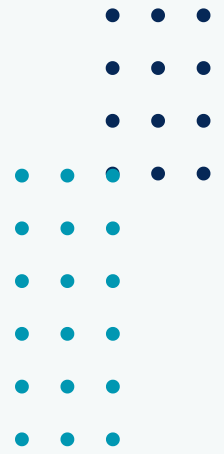


# ANNUAL SUMMARY 2024-25



## Wellington Regional Economic Development Plan 2022 – 2032

REFRESHED IN 2024

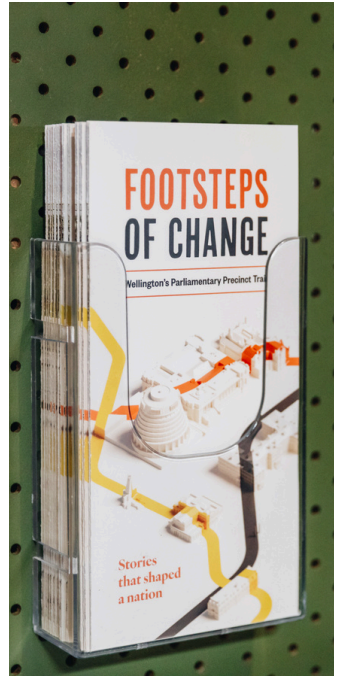
 **Wellington**  
Regional Leadership Committee

HIGHLIGHTS FROM YEAR  
THREE AND THE LATEST  
REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

Prepared by

**WellingtonNZ**





Left to right: The Block Party underway for Kāpiti - Horowhenua Kai Connect, Growth Jam 2024 event, Jon Kroll facilitating the Screen Accelerator Project, the 2025 Screen Accelerator Project cohort outside Park Road Post Production, the Footsteps of Change guide book, launch of the 'Make it Here' showreel, students at Ngāti Toa school participating in a House of Science kit, students in the Hutt Valley participate in the House of Science STEMM challenge, Mills Albert Pathways Skills Hub graduates, KCDC Internship programme in partnership with the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs and Ngā Hapu o Ōtāki, students learn about robotics at a Tūhura Tech session, attendees at a Tū Hauranga Trust's Courageous Leader session, Girls who Grow student visits to Stanmore Farm and Kaicycle,



**WELLINGTON REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
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## WELLINGTON REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN OVERVIEW

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The Wellington Regional Economic Development Plan 2022-2032 (REDP) guides the long-term direction of our economy on behalf of the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee (WRLC).

The WRLC brings councils, iwi, and central government together to take collective responsibility for our shared challenges and to achieve better outcomes for our communities across the Wairarapa-Wellington-Horowhenua region.

The vision of the REDP is to build a future-focused, creative, sustainable, and thriving region for all to be proud of. It aims to help create some of the 100,000 decent jobs\* our region will require in the next 30 years as our population grows. It also aims to improve quality of life by supporting our region to be more productive, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable with thriving Māori and Pasifika communities.

The plan is focused on four key sectors where initiatives can have an influence:

1. Screen, creative and digital;
2. Science, technology, engineering and high-value manufacturing;
3. Visitor economy; and
4. Primary sector, food and fibre.

It also supports and advocates for four key enablers that sit across these:

1. Māori economic development;
2. Skills, talent and education;
3. Water accessibility and security; and
4. Resilient infrastructure.

WellingtonNZ is driving implementation of the 31 initiatives in the REDP on behalf of the WRLC. This annual summary shares highlights from initiatives in the REDP over the past year (1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025), including feedback from initiative participants and leads, initiative highlights, and the latest regional data.

WellingtonNZ's support for initiatives varies from making connections, raising visibility, building capability and advocacy, to leading delivery of certain initiatives. As part of this support over the past year, WellingtonNZ engaged The Fundraising Agency to deliver a fundraising workshop series to build the capability of leads from 14 not-for-profit REDP-related initiatives to successfully develop and implement fundraising plans.

WellingtonNZ's Business Growth team works in parallel to build the capability of businesses across our region, enabling their ongoing growth. Throughout this year, the team engaged with 369 businesses through the Regional Business Partners Network. That included 140 attendees for the new offering of group workshops, known as One-to-Somes (workshops). Topics covered ranged from social media and LinkedIn for business, to tax, finance, sales and marketing, business strategy, and cost of goods sold mastery.

The third year of implementation has seen many initiatives now underway and starting to evolve as leads discover how they can make the greatest impact.

Collectively, REDP initiatives are providing opportunities for businesses and developing our skilled future workforce. WellingtonNZ acknowledges the continued passion and dedication of all the leads and key partners involved in delivering REDP initiatives, as well as the individuals and organisations participating in each initiative.

Continuing to collaborate with individuals and organisations throughout our region in the years ahead will enable the vision and aims of the REDP to be realised. Further work will continue to consider gaps in the REDP, ensuring issues and opportunities raised are being addressed.

Visit [WellingtonNZ.com/redp](https://WellingtonNZ.com/redp) to see the latest initiative articles, sign up for the quarterly newsletter, or contact the REDP programme team.



**WELLINGTON REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
MONITORING AND REPORTING SUMMARY 2024-25**

**MONITORING METRICS:** Indicators used to monitor progress against our strategic objectives

**REGIONAL INDICATORS:** Indicators monitored at a regional level

**QUALITY OF LIFE**

**AIM TO GROW** **Overall satisfaction with life**  
Measuring the overall satisfaction with life of residents provides an indication on social well-being. Biennial results - 2022 vs, 2024

**78%** Satisfied in Wellington Region\* **▼ 9%**

**AIM TO GROW** **The ability of income to meet every day needs**  
Monitoring the percentage of residents' ability to meet every day needs with their income provides an indication of the social and economic health of our region's residents. Biennial results - 2024 vs. 2022.

**40%** Could meet needs in the Wellington Region\* **▼ 14%**

**EMPLOYMENT**

**GROW 100K IN 30 YEARS** **Total Employment**  
The total employment across our region provides an indication of our regional economic performance. Annual figure - Year to March 2024 vs. March 2023. Additional employment figures follow from page 18.

**336,786** Total Employment **▲ 1.5%**

**AIM TO GROW** **GDP per capita**  
is used to capture the average economic wellbeing of our region overtime. Annual figure - Year to March 2024 vs. March 2023.

**\$96,268** GDP per Capita **▼ 1.0%**

**TERRITORIAL AUTHORITY:** Indicators monitored at a growth corridor level

**Population**  
Monitoring growth is important for understanding the infrastructure and resource needs of our region. Change is between 2023 and 2024.

**588,200** Regional **▲ 0.7%**

**37,700** Horowhenua **▲ 1.7%**

**57,800** Kāpiti Coast **▲ 0.4%**

**62,000** Porirua **▲ 0.9%**

**215,300** Wellington **▲ 0.2%**

**115,500** Lower Hutt **▲ 1.7%**

**47,900** Upper Hutt **▲ 0.8%**

**12,050** Sth Wairarapa **▲ 1.4%**

**10,250** Carterton **▲ 0.5%**

**29,700** Masterton **▲ 1.6%**

**The average income per capita**  
determines the average per-person income and evaluates the standard of living of our population. Annual figure - Year to March 2025 vs. March 2024.

**\$60,313** Regional **▲ 2.8%**

**\$43,568** Horowhenua **▲ 3.2%**

**\$55,964** Kāpiti Coast **▲ 3.3%**

**\$56,277** Porirua **▲ 2.6%**

**\$70,029** Wellington **▲ 2.2%**

**\$56,829** Lower Hutt **▲ 3.2%**

**\$58,237** Upper Hutt **▲ 3.0%**

**\$58,112** Sth Wairarapa **▲ 4.9%**

**\$53,588** Carterton **▲ 3.7%**

**\$49,521** Masterton **▲ 3.9%**

• Nielsen Quality of Life survey for 2024 does not include a Greater Wellington Regional sample and this is determined based on an average of participating TAs - Porirua, Wellington and Hutt City

Sources:  
Quality of Life: Nielsen Quality of Life Survey 2024 | Wellington region (excludes Horowhenua)  
Total Employment: Infometrics Regional Industry Employment Model | Wairarapa-Wellington-Horowhenua | March Year 2024  
GDP per capita: Infometrics | Wairarapa-Wellington-Horowhenua | March Year 2023  
Population: StatsNZ Subnational population estimates | TA Level | As at June 2024  
Average income per capita: Infometrics | TA Level | March Year 2025

## WELLINGTON REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN INITIATIVE FEEDBACK

WellingtonNZ is working alongside the lead for each REDP initiative. Feedback suggests initiatives are making a difference, with participants saying sharing:

*"The New Zealand screen sector as a whole and especially Wellington's local sector needs and thrives off of incubators like this. I have never taken part in an incubator like this one but it feels like it opens up our screen sector to the world in a way I never could have imagined. **It is invaluable for emerging producers to have the opportunity to network outside of their direct environment and hopefully make connections overseas to grow our industry beyond our borders.**"* – Screen Accelerator Project participant

*"**It has helped us find talented staff members, be inspired by others growth, and plug us in better to the ecosystem around us.**"* - Litmaps, on how being based in Taiawa Tech Hub has helped their business grow faster

*"Access to a range of different start-up companies at different stages, sizes & scale, with **a range of roles/people that can be asked questions/advice if the need arises.** A willingness to share & celebrate wins within the ecosystem. A really warm community feel."* - Roady, on the most significant benefits of being part of Taiawa Tech Hub

*"Kagan's workshop gave me **heaps of great takeaways on how to make a real splash in a new international market.** I really resonated with the Canva approach of marketing to everyone vs focussing your marketing efforts solely on your total addressable market and current customers."* - Participant, Kagan Sen's workshop in the Tech Leadership Series

*"The team at CreativeHQ are incredible! They pulled together such an excellent group of entrepreneurs for Fintech Lab 2025. **The initial kick off weekend set the scene for an action packed 3 months, which was the launchpad for our business.** Valued the experience and support very highly therefore would recommend."* - Participant, Fintech Lab Accelerator through Scale up Wellington

*"This course was amazing! Very informative and inspiring. Sam, Hari and guest speakers were **all focused on helping us to grow our businesses while growing the Dark Skies.** Highly recommend this course for businesses in the Wairarapa."* - Mieke, Dark Skies Business Capability programme participant

*"I remember the Up Up and Away kit best of all. I liked how it taught us about the wind and how the wind works and how it helps things fly. For any topic there is always something of interest in each kit. **The science kits are all easy ways for us to learn new science knowledge as they are so engaging.**"* - Liam, Year 6, Te Aro School

*"**Great to see young people introduced to these critical issues and engaged in solution thinking.** It's always inspiring to watch the innovation and passion from students."* – Ian, Girls who Grow Judge from Federated Farmers

*"It was amazing to see the (Girls who Grow) mentors guiding the students and how the event fostered creativity and teamwork. **This type of hands-on learning is invaluable.**"* – Teacher, Kuranui College

Initiative leads have reported a total of 99 jobs **(184 inc Screen)** created over the past year. This figure does not reflect the indirect impact of initiatives that are supporting businesses to grow and developing our workforce. The exception is for Taiawa, which an Infometrics Economic Impact analysis identified as supporting 45 jobs outside Taiawa through spending on suppliers and the spend generated by those suppliers employees.



## WELLINGTON REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### INITIATIVE LEAD FEEDBACK

WellingtonNZ asked initiative leads how being part of the REDP has supported implementation of their initiative.

