MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

AIDE MEMOIRE

Information on Government's major events involvement

Date:	1 May 2025	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0013006

Information for Minister(s)
Hon James Meager **Minister for the South Island**

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Kylie Hawker-Green	Manager, Major Events	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Lisa Gibson	Principal Advisor, Major Events	Privacy of natural persons	

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Minister's office to complete:

- ☐ Approved
- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Seen
- ☐ See Minister's Notes
- ☐ Declined
- ☐ Needs change
- ☐ Overtaken by Events
- ☐ Withdrawn

Comments

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Date:	1 May 2025	**Priority:**	Medium
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Purpose

To provide you with information on Government’s major events involvement to support South Island-based stakeholder engagements where relevant.

KHawker

Kylie Hawker-Green
Manager, Major Events
Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE

01 / 05 / 2025

Government’s involvement in Major Events

1. Major events generate important benefits for New Zealand. Government is involved in major events to secure or maximise targeted economic, social and cultural benefits that would be lost or reduced without intervention. Government defines a major event as:

   An event that is, or has the potential to be, internationally significant by which it generates international interest, profile, or visitation from outside New Zealand; offers an element or elements that are uniquely New Zealand; has evidence of international interest; and profiles New Zealand on an international platform.

   Examples of major events include New Zealand Sail Grand Prix, 2024 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championships and the 13th World Choir Games 2024.

2. A Major Events Strategy (the Strategy) guide’s government’s involvement in events. A summary of the Strategy is attached at **Annex One** and your office has been provided with the full document. The Strategy was updated in September 2024 to align direction with the Government’s key priorities, including economic growth. Major events generate direct economic outcomes through the attraction of international visitors and indirect outcomes using event platforms to internationally profile New Zealand as a visitor and business destination to incentivise future travel.

3. The Major Events Fund (MEF) supports the implementation of the Strategy. It is a $66.36 million (ex-servicing costs) fund managed in five-year multi-year appropriations (MYA). The Strategy includes five priorities which guide MEF investments: secure economic benefits, drive international exposure, build national pride, enhance our reputation and advance government priorities.

4. Events seeking MEF investment must be a sport, arts or cultural event delivered in New Zealand, aligned to one of three investment focus areas:

   a. Events that deliver net national economic benefits to New Zealand (primarily through the direct attraction of international visitors and/or direct event delivery spend).

   b. Sports major events that contribute to high performance outcomes, whilst aligning with the Sport NZ strategy.

   c. Events that create opportunities to profile and celebrate New Zealand’s national identity and cultures, our creative talent, ingenuity, diversity and adventurous spirit.

5. Key performance indicators (KPIs) for individual events and for the MEF portfolio measure outcomes aligned to the Strategy’s five priorities. Outcomes are reported to the Major Events Ministers Group (MEMG)[1] every six months.

New Zealand Major Events – key functions

6. New Zealand Major Events (NZME) at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is Government’s lead agency for major events across prospecting, investment and ‘whole of Government’ coordination and facilitation functions. NZME sits in the Tourism and Hospitality branch and reports to the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality. The team’s role includes the following key functions:

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[1] The MEMG comprises of the Ministers for/of: Tourism and Hospitality (Chair), Sport and Recreation, Arts, Culture and Heritage, Trade, Economic Growth and Foreign Affairs.

Providing Ministerial advice on event alignment with government objectives

7. NZME provides strategic advice to Ministers on Major Events and the implementation of the Strategy. The Minister for Tourism and Hospitality has responsibility for the MEF and makes all investment decisions. NZME conducts robust due diligence assessments on MEF applications and provides the Minister with investment advice. This advice includes an assessment of an event's alignment with MEF criteria, a Cost Benefit Analysis of the investment proposition and government agency feedback.

8. The Minister for Tourism and Hospitality may seek feedback from Ministerial colleagues to inform investment decisions where relevant. As such, she may seek your views on proposals with significance for the South Island.

Partnering with stakeholders to attract, deliver and leverage major events

NZME prospects for new major events content

9. NZME identifies internationally significant major events that deliver targeted outcomes to programme a consistent pipeline of content for New Zealand. This involves partnering with key stakeholders to identify, assess opportunities and bid for viable event propositions. Prospecting activity to secure new content is conducted under a 'portfolio by design' approach which considers factors including seasonal and regional distribution and balance of content (sports, arts, codes and genres). The three MEF investment focus areas guide major event prospect identification.

Strategic clusters

10. The clustering of aligned event content can amplify the profile of New Zealand and the individual events. Benefits can be accumulated across the events, increasing benefits and outcomes beyond what can be secured through individual events[2].

