



# Destination Pōneke

Putting People at the Heart of Pōneke Wellington

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021 – 2031

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# Introduction

In Te Ao Māori, Wellington is known as Te-Upoko-o-te-Ika-a-Māui, the head of the fish of Māui. The name comes from the story of Māui hooking a giant fish out of the ocean, which became the North Island of Aotearoa.

The fish's tail is Northland, its head is Wellington. It's an apt description for the capital city of Aotearoa, the place where big decisions are made. Or as Liz Mellish (Te Ātiawa) Chair of Te Wharewaka o Pōneke puts it, "the head of the fish is where the brains are. Wellington is a place of imagination and thought-leadership."

Being the head of the fish is something we have taken seriously in developing *Destination Pōneke*, a new destination management plan for Wellington city.

Whilst devastating, the Covid19 pandemic has provided the opportunity to stop and think about tourism and its value to Wellington and Aotearoa. As Government has articulated, tourism must "enrich New Zealand" culturally, economically, socially and environmentally.

Fundamental to this wellbeing framework, is our approach that a great place to visit must also be a terrific place to live and all destination initiatives must be of mutual benefit to visitors and community.

As an urban destination, and the most creative city in Aotearoa, enhancing Wellington's vibrancy and giving visitors a taste of local life, through enriching experiences, underpins this plan. We want people to explore and have fun, but also to be inspired by what they experience and who they meet.

We also want to leverage our competitive advantage as a destination, being the capital of Aotearoa; a place where change happens and decisions are made. There needs to be better access to, and awareness of, the nation's stories that are housed in Wellington. Every New Zealander has the right to connect with those stories, and every international visitor should engage in our history, culture and ideas as much as they do with our landscapes.

**Our ambition is to transform Wellington into a zero-carbon city famous for experiences that ignite curiosity and make you think.**

To achieve this, we all must work together towards the same goal, whether you're a business owner, policy maker, inner city worker, tech developer, community organiser or resident. It will take that creative thinking and collaboration Wellingtonians are famous for, along with perseverance and adaptability.

*Let's work together to make Wellington a zero-carbon capital famous for transformational experiences.*

**Putting people at the heart of Pōneke**



# A new era for tourism in Wellington

A city's most important tourists are not those visitors who travel the furthest and spend the most. They are in fact its residents.

These are the people that make a city vibrant, who regularly fill its restaurants, explore its trails, visit its attractions, create its art and pack its theatres. They are the people who drive an economy, enrich culture, create community and have the power to drive positive change.

It's therefore essential that locals love where they live and for that enthusiasm to spread to visitors. And for each to add value to the other's experience.

This means considering both residents and visitors when approaching how to best manage Wellington's development as a destination. Put simply, to put people at the heart of our place.

The way visitors now explore a city is also intricately linked to how locals live. Visitors don't want to be herded from one paid attraction to another. They want to soak up the vibe of a place and experience what it's like from a local's perspective. To visit the corner cafe and stumble across a bar tucked down a laneway. To leisurely browse for books and hear from locals the stories that don't make a museum wall. To experience culture and meet the chef at the end of an incredible meal. To take a morning stroll along a trail near their hotel and tread more lightly in line with their wish to reduce their environmental impact.

For residents, it is essential that Wellington is a place that's easy and enjoyable to live. There are five fundamental aspects of great, liveable

cities: robust neighbourhoods, accessibility and sustainable mobility, a diverse and resilient local economy, vibrant public spaces and affordability.

The liveability of Wellington is therefore central to WellingtonNZ's approach for creating this Destination Management Plan for Wellington city. We want everyone to feel like our city is a place where they belong. Whether they're here for a few days or a lifetime.

We strongly believe that by doing this, we will collectively make choices and decisions that enhance Wellington as both a place to live and visit. To ensure that the people that choose to come here will support local businesses, get engaged in our culture, and take care of our whenua. To ensure that planning decisions and new investment make it easier and more enjoyable for people to explore Wellington, and to ensure that the impact on our environment is minimal.



# A glimpse into Wellington in 2031

The Tan whānau touch down at Wellington Airport. They've just flown to Wellington in a bio-fuelled plane. They're greeted in the airport by beautiful waiata and a large solar powered sign that welcomes them to Wellington – Aotearoa's creative, low-carbon capital.

