

MDC 2021-2031 Long Term Plan

Submission

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Purpose of this submission: To request funding for Co-ordination of Events in Picton.

We are asking that the Marlborough District Council re-allocates budgeted regional funding for existing events and developing new events, to a local co-ordinator in Picton, for events held in the town.

The current provider is based in Blenheim and we believe the Picton community would show increased buy-in for those investments, if a locally focused team has the opportunity to execute those events.

With the backdrop of the stunning Tōtaranui/Queen Charlotte Sound and the main entry point for tourists to the region via Picton (Interislander Ferries and Cruise Ships and Sounds Air) there is huge potential to attract and encourage longer stays for domestic visitors with events that are authentic and community-led. In the past 12 months we have seen a huge influx of domestic tourists from around the country, and accommodation providers are telling us that visitors are choosing to stay longer in Picton than ever before.

In the immediate future, with Covid-19 still affecting international tourism numbers, including this strategy in the Long Term Plan offers the perfect time to develop events that are authentic, fresh thinking and reflect the town's natural attributes and facilities.

There are many examples of new events that have been incredibly successful, and attracted residents from around the region, and visitors from out of town. In 2019 the Tuia 250 ki Tōtaranui event was of a high national standard and started a wider conversation about pre-European history not previously seen. More recently, the Film + Feast Series this summer was a great example of a fresh idea, with a creative execution. In 2018 the inaugural Matariki Festival laid the ground work for shining a cultural lens into a local festival. It was also accompanied by a school holidays Ice Rink in the middle of winter – this was innovative and by working with Queen Charlotte College students to manage the operation gave our young

people skills and experience they could take with them into adulthood, along with raising much needed funds for their Japan school trip.

We strongly believe that having community-led events in these challenging times provides a multitude of benefits:

Jobs – attracting and keeping tourists for longer is of benefit to small businesses, employment and our local economy. These events also provide local jobs to local people.

Vibrant – building on our creative resources and stimulating arts and culture within Picton increases our attractiveness to the next generation to make it a great place to live, work, and play.

Resilience – working together for a common goal, helps people to be connected to their community, express their identity and appreciate the increasingly culturally diverse town that we all love.

Skills – volunteering is a great way to develop life and work skills. We want the younger generation to have an opportunity to gain big city skills, in a small town setting.

Keeping it local – our town has a wonderful creative skill-base, and by allowing locals to manage our events, we know who the stakeholders are, and we have the connections to make every event special.

Showcasing our region – Picton is one of the most beautiful jewels in the Marlborough crown, and the perfect location to experience everything the region has to offer. Events offer a reason to stay, other attractions offer a reason to stay longer.

In conclusion, we are asking that the current funding model for Events held in Picton is revisited, and the budget that has traditionally automatically been allocated to one provider could be instead considered in the Long-Term Plan with distribution to Picton locals with the enthusiasm to create experiences that reflect our town and our culture.