



# Southland Murihiku Events Strategy

2020 - 2025



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# Introduction

Home to the famous Bluff Oyster & Food Festival, Tussock Country Music Festival, the Burt Munro Challenge and many more iconic events, it is clear that Southland embraces the vibrancy and social wellbeing that events can deliver.

Events can be looked at from different perspectives...

- They are important to Southlanders, contributing to the quality of life on offer in the region.
- They play a key role in attracting people to the region to both live and visit.
- They can define what it is to be a Southlander and represent various aspects of the Southland Story.

Overall, it is agreed that they can create a sense of place, belonging and resident satisfaction adding to the liveability of a place.

In response to COVID-19, connection for locals to each other and their community will be of even greater importance. Events, more than ever before, are highly valued because of their role in driving and stimulating domestic

tourism and vibrancy within the Invercargill and Gore CBDs. For this to be achieved, there is a need for alignment with overall destination development and attraction activities.

This Strategy reflects a regional commitment and desire to maximise the benefit of events for the region, the community and its people. It has been developed by Great South in consultation with key partners and aligns with regional strategic planning including the Southland Regional Development Strategy 2015 and the Southland Murihiku Destination Strategy. Great South has a clear mandate from its shareholders to leverage opportunities for Southland in the areas of economic and business development, tourism and events.

The 5-year Strategy and its vision is focused on achieving 4 key goals. It outlines a suggested implementation framework and suggests that success will be determined by a multi stakeholder partnership approach considering those who fund, deliver, leverage and attend events.

## EVENT DEFINITION

For the purpose of this Strategy, events are described as:

“A planned and organised occasion, activity, gathering, display that is open to the public and occurs for a period of time.”

“A formal meeting of people with a shared interest, typically one that takes place over several days, with speakers and seminars”

*Note - Privately hosted events fall outside of these definitions and are therefore not included in this Strategy.*

# Our Guiding Principles

# 1

## TOGETHER

We believe that it is essential to have a regional, coordinated, collaborative and inclusive approach.

# 2

## DIVERSITY

We believe that our diversity is a strength and our uniqueness should be highlighted and celebrated.

# 3

## MANAAKITANGA

We want to welcome residents and visitors and share our region and its unique stories. We understand that as good hosts we need to make sure visitor's needs are addressed as well as our own.

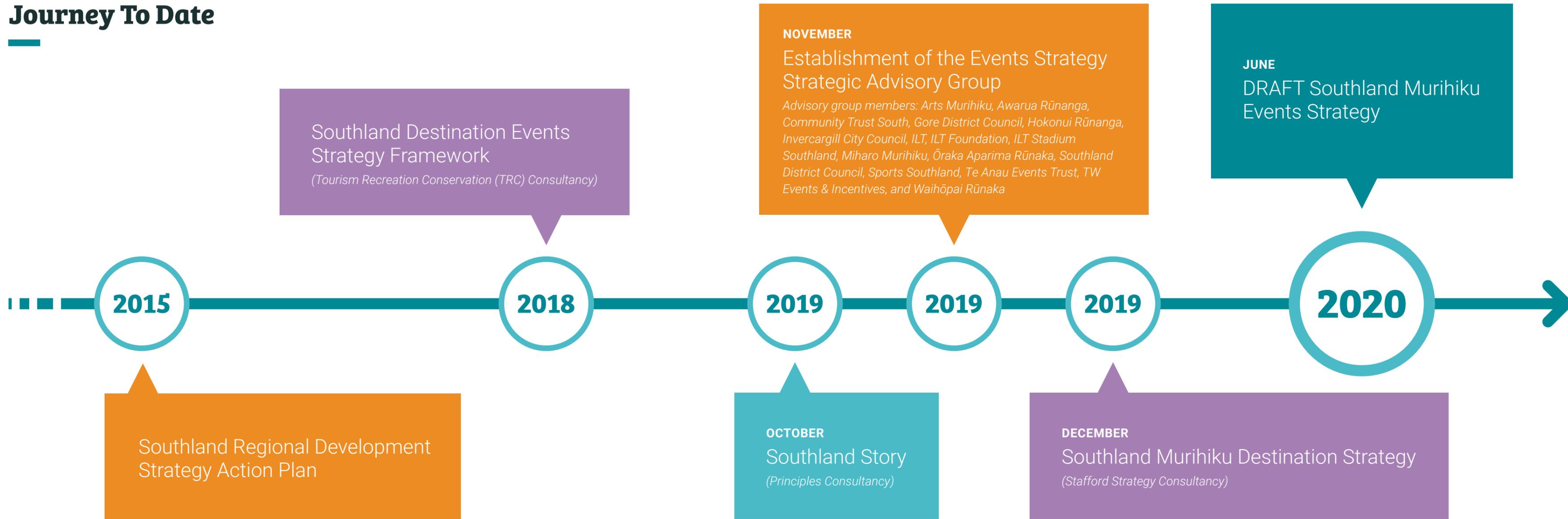
# 4

## KAITIAKITANGA

We see ourselves as guardians of our special place and have a responsibility to protect our land, sea, air, living creatures, traditions and communities - for the Southland communities of the future.



