Independent Review of New Zealand's Approach to Events

Detailed Report
Final Report

MARTIN JENKINS

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Preface

This report has been prepared for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment by Stephen Knuckey, Edwina Merito, Penny Fitzpatrick, and Alice Russon from MartinJenkins (Martin, Jenkins & Associates Ltd), and Susan Sawbridge (Daylight), Devorah Blumberg (Independent Advisor), and Stuart Turner (Purple Moon).

For over 30 years MartinJenkins has been a trusted adviser to clients in the government, private, and non-profit sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. Our services include organisational performance, employment relations, financial and economic analysis, economic development, research and evaluation, data analytics, engagement, and public policy and regulatory systems.

We are recognised as experts in the business of government. We have worked for a wide range of public-sector organisations from both central and local government, and we also advise business and non-profit clients on engaging with government.

Kei te āwhina mātau ki te whakapai ake i a Aotearoa. We are a values-based organisation, driven by a clear purpose of helping make Aotearoa New Zealand a better place. Our firm is made up of people who are highly motivated to serve the New Zealand public, and to work on projects that make a difference.

Established in 1993, we are a privately owned New Zealand limited liability company, with offices in Wellington and Auckland. Our firm is governed by a Board made up of Executive Partners and Independent Directors. Our Independent Directors are Jenn Bestwick and Chair David Prentice. Our Executive Partners are Sarah Baddeley, Nick Carlaw, Allana Coulon, and Nick Davis.

Status of this report

This report presents the findings and recommendations of an independent review undertaken by MartinJenkins for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. The findings, recommendations, options, scenarios, and indicative funding ranges are the independent advice of the review team. They do not represent Government policy, ministerial decisions, or commitments to future funding, institutional change, regulatory reform, or new revenue mechanisms.

Any decisions arising from the review will be matters for Ministers and, where relevant, Cabinet. Proposals involving additional Crown funding, new funding or revenue mechanisms, institutional change, machinery-of-government change, legislation, or regulation would require further policy development and consultation, fiscal and distributional analysis, detailed business cases, and consideration through established government processes.

Executive summary

This review assessed how New Zealand's events system could be strengthened to create greater public value

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) commissioned this independent review by MartinJenkins in April 2026 to assess the performance of New Zealand's events system and identify the changes needed to generate greater and more consistent public value over time. The review considered what is working well, where the system is under pressure, and how to create a national approach that is more coordinated, focussed on outcomes, and able to respond to a changing events market.

The review examined the events system across six interrelated lines of inquiry:

1. Strategic framework and outcomes
2. Investment, funding, and risk
3. Governance and system coordination
4. Regulatory and legislative settings
5. Public–business events interface
6. Central–local government interface.

The last two were treated as cross-cutting themes because they shape performance across all parts of the system.

The review was informed by analysis of documents; interviews with stakeholders from central government, local government, the events industry, and event partners; workshops with participants from the events sector; and international comparisons with Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Scotland, Wales, Denmark, Singapore, and British Columbia.

This review provides independent advice to inform future consideration and decisions by Ministers. Its recommendations on future system settings represent the review team's advice, while the funding levels, outcome estimates, and potential revenue mechanisms are illustrative scenarios. None constitute government policy or commitments, or pre-empt subsequent strategic, policy, fiscal, regulatory, or institutional decisions.

Events are a significant public-value opportunity for New Zealand

Events are one of New Zealand's most visible and versatile tools for generating public value. They support visitor spending, international profile, trade and investment connections, knowledge exchange, cultural expression, national pride, social cohesion, community vibrancy, and long-term legacy. Different event types generate different kinds of value, from mega and major public events through to international business events, national anchor events, regional events, and community events.

The case for central government to be involved is strongest where events generate benefits that extend beyond the host community or region, where national coordination is needed, where public value would not be fully captured by private organisers, or where the event creates opportunities for wider leverage and legacy benefits. This includes mega events, major public events, international business events, and some larger regional events with potential for national impact.

Smaller regional and community events are also important, but they are generally better led by local government, iwi, communities, and local partners, with central government playing a lighter enabling role where there is a clear national rationale.

This means central government's role should be selective and disciplined – focussed on events where national coordination, investment certainty, or active leverage can unlock public value that the market, local government, or event organisers are unlikely to realise on their own.

Public investment should be based on the public benefits an event can generate and the additional value that government support would unlock, rather than on the type of event involved. Commercially promoted events, concerts, cultural events, sporting events, or business events may all justify support where there is a credible case for additional national benefits. Similarly, an event should not be targeted or supported simply because it falls within a particular category.

New Zealand has a strong platform to build on. It has a well-established reputation as a safe, capable, and distinctive host nation. It has successfully delivered both major and mega events, including large sporting, cultural, and business events. Central government has shown a sustained commitment to major events through the Major Events Fund and New Zealand Major Events (NZME), and Tourism New Zealand's (TNZ) business events work has helped strengthen New Zealand's ability to attract international conferences. Local government, regional tourism organisations (RTOs), economic development agencies (EDAs), venues, industry bodies, and event organisers provide significant capability, commitment, and place-based expertise. The sector is connected, experienced, and highly motivated.

Events are already making a significant contribution to the New Zealand economy. Public events were estimated to generate close to 18 million attendances and around $1.1 billion in accommodation, restaurant, and transport spending in the year to 1 August 2026, while multi-day business events generated an estimated $925 million in total expenditure in 2025 alone.[1] An evaluation of the former Major Events Development Fund (MEDF) found that 18 supported events generated approximately $32.1 million in net economic benefit from $7.2 million of MEDF investment, representing a return of around 4.5 times the investment, after accounting for substitution and displacement effects.[2]

Those figures should not be interpreted as a forecast of returns from future investment but as historical evidence that carefully selected major events can generate positive net economic benefits.

Beyond economic benefits from visitor expenditure, events help attract investment, support trade and business connections, showcase New Zealand internationally, strengthen regional economies, build community identity, and create enduring social and cultural benefits. The breadth of these benefits creates a strong rationale for public involvement, but events vary significantly in their ability to generate these benefits. This points to the need for a portfolio approach that does not simply support events individually, but actively manages the mix of events New Zealand seeks to attract, retain, build, and leverage.

The global events system is changing

Three global shifts are particularly important for New Zealand.

- First, more major public events are controlled through commercially owned or professionally managed event properties, with promoters and rights holders seeking certainty, speed, and clear allocation of risks.
- Second, business events are increasingly valued not only for delegate expenditure but for trade, investment, innovation, research, talent, and sector-development outcomes.
- Third, successful destinations are treating events as long-term portfolio assets, linking event attraction to infrastructure planning, regional development, visitor-economy objectives, cultural identity, and national reputation.

These shifts have implications for New Zealand's system settings. To remain competitive, the system will need stronger event prospecting, clearer investment criteria, better integration between public and business events, more deliberate leverage and legacy planning, greater commercial capability,

1 Public events data is from PredictHQ, supplied by The New Zealand Events Association. The data includes community events, concerts, conferences, expos, festivals, performing arts, and sports events, and spending on accommodation, restaurants, and transport. Conference data is from Business Events Industry Aotearoa, "National Business Events Value Data", https://www.beia.co.nz/programmes/be-data/national-business-events-value-data. Total expenditure includes delegate, companion, and event owner expenditure.

2 Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, "Economic Evaluation Outcomes: Major Events Development Fund – Meta-Evaluation Report", 2013, https://www.majorevents.govt.nz/assets/Major-Events/63bcd1bf67/MEDF-evaluation-report.pdf. The evaluation relates to a selected portfolio supported under earlier funding and market conditions. Increasing the scale of investment would not necessarily produce benefits at the same average benefit-to-investment ratio. Additional opportunities may generate lower or higher returns, and a larger portfolio could face capacity constraints or diminishing marginal returns. Any future funding proposal should therefore be supported by contemporary, proposal-specific analysis of expected net public value rather than by extrapolation from the 2013 result.

and enough decision-making agility to compete internationally while maintaining public accountability.

The risk for New Zealand is not that it stops winning events altogether. It is that, without stronger strategy, investment flexibility, and portfolio discipline, it wins fewer of the events that generate significant value – particularly events that require early commitment, clear funding signals, coordinated mobilisation of partners, and a compelling national proposition.

The current system is not yet set up to realise the full opportunity in this environment

While the current events system delivers strong outcomes in individual cases, the review found that it is not consistently achieving its full potential. The system operates through a range of connected but only partially coordinated actors, funding settings are uneven, central–local partnership arrangements are sometimes under strain, business and public events are not strategically aligned, and there is no single stewardship function responsible for the overall performance of the events system. The practical consequence is that New Zealand can still deliver excellent individual events, but it does not yet have a system that reliably converts event opportunities into a balanced, long-term national portfolio with clear public-value returns.

Strategic direction and investment settings

The most important system challenge is the absence of an enduring national strategy and shared public-value framework. Major public events, business events, and regional events currently operate through related but separate pathways, with no single long-term view of what New Zealand is trying to achieve through events across the portfolio. This makes it harder to prioritise investment, manage trade-offs and sector expectations, build a long-term pipeline, and measure outcomes consistently.

Funding and investment settings also constrain performance. The Major Events Fund (MEF) provides an important foundation, but its scale and horizon do not fully match the long lead times, rising costs, and competitive dynamics of the international events market. Business events are supported through the Conference Assistance Programme (CAP), but there is no enduring large-scale tool for direct financial support to secure strategically important conferences and conventions. Recent one-off funds have helped attract event activity, but have also reinforced a short-term approach, created uncertainty about priorities, and placed pressure on local partners where delivery requirements were not fully aligned with funding decisions.

The costs of securing and delivering events are also increasing, including rights fees and expenditure on production, logistics, workforce, compliance, travel, and event-related infrastructure. However, core national funding settings have not increased at the same pace. As a result, the real purchasing power of existing funds has declined, while the level of support required to secure internationally competitive events has increased. These trends are reducing New Zealand's ability to compete for major opportunities and increasing the risk that available funding is absorbed by a smaller number of higher-cost events.

Overall, the current funding base is increasingly being asked to support a larger, more expensive, and more competitive opportunity set, leaving limited headroom to pursue additional high-value events even where the public-value case is strong.

Governance, coordination, and delivery

Governance and coordination are also dispersed. New Zealand can coordinate effectively on major or urgent event opportunities, but this often depends on informal relationships, individual effort, and case-by-case arrangements. There is no recognised system steward with a mandate to maintain a national portfolio view, coordinate pipelines for public and business events, guide prospecting, support leverage and legacy across more events, or provide a clear entry point into government. National associations and NZME have taken steps to improve pipeline coordination, but these efforts do not constitute a system-wide stewardship function.

The faster-moving, more commercial operating environment requires rapid negotiation, clear risk allocation, and confidence that public-sector processes or risk settings will not slow bids beyond commercially viable timeframes. This does not mean public accountability should be weakened, but it does mean New Zealand's future model needs enough commercial capability, delegated decision rights, and procurement flexibility to engage credibly in competitive event markets.

The regulatory environment is generally workable, but it creates avoidable costs, delays, and complexity in some areas. Stakeholders interviewed for the review were less concerned about any single legislative barrier than about inconsistent local implementation, uneven event-related capability and experience among regulatory authorities, disproportionate processes for smaller events, and the difficulty of navigating multiple requirements across jurisdictions. The Major Events Management Act (MEMA) remains useful as a commercial-protection tool, but it is narrow and increasingly dated given the contemporary operating environment for major events.

Cross-cutting system relationships

The central–local government interface is one of the most important constraints on future ambition. Local government is essential to events as a co-investor, regulator, host partner, venue and infrastructure provider, and place-based convenor. However, local government is under fiscal and capacity pressure. The recent one-off funding initiatives have required councils to support the delivery of events without sufficient early involvement in decisions. Without a more deliberate and durable central–local partnership, national ambition will exceed local capacity to deliver.

The public–business events interface also needs to mature. Business events are a distinct but important part of the national events system. They generate high-value visitation and can support trade, innovation, knowledge exchange, research collaboration, and sector development. However, they are not yet fully integrated into a wider national events system or strategic architecture. As a result, New Zealand is missing opportunities to align events with priority sectors, attract investment, and maximise trade, innovation, and international connections. The objective is not to treat public and business events as identical, but to manage them as connected parts of one national portfolio, with shared strategic direction, better pipeline visibility, and more deliberate links to priority sectors, trade, innovation, and regional opportunities.

International evidence points to a more coordinated and strategic model

International comparisons show that high-performing events systems do not rely on a single institutional model. Some use integrated tourism and events agencies, while others rely on distributed partnerships. Across these models, however, the more developed systems are anchored by durable strategy, stable investment settings, active portfolio and pipeline management, clear lead functions, and structured coordination across government, regions, and industry. They also treat leverage, legacy, and capability as planned system functions rather than optional additions.

The relevant lesson is to adopt the core disciplines common to high-performing systems while adapting institutional structures and funding tools to New Zealand's scale, central–local relationships, and fiscal settings. These core disciplines include durable strategy, active portfolio management, clear lead functions, early pipeline planning, stable investment settings, and deliberate leverage and legacy planning. The system should avoid narrow agency mandates that separate events from wider public value, excessive centralisation that weakens regional ownership, and funding arrangements that cannot accommodate long lead times.

Potential foundations of a New Zealand events proposition

This review has not sought to define New Zealand's future events proposition, as that should be a key task of a National Events Strategy. However, stakeholder feedback, industry submissions, existing strategies, and the international comparisons undertaken for the review suggest that the foundations of a future New Zealand events proposition could include:

- **An authentic Aotearoa New Zealand experience** – For event participants, delegates, and visitors, New Zealand can offer experiences that are difficult to replicate elsewhere, combining unique natural environments, strong regional diversity, and Māori culture and identity.
- **A trusted, safe, and capable host nation** – New Zealand has a strong track record of delivering major sporting, cultural, and business events. Its reputation as a safe, reliable, and well-organised destination remains a significant competitive advantage.
- **Distinctive experiences linked to place** – Many of New Zealand's strongest event opportunities are closely connected to distinctive places, landscapes, communities, and regional identities. The country's diversity enables a portfolio of experiences that cannot be replicated within a single metropolitan destination, while its compact geography means distinctive natural settings are often within easy reach of city-based venues and infrastructure.
- **Potential strategic areas of focus** – The process to develop the National Events Strategy could test whether New Zealand has comparative advantages in event categories and sectors aligned with its capabilities and international reputation. Areas identified through this review for further consideration include:
  - adventure and endurance sports
  - marine and freshwater sports

- nature-based leisure events
- Māori and Pacific peoples' cultural events
- food, agribusiness, and primary industries
- screen and creative industries
- health, science, and technology sectors
- sustainable technologies and environmental innovation.

- **Sustainable, values-led delivery** – New Zealand is well positioned to strengthen its reputation for sustainable, community-connected event experiences that create benefits for visitors, organisers, participants, and host communities.

International comparisons also suggest that successful event destinations are clear about the distinctive value they offer event owners, rights holders, delegates, participants, and visitors. New Zealand's future competitiveness is unlikely to be based on scale alone. Potential areas of differentiation identified through this review include New Zealand's reputation as a safe and capable host, the distinctive identity of Aotearoa New Zealand and Māori culture, remarkable natural environments, the ability to deliver authentic visitor experiences, and growing capability in high-value business events. However, the precise articulation of New Zealand's long-term events proposition should be developed through a National Events Strategy.

Overall, the international review suggests that New Zealand needs settings that are proportionate to its ambitions and competitive enough to act selectively when high-value opportunities arise. The evidence indicates that New Zealand's relative disadvantage is both financial and systemic: competitors often combine larger or more flexible budgets with clearer strategies, earlier pipeline planning, and more coordinated delivery machinery.

The recommended direction is to build towards a Championing model

The review has identified a clear case for change. New Zealand's events system continues to deliver successful events, but it is not yet sufficiently organised or resourced to realise the available public-value opportunity in a competitive global market.

New Zealand continues to secure and deliver high-quality events, and selected public investment has generated positive net benefits where support has been well targeted. However, the current system relies on relatively limited national funding, uneven coordination across agencies and regions, and funding mechanisms that are increasingly constrained by rising event costs and a strong forward pipeline. As competitor jurisdictions invest more deliberately, with clearer strategies and larger or more flexible event budgets, New Zealand risks losing ground unless it moves to a more coordinated, better-prioritised, and better-resourced approach.

This review recommends that New Zealand strengthen the system through Enabling and Maturing phases, with the aim of moving to a Championing model from 2029/30 if the necessary strategic, evidential, fiscal, partnership, and institutional conditions are met. This would shift government from being primarily an event-by-event investor towards a more active stewardship role, with clearer strategy, more durable funding settings, and stronger management of the national pipeline, while retaining specialist expertise and recognising the distinct mandates of partner organisations.

The six foundations of the recommended model

The recommended model has six foundations: a system-wide national strategy and portfolio approach; a national investment platform; a national stewardship function; a durable central–local partnership; connected public and business events; and a more enabling regulatory environment.

1. **National strategy and portfolio approach:** Through a National Events Strategy, there would be clearer choices about which events New Zealand seeks to attract, build, or support; how different event types contribute to national outcomes; and how funding, prospecting, leverage, legacy, and delivery capacity are coordinated across the whole pipeline. A more deliberate portfolio approach would mean managing a balanced long-term mix of major public events, international business events, national anchor events, and emerging opportunities. This would allow government and partners to consider how each event contributes to national priorities, to the overall pipeline, and to regional and seasonal spread, while ensuring that commitments remain consistent with delivery capacity.

2. **National investment platform:** Subject to government decisions, investment would be through a National Events Investment Platform, with clear funding tiers; dedicated support for prospecting, leverage, and legacy; and more sophisticated risk-sharing tools, such as underwriting, seed funding, guarantees, structured cost-sharing, and performance-based incentives where justified. The platform would support major public events, international business events, growth of anchor events, industry capability, and selected investment in infrastructure readiness. Its final form, scale, and institutional location should follow from the National Events Strategy and detailed policy and business case work.

   Routine investment decisions could be delegated within agreed parameters, while Ministers retain responsibility for the largest, highest-risk, or most strategically sensitive commitments. This would support faster and more commercially credible decisions, reduce ad hoc investment, and give regions, rights holders, industry associations, and agencies greater confidence about how decisions will be made.

3. **National stewardship function:** A national stewardship function would provide the system's centre of gravity. It would have a clear mandate to maintain the national portfolio view, coordinate prospecting and bidding, support investment decisions, strengthen public–business integration, assist with leverage and legacy opportunities, support capability building, and provide a clearer interface with the event industry, including regions, rights holders, industry associations, suppliers, and agencies.

4. **Durable central–local partnership:** A Championing model would also mean a more mature and durable central–local partnership. Central and local government would have clearer roles, co-investment expectations, risk-sharing arrangements, and delivery responsibilities. Regions would be more actively involved in shaping the pipeline, building anchor events, and connecting national opportunities to place-based priorities. This would need to be supported by more sustainable local funding arrangements and stronger local capability.

5. **Connected public and business events:** Public and business events would be managed as connected parts of one national portfolio, while retaining distinct delivery expertise. International practice demonstrates that strong events systems can operate successfully with either integrated or separate public-event and business-event structures, provided there is clear leadership, portfolio management, and coordination. If events functions were placed in an arm's-length agency, subsequent institutional design should consider locating major-event and business-event capability within the same organisation, while retaining specialist delivery streams, to support greater portfolio integration and a single industry interface.

6. **More enabling regulatory environment:** The regulatory environment would be more enabling and consistent. The initial emphasis should be on practical improvements – guidance, model approaches, facilitation, capability support, and a targeted refresh of MEMA. Broader legislative reform should only be pursued if evidence shows that these improvements are still insufficient to support New Zealand's most significant events.

What success would look like by 2030

By 2030, success would mean New Zealand has:

- moved beyond a reactive, event-by-event and fund-by-fund approach towards active management of a visible national portfolio
- embedded a shared public-value framework in significant funding decisions
- established a national pipeline view that is actively used by central and local government
- introduced portfolio-wide prospecting for priority opportunities
- embedded leverage and legacy planning from the feasibility stage for events receiving significant public support.

What success would look like by 2034

By 2034, success would mean New Zealand is:

- consistently competing for and securing a larger share of high-value events that are aligned with national priorities
- developing selected New Zealand-owned events into durable national assets
- achieving a more balanced regional and seasonal spread of event activity
- demonstrating public value through visitor expenditure, trade and investment outcomes, innovation and knowledge exchange, cultural and social outcomes, regional benefits, and stronger international reputation.

A staged approach: Enabling, Maturing, Championing

Begin the pathway with an Enabling phase from 2026/27

The review recommends a staged pathway rather than moving immediately to the full Championing model, because important preconditions are not yet in place. These preconditions include a ten-year National Events Strategy; a shared public-value and performance framework; credible national pipeline information; clearer central–local partnership and co-investment arrangements; structured engagement with the events industry; sufficient local government funding and capability; improved regulatory coordination; and a clear institutional home for national stewardship. Progression would also require greater certainty about the level and duration of national investment.

Moving too quickly to a higher-investment Championing model without these foundations would risk adding funding and complexity before the system has the strategy, decision rights, local co-investment arrangements, and delivery capability needed to use that investment well.

A Championing model would also benefit from durable political support and consistent investment settings. Without them, the system may struggle to build and maintain the relationships, capability, and multi-year pipeline needed for New Zealand to compete effectively.

Objectives and actions for the Enabling phase

From **2026/27**, MBIE should lead an **Enabling phase** in partnership with local government and sector stakeholders. Its objective should be to establish the strategic direction, coordination mechanisms, investment settings, and central–local partnerships required for a more coherent and effective events system.

The Enabling phase represents a substantial programme of reform in its own right. Taken together, its actions should substantially improve the performance of the events system, regardless of whether New Zealand ultimately progresses to a full Championing model.

The key actions for the Enabling phase should include:

- developing an initially government-led National Events Strategy, as the foundation for a later system-wide strategy co-owned with partners
- establishing a shared public-value and performance framework
- creating a view of the national pipeline and calendar across public events, business events, and national anchor events
- strengthening the integration of public and business events
- establishing central–local partnership principles and a more coordinated co-investment model
- strengthening support for business events, including direct financial support, or subvention, to secure strategically important events
- establishing a regular national coordination mechanism or forum to connect government with the broader events industry

- implementing a government interface for public and business events that is coordinated and easier to navigate
- developing national regulatory guidance, model approaches and protocols, with practical support for local authorities managing complex or unfamiliar event requirements
- beginning a targeted refresh of the Major Events Management Act
- embedding leverage and legacy planning earlier in the event lifecycle for a greater number of events.

Some of these actions could proceed within current settings or broadly similar settings through reprioritising and greater coordination. However, any significant expansion of event support, prospecting, leverage and legacy activity, and regional event delivery and regulatory capability would require additional funding.

Coordinated Co-investment would retain the MEF and CAP funding mechanisms while placing them within a clearer multi-tier investment framework. To illustrate the potential scale involved, the review has modelled an Enabling investment scenario of approximately $25 million to $29 million per year over 2026/27 to 2028/29. This would represent a moderate uplift of around $11 million to $15 million per year on current core MEF and CAP settings and would support stronger major event and anchor event pathways; modest increases in business-event support, prospecting, and leverage and legacy activity; and regional capability support. This is not a final recommended funding level, which should be contingent on a National Events Strategy.

Information provided by NZME reinforces this need for additional headroom. The pipeline of large-scale international and commercial event opportunities is strong, but the cost of securing these opportunities has increased as global competition for event content has intensified.

The suggested Enabling phase investment could deliver measurable improvements in outcomes if accompanied by the wider strategic, governance, and partnership changes recommended. Under the modelled Enabling scenario, the estimates include 8,000 to 9,500 more international visitors a year, up to around $32 million in additional international visitor expenditure through increased support for major events, and 40 to 60 additional business-event bids with an estimated bid value of $90 million to $140 million, before allowing for bid conversion.[3]

A moderate funding uplift would allow New Zealand to pursue a more selective, higher-value portfolio, strengthen proactive prospecting, and avoid spreading limited funding too thinly across lower-value opportunities. Additional funding would support a more disciplined portfolio model, with investment directed towards higher-value opportunities rather than spread across a larger number of events.

[3] Note: These figures are illustrative scenario estimates only. They have been derived from available information on Major Events Fund and Conference Assistance Programme performance. They are intended to demonstrate the potential scale of outcomes associated with increased investment and should not be interpreted as forecasts, targets or guaranteed returns. Actual outcomes would depend on event selection and additionality, bid conversion, visitor origin, displacement and substitution, public and private costs, portfolio composition, infrastructure and workforce capacity, and market conditions. Any future funding proposal would require contemporary appraisal and sensitivity analysis.

The Enabling phase is designed to be achievable largely within existing institutional arrangements. Decisions about dedicated stewardship structures or arm's-length delivery models should be made as part of the future transition towards a Championing model.

Mature the system and design the end-state from 2027/28 to 2028/29

The period from **2027/28 to 2028/29** should be used to **test, refine, and mature the Enabling model while designing the full Championing arrangements**. This active design and de-risking period would allow government to assess the effectiveness of the Enabling model, confirm the case for further investment, and settle the institutional, funding, and accountability arrangements before committing to the longer-term model.

During this phase, the initially government-led National Events Strategy should evolve into a system-wide strategy, jointly developed with and supported by local government, industry, iwi and Māori partners, business-event leaders, and relevant agencies. Shared frameworks and partnership arrangements should promote alignment while partners retain their own mandates and strategies.

This phase should also involve the detailed design of the stewardship function and the national investment platform. Design work should determine the institutional home for the function, its mandate, governance arrangements, decision rights, accountability settings, and relationship to Ministers. The review suggests that locating the stewardship function within a dedicated events unit or group in an existing arm's-length Crown entity is likely to be more practical than creating a standalone agency, provided it has sufficient authority, capability, and credibility and can retain broad outcome objectives. If major-event functions are moved from MBIE into an arm's-length setting, there would be merit in locating them alongside business-event functions to support a more integrated national portfolio approach and strengthen coordination across public and business events. However, these are options that will require further testing.

The system should also build the evidence base for any further regulatory reform. If guidance, facilitation, local capability support where needed, and a targeted MEMA refresh do not adequately address persistent barriers for nationally significant events, broader event-enabling legislation could be considered.

Move towards the Championing end-state from 2029/30, if preconditions are met

New Zealand should be positioned to **begin implementing the Championing model from 2029/30,** subject to the necessary preconditions being in place and the evidence from the Enabling and Maturing phases supporting progression. The purpose of the Maturing phase is to test whether the Enabling arrangements are improving decisions and partner experience, to refine the investment and stewardship model, and to establish whether the preconditions for Championing have been met. Progression should be based on evidence of system performance and readiness, rather than on the passage of time alone.

