



# GREAT SOUTH

Southland Regional Development Agency

## Southland Murihiku Events Strategy 2020 - 2025

Year end June 2023 review



# Southland Murihiku Events Strategy overview:

## VISION:

*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 between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023 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, which required reprioritising our work programme. The idea of the funding was to stimulate domestic tourism while international borders were closed. Funding from the STAPP for events ended in November 2022. The REF funding ends in June 2024.



# Leveraging events to promote the region

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

### SUPPORTING EXISTING DESTINATION EVENTS

The Strategy goal was to identify 10 events and develop a pathway to evolve them. During the year Great South worked with 37 event organisers who deliver key regional, special interest and/or premier events.

This included a range of advice and support aimed to increase visitors to the region, including help with social marketing plans, national marketing opportunities, event coordinator advice, website redevelopment, videography development, health and safety plans, ticketing support, and event logistic support.

The key focus during these Covid times has been to attract out-of-region attendees to grow event attendance and ensure potential visitors were informed about activities and attractions across Southland. Feedback from event organisers suggests they have seen an increase in attendees and media exposure for their events. The opportunity to raise Southland's profile while marketing an individual event has enabled Southland to position itself as an events destination, in turn attracting out of region visitors.

Google alerts has been used to track media coverage for events. This shows a steady increase in Southland events gaining exposure with 23 of the 37 events appearing in the alerts in the past 12 months.

Te Anau Manapouri Fishing Classic, Te Anau Ukulele Festival, and Edendale Crank Up have all received television coverage on The Project. In addition, Great South submitted Welcome Rock Station in conjunction with The Revenant Ultra Adventure Run to Country Calendar, which will be featured this winter.

### SOUTHLAND'S UNMISSABLE EVENTS CALENDAR

Our online unmissable events calendar showcases 37 events, and includes 3 premier, 24 special interest and 10 regional events. These events can be viewed at [southlandnz.com/southland-events](https://southlandnz.com/southland-events).

The top five most viewed pages were: Bluff Oyster & Food Festival (3,658), Revitalize Music Festival (2,229), Southland Multicultural Food Festival (1,112), Burt Munro Challenge (947), and Savour the South (927).

Cluster marketing campaigns were introduced to target potential event attendees within specific interest groups. These campaigns featured the region's key unmissable events as well as community-based events allowing an opportunity for lesser-known events to receive exposure.

**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](https://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.



- Spring 'You won't want to miss!' Events Guide (July/Sep):  
Purpose – Seasonal travel into region.  
Results – Digital advertising reach 115,166, impressions 392,949. Otago Daily Times homepage takeover impressions 344,149, pop-up impressions 56,728.
- Motor Caravan Market (Aug/Jan):  
Purpose – Motor caravan market identified as a target group.  
Results – Motor Caravanner Magazine three full page print ads showcasing Invercargill, Gore District, and Fiordland camp-friendly events throughout the year.
- Summer 'You won't want to miss!' Events Guide (Oct/Jan):  
Purpose – Seasonal travel into region.  
Results – Digital advertising reach 97,051, impressions 268,567. Otago Daily Times homepage takeover impressions 327,078, pop-up impressions 72,880.
- Southland Summer Wheels Guide (Dec/Mar):  
Purpose – Promote cluster of wheel-themed events.  
Results – Digital advertising reach 103,424, impressions 312,977.
- Autumn 'You won't want to miss!' Events Guide (Jan/Mar):  
Purpose – Seasonal travel into region.  
Results – Digital advertising reach 149,487, impressions 591,366. Otago Daily Times homepage takeover impressions 307,766, pop-up impressions 69,352.
- Food-Themed Events Guide (Feb/Apr):  
Purpose – Promote cluster of food-themed events.  
Results – Digital advertising reach 54,025, impressions 149,173.
- Winter 'You won't want to miss!' Events Guide (Apr/Jun):  
Purpose – Seasonal travel into region.  
Results – Digital advertising reach 105,716, impressions 223,128 to date.

Extra marketing activities were actioned throughout the year to showcase Southland's unmissable events and included:

- Creating digital event listings with: Eat New Zealand, New Zealand Motor Caravan Association (NZMCA), My Next Challenge, Arts Murihiku, and SportzHub
- Utilising different media outlets: Monthly submission to MediaWorks, NZME noticeboards, Kia Ora Magazine, North & South Magazine, and other relevant media channels when appropriate including television, websites, and magazines
- Local marketing: Digital display of events on promotional LED screens at Invercargill City Council, Invercargill City Library, and Invercargill Airport

The additional support and marketing provided for our Southland unmissable events has provided the opportunity to attract more visitors, and enhance events to be sustainable in the long-term.

