

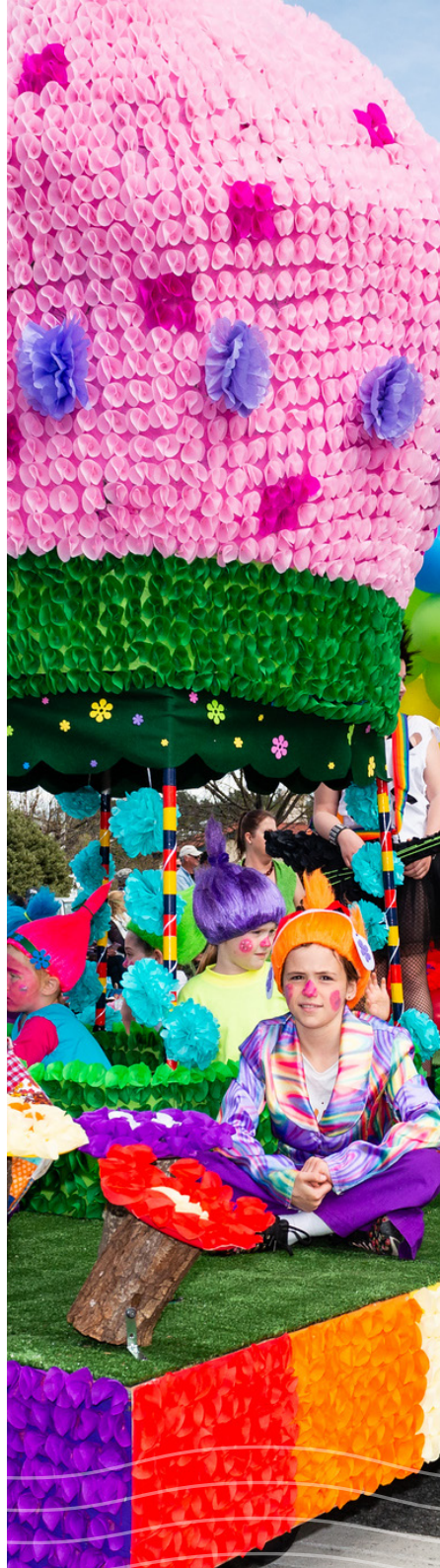


# EVENTFUL CENTRAL

A five-year Event Development Framework and  
supporting Action Plan for the period 2024–29

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# VISION

To advance Central Otago as a region that delivers a diverse range of uniquely Central Otago events.

The purpose of creating this Event Development Framework is to provide a strategic guide and focus for events in the Central Otago district. Ensuring that Central Otago is moving towards a balanced calendar of events of all types across the year, and that events support the needs of our communities and visitors.

Development of this framework has included Tourism Central Otago liaising with event organisers and groups across the region. Additionally a background report by McElrea Consulting was commissioned which analysed events over the pre-covid period and the variety of styles, types and timings. Insights gained have informed this framework alongside an understanding of the event industry within New Zealand post-covid and aligned to ambitions set out in Central Otago Destination Management Plan.

This framework and recommended action plan are a guide for Tourism Central Otago, the Central Otago District Council, and event stakeholders to enable the growth of events for the economic, social and cultural benefit of Central Otago.

The three key areas of focus are:

1. Define the role Tourism Central Otago plays to support events within the context of Central Otago District Council.
2. Provide recommendations for the growth and success of events in Central Otago
3. Ensure alignment of events within the wider context and aspirations of the Central Otago Destination Management Plan.

For the purposes of this document events are defined as:

"An occasion, activity, gathering, display or celebration of an educational, celebratory, competitive or commemorative nature that is open to locals, attracts visitors and occurs for a limited time."

"Business events are a formal meeting of people with a shared interest, typically one that takes place over multiple days, with speakers and seminars."





In the next five years, events can play a pivotal role in achieving Central Otago's economic, social and cultural ambitions. By collaboration we can set up Central Otago as a compelling destination and host of inspiring events, supported by tangible actions to generate legacy benefits, grow reputation and enhance economic impact.

This framework and action plan is an initiative of Tourism Central Otago a department within the Central Otago District Council responsible for the management and marketing of Central Otago as a visitor destination.

Through collaboration Central Otago can increasingly attract and sustain a vibrant events calendar that increases visitor nights, spend and impact within the region.

Advancing best practice in event attraction, development, and management, drawing on the learnings from other destinations and the aspirations of Central Otago's event stakeholders. In an increasingly competitive visitor market, strategic leadership and the collaboration of event stakeholders are critical elements for success.

There is a need to shape a balanced portfolio of events across the year that celebrate Central Otago's strengths, fosters local talent, activates the region's communities and delivers strong economic and social return.





## Strategic Framework for supporting events in Central Otago is to focus on:

- Existing, recurring events including community-run events and where possible and appropriate, working to support their development.
- Attract or develop Regional events that lift the profile of the Central Otago and/or contribute significantly to the economy, particularly during low and shoulder periods.
- Encouraging events to build on Central Otago's unfakable assets and competitive advantage to utilize and protect the area's landscapes and distinct seasons.