A key element of the Championing model is the **National Events Investment Platform**. If the government adopts the higher-investment scenario modelled by the review, this will require a material increase in central government funding. The review has modelled investment by central government of approximately $40 million to $46 million per year for this platform, an uplift of around $26 million to

$32 million per year compared with current core MEF and CAP funding. This would represent a step-change in ambition, scale, and certainty, especially if matched by more sustainable local or regional investment (for example, through an accommodation levy or another sustainable local or regional funding mechanism), while maintaining disciplined public-value assessment and active portfolio management.[4] This scale of funding is equivalent to around 0.01% of New Zealand's annual GDP and would move New Zealand's public investment in events closer to the relative scale reported for leading event destinations such as Australian states and Singapore.[5]

A sustainable local or regional funding mechanism is an important precondition for this model. Without it, central government would either need to carry a much larger share of event investment or scale back the ambition of the Championing end-state.

Under the higher Championing investment scenario, the modelling estimates 18,500 to 21,500 additional international visitors per year, approximately $64 million to $74 million in additional visitor expenditure annually, and around 150 international business-event bids per year with an estimated bid value of $350 million.[6] Compared with current settings, this would represent a material increase in New Zealand's ability to secure and leverage internationally significant events and build a more substantial long-term events portfolio.

The investment and funding ranges suggested for the Enabling, Maturing and Championing phases are indicative and intended to demonstrate what is likely to be required under a more ambitious National Events Strategy. Final funding requirements should not be predetermined through this review. Rather, they should be determined through the development of the National Events Strategy, following agreement on desired outcomes, priorities, and the level of ambition.

Potential to bring forward some actions

While a staged pathway is recommended, the government could bring forward selected elements of the Championing model if it wished to accelerate progress. Potential candidates include stronger system-wide prospecting, earlier use of a portfolio approach in investment decisions, additional business-event attraction support, increased support for selected national anchor events, and greater resourcing for leverage and legacy activity. These actions are less dependent on final decisions about long-term strategy and institutional design and could test elements of the more ambitious model while wider reforms are developed.

4 If a higher-investment model were pursued, more sustainable local or regional event funding should also be considered as part of the overall funding and partnership model. An accommodation levy is one possible mechanism. Depending on its design and the allocation of levy revenue across different tourism activities, it could provide approximately $12 million to $20 million per year for events. Alternative local or regional funding mechanisms should be considered alongside any levy option. Any proposal would require separate policy development, analysis of economic and distributional effects, engagement with local government, the accommodation sector and other affected parties, consideration of the range of purposes for which revenue might be used, and ministerial and legislative decisions.

5 New Zealand's GDP in current prices for the year ended March 2026 was approximately $450 billion (Stats NZ, Gross domestic product: March 2026 quarter, 18 June 2026). Publicly reported funding can be difficult to compare across jurisdictions.

6 Note: The estimates are illustrative scenario estimates informed by the performance of MEF and CAP. They should not be interpreted as forecasts or guaranteed returns and would require more detailed modelling if a Championing strategy was adopted.

However, this would involve important trade-offs. A more rapid transition would likely require earlier investment, additional implementation capability, stronger central coordination, and accelerated design of stewardship arrangements before the National Events Strategy, current local government reforms and longer-term funding settings are fully settled. While some risks can be managed, the staged pathway is intended to reduce implementation risk, allow priorities and outcomes to be agreed before major investment decisions are made, and ensure that increased funding and institutional reform are matched by sufficient system readiness.

Potential benefits from the recommended pathway and model

If implemented effectively, the recommended pathway could deliver greater public value from events, not simply by hosting more events but by building a stronger long-term pipeline. This could include competing more effectively for high-value events, developing nationally significant homegrown events, improving regional development pathways, and increasing the value created through earlier prospecting, stronger partnerships, and more deliberate leverage and legacy activity.

In the short- to medium-term, the Enabling phase is intended to support increased international visitation and visitor expenditure, stronger business event attraction and regional event growth, and improved system capability. Over the longer term, the Championing model would support a larger and more strategically managed national events portfolio, contributing to visitor growth, trade and investment outcomes, innovation and knowledge exchange, regional development, international profile, cultural outcomes, and community wellbeing.

An additional benefit would be a stronger and clearer international proposition that improves how New Zealand positions itself and competes for priority events. More coordinated strategy, investment, prospecting, and portfolio management would enable New Zealand to move from largely opportunity-led event attraction towards a clearer national proposition aligned with New Zealand's strengths, priorities, and long-term competitive advantages.

Overall, the review considers that the pathway provides the right balance of affordability, deliverability, and impact. It enables New Zealand to progressively build the capability, partnerships, governance arrangements, and investment mechanisms required to achieve greater value from events while managing implementation risks. The proposed pathway invests first in the foundations needed to improve system performance. Once those foundations are established, it supports a step-change in New Zealand's ability to attract, secure, and maximise value from events.

Conclusion

The review has found that the current system has substantial strengths, including committed people, capable delivery partners, a strong hosting reputation, and demonstrated success when agencies, councils, and organisers align around the most significant opportunities. The recommended pathway builds on these strengths.

Continuing with the current model will not be enough if New Zealand wants to compete more deliberately for high-value events and realise broader public value from events. The system needs clearer strategy, more stable and coordinated investment, stronger stewardship, a more durable central–local partnership, and a more consistent and enabling operating environment. Without these changes, New Zealand is likely to continue securing and delivering good individual events, but with uneven investment, missed leverage opportunities, and a weaker ability to consistently compete for the highest-value opportunities.

Maintaining the status quo could affect both the number and the value of the events New Zealand secures. Events would be less consistently aligned with national priorities, less deliberately leveraged for trade, investment, innovation, and cultural outcomes, less integrated with regional and infrastructure planning, and more dependent on short-term funding decisions and informal relationships. In a more competitive international market, this increases the risk that New Zealand loses high-value opportunities to jurisdictions that can move earlier, signal investment certainty, and present a clearer national proposition to rights holders, promoters, conference organisers, and investors.

The recommended pathway takes a pragmatic, staged approach: **Enable first, Mature next, and move to Championing from 2029/30** if the evidence and required conditions support it. By following this pathway, government can lead the shift from a capable but partially coordinated system to one that is more coherent, confident, and focussed on public value. The resulting system would be easier to navigate, better able to attract and deliver strategically important events, and better positioned to generate lasting benefits for New Zealand.

Introduction

Purpose of the review

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) commissioned this independent review in April 2026 to assess New Zealand's approach to events and ensure that future government involvement delivers maximum public value. The purpose of the review was to comprehensively assess how New Zealand's events system currently functions, including its strengths, weaknesses, and underlying drivers, and to identify opportunities to improve its performance and guide its future development. Given the significant public investment in, and public interest surrounding, major events and business events, this review is intended to inform a more effective, coordinated, and outcome-focussed approach for the future.

The review provides independent advice to inform future consideration by Ministers. References to future models, funding levels, or revenue mechanisms are recommendations or illustrative scenarios developed by the review team to inform future decision-making. The review does not pre-empt government decisions on strategy, funding, institutional arrangements, regulation, or new revenue mechanisms.

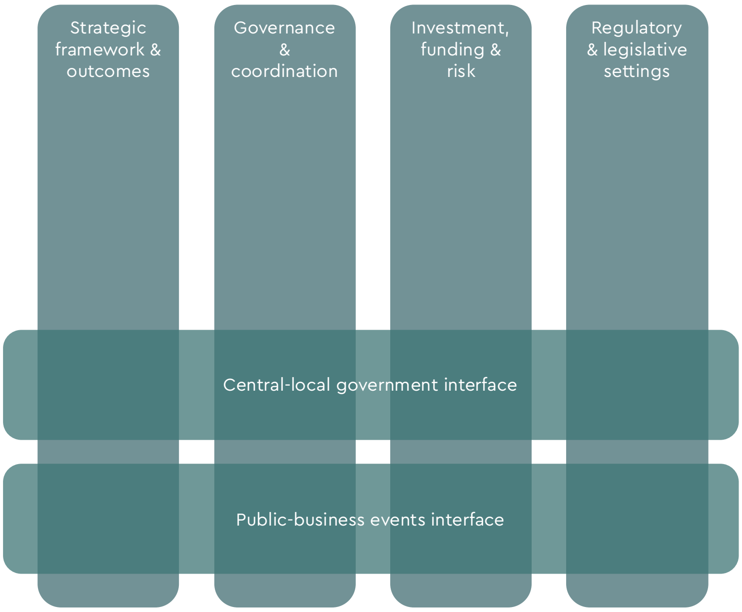
Scope and lines of inquiry

The review's terms of reference included six interrelated lines of inquiry across the breadth of the events system:

- **Strategic framework and outcomes** – evaluating whether New Zealand has a clear national strategy and outcomes framework for events, and how different event types contribute to national goals.
- **Investment, funding, and risk** – examining the adequacy of current funding mechanisms and risk-sharing arrangements across central government, local government, and event organisers.
- **Governance and coordination** – assessing whether roles and decision-making are clearly allocated and whether the system has effective leadership and coordination ("system stewardship").
- **Regulatory and legislative settings** – reviewing rules, regulations, and policy settings affecting events to identify any barriers or misalignments, at both central and local levels.
- **Public–business events interface** – assessing the relationship between public events (for example, festivals, sporting and cultural events) and business events (for example, conferences, trade shows), including opportunities for greater integration or synergy.
- **Central–local interface** – evaluating how central and local government collaborate on event planning, funding, and delivery, and whether current partnership arrangements are effective.

Following an overview of the current events system and the case for change, this report focuses primarily on the first four lines of inquiry. Throughout this report, the "public–business events" and "central–local" dimensions are treated as cross-cutting themes. As shown in Figure 1, they are integrated into each relevant section rather than examined as standalone topics, reflecting the view that stronger central–local partnerships and greater integration between public and business events are critical enablers of the other four elements examined in this review.

Figure 1: Scope of the review



This review did not seek to identify a list of future events for New Zealand to pursue or to determine strategic event priorities. Those choices will depend on the development of the National Events Strategy. Specific examples used throughout this report are therefore illustrative. They are intended to demonstrate what might be possible under different settings, rather than to pre-empt future strategy decisions or create a final investment pipeline.

Evidence base

A comprehensive evidence base underpins this review. The review team examined an extensive range of documents, covering central and local government strategies and policies, relevant legislation (for example, MEMA 2007), independent submissions on the terms of reference (such as from Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA) and New Zealand Events Association (NZEA)), previous reviews and evaluations, and event impact reports.

The review team conducted 45 interviews with stakeholders across the events system – spanning central government agencies, local councils, event organisers, tourism and economic development bodies, industry associations, and others – collectively involving around 90 individuals. In addition, two sector workshops were held to test emerging findings and options for change. Targeted international interviews and research reviews were completed to benchmark New Zealand's system against jurisdictions such as Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Scotland, Wales, Denmark (Copenhagen), Singapore, and British Columbia (Vancouver). In addition, the review team interviewed a representative of the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) to provide an international rights holder perspective.

Event type definitions

Different parts of New Zealand's events system, including NZME, already use categories to distinguish between events. However, terminology is not applied consistently across the wider events sector, local government, industry, business events, and public discussion. For example, an event described as "major" in a smaller region may not meet the threshold central government applies to a major event. This review uses the working taxonomy in Table 1 to distinguish between event types based on their scale, purpose, likely public-value profile, and the potential role of government.

Table 1: Event types

Event Type	Definition and characteristics	Examples
Mega event	A one-off (or very rare) event of exceptional global scale, typically a multi-day spectacle requiring extensive national financial and logistical support. It generates substantial international media coverage across multiple global markets (audiences of tens of millions). Attendance for public events may be hundreds of thousands of spectators over the duration of the event. A mega event can generate significant nationwide economic, social, and reputational benefits, including visitor expenditure, employment, an enhanced international profile, national pride, and opportunities to showcase New Zealand's culture on a world stage. It has the potential to drive legacies in infrastructure, skills and international relationships.	*Rugby World Cup, FIFA Women's World Cup, APEC Summits.*
Major public event	A major public event is a large public-facing sporting, cultural, or similar event with nationwide significance that attracts substantial domestic and international attendance or audiences. Major public events may be one-off opportunities, but they tend to occur more frequently than mega events, often rotating internationally or being hosted periodically by New Zealand (for example, every few years). This category includes flagship national festivals, world championships, and marquee sporting or cultural events. A major public event delivers measurable economic, social, and cultural benefits beyond the host region to New Zealand as a whole, such as visitor spending, international exposure, national pride, and showcasing New Zealand culture and talent.	*World Masters Games, The Ocean Race, World Choir Games.*

Event Type	Definition and characteristics	Examples
International business event	A business event with global reach or substantial international participation, such as an international conference, congress, convention, incentive, trade show, or expo hosted in New Zealand by an association, corporation, professional body, sector organisation, or public institution. These events have a high proportion of international delegates, who are typically business, academic, or industry specialists. These events can be aligned with industry sectors of importance to New Zealand. Such an event generates measurable economic benefits for New Zealand and may deliver broader trade, investment, or knowledge-transfer outcomes. The term "international" business event is relevant because strategically important business events may be small, medium, or large. Their national significance depends not only on scale but on delegate profile, international reach, and wider trade, investment, sector, innovation, or knowledge outcomes.	*International Congress and Convention Association events, Amway China NZ Leadership Summit.*
National anchor event	A notable recurring event with high local/regional attendance (often several thousand or more), an out-of-region draw, national media attention, and often sufficient profile to influence international visitation decisions or attract international media attention. These events are often anchored in local culture, sport, or industry sectors and generate meaningful regional economic, social, and cultural benefits. In some cases, they also deliver outcomes of national significance. They may also emphasise cultural and creative expression and strengthen regional or national identity and pride.	*Art Deco Festival Napier, World of WearableArt (WOW), Fieldays.*
Regional public event	A locally significant event, usually recurring (annual/seasonal). Attendance may still be significant, but audiences and participants are primarily local or regional, with visitors generally coming from nearby areas and minimal international participation. Regional public events have limited national media coverage (they may get some regional or niche attention). They form the bulk of a region's events calendar. Such events boost regional economies, typically through visitor spending in the host area and spending with local businesses, strengthen the sense of place, and showcase local culture or environment.	*Provincial sports matches, regional festivals, multi-day community events.*

Event Type	Definition and characteristics	Examples
Domestic business event	An incentive, conference, convention, exhibition, corporate meeting, trade show, or professional gathering where the primary participants are New Zealand-based delegates, exhibitors, buyers, speakers, or organisations. These events are typically organised by industry associations, professional bodies, corporates, professional conference organisers, convention bureaux, or public-sector organisations. Domestic business events contribute to regional economies through delegate expenditure, accommodation demand, venue utilisation, and support for local event suppliers. They also generate broader benefits through professional development and the strengthening of business networks. In some cases, successful domestic business events can provide a pathway to attracting international events or showcasing sectors of strategic importance to New Zealand.	*National association conferences, domestic trade shows and exhibitions, corporate conferences, industry summits, and professional congresses.*
Local and community event	A smaller scale, grassroots event intended primarily for local participants, usually attracting hundreds to a few thousand people. These events often celebrate local culture, creativity, and diversity. They are primarily recreational or civic in nature. These events are driven by community organisations or local councils. They tend to get minimal media coverage beyond the locality. They typically generate limited economic or visitor activity beyond the local area, but they create social and cultural benefits such as social cohesion, community pride, and wellbeing through shared experiences. Most of the benefits accrue to the city, town, or community where the event is held.	*School galas, community fairs, town parades, local A&P shows, theatre productions, and community arts festivals.*

Different genres of events can fall into different event-type categories depending on scale, ownership, audience profile, and public-value rationale. Concerts and music festivals illustrate this distinction. A one-off international stadium concert may be treated as a major public event if it generates substantial additional visitation, profile or wider public value. A recurring regional music festival may sit within the regional public-event category if it has broader-than-local draw or growth potential. Smaller local music, arts or cultural events will usually sit within regional or community categories. An event should not be included or excluded simply because of its genre or label. It should be assessed according to its public value, additionality, strategic fit, deliverability, and contribution to the wider portfolio.

Figure 2 illustrates a simplified hierarchy of event types based on their scale, reach, complexity, public-value profile, and potential rationale for government involvement. The base of the triangle represents the high-volume foundation of New Zealand's events system, comprising local and community events, regional public events, and domestic business events. These events occur frequently across the country and play an important role in supporting community wellbeing, regional vibrancy, visitor activity, venue utilisation, business networks, and event-sector capability.

Figure 2: Event hierarchy

Moving up the triangle, events become fewer in number but generally larger in scale, cost, risk, and complexity. They also tend to generate benefits that extend beyond a single community or region, increasing the potential rationale for national coordination or investment. National anchor events occupy the middle of the hierarchy because, while regionally based, they can attract substantial visitation, generate media exposure and economic or cultural benefits, and become assets of national significance.

Major public events (generally referred to as major events within this report) and international business events sit at a similar level because both have the potential to generate nationally significant benefits, albeit through different pathways. Although there is crossover in outcomes, major public events tend to enhance New Zealand's profile to broad audiences, cultural identity, and visitor economy, while international business events can generate immediate and future economic activity through delegate expenditure, trade, investment, innovation, research collaboration, and international connections. At the apex of the triangle are mega events, which are rare, highly complex opportunities that typically require substantial investment, cross-agency coordination, and risk management, but have the potential to deliver exceptional international exposure and wider economic, social, and reputational benefits.

The triangle is not intended to represent a strict hierarchy of scale and investment. Rather, it provides a conceptual illustration of how event scale, strategic importance, and the potential case for public intervention generally increase as events move from local activity towards nationally and internationally significant opportunities. As discussed later in this report, the core national portfolio, where national coordination and investment may have a clearer role, comprises mega events, major public events, international business events, and selected anchor events with national significance. A connected portfolio includes regional and domestic business event opportunities that may warrant national pipeline visibility. The wider system comprises local and community events led primarily by local government, iwi, community organisations, and private organisations.

The global events market

The global events market is becoming more competitive, more commercial, and more strategically targeted. Destinations are increasingly competing not only on natural appeal and delivery capability, but also on the speed of decision-making, certainty of public investment, ability to mobilise local and national partners, and the strength of the proposition offered to rights holders, promoters, conference organisers, delegates, sponsors, and investors.

Key shifts in the global events market include broader definitions of value, more strategic and portfolio-based approaches to event investment, rising costs and complexity, increasing commercialisation, greater competition for events, rapid technological change, and stronger expectations for leverage, legacy, and long-term outcomes.

Broader definitions of value and more strategic portfolio management

Public-sector decision-makers have long known that the value of public and business events can extend far beyond economic metrics. Decision-making, evaluation, and prioritisation are increasingly reflecting objectives such as social cohesion, cultural expression, environmental sustainability, community wellbeing, and national identity alongside financial return. This broader lens is now a defining feature of contemporary event policy, and many event organisers seeking public funding and support are adapting their approach accordingly.

A related shift is the increasing tendency for governments and destination agencies to manage events as long-term strategic assets rather than one-off opportunities. Leading jurisdictions increasingly use portfolio approaches that consider how events contribute collectively to broader objectives, including economic development, trade, innovation, cultural identity, international reputation, and community wellbeing, rather than assessing events primarily as standalone opportunities. This requires longer-term planning horizons, greater coordination across agencies and sectors, and more deliberate approaches to leverage and legacy.

There is also increasing recognition that the value of events depends not only on attraction and delivery, but on what happens before, during, and after the event itself. Many jurisdictions are investing more deliberately in leverage and legacy activity across a wider range of events, seeking to increase economic, social, cultural, and sector-development benefits. As a result, destination competitiveness increasingly depends on demonstrating how events contribute to lasting outcomes, not simply attendance, visitor expenditure, or media exposure.

Increasing commercialisation and competition

The events sector is also becoming increasingly commercialised. In sport, global properties such as SuperTri now operate alongside federation-owned competitions. Commercial leagues now play a major role in sports such as football (for example, the English Premier League), cricket (for example, the IPL), and basketball (for example, the NBA). Attendees are increasingly seeking more than sport alone, with off-field "sportainment" expectations adding to delivery obligations and complexity.

Concerts and live performances are experiencing similar shifts, with mega-tours, premium production values, and rising costs to secure, deliver, and attend events. For the public sector, this means dealing with an increasingly diverse group of rights holders, investors, and commercial operators.

For New Zealand, this is increasingly translating into major event opportunities that require direct engagement or negotiation with global event owners, promoters, or rights holders, rather than relying solely on domestically led bidding processes. These opportunities can offer significant visitor, profile, and reputational benefits, but they also tend to require larger and more certain funding commitments than many domestically led events.

The environments within which event decisions are made are also becoming faster and more competitive. Rights holders, conference organisers, and promoters increasingly expect clear timelines, coordinated responses, streamlined approval processes, and certainty around funding, risk-sharing, and delivery support. As a result, destination competitiveness is increasingly determined not only by what a place offers, but also by how effectively institutions are able to organise and respond.

Rising costs and complexity

Events are becoming increasingly expensive and operationally demanding, particularly at the major and mega-event level. This is well illustrated by recent mega-events. The hosting of the FIFA Men's World Cup 2026 across three countries and the joint hosting of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 by Australia and New Zealand illustrate the growing use of multi-country delivery models for the largest events. In response, organisations such as Commonwealth Sport and the International Olympic Committee are redesigning their hosting models to be more flexible and regionally distributed, with a greater focus on tailoring Games to suit local contexts.

The increasing demands of event organisers and the expectations of event attendees also require greater financial capacity. Even for events with the same name or brand, the scale and cost of delivery have often grown to an entirely different order of magnitude. New Zealand experienced this shift between RWC 1987 and RWC 2011, and again in the growth of the FIFA Women's World Cup between 2019 and 2023. Compliance, security, and infrastructure requirements continue to increase costs, placing growing pressure on host cities and governments.

At the same time, some innovations are reducing costs and improving efficiency. Digital channels enable organisers and destinations to reach audiences more effectively, while drones and remote broadcasting have lowered barriers to producing high-quality content.

New technologies and expectations

Technology is reshaping how public and business events are planned, delivered, and experienced. Artificial intelligence, digital engagement tools, advanced production technologies, and data analytics are transforming planning, delivery, and attendee experiences. While some technologies create efficiencies, they are also raising expectations around what organisers and destinations must deliver.

Business events also face new operating realities. Organisers increasingly seek to deliver purpose-driven events rather than simply convene people. Sustainability, accessibility, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) have become baseline expectations. At the same time, costs continue to rise, including travel and compliance costs.

Subvention remains an important tool for attracting business events aligned with priority sectors for host cities and governments, although approaches continue to evolve. Demand for subvention funding appears to be increasing in New Zealand and comparable destinations in this part of the world, while some organisations elsewhere, such as VisitBritain, have reduced their support.

Capability and workforce pressures

Finally, workforce, volunteer, and capability challenges are becoming more prominent internationally. Competition for skilled staff, increasing professionalisation of event delivery, and growing expectations for technology, commercial negotiations, security, and sustainability are increasing demand for specialist expertise. Many jurisdictions are investing in workforce development and capability building as part of their broader event strategies.

Implications for New Zealand

Taken together, these trends point to an events sector that is becoming more competitive, more commercial, more strategically managed, and more focussed on delivering long-term public value. Success is increasingly determined not only by destination appeal, but by strategic clarity, investment certainty, coordination across partners, and the ability to leverage events for wider outcomes.

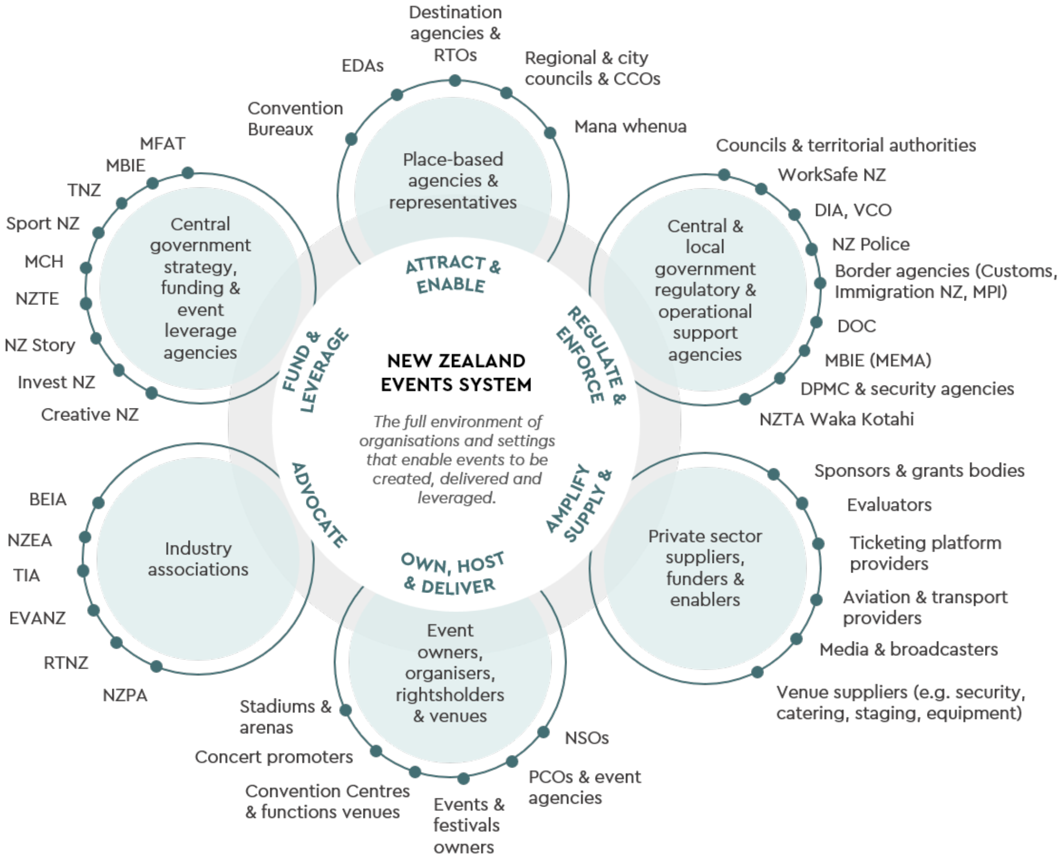
For New Zealand, this suggests that maintaining competitiveness will require stronger strategic direction, more deliberate portfolio management, improved prospecting capability, clearer pathways for investment and risk-sharing, and a greater focus on leverage, legacy, and capability development. The challenge is how to ensure New Zealand's events system is equipped to compete and succeed in this rapidly evolving global marketplace.