### MONTHLY EVENTS NEWSLETTER

1,320 subscribers receive our monthly newsletter. Events listed on the Events in Southland calendar (located at [southlandnz.com/events-southland](http://southlandnz.com/events-southland)) are eligible for inclusion, with events identified with consideration of geographical location and event type to



ensure a balanced selection is shared with subscribers. Events that are included are coded as a spotlight feature on their event listing website.

### **SOUTHLAND SOCIAL CLUB NEWSLETTER**

Our database of local businesses who have social clubs agreed to receive a quarterly newsletter encouraging attendance to local events as a workplace. Events who wish to be included must provide a special offer or an exclusive deal, such as early ticket sales, private tables, catering options, or discounted entry. Only one Southland Social Club Newsletter has been sent this year, due to requests for submissions by event organisers not submitting an offer for inclusion. Our team will review this marketing initiative and respond accordingly.

### **EVENT SCHEDULING CALENDAR**

The region's Historical Events Calendar is updated monthly and is available to view at [southlandnz.com/events/event-planning-resources/historical-events-calendar](http://southlandnz.com/events/event-planning-resources/historical-events-calendar). Great South maintain an additional database of more than 200 events in neighbouring regions and across New Zealand which is used to target marketing to potential individuals who are attending a similar styled event and is used to support key event organisers with possible to avoid scheduling clashes that could impact ticket sales.

## **Developing new events**

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

Great South continues to work alongside event organisers to support the development of new and emerging events across the region. Event attendees bring economic benefit with spend across sectors including tourism and hospitality, while also supporting retention and attraction of people by showcasing vibrant communities making Southland a great place to live, work and play.

- ➔ In development: Hump Day, Armageddon, Oceania Arm Wrestling, Cabaret Festival, Flavours of Fiordland, Southland Cheese Roll competition, Wapiti Weekend.
- ➔ One off delivery: GODZone, Spring Challenge.
- ➔ First year of delivery: Mavora Explorer, Rangatahi Zone, Te Anau Motorama, Te Anau Ukulele Festival, Anderson Park food activations, ILT Darts Masters.
- ➔ Second year of delivery: Pump Fest, George Begg Festival, Not Bluff Oyster Festival Mystery Bus Tour, Street Dine Fiordland, micro beer events.
- ➔ Third year of delivery: Men's Muster, Savour The South.

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



# Delivering community and regional events

## Celebrating Southland's culture and heritage and driving domestic tourism

### SUPPORTING COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL EVENTS

We have worked alongside 140 regional and community events of varying scale, type, at locations region wide. Support and advice has been provided to event organisers that included marketing, funding and sponsorship advice, event planning, logistics and suitable timing advice, survey development, equipment loan and event listing support. The development of our event organisers tool kit is in progress and includes resources information for local event suppliers, venues and 'how to' resource information in event delivery. This new online tool kit allows event organisers to independently find information. Find it at [southlandnz.com/events/event-planning-resources](https://southlandnz.com/events/event-planning-resources).

### EXPLORING CULTURAL EVENT OPPORTUNITIES

Great South worked alongside event organisers to provide advice and support at varying levels to: Southland Multicultural Food Festival, Riversdale Arts Mixed Media Exhibition, Waimumu Arts Exhibition, Riverton Heritage Harvest Festival, MLT Hokonui Fashion Design Awards, Miharo Murihiku Polyfest, Te Anau Tartan Festival, Rangatahi Zone, Heritage Month, Arts Murihiku and Born To Ride film opportunity for home-grown talent Cormac Bucannon (Burt Munro Challenge).

### MAXIMISING EVENTS IN FIORDLAND

Targeted event support that has been available for the Fiordland community thanks to the Regional Events Fund will end in November 2023. The benefits of this increased support are evident with a growing number of quality events.

Advice and support offered:

- Event organisers tool kit scoping and development
- Targeted capability building
- Management of regional events fund
- Monthly check ins
- Targeted digital marketing
- Development of new event ideas
- Marketing and website reviews
- Coaching and mentoring
- Event concept development and design support
- Brand development and resource to aid the delivery of GodZone and Spring Challenge

### MAXIMISING EVENTS IN THE GORE DISTRICT

Five Gore District events are included in the Southland Unmissable Events calendar. Great South are working with two further events in the district to be included in the future.

**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.



Advice and support offered:

- Individual marketing plans
- Marketing opportunities including features in cluster campaigns
- Funding and sponsorship
- Event planning support
- Invitation to attend Southland Event Organisers' Networking Group and relevant industry information shared

## EVENT PACKAGES

Great South designed and delivered a range of prizes and travel packages alongside event organisers to support attendance and promotion of our region's event offerings.