11. Commercial Information, Confidential advice to Government

New Zealand's event hosting reputation

12. Despite some factors such as travel costs, climate impacts, infrastructure constraints and limited funding (compared to other countries), New Zealand has built a strong global reputation as an exceptional international event host.

13. Building and maintaining strong relationships with international event rights holders, owners and influential stakeholders is a critical part of the prospecting function. This requires offshore engagement to ensure connections remain strong, and that decision makers remain aware of New Zealand's capacity and capability to host international major events.

Mega events

14. Mega events like the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup and 36^{th} America's Cup are the largest and most complex events to host. They can deliver significant targeted outcomes with long-

[2] This was most recently demonstrated through New Zealand's hosting of four major women's events which saw New Zealand recognised as a capable host of women's events and brought greater attention to New Zealand and to the individual events.

lasting national impacts as they can catalyse broader change, infrastructure development and wider benefits.

15. Mega events, seeking investment over $10 million are funded outside of the MEF through a separate Cabinet process. Robust analysis, including event feasibility studies and business cases, inform this process. Under the Strategy, mega events are targeted approximately every five years. Mega event acquisition requires a long lead time[3].

MEF events are leveraged to maximise and secure benefits

16. NZME leads and facilitates cross-government leverage and legacy programmes to secure benefits that align with government objectives. Bespoke leverage and legacy plans shape specialised ancillary activity around events (eg a related sector symposium or a sport activation opportunity) or initiatives to extend direct event benefits (eg promoting pre- and post-event tour packages to encourage international visitors to extend their stay). These programmes involve event organisers, central and local government representatives.

Regional engagement

17. NZME meets with local government event officials from several New Zealand centres on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. This includes ChristchurchNZ, Queenstown Lakes District Council and Dunedin City Council. Dunedin and Queenstown are reviewing and updating their event strategies. NZME has provided feedback on alignment to Government's Major Events Strategy.

18. ChristchurchNZ has a close working relationship with NZME and has attended international event conferences as part of the New Zealand delegation, promoting Christchurch and prospecting for content alongside NZME and Sport NZ officials.

Linking the events sector with the operational and leverage arms of government

19. NZME works collaboratively with a range of agencies involved in the operational delivery of events including Immigration New Zealand, New Zealand Customs, New Zealand Police, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (for matters of national security) and the New Zealand Transport Agency to ensure a coordinated and efficient government approach to support the successful delivery of major events.

20. Coordination across government agencies is critical to monitor and manage Crown risk. NZME sits on the Major Events Security Committee and the Major Events Border Steering Group and leads an all-of-government risk and coordination committee with oversight of events within the MEF portfolio.

Major Events Management Act 2007 (MEMA)

21. The MEMA provides certain protections for events that are declared to be 'major events' under the Act to prevent unauthorised commercial exploitation at the expense of either a major event organiser or sponsor (eg through ambush marketing) to ensure the smooth running of the event.

22. Events must apply for MEMA protections. The Governor-General may declare an event to be a major event under the Act on the recommendation of the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality following consultation with the Commerce and Sport and Recreation Ministers.

[3] NZME is currently focusing on events that would be delivered in 2030 and beyond.

Managing event investments to secure and maximise outcomes for government

Major Events Fund

23. The current MYA has a balance Confidential advice to Government There are several applications in process which will reduce these balances if investment is approved.

24. There is increasing demand on the MEF as event delivery costs are rising domestically and globally. This is being compounded by events facing financial pressures in the current economic climate and local government event funding pressures. These factors are leading applicants to seek increased investment from the MEF.

MEF portfolio and pipeline

25. Events collectively deliver a sustained and diverse stream of benefits when managed in a portfolio. The MEF portfolio includes one-off and recurring events. Recurring events (like Crankworx Rotorua, New Zealand Sail Grand Prix, ITM Taupō Super400), function as ‘anchor’ events delivering national benefits and providing consistency and surety for the sector (and connected sectors such as hospitality and tourism) between one-off events. MEF portfolio and pipeline summaries are attached at **Annex Two**. The MEF supports a range of South Island-based events (see **Annex Three**).