Overview of the events system and case for change

How the current system operates

An events system comprises the organisations, people, resources, and relationships that collectively support the attraction, development, and delivery of events. It is not defined by any single organisation or funding programme, but by the interactions between a wide range of participants operating within a shared policy, funding, and operating environment.

Figure 3: Overview of key events system roles and actors



Note: MBIE – Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, TNZ – Tourism New Zealand, NZTE – New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, MFAT – Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, MCH – Ministry for Culture and Heritage, DIA – Department of Internal Affairs, VCO – Visits and Ceremonial Office, MPI – Ministry for Primary Industries, DOC – Department of Conservation, DPMC – Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, NZTA – New Zealand Transport Agency, PCOs – Professional Conference Organisers, BEIA – Business Events Industry Aotearoa, NZEA – New Zealand Events Association, TIA – Tourism Industry Aotearoa, EVANZ – Entertainment Venues Association of New Zealand, RTOs – Regional Tourism Organisations, EDAs – Economic Development Agencies, NZPA – New Zealand Promoters Association, CCOs – Council Controlled Organisations, NSOs – National Sporting Organisations.

New Zealand's events system is multi-layered, decentralised, and heavily reliant on collaboration. Central government, local government, regional agencies, iwi and Māori partners, industry bodies, and event organisers all play distinct but interconnected roles in attracting, planning, funding, facilitating, and delivering events. In broad terms, the system can be visualised as in Figure 3.

The performance of the system depends not only on the organisations involved, but also on the wider environment in which they operate. Funding frameworks, legislation, infrastructure, workforce capability, governance arrangements, and partnerships can either enable or constrain success.

The current environment

Stakeholders

A defining strength of New Zealand's events system is the strong connectivity among its core participants. Across both public and business events, stakeholders generally know one another well, understand the roles of key organisations, and have established relationships that support collaboration across the event lifecycle – from early concept identification through feasibility, funding, bidding, delivery, leverage, and evaluation. Having well-connected stakeholders is important and should be protected.

The strength of these established networks can also create limitations. A system that relies heavily on a relatively small group of well-connected stakeholders may not consistently engage a broader set of partners who can contribute additional value. While iwi, sector agencies, and private beneficiaries do not need to be involved in every event (and likely would not have the capacity to do so), their absence at key points in the event lifecycle can make it more difficult to maximise international connections, leverage outcomes, legacy benefits, and sector development opportunities.

Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities across New Zealand's events system are generally understood, but are distributed across multiple organisations with different mandates, priorities, and funding arrangements.

Central government's involvement is primarily delivered through NZME within MBIE (administering strategy and funding for "major events"), TNZ (attracting international business events as a tourism driver), the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (advocating for arts and cultural events), and agencies like Sport New Zealand for sporting events.

Local government plays critical roles. Councils provide venues, infrastructure, and operational support for events, co-fund a substantial share of event costs (especially for public events), and lead regional bid coordination (for public and business events). However, their capacity and resources vary widely by region and locality.

Industry associations build capability, convene (and often measure) the sector, and lead advocacy.

Private entities such as event promoters and rights holders are also key players, as many events are privately initiated and delivered.

Not all organisations engage with events in the same way. Organisations such as convention bureaux, Tourism New Zealand, NZME, regional events teams, and event organisers have events at the centre of their mandate and operating rhythms. By contrast, regulatory and border agencies such as the Civil Aviation Authority, Immigration New Zealand, WorkSafe, and council consenting teams may encounter major events only occasionally. Their responsibilities are clear, but their engagement with events is comparatively infrequent.

Similarly, agencies with potential leverage roles may have deep expertise in sectors such as marine, health, energy, or technology, but events are rarely a core mechanism through which they pursue their objectives. When an event with significant leverage potential emerges, it can be difficult to sustain attention and commitment within existing budgets, work programmes, and strategic priorities, particularly when several years may pass between securing and delivering a major event. Mandates, funding priorities, and personnel can all change during this period.

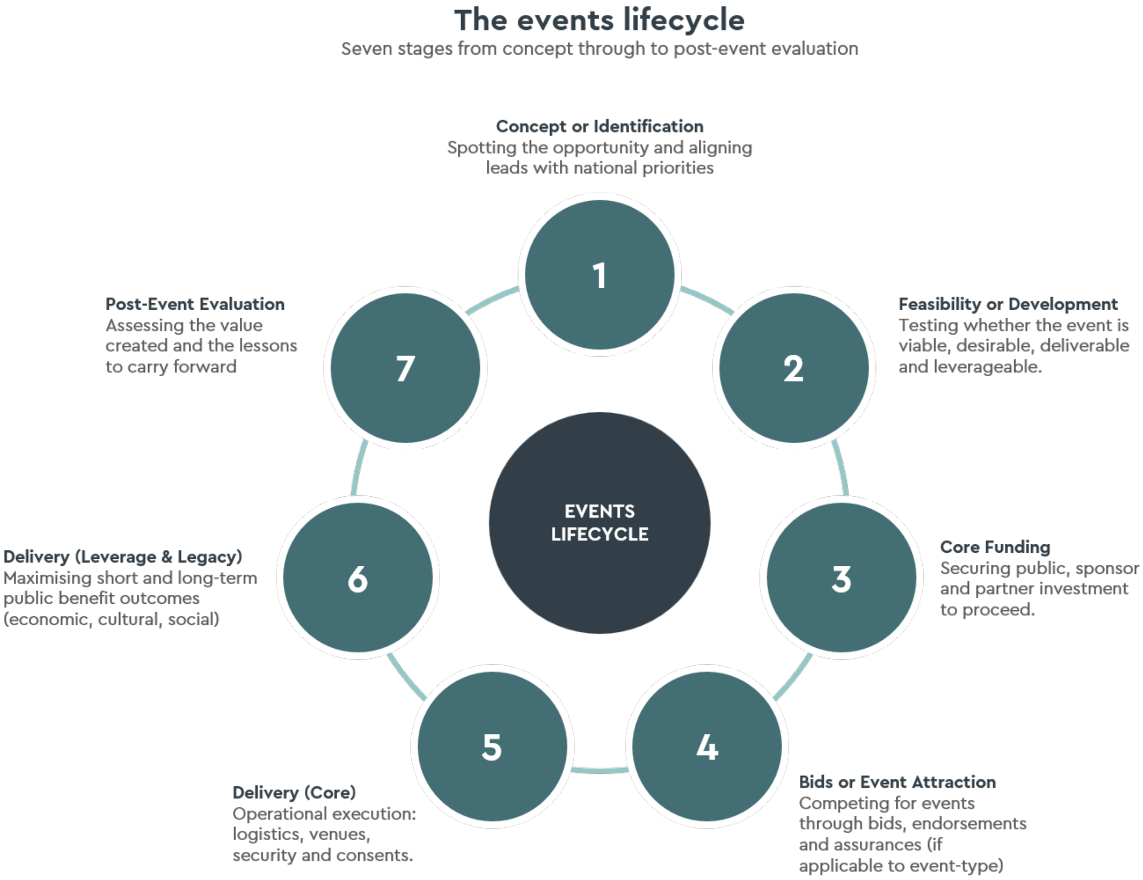
As a result, opportunities to maximise the direct, leveraged, and legacy benefits of events can be harder to realise. This is not necessarily due to a lack of willingness or support, but because events sit outside the primary operating focus of many organisations whose involvement can nonetheless be important to success.

The differing mandates, priorities, capacities, and levels of engagement across organisations create ongoing coordination challenges for the events system. These challenges become most apparent when successful delivery depends on sustained cross-system collaboration or deliberate effort is required to maximise the broader economic, social, cultural, and sector benefits that events can generate.

The event lifecycle in New Zealand

Across both public and business events, the lifecycle is well established and broadly understood (see Figure 4). New Zealand generally performs strongly across the core stages of attraction, development, and delivery. However, there are opportunities to generate greater value by engaging a broader range of stakeholders, strengthening coordination across public and business events, and capturing leverage and legacy opportunities earlier in the lifecycle.

Figure 4: Events lifecycle in New Zealand



Concept and identification

The concept and identification stage typically involves multiple actors generating leads. Depending on the event type, this can include NZME, NSOs, promoters, arts bodies, bureaux, RTOs or EDAs, iwi, academia, and government agencies. While this can create duplication, it also enables alignment when priorities converge, and the strong relationships across the system usually mean unnecessary duplication is resolved early.

A key distinction is between proactive prospecting and reactive assessment. NZME identifies and develops some opportunities proactively through early engagement with multiple parties, while also assessing opportunities brought forward by NSOs, promoters, regions, and other proponents. TNZ takes a similar approach, working with a wide range of stakeholders on both proactive and reactive opportunities. The opportunity is to build on this existing prospecting activity by broadening its reach, providing it with sufficient resources, and coordinating it more deliberately across public events, international business events, relevant national agencies, and regional stakeholders.

There is scope to strengthen early collaboration, particularly for events that can contribute to broader national priorities, ranging from social cohesion to economic development. Expanding the group of stakeholders who understand that events can be vehicles for achieving their objectives would increase the number of people scanning for opportunities, broadening the system's opportunity pipeline and improving early identification of high-value prospects. There is also an opportunity to link public and business-event pipelines earlier at a national level, so any shared-value opportunities are surfaced and can be pursued in a coordinated way.

Feasibility or development

Feasibility assessment considers whether an event is viable, desirable, deliverable, aligned with strategic priorities, and capable of generating wider benefits through deliberate leverage. The depth of analysis varies depending on the scale and risk of each project, from basic checks through to detailed economic modelling, risk assessment, venue and infrastructure reviews, border and security considerations, and sector-alignment testing. New Zealand generally gets the balance between necessary detail and unnecessary cost right. CAP funding supports feasibility work for international business events; NZME provides strong guidance and often funding for major public event feasibility work; and regional teams are well placed to assess community-level projects, albeit within funding constraints.

Sometimes the feasibility process does not involve a broad enough range of agencies, so the full value, cost, and opportunity profile of an event is not fully understood from the outset. Leveraging bodies engaged after the feasibility or development stage have less ability to shape or assess potential benefits, or to inform potential leverage and legacy planning. Early involvement of iwi has the potential to add value not only for tikanga and cultural integration but also for identifying opportunities to generate greater value through content, partnerships, and delivery. Feasibility work for the largest events should also connect across event-types: where public events might offer an opportunity (or risk, in the case of a clash) for business events and vice versa. Earlier alignment of interests and expectations reduces the risk of later misalignment and increases the likelihood that support can be sustained even if priorities, funding settings, or personnel change between investment and delivery.

A further gap is the absence of a central government "one-stop shop" for events aligned with national sector or social priorities. Alignment of NZ Inc agencies is part of the process for the Major Events Fund, so this absence is more apparent for business events than public events. This lack of easy access into specialist areas of government for events outside of the Major Events Fund is a resource cost and barrier for event organisers, and leverage opportunities can be missed. Missed opportunities at the feasibility stage often flow through the remainder of the lifecycle, affecting investment decisions, leverage planning, delivery, and evaluation.

Core funding

Core funding can be a significant challenge. Major public events often require central government investment, usually through the MEF, with local government expected to co-invest despite increasing fiscal constraints. International business events rely heavily on TNZ's CAP Fund for feasibility and bidding, but there is no enduring national fund for subvention, seed funding, or underwriting. New

Zealand's small markets for ticket revenue and commercial sponsorship compound the funding challenge. This leaves New Zealand at a competitive disadvantage internationally.

Bidding and event attraction

Bidding and event attraction can be resource-intensive and carry significant sunk costs, making the existing public-sector funding (through CAP, the Major Events Fund or regional support) critical up to this stage. For major public events, closed-tender or multi-city processes can place pressure on local government. The costs of bidding for international business events are well supported by the CAP Fund, limited only by scale: additional CAP investment would allow more opportunities to reach bid stage. Across both public and business events, events secured without prior government engagement (yet with an expectation of financial support) can create financial and reputational risks. The opportunity for wider reach at concept and feasibility stage mentioned above would flow through to stronger and more compelling bids for public events and for business events.

Core delivery

Delivery of events is generally well managed, with experienced organisers and established venues across the system giving New Zealand a reputation as a "safe pair of hands." However, regulatory challenges – particularly for events using public open spaces – can create friction with inconsistent processes around the country, resource constraints, and enforcement challenges adding cost and complexity. Public events and business events would also benefit from stronger national coordination in some areas such as cultural integration and sustainability.

Delivery of leverage and legacy

Public funding typically comes with leverage and legacy expectations. There have been strong examples of leverage and legacy activity attached to New Zealand's largest events, particularly where planning, budget, and agency ownership have been clear. For events supported through MEF, agencies may already be engaged early to identify leverage and legacy opportunities, and dedicated leverage and legacy funding has helped support uptake in some cases. The harder challenge is sustaining commitment over long lead times when agency mandates, budgets, people, and priorities can change between investment decision and event delivery. For business events and events outside MEF processes, the challenge is ensuring that the right sector, trade, innovation, cultural, or community partners are identified early enough, engaged effectively, and have the mandate, capability, and resources required to participate.

Post-event evaluation

Post-event evaluations are undertaken for most publicly funded events. Although broader value is increasingly recognised and sometimes measured for larger events, the relative cost and simplicity of existing methodologies mean that evaluations are often weighted towards economic impact. Long-term legacy tracking is uncommon, reflecting both the cost of ongoing evaluation and the fact that organising committees are frequently disbanded following event delivery.

This creates a risk that some of the benefits most often cited as justification for public investment, including social, cultural, environmental, capability, and knowledge outcomes, are not consistently measured or understood. There is significant potential to strengthen evaluation frameworks for both public and business events, including greater emphasis on leverage activity, legacy outcomes, and long-term public value.

Overall, the event lifecycle functions effectively, particularly in relation to event attraction, development, and delivery. The greatest opportunities for improvement are stronger coordination, earlier engagement with the right stakeholders, better access to expertise and support, more consistent integration of leverage and legacy, and stronger measurement of long-term outcomes.

Examples of leverage and legacy activity already occurring

Recent major events demonstrate that leverage and legacy activity is already occurring in parts of the system. The New Zealand Open has been used to support tourism promotion, international brand visibility, golf tourism, and investor-related relationship building. Supercars has supported the Women in Motorsport Breakfast, bringing together partners including Sport New Zealand, Motorsport New Zealand, and host cities to promote participation and career pathways for women in motorsport and related sectors. Tourism New Zealand's activation at the 2025 World Triathlon Championship Finals in Wollongong also helped promote New Zealand and build awareness ahead of the planned 2028 World Triathlon Championship Finals. These examples demonstrate the value of leverage and legacy activity, but also point to opportunities to plan it earlier, resource it more adequately, apply it more systematically, and link it more closely to national and regional outcomes.

Case for change: key system challenges

While many parts of New Zealand's events system function well, stakeholder feedback, system analysis, and international comparisons point to a number of structural challenges that limit performance and support the case for change:

Strategic direction and investment challenges

- **No enduring national strategy or shared outcomes framework:** There is currently no enduring national strategy or shared outcomes framework that articulates what New Zealand is seeking to achieve through events as a system. Major public events, business events, and regional events each follow separate paths, leading to inconsistent priorities, gaps, and reactive rather than planned development of an events pipeline. This absence of an enduring national events strategy means the system lacks a stable long-term direction and can be buffeted by changing political or funding cycles. Different agencies and regions often pursue events with differing criteria, and short-term goals (like immediate tourism numbers) can overshadow broader long-term benefits. Key tensions include:
  - Public versus business events: there is a lack of a unified perspective on how large conferences could be leveraged alongside public festivals, or vice versa.
  - Major versus national anchor events: successive governments have often focussed on large-scale public events, leaving national anchor events or domestic events to local initiative. While ad hoc interventions to support these types of events have been made in the past, the

opportunity is missed to more strategically connect regionally significant events with potential to grow into a national portfolio and deliver greater overall benefit.

These issues are considered further in the section on strategic framework and outcomes.

- **Temporary and uneven funding settings undermine confidence and long-term planning:** New Zealand has enduring baseline mechanisms through the MEF and the CAP, which are reasonably well understood. However, recent temporary initiatives and one-off packages (such as the Event Boost Fund or Events Attraction Package) have introduced additional complexity, short timeframes, and uncertainty about priorities. This unpredictability:
  - Hampers long-term planning: Organisers and bidders can't rely on consistent support for events requiring commitments five to ten years in advance.
  - Over-relies on local councils: For many major events, councils are expected to provide funding at short notice to help secure the event, as well as staff and other resources to support delivery. With local government under fiscal pressure, this can lead to frustration and sometimes an inability to commit, resulting in lost opportunities.

  Risk is not allocated strategically across the system. Currently, if an event loses money or overruns costs, it is generally the event organiser that bears the brunt. There is no clear national framework on how to share financial risks, which deters some councils or private promoters from pursuing ambitious events.

  These challenges and opportunities for overcoming them are considered further in the section on funding, investment, and risk.

System coordination and delivery challenges

- **Dispersed governance and the absence of a system steward:** Oversight and coordination responsibilities are dispersed across multiple agencies and levels of government. No single entity is responsible for overall coordination or performance of the events system. This has led to:
  - Duplication: For example, multiple cities or agencies might unknowingly identify or chase the same international event.
  - Gaps: Key functions like maintaining a national events pipeline, cross-portfolio planning, leveraging events for greater public outcomes and long-term legacy, and systematically linking public and business events are weak, inconsistent, or absent.
  - Overreliance on informal networks: Collaboration does happen, but often due to individual relationships and ad hoc committees, rather than through institutionalised processes.

  These issues and options for improving governance arrangements are considered further in the section on Governance and system coordination.

- **Burdensome regulatory environment:** Events face variable and complex regulatory requirements across different regions. Local councils each have their own bylaws and processes (for noise, traffic management, public safety, and so on), creating a patchwork of rules that event organisers must navigate, adding complexity for multi-city events. Smaller events often face nearly the same compliance hurdles as big ones due to one-size-fits-all rules, imposing disproportionate costs.

Additionally, stakeholders have raised concerns about national policy settings potentially affecting competitiveness, for example, perceptions that tax settings discourage some international events from coming to New Zealand.

These are further assessed in the section on regulatory and legislative settings.

- **Occasionally strained central–local partnerships:** Local councils are essential for hosting events (venues, permits, local funding) but are facing budget constraints and shifting priorities. There is no consistent or formal mechanism to align national and local event strategies, which risks local authorities being taken by surprise by central initiatives, being shut out of event negotiations, or being asked to support events (whether financially or through delivery obligations) at short notice. Recent ad hoc funding initiatives show that, although additional investment in the events system is welcomed, the way it is introduced can create tension. The lack of clarity on respective roles can breed mistrust or misaligned expectations, for example, small councils expecting more Crown support than is on offer, or central government having an expectation that local cities will contribute to national bids or event funding.
- **Limited integration of public and business events:** Public and business events are planned and funded in silos, despite opportunities for synergy. Each stream has separate pipelines and decision-making channels, for example, TNZ handles business events and NZME handles major public events, with little routine coordination. This has led to:
  - Missed synergies: for example, not coupling an international sporting event with a relevant industry conference, or co-marketing a cultural festival with a trade expo, when they could amplify each other.
  - Duplicated effort: lacking a consolidated calendar (noting the efforts of industry associations to resolve this), some agencies or regions might inadvertently target the same events or hold overlapping events, rather than spreading them to maximise year-round impact.

  The avenue to reach into different parts of government for cross-agency support (regulatory or leverage agencies) is also different for public events and business events. There is no established process for business events, whereas major public events have an established route through MBIE's major events team during decision-making and through the convening of an all-of-government coordination group.

The above issues – and how they interconnect – make a strong case for change. Despite New Zealand's successes, the absence of an overarching strategy, more durable funding settings, and coordinated stewardship limits the system's ability to maximise value and pursue long-term opportunities. For example, it becomes harder to create a national series of opportunities linked to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games or a sequence of significant commemorative events from 2035 to 2040 marking the bicentenary of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Similarly, an uncoordinated approach means there is limited ability to plan for needed event infrastructure or to ensure industry capability keeps pace with future event ambitions.

This report addresses specific lines of inquiry, assessing several of the challenges noted above in further detail, complemented by insights from comparable countries, and includes recommended directions for change. Cross-cutting themes of central–local partnership and public–business events integration are addressed throughout, reflecting their importance to each aspect of the system.

Lessons from international comparators

Before examining each specific area of New Zealand's events system, it is useful to highlight key lessons from other countries, based on an international scan of event strategies, funding models, and governance structures, as well as interviews with key experts in selected countries. These insights, drawn from Australia (Brisbane, Queensland; Sydney, New South Wales; Melbourne, Victoria); Scotland; Wales; Copenhagen and Denmark; Vancouver and Canada; and Singapore, help to contextualise New Zealand's situation and identify relevant practices that inform the review's recommendations.

Although jurisdictions vary considerably in ambition, scale, institutional arrangements, and system strengths, there is no single model that can be transplanted directly into New Zealand. However, the international evidence does reveal a number of consistent themes in how high-performing event systems are designed and operated. High-level findings, along with implications or considerations for New Zealand, are shown in Figure 5 on the following page.

In more detail, key lessons are:

1. Long-term strategy and portfolio management

High-performing jurisdictions do not treat events as isolated bids or one-off transactions. They use long-term strategy to guide an overall portfolio of events – balancing event types, geography, timing, anchor events, infrastructure, and wider public value. Scotland and Victoria are the clearest examples of this, with long-horizon strategies, deliberate portfolio thinking, and explicit integration of public and business events at the strategic level. Wales and New South Wales show a similar pattern, embedding both public and business events in a single strategic framework rather than treating them as unrelated systems. Business events are also overtly framed as more than generators of visitor numbers and expenditure, with several comparators explicitly prioritising knowledge exchange, innovation, trade, sector development, and international profile.

Lesson: A clear, inclusive strategy provides direction and fosters alignment among stakeholders.

2. Stable funding and pipeline planning

Strategy is only effective when matched by long-term funding settings that allow early commitments and deliberate pipeline development. Competitive jurisdictions pair multi-year planning with funding mechanisms that support different event types over different horizons. For example, Denmark and Scotland plan years ahead, Victoria combines stable funds with bespoke anchor event arrangements (often thinking in decades, not years), and Queensland aligns operational funds and major event attraction funding to much longer strategic horizons. The advantage comes from having funding that enables destinations to plan further ahead, commit earlier, maintain continuity, shape the pipeline intentionally, and match funding tools to different event scales and lead times.

Lesson: Reliable long-term funding and the ability to commit early give a competitive edge in securing events and building a continuous pipeline.

Figure 5: Lessons from comparator destinations

Comparator destinations have..

New Zealand should consider...

A clear vision of why it invests in events, both as a portfolio and individually

- Establishing and openly communicating the clear rationale for intervening in business and public events with a single portfolio perspective
- Building mutual understanding and strengthening alignment between national priorities and those of domestic stakeholders and delivery partners

Identified priorities, and a system for capturing data, measuring impact, and comparing impact against objectives

- Strengthening the connection and measurement of objectives against collective and individual investment decisions, across a single portfolio
- Building data and government-led mechanisms to capture impact, including leverage and legacy, from a greater proportion of events

The aim of creating a system that makes their destination 'easy to do business with'

- Simplifying access to the right agencies for advice on business and public event delivery, regulation, and leverage and legacy
- Ensuring an end-to-end process for supporting event organisers

One or more strategy documents to guide investment, including a specific events strategy

- Developing a National Events Strategy, covering different streams of events
- Ensuring the Strategy has clear priority outcomes, and that it complements regional and city needs and strategies

A partnership approach within and between different levels of government and other public partners

- Encouraging collaboration and partnership across the sector at all levels
- Developing prospecting targets collectively between parties who will play a part in funding, delivery or leverage

The right people in the right places in the system, with clear mandates and decision-making authority

- Reviewing how and where in the system key decisions are made
- Ensuring regions are involved early in decisions about potential investment into events in their region

Long-term, sustainable and consistent funding at both central and local government levels

- Enabling new funding levers to support local investment and leverage fairly and proportionately
- Ensuring central government funding is consistent and long-term

3. Clear lead-agency models and coordinated governance

Strong systems usually have a recognised lead coordinating function, even when delivery remains distributed. VisitScotland, Destination NSW, Tourism and Events Queensland and Visit Victoria all show that coherence comes from a clearly mandated lead body or lead pair that can coordinate strategy, investment, bidding, performance, and cross-agency alignment. These examples are all national (or state) agencies, predominantly funded and mandated by national (or state) government.

Exactly what functions are centralised varies. NSW sets all strategic decision-making at a state level with local government almost solely focussed on delivery, which is unlikely to suit New Zealand given that many local government entities have strong capability and specific priorities for events. The consistent theme across all jurisdictions reviewed is the presence of a clearly mandated coordinating function supported by specialist delivery partners, business events organisations, convention bureaux, and formal industry engagement.

Lesson: A national lead agency or network, supported by formalised partnerships between system partners, helps to avoid duplication and ensure accountability.

4. Regulation should enable delivery, not drive strategy

The comparator evidence does not support the idea that bespoke legislation is a key determinant of a high-performing events system. Scotland and Denmark rely primarily on general regulatory frameworks supported by strategy, coordination, and practical delivery arrangements; Singapore combines strong national control with highly navigable regulatory support; and Victoria and New South Wales use major events legislation selectively to solve specific operational or commercial-rights issues for designated large events. The consistent pattern is that good systems first make ordinary regulatory navigation easier, more predictable, and better coordinated, and only use targeted legislative tools where genuinely necessary. This suggests regulation matters, but usually as an enabling layer rather than as the core reform lever.

Lesson: High-performing systems prioritise streamlined and predictable regulatory processes, using legislative interventions selectively and only where clearly justified.

5. Clear central–local roles and co-investment expectations

Across every comparator with more than one tier of government, higher performance depends on clear role differentiation between national/state and local actors. National or state bodies (generally agencies, sometimes Ministries) usually lead strategic direction, attraction, and high-level investment, while local government anchors delivery through permitting, public safety, venues, infrastructure, place-making, and often co-funding. This is explicit in Scotland's "One Scotland" approach, Wales' central direction and local delivery model, Queensland's state–local operating split, New South Wales' state-led attraction and council-led delivery, Victoria's interdependent state–local model, and Vancouver's multi-level partnerships. The structures and allocation of responsibility differ; what is consistent is the clarity with which roles, expectations, and risk-sharing arrangements are agreed in advance.

Lesson: Clear operating models between national and local partners help align expectations, clarify responsibilities, and support effective co-investment and delivery.