## Journey To Date

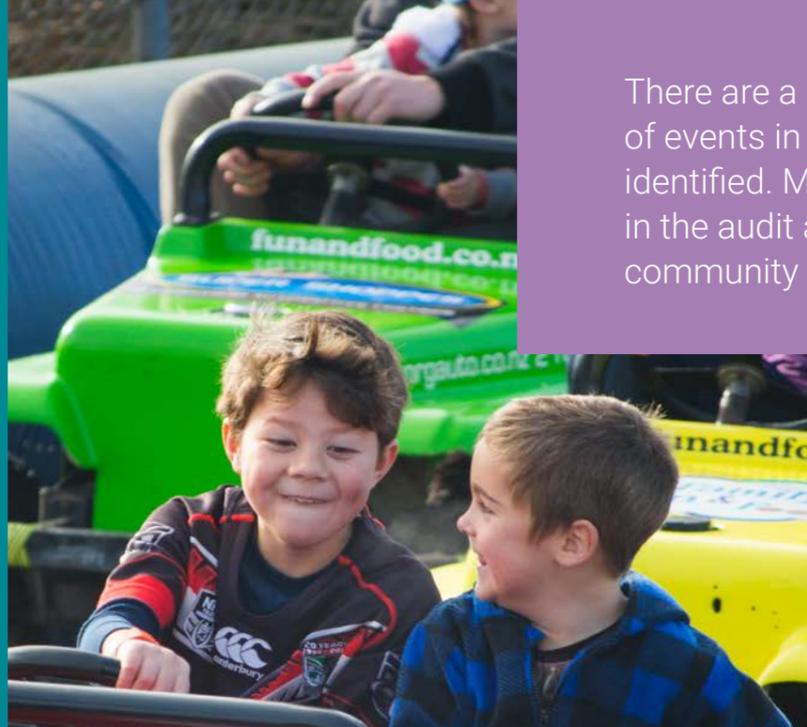


# Southland Events Sector Snapshot

In early 2020, an audit of Southland events was undertaken by Great South, involving contacting event organisers, regional sporting organisations, event funders, facility providers and searching promotional sites online.

This audit provided key insights into the sector and allowed a strategic assessment of the current situation and future opportunities. It also allowed events to be categorised and informed recommendations in this Strategy.

At the time of finalising this Strategy (late 2020), New Zealand was responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has resulted in many events not being able to be held and pressure for event organisers. The full impacts are not yet understood and the following insights only relate to the past four years, up to early 2020.



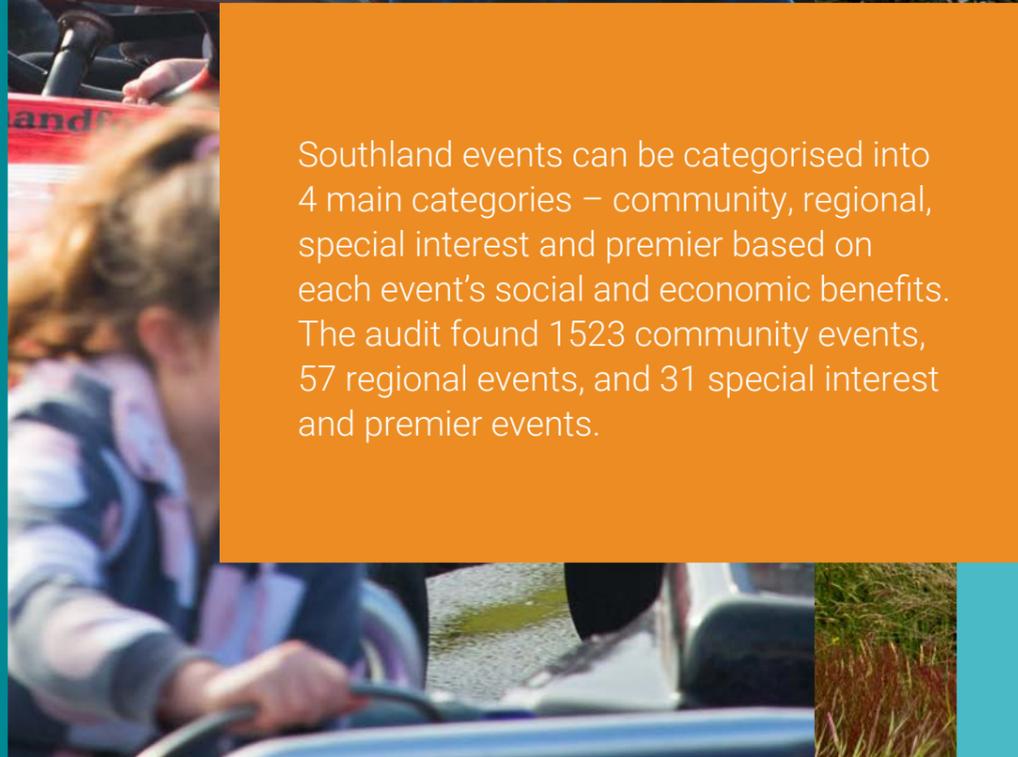
There are a significant number of events in the region with 1612 identified. Most events identified in the audit are delivered by community groups.