As they walk through the airport terminal, a message appears on their phone encouraging them to "Make your trip carbon free" by downloading the Carbon Free Aotearoa (CareFreeNZ) app. They press the download button. Browsing quickly through the app, they find it can not only count the carbon they use and save but is also filled with lists of carbon zero businesses and activities – and it can be used to pay for public transport.

The Tans hop on the electric bus swiping their phone as they board. Driving through the city they notice colourful street art everywhere and make a plan go and take some photos later. As they tap off, the CareFreeNZ app gives them a smile, letting them know they've saved 1,777 gm of CO2 by using electric public transport vs a fossil-fuelled taxi ride.

Arriving at their quirky inner-city eco hotel, they are warmly welcomed by staff and offered a refreshing iced kawakawa tea. They wander into the hotel's native-garden courtyard and watch as a kereru takes a drink from the bright yellow flowers on a kōwhai tree.

Over the next two days in Te Whanganui-a-Tara they explore much of what the city has to offer. They enjoy a waka tour of the harbour, starting with a mihi whakatau, before walking to the Te Aro Pa experience where the vibrant digital displays that overlay the remnants of whare give them a glimpse into how tangata whenua lived before the arrival of colonial settlers. The

experience inspires them to buy a painting, created by a local Te Ātiawa artist, to take home.

As well as eye-opening visits to Zealandia, Te Papa, the Parliament Precinct and Weta Workshop, they also have lots of fun at a pick-your-own-path maze experience where the paths visitors go down determine the story they uncover. Created by multiple storytellers from Wellington, from filmmakers to game developers, every member of the Tan family follows a different character and adventure, and all four emerge with anecdotes at the weird and wonderful things they'd spotted and learnt along the way.

A highlight for the Tans is dining out. They love the coffee, craft beverages and local eats, and using the CareFreeNZ app they find all the carbon zero places they can dine, and love discovering the stories told at each eatery around where in the region the food comes from and the people that produce it. The kids love eating at the food truck market off Courtenay Place, where they sit at shared tables, listen to live music and chat to locals.

At every spot they've checked in with their app and feel good about how much carbon they've saved on their trip. As they sit on the ferry - making their way to the South Island - Mr and Ms Tan talk about sending the kids to university in Wellington. It seems like such a great place to live.



**\$2.8billion**

visitor spend in the Wellington region, YE March 2020



**70%**

of visitor spend in Wellington is from New Zealanders



**#4**

preferred destination for a weekend break, after the Coromandel, Taupō and Rotorua



**18,000 jobs**

in tourism in Wellington city, YE March 2020



**Top NZ markets**

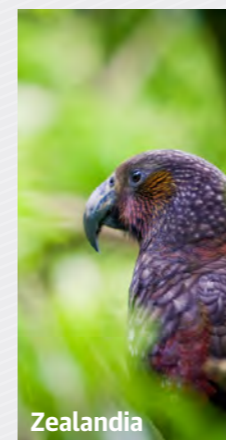
1. Auckland
2. Canterbury
3. Wellington Region
4. Manawatu-Whanganui
5. Waikato



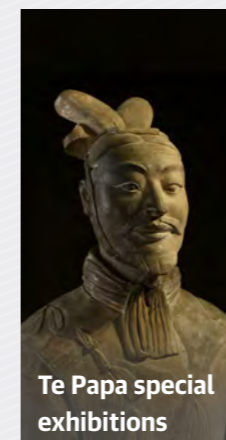
**Top international markets**

1. Australia
2. USA
3. UK
4. China
5. Germany

## Top 5 city experiences



Zealandia



Te Papa special exhibitions



Wellington waterfront



Weta Cave



Wellington Zoo

# Strategic framework

## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

### VISION

Wellington is a zero-carbon capital famous for transformational experiences.

### MISSION

Make Wellington wildly famous by enriching it as a place where people can enjoy memorable, life-enhancing experiences - over a weekend or a lifetime.

### GOAL

Enhance the economic, social, cultural and environmental benefit from tourism in Wellington, for the wellbeing of all.



### Enriching experiences

Make Wellington famous as a place where locals and visitors alike can have wild, memorable and transformative experiences all year round - ensuring the visitor economy adds value and creates jobs.