Feedback from initiative leads includes:

*“Being part of the REDP has **provided strategic recognition and validation for the Screen Attraction Programme, enabling stronger engagement with international and domestic partners.** It has allowed Screen Wellington to act confidently in promoting the region, coordinating cross-sector initiatives, and advocating for the region’s competitive advantages. The REDP framework has also helped align activity across economic development, education, and cultural diplomacy.”* - Screen Wellington

*“**The initiative would never have happened if not part of the REDP.**”* - Taiawa Wellington Tech Hub

*“Being part of the REDP has been essential and WellingtonNZ’s support has been the **key enabler to get where we are today.**”* - Wairarapa Five Towns Trail Trust

*“Without the support of WellingtonNZ and the REDP, the programme would not be able to progress at pace, nor would it have had the profile. This support has been critical post-Covid for this sector where the products are typically high-value and require discretionary spending. **The investment by WellingtonNZ and the Kāpiti Coast ED Kotahitanga Board will pay dividends as businesses and investors are beginning to show a greater interest in the sector.**”* - Kāpiti - Horowhenua kai connect

*“Being part of the REDP has been instrumental in advancing the implementation of our initiative. The programme has **provided both credibility and visibility, which has helped us build stronger relationships with local schools, community partners, and potential funders.** The funding support has enabled us to expand our reach across the Wellington region, deliver more science resource kits to schools, and provide targeted professional development for teachers.”* - House of Science

*“Being part of the Regional Economic Development Programme has been **instrumental in enabling the implementation and expansion of Girls who Grow across the Wellington region.** This has included seed funding, credibility for other funders, connection to regional networks, and capacity to trial new approaches.”* - Girls who Grow

*“Being in the REDP has enabled us to continue growing and expanding, offering more sessions to tamariki and rangatahi and **growing the opportunities available** for them.”* - Tūhura Tech

*“Being part of the REDP has been invaluable in supporting our Full-STEAMM initiative implementation by **providing expert mentorship, strategic guidance, stakeholder connections, targeted resources, collaborative networks, and professional development training.** This partnership accelerated progress, ensured best practices, and fostered sustainable impact across project phases.”* - Wellington E2E Centre

**WELLINGTON REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
SECTOR INITIATIVE OUTCOMES 2024-25

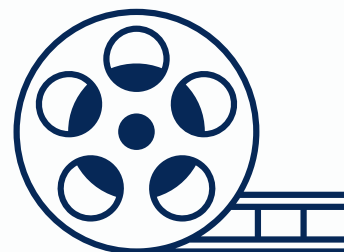
Highlights from Screen, STEM, visitor economy and primary sector initiatives are captured below. More detail is available on page 10 - 19.



**Hosted 11 inbound visits** to attract screen productions to our region



**3 productions confirmed** from the Screen Accelerator Project



Launched the **'Make it Here' Showreel** to promote our region's screen infrastructure.



**7 internships** completed through the Summer of Engineering programme, aligning skills needs with employment pathways



**2087 coaching hours** delivered across 384 startups, to provide greater access to innovation resources



**4 Tech Leadership Series events** and **2 Growth Jam events** delivered, enabling access to sector leaders and a more connected ecosystem



**Taiawa Wellington Tech Hub** expanded to 12 growing tech businesses in a shared workspace



**150 food and beverage cluster members** strengthening collaboration in Kāpiti - Horowhenua



**56 businesses** from the food and beverage cluster now promoted in the **Kapiti Producers Guide**



**Footsteps of Change** developed from the Civics Experience, an informative **historical walking tour** of the Parliamentary Precinct



**46 participants** completed a course on mastering **astrotourism** for business growth, leveraging the Wairarapa Dark Sky Reserve



**78,579 trips** across the recently completed **Tauwharenikau Bridge**, part of the Wairarapa Five Towns Trail Network being developed.



**WELLINGTON REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
ENABLER INITIATIVE OUTCOMES 2024-25

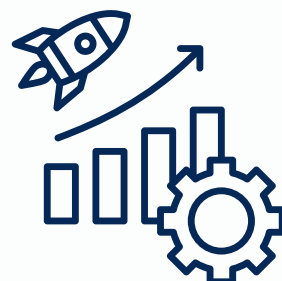
Highlights from enabling initiatives across Māori economic development, skills, water and infrastructure, as well as business support, are captured below. More detail is available on page 20 - 26.



Supported **four councils and two iwi rūnanga** with **social procurement readiness** to foster opportunities for Māori businesses



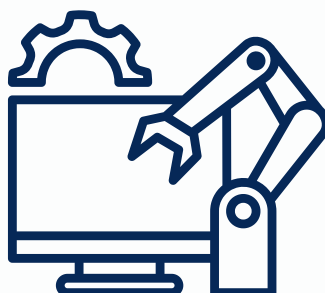
**200+ attendees** at Pasifika Networking events, inspiring & connecting students with businesses owners and leaders



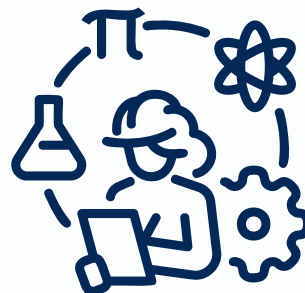
**100+ attendees** at a series of Boost your Business events to **grow Pasifika businesses**



**34,000 students** had access to House of Science resource kits across the region\*



Expanding Tūhura Tech to deliver **16 weekly tech education sessions** across the region, nurturing future skills



**45 students** gained skills for their future careers through the **E2E-STEAMM** programme



**497 students** engaged in the **Girls who Grow** programme, inspiring primary sector career pathways



Mills Albert civil construction skills hub has **trained and employed 19 local young people** in Kāpiti



**100 individuals** participated in the **Wairarapa Courageous Leader Series** to empower community action



**80 businesses** participated in three Wairarapa summer **water resilience** events, fostering peer-to-peer best practice learning



Completed the **Industrial Land Study**, identifying 11 areas for further investigation to ensure our future needs are met



**\$560k** contributed to business **capability** uplift through the Regional Business Partners Network to support small business success

\*Through the Wellington-Porirua, Kapiti-Horowhenua, and Hutt Valley branches. In addition, the independent Wairarapa branch reached 4,000 students.

## SECTOR

# Screen, creative and digital



GDP  
**\$1,587m** ▼  
 2023: \$1,625m



Employment  
**▼ 8,336**  
 2023: 8,443



Business Units  
**3,429** ▼  
 2023: 3,630

Wellington is proud to be recognised as a film friendly region. Our regional film office Screen Wellington, part of WellingtonNZ, supports sector development, screen attraction, and film facilitation. REDP highlights from the past year include:

- Achieving a year of sustained and strategic activity through the Screen Attraction Programme. Through international marketing, inbound famils, stakeholder partnerships, and capability-building, Wellington has positioned itself as a creative tech capital within the Pacific. The programme has enhanced connections with global producers, gaming studios, investors, and cultural partners, and supported local capability and industry development through collaborative projects with education providers and event platforms.
- Supporting 75-85 jobs during domestic productions secured including Caterpillar, Small Town Scandal, Warren's Vortex and Red Rocks.
- Hosting 11 groups of inbound visitors to promote our local screen facilities, including high-profile visits from Virtuoso Studios, Baobab Studios, cinematographers Baz Idoine and Cynthia Pushek, and art director Virginie Bourdin.
- Supporting Māori and Pasifika creatives through the UNESCO Creative City of Film programme, including enabling attendance at the Annecy Festival and International Film Animation Market.
- Coordinating more than 20 studio/site visits, involving key companies such as Wētā FX, Park Road Post, Lane Street Studios, A44, Pik Pok, and Floating Rock.
- Engaging with more than 2,000 participants via supported or partnered events such as Wellington Games Week, NZ Game Developers Conference (NZGDC), Play By Play Festival, Wellington Animation Film Festival (WAFF), and NZ Youth Film Festival (NZYFF).
- Facilitating 6+ international partnerships including with Content London, C21 Media, Ontario Creates (Canada), Galway UNESCO City of Film, and Baobab Studios (USA).
- Launching the Wellington 'Make it Here' Showreel to promote our region's production and post-production infrastructure.
- Establishing an Indigenous Animation Exchange with Māoriland Film Festival and Galway City of Film. Shortlisted for the UNESCO Creative Cities AGM with over 350+ Countries.
- Planning for the Screen Centre of Excellence at the Massey University National Academy of Screen Arts and seeking a Community Manager and tenants for the Centre itself.
- Delivering the Screen Accelerator Project to 28 producers. **Discover how this initiative is making an impact on the following page.**



Animators Seth Parata Stewart of Wellington and Siobhán Ní Thuairis of Galway were selected for the Indigenous Animation Exchange



Preview of the Wellington 'Make it Here' Showreel campaign



The New Zealand Game Developers Conference 2024 in action at Takina Wellington Convention and Exhibition Centre





**28**  
participants  
completed the  
Screen Accelerator  
Project this year

**3**  
productions  
confirmed as a  
result of the  
Project to date

#### CASE STUDY

## Screen Accelerator Project

### Goal: To strengthen and grow our regional screen sector

The Screen Accelerator Project enables screen practitioners at any stage in their career to build their capability and develop their unscripted content ideas into commercial productions, under the guidance of Emmy-award winning producer Jon Kroll.

The initiative is facilitated by Emmy Award-winning Hollywood producer Jon Kroll (Avocado Entertainment Ltd), who now calls Wellington home. The programme is run by Producers Melissa Conway and Sean O'Donnell of Tall Poppy Films and is based in Wellington.

Over the past year, two successful cohorts have completed the programme – 14 participants in December 2024 and another 14 in June 2025. Each cohort concludes with a high-stakes pitch event to a range of international buyers. These sessions are the culmination of intensive development, mentorship, and practical industry insight delivered by Jon.

The results speak for themselves. Three projects from the programme have now been confirmed, with two deals secured by Wellington-based producers and one by an Auckland producer.

A hallmark of the programme is the industry mixer event, which brings together a wide cross-section of the screen sector. The most recent mixer, held at Park Road Post Production, helped foster valuable new connections between emerging talent and established industry players.

Participant feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. One recent participant shared: *"I learnt tons about everything from pitching, making a sizzle reel, networking, making a pitch deck, the NZ screen rebate, the international tv/screen market, how to conduct myself in a professional environment, building relationships with producers/buyers and how deals work between buyers/producers/creators."*

Another described it as: *"Life changing, this will help me to keep giving back more film and stories to my community."*

To date, the Screen Accelerator Project has been funded by WellingtonNZ and Wellington City Council, with in-kind support from Yoobee College of Creative Innovation. Work is now underway to secure additional sponsorship to ensure the programme continues in 2026 and beyond. If you are interested in supporting this project please contact WellingtonNZ.

# Science, technology, engineering and high-value manufacturing (STEM)

Employment  
▲ 29,352  
2023: 29,311

GDP  
\$6,112m ▼  
2023: \$6,339m

Business Units  
5,997 ▼  
2023: 6,192

## Science, engineering and high-value manufacturing

The science, engineering and high-value manufacturing sub-chapter focuses on creating visibility for the ecosystem, addressing skills shortages and providing support for emerging companies to commercialise. REDP highlights from the past year include:

- Enabling seven internships for engineering students through the Summer of Engineering programme led by Summer of Tech. Due to low employer demand for this element of the programme, the focus has now shifted back to regrowing Summer of Tech. We encourage businesses across the region to continue taking up these opportunities to build our future regional workforce, including utilising support from Callaghan Innovation R&D Career and Experience grants where available.
- Securing a building commitment from a developer for the STEM Product Commercialisation Innovation Space initiative, also known as PDIHQ, subject to finding funding for underwriting and fitout costs. This initiative looks to address the lack of suitable lab space in our region. Pro-Dev is leading this initiative and has undertaken further work to develop the floor plans, governance structure, and technology and infrastructure fitout plans.