6. Leverage, legacy, and capability must be designed in

Several comparators demonstrate that wider public value does not arise automatically from hosting events; it is deliberately planned, resourced, and managed. Scotland links events to broader policy agendas and legacy investments; Singapore has created explicit legacy tools for business events; Vancouver demonstrates how legacy planning can continue beyond the event itself; and Victoria embeds capability-building directly into one of its regional funding streams. The common lesson is that the destinations with consistent leverage, legacy, and capability development have these as built-in system functions, resourced proportionately and with clear delivery ownership.

Lesson: Major public and business events should include proportionate leverage, legacy, and capability plans from the outset, including identified delivery partners, realistic funding, and clearer expectations for post-event evaluation and longer-term follow-through.

The table below provides a high-level summary of funding arrangements, strategic approaches, and institutional models across the comparator jurisdictions. It is intended to illustrate the diversity of approaches and should not be interpreted as identifying a single preferred model for New Zealand.

Table 2: Scale of event funding and strategic and structural models used across comparator jurisdictions

	Enduring funding	Additional funding (NZD)	Strategic approach	Structural location
Brisbane, Queensland	Homegrown – Queensland's Destination Events Fund is the enduring event fund, delivered through Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ). The annual allocation is not publicly available but >AU$25 million has been invested across 1,000+ events since inception. A recent boost of AU$20 million across four years was provided for major events (which can include significant national events) and business events.	The Queensland Government has committed AU$80 million (approximately NZ$97 million) to a Mega and Strategic Events Attraction Fund to secure major and strategic events in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032. Brisbane 2032 and the FIFA WWC 2023 also included major capital investments.	Queensland's events system is guided by two long-range, whole-of-government frameworks: Towards Tourism 2032 (a visitor economy strategy) and Destination 2045 (a 20-year tourism and events plan which positions Queensland as "Australia's event capital"). Events are also guided by a Queensland Business Events Industry Strategy 2032. TEQ is about to release an updated public events strategy.	Queensland's events system is led by Tourism and Events Queensland, which has statutory authority for attracting, supporting and promoting major, regional and business events; and the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation which leads mega-event assessment, bidding and government coordination. The Brisbane EDA leads city-level major events and business events, as do partners in other parts of Queensland (including the Gold Coast, Cairns, and the Sunshine Coast).

	Enduring funding	Additional funding (NZD)	Strategic approach	Structural location
Melbourne/ Victoria	Through Visit Victoria, a Major Events Fund (figures not publicly available; this fund also fluctuates to accommodate larger one-off events) and a Regional Events Fund (current round – $38 million over four years).	F1 ongoing annual investment; c. AU$100 million in 2023. AU$500m (NZ$600 million) in Etihad Stadium and MCG infrastructure to secure the AFL Final to 2057. AU$1 billion (NZ$1.2 billion) for the Melbourne Park Development to secure the Australian Open to 2046.	Major events, regional events and business events all sit within two overarching visitor economy strategies. While broader in scope, these strategies provide a common strategic framework across the different event streams.	Visit Victoria is the state government's lead agency for major events and destination marketing. Visit Victoria is also responsible for business events, operating as a membership-based entity with its own board and CEO.
Sydney, New South Wales	Through Destination NSW, the state invests in major and regional events via its core events budget. Investments are not publicly disclosed, but its regional events fund is long-term (established in 1996) and in the 2024/2025 year committed $1.4 million in support of 68 events across the state. Destination NSW is also the major funder of BESydney, which leads business event acquisition.	NSW event funding is not publicly available, but it is clear there is investment beyond baseline for key major events. For example, the NSW government committed $10 million as part of the legacy for the FIFA WWC 2023.[7]	Major events and business events are both captured in the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035, which provides a unified policy framework for both event streams. There are no event-specific strategies below this. Councils manage local delivery, permitting and community events, and support state-led major events under the Major Events Act.	Destination NSW is the state government's lead agency for major events strategy and acquisition, and for business events strategy. Business event acquisition is led by BESydney, an independent public–private partnership with its own board and CEO. The two organisations are not co-located but operate within a shared strategic and planning framework.
Vancouver, British Columbia	CAN$1.5 million (NZ$1.8 million) to Sport Hosting Vancouver, for major sporting events only. Cultural and sports events are funded provincially through Sport Hosting BC's Destination Events Program: $150,000, or 10% of an event's budget.	Mega events such as the FIFA World Cup receive additional funding from all three levels of government.	The Metro Vancouver Destination Development Strategy identifies Major Events as key tourism demand drivers.	Sport Hosting Vancouver sits within the City of Vancouver. It partners with agencies including Destination Vancouver, where the Vancouver Convention Bureau sits. Sport Hosting BC sits inside a Ministry; the BC Business Events Bureau sits within Destination BC.

7 Australian Sports Commission, Clearinghouse for Sport, "2023 Fifa Women's World Cup [AUS and NZ]", https://www.ausport.gov.au/clearinghouse/evidence/major-events/strategies/2023-fifa-womens-world-cup.

	Enduring funding	Additional funding (NZD)	Strategic approach	Structural location
Singapore	The Major Sports Events Fund is a S$165 million fund (approximately NZ$216 million) over four years. Funding is allocated to business event subvention, leisure events, seed funding, and one-off incentives for specific events.	Not separately identified.	The lead national strategy is ForwardSG; aligned with this are event strategies within the Singapore Tourism Board and Sport Singapore	The Singapore Tourism Board is home for business events and markets public events; Sport Singapore is the home of major sports events whether HP or participation.
Scotland	Typical annual funding of £2.5 million to 3.0 million (c. $5.7 million to $7.0 million). Approved by officers or VisitScotland Board. Scottish Government directly funds some anchor festivals.	Mega events receive additional funding; allocated by government but usually contracted and managed through EventScotland.	Scotland The Perfect Stage, in place since 2008, is for business events and public events. It has three interconnecting strands: developing events, developing the industry, developing Scotland.	EventScotland, originally separate, now part of VisitScotland. Includes business events and major events.
Wales	A Major Sporting Event Fund of c. £36 million over eight years, with most support at £500k or less. A Sport & Culture Fund supports growth for smaller/national events. A fund for business events is currently on pause.	With the establishment of the Major Sporting Event fund (which aligns in timeframe with the long-term strategy) there no longer appears to be separate one-off funds for larger events. For example, £5.2 million for the Grand Départ GB 2027 sits within this existing fund.	Overarching wellbeing legislation sets the long-term direction on public value for Wales. This flows through to a broader five-year Visitor Economy strategy, and then a National Events Strategy for Wales 2022–2030. This strategy is for the whole sector, business and public events, not just for Welsh Government.	Event Wales (for public events) and Meet in Wales (for business events) sit within Welsh Government, reporting to the same Director. The larger local authorities have specialist event delivery teams.
Copenhagen, Denmark	Sport Event Denmark captures major sports events and sports congresses only, with an estimated annual budget of c. NZ$8 million (as at 2022). Co-investment is usually required with cities (these budgets are not available).	Not separately identified.	Sport Event Denmark has a strategic refresh every four years; current focus starts with 10 sports which are important to Danes (which, in turn, drives economic and media benefits).	Sport Event Denmark is focussed on sport events and sport congresses, with cultural and business events generally led through separate city and regional arrangements. Although business events and public events both sit within Wonderful Copenhagen, the functions remain distinct.

The international evidence does not point to a single model that New Zealand should copy. Rather, it points to a set of design choices that should be adapted to New Zealand's scale, institutions and central–local partnership settings. New Zealand should draw on the strongest common features of these systems: long-term strategy, portfolio discipline, stable investment settings, active prospecting, clear stewardship, proportionate regulation, and deliberate leverage and legacy planning. Equally, it should avoid over-centralisation that weakens regional ownership; long-term funding commitments that are not periodically tested against public value; unfunded mandates for agencies or councils; and one-off funding tools that create market expectations without building durable system capability.

The sections that follow draw on specific international examples and comparisons relevant to each area of inquiry. More detail on the arrangements in the comparator jurisdictions is also provided in Appendix A.

Why the government gets involved

Central and local government become involved in events because many of the benefits generated by events are not fully captured by event organisers or commercial participants. Events can create significant economic, social, cultural, and reputational value, making them one of the most versatile tools available to support public policy objectives and broader public value. When the system functions well, events stimulate visitor spending, support jobs, and activate local economies in a highly visible way. Business events generate high-value visitation, knowledge exchange, and sector development that often fall outside of peak leisure tourism season. Major public events create national moments that strengthen identity, pride, and social cohesion.

Many of these benefits represent public goods, spillovers, or wider societal outcomes that private organisers have limited incentive or ability to maximise. In other cases, high upfront costs, uncertainty, or coordination challenges may discourage private investment altogether. Government involvement may be justified where it helps secure broader public benefits and is targeted, proportionate, and supported by appropriate risk management.

At the broadest level, central government becomes involved in events to:

- **Capture broad spillover benefits (positive externalities):** Events often generate benefits that extend beyond the direct commercial returns received by organisers. These include visitor spending, international profile, community pride, cultural expression, and knowledge exchange. Because organisers cannot fully capture or monetise these benefits, they may under-invest in activities that increase them. Public support can help unlock these wider benefits and, in some cases, help overcome risks or costs that would otherwise discourage investment.
- **Foster enduring legacies:** Major events can create long-term benefits, including enhanced infrastructure, revitalised places, skilled volunteers, stronger community and business networks, and enduring international connections. Government involvement can help ensure leverage and legacy activities are planned from the outset, increasing the likelihood that short-term events generate lasting value.

- **Address information gaps and uncertainty:** Event investment decisions often involve uncertainty about likely costs, benefits, and risks. Government can help address these information gaps through research, evaluation, data sharing, and common assessment frameworks, improving decision-making across the system and increasing confidence in investment decisions.
- **Overcome coordination failures:** Many significant events require coordination between multiple independent parties, including government agencies, councils, businesses, iwi, venues, and community organisations. Without active coordination, opportunities can be missed and unnecessary duplication can occur. Government can play a convening and stewardship role, helping align effort, clarify responsibilities, and ensure critical enabling functions are delivered effectively.
- **Provide public goods and ensure equity:** Many event-related benefits, including national identity, social cohesion, cultural expression, and community vibrancy, are public goods that market forces alone are unlikely to provide at socially desirable levels. Government intervention can also help ensure that opportunities and benefits are distributed more evenly across regions, seasons, and communities, rather than being concentrated only in the most commercially attractive locations or periods.

The relative importance of these rationales differs across event types. Consequently, the role of government, the policy tools employed, and the outcomes sought will vary depending on the nature and purpose of the event. Table 3 summarises how the rationale for central government involvement varies across event types, including the roles, interventions, and outcomes most commonly associated with each category.

Table 3: Central government involvement in events: rationales, roles, activities, and key outcomes

Event category	Rationales for central government involvement	Role of central government	Levers and activities used by central government	Key outcomes sought by central government
Mega events	Strongest rationale for intervention. Mega events create national-scale spillovers, international profile in the right markets, and leverage and legacy opportunities that private organisers or a single host region cannot capture alone. They also involve unusually high costs, risks, and complex cross-agency interfaces, so the potential for additional national benefits and the risk of coordination failures are greatest for these events.	National leader, underwriter and system integrator. Central government's role is to secure nationally significant opportunities, assess whether benefits justify costs, coordinate NZ Inc delivery, manage national risk and reputation, and ensure leverage and legacy are built in from the outset rather than treated as an afterthought.	Significant co-investment and, where necessary, guarantees and underwriting; Cabinet/ministerial decisions; cross-agency governance; border, security, transport and regulatory facilitation; national and international promotion; infrastructure alignment; leverage, legacy, and capability planning; evaluation and system learning.	A step-change in national economic and wider public value; major profile uplift; enduring international relationships; demonstrated capability to operate effectively as NZ Inc; authentic national identity and cultural expression at scale; and long-term infrastructure and capability legacy beyond the event window.

Event category	Rationales for central government involvement	Role of central government	Levers and activities used by central government	Key outcomes sought by central government
Major public events	Strong rationale where events deliver clear national economic, reputational, cultural or social value but where organisers will not fully capture or prioritise those wider benefits on their own. Central involvement is justified to secure events, improve scale and quality, spread benefits more widely, and make leverage/legacy more systematic.	Strategic co-investor and coordinator. Central government should co-invest in nationally valuable events, improve strategic fit with wider priorities, support a balanced national pipeline, and set clearer expectations around public value, leverage and legacy delivery.	Contestable funding or co-funding; prospecting and attraction support; border and regulatory facilitation where needed; cross-agency coordination; national marketing and profile support; leverage and legacy requirements; post-event evaluation and reporting.	Measurable national benefit, including economic return and wider public value; stronger international profile and hosting reputation; national pride and cultural visibility; a more balanced national portfolio and pipeline; stronger sector capability; and leverage-and-legacy practice becoming standard rather than exceptional.
International business events	Distinct and strong rationale. These events generate benefits well beyond delegate spend, including knowledge transfer, research collaboration, sector development, innovation, trade, investment, and global connections. Those benefits are often diffuse, under-captured by private actors, and require coordinated prospecting, bid support, and alignment with national institutions and sectors.	Partner for economic transformation and global connections. Central government's role is to use strategically aligned business events as part of the national portfolio, mobilise national institutions and sector champions, and connect business-event support to wider trade, science, innovation, and visitor economy objectives.	International marketing and attraction activity; bid assistance and subvention tools; partnerships with TNZ, convention bureaux, universities, CRIs and priority sectors; facilitation of hosts and delegates; earlier pipeline planning; and stronger integration with the public-events stream where linked opportunities exist.	Productivity and sector growth; enduring global business, research and investment links; high-value off-peak visitation; stronger bid competitiveness and pipeline visibility; better year-round utilisation of convention and visitor infrastructure; and a more resilient, professional business events workforce and supply chain.

Event category	Rationales for central government involvement	Role of central government	Levers and activities used by central government	Key outcomes sought by central government
National anchor events	Moderate-to-strong rationale where additionality is credible. Relevant factors include benefits beyond the host region, wider regional-growth effects, substantial visitation or place-branding benefits, gaps in the national calendar, and the potential to develop into a major event. Where these benefits are significant and additional, the rationale for central government involvement is stronger than for ordinary regional events.	Selective growth partner and co-investor. Central government should not lead all regionally based events, but it should selectively support those with broader-than-local spillovers, strategic growth potential, or clear relevance to the national pipeline and portfolio.	Co-funding with local government and regional partners; growth and capability support; targeted marketing exposure; facilitation where barriers are material; and inclusion within a national portfolio and pipeline approach so pathways to major event scale are deliberate rather than accidental.	Broader-than-local economic and profile benefits; regional growth and wider dispersal; capability-building in organisers, suppliers and volunteers; a stronger development pathway towards major event status; and better geographic spread of nationally relevant events across the system.
Regional events	More limited central-government rationale. These events often create worthwhile economic, social, and place-based value, but that value is usually concentrated locally or regionally. The central government rationale depends on a specific national objective, a system-wide issue, or a credible growth pathway; otherwise additionality is weaker and local leadership is more appropriate.	Primarily enabling rather than leading. Central government's role should usually be light-touch: set enabling frameworks, reduce friction where possible, and intervene selectively where national objectives are engaged. Day-to-day support, delivery, and place-based shaping should generally sit with local government and regional partners.	Broad framework settings; guidance, toolkits and coordination support; selective contestable or co-funding in specific cases; capability-building support; and occasional targeted intervention where national goals, pipeline continuity or growth pathways justify it.	Regional economic activity; place activation; seasonal and geographic dispersal; support for local supply chains and amenities; stronger local delivery capability; and contribution to the health and continuity of the wider national events system.

Event category	Rationales for central government involvement	Role of central government	Levers and activities used by central government	Key outcomes sought by central government
Community events	Weakest central-government rationale in most cases. Community events generate important public value through wellbeing, belonging, participation, local identity, inclusion and grassroots capability, but those benefits are mostly local and are usually best understood and supported by local actors rather than by central government.	Minimal direct role for central government. In most cases, central government should support indirectly or not at all, while local government, communities, iwi and local sponsors lead. A direct central role is only likely to be justified where a community event clearly advances a national policy priority or forms part of a wider strategic pathway.	General community-funding settings, inclusion and accessibility frameworks, guidance and capability resources, and only occasional targeted support where there is a wider policy rationale. The normal model is facilitation and framework-setting, not active national investment or coordination leadership.	Social cohesion and wellbeing; local identity, participation and cultural expression; volunteer and grassroots capability; community vibrancy and resilience; and modest local economic retention. These outcomes matter, but they are usually place-based rather than national in scale or distribution.

The strongest case for direct central government involvement sits with mega events, major public events, international business events, and selected national anchor events. These categories generate the clearest national spillovers, the strongest international profile, trade and innovation opportunities, the greatest coordination and risk-sharing challenges, and the most credible rationale for deliberate leverage, legacy, and capability-building activity.

This does not mean regional and community events are unimportant. Smaller events underpin the wider events ecosystem by creating demand for skills, suppliers, venues, and event-services capability between larger and less predictable events. They strengthen local identity, participation, community wellbeing, volunteer capability and grassroots delivery experience, while also providing pathways into larger events over time. Their benefits are generally more localised, however, meaning the rationale for direct central government leadership is weaker and the case for local leadership correspondingly stronger.

For national anchor events, central government support should generally be linked to a clear lifecycle rationale. Some events may warrant time-limited support to help them grow in scale, attract additional visitation, strengthen leverage outcomes or build commercial sustainability. Others may justify ongoing support where they function as strategic national assets and continue to deliver outcomes that would not otherwise be realised, such as international profile, regional dispersal, cultural identity, sector development, trade or investment benefits. In either case, support should be tested against clear additionality, public-value and portfolio criteria.

In sum, the type and intensity of public intervention should reflect the scale, distribution, and additionality of the benefits involved. Central government should concentrate its investment, coordination, and policy attention where national levers can improve outcomes, such as by securing internationally significant opportunities, supporting strategically important business events, coordinating complex cross-agency interfaces, and helping selected anchor events realise their national potential. Regional and community events are generally better led locally, with central government focussed primarily on providing supportive policy and regulatory settings and strengthening capability.

Some event genres, such as concerts and festivals, can sit across different categories depending on their scale, audience, strategic fit, and public-value proposition. Furthermore, different event genres will generate different combinations of outcomes. For example, sporting events may combine visitor and profile outcomes with participation, inclusion, volunteer development, high-performance pathways, organisational capability, national pride, and international sporting relationships.

Ultimately, the key test for public investment is not genre. It is whether public investment will generate additional benefits that are unlikely to be achieved by the market alone. As noted, these benefits can be international visitation, regional dispersal, destination profile, cultural outcomes, sector development, community vibrancy, or leverage opportunities. Public support may be justified if these types of additional benefits are clear, measurable, and aligned with the national events portfolio. Where an event like a concert or festival is commercially viable without public support and does not generate significant additional public outcomes, the case for central government investment is weak.

Understanding the value generated by events

Events generate substantial economic, social, cultural, and reputational value for New Zealand. They attract visitors, connect people and organisations, showcase places and communities, strengthen cultural identity, facilitate knowledge exchange, support business development, and contribute to broader public policy objectives. These benefits help explain why governments around the world continue to invest in attracting, supporting and leveraging events as part of wider tourism, economic development, trade, innovation, cultural, and community development strategies.

The scale of activity associated with events in New Zealand is significant. For the 12-month period to 1 August 2026, public events were estimated to generate approximately 17.9 million attendances and $1.1 billion in accommodation, restaurant, and transport spending. [8] These figures do not capture broader benefits such as media exposure, social outcomes, or longer-term legacy impacts. Business events are similarly significant. BEIA estimates that multi-day business events generated $925 million in total expenditure in 2025. Average expenditure per stay was $3,276 for international delegates, who stayed an average of eight nights, $2,118 for domestic delegates, who stayed an average of around three nights, and $999 for local delegates. [9]

These figures demonstrate that events can generate economic activity at a scale that is material to local economies, regions, and sectors. However, they need to be interpreted carefully.

Headline economic impacts are not the same as net public value

A large body of New Zealand and international research highlights that measures such as visitor expenditure, attendance and economic impact estimates do not represent the net value created for New Zealand.

[8] PredictHQ data, "Event stats for attended event categories 2025-08-01 to 2026-08-01", supplied by NZEA.

[9] Business Events Industry Aotearoa, "National Business Events Value Data", 2026, https://www.beia.co.nz/programmes/be-data/national-business-events-value-data.

Economic impact studies often report gross expenditure associated with an event, but not all spending represents new economic activity. Some expenditure may have occurred elsewhere in New Zealand in the absence of the event, some visitors may simply alter the timing of trips they were already planning to take, and some visitors attracted by an event may displace other visitors who would otherwise have travelled at that time. As a result, large spending figures should generally be viewed as indicators of economic activity generated by an event rather than as a direct measure of its public value or return on government investment.

The previous evaluation of the MEDF, a precursor to MEF, highlighted the importance of this distinction. The evaluation found that the strongest and most defensible economic benefits arose from attracting international visitors whose expenditure represented genuinely additional activity for New Zealand. The evaluation also highlighted the importance of accounting for displacement, leakage and substitution effects when assessing event benefits. Applying a conservative cost-benefit framework that excluded domestic expenditure transfers, inflated multiplier effects, and non-additional visitation, the MEDF evaluation estimated that 18 supported events generated approximately $32.1 million in net economic benefits from $7.2 million of MEDF investment, equivalent to approximately 4.5 times the amount invested. This compared with the $143.8 million of aggregate national economic benefit originally estimated by event organisers and their consultants, which implied a return of approximately 20 times the investment. [10] This distinction between gross economic activity and net public value is increasingly reflected in international guidance and evaluation practice and continues to be taken into account by MBIE when assessing the impact of the MEF.

Importantly, the findings did not suggest public investment in events should be reduced. Rather, they pointed to the need to target investment towards events that generate the highest levels of additionality. This is consistent with OECD guidance and event-evaluation frameworks and measurement systems used across several comparator jurisdictions, recognising that the greatest value often arises not from the event itself, but from the opportunities and outcomes it creates.

This is useful historical evidence that a selected portfolio of events can generate positive net economic benefits, but it does not establish that current or future investments will achieve the same return, or that substantially increasing funding would maintain that average rate. Returns vary with additionality, visitor origin, displacement, public and private costs, leverage, delivery capacity, and market conditions. As investment expands, the availability of comparable high-return opportunities may diminish and marginal costs may rise. This means that proposals for increased investment will require contemporary assessments of net public value and opportunity cost.

[10] Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, "Economic Evaluation Outcomes: Major Events Development Fund – Meta-Evaluation Report", 2013, https://www.majorevents.govt.nz/assets/Major-Events/63bcd1bf67/MEDF-evaluation-report.pdf.

Recent examples illustrate the potential benefits of well-targeted investment

Recent event examples show that supported major events can outperform initial visitor and exposure expectations when the event proposition, host location, and market demand align. The IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship 2024 attracted significantly more international visitors than forecast and strengthened New Zealand's relationship with IRONMAN. The Masters Hockey World Cup 2024 attracted more international visitors than anticipated and generated strong activity for the host region. The New Zealand Open 2025 exceeded targets for international visitor nights and generated substantial broadcast, digital and media exposure. These examples do not remove the need for disciplined assessment of additionality, displacement, cost and opportunity cost; rather, they demonstrate why a selective portfolio approach can generate value when investment is targeted to events with strong visitor, reputational, and future-pipeline potential.

Events as platforms for trade, investment, and innovation

Many countries increasingly view events as platforms for wider economic development, rather than primarily as tourism generators.

This is most consistently evident in business events. Conferences, congresses, exhibitions, and trade events provide opportunities to attract international expertise, facilitate research collaboration, support industry development, and create new commercial relationships. International evidence suggests that some of the most valuable outcomes from business events may occur long after delegates have returned home. Potential benefits include:

- research and innovation partnerships
- export opportunities and trade relationships
- foreign direct investment
- talent attraction and retention
- workforce capability development
- international market intelligence
- knowledge transfer across firms, sectors, and institutions
- stronger international networks and relationships.

These outcomes can take many forms. For example, a business event may facilitate export opportunities for New Zealand firms, support research collaborations between universities and international partners, attract international investment into priority sectors, strengthen workforce capability through exposure to global expertise, assist talent attraction and retention, or increase international awareness of New Zealand's capabilities in areas such as agribusiness, advanced manufacturing, health technologies, screen production, or sustainable technologies. While these benefits are often less visible than visitor expenditure, international evidence suggests they can be among the most valuable long-term outcomes generated through events.

The emerging international literature increasingly recognises that these outcomes can significantly exceed the value of delegate expenditure itself, even though they are often more difficult to measure and may materialise over many years.

Broader social, cultural, and community benefits

Events also generate a range of benefits that are not easily captured through traditional economic measures. Major sporting and cultural events can contribute to:

- social cohesion and community connectedness
- community pride and sense of place
- cultural participation and cultural expression
- promotion and visibility of Māori culture and identity
- participation in sport and recreation
- volunteer development and capability building
- wellbeing outcomes
- destination reputation and international profile.

Recent New Zealand evaluations provide useful illustrations of these wider impacts.

- The FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 delivered benefits that extended well beyond tourism expenditure, including increased visibility of women's sport, enhanced participation pathways, greater public awareness and engagement, and opportunities for more than 100,000 students and young people to participate in leverage, legacy and community engagement initiatives. Survey evidence indicated that the event strengthened awareness of women's sport and contributed to positive social outcomes beyond the tournament itself. [11]
- The 36th America's Cup generated a range of non-monetisable place-making, education, skills, cultural, and partnership outcomes, in addition to economic impacts. Legacy programmes included infrastructure improvements, stronger partnerships with mana whenua, capability development initiatives, and environmental projects. Volunteer contributions associated with the event were estimated at more than 4.5 million hours, valued at approximately $46.8 million. [12]

Similarly, evaluations of other major events have identified benefits relating to national pride, international reputation, and community engagement. Following the Lions Tour, for example, many people reported that hosting the tournament created a sense of pride amongst New Zealanders. [13]

Evidence from the wider arts and culture sector also points to substantial wellbeing benefits. Research undertaken by Massey University estimated that live performance activities generated approximately

[11] Fresh Info, "FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 National Economic Impact Evaluation", December 2023, https://www.majorevents.govt.nz/dmsdocument/27911-fifa-womens-world-cup-2023-national-impact-evaluation-report.

[12] Fresh Info, "36th America's Cup Impact Evaluation – Final Report", 30 June 2021, https://www.majorevents.govt.nz/dmsdocument/15674-36th-americas-cup-impact-evaluation-report.

[13] PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) & Kantar TNS, "Economic impact and benefits analysis of the DHL New Zealand Lions Series 2017", New Zealand Major Events, 2018, https://www.majorevents.govt.nz/dmsdocument/17715-economic-impact-and-benefits-analysis-dhl-nz-lions-series-2017.

