



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Louise Upston	Portfolio	Tourism and Hospitality
Title of Cabinet paper	Major Events and Tourism Package	Date to be published	7 April 2026

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
September 2025	Major Events and Tourism Package	Office of Minister for Tourism and Hospitality
8 September 2025	Major Events and Tourism Package CAB-25-MIN-0307 Minute	Cabinet Office
2 September 2025	BRIEFING-REQ-0020429: Implementing a Major Events and Tourism Investment Package	MBIE

Information redacted

YES / NO (please select)

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Some information has been withheld for the reasons of:

- Confidential advice to Government
- Commercial information

Budget-sensitive

Office of the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality

Cabinet

Major events and tourism package

Proposal

- 1 This paper proposes additional support for New Zealand's tourism sector, through a package that builds on the *Tourism Growth Roadmap* to further position New Zealand as an events and tourism destination and encourage international visitors to see more of our country.

Relation to government priorities

- 2 Growing the economy is this Government's priority. The proposals in this paper complement our *Going for Growth* plan by recognising the role that the Government can play in the coming months to boost activity and sentiment in the wake of a more gradual economic recovery, consistent with our fiscal objectives.

Tourism and major events are a key part of our economy

- 3 Tourism is critical to New Zealand's economic growth as our second largest export, directly contributing \$17 billion to GDP and just under 200,000 jobs. Visitors to New Zealand spend \$2,764 per trip (median) giving a real boost to our travel, retail, hospitality and tourism businesses. While our international visitor arrivals and tourism expenditure initially saw strong recovery following the reopening of our borders, growth has since slowed.
- 4 For this reason, I have already increased investment to boost demand for travel to New Zealand via the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy. This was part of the *Tourism Growth Roadmap* I published earlier this year which set a clear goal to return to 2019 international visitor arrivals by 2026. However, there is more we can do to give Kiwis a chance to see stars at home, encourage international visitors to see more of our country, and deliver economic gains.

Attracting new events will energise our hospitality and events industry

- 5 Events are a key ingredient to the success of our hospitality sector. It's been calculated that for every dollar spent on live performance \$3.20 is returned in benefits to the wider community¹. To capitalise on this, we need a robust pipeline of events, with regular smaller events in our regions, less frequent

¹ *Measuring and Articulating the Value of Live Performance in Aotearoa*. Massey University (2024)

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large events hosted at larger venues around the country and some large-scale mega-events that generate significant economic activity in our cities.

- 6 In addition to our current investment in Major Events, I've been building a pipeline of New Zealand events. Earlier this year I announced a \$5 million investment into the *Regional Events Promotion Fund* to help drive attendance at more than 250 regional events, providing a solid geographic spread. These are the small pebbles of our events industry.
- 7 Next are the small rocks that will drive attendance at a range of existing events, bolstering and sustaining our events industry while also attracting some larger international opportunities. I intend to make a further \$10 million investment which will be funded from existing baselines and pre-committed funding from the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy to establish a *One-off Events Boost*. This will be run as a contestable fund, opening in September, with announcements about successful events from October.
- 8 The final piece, or big rocks, are attracting mega-events; huge, exciting international music, cultural and sporting events that will boost our local industry and attract visitors from around the world. Live performance-motivated expenditure contributes 1.4 per cent to GDP. For example, Coldplay is estimated to have generated 160,000 ticket sales (with 50 per cent from outside the region) boosting Auckland's GDP by \$17.6 million. I propose that the *Events Attraction Package* will utilise the expertise of a group of eminent New Zealanders to secure a package of up to \$40 million large-scale events, focussing on what can be delivered in 2026
- 9 A total of \$15 million of this investment will be brought forward from future allocations of the tourism portion of the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy in the next two financial years.
- 10 Events of all sizes are delivered by locals, drive economic activity and create jobs in our communities. Local Government needs to have some skin in the game, to help ensure each event reaches its potential. Normally *Major Events* require 50 per cent co-funding from local government. For the *One-off Event Boost* this will be reduced to 25 per cent, including in-kind support. Decisions about co-funding requirements for the *Events Attraction Package* will be taken as part of finalising the package.
- 11 I expect to announce the *Events Attraction Package* of events by Christmas. This is not a contestable fund. The highest value events, from the perspective of size and ability to generate more business for hospitality and tourism will be funded.