There are approximately 25 multi day conferences each year (categorised as 'special interest' events).



Many events have been delivered for Southlanders and not to attract people from out of the region to visit.



Southland events can be categorised into 4 main categories – community, regional, special interest and premier based on each event's social and economic benefits. The audit found 1523 community events, 57 regional events, and 31 special interest and premier events.

There are 3 premier events: Burt Munro Challenge, Tussock Country Music Festival, and the Southern Field Days.

Invercargill hosts two thirds of all events in the region including almost all conferences and most special interest and premier events. Gore hosts 9% and Te Anau 8% respectively.

Events are well spread throughout the year with the summer months very busy (February especially). There is an opportunity to grow more events in the shoulder or off peak times.



## SWOT ANALYSIS

The following analysis of the current internal and external factors in relation to Southland events was provided by TRC (in the 2018 Southland Destination Events Strategy Framework). It includes the current events calendar, accessibility and connectivity, consumer trends, market opportunities, event facilities and infrastructure. It provides useful context alongside the insights gained from the audit of 1612 events in early 2020. Additional factors have been added in purple.

### STRENGTHS

#### USPs/Competitive advantages of Southland

- Reputation for southern hospitality
- Sporting and industry prowess
- Natural assets (coast, conservation estate)
- Built assets (sporting, conference)
- Parochial and passionate communities with strong interests and heritage
- Food proposition (kiamoana/seafood, traditional and alternative horticulture and agriculture)
- Active community funding
- Developing connectivity (particularly air)
- Geographic difference and proximity to NZ icon locations (Milford Sound, Stewart Island, The Catlins, Queenstown)

### OPPORTUNITIES

#### Trends

- Growth in recreation, adventure racing, commercialised sport (darts, wrestling), special interest - particularly motoring, team sports (alternative), popular culture and technology (comicon, gaming), food and beverage (craft beer, kiamoana/seafood)
- Markets: baby boomers/silver surfers, motorhomes, independent professionals
- Coordinated events community and communication
- Potential to add unique cultural/heritage dimension to events; infusing local flavour into events, unique venues, safety, security
- Fostering sustainability
- Getting away - unplug/mindfulness
- Capitalise on new connectivity
- Enhanced use of under-utilised venues

### WEAKNESSES

#### Constraints for Southland events

- Relatively small population base (100,000)
- Relatively small business base for event funding support
- Distance from large population bases (travel time and cost)
- Multiple and fragmented sources of event information
- Negative perceptions of colder climate for outdoor events compared with competitive destinations
- Seasonality of events (high peak of Feb and low of Sept)
- Lack of regional connection and collaboration between events
- Have attracted events and then lost to bigger centres
- Accommodation based on capacity and seasonality a challenge in parts of the region

### THREATS

#### Obstacles/Competition for Southland

- Competition for event funding from other regions
- Competition for domestic event visitors from other regions (particularly tier 2 destinations and new venue development)
- Lack of strong positioning as an events destination (generically)
- Progress of event development in smaller versus larger areas in the region
- Lack of understanding/appreciation of the impact of events by local residents
- Duplication/replication/acquisition of events
- COVID-19 impacting confidence of event organisers
- Closure/natural ending of a number of significant events for Invercargill City at a time of major construction, represents a short term threat to vibrancy in the Invercargill city centre



