



GREAT SOUTH 
Southland Regional Development Agency

Southland Murihiku Events Strategy 2020 - 2025

18 month review



Southland Murihiku Events Strategy vision and goals:

He rāngai tautoko, hihiri me te kaupapa toitu e akiaki ana I te uru mai o te hapori me te akiaki I te haerenga ki te rohe ma te hanga o nga mea rereke.

A supported, dynamic and sustainable event sector that encourages community participation and drives visitation to the region by building on unique points of difference.

GOALS:

ATTRACT, RETAIN, GROW AND ENHANCE SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

Stimulate Southland's economy by supporting, promoting and growing existing events and attracting new events that bring visitors and encourage spending in Southland.

MAXIMISE COMMUNITY WELLBEING: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL

Event organisers, business and community working together to ensure maximum economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits are achieved. Events will celebrate and showcase Southland's people, places and unique selling points.

ENCOURAGE EXCELLENCE IN EVENT MANAGEMENT

Southland's event sector will be strengthened with regional event organisers' skill and capabilities developed and improved.

PROVIDE A BALANCED EVENTS CALENDAR

Provide a balanced, all-season calendar of premier, special interest, regional and community events that celebrate Southland's key attributes and industries.



Great South delivered the Southland Murihiku Events Strategy in November 2020. The following is a summary of activity undertaken over the past 18 months as well as a transparent address of activities not undertaken during the time period. While we were within the Covid environment at the time of the Strategy's delivery, there were some changes since the Strategy launch that had a major impact on implementation, particularly in terms of priorities.

In May 2020 the New Zealand Government announced the Strategic Tourism Assets Protection Programme fund (STAPP) and in January 2021 announced the Regional Events Fund (REF). This meant a significant increase in funds for Great South to put towards events - the idea being to stimulate domestic tourism while international borders were closed. There was a limited timeframe for the funding, which meant re-prioritising our work programme.



Leveraging events to promote the region

Growing existing special interest events to become premier events and strengthening Southland's profile

SUPPORTING EXISTING DESTINATION EVENTS

Great South has identified and is working with the organisers of 36 key regional and premier events to support them with creating, executing and reviewing their individual marketing plans. The Strategy had identified 10 events that would receive this attention.

Each of the 36 events received individual marketing plans and additional promotion opportunities across New Zealand. The focus is attracting 'out-of-region' event attendees, growing event attendance and showcasing Southland's places, spaces, and people.

At a minimum, one meeting a year is held with the organisers of each event to review their individual marketing plans. Advice has included anything from website redevelopment, marketing and media opportunities, health and safety and event planning in general.

For these events, Great South produced promotional videos, photos and editorial copy to aid consistency in future promotion. Raising the profile of individual events is important not only for attendance and participation, but to raise Southland's profile as an events destination and attract out of region visitors. This was particularly important while international borders were closed.

The events included cover a range of categories including, food, active, family, agriculture, arts, and festivals. Of these, there are three premier, 23 special interest and 10 regional events. A further four special interest and two regional events will be included in the calendar in the future.

SOUTHLAND'S UNMISSABLE EVENTS CALENDAR

In November 2021, Great South launched the Southland Unmissable Events calendar, which showcases each of the 36 events, clustering them by season or event type. The calendar is available on Southland's promotional website southlandnz.com and each event is featured with a promotional video, images and a blurb about the event that conveys its looks and feel. Being featured on southlandnz.com means other useful information such as suggested activities, regional connectivity, is also featured.

To date, the landing page has had 3,704 pageviews, with best performing individual event page to date being the Bluff Oyster & Food Festival.

The plan was to create seasonal campaigns featuring events for the relevant season. Unfortunately, due to the Government's Covid-19 restrictions in January, no Autumn campaign occurred. Instead, focus was put on Winter and spring events and marketing by event type, such as food/harvest, active/sports.

ACTION: Promote 10 events each year that drive visitation in the off peak and shoulder periods.

