

Annual Report 2025-26

Presentation to Manawātū District Council
7th October 2026

Tā Mātou Matawhānui

Our Vision

Manawatū 2030;

Ko te rohe tino ahu whakamua
o Aotearoa – New Zealand's most
progressive region

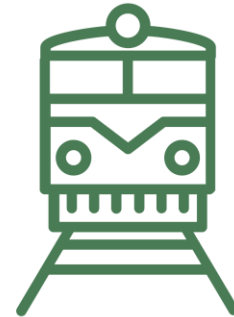
Our Goals



Manawatū is renowned for its exceptional lifestyle, competitive advantages, and is a magnet for investment, business, talent and visitors



Manawatū is a world leading agrihub



Manawatū is a leading distribution hub, and leverages off its role in central New Zealand

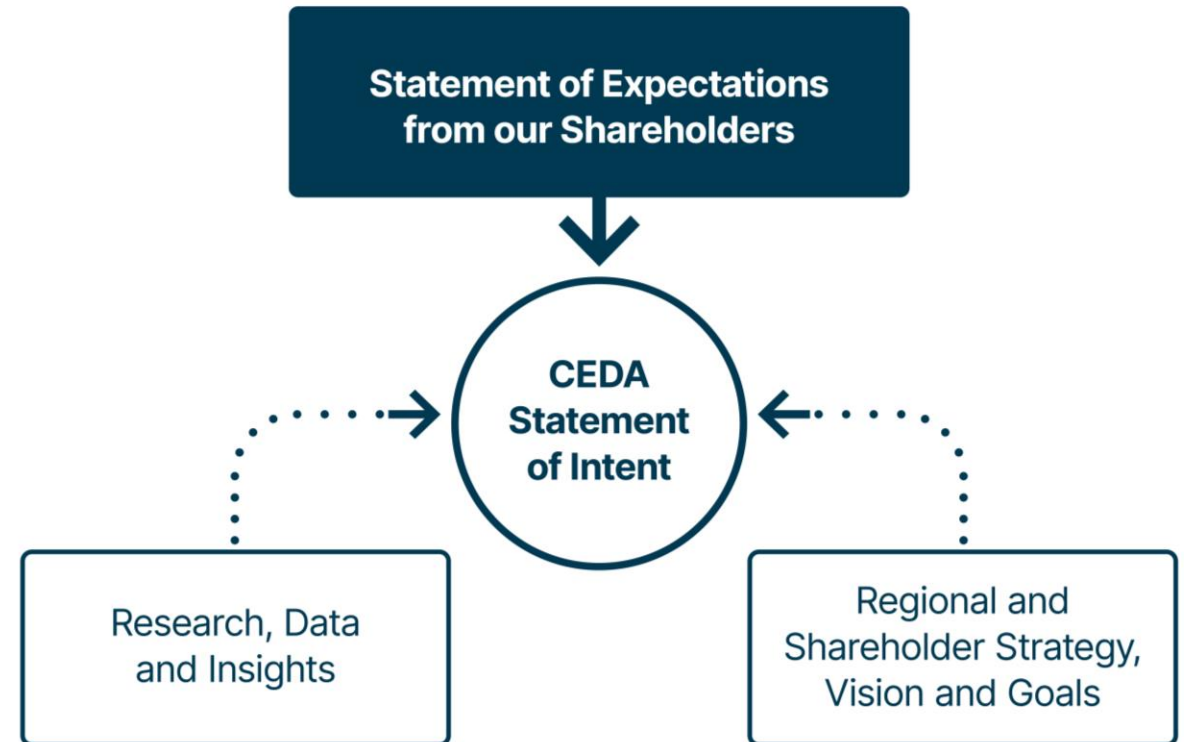
How We Work

Core Focus Areas

- Stimulate inward investment, retention and expansion of business
- Developing a talent pipeline
- Support domestic visitation and tourism

Shareholders top priorities

- Te Utanganui, the Central New Zealand Distribution Hub
- Manawatū Regional Food Strategy
- Promotion and development of key tourism and visitor destinations
- Inward investment in the Feilding and town centre and Palmerston North city centre