- Scoping a brand and narrative for the STEM Maker Story initiative. A pilot campaign will showcase our region's advanced manufacturing and innovation capabilities both to local youth considering career options, and the rest of Aotearoa and the world.
- Supporting the STEM Mentorship Programme led by Te Rūnanga O Toa Rangatira (Ngāti Toa). **Discover how this initiative is making an impact on the following page.**

WellingtonNZ also completed 400 business engagements. These enabled businesses to access Callaghan Innovation support and funding in 2024/25. The majority of these businesses were in the STEM sector, as well as some focused on other innovative sectors.

WellingtonNZ again supported the Life Sciences Summit, now in its third year. The summit brought together New Zealand's life science community, and provided a platform to discuss sector challenges, including gene technology regulation and clinical trials. A pre-summit 'Touchdown' event was hosted by BioTechNZ and WellingtonNZ at CreativeHQ. The Summit also included tours of the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research and the Ferrier Research Institute. BioTechNZ has committed to holding the summit in Wellington for three more years.



The Life Sciences Summit 2025, held at Tākina Wellington Convention & Exhibition Centre

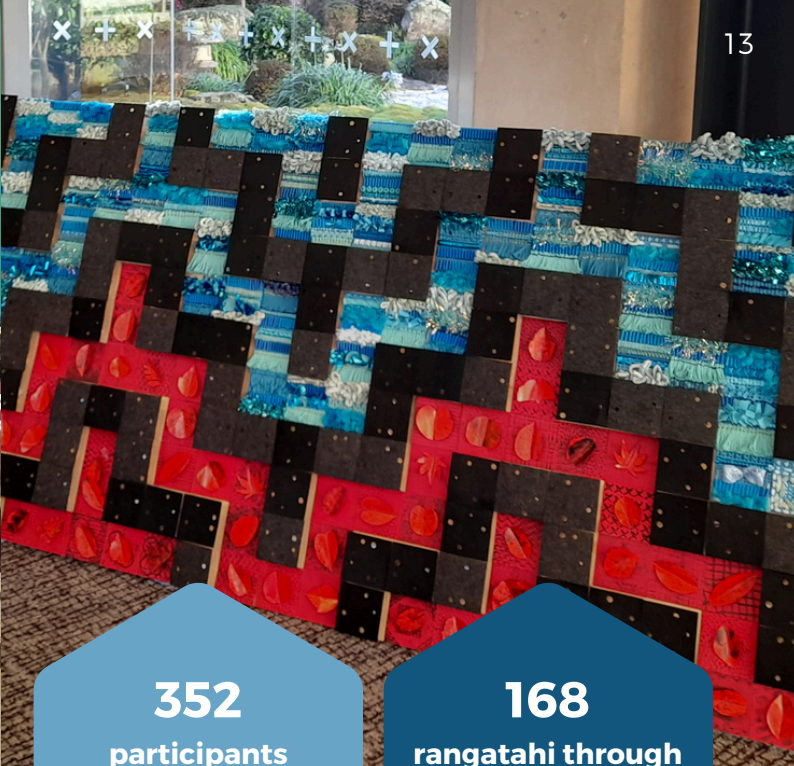


Concept plans for PDIHQ, the proposed STEM Product Commercialisation Innovation Space



Whanau from Takapuwahia build their Pa using virtual reality, as part of the STEM Mentorship programme offering through Matamoe Hub





**352**  
participants  
through Vivita Toa  
programmes over  
the past year

**168**  
rangatahi through  
afterschool tech  
workshops and  
holiday  
programmes

#### CASE STUDY

## STEM mentorship programme

### Goal: Build and upskill our workforce

Led by Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira (Ngāti Toa), the STEM mentorship programme aims to boost Māori representation in STEM through hands-on, culturally grounded learning. This kaupapa has engaged hundreds of rangatahi — sparking curiosity, growing confidence, and building pathways into STEM where Māori youth see themselves as leaders and innovators.

The programme aims to uplift Māori participation in STEM by embedding learning in culture, community, and creativity. In partnership with organisations like House of Science and Matamoe Hub, Ngāti Toa has built a kaupapa that inspires and empowers rangatahi through real-world, hands-on STEM experiences.

A major milestone in this journey has been the transformation of a creative makerspace into Vivita Toa — a space where rangatahi can explore science, technology, engineering, and maths in practical, culturally grounded ways. Groups of students from six high schools explored the theme Our Taiao, tackling global challenges such as plastic pollution through creative solutions including reusing

materials, weaving, and stamping. Their innovative work culminated in a public exhibition at Porirua's Pātaka Art + Museum.

*"While the original concept focused on university mentors inspiring rangatahi, our experience on the ground has shown that lasting engagement and impact come not only from inspiration, but from enabling rangatahi to experience STEM for themselves in hands-on, culturally grounded ways."*

*"We've since pivoted to a delivery model that prioritises practical learning: nurturing curiosity, building critical thinking, and introducing design thinking. This shift has deepened the kaupapa, helping rangatahi understand not just what STEM is, but why it matters — especially when learning connects to their lives, communities, and aspirations. We've seen stronger engagement through culturally responsive practice and real-world problem-solving."* Maria Dunlop, Innovation Manager, Ngāti Toa

Supported from the outset by WellingtonNZ, and guided by Ngāti Toa as it has evolved, this kaupapa continues to grow — redefining what STEM engagement can look like for Māori communities.

This initiative proves that when rangatahi see themselves in STEM, they don't just participate — they lead, create, and reimagine what's possible.

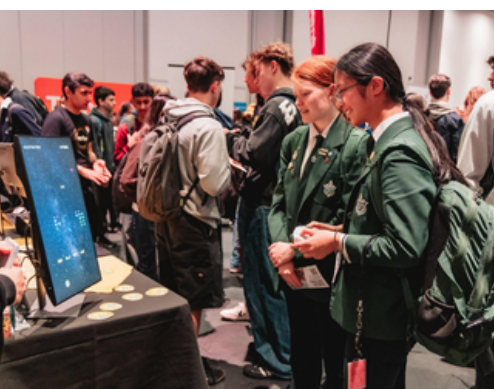


The technology sub-chapter focuses on harnessing entrepreneurial talent, addressing skills shortages, upskilling leadership teams and attracting investment. WellingtonNZ's subsidiary Creative HQ is now leading delivery of several tech initiatives and the Tech Sector Strategy. REDP highlights from the past year include:

- Delivering the Tech Leadership Training Series, including events with Kagan Sen - Head of Growth Canva Japan, Vidya Dinamani - Product Rebels CEO / Founder, Andrew Tokeley - Product Leadership Coach, and Daniel Heerkens - Salamander Advisory Singapore, plus two Growth Jam events featuring 12 speakers from leading tech companies across NZ and Australia. A key milestone for the series was expanding to the Kāpiti Coast, where a workshop was delivered in collaboration with KCDC.
- Continuing to scale up Creative HQ's startup programmes. This included supporting 29 start-up teams through the Fintech Lab and Aurora Climate Lab accelerator programmes, delivering 2087 coaching hours with 384 startups, building the final modules for the Founder Launch e-learning programme which gained 439 new users, and supporting 53 participants through On the Business workshops.
- Creative HQ also coordinated tech week activities delivered across our region in 2025, and delivered Working in the Cloud, a careers event for 900+ secondary school students from 27 schools across the region. The event featured 23 tech companies, four software and tech tertiaries, and industry groups from the wider tech ecosystem, with a mix of panel discussions and expo space for making connections.
- WellingtonNZ, Wellington City Council and Victoria University of Wellington continue to partner on Taiawa Tech Hub. **Discover how this initiative is making an impact on the following page.**

WellingtonNZ also facilitated bringing major tech sector conferences to the region. These included:

- Sunrise Aotearoa, which brought together 400 members of the tech start-up community to explore big ideas, learn new tools and mindsets, and make new connections.
- Electrify Aotearoa, a two-day workshop and conference organised by Ministry of Awesome. The event focused on addressing the disparity in the number of female-led ventures in New Zealand. Electrify Aotearoa worked to build the capability of female founders through education, creating connections between founders and investors, and building support networks for founders and aspiring entrepreneurs. Female school students were invited to attend and learn about career pathways.
- APNIC 58 — the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre international conference, which brought together Internet and networking experts, government representatives, and industry leaders. A focus was to address a lack of diversity in the younger generation within the internet industry. We made connections to local initiatives — Tūhura Tech and Summer of Tech — to encourage IT students to attend. Victoria University of Wellington also sponsored 20 students to participate in the conference.



Students explore tech career opportunities at the Working in the Cloud careers event



Speakers and participants at the 2025 Growth Jam event



A group of delegates attending the international APNIC 58 conference





## CASE STUDY

## Taiawa Wellington Tech Hub

**Goal: Develop hubs equipped for STEM innovation and collaboration, raising the profile of the STEM sector**

Taiawa Wellington Tech Hub is a vibrant shared workspace at Victoria University's Pipitea campus, designed to accelerate growth for innovation-led businesses. In its first year, it supported ecosystem-wide impact, helping companies grow faster through access to university expertise, peer networks, and flexible, low-overhead space.

Based in Rutherford House at Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University's Pipitea campus, Taiawa is designed to boost collaboration and accelerate growth for Wellington's entrepreneurial community.

With 60 dedicated desks, social and meeting spaces, and a strong culture of collegiality among its Wellington-based businesses, Taiawa provides opportunities for startups, students, academics, and industry to collaborate on research, internships, and real-world projects.

Established by WellingtonNZ and Wellington City Council, and now hosted by Victoria University with ongoing support from WCC, Taiawa is home to tech-focused companies on global growth trajectories.

**\$11.9m**  
GDP created by  
businesses located  
in Taiawa

**127**  
FTE jobs supported  
by businesses  
located in Taiawa

Over the year to March 2025, nine of the businesses located in Taiawa created a total of \$11.9M in gross domestic product (GDP) and supported 127 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. This included:

- \$4.0M in GDP and 82 FTE directly,
- \$3.3M in GDP and 20 FTE through spending on their suppliers (the indirect effect), and
- \$4.6M in GDP and 25 FTE jobs supported through staff within Taiawa and suppliers spending their earnings at local businesses (the earnings impact).

Resident businesses cite faster growth through access to university expertise, peer learning, training opportunities, and events — including investor meetups in relaxed, non-pitch environments. Being part of Taiawa means access to a supportive, inspiring network without the cost and commitment of a full office lease — enabling founders to focus on scaling. Businesses within Taiawa are also willing to celebrate wins together and take inspiration from each other's achievements.

*"Connecting us in closer with the Wellington ecosystem, through people links has been essential to opening up new investor relations." - Litmaps*

*"Excellent access to student talent when we offered an internship-helping us connect with emerging professionals." - Cogo*



GDP  
\$4,925m  
2023: \$5,014m ▼



Employment  
▲ 54,393  
2023: 53,042



Business Units  
▲ 7,704  
2023: 7,494

Developing iconic attractions is key to growing the value of our regional visitor economy, alongside enabling operators to become more sustainable. REDP highlights from the past year include:

- Securing funding from the Lotteries Environment and Heritage Fund to develop the first phase of the Civics Experience initiative. The initiative has been given the name Footsteps of Change – Wellington's Parliamentary Precinct Trail, with the tagline 'Stories That Shaped a Nation'. A map box has been installed at the Wellington iSite inside Tākina, and an app is available to download, encouraging locals and visitors alike to participate in this walking tour. A full launch is scheduled as part of the Wellington Heritage Festival in October 2025.
- Launching the latest visitor economy sustainability programme, known as LoCarb, in partnership with Hospitality New Zealand. LoCarb aims to reach 250 operators across the region, helping to reduce their emissions while also reducing costs. Participants receive access to the Cogo Carbon Measurement Tool, providing an overview of the region's emissions reduction efforts. More than 80 operators have expressed an interest in the programme since the launch in April 2025.
- Hosting potential international investors for the Porirua Adventure Park to promote our regional context, while facilitating discussions between key partners aiming to progress next steps.