We also need to remove red-tape to allow for more, larger, events

- 12 I want to ensure that the policy settings are right to deliver on this Government's ambitions to make New Zealand a world-class venue for major events. Eden Park, this country's biggest venue for large, international musical acts, is subject to local planning rules in the Auckland Unitary Plan

(AUP). The AUP contains rules and standards for noise, traffic management and limits on start and finish times for events at Eden Park. These standards are considered as part of the consenting process and inform the conditions of Eden Park’s consent for hosting events.

- 13 A new regulation-making power was recently introduced via the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025. This power enables the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform to remove or modify provisions in RMA plans where they negatively impact economic growth, development capacity or employment. There are a series of process steps and safeguards associated with the use of this power. As a first step, the Minister must investigate the impacts of the provisions and whether specified statutory criteria are met, and produce a report, which must be made publicly available.
- 14 The Minister Responsible for RMA Reform intends to initiate an investigation into provisions in the AUP that relate to events at Eden Park, to determine if they negatively impact economic growth or employment. The Minister Responsible for RMA Reform will report back to Cabinet with his findings.

A package of deals will also provide a much-needed boost to tourism and hospitality

- 15 Building on this, I propose the creation of a *Regional Tourism Boost* marketing campaign - a \$10 million campaign to attract international visitors to travel, stay and dine in New Zealand from early 2026. The marketing campaign would highlight great value deals provided by businesses that are time-limited discounts or special offers on air travel and accommodation, alongside promotion of regionally specific hospitality experiences adding flavour to the visitors’ experience of New Zealand. These will incentivise people to act quickly and lock in the deal, committing to travel during the target period.
- 16 For example, deals targeting those travelling for the peak Lunar New Year tourism period, could include a special airfare to Auckland with an optional connection to another North Island destination, discounts to stay at hotels would be promoted online. Visitors to the region would receive direct promotions to make the most of the offerings of local attractions and hospitality businesses. All of this could be booked in October or November of this year for redemption in January and February 2026.
- 17 *Regional Tourism Boost* will build on the success of the previous \$3 million *Regional Tourism Boost* winter campaign run earlier this year. This provided special offers including discounts on travel and visitor experiences.

Commercial Information
[Redacted]

- 18 We can improve on the previous campaign by ensuring that hospitality is included this time and sequencing the deals so to have the greatest possible impact and help to spread visitors around the country, reducing pressure on some regions. Tourism New Zealand will also help assess and refine the

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Deals and use their international networks to boost coverage. Collaboration between Regional Tourism Organisations is an important step toward a potential consolidation in their number, which will be considered as part of my subsequent work on the *Tourism Growth Roadmap*.

- 19 A contestable fund run by MBIE in September will incentivise the best deals from across travel, tourism and hospitality as Regional Tourism Organisations work with businesses to prepare a competitive package where the impact of investment can be clearly measured.

Improving our airline connectivity encourages airlines to increase their capacity

20 Confidential advice to Government
[Redacted text]

- 21 We also need to give airlines confidence about our ability to manage large aircraft should there be disruptions to major airports. Hiring and training additional Airways NZ staff at RNZAF base Ohakea will provide the necessary network redundancy, meaning that they need not carry additional fuel which is both costly and has recently led to a reduction in capacity on flights to Auckland. I propose to work with the Acting Minister of Transport to address this matter.

- 22 I also propose to work with the Acting Minister of Transport to develop options for addressing rising operational costs in the aviation sector, including considering different border cost structures for short-haul vs long-haul destinations. I will report back on both matters to Cabinet before the end of the year.

Upgrading our events and tourism infrastructure will serve a double benefit

- 23 Upgrading our existing infrastructure for events and tourism will both energise the trades in our cities and regions and will attract more visitors by improving their experience. Providing funding to install a roof on the Auckland Tennis Centre will help ensure the future of the ASB Classic, while investment into cycle trails, creates jobs through construction and maintenance, drives regional economic activity with visitor spending, and improves well-being and physical fitness for users.

- 24 This is not a contestable fund. I have identified specific projects that will boost economic confidence, improve the visitor experience and where work can begin no later than early 2026. I propose a *Tourism and Events Infrastructure Package* of \$10 million for investment into our sports facilities and cycle trails. I expect to announce the full package of infrastructure improvements once the necessary contracts have been put in place.