South Island based event outcomes

26. As noted, NZME use a CBA tool to forecast (pre-event) and measure (post event) major event outcomes. The CBA tool includes a twenty per-cent loading on Government investment to account for deadweight loss as per Treasury guidelines. Recent events that have generated strong impacts for the South Island include:

Event	Investment (NZD million)	International visitors	International visitor spend (NZD million)	International visitor nights	Net benefit (NZD million)	Benefit Cost Ratio
FIFA Womens World Cup 2023*	55.00 (national figure)	Only national figures available			6.8	1.25
New Zealand Open 2024	0.60	704	1.50	4,251	1.27**	n/a
Sail Grand Prix 2024	1.35	Commercial Information				
Winter Games New Zealand 2024	1.50					

* A mega-event supported through a dedicated appropriation (not through the Major Events Fund. Co-hosted event with Australia. Dunedin did not publish a regional level event evaluation. Relevant and available information from a national evaluation is captured in this table. The Benefit-Cost-Ratio has been calculated using the costs incurred for Dunedin against the benefits returned (every $1 of cost incurred by Dunedin returned a benefit of $1.25 – a net benefit of $0.25 per dollar).
** Economic Impact Assessment figure provided by the applicant. This uses a different methodology to CBA.

Matters for your awareness

Confidential advice to Government

27. Confidential advice to Government

28. Confidential advice to Government

29. Confidential advice to Government

One New Zealand Stadium Te Kaha

30. The availability of fit-for-purpose and technically compliant venues with sufficient seating capacities are required to secure a range of international events content. One NZ Stadium Te Kaha is New Zealand’s newest venue and one we have started to promote as a national asset. Alongside Forsyth Barr Stadium in Dunedin, Commercial Information

Major Events and South Island portfolio connections

Potential major events involvement

31. As noted, the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality may seek your views on major event proposals with significance for the South Island. You may also receive invitations to attend South Island based MEF-supported events.

32. If stakeholders raise new international major event opportunities during engagements, you may wish to direct them to our website at www.majorevents.govt.nz for information.

How NZME can support you

33. NZME will provide you with updates on major event matters with South Island significance via your Fortnightly Report. Additionally, we can provide you with Major Events information when required including information to support your attendance at any MEF events.

Annexes

Annex One: Major Events Strategy summary Annex One withheld in full - Confidential advice to Government

Annex Two: Major Events Fund Pipeline and Portfolio by Focus Areas 2025-2037

Annex Three: South Island-based MEF events

Annex One: Major Events Strategy summary

Ratified by the Major Events Ministers Group in July 2024, and new criteria came into effect from 1 September 2024.

(Attached as separate A3)

Annex Two: Major Events Fund Pipeline and Portfolio by Focus Areas 2025-2037

Pipeline (Attached as separate A3).

Portfolio by Focus Area and thematic cluster across 2025-2037

Cluster	Focus Area 1: Economic	Focus Area 2: Sport	Focus Area 3: National identity, creativity, ingenuity, diversity and adventurous spirit
Mega	Commercial Information	Commercial Information	Commercial Information
Women & girls in sport	Inaugural Women's British and Irish Lions Commercial Information	Women’s Amateur Asia-Pacific Championship (golf) Commercial Information	
Creative / innovation / adrenaline	NZ Sail Grand Prix The Ocean Race ITM Taupō Super400 (Supercars) Commercial Information	Natural Selection Tour Bike NZ Commercial Information	World Dance Crew Champs Commercial Information
Dual gender / inclusive	Commercial Information	Commercial Information	Crankworx Rotorua Crankworx Summer Series Commercial Information

		Commercial Information	
Other	Commercial Information	NZ Open (golf) Commercial Information	Creative and Cultural Incubator events (x8) Commercial Information

KEY:

Current portfolio	Event is secured for NZ and MEF funding is confirmed.
Active work in progress	Detailed leads, prospect work, current bids and or MEF EOIs and Applications in process.
Leads and prospects	Identified events on the pipeline. Yet to commence detailed work.

Annex Three: South Island-based MEF events

Event	Location	Date	MEF investment	Rationale for investment	Notes
MEF portfolio events					
Natural Selection Tour – Bike New Zealand (mountain bike)	Queenstown	7–16 February 2025	$500,000	International profiling; opportunity to Free and frank opinions [redacted]	Free and frank opinions [redacted]
New Zealand Open (golf)	Queenstown	Late Feb–early March dates 2025–2027	$1,800,000 ($600,000 per annum)	Economic benefit; international profiling and a high-performance pathway for amateurs and professionals. Trade and diplomacy opportunities.	Multi-year investment. Free and frank opinions [redacted]
Crankworx Summer Series (mountain bike)	Christchurch	Feb–March 2024–2027	$3,000,000 ($750,000 per annum)	Economic benefit (extending international visitor stay leading into Rotorua event), regional dispersal, sports participation.	Multi-year investment. Feeder event to core Rotorua Crankworx event.
MEF – Creative and Cultural Incubator* events					
New Zealand International Science Festival 2025	Dunedin	28 June–6 July 2025	$100,000 Con fide [redacted]	To grow the event to become more nationally significant as a pathway to becoming internationally significant.	