ACTION: Encourage events to use the regional Southland brand, sharing Southland's places, spaces and people.

ACTION: Partner with 10 special interest event organisers within five years to investigate evolving their event to a premier event.

ACTION: Minimum of 20 events are identified each year to support promotion of the Southland destination including alignment and inclusion in the region's marketing plan and activations.

ACTION: Deliver a campaign and subsequent activations, which promotes the Southland Regional Events Calendar (southlandnz.com) and aligns with domestic visitation activity and marketing

ACTION: Within five years, identify three clusters of events and develop and implement promotional plans.

ACTION: Investigate opportunities to promote the calendar of destination events.

ACTION: Assess the monthly events e-newsletter featuring upcoming events.

ACTION: Work with neighbouring regions to understand the timing of recurring events in order to avoid scheduling conflicts.



In summer of 2020/21 and 2021/22, we delivered a Southland Summer Wheels campaign that featured wheel-based Southland Unmissable Events. In addition, at least 10 community events were included within the campaign. The campaign included digital, print advertising, event booklet, radio and an Invercargill prize package.

We have taken advantage of additional marketing opportunities for our our Unmissable Events such as:

- Sharing to websites with event listings, such as Eat New Zealand and NZ Motor Caravan Association (NZMCA)
- Sending notifications to MediaWorks and NZME noticeboards
- Submitting to Kia Ora Magazine
- Displaying on promotional LED screens at Invercargill City Library and Invercargill Airport
- Plus other relevant media channels including television, websites and magazines

MONTHLY EVENTS NEWSLETTER

Great South sends out a monthly events e-newsletter to our database of around 1200 subscribers and growing. This newsletter includes both community events as well as Unmissable events. Events are selected from the event listing on the 'what's on' page of southlandnz.com.

SOUTHLAND SOCIAL CLUB NEWSLETTER

Great South established and has sent two Southland Social Club newsletters to companies and businesses to give them ideas for their workplace social events. To be included, events needed to offer an exclusive deal, such as early ticket sales, private tables, catering options, or discounted entry.

EVENT SCHEDULING CALENDAR

Great south created a calendar tracking event timings across three years on southlandnz.com to assist event organisers with event scheduling, which is updated. In addition we have a database of more than 200 events in neighbouring regions and nationwide to help avoid scheduling clashes. It also provides opportunity for us to leverage off those events particularly with digital marketing.

Creating visual assets for events

Building the Great South Visual Library

The Great South Visual Library was launched mid-2021. Imagery and footage from Southland Unmissable Events have been uploaded to the library. Event organisers are invited to send additional images for Great South to add to the visual library. This allows event organisers access to a library of over 4,000 event and promotional images they can use for marketing purposes.

ACTION: Development and promotion of the online regional Southland brand portal (visual library via Brandkit) which will consist of imagery content to be shared.



ACTION: Identify opportunities to develop new events which showcase a unique aspect of the Southland identity.

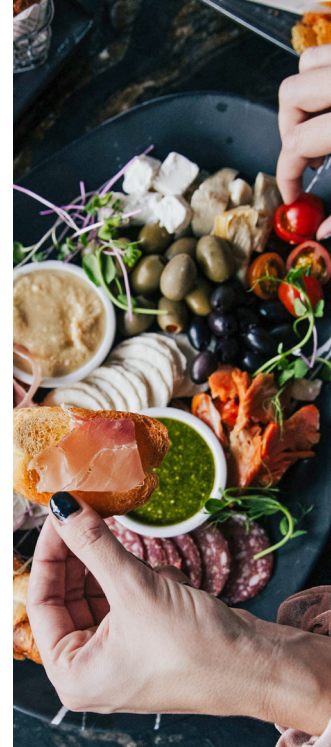
Developing new events

Helping create new regional events that showcase unique aspects of Southland's identity

The Southland Murihiku Food Tourism Strategy identified the region has an opportunity for growth in food-related events and food tourism, therefore our focus to date has been on the introduction of food-based events.