- Invercargill winter school holiday discounts (Connecting event – LT Kidzone Festival):  
Purpose – ILT Kidzone Festival ticket holders offered discounts to local activities to encourage participation and increase length of stay of visitors.  
Results – ILT Kidzone Festival digital advertising reach 3,230.
- 'Southland's Grand Winter Weekend' (Connecting event – MLT Hokonui Fashion Design Awards):  
Purpose – Social media prize pack competition to highlight the Southland's shopping and pampering experiences.  
Results – SouthlandNZ Facebook post reach 12,524, engagements 1,705.
- 'Shop till You Drop' stand off with The Hits Dunedin (Connecting event – Ascot Park Christmas At The Races):  
Purpose – Radio prize pack competition in conjunction with an event showcasing Invercargill.  
Results – Radio reach 15,000 listeners and 22,000 Facebook followers. NZ Herald digital advertising impressions 88,697.
- 'Fiordland Family Easter Escape' (Connecting events – Te Anau Tartan Festival and Southland A&P Show):  
Purpose – Monopoly board competition at the Southland A&P Show to promote Easter family-friendly events and activities across Fiordland.  
Results – Digital advertising reach 17,812, impressions 28,622. Southland A&P Show Monopoly board handouts 6,000.
- 'Taste Southland' (Connecting clip-on events to the traditional timing of the cancelled Bluff Oyster & Food Festival):  
Purpose – Engage operators and promote food-based events in line with Southland's food strategy.  
Results – Digital advertising reach 92,182, impressions 230,830.
- Air New Zealand Grabaseat packages:  
Purpose – Travel into region by flight with event tickets and accommodation included, plus additional marketing and promotion via Grabaseat.  
Submitted and selected: Southland Beer, Wine & Wild Food Festival. Result – 12 packages sold.  
Submitted but not selected: Magic Mike, Schick 3x3 Cup.  
Considered but not submitted: Bayleys Tussock Country Music Festival, MLT Hokonui Fashion Design Awards, Silver Ferns netball match.



**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:** 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.

# Creating visual assets for events

## Building the Great South Visual Library

The Great South Visual Library holds over 900 public images and videos of our Southland Unmissable Events. Event organisers are contacted annually for them to provide up-to-date images for inclusion. Event organisers are encouraged to access the regional visual library that includes over 4980 images and videos available for download to incorporate into event marketing. Discover the library at [visuals.greatsouth.nz](https://visuals.greatsouth.nz).

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

## Improving functionality and tools

### SOUTHLANDNZ WEBSITE REDVELOPMENT PROJECT

Redevelopment of the regional events calendar is complete. Now called Events in Southland, event organisers can list their upcoming event/s. This in turn provides a website platform for residents and visitors to find a comprehensive calendar of events occurring across the region. Explore the calendar at [southlandnz.com/events-southland](https://southlandnz.com/events-southland).

The calendar has the ability for users to filter events using search functions including timeframes, geographical location, and event categories/type. Event organisers who deliver multiple events during the year have back-end listing capability which allows cloning/repeating – making listing an event quicker.

Micro calendar landing pages have been created to showcase groups of events, including Food & Drink, Family Friendly, Sports & Outdoor, Markets, Arts & Cultural, Workshops & Classes, Southland Summer Wheels Guide, Taste Southland and Southland Heritage Month. These more clustered landing pages have been used to support digital marketing.

The new CRM calendar system allows the ability to create webpages showcasing events specific to a region, a specific time period, and/or a category function. Great South collaborated with Arts Murihiku to tailor a calendar specific to their needs and now house a fully functional events calendar on their website which is powered by SouthlandNZ. Check it out at [artsmurihiku.co.nz](https://artsmurihiku.co.nz).

The Events in Southland calendar campaign during May and June informed residents about the platform using multiple medial channels, with a balance of education and promotion. It also educated potential event listers including venues, hospitality, event organisations, clubs and organisations, and funders. The campaign informed local residents that [southlandnz.com](https://southlandnz.com) is where



they need to go online to find events in Southland. In addition it connected community leaders and businesses with e-newsletters and websites encouraging them to share the Events in Southland calendar with their channels.

→ 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022:  
Results – Event listings 332, website traffic 13,503.

→ 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023:  
Results – Event listings 420, website traffic 27,159.

### **DATABASE OF EVENT SUPPLIERS**

A database of event suppliers was launched in February and includes local suppliers from entertainment, food trucks, speakers, infrastructure, venues and more. Find the database at [southlandnz.com/events/event-planning-resources/event-suppliers](https://southlandnz.com/events/event-planning-resources/event-suppliers). We are yet to formally reach out to event suppliers for them list their business in the database. This is due to a delay in the development of the website's CRM system.

## **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 employs a data insight analyst who has undertaken a range of economic impact assessments relating to events and spend across the region. We also assess the value of media exposure using media monitoring tools and post event surveys. Work in this space continues to be developed.