- Supporting the Wairarapa Five Towns Trail Trust with establishing a presence, brand, and preparation for a fundraising plan.
- Delivering two series of Dark Skies Business Capability Development Programmes in partnership with Milky-Way.Kiwi Ltd and Masterton District Council. **Discover how this initiative is making an impact on the following page.**

In addition, WellingtonNZ supported wider visitor economy activities including:

- Commissioning the Wellington Cruise Strategy with CentrePort to provide future direction and delivering another season with 73 ships, 120,000 passengers and \$100m of regional economic impact.
- WellingtonNZ's Business Events Wellington team won conference bids representing \$26m of economic impact, while events supported by the Major and regional events team contributed more than \$50m of domestic, out-of-region and international visitor spend.
- Leading the bid to secure \$600k of Government Regional Tourism Boost Funding to increase regional dispersal of international visitors into central New Zealand regions over April-August; a partnership with seven surrounding Regional Tourism Organisations.
- Increasing international visitor arrivals into Wellington Airport from Australia between March – August 2025.



A user experiences the Footsteps of change app



Graze participated in the last round of the LoCarb visitor economy sustainability programme



The first cohort of the Dark Skies Business Capability Development Programme



## CASE STUDY

## Wairarapa Dark Skies development

**Goal: Improve the value and sustainability of tourism across our region through developing iconic attractions**

In 2023, South Wairarapa and Carterton became an official International Dark Sky Reserve — one of only 24 worldwide. Since then, 46 participants from more than 20 local businesses have taken part in astrotourism training, supported by WellingtonNZ and led by Milky-Way Kiwi. The programme aims to turn the region's night skies into a growing economic opportunity.

Dark Sky Reserve status is awarded to areas with exceptional night sky quality, and the certification was the result of years of hard work by the local Wairarapa Dark Sky Reserve Association, supported by a dedicated and passionate community.

Since achieving this milestone, business capability courses have been running throughout the Wairarapa, focused on Mastering Astrotourism for Business Growth. Led by Hari Mogoşanu and Sam Leske of Milky-Way Kiwi — who also run their own astrotourism business, Star Safari, and bring over 20 years of experience in space science and communication — the courses aim to help local businesses leverage the Reserve status for growth.

**46**  
participants have  
completed the  
Dark Skies course  
this year

WellingtonNZ co-funded the courses as part of the Dark Skies initiative in the REDP, making them accessible to a wide range of businesses and individuals with ideas for astrotourism. The most recent round of training focused on Masterton businesses, with co-funding from the Masterton District Council, as part of preparations to apply for expansion of the Reserve to include the Masterton district.

Hari and Sam explain: *“Our aim is clear: to expand the stargazing capabilities in the region, support the Wairarapa Dark Sky Reserve, and stimulate economic growth throughout the area. By enhancing local businesses’ ability to offer high-quality astrotourism experiences, we not only contribute to preserving our night skies but also foster a thriving community where everyone’s success is interlinked. This course is more than an educational opportunity — it’s an investment in the collective future of Wairarapa’s economy.”*

Participants are already applying what they’ve learned in a variety of ways — from purchasing telescopes and offering stargazing experiences to attracting astrophotographers by showcasing their unique geography. Local iwi has also taken part, build local knowledge and are exploring how to use the night sky as a platform for cultural storytelling.

A third series of the course has been confirmed, and follow-on support is in development to help more ideas move from inspiration to action.

## SECTOR

# Primary sector, food and fibre



GDP  
**\$2,131m** ▲  
2023: \$2,101m



Employment  
**13,338** ▲  
2023: 13,106



Business Units  
**3,504** ►  
2023: 3,504

The primary sector, food and fibre chapter covers the value chain from producer to final consumer. Kāpiti Coast, Horowhenua and Wairarapa are responsible for over 90% of food and fibre production in our region, with each having their own focus areas. REDP highlights from the past year include:

- Growing the Kāpiti - Horowhenua kai connect programme including its food and beverage cluster to 150 members. Part of this growth is due to the inclusion of hospitality businesses and working more collaboratively with the tourism cluster. The cluster offered businesses a range of opportunities throughout the year, including a series of industry evening events, capability building, and establishing an export cohort and Kāpiti food tour. **Discover how this initiative is making an impact on the following page.**
- In Wairarapa, the WEDS Work Programme has identified where economic development support can have the greatest impact, focusing on productivity, diversification, and resilience. This has led to advancing a tailored Capability Series to support leadership, business growth, and workforce development. In parallel, the Future Options for land use workstream has been launched to review and prioritise diversification and value chain opportunities, with initial planning and stakeholder engagement underway.

WellingtonNZ supported wider food and fibre events throughout the region during the year. These included:

- Five workshops delivered through Perkins Consulting across Wellington City, Kāpiti Coast, Wairarapa, and the Hutt Valley. The purpose of these One:Some workshops was to uplift financial and marketing capability of hospitality businesses/ food service businesses.
- Participating at the Emerging Suppliers forum to engage with businesses and share information about the Regional Business Partners Network (RBPN).
- Holding a booth at the Kāpiti Food innovation forum, where WellingtonNZ's Business Growth Managers shared information about the RBPN. Through this event, the team engaged with a local cider-manufacturing business and co-funded them to participate in the Food & Beverage Accelerator by Rise Growth Lab.



The Cost of Goods Sold Mastery workshop facilitated by Liz Perkins in Kāpiti



Attendees at a Kāpiti food and beverage cluster networking event



The team at Crooked Vege at work





Attendees enjoy the the Sheffield and Birmingham Street Block Party



The Funk with Food team at the Block Party



Local producers as part the Kāpiti Artisan collective at the Fine Foods Trade Show

## CASE STUDY

# Kāpiti - Horowhenua Kai Connect

**Goal: Identify and develop innovative and sustainable new food and fibre opportunities across our region**

Food and beverage businesses across Kāpiti, Horowhenua and Porirua are joining forces through the Kāpiti-Horowhenua Kai Connect initiative, led by Kāpiti Economic Development Kotahitanga Board and the economic development team at Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC). With more than 150 members, the cluster is strengthening the region's food and beverage sector by supporting collaboration, raising quality and visibility, and creating sustainable growth opportunities.

Activities undertaken to support members over the past year include:

- Launching a commercial kitchen database hosted on Business Kāpiti utilising existing infrastructure. This helps small producers find kitchens that can be hired per day, enabling them to scale out of home faster.
- Shaping two complementary regenerative projects based on Te Ao Māori principles and approaches to food production – horticulture on Māori land and Agriculture/Horticulture training at Te Wānanga o Raukawa.
- Developing an artisan retail space at Coastlands and exploring a national sales and distribution role to represent local brands. These ventures aim to grow revenue and brand awareness while keeping producers actively involved.

- Supporting PR and marketing, and enhancing the Kāpiti Producers Guide to include caterers.
- Collaborating on three event offerings - Oktoberfest, the Sheffield and Birmingham Street Block Party, and a Visa Wellington on a Plate tasting Safari.
- Enabling six local producers to represent the district as part the Kāpiti Artisan collective at the Fine Foods Trade Show in Auckland - New Zealand's premier trade show. The collective included local businesses Apostle Hot Sauce, The Bond Store, Goldies Wholefoods, Elemental Cider, Rose's Chilli Crisp, and Coral Tree Organics.

*"Attending as a collective has opened up the opportunity to attend Fine Foods which we wouldn't have been able to afford to do on our own, we are grateful for the support of the council with their logistical help."* - Lydia Harfield, co-owner of Apostle Hot Sauces.

*"The cluster allows us to connect with producers we would not have had a chance to meet before."* - Lottie and Bran, Funk with Food

*"While it is a tough economic climate, the wrap around support of the cluster helps businesses navigate compliance, have access to the right experts for the right stage of their business lifecycle, enable intentional collaborations, leverage off collaborative events while growing their businesses."* - Kāpiti Coast District Council

Next for the cluster is to transition this initiative to be led by business with a new leadership group forming to drive future projects.

To read more about the Kāpiti Coast food and beverage sector vision, success stories or to get involved, visit: [businesskapiti.co.nz/grow/food-and-beverage/](https://businesskapiti.co.nz/grow/food-and-beverage/)

# Māori economic development

The Māori economic development chapter recognises that in Te Ao Māori all things are inter-connected. A prosperous and well-balanced Māori economy creates healthy whānau, healthy whānau contribute to a thriving environment, a thriving environment forms the backdrop to a developing economy, and so on. REDP highlights from the past year include:

- Developing a strategic framework around five procurement lifecycle stages: Tender Readiness, Warrant of Readiness, Market Engagement, Contract Performance, and Post-Contract. WellingtonNZ has identified the first two as a focus for the year ahead and are seeking interest from leads for the remaining three focus areas.
- Supporting four councils and two iwi rūnanga with social procurement readiness. This included developing seven procurement strategies and plans, and delivering a full suite of tools and training, addressing barriers that previously limited Māori and Pasifika businesses from engaging in tendering processes. **Discover how this initiative is making an impact on the following page.**

The focus on procurement will continue in the year ahead. This will include Te Matarau a Māui leading a project to develop procurement templates to support both buyers and suppliers with their social procurement approach. WellingtonNZ is focusing on capability building utilising the Regional Business Provider Network and supporting construction businesses to become better prepared to respond to tender opportunities.

In addition, WellingtonNZ has a specialist business growth manager with a focus on pakihi Māori (Māori businesses). They are available to meet with individual businesses across the region and run regular drop-in business clinics. This role helps to connect business owners with the right people, advice, and resources to enable business growth.

Ngāti Toa and Porirua City Council delivered BizFest, with support from WellingtonNZ and partners. BizFest was designed to inspire, connect, and empower local businesses. The event celebrated the strength, resilience, and excellence of the Porirua business community under the theme Kōpū i te pae – honouring those who lead with courage, navigate with wisdom, and uplift others in the pursuit of opportunity.

Over the past year, WellingtonNZ connected 28 pakihi Māori to Callaghan Innovation programmes and 26 pakihi Māori businesses to management capability programmes. Building on momentum from Bizfest, WellingtonNZ will support BizHub as ‘Hoa Haere’ – Foundational Partner. Bizhub is a community-led business space established by Ngāti Toa and Porirua City Council. It will provide free, in-person business support, capability-building pop-up events, and a collaborative space.

Iwi and Māori continue to have a key role in other initiatives throughout the REDP, including the Porirua Adventure Park and STEM Mentorship Programme. Wider initiatives are designed for inclusivity like House of Science with their bilingual science resource kits in Te Reo Māori and English.



Participating in a panel discussion at the Porirua BizFest event



A planning meeting for BizHub, which recently launched in Porirua



Māori in Business Wairarapa hosting a Construction Connect Business after 5 hui.



Photo credit - Celeste Fontein

6

local organisations  
supported with  
inclusive procurement  
strategies

## CASE STUDY

# Greater access to procurement contracts

**Goal: Build capacity and capability of Māori enterprises in social procurement processes**

This initiative aims to strengthen procurement readiness across Te Upoko o te Ika a Māui through partnership and collaboration. This means increasing the participation of local suppliers with local buyers. It aims to generate new employment and grow our regional economy. WellingtonNZ contributes to this by building relevant capability, and connectedness within our business community.