Great South worked with Hospitality New Zealand Southern Branch to develop new event Savour the South. The first event was held in April 2021 and was more of a marketing exercise to draw attention to restaurant dining experiences and concentrating on Southland food suppliers. The 2022 event included new ticketed food events including Long Lunch Te Anau.

We have also worked with Hop 'N' Vine, supporting them with the creation of the Fiordland Summer Beer Fest (formerly Hop 'N' Vine Te Anau), and Oktoberfest in Invercargill.



Delivering community and regional events

Celebrating Southland's culture and heritage and driving domestic tourism

EVENT PACKAGES

Great South created prize packages aligned with events that were marketed via digital media and print, and event travel trade includes working with inbound agency on designing group travel packages.

Recent packages:

- ILT Kidzone 2021 'Winter Escape to Invercargill' - family-friendly Invercargill based activities, accommodation, and meals
- Savour the South 2021 'Fiordland Foodie Escape' - meals and accommodation for four
- Savour the South 2021 'Southland Seafood Package' - a \$200 Kings Fish Supply Southland seafood produce gift pack
- Southland Summer Wheels Guide 2022 'Wheely Good Couples Getaway' - Invercargill based activities and accommodation
- Burt Munro Challenge 2022 (Cancelled) 'THL Operator Special' - discount hire on camper vans during the Burt Munro Challenge ex Queenstown
- Bluff Oyster Festival 2022 (Cancelled) 'Inbound Group Travel Agency' - event tickets, 5 nights' accommodation, and regional activities including Stewart Island for 46 people
- Burt Munro Challenge 2023 'Inbound Group Travel Agency' - event tickets, 6 nights' accommodation, and regional activities for 80 people



ACTION: Identify and provide additional support for at least 10 community event organisers each year to deliver their events which each represent a unique aspect of the Southland identity

ACTION: Create packages/deals for at least 5 events each year which encourage attendees to attend and stay longer.

ACTION: Identify and support a minimum of 50 community and regional events each year focusing on those which are family friendly and showcase quality of life opportunities.

ACTION: Explore and support the delivery of cultural event opportunities for Southland alongside local stakeholders and communities, with a particular focus on creative arts.

ACTION: Create a clear plan to maximise the value of events to drive domestic visitation considering



alignment to destination promotion, opportunities for new events and building capability and capacity in relation to the delivery of events - Fiordland and Gore District focus.

ACTION: Deliver resources and training opportunities aiming to upskill and educate event organisers on social distancing and other issues related to a COVID-19 environment.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL EVENTS

We have worked alongside 95 regional and community events of varying scale and geographically spread throughout the region. Support included marketing, offering advice on holding events in a Covid environment, funding and sponsorship advice, event logistics, basic economic surveys and loaning equipment and signage.

EXPLORING CULTURAL EVENT OPPORTUNITIES

Great South has provided event advice to the Southland Multicultural Food Festival, Riversdale Arts Mixed Media Exhibition, Riverton Heritage Harvest Festival, MLT Hokonui Fashion Design Awards, Miharo Murihiku Polyfest, Matariki Festival and Feast Murihiku.

Great South contributed to Community Trust Southland's review of its Art, Heritage and Culture strategic pillar and attended Active Southland's play champion workshops. We also connected organisers of The Revenant ultra run to the Chinese Consular so that Chinese history could be embedded within the event.

MAXIMISING EVENTS IN FIORDLAND

The Regional Events Fund (REF) allowed for a 24-month full time position to be created in Fiordland to elevate support for event organisers. This support includes:

- Capability building
- Growing events
- Creating new events
- Administration of Regional Events Fund
- Direct support for 11 Unmissable Events
- Website reviews
- Coaching
- Event marketing templates
- Health and Safety reviews
- Brand development and planning support

One-off events that received REF funding also received support with regional information and resources.