### **INVERCARGILL INNER CITY REBUILD**

As part of a service agreement with Invercargill City Council, Great South employs a City Centre Coordinator. The role includes liaison and communication with Invercargill CBD businesses and retailers and delivering and partnering with event organisers to support the development and coordination of events. These event activations promote a positive, sustainable, and engaging CBD.

Activations in the past 12 months include:

- Winter shopping promotion
- School holiday activations
- Saturday pop up's
- Halloween spooky play trail
- Hidden Markets
- Esk-plore Your City Streetfest
- Flames on Esk
- Night of the Arts

**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.



# Showcasing the region's spaces and places

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

### MARKETING SOUTHLAND'S VENUES

Great South's promotional website southlandnz.com was upgraded. The site now includes a resource library of venues across the region providing a platform for event organisers and industry peers to find a venue within the region that meets their event requirements. This is available at southlandnz.com/events/event-planning-resources/event-venues. Key venue operators were invited to list their venue free of charge on eventfinda.co.nz, eventplanner.co.nz, and venues.org.nz., which included working with Active Southland to overlay the Southland Regional Spaces and Places Strategy.

Working with key conference and events venues across the region, promotional material to develop a resource library of film and images to support the region in bidding and promoting for new activity in the region is being developed. The project outcomes include the development of an individual promotion video, regional promotion video and shorts clips for use when bidding for large conferences and events when multiple venues will be used.

### PROFILING SOUTHLAND AS A CONFERENCE DESTINATION

Great South operates Business Events Southland. Its role is to attract Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Expos (MICE) to Southland and Fiordland. Resources for event planners operating in the region have been developed and are available at southlandnz.com/business-events. The suite of information includes details of venues, dining, suppliers, partner program and pre and conference activities. Since the launch in February, this platform has received 808 visitors.

A review of all resources used to bid for MICE events and share with organisers of confirmed events has been undertaken. This includes the region's bid template, introduction information booklet for meet and incentive clients, famil templates, suggested itinerary options for visitors to the region and delegate welcome booklet. In progress is our region's key conferencing resource booklet.

Business Events Southland trade activity across the year has included: The Office EA PA (Auckland), Meetings23 (Wellington), Association X (Wellington), AIME (Melbourne), and sales calls in Wellington and Christchurch with key PCO's and Event Managers.

### BUSINESS EVENTS STRATEGY

Development of a Business Events Southland Strategy has been drafted with key MICE stakeholders contributing. It is expected our final draft will be ready for the Great South board to sign off in early August.

**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 coordinated approach to marketing and event attraction that builds on the competitive advantages of the Southland region - link to Southland Regional Spaces & Places Strategy.

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

**ACTION:** Develop and promote the famil and itinerary information resource (which provides additional information on pre and post conference attractions).



# Networking between event organisers

## Sharing information and advice

### TOOL KIT RESOURCES

Great South continues to develop a regional events tool kit to provide resources and links to information. This supports event organisers with event planning, finance, logistics, health and safety, sustainable practices, marketing, regulations, consents, staffing, volunteers, and vendors. Explore it at [southlandnz.com/events/event-planning-resources](https://southlandnz.com/events/event-planning-resources). This project is due for completion in September 2023, with new content being uploaded as created.

### NETWORKING

Great South continues to offer event networking sessions for the organisers of Southland's Unmissable Events. Sessions are scheduled three times per year and offer a safe space for event organisers to come together, share stories, seek advice, and raise concerns. Guest speakers are invited to present on topics such as waste management, understanding your customer, event layouts, alcohol harm, and marketing.

A survey was carried out with this group to measure Great South's service. Responses were received from 20 of the 31 event organisers. Overall, Great South event support was rated 4.3 stars out of 5.

Some key takeaways from the survey:

- 50% agreed individual marketing support service is very valuable
- 70% agreed the event's planning calendar is very valuable
- 40% said they didn't know about the event venue database
- 80% agreed the free event listing platform is very valuable
- 65% have not attended a Great South Event Networkers Group session, although 55% said they will attend in the future
- Topics event organisers would most like to see in upcoming session are funding and sponsorship, marketing and social media, and volunteer and staffing solutions
- The biggest challenges faced include increasing costs, staffing and volunteer shortages, and funding

**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 early development stages:

- Event Funders Group established and meets regularly.
- Complete a review of funders' current policies to investigate establishing a set of over-arching guiding principles.
- 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.
- Prepare and share an annual report which provides a snapshot of the economic value of 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.
- Complete economic impact assessments for each of the 10 identified special interest events (identified to be grown to premier) and all premier events.
- Seek to understand and support the role of the volunteer sector.