This initiative supported four councils and two iwi rūnanga to build social procurement readiness through the development of procurement strategies and implementation plans. It was made possible through the openness and commitment of these organisations to explore new ways of working, and their willingness to share existing processes and resources to improve outcomes collectively.

Through a co-design process, a comprehensive suite of tools and training was developed to address barriers that have limited the participation of Māori, Pasifika, and locally owned businesses in tendering opportunities. This collaborative approach resulted in seven bespoke procurement strategies and implementation plans, each tailored to reflect the unique needs and aspirations of the participating organisations.

The results reflect a collective shift from transactional procurement approaches to a more outcomes-focused mindset. This led to more thoughtful supplier engagement and deeper understanding of local impact as well as

demonstrating that inclusive procurement is both legal and achievable.

Key insights for other organisations to learn from include the importance of leadership commitment to making a lasting change, that international trade obligations can be navigated, and that not all pakihi Māori are connected to mana whenua – with 84% of Māori in the region being mātāwaka (Māori who are not affiliated with local mana whenua by whakapapa). This requires thinking about how to engage Māori communities who may not be connected to a local iwi, ensuring that opportunities are available to all.

The programme also showed that support must be tailored to each organisation's readiness and capacity, as some buyers are willing but under-resourced. It also emphasised the need for practical, relational support, which unlocks change more easily than providing advice alone.

This mahi was made possible through WellingtonNZ's role as a connector - commissioning a dedicated procurement expert to create the right conditions for change, while supporting the wider ecosystem.

Continued investment is required to uplift the capability of both buyers and suppliers. This will help redirect spending in ways that strengthen our communities, foster resilience, and keep money circulating locally for longer.

WellingtonNZ remains committed to identifying further opportunities to grow procurement readiness for the business community we serve. WellingtonNZ will continue building procurement capability by leveraging tools such as the Regional Business Partner Network, and through partnerships and connections across the broader business sector.

## Skills, talent and education

The REDP recognises the important role that skills, talent, and education play in enabling regional economic development and productivity, and includes a range of initiatives to develop our future workforce. REDP highlights from the past year include:

- House of Science resource kits reaching a total of 138 schools through the Wellington-Porirua, Kapiti-Horowhenua, and Hutt Valley branches, which equates to 34,000 students. In addition, the independent Wairarapa branch reached 27 schools covering more than 4,000 further students. **Discover how this initiative is making an impact on the following page.**
- Introducing the Girls who Grow programme into our region, with 497 students across 17 schools participating in experiential learning. Activities included on farm ‘lunch and learn’ days which connected students to food systems, biodiversity, soil health and regenerative practices, as well as regional imagination challenges. The programme provided students with opportunities to lead innovative projects, meet inspiring mentors, and discover potential meaningful career pathways in agriculture.
- Supporting Tūhura Tech to empower the next generation through free technology education sessions for youth. Tūhura Tech is now delivering 16 sessions weekly across Wellington, Hutt Valley and Porirua, with some initial outreach underway in Wairarapa and Kāpiti. Part of the REDP support for Tūhura Tech over the past year included engaging the experts at The Fundraising Agency to build a dedicated fundraising strategy.
- Expanding the Full-STEAMM programme delivered by Wellington E2E Centre beyond the pilot. Full-STEAMM supports schools to transform Year 9 female students into future talent to drive productivity and strengthen equitable representation across STEAMM fields in New Zealand. The programme has reached 45 students regularly over the past year, with a further 30+ registered for term three 2025.
- Sponsoring Pasifika Career Mentoring sessions for four schools, connecting students with Pasifika mentors to explore diverse career opportunities across ANZ. This programme, delivered by the Wellington E2E Centre, gave students practical advice on subjects to focus on at school and the importance of further study to build knowledge and embrace lifelong learning for their careers.
- Creating opportunities for residents to access local training and employment through Kāpiti Coast District Council. This included partnering with Mills Albert, a Kāpiti civil construction company, to set up the Mills Albert Pathways Skills Hub which has now trained and employed 19 local young people; partnering with Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki to support two tane into Council internships, which led to full time employment within the Parks and Reserves team, and placing 17 young people into employment through the Mayor’s Taskforce for Jobs.
- Refreshing the Wairarapa Workforce Action Plan with new sector-led initiatives; advancing the Attract, Connect, Stay project to strengthen the healthcare workforce; and delivering the Courageous Leader Series to approximately 100 participants to build local workforce leadership. The Māori in Business workforce hui engaged 30 local businesses to explore tikanga in employment practices. These initiatives reflect a continued collective effort to deliver long-term, meaningful workforce outcomes for the region.

WellingtonNZ engaged in wider workforce development activities throughout the year. This included supporting five students to participate in Innovative Young Minds, organising eight workplace visits for groups of high school students, and hosting a team of six students and one alumni from around New Zealand for the Young Enterprise Entrepreneurs in Action Weekend.

The skills, talent and education initiatives in the REDP are delivered by local not-for-profits and groups committed to making a positive impact for our region’s current and future workforce. WellingtonNZ welcomes interest from potential partners and is keen to connect them with the appropriate initiative leads.




**34,000**

students in our region have access to House of Science resource kits

**\$10.20**

social return on investment for every \$1 invested in House of Science

## CASE STUDY

# House of Science

## Goal: Future-proofing the skills of our people and the needs of our sectors

Science has come alive in classrooms across the region thanks to House of Science – a charitable trust established to help improve scientific literacy in primary and intermediate schools.

House of Science develops comprehensive bilingual resource kits that align with the New Zealand curriculum and contain everything a teacher needs to teach the subject at hand. The hands-on kits see students doing a range of tasks. They could be examining skeletons, making batteries from salty water, germinating bean seeds, testing water quality, constructing bumble bee nests, or fingerprinting.

Manager of the Wellington City, Porirua and Hutt Valley branches, Carol Brieseman, says *“We want to see every child in New Zealand become scientifically literate. This means they have a clear understanding of science concepts and processes encountered in their daily lives.”*

With research showing that many children form views about science by age 10, early engagement is crucial. The kits give students fun, memorable experiences that show science can be part of their world.

WellingtonNZ has partnered with House of Science in our region through the REDP, recognising the need for long-term investment in developing our future STEM workforce. WellingtonNZ contributes funding to grow the reach to more schools, as well as credibility and visibility that has enabled House of

Science to build stronger relationships with local schools, community partners and potential funders. Local branch managers have also participated in the fundraising workshop series delivered through WellingtonNZ.

Principal of Te Aro School, Sue Clement, shared: *“The school has been using science kits as part of their strategic goals, linking them to the mathematics curriculum and literacy, particularly oral language and writing. **The kits have significantly improved student engagement and attitudes towards learning science.** Students now talk about themselves as scientists, showing the impact of these resources.”*

Students at Te Aro School also shared:

- *“This week we explored and learnt about tectonic plates. **The experiments in the kits are both fun and interesting.** When we were learning about earthquakes we used some slinkies to see how energy moves across the land. We have been learning as part of our science work to record some of our learning and to draw diagrams. We are really enjoying doing all this science learning.”*  
– Tova and Genevieve, Year 4
- *“I remember the Up, Up and Away kit best of all. I liked how it taught us about the wind and how the wind works and how it helps things fly. For any topic there is always something of interest in each kit. **The science kits are all easy ways for us to learn new science knowledge as they are so engaging.**”* - Liam, Year 6

To learn more about House of Science or how your school can get involved, visit:  
<https://houseofscience.nz>



**100+**  
attendees at Pasifika  
business capability  
events

**200+**  
attendees at  
Pasifika student  
networking events

#### CASE STUDY

## Pasifika business enablement

**Goal: Address regional and ethnic disparities in education and employment opportunities**

Since the REDP was established, an opportunity was recognised to support Pasifika businesses across our region to grow capacity and capability. The Pasifika business enablement initiative has grown since, in partnership with Wellington Pasifika Business Network (WPBN) and others. Key achievements include a range of student and business networking events.

One of the earlier actions was to build an online business resource hub on the WellingtonNZ website. This directory provides a range of useful resources for all kinds of businesses in Wellington, including those with dedicated support for Pasifika.

Next, a networking series was established to connect tertiary students with the Pasifika business space, providing inspiration from local business owners and leaders who actively apply their values through their chosen careers. This series is now well established, with one event per semester at Victoria University, and occasional events being held at other tertiary institutions. The Pasifika Students' Council at Victoria University is fully behind the

events and help to draw in over 100 attendees for each session.

Over the past year, WellingtonNZ also partnered with Wellington Chamber of Commerce as part of the Power of Three network with WPBN and Te Awe to deliver Boost your Business; a series of five events for Pasifika businesses. Topics included sharing your story, building your business community, connecting with your customers, and understanding and using AI. These events were delivered to nearly 100 attendees across Porirua and Wellington city. Feedback included:

- *"It helped me find the courage to tell my journey. I never thought of it as a story before."*
- *"Really valuable session. I can now introduce my business in a way that connects."*
- *"This was the first time I introduced my business out loud. That was a big deal for me."*

WellingtonNZ partnered with WPBN to deliver a Pasifika business capability and networking event in Lower Hutt, bringing business owners together to raise awareness of support available and to build connections. This event was well received with around 40 attendees. Planning is underway to deliver more opportunities like these in the year ahead.



# Water accessibility and security AND Resilient infrastructure

Reliable water and infrastructure mean security for businesses to continue operating and grow in our region. The REDP elevates implementation of the Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy (WWRS) as a regional priority. Highlights from the past year include:

- The establishment of a Governance Group comprising councils and mana whenua, and the appointment of a dedicated Programme Director to drive delivery. Workstreams under the Implementation Plan were scoped and resourced to support long-term regional water resilience. Councils agreed to lift the Strategy's visibility, reflecting shared recognition of its importance for the region's productive future. The Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy (WEDS) part-funded the 'A Case for Action' project to assess current and future water demand across the Ruamāhanga catchment.
- The Waingawa Process Water Project progressed on schedule, with water delivery to industrial users set for July 2025. The project will support industrial growth while freeing up potable water for the community, strengthening regional water resilience and economic development.
- The Water Summer Series, sponsored by WEDS and led by the Wairarapa Water Users Society, delivered three well-attended on-farm events engaging more than 150 participants to showcase innovative, efficient water use practices. Covering self-generating electricity, seed production, and deep aquifer extraction.

The REDP also recognises planning to ensure sufficient land is available to support industrial developments over the next 30 years as a regional priority. Highlights from the past year include:

- Completing the Industrial Land Study ([available here](#)). The study identifies a significant shortfall in industrial land across the region and identifies 11 areas for further investigation to meet projected demand over the next 30 years.
- Establishing an Industrial Land Steering Group to support regional alignment while enabling councils to progress local delivery, including zoning and infrastructure planning for identified sites. This coordinated approach will help safeguard and expand industrial land supply in a way that is integrated with infrastructure investment, housing delivery, and climate adaptation efforts across the region.

The next phase will focus on working with councils and industry to progress detailed site assessments, ensuring that the region is positioned to retain and attract industrial businesses and the jobs they provide.

The Wellington Regional Leadership Committee has an ongoing role to play in advocating for resilient infrastructure for our region and maximising the economic development benefits from such opportunities.



Pumps installed at Waingawa Process Water Project.



Attendees at the Waingawa Water Storage Announcement



Attendees at the Water Summer Series event in December 2024





**\$25m**  
confirmed for  
Carterton Water  
Storage project

#### CASE STUDY

## Water storage at Waingawa Industrial Park

**Goals: Implement solutions to enable water accessibility and security in Wairarapa, and prepare our region for commercial and industrial developments**

Funding has been secured by Carterton District Council for a new water reservoir project at Waingawa marking a significant step toward improving water resilience in the Wairarapa region.