MAXIMISING EVENTS IN THE GORE DISTRICT

Five Gore District events are included in the Southland Unmissable Events calendar. The suite of services provided to these events includes:

- Individual marketing plans
- Additional marketing opportunities
- Alignment to regional marketing strategies, such as inclusion in cluster campaigns
- Event organisers invited to attend the Southland Event Organisers Networking Group and included in email update on relevant industry topics

Note: On the Fly Mataura River Festival and Gore Southern Shears will access this level of support in the future.



Showcasing the region's spaces and places

Partnering with Councils to increase utilisation of existing facilities and venues for conferences and sporting events

PROFILING SOUTHLAND AS A CONFERENCE DESTINATION

Great South has always been involved with attracting conferences to Southland. To better reflect the nature of this work, it has rebranded this activity to Business Events Southland. As well as attending national events to promote Southland as a business events destination, Great South has worked locally with Southland venues and accommodation providers to help them develop high quality promotional collateral to better attract events.

Extra effort has been placed on attracting business events and incentive travel to Fiordland. When business events are held in Invercargill, the opportunity for attendees to extend their stay and travel to other parts of the region is being encouraged.

Information about Southland's venues has been collected and will be included in the Southland NZ website upgrade. The venue information will be sectioned into three areas: business event meeting spaces, private dining venues, and general event spaces.

We also contacted key venues within the region encouraging them to list their venue on findavenue.co.nz and other tourism business venue sites.

BUSINESS EVENTS STRATEGY

Great South received \$35,000 in funding from Tourism New Zealand to develop a Business Events Strategy. We are working with industry partners on developing this. A perception study has been undertaken by Angus & Associates. It is expected a draft strategy will be prepared by year end 2022.

We have been updating our resources for business events, including our regional bid document, industry toolkit, incentive programmes and pre and post business event itineraries.

Understanding the economic benefits of events

Exploring the economic impact of events and bringing life to Invercargill City while the inner-city rebuild is underway

ASSESSING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EVENTS

Great South has undertaken a range of economic impact assessments of events. We also assess the value of media

ACTION: Promote Southland's venues and facilities to attract quality events all year round via an upgrade on the SouthlandNZ website which includes creation of copy, promotional video, images and connectivity.

ACTION: Develop a Business Events Strategy including the Regional Conference Bid template document and Business Events Toolkit.

ACTION: Explore and introduce statistical tools to provide insights on the regional economic benefits of events relating to expenditure and attendance.

ACTION: Identify and deliver a range of events and activations to be delivered during the construction of the rebuild and intended to stimulate economic



activity, create vitality and align with wider destination marketing and activity.

ACTION: Ensure events are included within the future strategic framework for the Invercargill inner city rebuild acknowledging their key role in activating the redevelopment.

exposure using media monitoring tools and post event surveys. Work in this space continues to be developed.

INVERCARGILL INNER CITY REBUILD

A full-time staff member is employed at Great South to deliver events and activations within the Invercargill Central Business District, as part of service agreement with Invercargill City Council. The City Centre Coordinator works alongside Invercargill Central Limited, the Invercargill Public Library, Invercargill City Council Communications, H&J Smith, and the Neighbouring Retailers Group when implementing activations. This group is currently developing a marketing plan to continue growth in this space.

Activations in the past 12 months:

- July school holidays 'Seek & Find'
- October school holidays 'Find Fin' the library mascot in conjunction with the Invercargill Public Library
- Halloween 'Spooky Saturday Trick or Treat'
- Lead into Christmas Saturday vibes including The Magic Guy, XO Church games and live music, face painting
- Lead into Christmas Southland Foodbank collection with retailers and businesses in the CBD
- Various 'Shop and Win' prize draw activations aimed to increase foot traffic and sales, including a Valentine's Day promotion
- 'Esk & Us' exhibition on Esk Street involving Arts Murihiku, Greenlight Innovations, Random Acts of Art
- Easter 'Fun Day'

Note: Covid restrictions and ensuring safety of visitors into the CBD has meant activations have been limited.

