



07 May 2022

**MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL ANNUAL PLAN SUBMISSION 2022/2023**

**To provide a one-time provision in the budget of \$120,000 to bridge the shortfall of partnership support**

The effects for the pandemic are long reaching and have affected Marlborough and Destination Marlborough a myriad of ways. It has changed the way visitors experience our region. It has put all organisations in a state of constant flux, requiring businesses to react and adapt quickly as the tourism landscape changes. It has broadened Destination Marlborough focus from predominantly marketing and promotion, to include business support, capability building and destination management.

It is important to reiterate the vulnerability of the sector as one that is highly exposed to the impacts of the pandemic. While Destination Marlborough works in the recovery phase it is operating in an environment where our industry is still reeling from the effects of two years of border closures.

MBIE STAPP funding, \$1.4 million over two years, assisted in supporting our industry. STAPP funding has enabled Destination Marlborough to undertake increased domestic marketing, product development and importantly the creation and implementation of the regions Destination Management Plan. This funding concludes in December 2021, mid-way through the financial year, with no indication of extension.

Prior to COVID, the Marlborough industry supported Destination Marlborough with cash and in-kind partnerships. These partnerships doubled the annual MDC funding and supported ongoing hosting media and travel trade in region, domestic marketing, and international travel to ensure Marlborough's inclusion in all parts of the travel trade distribution channel. As our industry rightly focuses on keeping operational their discretionary marketing budget has diminished and partnership contributions to Destination Marlborough are down 89% from \$1.9million in 2019/2020 to \$200,000 YTD 2021/2022.

The pandemic has a long tail, and it will take time for businesses to recover to be able to support regional promotion activity again. Destination Marlborough will use the next year to investigate and secure additional funding channels and partnerships for both Domestic and International marketing. In the interim, Destination Marlborough wishes to recommend the following to Councillors as they consider the 2022-23 Annual Plan,

**To provide a one-time provision in the budget of \$120,000 to bridge the shortfall of industry partnership support to resource international travel trade promotion, and ongoing destination marketing and management, while Marlborough's visitor industry recovers.**

Activity summary as follows:

3. Support in market offshore travel trade promotion in partnership with Tourism New Zealand – \$30,000
4. Support ongoing implementation of the Destination Management Plan and first four key priorities – \$50,000
  - a. Continuing the journey to further develop meaningful iwi partnerships and incorporation of Te Ao Māori based land stewardship practices when applied to visitor experiences
  - b. Wine visitor strategy – collaboration with Wine Marlborough to enhance and improve the visitor experience

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**Destination Marlborough**

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- c. Cycle visitor strategy – linking and developing existing cycleway opportunities throughout Marlborough
- d. Cruise management strategy – preparing for the return of cruise, reduction of impact and fair regional dispersal of the cruise opportunity
- 5. Support ongoing domestic promotion of Marlborough in a highly competitive marketplace - \$40,000

In addition, the Destination Marlborough Trustees welcome the opportunity to contribute to future discussions to progress Destination Management objectives and the alignment of Marlborough's economic development functions to get maximum value and return for the region's investment.

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Submitted on behalf of the Trustees of Destination Marlborough, the not-for-profit trust established by Marlborough District Council to market the region as a visitor destination.

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