Financial Implications

25 The *Tourism and Major Events* package has an indicative cost of \$70 million over the next two years, of which \$20 million would have been spend on other current and future investments in the tourism portion of the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy and \$5 million will be funded from existing baselines.

Consultation

26 The Minister of Finance, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform, Minister of Conservation and Acting Minister of Transport have been consulted in relation to sections relevant to their responsibilities.

27 This paper was prepared by the DPMC and MBIE on behalf of the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality. The following agencies have been consulted in relation to sections relevant to their responsibilities: the Treasury, the Department of Conservation, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry for the Environment.

Communications

28 The Prime Minister and the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality will announce the details of this package following Cabinet agreement, in conjunction with other Minister as appropriate.

Proactive Release

29 This paper will not be proactively released.

Recommendations

- 1 **agree** that the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality appoint an advisory panel of eminent New Zealanders to support the event identification and attraction process for the *Events Attraction Package*;
- 2 **agree** to progress a \$40 million *Events Attraction Package* to attract large-scale events in New Zealand in 2026, subject to a further event identification and attraction process;
- 3 **approve** the following changes to appropriations to provide for the *Events Attraction Package* as described in recommendation 2 above, with corresponding impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt across the forecast period:

	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & outyears

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Non-Departmental Other Expenses:					
Tourism and Hospitality: Tourism Strategic Infrastructure and System Capability		(10.000)	(5.000)		
Economic and Regional Development: Major Event Development Fund 2022-2027	40.000				
Total operating	40.000				

- 4 **agree** that the proposed change to appropriations for 2025/26 above be included in the 2025/26 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply;
- 5 **agree** that \$15 million of the *Events Attraction Package* will be funded by transferring funding from 2026/2027 and 2027/28 and the remaining \$25 million will be charged against the Between Budget Contingency established at Budget 25;
- 6 **agree** to provide \$10 million of funding for the *Regional Tourism Boost* to attract international visitors from early 2026 through marketing of travel, stay and dine deals;
- 7 **agree** to establish the following appropriation in Vote Business, Science and Innovation:

Title	Appropriation Minister	Type	Scope
Tourism and Hospitality: Regional Tourism Boost	Minister for Tourism and Hospitality	Non-departmental Other Expense	This appropriation is limited to implementation of the Regional Tourism Boost.

- 8 **approve** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the decisions in recommendation 6 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt:

Vote Business Science and Innovation	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & outyears

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Minister for Tourism and Hospitality					
Non-departmental Other Expense:					
Tourism and Hospitality: Regional Tourism Boost	10.000	-	-	-	-

- 9 **agree** that the proposed change to appropriations for 2025/26 above be included in the 2025/26 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply;
- 10 **agree** that that the expenses incurred under recommendation 8 above be charged against the between-budget contingency established in Budget 2025;
- 11 **agree** to provide \$10 million of funding for the *Tourism and Events Infrastructure Package*, with the final fiscal envelope to be determined depending on design details and commercial negotiations;
- 12 **approve** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the decision in recommendation 11 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt:

	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & outyears
Vote Business Science and Innovation					
Minister for Tourism and Hospitality					
Non-Departmental Other Expense					
Tourism Facilities MCA – Ngā Haerenga, The New Zealand Cycle Trail Fund	5.000	-	-	-	
Tourism and Hospitality: Tourism Strategic Infrastructure and System Capability	5.000	-	-	-	
Total operating	10.000				

- 13 **agree** that the proposed change to appropriations for 2025/26 above be included in the 2025/26 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply;
- 14 **agree** that that the expenses incurred under recommendation 11 above be charged against the between-budget contingency established in Budget 2025;
- 15 **note** that the *One-off Events Boost* will be funded from existing baselines and pre-committed funding from the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy;
- 16 **authorise** the Minister of Finance and the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality to jointly take decisions relating to the final design, financial allocation and operational matters as required to progress the implementation of the *Events*

Attraction Package in alignment with the fiscal envelopes agreed above and in consultation with relevant portfolio Ministers;