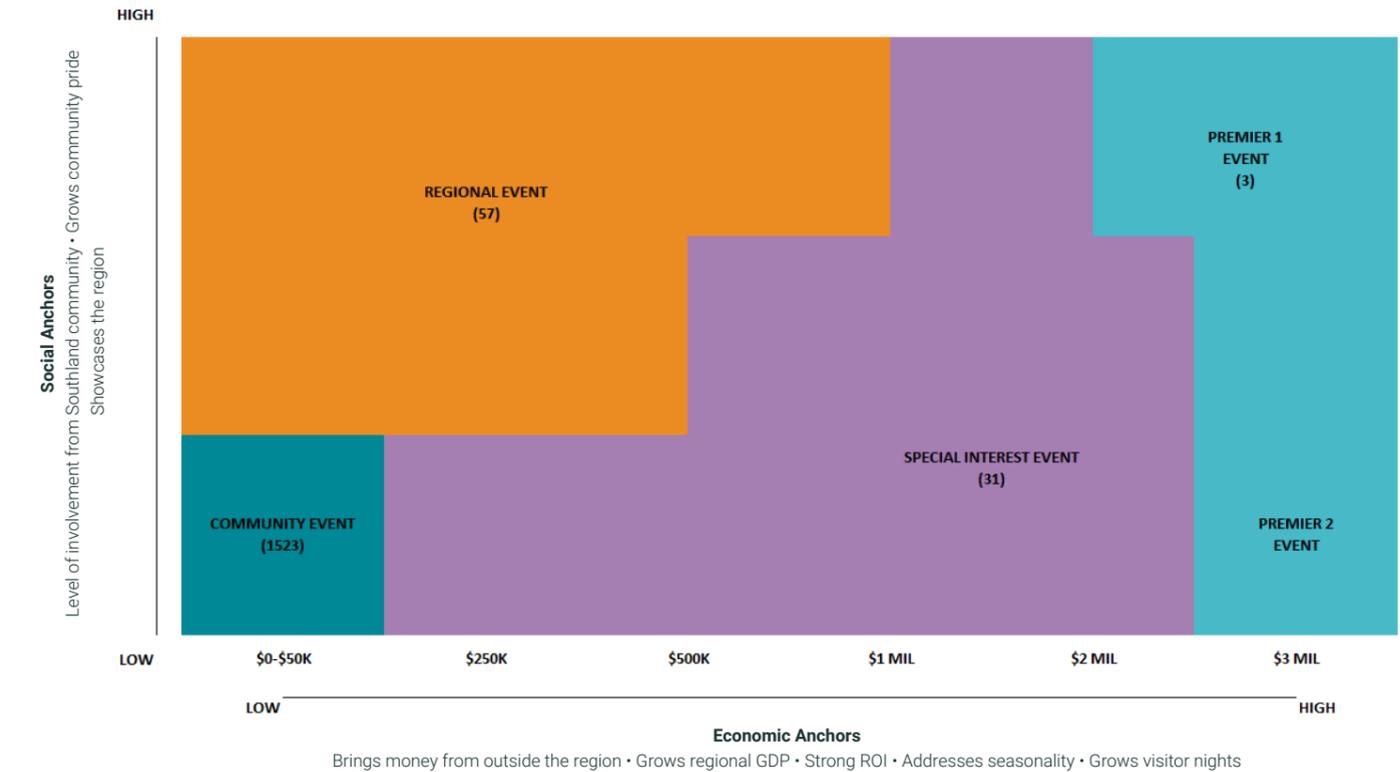
## Event Categories & Framework

Events can be looked at in terms of both their social and economic value and it is acknowledged that this varies from event to event. The framework below provides a visual snap shot of Southland's event landscape measuring both the social and economic anchors of events and also suggests five key event categories.

During the process to develop the Strategy, an event audit was undertaken and all events were able to be plotted into this framework.

From a social perspective this includes measuring the level of involvement from the Southland community, ability of the event to grow community pride and showcase the region to those outside of the region.

