding

### Stronger presence in Australia

Focusing on Australia is important because of its proximity and the opportunity of tapping into its market of more than 22 million annual business event participants. A representative based in Australia will strengthen

networks and contacts in the main Australian cities, promote Auckland as a world-class business events destination, and respond more quickly to enquiries and opportunities.

ACB will continue to work in partnership with CINZ and Tourism NZ. However, these organisations have a national mandate. A gap still exists in the Australian market for Auckland to pursue small to medium sized business events, as well as the larger convention business.

### **Brand and identity**

Through its marketing, ACB will use Auckland's fresh brand positioning to show off what makes Auckland a stand-out business events destination.

Auckland is a thriving city with a vibrant and dynamic spirit, and a strong connection to its land and heritage. Auckland has the best of both worlds – a unique combination of urban development and natural wonderland.

The quality and character of Auckland provides wonderful dualities for business events delegates:

- Auckland has a global community, but retains smaller city attributes of accessibility and friendliness
- Auckland is one flight away from its target markets, but on arrival feels like nowhere else in the world
- Auckland has world-class facilities and hospitality, but it is also a great place to explore the great outdoors
- Innovation is ingrained in the 'Kiwi DNA' and this is blended with Auckland's regional stature as a knowledge hub.

ACB will promote Auckland's unique characteristics to attract more business events and delegates to the city, and help to sell the Auckland story.

### **Measurement and insights**

ACB will also lead analysis and modelling of tourism datasets including the Convention Research Programme (CRP) which includes both the Convention Activity Survey (CAS) and Convention Delegate Survey (CDS), New Zealand International Travel and Migration statistics, and International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) information.

Measurement and insights form the basis of the targets outlined in this plan, monitoring is critical to ensure we meet our objectives.

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A gap exists in the Australian market for Auckland to pursue small to medium sized business events.

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An aerial photograph of Auckland, New Zealand, showing the harbor, city buildings, and a bridge. The sky is blue with some clouds. The water is a light blue-green color. The city is densely packed with buildings, and there are many boats in the harbor. A large bridge spans across the water in the background.

## The ultimate outcome

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Auckland is working towards becoming the world's most liveable city and was ranked third in the 2012 and 2013 Mercer 'Quality of Living' surveys. The city is determined to attract new money and new jobs, and a strong portfolio of business events can be a major contributor to Auckland's economic expansion. Business events can also provide the diversity and profile of key sectors that keeps the spotlight on Auckland.

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For more information

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