$17.3 billion in combined economic and social value in the 12 months to June 2024, including an estimated $7.5 billion of wellbeing-related benefits. [14]

The opportunity for New Zealand

The opportunity for New Zealand is to take a more deliberate approach to attracting, supporting, and leveraging events that can deliver the greatest overall value, rather than focussing simply on attracting and delivering more events.

Getting the system right will enable New Zealand to unlock greater value. It will support smarter investment decisions, give public and private partners clarity over long lead times, and ensure resources are directed where they have the greatest impact. A well-functioning system also streamlines effort across agencies from the outset, with early leverage planning and robust measurement put in place, and lessons captured. If these elements work together, New Zealand will be better placed to consistently capture a larger and more consistent share of the economic, social, cultural, and strategic value that events can generate.

Foundations of an effective system

Drawing on the current state assessment, the rationale for central government involvement in events, the benefits that events can generate, and lessons from international jurisdictions, an effective events system should be designed to achieve two objectives. First, it should deliver a balanced set of public-value and system outcomes. Second, it should be guided by a clear set of principles that support strategic direction, sustainable investment, capability development, efficient delivery, and transparent accountability.

Public value and system outcomes

Public-value outcomes describe the benefits that events generate for New Zealand. System outcomes describe the extent to which the events ecosystem is functioning effectively and sustainably.

Key public-value outcomes should include:

1. Additional and sustained economic value at local, regional and national levels, extending beyond the immediate impacts of individual events.
2. Enhancements to New Zealand's international reputation and enduring global connections across business, research, culture and sport.
3. Strengthened wellbeing, identity and belonging, community pride, and social cohesion, contributing to resilient, connected, and vibrant communities.

Key system outcomes should include:

1. Balanced benefits across regions and seasons, improving the utilisation of existing infrastructure and supporting place-based development and resilience.

[14] Carter, D., Hoad, C., Muller, P., Tappenden, A., Wilson, J., and Wilson, O., "Measuring and Articulating the Value of Live Performance in Aotearoa", 2024, Massey University, https://www.massey.ac.nz/documents/2119/Measuring-and-Articulating-the-Value-of-Live-Performance-in-Aotearoa.pdf.

2. Strong coordination between stakeholders and a robust, visible and predictable pipeline of events.
3. Increased capability across organisers, workforce, volunteers, suppliers and public agencies, strengthening New Zealand's ability to deliver events of increasing quality and complexity.

No single event or category of event will deliver all of these outcomes. Rather, these outcomes should be achieved collectively through a balanced portfolio of events. Different event types will contribute in different ways, as illustrated earlier in Table 3. The performance framework should operate at two levels: event-level measures proportionate to the event's purpose, scale, and funding, and portfolio-level measures that assess whether the overall mix of events is delivering balanced public value and system outcomes.

Principles for an effective events system

To deliver these outcomes consistently over time, an effective events system should be guided by the following principles:

- **Unified and enduring strategic direction and coordination:** The events system should have a single, cohesive national strategy with clear, authoritative leadership and integrated planning across central government, local government, and industry partners. This strategic direction must be maintained over the long term and resilient to short-term political changes to provide consistency and forward-planning certainty. Roles and mandates should be unambiguous, with a designated lead authority (a clear "front door") coordinating efforts across the system. Stakeholders should be united under shared goals and a common vision, with transparent processes for setting priorities and making trade-offs to reduce fragmentation and ensure all parts of the system work together effectively.
- **Targeted national focus and additionality:** Central government's involvement in events should be firmly focussed where it delivers unique national-level benefits and fills gaps that other players cannot address. Public resources and support should be concentrated on events with significant national impact or strategic growth potential – those that bring added value for the country as a whole – while local authorities, iwi and Māori, and industry are empowered to support and lead events within their own scope. This ensures that central government investment provides clear additionality and does not duplicate or displace the roles of local and private partners.
- **Sustainable investment and shared risk:** The events system must be underpinned by stable, long-term funding and equitable risk-sharing arrangements. Secure multi-year funding commitments and strong partnerships should provide predictable resources and clear visibility of a long-term events pipeline, allowing organisers to plan with confidence and invest in capability and infrastructure. Financial responsibilities and rewards should be shared fairly among central government, local government, iwi and Māori, and private partners, ensuring hosting obligations are sustainable and that the system's capacity is resilient over time.
- **Capability development and enduring legacy:** The system should continuously build New Zealand's event-hosting capability and maximise the lasting benefits of events. This includes the development of sector skills and expertise, strengthened partnerships, and infrastructure and processes that improve with each event. Significant publicly supported events should include

consideration of legacy from the planning stage – leaving behind tangible benefits such as enhanced facilities, skilled workforces and volunteers, stronger international networks, and innovations that boost the events system long after the event itself.

- **Cost-effectiveness and efficiency:** The events system should deliver strong value for money through streamlined, efficient operations. It should be straightforward and attractive to bid for, develop, and host events in New Zealand. Clear, well-aligned processes and proportionate requirements for different events should minimise unnecessary bureaucracy, reduce duplication, and leverage existing regional and national strengths.
- **Accountability and transparency:** The system should have clear accountability and transparent performance management, underpinned by unambiguous roles and responsibilities. It must be clear who is responsible for each aspect of strategic direction, funding decisions, and event delivery. Decision-making on investment in events should be guided by robust, consistent methods of measuring outcomes, and the system's overall performance should be tracked through a consistent set of shared outcome metrics and openly reported, enabling continuous learning and improvement.

Together, these outcomes and principles establish the framework against which future options for New Zealand's events system are assessed in the remainder of this report.

Line of inquiry 1: Strategic framework and outcomes

This line of inquiry involved assessing the current strategic framework and outcomes of focus across the events system, what a national approach to events should prioritise to maximise public value, and how a strong pipeline of events can be supported over time.

Current strategic framework

As outlined briefly in the overview of the New Zealand events system, the current strategic framework has four main elements:

- **The Major Events Strategy provides a government framework for investing in internationally significant public events**. There is a focus on securing events aligned with strategic priorities. The strategy's five priorities guide funding criteria and desired outcomes: securing economic benefits (for example, boosting tourism spend, jobs and exports), driving international exposure (promoting New Zealand's global brand to attract visitors and investment), building national pride and cultural identity (uniting communities and celebrating Māori and New Zealand culture), enhancing New Zealand's reputation as an exceptional host nation (for future event bids and international confidence), and advancing broader government goals by leveraging events to support targets in areas like sport, arts and regional development. The recently released Tourism Policy Statement reinforces events as central to a thriving tourism system, noting that mega and major events can elevate New Zealand's profile internationally, attract large-scale visitors, and build trade and investment links. In line with this, the Major Events Strategy aims to ensure a balanced events portfolio across seasons, regions, and outcomes. It also supports leverage and legacy activity so funded events can amplify or deliver lasting economic, social, cultural, or reputational outcomes. The primary tool available to execute the strategy is the Major Events Fund.
- Business events (meetings, conferences, conventions, exhibitions, and corporate incentives) are recognised as a distinct but complementary pillar of New Zealand's events framework. There is no separate government strategy for business events but TNZ, as the national destination marketing agency, includes business events within its Statement of Intent and supports the attraction and promotion of international business events that generate high-value visitation and delegate expenditure, contribute to knowledge exchange, and showcase New Zealand expertise. This aligns with the Government's Tourism Policy Statement, which highlights business events as key to supporting high-value, year-round visitation, regional dispersal, and knowledge exchange. In 2024, the industry launched Pīata Mai: Business Events Strategic Direction 2035, a shared long-term vision to grow a thriving, high-value business events sector. That strategy emphasises business events' potential to boost economic returns (especially in off-peak seasons), foster

innovation and trade connections, incorporate sustainability and Māori culture, and deliver lasting community and environmental benefits beyond the immediate visitor spend.

- **Some industry bodies have developed strategic frameworks or sector leadership positions** that complement government initiatives. BEIA, for example, is the steward of the Pīata Mai strategy mentioned above, and provides industry leadership, advocacy, capability development, research, and networking while working alongside TNZ, convention bureaux, and other stakeholders to grow and strengthen the business events sector. The NZEA, representing the broader events sector, emphasises the holistic value of events, advocating that events contribute not just to tourism and economic growth, but also to community wellbeing, cultural vibrancy, and environmental sustainability.
- **Many councils, EDAs and RTOs have their own major event and business event strategies** that align with local economic development and community objectives. These strategies treat events as catalysts for localised outcomes, using public events from community to major-event scale and business events to boost local tourism and visitor spending, offset seasonality, support local businesses, jobs and sectors, and foster community pride and cultural expression.

Strengths and challenges

Strengths

Based on the research, stakeholder interviews, and international comparisons, New Zealand's events system has the following strengths at a strategic level:

- **New Zealand has a strong and well-established reputation for hosting events**. It has a proven ability to deliver large-scale sporting, cultural, and business events that generate significant economic, social, and cultural benefits. Its reputation as a safe, authentic, and innovative host helps New Zealand remain internationally competitive, while Aotearoa New Zealand's distinctive identity and Māori culture provide meaningful points of difference.
- **There is a sustained commitment from central government to major events**. This is reflected in its long-term dedicated funding through the Major Events Fund (MEF), ministerial oversight, pipeline management, and prospecting for future opportunities. This has helped create a strong foundation for coordinated national support and prospecting for high-impact events.
- **Understanding of the value of events has deepened over time.** Particularly since Rugby World Cup 2011, there has been a wider recognition that events deliver more than immediate economic returns. Cultural, creative, and community events are increasingly seen as important contributors to national identity, regional development, social cohesion, and broader public value.

- **The events sector is supported by collaborative relationships and growing expertise**. Long-standing relationships across agencies, regions, and delivery partners support effective operational planning and event delivery, even though coordination is less consistent at the wider portfolio, leverage and legacy levels. This collaborative culture is seen as a particular strength, especially in comparison to more competitive systems internationally.
- **The business events sector is also strengthening**. It is supported by growing recognition of its role in driving off-peak visitation, knowledge exchange, and sector development. Established convention bureaux, the Conference Assistance Programme (CAP), and investment in venues such as the New Zealand International Convention Centre, Te Pae and Tākina, together with associated growth in accommodation capacity, have significantly increased New Zealand's ability to host larger conferences and exhibitions.
- **At the regional and local level, New Zealand has strong event capability and enthusiasm**. Many councils and agencies invest in their own event strategies, teams, and networks. This creates a diverse national event landscape, supports regional economies and domestic tourism, and helps ensure events are grounded in local priorities and community needs. The capability developed through community and regional events within local authorities forms the essential foundation for hosting the less-frequent major and mega events.

Challenges and weaknesses

Based on the research, stakeholder interviews, and international comparisons, several strategic challenges and pressures have been identified across New Zealand's events system.

- **There is broad agreement that the current events system is not achieving its full potential**. A central reason is the absence of a clear, shared long-term strategic direction. Stakeholders consistently reported that the system lacks a cohesive vision. Feedback about there being "no overarching strategy" and "a reactive approach" was common. As a result, decisions can be reactive and short-term, rather than consistently anchored to enduring national priorities, making it harder to sustain momentum and continuity over the multi-year lifecycle of events.
- **New Zealand's national events proposition is not clearly articulated**. While several parts of the system have strategic priorities and desired outcomes, the review found less clarity about New Zealand's overall proposition as an events destination. Stakeholders generally agreed that New Zealand offers distinctive experiences and strengths, but there is currently no shared articulation of how these advantages should shape event attraction, portfolio development or long-term positioning. This makes it harder to prioritise opportunities, communicate a consistent proposition internationally, and align prospecting activity across the system.
- **Some elements of the system are fragmented, with uneven coordination at the national level.** Responsibilities and capabilities relating to public, business and regional events are distributed across multiple agencies, organisations and tiers of government (for example, NZME, TNZ, convention bureaux, councils, economic development agencies), but they are not consistently connected or resourced across the full national portfolio. There is no single entity with a mandate

to lead the system as a whole or provide a clear entry point for event proponents. This can create confusion, role ambiguity, duplication, unnecessary regional competition, and missed opportunities that could otherwise enable a more coherent national pipeline of events.

- **There is no shared definition of success or common framework for assessing outcomes across different event types.** While events are widely understood to create public value, and the nature of that value varies between event types, there is no consistent way of measuring or comparing that value across economic, cultural, social, and strategic objectives. This makes it difficult to prioritise investment fairly and to recognise the full contribution of different kinds of events. This does not mean every event should be assessed against identical measures. An effective performance measurement framework should distinguish between event-level measures, which are proportionate to the type, scale, and purpose of the event, and portfolio-level measures, which assess whether the overall mix of events is delivering balanced economic, social, cultural, regional, seasonal, trade, innovation, and reputational outcomes.
- Funding mechanisms have, in recent years, been short-term and misaligned with the long-term planning needed for a resilient system. While established mechanisms like MEF and CAP provide ongoing support – even though CAP's annual allocation fluctuates – more recent event funding has been uncertain and inconsistent. This instability limits the ability of central and local partners to plan, bid for, and sustain a balanced multi-year events portfolio, and it weakens confidence in the broader pipeline. The additional funding was welcomed, but one-off interventions such as the Events Attraction Package and Events Boost Fund also exposed or reinforced these issues, despite being designed for speed and responsiveness. These funds have created confusion about priorities, generated central–local friction, and contributed to perceptions of inconsistency.
- **Business events and public events are not yet fully integrated into one events system.** Although the business events sector at the regional level is well developed and actively promoted, at a national level it operates in parallel to major events rather than as part of a coordinated portfolio and prospecting pipeline. This can mean missed opportunities to align public and business events, leverage international visitors and delegates, and recognise the broader public value that strategically aligned business events can generate.
- **The system's ability to leverage events for longer-term benefits remains underdeveloped.** While there is strong interest in creating legacy outcomes from both major events and business events, and dedicated leverage and legacy funding has been made available to support MEF activity and has supported stronger agency engagement in some cases, leverage and legacy outcomes are not delivered consistently across the system. The principal barriers extend beyond funding and inter-agency coordination. They include whether relevant agencies have a clear mandate, current work-programme alignment, people and budget available at the right time, and sufficient confidence that benefits identified several years before delivery will still align with agency priorities when activation is required.

- **There is a gap between ambition and delivery capacity.** Stakeholders often aspire to secure and deliver a strong pipeline of high-impact events with broad and lasting outcomes, but the practical capacity to do so (including workforce capability, infrastructure, funding, and organisational bandwidth) is stretched. This can create pressure on the system and limit the quality, scale, or consistency of delivery. Periods of high event volume can place pressure on experienced event personnel, suppliers, venues, accommodation, local permitting teams, transport planning, and volunteer capacity. A stronger pipeline should not simply aim to maximise the number of events. It should sequence opportunities so they are deliverable, avoid unnecessary clashes, and build the workforce, supplier and local-government capability needed to support higher ambition over time.
- **Regional delivery is under pressure.** Regions carry much of the responsibility for event delivery but face growing financial and operational pressures. The system relies heavily on local government funding despite increasing fiscal constraints, while a lack of clearly defined roles and joint planning mechanisms limits coordination. At the same time, inconsistent regulatory settings across regions increase the cost and complexity of event delivery.

Lessons from international comparators

International practice points to a consistent set of strategic lessons for New Zealand. The more mature and coordinated comparator systems treat events as a long-term public-value portfolio that is deliberately stewarded, funded, measured, and leveraged over time. Some of these practices are already evident in New Zealand. The comparators nevertheless show how they can be applied more deliberately, consistently, and at greater scale.

- **Anchor the system in a durable strategic framework that defines the public value events are expected to create.** All the international comparators reviewed have a clear and durable strategic framework that explains why events matter and what they are expected to achieve. These frameworks provide stability across political cycles and give the industry confidence to plan over the long term. Scotland has maintained a stable national events strategy since 2008, Wales embeds events within a wider wellbeing framework, Victoria explicitly uses strategy and published guidelines, and Singapore has a whole-of-government vision.
- **Integrate events into wider national priorities.** Wales aligns its visitor economy, and then events system, with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, ensuring elements such as cultural identity, language, and community cohesion are treated as core outcomes. Singapore positions events as tools to drive tourism demand and strengthen social cohesion and national pride. Queensland and Victoria embed events within long-term visitor economy strategies, linking event outcomes directly to targets for visitor expenditure, jobs, and regional dispersal. A common feature across leading jurisdictions is the deliberate use of events to support wider economic-development objectives. In particular, business events are increasingly aligned with priority sectors, research strengths, investment promotion goals, export development objectives, and talent-attraction strategies. This reflects growing recognition that the value of some events lies less in immediate

visitor expenditure and more in the relationships, knowledge transfer, investment opportunities, and international connections they create.

- **Manage events as a portfolio, rather than a series of one-off projects.** This allows jurisdictions to better balance anchor events with emerging opportunities, manage seasonality, and ensure the overall mix contributes meaningfully to national goals. Scotland maps its portfolio, including anchor and one-off events, up to ten years ahead, Vancouver actively manages its calendar to avoid capacity clashes and to target 'need periods', and Victoria uses long-term calendar thinking to give businesses confidence to invest. The implication is that the value of any individual event should be assessed in the context of the wider pipeline and the overall mix the system is trying to build.
- **Give the system a clear steward and a recognisable front door.** Successful systems make it easy for rights holders, organisers and partners to know who leads, who convenes, and how to navigate government. Scotland uses EventScotland/VisitScotland as the coordinating lead, Vancouver relies on a neutral destination marketing organisation that can aggregate funding across multiple levels of government, and Victoria's "Team Victoria" model allows agencies and partners to act around a shared opportunity.
- **Treat pipeline development as an active strategic discipline.** Comparators identify target sectors, target windows and target geographies, and then prospect deliberately. Scotland aligns conference and event targets with national priorities and sector strengths, Vancouver actively tracks conferences and works through ambassadors and institutional partners, and Victoria uses proactive funding to secure events that meet a strategic need. The pipeline should be built around fit and additionality, not just opportunities that present themselves first.
- **Measure outcomes consistently at both event and portfolio level.** International practice still relies heavily on economic impact because it is more easily measurable and auditable, but the stronger systems go further by embedding those measures in a broader public-value framework. Scotland uses eventIMPACTS to enable comparison across event types and funders, Wales is using implementation plans and the development of key performance indicators (KPIs) to keep delivery aligned to strategy (and therefore broader wellbeing indicators), Vancouver combines event-by-event economic impact and return on investment (ROI) with wider community and measures relating to foreign direct investment, and Victoria distinguishes between the threshold investment metrics and the broader accessibility and community outcomes expected in delivery. The lesson is to have a common framework that preserves economic rigour while also making broader public value visible and comparable over time.
- **Plan leverage, legacy, and local benefit from the start.** The strongest comparators do not assume wider benefits will automatically follow from hosting but explicitly design for them. For example, Vancouver's partnership model explicitly balances social legacy, marketing value, and room-night return; Wonderful Copenhagen has shifted its major event approach towards liveability, citizen benefit, and sustainability; and Wales' wellbeing framing requires long-term cultural, social, and environmental contribution to be considered alongside visitor impacts. The

lesson is that public funding for relevant events should be tied to proportionate leverage and legacy plans, with named delivery partners, realistic commitments, and follow-through after the event itself.

For New Zealand, the overarching lesson is that a strong strategic framework should provide the common direction for the entire system. The comparators show that when strategy is stable, shared, and connected to wider national goals, it becomes a powerful tool for aligning investment, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring events deliver meaningful public value.

Opportunities to strengthen the strategic framework and outcomes

Based on the assessment of system opportunities and challenges, and the lessons from international comparators, a more strategic approach could create significant opportunities for New Zealand.

A national strategy should provide enduring direction and clearer leadership

- **Governance, leadership and system coordination:** There is an opportunity to foster a unified national approach to events through more intentional system stewardship and a long-term strategy for public and business events. Establishing clear leadership, including a designated lead or front door for event opportunities, and stronger coordination across central and local government and industry would reduce friction and ensure that events align with national priorities.
- **Enduring, politically resilient strategy:** By establishing an enduring strategic framework that can be maintained across successive governments, for example, over a horizon of at least ten years, New Zealand would enable consistent forward planning for events and avoid disruptive shifts in priorities when political leadership changes.
- **Clarifying New Zealand's event proposition:** There is an opportunity to define more clearly the role New Zealand wishes to play in the international events market. Rather than attempting to compete across all event categories, New Zealand could be more deliberate about identifying the types of events, sectors and experiences that align with its distinctive strengths and broader national priorities. A clearer proposition would improve prospecting, investment decisions, international marketing, and portfolio development.

The strategy should connect regional pathways with broader public value

- **Integrating local strategies and regional pathways:** New Zealand can better leverage existing regional event strategies and local expertise by integrating them into the national framework. By aligning local priorities more explicitly with national goals, and by creating clear pathways for successful regional events to grow into major events, New Zealand can strengthen its overall events pipeline, encourage more regions to develop strategies, and ensure local successes contribute to national outcomes.

- **Multi-dimensional public value:** Well-designed events offer an opportunity for New Zealand to deliver economic gains alongside broad social, cultural, and environmental benefits, a combination of outcomes that relatively few public investments are designed to achieve simultaneously. Realising these diverse benefits often depends on strategic event design, although some events can generate benefits intrinsically (for example, cultural events). Deliberate leverage and legacy initiatives, particularly for public events of scale and business events with a strong alignment to national priorities, can help capture and sustain a greater share of the broader benefits after the event itself. In addition, capturing this opportunity requires strong and consistent approaches to measuring non-economic benefits and making transparent trade-offs when opportunities exceed available funding.
- **Strengthening trade, investment, and innovation outcomes:** There is an opportunity to more explicitly incorporate trade, investment, innovation, and knowledge outcomes within New Zealand's events framework. While these outcomes are often associated with business events, they can also be created through major public events, particularly where there are opportunities to connect sectors, investors, researchers, exporters, entrepreneurs, and international visitors. A clearer focus on these outcomes would help ensure events are treated as tools for wider economic development rather than solely as tourism generators.

Portfolio discipline should guide investment and long-term system development

- **Portfolio-planning and system capacity:** A deliberate, multi-year approach to planning and funding a balanced mix of events across different event types, sectors, seasons and regions would help spread risk, smooth demand on venues and services, build capability through recurring homegrown events, and align investment with host capacity and infrastructure constraints. Different event types contribute in different ways. International business events can support off-peak demand and high-value visitation, while public events, including winter, shoulder-season, and recurring regional events, can support seasonal smoothing, regional activity, and place vibrancy. A portfolio approach should assess the role of each event within the overall calendar rather than applying the same expectations to every event.
- **Net national portfolio effects:** A portfolio approach would also allow decision-makers to consider New Zealand-wide impacts rather than evaluating opportunities in isolation. This would make it easier to understand how events complement, compete with or potentially displace activity elsewhere in the system. The objective would not necessarily be to avoid overlap, but to ensure that the combined portfolio delivers greater national value than a series of disconnected decisions. New Zealand Major Events already applies elements of portfolio thinking across event type, region, season, recurring and one-off opportunities, and expected benefits. The opportunity is to extend and formalise that discipline across the wider national system.

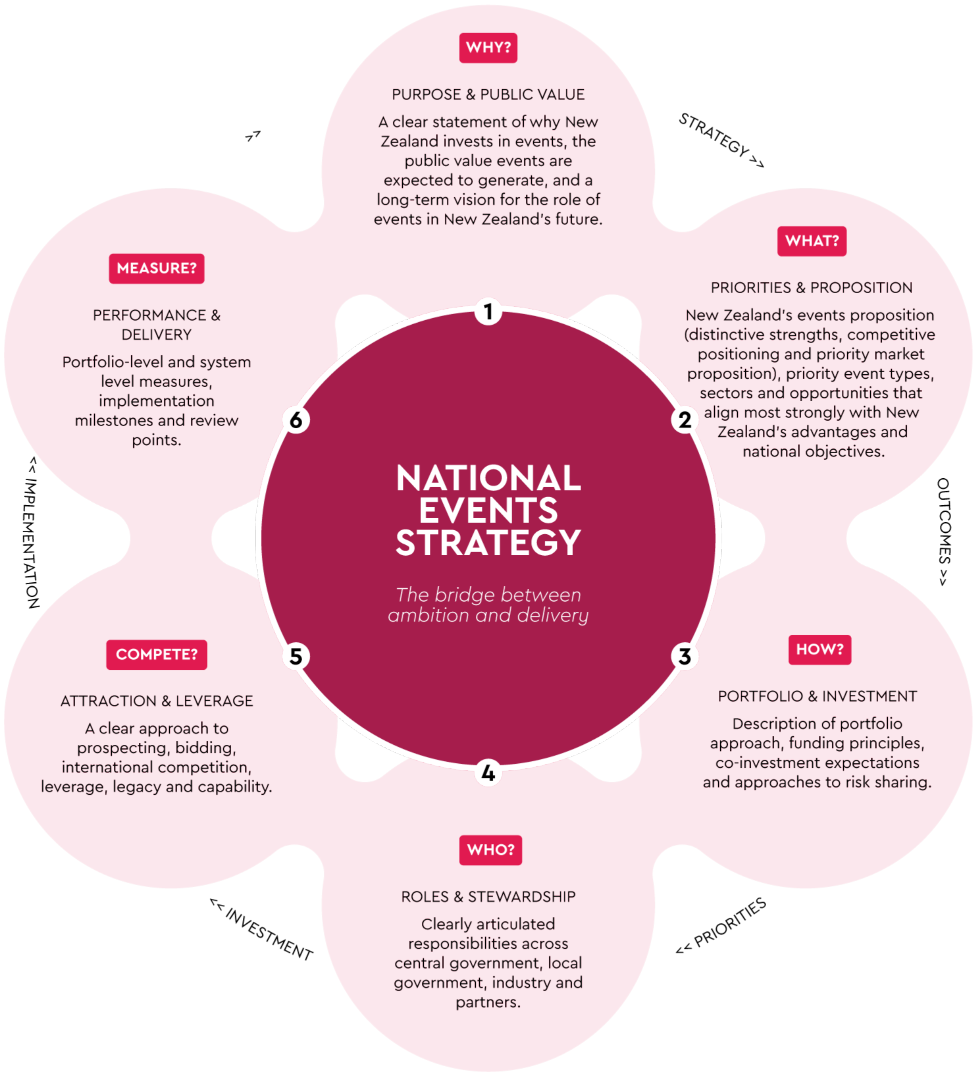
- **Additionality and net national value:** There is a related opportunity to place greater emphasis on additionality and net national value within future strategy and investment decisions. This would involve considering not only whether an event generates activity, but whether it creates outcomes that would not otherwise occur. For example, investment decisions should increasingly assess whether an event attracts new visitors, stimulates new expenditure, creates new trade, innovation or cultural opportunities, extends seasonal demand, strengthens regional diversification, or contributes to wider strategic objectives. A stronger focus on additionality would help ensure public investment supports overall growth and value creation rather than simply redistributing activity within the existing system.
- **Strategic clarity before investment expansion:** There is a significant opportunity to first establish agreement about the role events are expected to play in achieving national outcomes before determining future investment levels. International comparators consistently align event funding with clearly articulated strategic priorities. Strategy should be the primary driver of future funding decisions, with investment levels determined by the outcomes sought.
- **Sustainable investment and partnerships:** Adopting sustainable investment and partnership settings offers an opportunity to strengthen the events pipeline and maximise public value. This could entail a coordinated, system-wide approach in which costs and risks are shared among partners, better supporting a stable pipeline of future events. A stronger partnership model would also reduce the stop–start dynamics and market confusion associated with short-term funds, and give regions, rights holders, and business event partners clearer long-term signals.
- **Leverage, legacy and long-term capacity:** Earlier planning would enable leverage and legacy activity to be designed around realistic agency mandates, budgets and work programmes rather than added close to delivery. It would also allow selected events to build enduring workforce, supplier, organisational, and regional capability. This would require named delivery partners, agreed commitments, and proportionate resourcing from the outset.