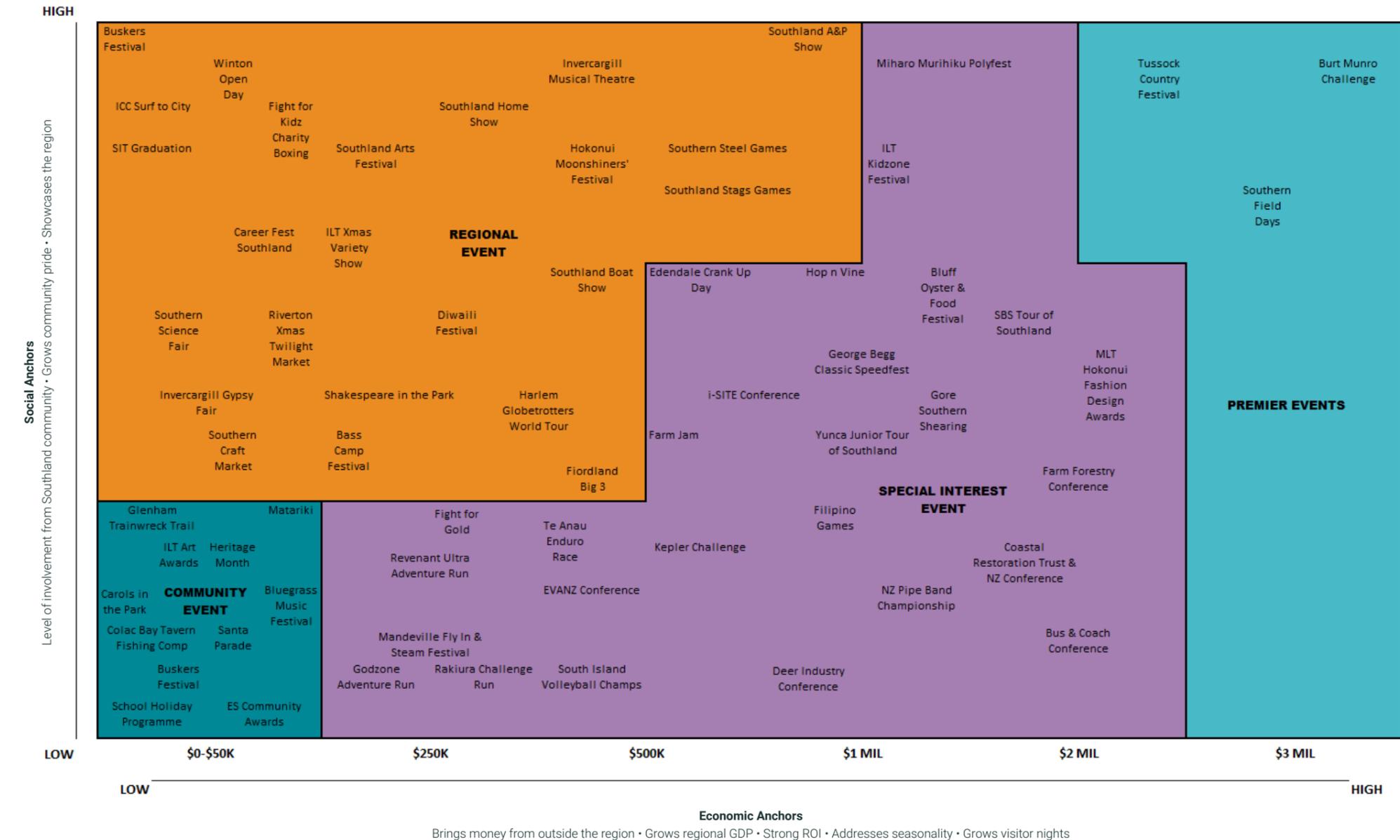
Economically, this includes measuring the ability of an event to attract investment and spend from outside of Southland; to help grow regional GDP and offer strong return on investment (ROI); address seasonality and grow overnight visitation (domestic and international).



## SOUTHLAND EVENTS CATEGORIES

CATEGORY	NUMBER	ATTENDEES	ATTENDEES' ORIGIN	SOCIAL BENEFITS	ECONOMIC BENEFITS	MEDIA INTEREST
<b>Premier 1</b>	3	Over 5,000	Local, national and international	High (compared to Premier 2)	High (multi day)	High out of region
<b>Premier 2</b>	0	Over 5,000	National and international	Low (lower than premier 1)	High (multi day)	High out of region
<b>Special Interest</b>	29	Up to 5,000	Local, national and international	Varies depending on special interest e.g. Low = Bus & Coach Conference High = ILT Kidzone	Varies e.g. Low = One-Day Conference High = Multi-Day Conference	Varies – some events of high interest e.g. MLT Hokonui Fashion Awards
<b>Regional</b>	57	Over 2,000	Mostly local, with some from neighbouring regions	High – often represents element of Southland identity and has high local involvement e.g. Southland A&P Show	Varies but more often low e.g. Low = ICC Surf to City, Buskers Festival; High = Southern Steel Netball Game	Mostly local interest as events targeted at locals
<b>Community</b>	1523	Less than 2,000	Local	Varies – specific to the event and purpose	Low and often not the purpose of holding the event	Local interest only

## SOUTHLAND EVENTS FRAMEWORK *With a sample placement of events*



## Part B: The Strategy

### Vision

*He rāngai tautoko, hihiri me te kaupapa toitu e akiaki ana I te uru mai o te hāpori 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

This Strategy has four key goals:

#### ATTRACT, RETAIN, GROW & 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 & 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.