### Future proofing

Meet the needs of locals and visitors by developing and maintaining infrastructure, the visitor economy workforce and our beautiful environment.



### Sharing our stories

Enhance Wellington's reputation as New Zealand's creative heart to keep it front of mind as somewhere people want to live and visit.

Welcome to a place where cosmopolitan and natural environments are seamlessly connected and the path towards a sustainable future is clear. Where creativity and tikanga māori are part of our DNA, easy to experience, see and learn from.

A place where everyone is welcomed, and everyone belongs.

Nau mai, haere mai ki Pōneke.

## CROSS CUTTING PRINCIPLES

### Kotahitanga

Take a collaborative approach to ensure the destination management of Wellington is managed by many, aiming for shared outcomes.

### Manaakitanga

Work together to ensure locals and visitors have welcoming and personally enriching experiences no matter where they are in Wellington.

### Kaitiakitanga

Ensure the visitor economy is developed with sustainability at the centre of all planning and decision making to protect our city for future generations.

# Top 4 priority projects

## 1 Leverage Wellington's capital city status

### REASONING

Wellington is rich in local and national institutions that tell stories of Aotearoa. However, they're often closed at weekends when domestic travellers are most likely to visit and their internal tourism capability is often limited. Addressing this would enable deeper engagement and stronger cultural and economic benefit when it comes to leveraging our capital city status and improve access of these experiences to visitors and communities.

### ACTION

Partner with government institutions to develop their product and customer experience offering

## 2 Share the stories of mana whenua

### REASONING

Integral to Wellington's story are the stories of mana whenua. Te Ātiawa is already making great progress in sharing their stories - notably via Te Wharewaka o Pōneke, Pipitea marae and the storytelling uncovering of the site of Te Aro pā. Te Ātiawa is working to enhance Te Aro Pā, a project that will enable them to share the stories of their iwi in a more memorable, engaging way. This project will enhance cultural tourism in Wellington and provide a place for Wellingtonians to better understand the history of their home.

### ACTION

Support mana whenua to share their stories, through the development of Te Aro Pa and other initiatives

## 3 Develop local IP

### REASONING

Developing new experiences aligned to Wellington's strengths will make the city a more dynamic destination, attract new visitation, extend length of stay and boost value. Tākina is one such new experience with its exhibition space somewhere new to entertain audiences. It also offers an opportunity for New Zealand creatives to premiere new exhibitions and stories, before touring elsewhere. To achieve this, investment in local IP is needed – to ensure Aotearoa's stories can be captured and shared in an immersive, engaging way.

### ACTION

Feasibility and investment attraction into new commercial tourism experiences and the development of local IP.

## 4 Transition to a carbon zero tourism industry

### REASONING

To reach carbon neutrality, environmental stewardship needs to be part of every decision made in relation to Wellington's destination management. Of particular interest is de-carbonising public transport and making it more accessible through integrated ticketing, better frequency and mode shift options. Many Wellington tourism operations are already on a meaningful sustainability journey, particularly larger companies. Some indeed have been doing so before the regenerative tourism term was even coined. However, sustainability is less visible amongst small and medium tourism businesses. To address this WellingtonNZ is currently delivering a trial project to build capability with local tourism businesses with plans to roll out more widely.

### ACTION

Sustainable tourism programmes and visitor-friendly public transport planning



# About this plan

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This destination management plan has been developed by WellingtonNZ, the Wellington region's economic, events and promotional agency. It will enable WellingtonNZ to actively lead, facilitate and advocate in ensuring that Wellington City as a destination is managed in a sustainable way. It is about enhancing aspects of our destination so that Wellington continues to be a great place to live, work, study and visit, and is ready for future change.

The Wellington City Destination Plan has been developed by canvassing the aspirations of communities across Wellington, not just the tourism industry. It has included research and consultation with iwi, Wellington residents, potential students and talent, New Zealanders who want to travel domestically, local businesses and associations who represent the wider business and tourism sectors, and local and central government bodies.

Taking a collaborative approach, this document incorporates the views and expertise from the many stakeholders we have engaged and collaborated with to develop our vision and priority projects to support jobs in our region, add diversity, vibrancy, and prosperity to our communities.

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