Strategic options for the events system

Based on these opportunities, the review identifies three options for a long-term (ten-year) National Events Strategy covering both major public events and business events. The options reflect different levels of ambition and system change. These options represent cumulative levels of ambition rather than wholly separate models. Option 1 is a baseline "do-minimum" comparator that sharpens current settings; Option 2 is the recommended first phase for 2026/27; and Option 3 is the longer-term championing end-state once the key preconditions for transformation are in place, including stronger visitor economy alignment, more durable local co-investment capacity, and a clearer institutional home for system stewardship.

The options and subsequent aligned options for the other areas of inquiry are presented as coherent packages because strategy, funding, coordination, prospecting, regional partnership, and leverage changes are mutually reinforcing, even though some elements could be sequenced differently in implementation. Additional investment without better coordination, clearer priorities, and stronger regional partnerships would have limited effect. New coordination structures without stronger resourcing and greater discipline in decision-making would add process without improving performance.

Figure 6: What a high-quality national events strategy should contain



The options are:

- **Option 1: Strategic Investment** (incremental change) – A central government events strategy with a focus on the government being a more disciplined and transparent investor, and using existing funding and policy levers more deliberately to improve outcomes.
- **Option 2: Enabling** (moderate change) – A central government events strategy that builds on Option 1 by adding stronger system coordination and support. The focus of the strategy is to remove barriers and foster partnerships, allowing regions and sectors to take more of a lead and aligning efforts across the system.
- **Option 3: Championing** (transformative change) – A system-wide strategy, with central government co-leading with regions, local government and sector partners, and co-investing to transform the events system, fundamentally reshaping how events are supported and delivered.

Each option is described further below. Irrespective of the type of strategy developed, there are key elements that high-quality events strategies share as illustrated in Figure 6.

While the options are presented as a staged progression, some aspects of Option 3 could be introduced progressively during the Enabling phase. In particular, stronger prospecting activity, more active portfolio management, growth support for selected national anchor events, expanded business-event attraction tools, and more systematic leverage and legacy activity could all be accelerated if government wished to move more quickly towards a Championing model.

Option 1: Strategic Investment (incremental change)

The strategic investment approach would involve a government-focussed national events strategy under which central government continued to act primarily as an investor in selected events, but applied greater discipline, transparency, and focus on public value and return on investment. The priority would be for central government to do what it already does, but better – retaining the current lead arrangements for major public events and business events, maintaining existing funding programmes (such as the MEF for public events and the CAP for business events), and using those levers more deliberately through clearer priorities, stronger investment logic, and more consistent evidence-based decision-making. No major changes are implied under this strategic approach. The emphasis is on refining current processes and strengthening performance evaluation and communication with system participants.

This option should be read as a baseline comparator rather than a preferred end-state. It would improve clarity, transparency, and forward visibility within current settings, but would make only limited changes to system leadership, regional roles, and the scale of proactive prospecting and leverage activity.

Under this option, the strategy content would highlight clear investment criteria, priority outcomes, and improved value-for-money assessments, ensuring public event investments align better with desired outcomes. The prioritised public-value outcomes would be economic and reputational at the national level, including additional international visitation, international visitor expenditure, and media exposure. Broader social and cultural outcomes and regional-level outcomes would be secondary and expected to follow from the primary outcomes. The system outcomes of focus would be greater transparency and certainty. Under this strategic approach, mega events would remain one-off exceptions handled on a case-by-case basis rather than through systemic change.

Overall, this strategic option would deliver incremental improvements. It would aim to increase efficiency and accountability in how existing resources are deployed, but would not fundamentally reshape the events system or its long-term ambition.

In practice, under Option 1, any expansion of the government's proactive prospecting for large-scale international events would be limited. Its main focus would remain on improving how the existing and emerging pipeline is assessed, funded, and delivered, while retaining the ability to consider exceptional opportunities as they arise. Business events would remain supported primarily through TNZ and CAP, but with clearer articulation of how business event priorities and outcomes fit alongside major public event priorities in the refreshed central-government strategy.

More details about the features of this option are provided below.

Table 4: Key features of Option 1: Strategic Investment

Category	Key features
Government Role/ Ambition Level	Strategic Investor: Central government remains primarily a funder and selective lever for events, maintaining the current lead arrangements for major public events and business events while using existing funding settings more deliberately, with clearer and better communicated intervention logic, without changing the wider system.
Potential elements of a Vision/North Star	New Zealand achieves more value from central government event funding. Central government uses clearer priorities, stronger evidence, transparent criteria, and better evaluation to improve returns from major event funding.
Indicative Goals and Outcomes	Improved efficiency, accountability, and additionality from public investment. Public-value outcomes focus mainly on visitor spend, visitor nights, media exposure (for relevant events); system outcomes focus on clearer investment decisions and better reporting. This would enable sharper investment rather than system transformation.
Potential Targets and Priorities	Set a smaller number of investment priorities for current funds. Targets could include all funded events reporting against consistent KPIs, all major funding decisions publishing clear rationale, and directing investment to events with clear additionality, visitor value, and profile (underperforming or low additionality investments are reconsidered). Priority areas would be narrower: focus on events with strong economic return, destination fit, shoulder-season value, or credible growth potential.

Category	Key features
Potential Strategic Initiatives/Focus Areas	1. Investment criteria reset: Clarify what central government will and will not fund, explain why, and apply the criteria consistently, including to any future funding increases. 2. Portfolio reporting: Publish annual portfolio-level results for major and business events. 3. Targeted funding: Support a small number of high-value events where New Zealand has a clear proposition and delivery capacity. 4. Evidence and evaluation uplift: Improve data, impact assessment, and post-event learning to drive continuous improvement.
Example events of focus	As illustrations only, the types of events that generate significant economic benefits, additional international visitation, additional international visitor spend, and reputational effects include examples like World Championship and Series Events (for example, Hockey Masters, Ironman 70.3 Asia Pacific Championship, Supercars Championship), significant national events (for example, NZ Open, World of WearableArt), and international, multi-day business events (for example, the World Avocado Congress, Asian Seed Congress).
Relevant international examples	**British Columbia and Vancouver** provide a strategic investment comparator with event support delivered through a range of programmes, priorities, and partners rather than being guided by a single system-wide strategy. Events support is provided through a combination of the Destination Events Programme and Hosting British Columbia programme, with sports events supported through Sport Hosting Vancouver and a target list of events aligned to the Vancouver Sport Strategy.

Option 2: Enabling (moderate change)

Option 2 represents a moderate step-up in ambition from Option 1. It remains a government-led strategy rather than a fully co-owned system strategy, but would move central government beyond being largely an investor in individual events towards actively enabling the wider system to work more effectively. Central government would strengthen coordination across agencies, improve alignment with regional initiatives, clarify roles, and reduce regulatory and operational friction, while supporting regions and the sector to lead where they are best placed.

In practice, an enabling-focussed national events strategy would lay out a longer-term direction for central government's involvement in events, demonstrating how government funding and policy support align with wider objectives and facilitating transparency about priorities, funding decisions, and the event pipeline. Public-value outcomes of focus would still be economic and reputational at national and regional levels, but the shared framework would give more explicit consideration to trade, investment, knowledge exchange, sector-development, social, and cultural outcomes. A key system outcome of focus would be to enable a more coherent events portfolio across both streams – establishing better visibility of upcoming events, avoiding calendar clashes, improving bid quality, harmonising central-regional planning, and ensuring a consistent evaluation framework across New Zealand. It would also support more consistent and frequent proactive prospecting for strategically aligned major public events and business events, and require leverage and legacy planning to be considered earlier, particularly where events align with national or regional priorities.

This type of strategy would see central government become a proactive partner that connects and empowers local leadership, for example, by engaging earlier with regions and supporting their event strategies and priorities. Regions would have a stronger role in identifying, shaping, and growing anchor events within a clearer national framework, supported by earlier sharing of priorities and more deliberate central–regional planning. Overall, this strategy would support a more productive and better-coordinated events system, reduce duplication, and enable stronger growth in priority events across New Zealand. This option should also provide a more coherent "no-wrong-door" government interface, while retaining delivery leadership within current institutional settings.

This option deliberately includes several reforms that, in some international jurisdictions, are associated with more mature events systems. The intent is to avoid delaying improvements that can reasonably be achieved before longer-term questions about stewardship arrangements, institutional design and investment scale have been settled.

Further details about the key features of this option are provided below.

Table 5: Key features of Option 2: An enabling strategy

Category	Key features
Government Role/ Ambition Level	Enabler: Central government focusses on removing friction, connecting effort, and supporting regions and the sector to lead where they are best placed, using its levers to make the system easier to navigate and more productive.
Potential elements of a Vision/North Star	New Zealand has a coordinated and easy-to-navigate events system that helps regions, sectors, and event owners grow the value of events. Central government reduces friction, aligns funding and regulatory settings, and supports regions to lead where they are best placed.
Indicative Goals and Outcomes	A more coherent national events portfolio emerges. Public-value outcomes continue to include visitor spend, visitor nights and media exposure, but are broadened through a shared framework to better recognise regional outcomes and the trade, knowledge, innovation, and sector-development value of strategically aligned business events. System outcomes include better event pipeline visibility, fewer date or venue clashes, improved bid quality, stronger central–local coordination, smoother regulatory pathways, more consistent evaluation practices, stronger regional and seasonal spread of events, and growth in selected national anchor events, major public events, international business events, and mass-participation events.
Potential Targets and Priorities	Establish a ten-year forward view of priority events, recurring commitments and prospects, supported by a shared public-value framework. Targets could include assessing all major publicly supported events against common criteria, a shared national calendar and pipeline tool used to support prospecting and coordination, agreed priority event categories and linked public–business event opportunities, a pipeline of major and anchor event prospects reviewed annually, and improved regional and seasonal spread. Priority areas would include events aligning with regional strengths, existing venue capacity, and off-peak seasons, and business events linked to priority sectors.

Category	Key features
Potential Strategic Initiatives/Focus Areas	1. National pipeline, calendar, and prospecting discipline: Identify potential date, regional, and accommodation clashes early, and support more deliberate prospecting for events that fit national and regional priorities. 2. Business events development and leverage: Strengthen New Zealand's capacity to bid for strategically important business events (including clearly targeted subvention funding), better integrate business events into the shared national pipeline, and align major public events with linked business events to maximise trade, knowledge, and investment outcomes. 3. Regional anchor uplift programme: Help regions grow existing events with national potential through capability-building, marketing, evaluation, co-investment support, and clearer pathways into the national portfolio. 4. Central–regional partnership framework: Establish clearer shared priorities, pathways, and ways of working so regions can identify, shape, and co-lead priority anchor and growth events within an agreed national framework. 5. National proposition development: Develop a clearer articulation of New Zealand's competitive strengths and desired positioning as an events destination, aligned with wider visitor economy, economic development, and social and cultural objectives.
Example events of focus	As illustrations only, events to support through an enabling approach would include those noted in Option 1 but would also include more regional events of significance, such as Kia Mau Festival, Te Matatini, and ASB Classic, where central government's role would be to support coordination, leverage, evaluation, and growth. The pathway to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games could also be leveraged under this strategy, with a focus on attracting connected regional and business events (see below for what this might entail).
Similar international examples	**Scotland** is a useful enabling comparator. Scotland's 'The Perfect Stage' has provided a stable national strategy since 2008, covering both public and business events and giving government and agencies a shared direction. EventScotland, within VisitScotland, coordinates bidding, investment, support, and evaluation, while the "One Scotland" partnership model aligns national agencies, local authorities, and industry. Scotland rarely invests unless the host local authority also provides funding or significant in-kind support, which reinforces shared responsibility. **Denmark** also provides an example of an enabling approach, but in a more segmented form. Sport Event Denmark leads international sports events through a structured partnership with the host city and national or international federation, while cultural and business events are largely city- or region-led. This model relies on clear roles, co-investment with cities, long-term mapping for sports events, and light coordination across business events, rather than a single integrated events system.

The Road to Brisbane 2032

The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be the closest Games to New Zealand in a generation and provide a useful illustration of the opportunities a more coordinated New Zealand events system could unlock.

The core responsibility for Olympic and Paralympic preparation sits with agencies such as the New Zealand Olympic Committee, Paralympics New Zealand, Sport New Zealand (including Sport Diplomacy), High Performance Sport New Zealand and the National Sporting Organisations (NSOs): nothing in an improved events system could or should replace or duplicate their roles.

However, the Games create a multi-year window for New Zealand to host a range of aligned events: from pre-Games friendlies and qualification tournaments to sector-focussed conferences, cultural festivals, and Pacific-focussed gatherings. At present, there is no easy way to assess and then bring together such a mix of NZ-hosted events.

With clear, coordinated national pipelines under a connected events system, New Zealand could position itself as a complementary destination within the wider Games environment, attracting teams, officials, media, and international delegates seeking high-quality preparation environments and cultural experiences in the lead-up to 2032. These events would provide platforms for the tourism, trade, investment, education, and cultural diplomacy activity already identified, supporting broader economic, cultural, diplomatic and reputational gains.

Option 3: Championing (transformational change)

This transformational strategic approach would involve a step-change in central government's role – moving beyond largely funding and promoting to actively co-leading and investing in building the overall events system. This would entail a co-designed system-wide strategy with a bold common vision and long-term direction for the whole events system, not just a government-focussed strategy, developed in close partnership with regions and the events sector. The co-owned national events strategy under this model would articulate a united vision and define New Zealand's distinctive event proposition, setting out shared objectives and priorities for business events and public events, to build the conditions for attracting and hosting international and mega events and developing regionally significant events as part of a planned pipeline, including developing event capabilities, investing in leverage and legacy activities, and enhancing infrastructure.

In practical terms, this option would likely require dedicated national capability and leadership in recognition that transformational change cannot be achieved through dispersed effort. This could mean establishing a central events agency or unit with sufficient authority and accountability to coordinate portfolio planning, guide strategy implementation, and make delegated funding and support decisions within agreed parameters (structural options are considered further in the line of inquiry on governance and coordination). Arm's-length governance features would likely be required so that most portfolio and investment decisions are made with specialist expertise and commercial agility, while Ministers retain strategic oversight and responsibility for the largest, highest-risk, or most politically significant commitments.

Through a championing approach, the aim is for substantial growth in broader public value from events, achieving not only stronger economic returns and visitor outcomes, but also enhanced social and cultural benefits, an elevated national profile, greater sector capability, and increased confidence in New Zealand's ability to secure and deliver high-quality, high-impact events.

International experience suggests that a transformative strategic approach is only achievable where a set of reinforcing preconditions are in place across strategy, institutions, funding, and delivery systems. Key features of a championing approach are as follows:

- An events strategy aligned with visitor economy and/or economic development strategies, which clearly guide the role of events in supporting broader goals and priorities. For example, destinations like Queensland and New South Wales (NSW) anchor their event ambitions in long-range tourism plans (for example, Queensland's Destination 2045 and NSW's Visitor Economy Strategy 2035), positioning events as core levers to grow the visitor economy. This provides clear vision and stability for industry partners and ensures that event investments are aligned with broader tourism priorities. This is also often coupled with alignment to broader economic strategies, particularly for business events, as seen in Scotland, Singapore and Victoria, where conferences and major events are used to advance priority sectors, innovation, trade and global positioning.
- Strong institutional leadership. A transformative strategy requires a dedicated or unified approach for tourism and events that combines mandates for both international and domestic visitor economy outcomes (such as Destination NSW, Visit Victoria, and VisitScotland). These entities provide strategic oversight of the system, enable portfolio planning, and coordinate whole-of-government and industry engagement for national and international outcomes, which international evidence shows is critical for coherence, credibility with rights holders, and effective pipeline development.
- Robust local government capacity, sustainable co-investment mechanisms, and funding settings that allow local partners to participate with confidence. A transformative strategy will falter without local partners who have the bandwidth and resources to participate and co-invest. New Zealand's experience and international comparators (such as models in Wales, Vancouver and parts of Australia) underline that local authorities and their agencies are critical for the successful delivery of events – from co-funding to providing venues, infrastructure, and community support. This needs sustainable local funding sources. Only when local councils have stable finances and operational capacity can they share ownership of an ambitious events programme.

Together, these conditions would provide the strategic direction, institutional capability, and co-investment capacity needed to sustain a genuinely transformative model. They need not all be fully resolved before any Championing characteristics are introduced, but insufficient progress on them would constrain the scale and durability of transformation.

Further details about the key features of this option are provided below.

Table 6: Key features of Option 3: A Championing strategy

Category	Key features
Government Role/ Ambition Level	Champion: Central government takes an active co-leadership role in shaping the national events system, setting a long-term direction with regions and the sector, and co-investing in the capability, infrastructure, and coordination needed for a stronger national events portfolio.
Potential elements of a Vision/North Star	New Zealand is an internationally distinctive destination for leisure, lifestyle, cultural, and knowledge events. Events grow visitor value, strengthen New Zealand's global profile, showcase Māori culture and identity, support priority sectors, and leave lasting community and economic benefits.
Indicative Goals and Outcomes	Step-change growth in public value from events, including increased international visitor nights and spending, improved international media profile, stronger cultural and social outcomes, and better use of events to support trade, investment, innovation, sport, and culture. Under a Championing strategy, events would increasingly be used as platforms to support broader national objectives. For example, international business events could be targeted towards sectors of strategic importance to New Zealand, while major public events could be accompanied by business programmes, investment showcases, research forums, trade missions, industry conferences or innovation initiatives designed to maximise long-term value creation. Step-change in system outcomes including a stronger major and mega-event pathway, more high-impact homegrown anchor events, greater regional and seasonal dispersal of events, and enhanced sector capability.
Potential Targets and Priorities	Set a 2040 horizon for a nationally significant events portfolio. Possible targets could include securing one or more transformational mega events or aligned event series by 2040, developing a decade-long pipeline of priority international events, growing a defined set of homegrown anchor events, and aiming to double the current baseline value of the national events portfolio by 2040. Priority areas could align with New Zealand's unique qualities and advantages, such as adventure and endurance sports, marine and sailing, Indigenous cultural events, food and agribusiness, screen and creative industries, health technologies, and sustainable technologies. These examples are illustrative rather than definitive. Their purpose is to demonstrate how a future events portfolio could become more deliberately aligned with areas of comparative advantage, rather than attempting to compete equally across all event categories and sectors. Through a Championing strategy, New Zealand would compete less as a generalist destination and more as a destination known for particular experiences, sectors and areas of expertise. Portfolio development, prospecting and investment would increasingly focus on opportunities aligned with identified areas of comparative advantage.
Potential Strategic Initiatives/ Flagship Focus Areas	1. 2040 national events programme: Develop a major, aligned series of events around the 2040 bicentenary of the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Treaty of Waitangi, featuring cultural, business, tourism, and community components with both national and international reach (see below for what this could entail). 2. Brisbane 2032 runway: Leverage the lead-up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympics to attract Oceania qualification events, pre-Olympic friendlies, sports science conferences, and other related business events. 3. Anchor event growth programme: Invest in selected New Zealand-owned public and business events with the potential to grow in scale, export potential, and legacy impact. 4. National leverage and legacy programme: Better enable trade, investment, cultural, community, and capability benefits beyond the event itself.

Category	Key features
Example events of focus	As illustrations only, potential bids or partnerships to explore include Olympic-sport qualification tournaments, major multi-sport events like the Commonwealth Games, or future co-hosted proposals following the success of the FIFA WWC 2023. Other opportunities could expand homegrown events such as Te Matatini (the pre-eminent national kapa haka festival), the World of WearableArt, or growing existing sector-aligned conferences, such as aerospace conferences, into leading Asia-Pacific forums, all to enhance their global reach and legacy in the lead-up to 2040.
Relevant international examples	**Victoria and Melbourne** show a mature Championing-style approach, with major, regional, and business events treated as core drivers of the visitor economy under Experience Victoria 2033 and Visit Victoria 2030. The state uses long-term anchor events, stable multi-year funding, bespoke arrangements for Tier 1 events, infrastructure investment, a coordinated "Team Victoria" model, and enabling legislation such as the Major Events Act 2009 to secure and leverage events at scale. Examples include long-term rights and infrastructure investment linked to the Australian Open, Australian Football League Grand Final, Boxing Day Test, and Australian Grand Prix. **Queensland and Brisbane** also demonstrate a Championing-style posture through Destination 2045, which positions Queensland as "Australia's event capital", supported by a dedicated Mega and Strategic Events Attraction Fund, and long-range planning through to Brisbane 2032 and beyond.

2040: The bicentenary of the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Treaty of Waitangi

The bicentenary (200th anniversary) of the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Treaty of Waitangi falls on 6 February 2040. As the foundational document of New Zealand, this historic milestone is likely to be a significant focus for national commemoration and reflection.

Earlier government work around the 175th-anniversary recognised a longer pathway towards 2040.

Leading up to 2040, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage continues to disburse funds to support Waitangi Day events nationwide. This foundation provides an important starting point. However, the bicentenary is also one of the most significant national moments in recent times and presents a much broader opportunity: to move beyond a programme of community-led events and create a platform for a larger national and international ambition.

With the right framing, and coordination through a national events system, 2040 could position Aotearoa New Zealand as a global meeting place for Indigenous leadership, Treaty partnership, culture, creativity, and future-focussed nation-building. It could become a moment that not only commemorates history, but also projects a confident and internationally relevant story about New Zealand's contemporary identity, values, and outlook.

There are useful international comparators. Scotland's Homecoming initiative, for example, used a significant cultural milestone to invite the Scottish diaspora and international visitors to reconnect with Scotland through culture, heritage, tourism, events, and identity.

New Zealand has the opportunity to do something distinctive and more ambitious: a bicentenary platform grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, shaped by iwi and Māori leadership, and connected to Indigenous peoples, diaspora communities, global partners, and future generations. A connected system could help curate and sequence a programme of NZ-hosted events that builds from 2035 and collectively amplifies the themes of 2040: cultural festivals, First Nations exchanges, sector-focussed conferences, Pacific gatherings, and international business events. These events would not replace or duplicate existing planning, but would provide structured platforms to align tourism, trade, investment, education, and cultural diplomacy around a shared horizon. A more integrated events system would be better placed to design a coherent multiyear pipeline leading into 2040, align it with agency priorities, and ensure events contribute meaningfully to a wider national narrative. It would also provide a natural interface for iwi, Māori business, philanthropic partners, and agencies such as NZ Story, TNZ, MFAT, MBIE, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, and New Zealand Trade and Enterprise to coordinate their outward-facing activity.

In this way, the bicentenary could connect national reflection with a coordinated international programme supported by a more capable events system.

Comparative summary of strategy options

Table 7: Comparison of three strategy options across key dimensions

Dimension	Option 1: Strategic Investment	Option 2: Enabling	Option 3: Championing
Role of central government	Primarily a disciplined investor and selective lever. Government focusses on improving the effectiveness, transparency, and ROI of existing funding tools.	System enabler and connector. Government reduces friction, aligns settings, and supports regions and the sector to lead within a clearer national direction, but does not yet create a dedicated stewardship model.	Active co-leader and system builder, supported by a dedicated stewardship model. Government treats events as strategic national assets and leads the development of a coordinated national events system.
Level of ambition	Incremental. Improves performance within the current system without materially reshaping it.	Moderate. Improves performance and strengthens coordination and coherence across the system while retaining existing institutional settings.	Transformational. Repositions events as a core national generator of public value with long-term ambition and shared leadership.
Degree of system change	Low. Existing agencies, funds and decision-making structures remain largely unchanged, with refinements to criteria, evaluation, and reporting.	Moderate. Introduces stronger cross-government coordination, clearer pathways, and more deliberate central–regional interaction.	High. Likely requires new national arrangements, stronger operating capability, and sustained whole-of-system coordination.
Strategic focus	Sharpening investment logic and improving returns from the current portfolio of funded events.	Growing the value and impact of events by improving coordination, pipeline visibility, and regional leadership.	Building a distinctive, long-term national events portfolio aligned to economic, cultural, social, and reputational objectives.
Approach to regions and the sector	Regions and event owners operate largely within existing arrangements, with limited change to roles or decision-making.	Regions and the sector are supported to lead where they are best placed, with clearer signals, improved co-investment pathways, better alignment, and reduced central friction.	Regions and the sector are co-owners of a national strategy, with shared ambition, coordinated investment, and aligned delivery roles.
What the option enables	Better value for money, clearer and more transparent decisions, and improved accountability, but limited change in the scale or ambition of the national events pipeline.	A more coherent national events portfolio, stronger regional and anchor events, stronger business event integration, earlier leverage and legacy planning, more deliberate prospecting, better bid quality, and improved system productivity.	A step-change in public value from events, including stronger major and mega-event pathways, enhanced national profile, deeper legacy outcomes, and increased sector capability.
Overall character	A sharper version of the current model.	A more connected and purposeful system.	A more integrated, nationally led events system with a long-term vision.

The comparison reinforces that these are cumulative levels of ambition. Option 2 incorporates the stronger investment discipline of Option 1, while Option 3 adds the shared leadership, institutional capability and sustained co-investment required for system transformation.

Across all three options, business events should be treated explicitly as part of the national events portfolio, with the main difference being the depth of integration: clearer alignment under Option 1, deliberate coordination and better linked opportunities under Option 2, and shared portfolio stewardship under Option 3.