He karapatanga ki Papaioea me Manawatū | Palmerston North and Manawatū at a glance

POPULATION

90,500 Palmerston North
34,000 Manawatū
June 2025



124,500
POPULATION TOTAL



0.3%
Rate of population growth
Estimated 400 annual increase
YE June 2025

MEDIAN AGE

36.1 Palmerston North
40.9 Manawatū
June 2025

MANAWATŪ GDP

\$8,932m
2.1% of NZ economy
YE June 2026



RTO RATING

14th



Manawatū Region is **ranked 14th for visitor spend** out of 31 Regional Tourism Organisations around New Zealand
YE June 2026

TOURISM ELECTRONIC CARD SPENDING BY VISITORS

\$309m
in Manawatū region
(-0.4%)
YE June 2026*



12,339
TOTAL BUSINESSES
(+0.5%) on previous year
June 2025



68,172
TOTAL EMPLOYEES & SELF-EMPLOYED
(-0.8%)
June 2026
573 jobs
decrease from March 2025



\$5,120m
TOTAL EARNINGS
Salaries, wages & self-employment income
\$350m increase (+7.3%) YE March 2024



BUILDING CONSENTS VALUE
\$233m
(+30.4%)
YE June 2026

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES 2025-26

INWARD INVESTMENT + SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

- Achieved: 19 | Target: 15
Inward investment activities/identified opportunities

- Achieved: 15 | Target: 9
Sector development initiatives in sectors of strength



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT + INNOVATION

- Achieved: 500 | Target: 400
Engagements supporting business growth, expansion and retention

- Achieved: 7 | Target: 6
Start-up + innovation initiatives through partnerships



TALENT ATTRACTION + RETENTION

- Achieved: 6 | Target: 4

Initiatives that support talent attraction and retention, industry, or youth into employment



PROFILING THE REGION + ECONOMIC DATA

- Achieved: 64 | Target: 20
Content pieces or media features
- Achieved: 6 | Target: 2
Campaigns or digital initiatives
- Achieved: 344K | Target: 190k
Sessions on ManawatuNZ.co.nz
- Achieved: 11 | Target: 4
Economic updates



IWI ENGAGEMENT + STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

- Achieved: 4 | Target 3
Initiatives to support iwi engagement and projects
- Achieved: 30 | Target: 12
Partnership agreements in place
- 76% Stakeholder satisfaction



Ngā Tino Kaupapa o te Tau | Highlights from the year

Te Utanganui
progressed, including
successful **Regional
Infrastructure Fund** outcome

318

businesses actively
engaged through the
**Regional Business Partner
Programme**

\$226,472

in capability development
support issued, including
\$22,500 through the new
AI Advisory Pilot

29

new content pieces curated

30

partnership agreements
in place, including
11 new agreements

500

business engagements
completed

**New talent initiative
developed** in partnership
with the Manawātū
Business Chamber and
Massey Business School

19

Inward Investment
activities or opportunities
identified including **4 new
opportunities** identified

4

initiatives delivered to
support iwi or mana whenua

**Innovate Grants
programme**

launched in partnership with
The Factory

\$989,134

in MBIE* Innovation
Research and Development
grants issued to businesses
in the region

+72

Net Promoter Score for the
Regional Business Partner
Programme

Attended travel-trade show
TRENTZ, pitching our region
to **60+ travel buyers**

64

content pieces and media
features achieved, reaching
an estimated media
audience of **8,802,899**

76%

stakeholder satisfaction
rating achieved through
the biennial customer
satisfaction survey

International Urban and
Regional Collaboration
programme
Action Plan approved

**Accelerate
Academy**

Hauora Wānanga o ngā
Rangatahi o Manawātū
delivered

344,555

sessions on
ManawatuNZ.co.nz
a 12.3% increase
on 2024-25

5

**primary sector
land diversification
opportunities supported**

Key Projects Updates from the year

Te Utanganui – The Central New Zealand Distribution Hub

Strong momentum over the year...