## By following this framework in five years' time Central Otago

- Will be home to at least three new signature/destination events that are distinctly Central Otago and attract significant visitation to the region.
- Will have capacity to support events with improved promotion, marketing and co-ordination.
- Events will partner and collaborate, share resources and undertake co-promotion.
- Working with Central Otago District Council to organise an event will be a seamless process, with a well-utilised event portal.
- Improve connectivity to event venues and communities throughout the region.
- Package events, accommodation, transport and activities to enhance the event attendees' overall experience as well as maximise visitor spend and impact within Central Otago.

## The role of Tourism Central Otago in events

- Event Research, data enablement & attraction.
- PR and Marketing Advice/Support.
- Manage Community Board Promotions Grants processes and facilitate opportunities from other funders (e.g Central Government).
- Event development and attraction – support event organisers to create new events, or move existing events to the district.
- Event Organisers Toolkit and Event Calendar.
- Event Resources and Infrastructure Assets - Tourism Central Otago has three gazebos, a finish gantry, timing clock and other resources that are available for events.
- Central Otago Business Events – maintain a paid membership programme to attract conference, incentive and executive retreats to the district.

## The role of Council and Community Boards in events:

- Funding - Council and Community Boards fund aspects of events throughout the district via grants.
- Venues & Facilities - Central Otago District Council provide venues, grounds, resources and designated areas.
- Regulatory and Licensing - Council has regulatory and advisory role (e.g. consents, road closures, alcohol licensing, environmental health etc.).



# Defining our Events

Events and festivals are an important part of community life and social cohesion. They bring people together from many different backgrounds, ethnicities, and demographics. They also play an important part in adding economically, socially, environmentally and culturally to our region. Events provide significant benefits for our local community and visitors alike. Events can stimulate visitation and economic growth by showcasing the destination and attracting attendees from outside the region often to stay for multiple nights.

A positive experience for a visitor at an event can prompt them to become a destination advocate, promoting an area, and potentially prompting a return visit, moving to, or investment in the region.

A review of existing events over the last five years enabled us to create a definition of the different event types that take place throughout the region, reflecting the size, scale and alignment of the event with our visitor markets and the Central Otago Destination Management Plan.





## Significant (Major) Regional Events

Events that drive high regional visitation, they are typically already established and attract over 1500 attendees or spectators from inside and outside of the region. These events bring a significant economic and/or social return to the region and drive increased visitor nights and longer length of stay. They may align with the aspirations of the Central Otago Destination Management Plan. There are opportunities to increase regional brand awareness in association with targeted media and PR activity.

## Developing Regional Events

These events see between 400 and 1500 attendees and have significant economic potential for both businesses and community. They align with the aspirations of the Central Otago Destination Management Plan and there is capacity for these events to grow and increase their impact on the region. In time these events may move into the Significant Event category. Alongside driving visitation there is opportunities to increase regional brand awareness in association with targeted media and PR activity.

## Special Interest and Sporting Events

Special Interest events target specific sectors or niche markets and bring economic and social benefits to businesses and communities in the region. They will generally have less than 400 attendees/spectators and align with Central Otago Destination Management Plan. There is room for these events to grow in size and increase their impact on the Central Otago region.

## Business Events, Incentives & Corporate Retreats

Business events, including meetings, incentive trips, conferences and exhibitions, provide an opportunity to grow the visitor economy for the Central Otago region. As high value visitors, business event attendees generally have a higher spend than leisure visitors, spending more on commercial accommodation, travel, dining and retail. Business visitors will often extend their stay or return with family or friends. They contribute to local economies and drive visitation and business during quiet periods (i.e. mid-week and shoulder seasons). Experiencing Central Otago also opens up investment opportunities and creates advocates and ambassadors for local products.

## Local Events

Local events are important to communities as they help to develop community spirit and pride to improve the lives of residents, build identity and a sense of place (local placemaking) and enhance community engagement.

## Moving and growing the impact

A key focus of addressing seasonality and productivity across the region is to encourage events to fill gaps in the existing visitor seasons (targeting off-peak). A focus on supporting and attracting events in late Autumn, Winter and Spring will increase the potential benefits to our communities and businesses.

- Encourage existing and new events to look at dates outside of the traditional visitor periods.
- Utilise Central Otago Business Events to build demand for Conferences and Incentive groups in shoulder seasons and mid-week.
- Facilitate and support collaboration between organisers to share resources and knowledge to maximise return on their investment.
- Collaborate with event organisers and community groups to identify opportunities for events to develop across the district