Recommended strategic direction

Whichever option is chosen, the immediate priority is to develop a ten-year National Events Strategy that establishes a clear vision, objectives, priorities, event typology, public-value outcomes framework, and performance framework for New Zealand's events system. The strategy should focus principally on mega events, major public events, international business events and national anchor events, while recognising their relationship with the wider regional and community events landscape. The main difference between the three options is the strategy's level of ambition, breadth of focus and intended role in shaping the wider system.

This review recommends that the National Events Strategy initially adopt an Enabling focus, moving central government towards a more active system-enabling role while establishing a clear longer-term direction towards a Championing strategy. The initial strategy should strengthen the foundations needed for a more deliberate and coherent national approach, including clearer priorities, a shared public-value framework, stronger portfolio and pipeline planning, better integration of public and business events, more deliberate prospecting, earlier leverage and legacy planning, and stronger central–regional partnerships.

The initial strategy should be government-led and developed through targeted engagement with regions, local government, iwi and Māori, the events sector, and other system participants. Its first purpose should be to clarify central government's role, priorities, investment, and risk appetite, while establishing frameworks through which other participants can align their strategies and activities where interests intersect. It should not seek to direct all event activity or replace council, sector, iwi, community or commercial strategies.

Over time, the National Events Strategy should evolve progressively from a government-led Enabling strategy into a system-wide strategy, jointly developed with and supported by central and local government, regional event and tourism organisations, iwi and Māori partners, industry, and other sector participants. This evolution should occur as shared priorities, partnership arrangements, and wider system settings mature. The longer-term strategy would retain the foundations established through the Enabling phase but adopt a stronger shared ambition for New Zealand's national events portfolio and the public value it is expected to create.

It would not be practical to begin immediately with a full system-wide Championing strategy because several of its strategic and system preconditions are not yet sufficiently developed. These include an agreed public-value framework, clearer wider strategic priorities, durable partnership and co-investment arrangements, and an institutional basis for shared national stewardship. For example, while the recently released Tourism Policy Statement is a significant step towards providing a durable long-term direction for the visitor economy, it is not fully equivalent to a comprehensive visitor economy strategy. It functions more as a high-level framework that clarifies policy objectives, principles, and system roles. [15]

New Zealand also does not currently have an institution with the combined national and international visitor-economy mandate envisaged for co-leading the development and implementation of a fully system-wide Championing strategy. Furthermore, local government is under significant fiscal and operational pressure and is undergoing a challenging period of reform. This constrains the capacity of some councils and regional organisations to participate fully in the co-development and implementation of a more ambitious system-wide strategy. The way these wider issues are resolved will influence the respective roles of central and local government in developing and supporting that strategy.

Developing the strategy in stages would reduce implementation risk, build confidence and evidence, and allow work on longer-term stewardship, partnership and investment settings to proceed alongside implementation of the initial Enabling strategy. It would also allow selected Championing features to be introduced progressively where they are feasible and supported, without prematurely presenting the whole system as ready for a fully co-owned Championing strategy.

This staged approach recognises that many regions already have a clear view of their own event priorities, strengths and direction, while central government would benefit from first clarifying its role, priorities and operating settings. Doing so would allow government to engage with the wider system from a more coherent and constructive base and would provide stronger foundations for the strategy to become more fully system-wide over time.

[15] Several key components typical of international best-practice visitor economy strategies are not yet fully present in the Tourism Policy Statement. These gaps include concrete targets and performance measures, and defined institutional arrangements and delivery mechanisms, among others. In fact, the Tourism Policy Statement itself acknowledges that a subsequent National Destination Plan with "clear targets, measures and reporting" may be needed to truly guide long-term tourism growth and align national and regional objectives. See Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, June 2026, "New Zealand's Tourism Policy Statement", https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/new-zealands-tourism-policy-statement.pdf.

Line of inquiry 2: Investment, funding, and risk

This line of inquiry involved an assessment of the current funding and investment settings, what settings are required to support a sustainable events pipeline across event types, and how central and local government co-investment and risk-sharing arrangements could be improved.

Current funding and investment system

As summarised in the overview of the events system, key elements of the system's investment, funding, and risk framework are listed below.

- **The Major Events Fund (MEF) is an enduring funding mechanism administered through a multi-year appropriation**. It is about $13.3 million per year to support the attraction and delivery of major public events, administered by MBIE, and has supported around 8 to 11 investment approvals a year in recent years, usually for events two to four years ahead. Annual approvals and commitments vary depending on event size, timing, multi-year commitments, and available headroom. A major event under the MEF has, or has the potential, to be internationally significant by generating international interest, profile or visitation. The MEF can support sports, arts or cultural events delivered onshore (not business or trade events, music festivals or concerts). All funding decisions are made by the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, on advice from NZME officials. The Minister may seek feedback from the broader group of Event Ministers where relevant.
- **The Conference Assistance Programme (CAP) is a smaller, targeted fund, administered by TNZ.** It helps secure international business events of 200 or more delegates (this includes bid support and, if a bid is successful, tagged follow-up funding). Funding allocated through CAP on an annual basis is not publicly disclosed, although TNZ has received additional funding for CAP and related business events support in recent years (an additional $3 million in 2024/25, $3 million in 2025/26 and $1 million for 2026/27). The fund supported between 70 and 115 bids a year from 2021/22 to 2024/25, and can assist with financial feasibility studies, production of bid documents and presentations, and bid marketing strategies. All funding decisions are made by TNZ.
- **Some local government organisations have event funds**. Many councils have contestable funds or dedicated budgets for community, regional and/or major events. These vary widely in size and criteria and are under pressure from competing local needs.
- **There have been ad hoc injections.** Government has also introduced several temporary funding programmes to stimulate the events market. These include:
  - the Creative and Cultural Events Incubator, which comprised a tagged 10% share of the MEF from 2020 to 2024 and supported new or developing creative and cultural events

- the one-off $50 million Regional Events Fund, which was intended to stimulate domestic tourism and travel following COVID-19
- the one-off $10 million Events Boost Fund, which has supported international visitation over 2026
- the one-off $40 million Events Attraction Package (EAP), introduced in 2025 to attract major sporting, music and cultural events with large audiences and international visitors
- the one-off $10 million Events and Tourism Infrastructure Fund, which supported upgrades to existing events and tourism infrastructure to enhance visitor experiences.

These funds have had a variety of objectives, criteria, and decision-making processes associated with them.

Strengths and challenges

Strengths

In relation to investment, funding, and risk management arrangements, New Zealand's events system has the following strengths.

- **The MEF provides medium- to long-term certainty for planning.** The MEF has a rolling five-year funding horizon, which helps support forward planning, pipeline development, and more proactive bidding for major events. Its constancy is seen as a positive, and it is widely viewed as the core foundation of national major events funding.
- **Business events support can be nimble and effective.** TNZ's well-established CAP has been recognised for its fast turnaround, clear criteria linked to scale, and practical support for bids. It shows that targeted business events funding can be efficient and effective in helping secure international conferences.
- **Local government plays a strong co-investment role.** A range of Councils, including the metros (Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin) and many smaller regions and localities, have developed their own public- and business-event strategies, funds and portfolio approaches. While noting the growing instability of local government funding arrangements, these local efforts complement national investment and have helped deliver major events and business events successfully through central–local collaboration.
- **Evaluation and accountability are relatively well established.** Publicly funded events are increasingly assessed through cost–benefit analysis, investment KPIs, and post-event reporting. This provides a stronger foundation for evidence-based decisions and accountability for public spending. However, as discussed below, the consistency and coverage of wider social, cultural, reputational and long-term outcomes remain less developed.

- **The funding landscape is diverse.** Events are backed through a mix of central government funds, local councils, RTOs/EDAs, venues, and commercial and philanthropic sources. This gives different types of events more pathways to secure support across the wider ecosystem, although it also increases the need for coordination across funders, as discussed below.
- **The system has shown flexibility in times of disruption.** COVID-19 response measures, including temporary recovery and attraction funds, showed that government can adapt event funding quickly when the sector is under pressure. This demonstrated the perceived value of events and the system's ability to respond in a crisis.
- **New Zealand can deliver large-scale global events when required.** The country has shown it can attract and host mega events such as the Rugby World Cup, America's Cup, and FIFA Women's World Cup when dedicated funding is made available. These examples highlight strong operational capability and partnership alignment.

Challenges and weaknesses

Conversely, the review has identified the following funding and investment challenges.

- **Available funding does not match the scale and timing of demand.** The MEF's rolling five-year appropriation provides a degree of continuity, and funding can be carried into outyears or committed beyond the current appropriation period where this is consistent with approved annual caps and appropriation settings. In practice, however, the principal constraint is limited uncommitted headroom. Existing commitments, applications in process and credible prospects may absorb much of the funding available across future years. Annual expenditure limits can also prevent government from committing to an event when the required payment profile does not align with available annual allocations, even if further funding is expected through a future appropriation. The result is a medium- to long-term capacity constraint – strategically aligned event opportunities with credible public-value cases may not be pursued at the required scale or speed. It may also encourage investment in opportunities with lower individual funding requirements rather than those offering the greatest net public value. CAP faces a related certainty problem because its quantum is confirmed year by year, and there is no enduring business-event fund for direct contributions to core delivery costs or subvention.
- **Recent one-off funding packages created uncertainty and may have affected market expectations.** Temporary initiatives such as the Events Boost Fund and EAP increased investment, enabled faster responses and demonstrated renewed government commitment to events. However, their differing objectives, processes and timeframes reduced certainty about long-term priorities and central–local roles. The level and form of support available through some packages may also have increased expectations among promoters and rights holders about future subsidy levels, creating risks for consistency, transparency, and value-for-money once temporary funding ends. Detailed stakeholder perspectives are provided below.

- **Business events lack a large-scale enduring fund.** While the CAP helps support bids as its primary aim, there is no enduring equivalent to the MEF for securing and hosting large business events through direct cash contributions. This may leave New Zealand less competitive than destinations that offer more substantial conference incentives.
- **Council financial pressures make co-funding harder.** Many councils are facing tight budgets and as a result are reducing discretionary spending, including on events and destination marketing. In addition, the government has strongly signalled that councils should focus on core services, such as infrastructure and essential services. This creates tension when central government also expects local co-investment in public and business events, especially for smaller councils with even more limited capacity to contribute.
- **The system is fragmented across multiple funders.** Although the range of funding partners creates opportunities, central agencies, councils, TNZ, and private funders all make decisions separately, with limited overall coordination. This can increase transaction costs for organisers and lead to duplication, gaps or weaker portfolio alignment.
- **Central–local cost and risk-sharing remains predominantly case-by-case.** Cost and risk-sharing arrangements between central and local government have general guidelines, but they do not provide a sufficiently consistent basis for determining contributions across event types, host locations, and levels of regional capacity. This reduces predictability, increases negotiation costs and may make it harder for smaller regions to participate in nationally valuable opportunities.
- **Funding commercially owned public events and business events raises additional investment-design questions.** Where public funding contributes to a commercially successful event, agreements may need appropriate profit-sharing, repayment or clawback provisions. However, where government is purchasing specified additional public outcomes, the assessment should focus on whether those outcomes are measurable, additional and value-for-money rather than treating commercial ownership as disqualifying. Clearer principles are needed for outcome purchasing, profit treatment, risk allocation, and the use of seed or subvention funding.
- **Funding decisions focus heavily on short-term economic returns.** Current funding settings tend to prioritise immediate visitor spend and similar metrics. This can undervalue events that generate cultural, social, reputational or other longer-term benefits that are harder to quantify but still important.
- **The MEF's broad objectives can make prioritisation difficult.** MEF considers economic, social, cultural, sporting, and reputational outcomes across a wide set of criteria and KPIs. This breadth allows different forms of public value to be recognised, but the absence of an explicit hierarchy can make trade-offs less transparent and blur the fund's primary purpose. In practice, visitor expenditure and near-term economic returns tend to carry substantial weight. A clearer public-value framework should specify how different outcomes are prioritised and compared rather than simply narrowing the range considered.

- **Recurring and national anchor events are not well supported.** National funding often favours new or one-off events. While recurring or national anchor events can and are supported through MEF where they deliver national value, they are expected to become self-sustaining. In a small market, this can leave proven anchor events without the ongoing backing they need to continue delivering value or increase the value they generate. Longer-term support can provide continuity, sponsor confidence and a platform for longer-term leverage and legacy. However, there is a potential trade-off as it can lock up funding that could otherwise support new opportunities. The question should not be whether recurring events should be supported, but under what conditions and with what expectations of public support, regional co-investment, commercial investment, and ongoing national value.
- **Compliance requirements can be too onerous for smaller events**. Business cases and reporting processes associated with funding applications can be complex and resource-intensive. These requirements may be disproportionate to the funding received, and can particularly reduce access to public funding for smaller or emerging organisers.
- **There is limited investment in long-term system capability.** Most central government funding goes directly to events rather than to the wider ecosystem that supports them. As a result, workforce development, skills, infrastructure, and knowledge-sharing are not consistently strengthened over time.
- **Commercial sponsorship is constrained.** Event organisers rely on ticket sales, sponsorship, and local business contributions (often in-kind), but New Zealand's small market constrains the scale of private financing available, and ticket prices are inherently capped by local demand. Sponsors are similarly constrained – New Zealand's corporate sector lacks many big local players with deep pockets and multinationals are often guided by global marketing budgets rather than local objectives.

Feedback on recent one-off major event funding mechanisms

Stakeholders interviewed for this review indicated that while recent funding interventions for major events (EAP, Events Boost Fund, and Regional Events Fund) delivered speed, stimulus, and market access, they also introduced short-termism, inconsistency, and weak integration with delivery systems and regional priorities.

Across all funds, stakeholders welcomed the additional investment in events. However, stakeholders also consistently pointed to a trade-off between speed and strategy – the EAP and Events Boost Funds delivered pace and market responsiveness, but at the cost of clarity, consistency, and long-term value. On the other hand, the mechanism for distributing the Regional Events Fund demonstrated the value of devolved, locally-led investment, but it lacked continuity.

What worked well

Favourable perspectives on the Events Boost Fund and EAP were more commonly expressed by those with direct involvement in decision-making or who had directly benefited from funding, likely reflecting their proximity to how these mechanisms were implemented in practice. These stakeholders praised the newer funds for enabling New Zealand to move quickly and compete internationally. For example:

- *"We had a deal in 30 days and announced it in January… that process was very robust, fast"* (funding recipient).
- *"The Event Boost Fund helped us secure [event]… was wildly successful… promoters now want to keep it here"* (council/RTO).
- *"[Rights holders] who thought that New Zealand was a bit of a joke… we suddenly turned up in their offices and said, 'we've got some cash.' It woke them up"* (sector stakeholder).

While noting the challenge posed by its short-term nature, the Events Boost subvention funding was also praised by business events system stakeholders for increasing New Zealand's ability to compete with other business event jurisdictions.

- *"Credit where credit's due. There was extra money this year for us to go out and subvent business to get into this country, and that is a good thing"* (venue stakeholder).
- *"If the feasibility study is done and it's showing a loss, then if it's minor, that's where some things like subvention can help it to go, 'okay we'll help offset some of that loss because we still want it to come'"* (venue stakeholder).
- *"That was probably the first time that business events were allocated any type of subvention funding. We've demonstrated the return that we were able to deliver… it held us accountable but also gave us a commercial acumen to invest that money wisely"* (council/RTO).

The Regional Events Fund, introduced after COVID-19 to stimulate domestic tourism and inter-regional travel through events, was highlighted by local government and RTOs as a 'clean' and effective way to distribute funding in line with regional priorities and strengths. Regional partners felt they were best positioned to respond, tailor approaches, and manage risk in real time because of their existing expertise, infrastructure, relationships, and greater flexibility to enter into commercial arrangements such as non-disclosure agreements.

- "*If you put it into the hands of the people that actually work on the ground, the overall results that you get are quite different*" (council/RTO).
- *"The Regional Events fund was a cleaner way to distribute funds to regions, and it was divvied up by the tourism spend* across *the country"* (council/RTO).
- *"Government using the infrastructure of the RTOs to distribute government funds is efficient because those local governments, they know the product really well"* (funding recipient).

What didn't work well

Concerns related to how additional funding was introduced, communicated, and connected to the wider system. Stakeholders identified five recurring issues: limited continuity, unclear objectives, insufficient involvement of delivery partners, effects on market expectations, and the administrative complexity created by overlapping mechanisms.

- Lack of multi-year certainty, limiting pipeline development:
  - *"They're looking for a one-off success, whereas the decision to invest in something or to want to attract an event to the country has a much longer-term impact than just the one-off success…the longer-term impact that can come from multi-year thinking versus one-off delivery is really important"* (sector stakeholder).
  - *"We can't keep turning on and turning off and dialling up and dialling down. This…is going to come back to bite us because it's a little piece of goodness, but we're not going to have it next year"* (sector stakeholder).
- Lack of strategy, unclear objectives, and opaque decision-making:
  - *"There's no clear objective, no clear long-term view… it's really muddied the waters in terms of what the government's trying to achieve"* (venue stakeholder).
- Funding that was disconnected from on-the-ground delivery requirements:
  - *"Here's the money… good luck… there was no support or help"* (funding recipient).
  - *"What is the relationship between the government and the regions? The model they developed didn't have one…it was really using us as a post-box"* (council/RTO).
  - *"NZ Major Events… weren't [in a position]… to tell us what was going on and they were organising deals with our partners and we had to then… ring our partners to say 'hey, what's going on?'"* (council/RTO).
  - *"We were left out of it, but then when the events come through with that funding, we're expected to step up and deliver… when you're already trying to deliver all your own work"* (council/RTO).
- Distortion effects and market expectations:
  - *"The EAP is… setting a precedent for future years that we're going to throw lots of money at promoters to bring stuff here… it's going to be difficult when that funding dries up in a year…"* (sector stakeholder).
  - *"… the Boost Fund or the recent funding [is] focussed on the sugar hit or the shiny rock versus the complex carbohydrates and building long-term support for an industry…"* (council/RTO).

- *"A shopping cart of funds… we're not being strategic"* (system stakeholder).

- Confusion and inefficiency that the coexistence of multiple funds created:
  - *"Each fund has subtly different criteria… that's really confusing"* (system stakeholder).
  - *"Short timeframes, inconsistency and overlapping funds… not conducive to a well-functioning system…"* (system stakeholder).

Overall, stakeholders emphasised the need to transition from short-term, opportunity-led funding to a coherent, multi-year investment model with clear objectives, transparent decision-making, and stronger alignment between funding and delivery capability.

Lessons from international comparators

Investment and risk-sharing models overseas vary, but most countries operate multi-layered funding systems that blend national, regional, and local contributions with financial risk distributed according to event scale. Denmark illustrates this well: international sports events are supported through the National Lottery funding via Sport Event Denmark, which carries the largest financial share in the bid phase yet typically contributes less than 50% of public funding, with organisers retaining most financial risk. Cultural events, by contrast, see risk shared mainly between cities, regions, and organisers.

Victoria offers the most stable and long-term funding environment, with multi-year mechanisms such as the Major Events Fund, Regional Events Fund and bespoke arrangements for Tier 1 anchor events. Significant infrastructure investment also underpins long-term rights, such as AU$1 billion for Melbourne Park securing the Australian Open until 2046. Risk-sharing is calibrated across state and federal levels depending on event type.

More generally, New Zealand can draw several key lessons from the international practices:

- **Invest with consistency and at the right scale for impact.** High-performing event destinations like Victoria and Singapore commit substantial resources (roughly 0.02% to 0.03% of GDP per year) to major events, far outspending New Zealand's current Major Events Fund (around 0.003% of GDP). A larger scale of investment may be needed to remain globally competitive, especially for events with significant tourism impact. However, any increase in funding should be tied to strategic objectives (such as filling seasonal gaps or leveraging unique New Zealand advantages) to ensure quality over quantity.
- **Maintain outcome-based funding**. The MEF already emphasises outcomes, with funding often conditional on key performance indicators. This aligns with international practice that links funding to agreed outcomes, as seen in Australia and Singapore. New Zealand should continue and strengthen this approach for major and business events, for example, through robust and

comparable pre-event agreements on targets, and post-event evaluations to confirm returns. This strengthens accountability and helps build an evidence base for public investment.

- **Leverage partnerships and co-funding.** In all examined jurisdictions, government support is part of a broader funding mix, alongside local authorities, private sponsors, commercial revenue, and community contributions. New Zealand should persist with (and potentially formalise) minimum co-funding thresholds. This reduces risk to taxpayers and encourages events to harness private-sector creativity and funding.
- **Strategic targeting.** Successful programmes are selective. They fund events that align with clear strategic goals – whether it's driving tourism in the off-season, promoting national culture, or boosting international image. New Zealand's comparatively smaller funding should focus on events that offer distinct net benefits. Funding should not be spread too thinly across multiple objectives or a large number of events, or direct to events that are likely to proceed without government support or generate limited additional public value.
- **A broader portfolio approach.** Scotland's example shows value in balancing a portfolio of events, supporting a mix of recurring anchor events and new opportunities to create year-round benefits. Offshore examples suggest that New Zealand could benefit from a formalised strategy that considers both business and public events in an overarching portfolio and distinguishes between national anchor events versus truly international ones with potentially different funding pathways for each.
- **Robust evaluation and clear communication.** Demonstrating impacts through credible evaluation is essential. New Zealand can build on its existing cost-benefit analysis, which is widely used throughout the country for public events, by extending the assessment of broader outcomes. As a comparison, event organisers and government bodies across the United Kingdom use an EventIMPACTS toolkit for economic and social impact evaluation, and Victoria has event ROI studies. Business events use different measurement approaches, which makes comparison across a single portfolio challenging. Transparent and consistent reporting of outcomes against objectives (such as attendance, visitor spend and media reach, or whatever is set as the priority within a national strategy) will build public confidence and support for ongoing investment.

By drawing on the scale and selectivity evident in Australian states and Singapore, the coordination found in Scotland, and the emerging evaluation rigour in Wales, New Zealand can improve its approach to funding and investment.

Opportunities to strengthen investment, funding, and risk management in the events system

The review's national and international findings and analysis point to the following broad opportunities to strengthen the events investment, funding, and risk framework. The opportunities are not mutually exclusive and could be combined or sequenced (see the following options section). Each addresses gaps identified above.

Create clearer funding pathways for major, anchor and business events

- **Extended Major Events Fund (regional growth tier):** Although the MEF does support regional events, this could be made more explicit and enduring, with a focus on helping them scale and generate broader benefits for New Zealand. In practice, this could mean creating a distinct tier within the MEF dedicated to national anchor events or regional events that show potential to scale (that could grow into future major events and have greater export potential). Additionally or alternatively, support for emerging regional anchor events could be enabled through enhanced central–local partnership mechanisms. Rather than an open contestable funding process, central and local governments would partner to identify and invest in these events, fostering a pipeline from promising regional to major events.

  A clearer lifecycle model is also needed for these events. Some national anchor events may warrant time-limited growth funding to help them reach a more sustainable scale; some may justify tapering central support as regional, commercial or sponsorship funding grows; and a small number may warrant ongoing public support where they operate as strategic national or regional assets and continue to generate benefits that would not otherwise be realised. There should not be a hard rule. The level and duration of central government support should reflect the additional public value an event is expected to generate, its alignment with national priorities, regional co-investment, commercial maturity, leverage potential, delivery capacity, and opportunity cost within the wider portfolio. Long-term support should be reviewed periodically against these factors.

- **Enhanced support for business events:** New Zealand's ability to attract and host large international conferences and business events can be strengthened by expanding support beyond the current CAP bid assistance. This could include offering subvention funding or seed investment for event delivery (to attract larger international business events) or underwriting international conferences that align with priority sectors. The goal is to make New Zealand more competitive in the conference market by offsetting costs and acknowledging the broader economic and knowledge benefits of business events.

Build a more durable funding base

- **Sustainable revenue sources:** Given local government fiscal pressures and weak commercial sponsorship markets, an opportunity is to identify and implement a new regional funding stream for events, such as a proportion of a national accommodation levy or other alternative. Revenue from such a mechanism could be ring-fenced, subject to future policy decisions, for destination management, events, and tourism and event infrastructure. This would provide a more stable, self-replenishing budget for events independent of annual government appropriations, enabling longer-term planning and possibly contributing to reserves or contingency funds for events. Instituting a new revenue source like an accommodation levy would require policy and legislative action by central government, possibly in partnership with local government. Such revenue should supplement (not replace) existing event budgets, and could be complemented by encouraging private-sector co-investment. The Auckland Deal includes an agreement to explore an accommodation-levy policy in 2027.

- **Longer-term funding and baseline uplift:** A further opportunity is to align funding more closely with the long lead times and flexibility required for major and business events, while increasing the amount of funding available annually. The MEF already operates through a rolling five-year multi-year appropriation, but this does not in itself provide sufficient uncommitted headroom or certainty for all opportunities arising beyond the current funding horizon. Options for greater continuity could include maintaining a rolling multi-year appropriation with more systematic replenishment, developing explicit arrangements for commitments that extend beyond the current appropriation period, or, if justified following Treasury and legal advice, considering a permanent legislative authority. The objective would be to create sufficiently stable authority and funding to support high-priority long-term commitments, rather than to prescribe a particular appropriation mechanism at this stage. CAP would also benefit from greater multi-year certainty because the largest business events have similarly long lead times.

Use a wider investment and risk-sharing toolkit selectively

- **Expand the toolkit to include a more sophisticated approach to underwriting, selected use of incentives and risk-sharing:** There is also the potential to move beyond standard grants to include financial tools that better manage risk and reward success for public events. For example, the government could selectively underwrite certain strategic events (guaranteeing to cover a portion of losses if the event underperforms, which encourages promoters to bring events here) or offer performance-based incentives/rebates (providing support after an event if it achieves agreed targets like high international visitation or off-season timing). These measures, if used carefully, would share event risks and attract events that otherwise might not come to New Zealand, without always requiring large upfront subsidies. Some of these tools have been previously trialled with limited uptake, highlighting the need for careful design. In addition, underwriting activity is restricted under the Public Finance Act and generally requires Minister of Finance approval. An expanded toolkit would need either an agreed approval pathway or standing parameters for when underwriting can be considered, how risk is priced and managed, and who holds decision rights.

Use event funding to strengthen wider system capability

- **Invest in event sector capability:** There is also the potential to extend the events funding framework to support building long-term capability in the system. This might involve annual funds for capability development, grants for knowledge-sharing initiatives, or co-funding upgrades for essential event infrastructure (like venues or technology), in partnership with local government and industry bodies. This would strengthen the broader ecosystem (skills, systems, and facilities), leading to better efficiency and resilience over time. Any central capability support should be delivered in partnership with industry associations/local government and aligned to wider sector initiatives, given central agencies' typically limited direct role in training and event infrastructure delivery.