- Regional Infrastructure Fund progressed
- NZIER Economic Impact Report completed
- Te Utanganui Masterplan Refresh
- Advocacy (15) with central/local government, industry and sector partners
- Website and investment documents refreshed

Manawatū Regional Food Strategy

Land Diversification

- 5 sector opportunities
- Land owner database, and direct email campaign
- MoU with Federated Farmers
- Lean Farm workshop

International Urban & Regional Cooperation

- MoU with Ljubljana EDA and Venture Taranaki
- Regional Cooperation Action Plan approved

Manawatū Destination Management Plan

Regional Identity

- 6 campaigns delivered incl. International campaigns (2) through Kiwi North NZ and NZ collaborations
- 64 content and media features

Trade Events Programme

- TRENZ, and Tourism Regional Showcase in Sydney

Trade Product Development

- Visitor Sector Collective
- Manawatū Garden Festival

Inward Investment

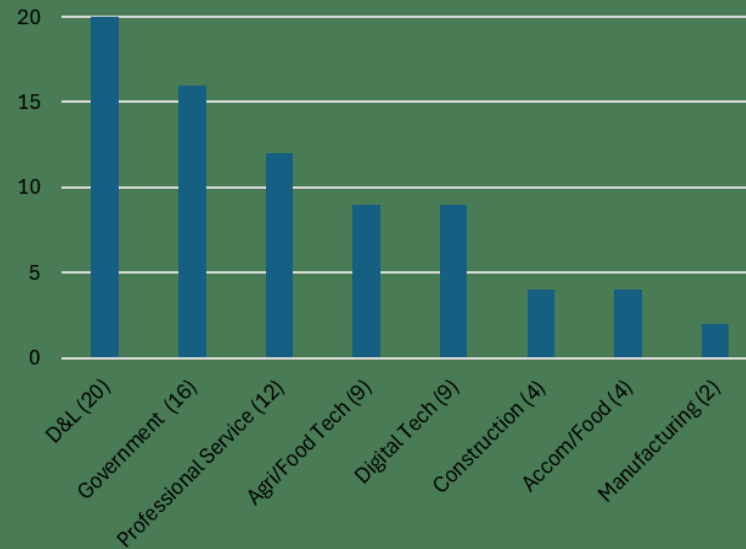
19 Inward Investment activities or opportunities identified

- Hotel Investment pitch deck updated
- Five conference presentations/ attendance across NZ
- Delegation to Ruakura
- Supporting expansion in industrial land supply with private investors/ developers
- Regional Inward Investment Prospectus to targeted client list
- Pursued several primary sector opportunities including biochar, olives, and niche manufacturing

Where they came from

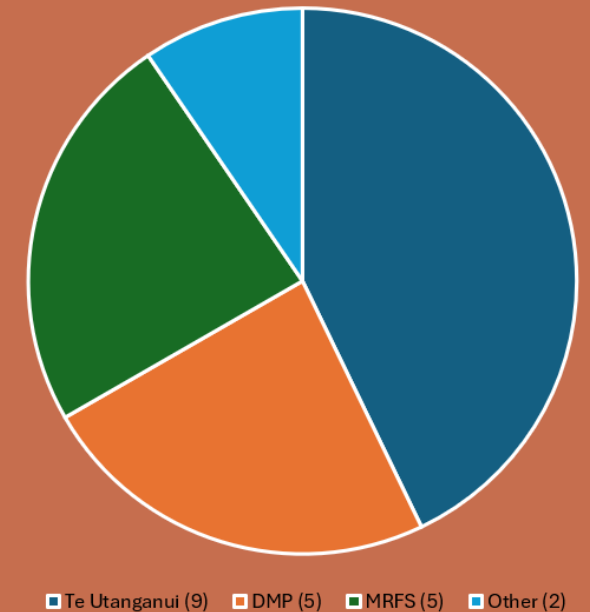
76 Inward Investment Engagements

- 42 business / 34 partners
- 75% from out of region (57)
- Sectors:



Current Activity 2026-27 year

21 Ongoing Opportunities/Planned Initiatives – Inward Investment & Sector development



CEDA

CENTRAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

MANAWATŪ