The Carterton District Council Water Storage 20-hectare reservoir will hold up to a million cubic metres. The main beneficiary is Waingawa Industrial Park. The industrial park is already home to water-heavy manufacturing industries and is positioned next to State Highway 2, the Wairarapa rail line, and existing water infrastructure.

Beyond supporting the industrial park, the reservoir will also provide irrigation support for surrounding farm land, which opens up opportunities for more diverse and higher-value agricultural production.

WellingtonNZ has advocated for water accessibility and security in Wairarapa, with the Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy recognised as a regional priority in the REDP and co-funding provided towards initiatives such as A Case for Action through the Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy.

The project is expected to drive economic growth in two ways: by helping existing businesses expand and making the region attractive for new industries that need reliable water access. It also builds in drought resilience, which is becoming increasingly important with climate change.

The total project cost is expected to be up to \$25M. The Government's Regional Infrastructure Fund will provide an initial loan of up to \$3M for preparatory work. Carterton District Council is expected to contribute \$5M in co-funding for the project, and a further \$17M loan will be available from the Regional Infrastructure Fund for construction once a final model has been confirmed.

Water resilience is well recognised as a regional priority for Wairarapa. This project connects back to the Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy, Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy, Future Development Strategy and REDP, as well as supporting the future availability of industrial land for our region.



# REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

This regional snapshot is provided as an overview of our regional performance since the Regional Economic Development Plan was launched in August 2022.

A key measure of regional performance is how satisfied residents feel with their overall quality of life. In 2024, 78% of people living in the Wellington Region\* reported being satisfied, down from 2022 but still slightly above the national average of 77%. Across all participating territorial authorities (TAs), declining financial wellbeing was the main driver of reduced quality of life. In contrast, improvements were most often linked to better health, wellbeing, and work circumstances.

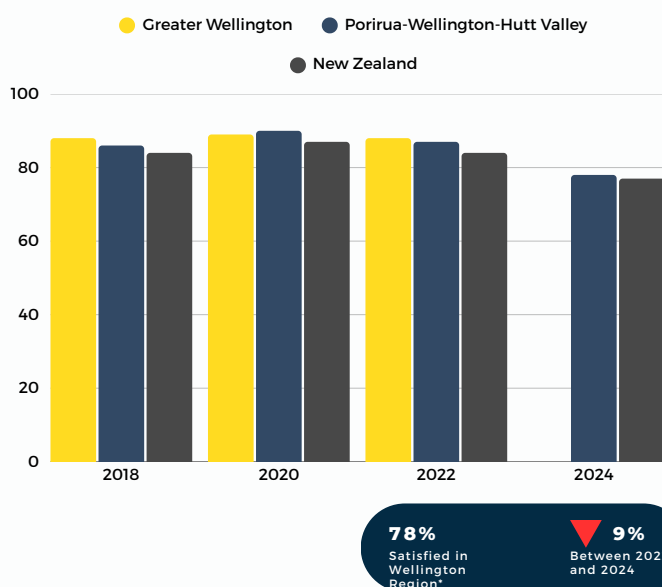
Financial pressures remain a significant issue for the region. Just 40% of residents said their income was enough to meet their everyday needs in 2024 – a 14% drop from the previous year – reflecting ongoing cost-of-living challenges. However, this figure still compares favourably to the national average of 35%.

The Horowhenua-Wellington-Wairarapa region outperforms the national average in housing affordability, with mortgage repayments making up 31.8% of income (compared to 39.3% nationally), and rental costs sitting at 20.4% of income (vs 22.1% nationally). This supports the stronger ability of residents income to meet everyday needs in our region than national averages.

\*Note: Greater Wellington did not participate in the 2024 survey. Data is drawn from Porirua, Wellington City, and Hutt City and used as a proxy for the wider region. Averages have been backdated to support comparison.

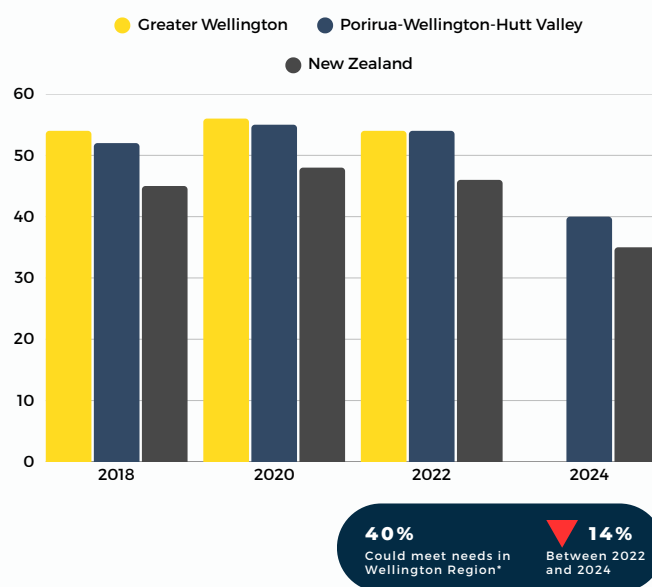
## Overall Satisfaction with Quality of Life

Greater Wellington Region - excludes Horowhenua



## Ability of Income to Meet Everyday Needs

Greater Wellington Region - excludes Horowhenua



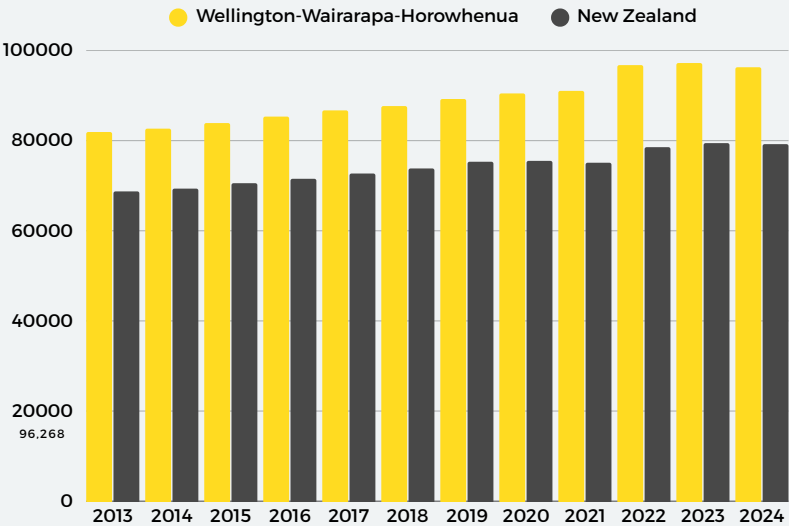
WELLINGTON REGIONAL ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

GDP PER CAPITA

The region experienced a large span for GDP per capita with Wellington city (\$163,377) the highest nationally of all TAs by a margin of over \$60,000, and Horowhenua (\$37,183) the lowest nationally.

Despite some lower GDP per capita areas within the region, the Wairarapa-Wellington-Horowhenua region maintained a competitive edge nationally with the highest regional GDP per capita.

GDP per capita is reported annually. This is due to population through national population estimates being released annually in June and regional GDP figures being released annually in March.



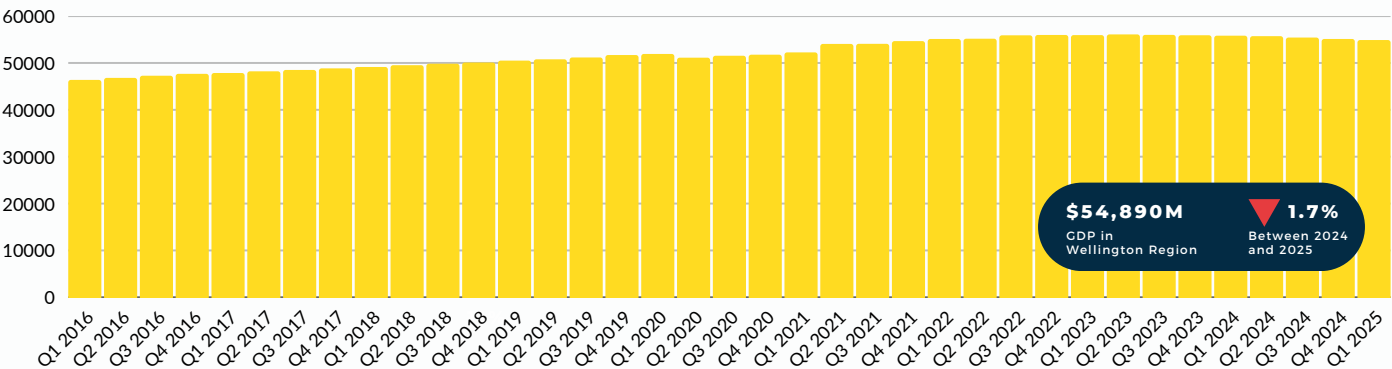
**\$96,268**  
GDP per capita in Wellington Region

**1%**  
Between 2023 and 2024

**\$79,210**  
GDP per capita in New Zealand

**0.3%**  
Between 2023 and 2024

GDP



**\$54,890M**  
GDP in Wellington Region

**1.7%**  
Between 2024 and 2025

GDP in the Wairarapa-Wellington-Horowhenua region was provisionally measured at \$54.89 billion in the first quarter of 2025, down 1.7% from March 2024 to March 2025. This compares to a national GDP decline of 1.1% over the same period.

The region has now experienced seven consecutive quarters\* of economic contraction, suggesting the downturn is being felt more sharply here. While national data for Q1 2025 shows signs of underlying economic activity starting to stabilise and improve, albeit from a low base, the regional economy has yet to reflect this shift.

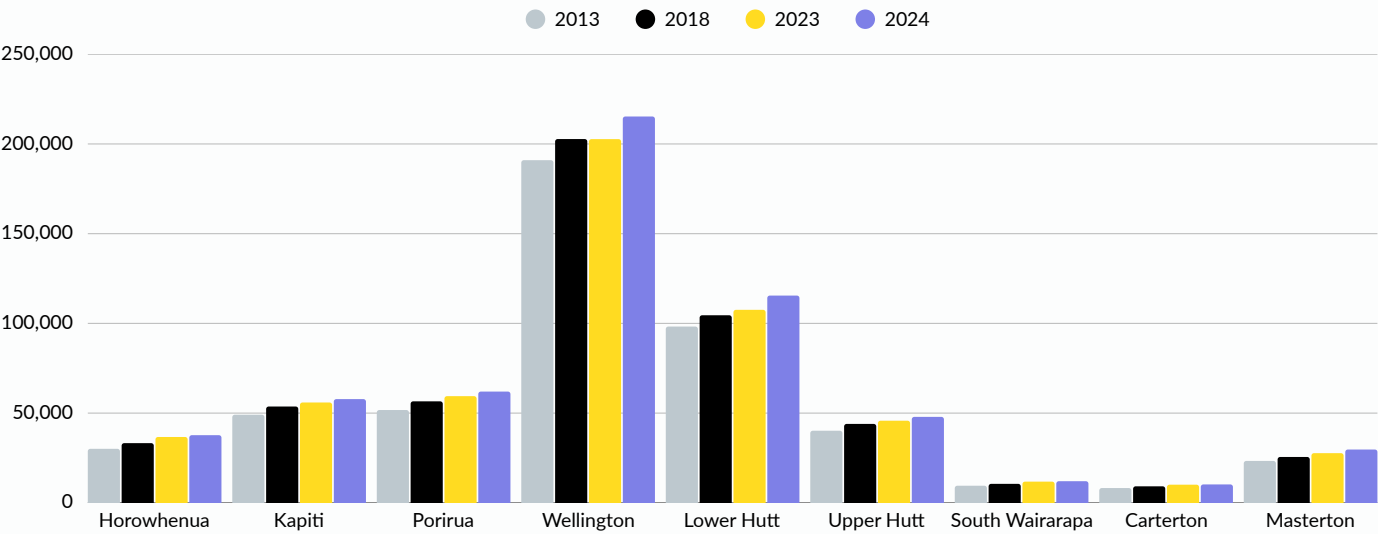
All territorial authorities in the region saw GDP contract over the year to Q1 2025. Horowhenua and Masterton proved the most resilient, with annual GDP declines of just 0.6% and 0.5% respectively, in line with national patterns where the primary sector is playing a key role in the early stages of recovery.