# Eventful Central – Action Plan

Strategic Building Block	Action	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Sustainable Funding &amp; Investment</b>	Event coordination	Investigate further the need for an events coordinator within Council or Tourism Central Otago to support the development of the plan	TCO / CODC	Immediate
<b>Exceptional New Product Development</b>	Maintain and promote Event Toolkit	Ensure event toolkit is up to date with current information to support new and existing events Increase awareness of toolkit to internal and external stakeholders	TCO / CODC	Ongoing
<b>Sustainable Funding &amp; Investment</b>	Grants process	Continue to work within council to streamline process for grants applications and investigate options for a District wide events grant. Update CODC Promotions Grant Policy to reflect goals of Event Development Framework and Central Otago Destination Management Plan	TCO / CODC	Immediate
<b>Sustainable Funding &amp; Investment</b>	Measuring event and value Impact	Develop event impact assessment templates for use by event organisers. Assessment to include economic, environmental, social and cultural elements.	TCO Council Event Organisers	Medium
<b>Next Generation Community Engagement</b>	Monitor community support for events	Include event impact/awareness question(s) in Central Otago Resident Satisfaction Survey.	TCO Council	Ongoing
<b>Inspiring Environmental Stewardship</b>	Manage the environmental footprint of events	Support events to develop sustainability action plans that reduce their waste and carbon footprint. Celebrate events sustainable and environmental practices. Encourage give-back opportunities or partnerships with local environmental initiatives	TCO Council Event Organisers	Medium term



Strategic Building Block	Action	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Exceptional New Product Development</b>	Grow Regional Events Calendar	<p>Attract and support significant and developing regional events.</p> <p>Facilitate and encourage event listings on centralotagonz website and local/national event calendars.</p> <p>Create a mechanism for event organisers to easily book and access event resources.</p>	TCO Council Event Organisers	Ongoing
<b>Authentic Branding &amp; Customer Experience</b>	Branding, Media and Publicity	Facilitate integration of destination branding into event marketing programmes and participation in destination marketing initiatives.	TCO Event Organisers	Ongoing
<b>Authentic Branding &amp; Customer Experience</b>	Events Visual Library	<p>Develop a resource of professional event drone/moving/ stills footage + content that showcase the region's competitive advantages.</p> <p>Work with partners to ensure distribution of the footage/ stills through regional and national tourism libraries.</p>	TCO Event Organisers	Ongoing
<b>Leading Cross Sector Partnerships</b>	Build business event development and marketing resources	<p>Develop market snapshot on business travel and incentive market for Central Otago.</p> <p>Develop research and case studies on existing Central Otago business events to help attract similar types of events.</p> <p>Build national profile of Central Otago as a destination for small-medium business events</p> <p>Maintain paid membership programme and develop a marketing and sales strategy, including destination profiling.</p> <p>Target key markets through tradeshow participation, sales calls and familiarisations.</p>	TCO COBE	Ongoing
<b>Leading Cross Sector Partnerships</b>	Partner with other sectors and industries for business events	<p>Identify and collaborate with target industry sectors and associations that build on the strengths of the region e.g. cycle trails, viticulture, horticulture, agriculture, energy, sciences, construction, arts and heritage.</p> <p>Develop database of business events and professional conference organisers (PCO's) and in region talent/ speakers</p>	TCO COBE Economic Development Industry Associations Event Organisers	Ongoing



Strategic Building Block	Action	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>High Impact Tourism Alliances</b>	Event packaging	Develop partnerships with tourism operators and event industry to encourage packaging and value-add options for event attendees and delegates.	TCO COBE Event Organisers Local Business	Medium
<b>Next Generation Community Engagement</b>	Schools, Regional and National Sporting Events	Support local schools, organisations and clubs to attract sporting events that utilize Central Otago's various sporting grounds and facilities. Provide guides/templates to assist bids for hosting events	TCO Council Event Organisers Schools Clubs & Organisations	Medium
<b>Exceptional New Product Development</b>	Capacity Building	Develop event organiser capacity building programme, including (but not restricted to) income diversification and human resourcing. Identify and support existing events with potential for elevation to Significant event status through pathway of growth in the capacity building program.	TCO COBE Council Event Organisers	Medium
<b>Exceptional New Product Development</b>	Leverage council and community venues and assets	Identify opportunities to promote and support better utilisation of council and community assets and infrastructure.	TCO COBE Council Event Organisers Trail Trusts	Medium
<b>Advancing Workforce and Talent Development</b>	Network Development	Stage an annual event symposium Facilitate event organiser, supplier and venue manager networking events Organise famils for event organisers to visit venues, open spaces and tourism facilities.	TCO / Council Event Organisers	Ongoing
<b>High Impact Tourism Alliances</b>	Regional Collaboration	Partner and collaborate with neighbouring RTO's and Councils, airports and airlines to develop a collaborative approach to major regional events. Identify opportunities for multi-region events that attract visitation across the district. Partner on event marketing initiatives through other partnerships; e.g. Southern Way.	TCO Neighbouring RTOS Southern Way Group Councils Airports Airlines	Ongoing



Strategic Building Block	Action	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>State of the Art Connectivity</b>	Connectivity to events	Improve transportation options to and from events. This includes transportation within Central Otago and to Central Otago.	TCO / Council Event Organisers Local Business Transport Providers	Medium
<b>State of the Art Connectivity</b>	Enhance Supporting Services	Ensure local communities are aware of coming events and opportunities to connect with, and deliver exceptional experiences. Work with event catering and hospitality services to ensure operational hours maximise the value event hours.	TCO / Council Event Organisers Local Business	Immediate