			Confidential advice t [redacted]		
World Buskers Festival	Christchurch	24 January–4 February 2025	$100,000 Con fide [redacted]	To develop management talent, to create a more culturally focused team and to set up mentor support.	
MEF funding approved, event to be secured – confidential					
Commercial Information, Confidential advice to Government [redacted]					
MEF application in process (for decision) – confidential					
Commercial Information, Confidential advice to Government [redacted]					
Prospective events (to be confirmed)					

Commercial Information, Confidential advice to Government					
Multi-city events with potential for South Island based content					
Women’s British and Irish Lions Series 2027	Multi-city – venues TBC	6 July–2 August	$3.9 million	Economic benefit through international visitation; international profiling; high performance sport; female sports participation.	Event confirmed and investment approved.
Negotiations					

Negotiations					

* Events supported through the Creative and Cultural Events Incubator, a seed and development initiative introduced in 2020 and closed in 2024. The Incubator ringfenced MEF monies to support homegrown creative and cultural events to grow in scale and add balance to the predominantly sports heavy MEF portfolio. The Creative and Cultural Events Incubator was closed to new applicants in 2024 as the programme generated a very low success rate.

Purpose and Vision

The New Zealand Government invests in major events to achieve specific outcomes that align with government priorities.

Investments are made through the Major Events Fund, a contestable $58 million five-year fund.

Our vision is that New Zealand is internationally recognised as a desirable major events destination, delivering world-class events that generate economic and social outcomes, enhance our global reputation, and enrich the lives of New Zealanders.

www.majorevents.govt.nz

Major event priorities

The government invests in major events that generate significant immediate and long-term benefits that align with wider government objectives. Five priorities guide Major Events Fund investments.

PRIORITY ONE: Securing economic benefits

By securing economic benefits from the major events we invest in, we will help to build a stronger, more productive economy and support investment and exports.

PRIORITY TWO: Driving international exposure

By utilising major events to drive exposure of New Zealand in key markets, our investments will provide opportunities to enhance New Zealand's international brand, advance diplomatic interests, and promote New Zealand as a visitor destination, place to do business, and invest.

PRIORITY THREE: Building national pride

Our major events will create vibrancy, enhance social cohesion and connectedness, and celebrate our unique identity to build national pride.

PRIORITY FOUR: Enhancing our reputation

Our reputation as an exceptional international major events host will be enhanced globally by consistently presenting world class events, and the domestic events sector will be vibrant with a strong pipeline of future events.

PRIORITY FIVE: Advancing government priorities

By realising direct event, and leverage and legacy opportunities, our major events will advance numerous government priority areas, including the sport and recreation and arts and culture strategies.

Evaluation

We will use qualitative and quantitative measures to evaluate performance. This will include cost-benefit analysis (e.g., the net economic return for every dollar spent), international visitor activity, broadcast and media exposure in key markets, the realisation of trade and diplomacy opportunities, sentiment, reputation and engagement monitoring, progress towards cross-portfolio government objectives and the status of the Major Events Fund portfolio.

Leverage and Legacy

Leverage and legacy are the broader and longer-lasting national and local benefits that can be realised through an event.

Events receiving Major Event Fund investment must develop leverage and legacy plans that identify opportunities and the actions required to realise the benefits government seeks. Events must establish a leverage and legacy committee with Crown partners where there is strategic alignment and benefit potential.

Co-funding is available to support leverage and legacy activities led by Crown partners. This must be for a project or programme outside the agency's business-as-usual activity, and must align with the leverage and legacy plan for the event.

Investment criteria

To be eligible for Major Events Fund investment, an event must:

- Be a major event by government's definition:

  Government defines a major event as an event that is, or has the potential to be, internationally significant by which it generates international interest or visitation from outside New Zealand, profiles New Zealand on an international platform and offers elements that are uniquely New Zealand.

- Be a sports, arts or cultural event delivered onshore.
- Meet baseline application requirements listed on www.majorevents.govt.nz.

www.majorevents.govt.nz

Investment criteria

To be prioritised for investment, an event must align with one of three investment focus areas:

INVESTMENT FOCUS AREA ONE: Events must deliver net national economic benefits.