Reviewing regional events calendar and other events pages on southlandnz.com website

Improving functionality and tools

A review of the events listing section of southlandnz.com has been completed in readiness for the new website. Changes include the ability for users to filter events according to timeframes, particular areas within Southland, types of events and more.

As previously mentioned, the historic event scheduling calendar on the current southlandnz.com website can be used by event organisers for future event planning, to identify congestion periods and estimate audience size.

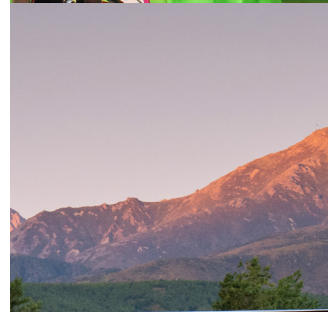
Great South is well underway with the creation of a local event suppliers and food vendor database. It will be available on the new southlandnz.com but in the meantime is being shared on request.

ACTION: Create a database of event suppliers, bands, volunteers, venues etc. and ensure event organisers have access.

ACTION: Complete the upgrade of the existing regional events calendar (southlandnz.com) considering user awareness and accessibility.

ACTION: Develop a plan encouraging event providers to promote their event via the regional events calendar.

ACTION: Review the schedule of proposed events in the region each year to ensure a balanced calendar.



Networking between event organisers

Sharing information and advice

RESOURCES

Great South is developing a regional events tool kit/resource hub and is working on content that best meets the needs of event organisers. As resources are created they are shared with event organisers. In the future they will be available on the new southlandnz.com website.

This project is behind schedule due to Covid impacts facing the events sector and wanting to make sure the resources are fit for purpose.

NETWORKING

We have established an event networking group that includes the organisers of the 36 Southland Unmissable Events. These sessions are held quarterly and are a safe space for event organisers to come together and share stories, advice, and concerns. Guest speakers present to the group.

We also carried out a survey for feedback from this group to measure Great South's service and support to date. The results were shared at the review presentation in June.

Topics have included:

- Understanding your customer
- Managing COVID-19 with advice from Southland District Health Board
- Event layouts and barriers to participation
- Funding and sponsorship
- Social media training

ACTION: Encourage event organisers (through the Event Organisers' Network) to consider how to reduce barriers making events more accessible to all.

ACTION: Establish an Events Organisers Network which meets regularly.

ACTION: Identify and promote one professional development opportunity a year.

ACTION: Review and update the Great South Event Toolkit (providing advice, links and resources).

ACTION: Develop resources to support event organisers to operate events in sustainable ways and considering the impact on the environment and communities.

ACTION: Support a balanced, connected, and collaborative events network.



Actions not yet started or in the early stages of development:

- Complete a review of funders' current policies to investigate establishing a set of over-arching guiding principles.
- Develop a coordinated approach to marketing and event attraction that builds on the competitive advantages of the Southland region - link to Southland Regional Spaces & Places Strategy.
- Test collaborative models to achieve efficient use of venues and under-utilised spaces.
- Assess and track available accommodation and facility capacity and align to drive visitation through a shared industry calendar.
- Develop and promote the Famil and Itinerary Information resource (which provides additional information on pre and post conference attractions).
- Key principles of inclusion, welcoming etc. as identified in the MBIE Welcoming Communities programme are endorsed and shared.
- Complete economic impact assessments for each of the 10 identified special interest events (identified to be grown to premier) and all premier events.
- Network of event providers supported in order to provide quality physical activity events, to develop their capability and to encourage working collaboratively.
- Identify and support physical activity events with the use of participant voice to develop more quality experiences.
- Prepare and share an annual report which provides a snapshot of the economic value of events.
- Develop resources and tools to support event organisers to operate in sustainable ways and considering impact on the environment and communities.
- Seek to understand and support the role of the volunteer sector.