## ATTRACT, RETAIN, GROW & 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.*

FOCUS	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTION	WHO	TIME CONSIDERATION
Funding Considerations	Robust funding policies are established which reflect the dynamic nature of events including levels of profitability and acceptable losses	Event Funders Group established and meets regularly	Great South, Event Funder Group	October 2020
		Complete a review of funders' current policies to investigate establishing a set of over arching guiding principles	Great South, Event Funder Group	July 2021
Regional Promotion Alignment	Events are used to promote the region	A 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	Great South	20 events each year
		Within 5 years, identify 3 clusters of events and develop and implement promotional plans	Great South	TBC
		Promote 10 events each year which drive visitation in the off peak and shoulder periods	Great South	10 events each year
Grow Attendance	Increase attendance to Southland events	Deliver a campaign and subsequent activations which promotes the Southland Regional Events Calendar (SouthlandNZ.com) and aligns with domestic visitation activity and marketing	Great South, Event Organisers Network	December 2020
		Encourage event organisers (through the Event Organisers Network) to consider how to reduce barriers making events more accessible to all	Event Organisers Network	Priority once the Network is formed
Regional Identity	Events are used to share the Southland Story, strengthening the profile and position of Southland	Development and promotion of the online regional Southland brand portal (Brandkit) which will consist of imagery and copy content to be shared	Great South	November 2020
		Encourage events to use the regional Southland brand, sharing Southland's places, spaces and people	Great South, Ngā Rūnaka, Event Organisers Network	August 2021
		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	Great South	10 events each year
		Identify opportunities to develop new events which showcase a unique aspect of the Southland identity	Great South, Regional Event Forum	Annual review of event opportunities
Grow Existing Events	Existing special interest events grow to become premier events	Partner with 10 special interest event organisers within 5 years to investigate evolving their event to a premier event	Great South, Event Organisers Network	10 events partnered with within 5 years
Facilities & Venues	Partnership approach with Councils to increase utilisation of existing facilities and venues for conferences and sporting events	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	Great South, Business Events Sector Forum, Councils	July 2022
		Test collaborative models to achieve efficient use of venues and under utilised spaces	Great South, Regional Event Forum	TBC
		Assess and track available accommodation and facility capacity and align to drive visitation through a shared industry calendar	Business Events Sector Forum	Assessed each year
		Develop a Business Events Strategy including the Regional Conference Bid template document and Business Events Toolkit	Business Events Sector Forum	December 2021
Activating Our Spaces & Places	Quality events activate and showcase the region's spaces and places	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	Great South, Ngā Rūnaka, Invercargill City Council, Sport Southland	TBC

## MAXIMISE COMMUNITY WELLBEING: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL & 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.

FOCUS	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTION	WHO	TIME CONSIDERATION
Economic Value	There is greater regional reporting and understanding of the economic benefits of funded events	Explore and introduce statistical tools to provide insights on the regional economic benefits of events relating to expenditure and attendance	Great South	November 2020
		Complete economic impact assessments for each of the 10 identified special interest events (identified to be grown to premier) and all premier events	Great South	From 2022
		Prepare and share an annual report which provides a snapshot of the economic value of events	Great South	End of financial year
Southern Hospitality	The role of events acknowledged in welcoming and connecting newcomers, visitors and local people	Key principles of inclusion, welcoming etc as identified in the MBIE Welcoming Communities programme are endorsed and shared	Councils, Ngā Rūnaka, Event Organisers Forum	TBC
Quality of Life	A wide range of community and regional events (particularly those which are family friendly and showcase quality of life opportunities) continue to be delivered across the year	Identify and support a minimum of 50 community and regional events each year focussing on those which are family friendly and showcase quality of life opportunities	Great South, Regional Event Forum	50 events each year
Longer Length of Stay	Events encourage and maximise longer length of stay and repeat visitation	Develop and promote the Famil and Itinerary Information resource (which provides additional information on pre and post conference attractions)	Great South	June 2021
		Create packages/deals for at least 5 events each year which encourage attendees to stay longer	Great South	5 events per year
Culture & Heritage	Southland culture and heritage is represented and celebrated through events	Explore and support the delivery of cultural event opportunities for Southland alongside local stakeholders and communities, with a particular focus on creative arts	Great South, Ngā Rūnaka, Arts Murihiku	June 2023
Invercargill Inner City Rebuild	Events are a critical part of the future strategic framework for the Invercargill inner city rebuild and transition period while construction is underway	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	Great South, Invercargill City Council	Now - December 2023
		Ensure events are included within the future strategic framework for the Invercargill inner city rebuild acknowledging their key role in activating the redevelopment	Great South, Invercargill City Council	Now - December 2023
Fiordland Focus	Events are a key driver of domestic visitation for Fiordland considering the significant impact which this area has experienced due to international borders being closed	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	Great South, Southland District Council, Te Anau Events Trust	TBC
Gore & Districts Focus	Gore continues to welcome a number of visitors to the region through the provision of well supported special interest and premier events	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	Great South, Gore District Council	TBC
Play, Active Recreation & Sport	Events with a focus on physical activity that provide a great experience, contribute to a vibrant lifestyle, are inclusive and develop positive community connectedness	Network of event providers supported in order to provide quality physical activity events, to develop their capability and to encourage working collaboratively	Great South, Sport Southland	TBC
		Identify and support physical activity events with the use of participant voice to develop more quality experiences	Great South, Sport Southland	TBC