Criteria:

- Generate a net economic benefit to New Zealand (primarily through the direct attraction of international visitors and/or direct event delivery spend).
- Provide an opportunity to promote Brand New Zealand, telling New Zealand's story in key international markets, specifically priority markets as identified by Tourism New Zealand and New Zealand Trade and Enterprise.
- Provide business, sector, diplomatic and trade opportunities, specifically in priority areas identified by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

INVESTMENT FOCUS AREA TWO: Sports major events must contribute to high-performance outcomes, whilst aligning with Sport NZ's strategy.

Criteria:

- Align with High Performance Sport New Zealand strategic priorities and investments
- Feature world-ranked athletes and athletes identified as part of the high-performance pathway, or provide local athletes with greater and more accessible opportunities for international competition.
- Represent regionally (i.e., Asia), or globally significant competitions, or support pathways to pinnacle global events.
- Provide opportunities to support increased participation by those populations outlined in Sport New Zealand's strategy priorities (as reflected in the Sport New Zealand Strategic Plan 2024-2028).

INVESTMENT FOCUS AREA THREE: Events must create opportunities to profile and celebrate New Zealand's national identity and cultures, our creative talent, ingenuity, diversity, and adventurous spirit.

Criteria:

- Establish or develop a home-grown event where the event and/or the intellectual property can be retained for New Zealand.
- Increase the international profile of and engagement with New Zealand through world-class arts or culture aligned to the Government's overarching arts, culture, and heritage priorities for our creative sectors.
- Showcase our innovative spirit through urban-based, nature-based, or adrenaline-based events that speak to our adventurous and pioneering values.

Confidential advice to Government

Major event pipeline 2025-2037

NEW ZEALAND MAJOR EVENTS

KEY:

Confirmed:	Focus Area 1	Focus Area 2	Focus Area 3	*Incubator*
Prospective:	Focus Area 1	Focus Area 2	Focus Area 3	Games cycle
Classification:	Anchor	*Homegrown*	Targeted	Mega

* Potential investment unknown

Date: As at April 2025

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
24		Glasgow Comm Games 2026	Commercial Information	LA Olympics 2028	
23					
23		Commercial Information			
22					
21					
20					
19					
18					
17					
16	NZ Open (golf)				Commercial Information
15	*Global Youth Sevens*				
14	Natural Selection Tour Bike NZ			Commercial Information	
13	*Pasifika Festival*	ITM Super440 (Supercars)	ITM Super440 (Supercars)		
12	*Kia Mau Festival*	Commercial Information			
11	*Kupu Māori Writers Festival*				
10	*Doc Edge Life Unscripted*	*Doc Edge Life Unscripted*	Commercial Information		
9	*Golden Shears*	*Golden Shears*	Commercial Information		
8	*World Buskers Festival*	*World Buskers Festival*	*World Buskers Festival*		
7	*ASB Polyfest*	*ASB Polyfest*	*ASB Polyfest*		
6	*International Science Festival*	*International Science Festival*	*International Science Festival*		
5	ITM Taupō Super400 (Supercars)	Women's Amateur Asia Pac. Golf	The Ocean Race		
4	*World Dance Crew Champs*	NZ Open (golf)	NZ Open (golf)		
3	NZ Sail Grand Prix	NZ Sail Grand Prix	Women's British & Irish Lions Series		
2	Crankworx Summer Series	Crankworx Summer Series	Crankworx Summer Series		
1	Crankworx Rotorua	Crankworx Rotorua	Crankworx Rotorua	ICC Men's T20 World Cup*	Men's British Irish Lions Series*
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029

Note: The prospective events outlined above represent a long list of options known to be available for consideration.

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NEW ZEALAND MAJOR EVENTS

Major event pipeline 2025-2037

KEY:

Confirmed:	Focus Area 1	Focus Area 2	Focus Area 3	To note for NZ
Prospective:	Focus Area 1	Focus Area 2	Focus Area 3	Games cycle
Classification:	Anchor	*Homegrown*	Targeted	Mega

* Potential investment unknown

Date: As at April 2025

2030 | 2031 | 2032 | 2033 | 2034

Comm Games 2030 TBC

Brisbane Olympics 2032

Comm Games 2034 TBC

Commercial Information

11
10
9

Commercial Information

8
7
6
5
4

Commercial Information

3

Commercial Information

2
1

2030 | 2031 | 2032 | 2033 | 2034

2035 | 2036 | 2037

5
4 Commercial Information | Olympics 2036 TBC
3

Commercial Information

2
1

2035 | 2036 | 2037

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