\*Note: GDP figures are provisional from Q2 2024 onwards and may be revised.



WELLINGTON REGIONAL ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
TERRITORIAL AUTHORITY LEVEL

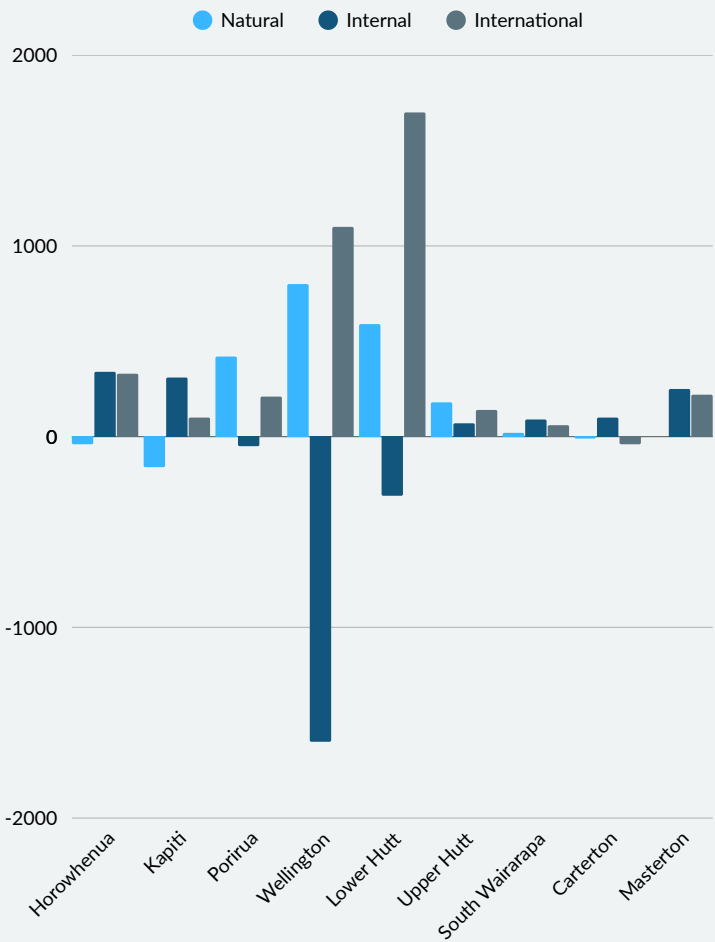
TOTAL POPULATION



Changes in an area's population are influenced by two main factors: natural increase (births minus deaths) and net migration (arrivals minus departures). A strong regional economy with good job opportunities helps retain existing residents and attract newcomers from other parts of the country and overseas. Wellington City remains home to nearly half of the region's population, but its recent population decline (last Census) is mainly due to ongoing negative internal migration, with people moving from Wellington to other parts of New Zealand. A common measure of population stability is the proportion of people living in the same residence as five years ago. In the Horowhenua-Wellington-Wairarapa region, this figure is 42 percent, slightly below the national average of 45.2 percent.

Notably, both Wellington City and Lower Hutt, our two largest population centres, experienced a net gain in international migration in the year to 2024. This growth is particularly significant given the broader national context: 2024 and 2025 have seen record numbers of New Zealand citizens departing for Australia and other international destinations. Despite these high outward flows, international arrivals to the region have more than offset departures, highlighting the region's appeal to new migrants and its ability to maintain population growth.

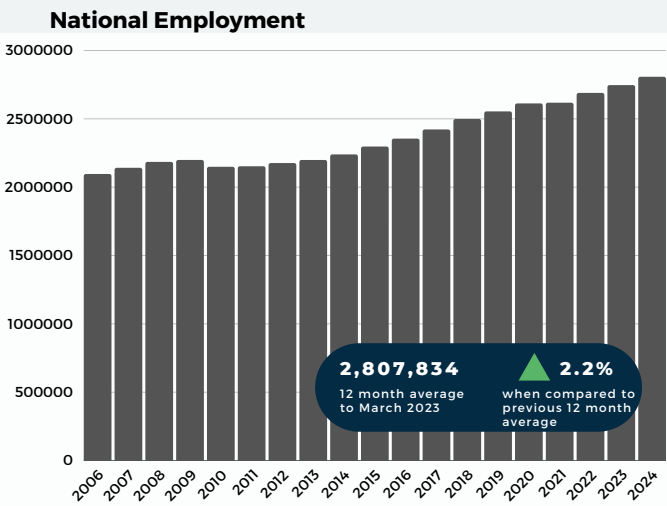
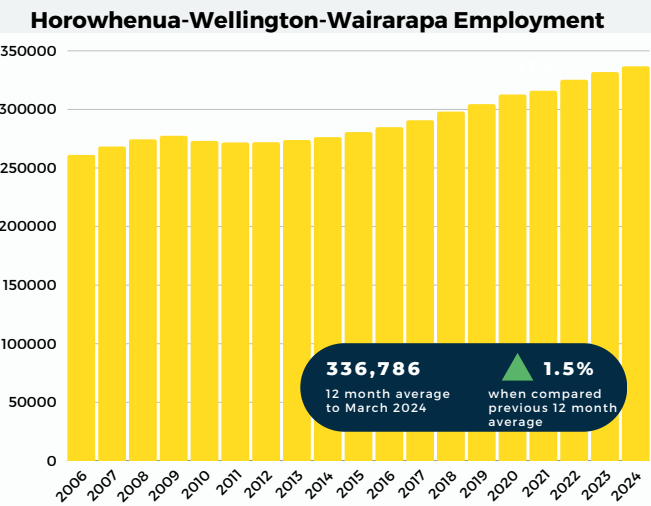
SOURCES OF GROWTH



# EMPLOYMENT SNAPSHOT

## TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

Total Employment is an annual figure that is produced through Infometrics modelling to include both filled jobs and self-employment. This means it effectively models the total employment of the region.



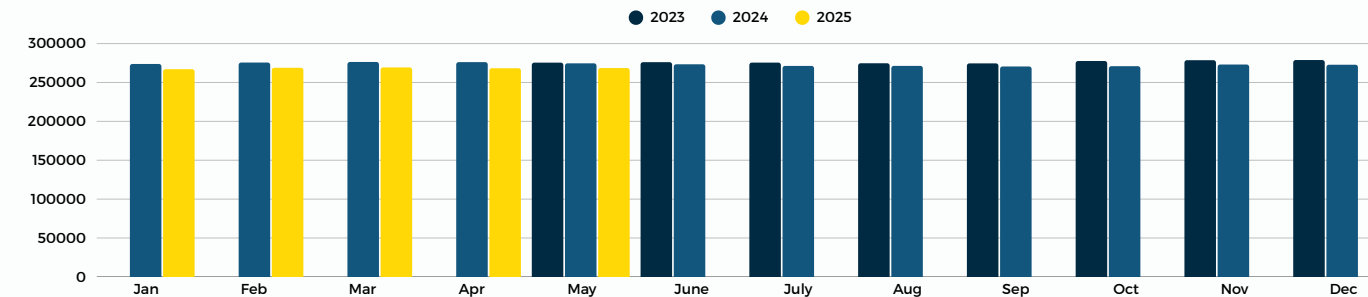
## FILLED JOBS

Stats NZ's Monthly Employment Indicators track filled jobs across the country. While they do not capture self-employment and therefore do not reflect total employment, they offer a useful, regular snapshot of employment trends.

In the Wairarapa-Wellington-Horowhenua Region, filled job numbers have declined over the past year, largely due to public sector downsizing and the impact on related support industries.

However, early signs of recovery are emerging. In a notable shift, the public administration sector, Wellington's largest employer, accounting for around 17% of the workforce - recorded its first significant monthly growth (approximately 1%) in nearly two years.

The regional job market has remained relatively flat over the past year, with fluctuating filled job numbers in Wellington City driving overall employment trends.





## WELLINGTON REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

### LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The labour force participation rate is determined by dividing the total number of individuals who are employed or seeking employment by the entire working-age population.

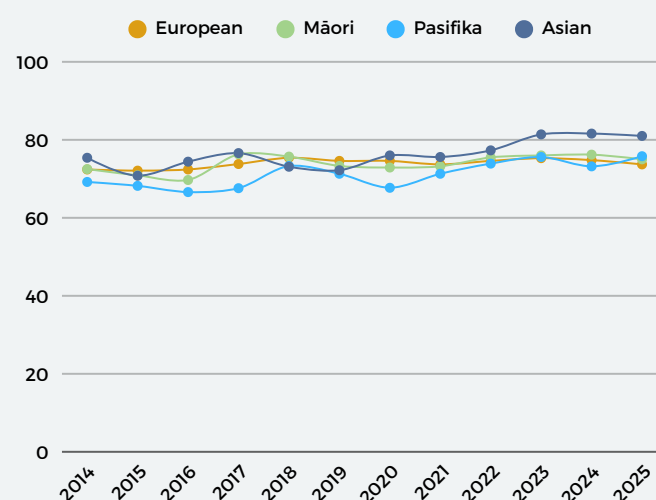
Trends over the past five years continue to show that people of Asian ethnicity have the highest labour force participation rate in the Wellington Region. They also make up the second-largest labour force, following those of European ethnicity.

Pasifika populations recorded the only increase in participation over the past year—a recovery from the previous year, when they were the only group to see a decline. This rebound places Pasifika as the group with the second-highest participation rate in the region.

Nationally, a key theme of the labour market downturn has been declining participation. As of early 2025, the national participation rate has dropped to 70.9%, its lowest level since June 2020.

This suggests growing discouragement among jobseekers, with more people entering education, training, or stepping back from active job searching.

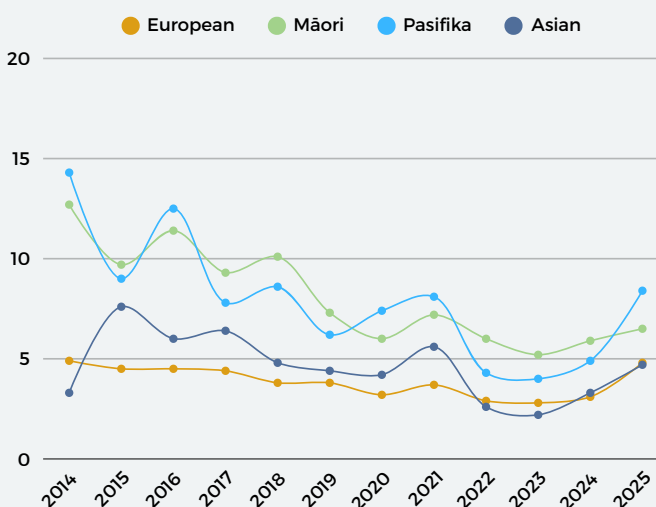
Despite this, all major ethnic groups in the Wellington Region have maintained participation rates above the national average over the past year.



