

20 January 2022

IMA grouping	Canterbury & West Coast
RTOs covered	ChristchurchNZ, Venture Timaru, Hurunui Tourism, Development West Coast, Destination Kaikōura, Mackenzie Tourism, Selwyn, Ashburton, Waimakariri
Reporting period	1 July 2021 – 31 December 2021

Summary report of five key achievements from the IMA grouping during the reporting period

1. Across this reporting period (12 May –31 Dec 2021), 15 events proceeded, 3 events were currently delayed/postponed and 6 events were cancelled in the Canterbury & West Coast region.

Of the events that went ahead, final figures are still coming in from event organisers but to date approximately 30,000 attended the 15 events, attracting approximately 12,800 visitors to the region.

Unfortunately, nine events were cancelled or postponed due to Covid-19 lockdowns or uncertainty of how to implement Govt guidelines to provide safe events.

Those that were postponed created an ongoing issue with many events across the regions having to be moved to the same date. Several events were rescheduled multiple times, such as Bandquet in Timaru, before deciding to cancel as it was considered that by this stage the brand had lost credibility and trying to rebuild was simply too tough. Event organisers were then able to focus on planning for future years or creating other types of events that could be run without large crowds in one area. Many of those that were able to go ahead did so with much smaller numbers due to Govt restrictions, such as the Addington and Riccarton Races.

Unfortunately, Christchurch's pinnacle major event for summer 2022 -SailGP Season 2 had to be cancelled due to not being able to secure the required MIQ allocation. Fortunately, ChristchurchNZ have been able to secure a multiyear partnership with SailGP and alternate hosting with Auckland. Christchurch will now host SailGP in 2023 and 2025 (AKL 2024 & 2026).

Several events, such as SCOFF, Kaikoura Crayfest and the Hurunui Garden Festival were able to go ahead due to running in multiple locations across multiple days, without having large audiences congregating in one space. They enabled the regions to still have an event and build an awareness and hype for future years when they can be further developed, attract larger crowds, and created ticketed opportunities.

Some regions found that even though they promoted the REF funding far and wide, event organisers were reluctant to commit due to uncertainty around Covid-19 lockdowns and implementation of Govt guidelines.

REF has enabled RTOs to employ roles that had previously not been considered necessary. Kaikoura has been able to continue to contribute to the role of Marketing & Events Engagement Manager to ensure consistency in the management of regional events and work with event organisers to seek new and develop existing events. Mackenzie recruited an Event Development Manager, who assisted in developing a detailed Strategy Plan and ran their first REF Funding Round.

The closing of many accommodation properties in the West Coast resulted in a critical loss of inventory to accommodate business events and the loss of their Business Events Executive. Unfortunately, the West Coast have had to pivot from attracting and bidding on business events (business development) to capability building and asset development.

2. Ashburton, Kaikoura and Waimakariri took the opportunity to deliver multiple capability workshops for local event organisers. Topics covered included Event concept; Financial & Sponsorship; Values and Audience; Marketing & Social Media Platforms; Collaboration & Environment; Reporting; Legacy and leverage; Economic value; Increasing regional profile. The workshops were all well received with participants utilising the skills they have learned and sometimes provide them with the confidence to apply for funding for their events.

3. Despite Covid lockdowns, 15 events were still able to go ahead, as noted in the attached Event Register. Some events highlighted included:

- The Mid Canterbury Winter Classic attracted 125 competitors from 14 regions across New Zealand.
- The South Island Dairy Women's Conference held in Ashburton attracted a higher attendance than previous years as the 2020 conference was cancelled, with attendees coming from all over New Zealand.
- Through REF funding, Crayfest Kaikōura was able to strengthen its position in the Kaikōura events calendar, with 35% of attendees travelling to Kaikōura specifically for the event, with an average length of stay 1.7; key markets for attendees included Christchurch 48.67% & Marlborough 15.93%
- SCOFF (South Canterbury Outstanding Food Festival) was a collaboration with the Mackenzie, Waimate and Timaru districts, which resulted in a wonderful collaboration that has built and enhanced relationships between the three territorial authorities and the businesses within them. Without the REF funding to deliver the project, this opportunity would not have arisen to this extent, and therefore the establishment of these relationships would not have been fostered.
- The Hanmer Springs Fete was held on the 29th of October 2021. 3,000 people attended this event with around 2,000 of those from outside of the Hurunui district. There were 170 stallholders, and the site was extended to allow for safer COVID practises. The economic impact on the Hanmer Springs town was fantastic.
- The Hurunui Garden Festival on 28-31 October 2021 was held in 22 gardens over 3 days. They had 12,000 garden visits this year with around 3600 visitors. 600 of those from the Hurunui district and 3000 from outside of the area. This number was 66% up on last year's event. They also had an increase from 19 to 22 gardens this year.

4. The West Coast, Mackenzie and Waimakariri finalised their Strategy Plans, with Mackenzie and Waimakariri running their first funding rounds. Strong communications plans were developed and implemented to attempt to advise as many potential applicants as possible to ensure that a good quantity and quality of funding applications were received for REF funding.

5. ChristchurchNZ (lead entity) hosts monthly meetings for the IMA to come together and discuss each region's progress & any event applications. These meetings ensure transparency and facilitate shared communication between regions hosting events with similar demographics and how we can best ensure event attendance is maximised at all events.

As an IMA there is an internal regional events calendar where each region is responsible for updating their events accordingly to ensure no clashes where possible.

Many of the RTO's work closely with their local Councils e.g. Kaikoura, Waimakariri and Timaru, to ensure any relevant and appropriate event information is communicated between parties. Kaikoura and Waimakariri have both developed and manage websites that includes an event hub with a calendar for external users and event resources for event organisers.

Additionally, the RTOs have collaborated to support postponed events through collaboration and offering displaced exhibitors and attendees with special offers and added value to attend similar events in neighbouring regions.