## ENCOURAGE EXCELLENCE IN EVENT MANAGEMENT

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

FOCUS	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTION	WHO	TIME CONSIDERATION
Regional Networking	Event organisers have the opportunity to meet and learn from each other, and to share information	Establish an Events Organisers Network which meets regularly	Event Organisers Network	October 2020
Capability Building	Event organisers are motivated, encouraged and inspired to increase their expertise and knowledge	Identify and promote one educational and professional development opportunity a year	Regional Event Forum	1 event each year
Regional Resources	Great South Event Toolkit is a valued resource for event organisers	Review and update the Great South Event Toolkit (providing advice, links and resources i.e. waste management, financial management)	Great South	April 2021
COVID-19 Support	Event organisers are supported to organise and manage their event/s in a COVID-19 environment	Deliver resources and training opportunities aiming to upskill and educate event organisers on social distancing and other issues related to a COVID-19 environment	Great South, Event Organisers Network	TBC
Local Supplier Support	Event organiser's knowledge of local event resources and suppliers is improved	Create a share point directory database of event suppliers, bands, volunteers, venues etc. and ensure event organisers can access this	Great South	March 2021
Volunteer Sector	The volunteer sector's role in event delivery is understood, acknowledged and supported	Seek to understand the role of the volunteer sector and support accordingly	Event Funders Group	June 2023
Environmentally Friendly Practices	The principles of environmental sustainability in relation to operating events are identified and shared with event organisers	Develop resources and tools to support event organisers to operate events in sustainable ways and considering the impact on the environment and communities	Great South, Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council, Gore District Council	TBC

## 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.

FOCUS	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTION	WHO	TIME CONSIDERATION
Digital Calendar on southlandnz.com	Improved usability and functionality of the regional events calendar	Complete the upgrade of the existing regional events calendar (SouthlandNZ.com) considering user awareness and accessibility	Great South	July 2021
		Develop a plan encouraging event providers to promote their event via the regional events calendar	Great South	December 2020
Awareness & Promotion	Increased awareness of the regional events calendar	Investigate opportunities to promote the calendar of destination events	Great South	December 2020
		Assess the monthly events e-newsletter featuring upcoming events	Great South	December 2020
Scheduling	Improved scheduling of events throughout the year	Review the schedule of proposed events in the region for each year to ensure a balanced, all season calendar	Regional Event Forum	Completed each year
		Calendar awareness and promotion of calendar of destination events		
		Work with neighbouring regions to understand the timing of recurring events in order to avoid scheduling conflicts	Great South	December 2021
		Support a balanced, connected and collaborative events network	Regional Event Forum, Event Organisers Network	December 2023



# Part C: Implementation

## Key Stakeholders

**GREAT SOUTH**  
 Southland Regional Development Agency

**Invercargill**  
 CITY COUNCIL

**GO RURAL CITY RE LIVING**  
 DISTRICT COUNCIL

**SOUTHLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**TW**  
 EVENTS & INCENTIVES  
 DRIVING THE UNEXPECTED

**For Our Community**

**Community Trust South**  
 TE POU ARATAKI POUNAMU O MURIHIKU

**teanau events**

**ILT FOUNDATION**

**miharo**

**ILT STADIUM SOUTHLAND**

**SPORT SOUTHLAND**

**ARTS MURIHIKU**

**Hokonui Rūnanga**

**TE RUNAKA O AWARUA**

**TE RUNAKA O MURIHIKU**

# Implementation Plan

The Southland Murihiku Events Strategy 2020 - 2025 describes the vision to create a supportive, dynamic and sustainable events sector that encourages community engagement and drives visitation to the region by building on unique points of difference.