### UNEMPLOYMENT

The steady year-on-year decline in unemployment rates across ethnic groups has reversed over the past year, with 2024 seeing a significant rise in unemployment across all ethnicities.

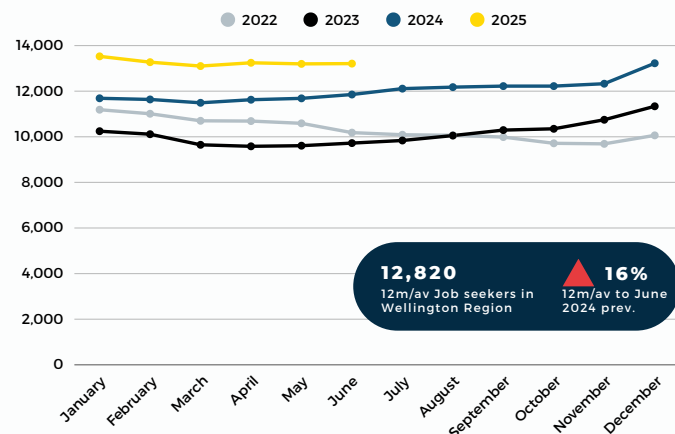
While this reflects the broader economic challenges facing the region, there are some encouraging signs. Notably, the gap between ethnic groups is narrowing, indicating more equitable labour market outcomes. Regionally, Māori, Pasifika, and Asian populations all recorded unemployment rates lower than their respective national averages. In contrast, the unemployment rate for people of European ethnicity in the region was slightly higher than the national rate for that group.



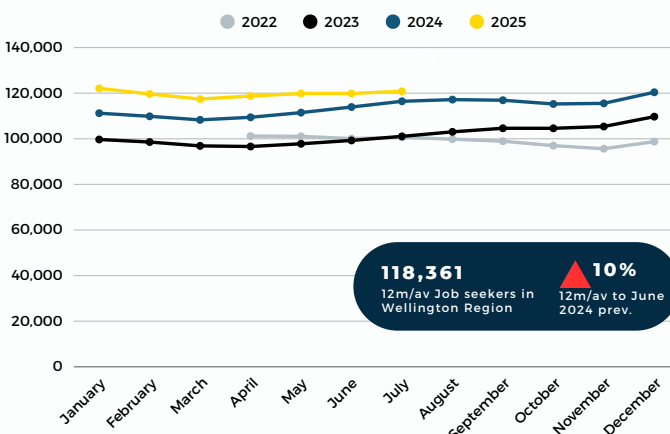
## WELLINGTON REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN TERRITORIAL AUTHORITY LEVEL

### WORK-READY JOB SEEKERS - NATIONAL

**Work Ready Jobseekers**  
Wellington MSD Region



**Work Ready Jobseekers**  
National

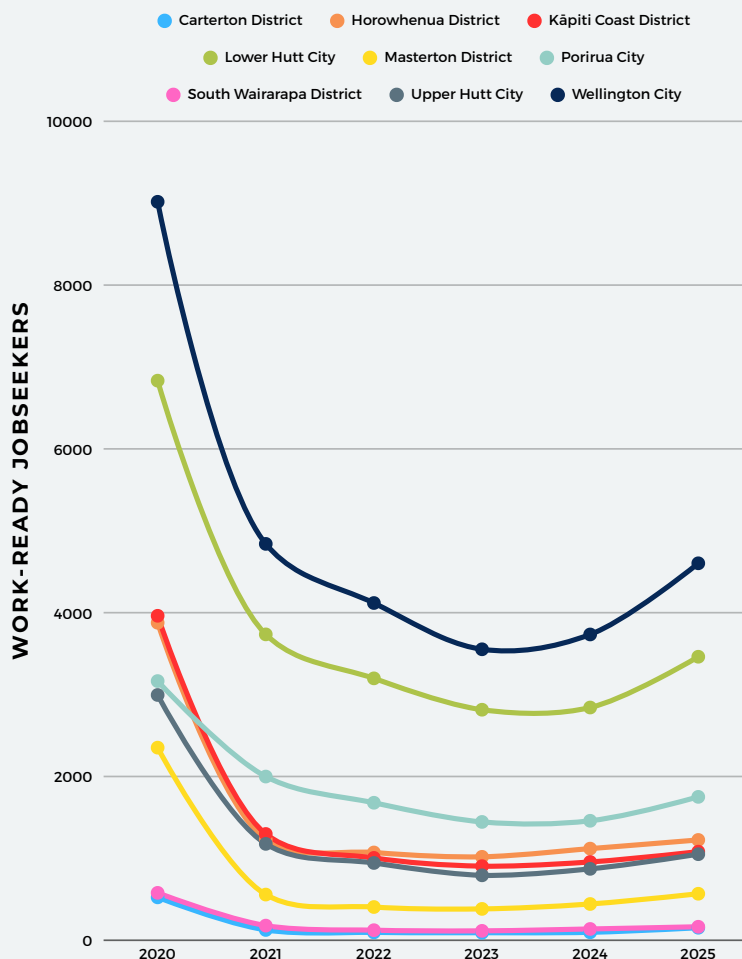


### WORK-READY JOB SEEKERS - TERRITORIAL AUTHORITY

The Work Ready Job Seeker benefit supports people actively looking for work or preparing to enter the job market, including those limited to part-time work or facing temporary health-related barriers. Over the past year, central government introduced two new non-financial sanctions under the Traffic Light System, both focused on helping people into employment. The Report Job Search sanction requires at least three job-search activities per week, while the Upskilling sanction involves five hours of employment-related training weekly, both over four weeks.

Despite the sanctions increasing barriers to access job seeker benefits, there has been a noticeable rise in job seekers across the region, with all territorial authorities reporting an increase in the 12 months to June 2025 compared to the previous year, returning to around 2021 levels.

Wellington had large falls in vacancies advertised online in most industries, occupations, and skill levels in the year to March 2025 quarter in the Jobs Online report. Wellington follows the national trend where there have now been annual falls for the last 10 quarters in the advertised vacancies.



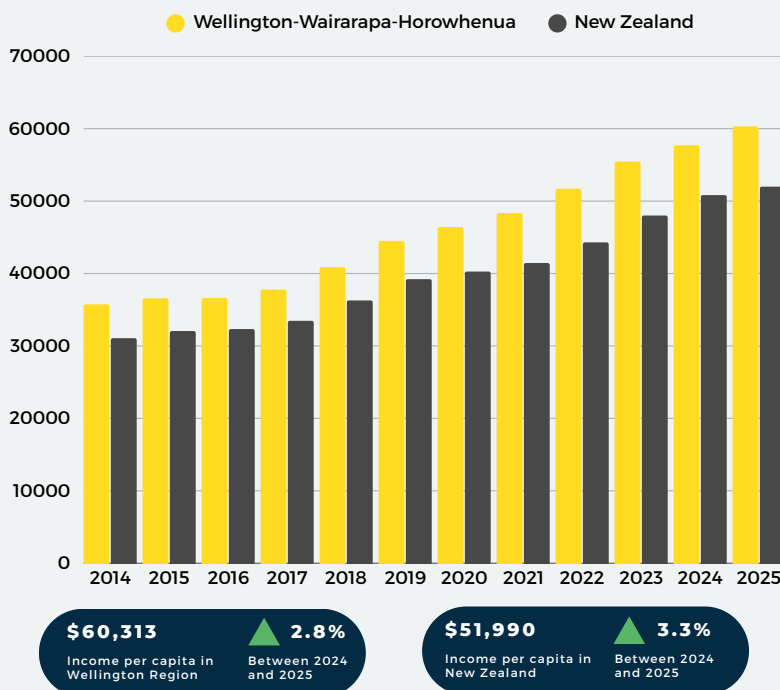


## WELLINGTON REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN TERRITORIAL AUTHORITY LEVEL

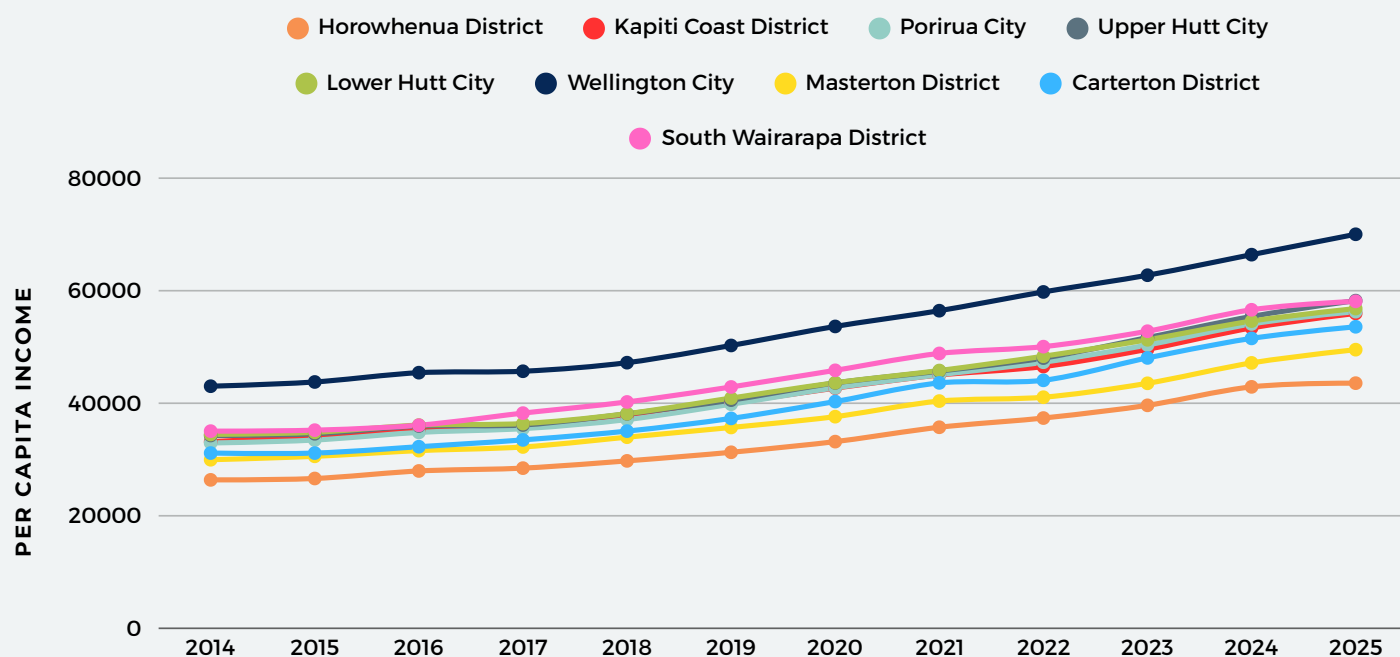
### PER CAPITA INCOME - NATIONAL COMPARISON

Per capita income is a widely used indicator of overall living standards, as it considers all sources of household income relative to household size. In the Wairarapa-Wellington-Horowhenua region, per capita income reached \$60,313 in 2025, well above the national average of \$51,990. While national income levels grew at a faster rate than the region over the past year, the longer-term trend still shows steeper growth regionally.

South Wairarapa, in particular, recorded strong annual growth of 4.9 percent. Nationally, income growth rates have often been higher in non-metro and provincial areas than in major cities, indicating a gradual convergence between regions. This trend is also playing out locally, with several parts of the region showing faster growth as they catch up with metropolitan centres.



### PER CAPITA INCOME - TERRITORIAL AUTHORITY LEVEL



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