Improving airline connectivity

- 17 **direct** the Acting Minister of Transport to report back to Cabinet on options for addressing rising operational costs in the aviation sector, such as different border cost structures for short-haul vs long-haul destinations, working in conjunction with the Minister of Immigration, Minister of Customs and Minister for Biosecurity and Food Safety;
- 18 **direct** the Acting Minister of Transport to report back to Cabinet on progress to establish 24/7 Air Traffic Control Services RNZAF Base Ohakea to support greater aviation connectivity in the short-term;
- 19 Confidential advice to Government
[Redacted]

Investigation into impact of local planning rules on Eden Park

- 20 **Note** that the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform has powers to recommend regulations are made under the Resource Management Act to modify or remove provisions of a policy statement or plan, if an investigation determines they negatively impact economic growth, development capacity or employment and specified statutory criteria are met;
- 21 **Note** that the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform will initiate an investigation into the provisions in the Auckland Unitary Plan, as they relate to events at Eden Park, to determine if they have a negative impact on economic growth, development capacity or employment.


Authorised for lodgement

Hon Louise Upston

Minister for Tourism and Hospitality

Annex - Tourism and Events Infrastructure investments (\$10 million)

Sport facilities proposals – total \$5 million

Project	Funding requirement	Details
Manuka Doctor Tennis Centre, Auckland	\$5 million	<p>Development of a new roof structure over the Centre Court at the Manuka Doctor Arena (Stanley Street) facility (formerly ASB Tennis Centre) before the international summer tournaments start in January 2027.</p> <p>A new roof would protect players and spectators from rain and sun, particularly during the ASB Classic men’s and women’s international tennis events that occur in January each year. A roof would address the potential for fixture delays and event cancellations due to adverse weather, reduce event insurance premiums and safeguard the potential monetary returns to tennis and the community that come from these tournaments.</p> <p>A roof would also enable other sports to hold events in the arena, such as basketball, futsal, netball, volleyball, boxing and squash (with a mobile glass court) alongside other community and concert events.</p> <p>Commercial Information</p>  <p>The project has resource consent approved, landowner approval and preferred architectural and structural engineering design and QS cost estimates completed. Construction could start in 2025 once funding is confirmed, a building consent is granted and following completion of construction tenders.</p>

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Tourism initiatives – total \$5 million

Project	Funding requirement	Details
Cycle Trails Infrastructure Investments	\$5.55 million	
Mountains to Sea Cycle Trail	\$3.1 million	<p>NZ Cycle Trail funding has previously supported Te Ara Mangawhero around Mount Ruapehu / the Tongariro National Park, which is part of the Mountains to Sea trail. This further investment would fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completion of the Te Ara Mangawhero Trail from Ohakune to Turoa – estimated cost \$2 million to get the current trail end back to the road • completion of the Te Hangaruru Trail from Horopito to Last Spike – estimated cost \$1.1 million. <p>Funding would enable Ruapehu District Council to further progress these two trail sections and provide an economic boon for Ruapehu District particularly given the challenging circumstances of a poor ski season.</p>
Whakarewarewa Forest Loop Great Ride reroute	\$250,000	<p>The Whakarewarewa Forest Loop is one of the Great Rides and a popular mountain-biking trail in the Redwoods near Rotorua.</p> <p>This investment would make improvements to the trail by rerouting it through the forest and away from the concrete pathway alongside busy SH5.</p>
Waimate Trail / Te Waimatamate Ara: Waimate to Waihao Forks	\$200,000	<p>The Waimate Trail is a new 67km walking and cycling trail being constructed in the Waitmate District. The community has raised 80 per cent of the funding required to complete Stage One of the trail.</p> <p>This investment would fund a 13km stretch of Stage One part of the trail from Waimate to Waihao Forks.</p>
Dunedin Tunnels linking Dunedin to Mosgiel and to the Clutha Gold Great Ride	Up to \$2 million	<p>This investment would co-fund Stage One of the Dunedin Tunnels Trails: Wingatui to Green Island, providing off road access into Dunedin at Grade 1 experience. Stage Two is to Kaikorai Valley and into the Caversham Tunnel into Dunedin CBD with existing cycle trail.</p> <p>Completing this would provide tourism (and commuter) access between Dunedin and Mosgiel and link to both Clutha Gold and Otago Central Rail Trail via heartland rides. The Dunedin population will have easy access to off-season use of especially Clutha Gold to add resilience to businesses.</p>