This will be achieved with the following goals:

- Attract, retain, grow and enhance sustainable events
- Events are utilised to maximise community wellbeing: economic, social, cultural and environmental
- Encourage excellence in event management
- Provide a balanced events calendar

In order to achieve these goals, a review of current practices and resources was undertaken to identify which areas require further focus. The following areas were identified as essential to the success of this Strategy and

includes the establishment of a:

### Regional Event Forum

Involves the partnership of stakeholders who play a role in the development of events in the region as outlined in this Strategy (e.g. Councils, funders, facility providers, Iwi, Air NZ, Great South, Sport Southland, premier event organisers).

### Event Funders Group

Relevant funders of events in Southland interested in strategically assessing funding opportunities for events in the region.

### Event Organisers Network

Collaboration and connection of the regions event organisers providing the opportunity to share learnings and support each other.

### Great South

Councils have allocated funding to Great South as the Regional Development Agency for Southland, to enable the activation of this Strategy. Great South is tasked to leverage the benefits of events for the region and ensure alignment with domestic visitation activity.

### Key Stakeholders

Arts Murihiku, Business Events Forum, Gore District Council, Invercargill City Council, Ngā Rūnaka, Southland District Council, Te Anau Events Trust, Venue Providers



# Summary of Desired Outcomes

	OUTCOME	WHO
ATTRACT, RETAIN, GROW & ENHANCE SUSTAINABLE EVENTS	Robust funding policies are established which reflect the dynamic nature of events including levels of profitability and acceptable losses	Great South, Event Funder Group
	Events are used to promote the region	Great South
	Increase attendance to Southland events	Great South, Event Organisers Network
	Events are used to share the Southland Story, strengthening the profile and position of Southland	Great South, Ngā Rūnaka, Event Organisers Network, Regional Event Forum
	Existing special interest events grow to become premier events	Great South, Event Organisers Network
	Partnership approach with Councils to increase utilization of existing facilities and venues for conferences and sporting events	Great South, Business Events Sector Forum, Regional Event Forum, Councils
	Quality events activate and showcase the region's spaces and places	Great South, Ngā Rūnaka, Invercargill City Council, Sport Southland
MAXIMISE COMMUNITY WELLBEING: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL	There is greater regional reporting and understanding of the economic benefits of funded events	Great South
	The role of events acknowledged in welcoming and connecting newcomers, visitors and local people	Councils, Ngā Rūnaka, Event Organisers Forum
	A wide range of community and regional events (particularly those which are family friendly and showcase quality of life opportunities) continue to be delivered across the year	Great South, Regional Event Forum
	Events encourage and maximise longer length of stay and repeat visitation	Great South
	Southland culture and heritage is represented and celebrated through events	Great South, Ngā Rūnaka, Arts Murihiku
	Events are a critical part of the future strategic framework for the Invercargill inner city rebuild and transition period while construction is underway	Great South, Invercargill City Council
	Events are a key driver of domestic visitation for Fiordland considering the significant impact which this area has experienced due to international borders being closed	Great South, Southland District Council, Te Anau Events Trust
	Gore continues to welcome a number of visitors to the region through the provision of well supported special interest and premier events	Great South, Gore District Council
	Events with a focus on physical activity that provide a great experience, contribute to a vibrant lifestyle, are inclusive and develop positive community connectedness	Great South, Sport Southland
ENCOURAGE EXCELLENCE IN EVENT MANAGEMENT	Event organisers have the opportunity to meet and learn from each other, and to share information	Event Organisers Network
	Event organisers are motivated, encouraged and inspired to increase their expertise and knowledge	Regional Event Forum
	Great South Event Toolkit is a valued resource for event organisers	Great South
	Event organisers are supported to organise and manage their event/s in a COVID-19 environment	Great South, Event Organisers Network
	Event organiser's knowledge of local event resources and suppliers is improved	Great South
	The volunteer sector's role in event delivery is understood, acknowledged and supported	Event Funders Group
	The principles of environmental sustainability in relation to operating events are identified and shared with event organisers	Great South, Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council, Gore District Council
PROVIDE A BALANCED EVENTS CALENDAR	Improved usability and functionality of the regional events calendar	Great South
	Increased awareness of the regional events calendar	Great South
	Improved scheduling of events throughout the year	Regional Event Forum
	Calendar awareness and promotion of calendar of destination events	Great South, Event Organisers Network, Regional Event Forum



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