Proposed events system funding options

The opportunities above can be combined at different levels of ambition. The three options below represent a staged pathway rather than wholly separate models. Each successive option retains the core disciplines of the previous option while increasing the scale of investment, the range of event types and system functions supported, the role of regional partners, and the sophistication of the available investment and risk-sharing tools.

These options are:

- **Option 1: Focussed and transparent investment** (incremental change) – Government largely retains the current funding model, but applies clearer criteria, stronger transparency, and more disciplined targeting to existing event funds. In practice, this means getting better value from current tools rather than creating new funds or significantly changing how the system operates.
- **Option 2: Coordinated Co-investment** (moderate change) – Government builds on the current model by introducing a clearer multi-tier investment approach, stronger central–local co-investment settings, and more support for regional capability, prospecting, leverage and legacy. In practice, this creates a more coordinated and predictable funding system while still working mainly through existing funding mechanisms.
- **Option 3: National Events Investment Platform** (transformative change) – government establishes a more integrated national investment platform with a larger and more flexible funding base, broader tools for supporting major, business and anchor events, and stronger local co-investment over time. In practice, this shifts the system from mostly fund-by-fund decisions to a longer-term national portfolio approach with greater scale, certainty and sophistication.

The investment and funding ranges suggested for all three options are illustrative scenarios rather than government commitments. They demonstrate the broad scale and composition of investment associated with different ambitions. Final requirements should follow the National Events Strategy and require detailed policy, contemporary evidence of additional net public value, fiscal and delivery-capacity assessment, business cases, and Cabinet and Budget decisions.

The scenarios use an estimated current baseline comprising the MEF and existing business-event support. Because the annual CAP allocation is not publicly disclosed, the baseline and associated funding increases are indicative and should be validated through detailed policy and fiscal work. The scenarios exclude separate, case-by-case appropriations for mega events and, unless otherwise stated, exclude new local or regional revenue.

Option 1: Focussed and transparent investment (incremental change)

Option 1 retains the current events investment model but applies greater discipline and improved transparency and consistency to funding decisions. The rationale for government funding decisions for major events would be made clearer and publicly communicated more consistently. Although this does not require changes to the underlying investment model, it would require government to be more explicit and transparent about why particular major events are supported, how decisions relate to the purpose of the MEF, and how trade-offs have been considered. This enhanced transparency and accountability directly addresses stakeholder concerns about some of the past decisions (albeit primarily relating to the EAP and Events Boost Fund) appearing to be ad hoc.

Under this option, central government would continue to invest primarily through the MEF and CAP, with an illustrative total funding increase of approximately $3.35 million to $4.95 million per year. This could comprise an additional $2 million to $3 million through the MEF, including support for a small number of national anchor or other priority major events; an additional $1 million to $1.5 million for business-event bid support through CAP; and approximately $350,000 to $450,000 in associated operational support. This option would not introduce enduring business-event subvention funding and would provide limited additional capacity to secure large or major business events requiring direct contributions to delivery costs. Within the constrained funding envelope, investment would be concentrated more selectively on major and national anchor events that demonstrate strong additional public value, including through international visitation, profile, regional benefits or other national outcomes. This would require explicit consideration of opportunity cost and may result in fewer investments where concentrating support produces greater net public value.

No new funds or complex risk-sharing instruments would be introduced. Any future one-off increases in funding under this option would be directed through existing investment parameters, rather than through a separate temporary initiative such as the EAP. This approach would reduce the short-termism and uncertainty about additional public value associated with establishing separate temporary mechanisms such as the EAP. In practice, this means additional funding would be aligned with the purposes and assessment disciplines of the MEF or CAP to ensure continuity and consistency.

Overall, Option 1 should provide clearer direction about which events government would support and improve accountability, but would not fundamentally change the scale or structure of public investment in events in New Zealand. Option 1 aligns with the strategic investment ambition, where government uses its existing funding tools and levers more deliberately.

More details about the potential features of this option are provided in Table 8.

Table 8: Key features of Option 1: Focussed and transparent investment

Funding activity	Change compared to current system	Illustrative cost and potential additional activity
Major events	**Enhanced existing activity:** MEF retained as the main investment mechanism with modest uplift. Clearer criteria, stronger transparency, and more disciplined decision-making within existing grant-based system.	+$3 million to $4.5 million per year across MEF (+$2 million to $3 million) and CAP (+$1 million to $1.5 million). This could support around two to three additional major events, one to two additional national anchor events, and around 20 to 30 additional business-event bids each year. The actual mix would depend on the size, type and funding requirements of selected opportunities.
Business events	**Enhanced existing activity:** CAP retained with modest uplift, with greater clarity on the purpose of support for business events beyond scale (international visitation).	
National anchor events	**Enhanced existing activity:** A more explicit allowance within existing funding supports a small number of anchor events that improve pipeline continuity, without creating a new specific programme.	
Mega or large-scale major events	**Existing activity:** No distinct new mechanism or additional emphasis is proposed. The existing ad hoc Cabinet process for funding mega events would remain.	No proposed increase.
Prospecting	**Existing activity:** Some improved forward planning and pipeline visibility, but there is no material expansion of the prospecting function as no new prospecting activity is funded.	No proposed increase.
Leverage and legacy activity	**Existing activity:** Continued consideration of leverage and legacy activity from within overall funding envelope. No additional dedicated leverage or legacy funding is proposed, as the focus is on improved targeting, consistency, evaluation, and reporting.	No proposed increase.
Operational support	**Enhanced activity:** Additional funding to support the administration of the additional MEF and CAP funding (representing around 10% to 12% of the additional investment).	+$350,000 to $450,000.

Based on past experience with MEF and CAP, the additional funding might attract:

- an additional 2,500 to 4,000 international visitors per year (generating roughly 20,000 to 22,000 visitors per year from MEF co-investment)
- over 30,000 to 40,000 additional international visitor nights (to reach an average of around 240,000 to 255,000 nights per year from MEF investment)
- around $9 million to $13 million in international visitor expenditure (to around $70 million to $75 million of international visitor expenditure per year), and
- support an additional 20 to 30 event bids valued at around $45 million to $70 million (which might convert to around 13 to 20 successful bids).

These are indicative estimates under the funding scenario, based on average outcomes achieved from MEF and information from TNZ, not forecasts or guaranteed returns.

Under this option, the scale of New Zealand's event funding per year, as a proportion of GDP, would remain equivalent to locations such as Scotland and Denmark (with key funds representing around 0.001% to 0.003% of GDP), and below the relative funding scale reported for competitors such as Australian states and Singapore (with reported events funding in these jurisdictions at around 0.01% to 0.03% of GDP). These comparisons are indicative because the scope of publicly reported event funding differs across jurisdictions, including in the treatment of regional programmes, business events, operating costs, bespoke anchor-event agreements, and event-related infrastructure.

Option 2: Coordinated Co-investment (moderate change)

Note: Option 2 includes all of the core components of Option 1, but takes a further step to strengthen regional leadership, co-investment, and system coordination.

Option 2 moves further towards a more coordinated national investment approach. The scenario modelled was approximately $25 million to $29 million of funding per year, representing an increase of around $11 million to $15 million per year on the current combined MEF and CAP funding levels. This level of investment reflects both a desire to increase the impact of events and the fact that major-event costs have increased and the current MEF is nearly fully committed for several years, leaving little room to pursue new opportunities without additional funding. Improved prioritisation would make existing funding work better, but it would not by itself resolve the capacity constraint if event costs and competitive demands continue to rise.

Central government would continue investing through existing funds but there would be a stronger role for regions in identifying, shaping, co-funding, and leveraging events, for example, through ring-fenced funding for significant/regional events and regional capability to empower local partners. Option 2 also begins to increase proactive event attraction efforts, using modest new resources to identify a few high-priority events that align with national objectives and lay the groundwork for the larger-scale attraction efforts envisaged over the long-term.

This option would include a broader multi-tier investment framework, shifting the system towards a more explicit portfolio approach, covering major events, strategically valuable business events, and national anchor events, with stronger central–local co-investment arrangements and the introduction of dedicated support for regional event development, giving regions a greater leadership role in shaping and funding their event priorities.

Decision-making on CAP funding, through TNZ, would remain as is. For the MEF, minor and routine funding and support decisions (for example, under $1 million) could be delegated to officials or regional bodies operating within agreed criteria and subject to robust internal review processes. For mid-sized or strategically important major events below a moderate threshold (for example, $1 million to $4 million), a cross-agency panel could review and either have delegated authority to approve the funding or make recommendations to the MBIE Chief Executive who would hold the delegation to sign-off on those decisions. Ministers would remain involved for large (for example, over $4 million), high-risk, or strategically significant opportunities, and certainly for mega events or events requiring Cabinet-level decisions. In addition, officials would still notify Ministers of upcoming decisions across the MEF, under the "no surprises" convention. The multi-tier decision-making approach aligns with the funding option's intent to create clearer, nimble pathways and more decentralised decision-making. These thresholds are indicative and further work and government decisions would be required to finalise the parameters.

Under this option, a more structured, but flexible, approach to central–local co-investment in major and anchor events could be introduced. Rather than negotiating support for each major and regionally significant event, government would establish clearer principles for when and how central government contributes, what is expected from local government and sector partners, and how co-funding requirements vary depending on event type, regional capacity, and public value. This could be in the form of a central–local government events funding accord. This formal partnership, similar to the devolved Regional Events Fund approach that stakeholders praised for its ability to support regional priorities, would set transparent but more flexible expectations for cost-sharing, helping smaller councils participate, while still requiring shared commitment where events deliver both national and local benefits. The aim would be to reduce avoidable uncertainty and case-by-case conflict by establishing in advance the principles, factors and indicative ranges that would guide each party's contribution and commitment timeframe, while retaining flexibility for exceptional opportunities.

This option could also introduce and test selective risk-sharing tools, such as capped underwriting, or limited guarantees for priority opportunities where the public-value case is strong and risks are well understood. These tools would be used selectively rather than routinely, and could be considered for both major events and business events.

Finally, this option would build on the leverage and legacy activity already occurring through some MEF-supported events, but would make it more systematic across the portfolio. The focus would be on earlier planning with relevant agencies, clearer expectations for event organisers and host regions, and modest dedicated capacity to convert event opportunities into tourism, trade, investment, participation, sector-development or regional outcomes.

Option 2 aligns with the Enabling strategic direction, where government focusses on removing friction, connecting effort, and supporting a more coherent national event portfolio. This option would support a more predictable and coordinated investment system for events. It would ensure a stronger platform for central–local co-investment but would not fully resolve long-term funding certainty or create a transformational shift in the scale of public investment in events in New Zealand.

Further details about the features of this option are provided below. The figures below illustrate a possible moderate-change package. They are not a recommended appropriation, and components could be progressed at different scales or through reprioritisation, subject to detailed policy and Budget decisions.

Table 9: Key features of Option 2: Coordinated Co-investment

Activity	Change compared to current system	Illustrative cost and potential additional activity
Major events	**Enhanced existing activity:** The MEF remains the primary investment mechanism, but within a broader multi-tier framework and with a moderate uplift. This option also involves clearer criteria, greater transparency, and disciplined decision-making.	+$8 million to $10 million per year across MEF (+$6 million to $7 million) and CAP and subvention funding (+$2 million to $3 million). This represents potential funding for, indicatively, around five to ten additional major or anchor events per year, and 40 to 60 business-event bids supported per year. The actual mix would depend on the size, type and funding requirements of selected opportunities.
Business events	**Enhanced existing activity:** Increased quantum for CAP, including subvention funding.	
National anchor events	**Enhanced existing activity:** More deliberate support for anchor events, with regions playing a stronger role in identifying, shaping, co-funding, and leveraging regionally significant recurring events.	
Mega or large-scale major events	**Enhanced existing activity:** Increased funding, clearer investment pathways, delegation to senior officials for (some) approvals, and selective risk-sharing tools would improve the ability to support larger priority opportunities, but there is no distinct large-event mechanism to provide transformational investment. Ad hoc Cabinet approval process for mega-event funding retained.	No proposed baseline increase; considered case by case as needed.
Prospecting	**Enhanced existing activity:** Improved pipeline visibility, a more coordinated national–regional investment approach and a modest funding uplift would support more deliberate prospecting and clearer pathways for different event types and scales.	+$250,000 to $500,000 per year.
Leverage and legacy activity	**Enhanced focus:** There is a more explicit focus on leverage and legacy activity across both event streams, including regionally led leverage opportunities, and a greater emphasis on integrating leverage and legacy planning for both public and business events.	+$500,000 to $1 million per year.
Regional delivery capability	**New activity:** A ring-fenced portion of funding would support central–regional partnerships, localised decision-making, and facilitation for regional event delivery. This could also include support for council-administered regulatory requirements and related delivery capability where needed.	+$1 million to $2 million per year.
Operational support	**Enhanced activity:** Additional funding to support the administration of the additional MEF, CAP and regional capability funding (representing around 10% to 12% of the additional investment), noting that this is in addition to the resources for prospecting noted above.	+$1 million to $1.5 million per year.

Based on past experience with MEF and CAP, the additional funding might attract:

- an additional 8,000 to 9,500 international visitors per year (to reach 25,000 to 27,000 visitors per year from MEF co-investment)
- around 90,000 to 110,000 additional international visitor nights (to reach an average of around 300,000 to 320,000 nights per year from MEF co-investment)
- around $25 million to $32 million in international visitor expenditure (to around $85 million to $95 million of international visitor expenditure per year from MEF co-investment), and
- support an additional 40 to 60 business-event bids valued at $90 million to $140 million (which may convert to an additional 25 to 40 successful bids from CAP and subvention funding).

These are indicative activity and gross visitor expenditure estimates under the modelled funding scenario, based on average outcomes achieved from MEF and information from TNZ, not forecasts or guaranteed returns. Actual outcomes would depend on event and bid selection, additionality, conversion, visitor origin, displacement, public and private costs, portfolio composition, delivery capacity, and market conditions. The modelling should inform, but not substitute for, detailed appraisal.

Option 3: National Events Investment Platform (transformational change)

Option 3 includes, and builds on, the components in Options 1 and 2, but expands upon the ambition to enable a more fully developed national events investment system with stronger funding, risk-sharing, capability, and local government participation.

For the purposes of this option, the "National Events Investment Platform" refers to the combined investment architecture rather than necessarily a single legal fund. It would bring together a multi-tier funding framework, portfolio-management processes, agreed decision rights, specialist operating capability, and a wider range of investment and risk-sharing tools. Detailed design would determine whether existing appropriations were consolidated, aligned under a common framework or replaced by a new fund.

Option 3 illustrates a possible higher-ambition investment model that could be considered if the National Events Strategy establishes a Championing level of ambition. It is not an agreed future model or a recommended appropriation. The review has modelled central-government funding of approximately $40 million to $46 million per year to illustrate the scale that a much more active model could involve. This represents a meaningful step-change rather than a marginal or moderate uplift, bringing New Zealand closer to the relative scale of investment in leading comparator jurisdictions while retaining disciplined investment criteria and portfolio management. The final level, source, pace and allocation would require separate policy development, business cases, assessment of net public value and fiscal trade-offs, delivery-capacity analysis, and Cabinet and Budget decisions.

A multi-tier National Events Investment Fund, or equivalent, would be established to support a combination of major events, anchor event growth, business events, leverage and legacy funding, industry capability-building, and selected infrastructure-readiness investment. The investment model would be portfolio-based, with government deliberately co-investing with partners in a long-term pipeline of events that support national outcomes across visitor value, regional dispersal, global profile, culture, trade, innovation, sport, and social benefits.

This option would allow for subvention funding (direct financial incentives to help offset event hosting costs) in addition to business-event bid support, enabling New Zealand to be a viable contender for strategically aligned and larger international business events.

As noted in the equivalent option under Governance and system coordination, day-to-day investment decisions would be made by an integrated unit/group within a Crown entity and its board at arm's-length, with Ministers focussed on setting the strategic direction and approving any exceptional, high-risk, strategically important or complex commitments (including, for example, those involving $10 million or more of central government investment).

This option could also introduce a longer-term, stable funding appropriation horizon (for example, through a permanent legislative authority), introduce greater use of advanced risk-sharing tools (such as underwriting, guarantees, structured cost-sharing arrangements), and require stronger operating capability to support fund management, portfolio oversight, prospecting, leverage and legacy coordination, and related system functions.

A higher-ambition system would require a higher level of local and regional co-investment. This option assumes that a new funding mechanism is available for local government partners, such as an accommodation levy or equivalent. Without a new local funding source, Option 3 is unlikely to be viable, unless central government was willing to directly fund a far greater share of event investment.

For illustration, if implemented at around 3% to 5% of accommodation spend, modelling estimates that an accommodation levy could contribute an additional $12 million to $20 million per year in local event funding, assuming around 10% of levy revenue is used for events.[16] This is not a revenue forecast, recommended allocation or commitment. Any proposal would require separate legal, economic, distributional and administrative analysis; consultation; consideration of all competing uses of revenue; and ministerial and legislative decisions. Alternatives should be assessed alongside it.

[16] The Stats NZ Tourism Satellite Account records $4.152 billion of expenditure on accommodation services, excluding GST, for the year ended March 2025. Applying a 3% levy to this would generate around $125 million in gross revenue (10% of which is $12.5 million) and a 5% levy would generate around $208 million in gross revenue (10% of which is $20.8 million). The levy estimates illustrate the potential order of magnitude only. The Tourism Satellite Account measure is used as a broad proxy for the potential levy base and does not establish the expenditure that would legally be subject to a levy. Actual revenue would depend on the levy's coverage, exemptions, taxable base, behavioural effects, collection costs and the proportion ultimately allocated to events. The modelling does not deduct collection or administration costs or model behavioural responses, exemptions, changing accommodation demand or the distribution of revenue between regions.

If there is a new mechanism to support local government event support, any central funding directed to regional and anchor events would also need to be tightly focussed on additionality, growth, and leverage and legacy opportunities, rather than substituting for event investment that regions could fund directly.

More systematic leverage and legacy support would also be a feature of this option. This would include more deliberate identification of opportunities across agencies and sectors, stronger support for activation, and a clearer expectation that high-value events are used to pursue wider outcomes beyond immediate visitation. Under this model, leverage and legacy would be planned at both event and portfolio level, allowing government and partners to identify where a sequence of events could support tourism, trade, investment, participation, workforce, regional development or national brand objectives over time.

Unlike the other options, this option could include industry capability and event-infrastructure readiness investment as part of the funding model, recognising that successful events systems are underpinned by the capability, venues, infrastructure, and supporting systems required to attract and deliver events at an international standard. A portion of the investment platform could be directed towards targeted system capability where this is demonstrably necessary to attract or deliver priority events. This could include workforce and sector capability, knowledge-sharing, evaluation systems, event technology, venue readiness, and infrastructure partnerships where these are critical to attracting and delivering priority events.

Overall, Option 3 would align with the Championing strategic ambition by creating a step-change in the scale, certainty, and sophistication of public investment in events. It would enable a longer-term national pipeline of major and potentially mega events, stronger growth in regional and anchor events, a more deliberate approach to higher-value business events, and greater use of events to support wider economic, social, cultural, and strategic outcomes. However, it would also be the most complex option to implement, requiring new revenue or funding decisions, stronger national machinery, higher operational support, and a greater level of fiscal exposure and active risk management.

More details about the features of this option are provided in Table 10.

Table 10: Key features of Option 3: National Events Investment Platform

Activity	Change compared to current system	Illustrative cost and potential additional activity
Major events	**Enhanced activity:** A new multi-tier National Events Investment Fund would become the primary investment mechanism for international events, replacing and expanding on the current MEF, with increased funding, a portfolio-based approach, and the ability to make longer-term commitments to priority opportunities. Central government remains the primary investor but shares strategic leadership with local partners.	+$19 million to $22 million per year across MEF (+$14 million to $16 million) and CAP and subvention funding (+$5 million to $6 million). Indicatively, this could support around 12 to 15 additional major events each year, and support for 150 business-event bids per year, ranging from small to major bids. The actual mix would depend on the size, type and funding requirements of selected opportunities.
Business events	**Enhanced activity:** CAP-type funding would be expanded under the new platform to support more international business-event bids, alongside more explicit subvention support for higher-value (large to major) business events. This would provide a more deliberate and better-resourced approach to targeting business events with wider strategic value.	
National anchor events	**Enhanced activity:** A regional events programme, with the funding source to be determined (for example, an accommodation levy or equivalent local authority tourism investment mechanism), would support anchor events and broader regional event investment, led by the regions. Any central funding for regional and anchor events would be focussed on additionality, growth, and leverage and legacy opportunities.	From additional revenue available through a potential new local government funding mechanism. Indicatively, this funding could support five to ten significant regional events to grow to national scale over time.
Mega or large-scale major events	**Enhanced activity:** Larger investment pools, longer-term commitments, and more systematic use of advanced investment tools would improve the ability to pursue large-scale major and mega-event opportunities. This may reduce the need for separate Cabinet requests for some events, but not for the very largest opportunities.	Funding would either be included within the overall increase noted above or require a separate Cabinet approval process.
Prospecting	**Enhanced activity:** The potential for a longer-term appropriation horizon, stronger pipeline discipline, and a portfolio-based investment model would support more deliberate long-term prospecting and earlier commitment to priority opportunities, including major and potentially mega events.	+$1 million to $1.5 million per year.
Leverage and legacy activity	**Enhanced activity:** Dedicated funding would support a more systematic leverage and legacy model, including stronger activation, cross-agency coordination, and clearer expectations that high-value events are used to deliver wider outcomes beyond immediate visitation.	+$2 million to $3 million per year.
Regional delivery capability	**Enhanced activity:** Regions would be able to use a proportion of the events funding from a sustainable local or regional revenue mechanism, such as an accommodation levy or alternative, to support local event delivery capability and the administration of regulatory requirements.	From additional revenue available through a potential new local government funding mechanism.

Activity	Change compared to current system	Illustrative cost and potential additional activity
Industry capability and capacity building	**New activity:** Dedicated funding would support industry capability, workforce development, knowledge-sharing, evaluation systems, and related sector-strengthening activity, potentially through industry associations or other delivery partners.	+$1 million to $2 million per year.
Infrastructure readiness and regulatory support	**Potential new activity:** Funding could support event-infrastructure readiness, venue readiness, and a more effective regulatory environment for major events, including targeted expert support to reduce avoidable delivery friction and costs.	Inclusive of the overall increase in event funding.
Operational support	**Enhanced activity:** Additional funding to support the administration of the new investment fund (which effectively includes additional MEF, CAP, regional and industry funding). Additional operational funding for prospecting and legacy and leverage activity is already included in the figures above.	+$2.5 million to $3.5 million per year.

Based on past experience with MEF and CAP, the additional funding under this option might attract: [17]

- an additional 18,500 to 21,500 international visitors per year (to reach approximately 37,000 to 40,000 visitors per year supported through MEF co-investment)
- around 220,000 to 250,000 additional international visitor nights (to reach an average of 430,000 to 460,000 nights per year from MEF co-investment)
- around $64 million to $74 million in additional international visitor expenditure (taking the estimated annual total generated through MEF co-investment to between $125 million and $135 million), and
- support for around 150 business-event bids, including a greater number of bids for large-to-major events, representing an estimated bid pipeline value of $350 million (which could convert to just under 100 successful bids each year, approximately the level New Zealand has the capacity to host and deliver).

These are indicative activity and gross visitor expenditure estimates under the modelled funding scenario, based on average outcomes achieved from MEF and information from TNZ, not forecasts or guaranteed returns. Actual outcomes would depend on the quality and additionality of supported opportunities, bid conversion, visitor origin, displacement and substitution, public and private costs, capability and infrastructure constraints, portfolio composition, and the effectiveness of leverage activity. Further detailed appraisal will be necessary.

The illustrative scale of funding for this option equates to around 0.01% of New Zealand's GDP, which would represent a clear move towards the scale of higher-investment comparator jurisdictions such as Victoria, New South Wales and Singapore.

17 This assumes that additional local-government funding enables councils to match the increased level of central-government co-investment.

Comparative summary of investment and funding options

Table 11: Comparison of three investment and funding options across key dimensions

	Option 1: Focussed and Transparent Investment	Option 2: Coordinated Co-investment	Option 3: National Events Investment Platform
Aligned strategic ambition	Strategic Investor: Government uses existing funding and levers more deliberately.	Enabler: Government removes friction, connects effort, and supports regions and sectors to lead.	Champion: Government actively co-leads and builds the national events system.
Funding and investment approach	Improves the discipline, transparency, and targeting of existing funds, with limited changes to current architecture.	Builds a more coordinated investment system with clearer pathways for major events, anchor events, regional events, and business events.	Creates a long-term, integrated national investment platform for major events, mega events, anchor events, and business events, as well as investment in industry capability and event-related infrastructure.
Funding quantum and scale	Illustrative additional Crown funding scenario of \$3.35 million to \$4.95 million per year funded through a rolling five-year appropriation.	Illustrative additional Crown funding scenario of \$11 million to \$15 million per year funded through a rolling five-year appropriation.	Illustrative additional Crown funding scenario of \$26 million to \$32 million per year funded either through a rolling five-year appropriation or through a permanent legislative authority; the review also models \$12 million to \$20 million of local or regional government funding through a new mechanism.
Main mechanisms	Refined MEF criteria, stronger evaluation, clearer investment priorities, and some limited additional support for selected major, anchor and business event opportunities.	Increased, multi-tier major-events funding, including regional capability support, increased CAP, enhanced central–local co-investment principles, and selective risk-sharing mechanisms.	National investment fund/platform supporting a combination of major events, anchor events, business events (bids and subvention funding), leverage and legacy activity, industry capability, and infrastructure readiness; greater use of risk-sharing tools.
Decision-making and process	Central government continues to make decisions through the existing MEF and CAP processes, supported by clearer criteria, greater transparency, and a longer planning horizon. Decision-making remains largely centralised and grant-based.	Central government remains the primary investor, but decision-making becomes more structured and partly more localised, with ring-fenced regional funding and clearer co-investment principles. The process remains nationally led, but involves stronger partnership and differentiated pathways for different event types.	Decision-making sits within a broader portfolio-based national investment platform, with longer-term commitments, stronger portfolio discipline, and a wider range of funding and risk-sharing tools. Central government remains the primary investor in international events, but with more system-wide coordination, oversight, and operational support.

	Option 1: Focussed and Transparent Investment	Option 2: Coordinated Co-investment	Option 3: National Events Investment Platform
Role for regions	Limited change: regions continue to play a supporting role within existing arrangements, with little formal change to regional decision-making or dedicated regional funding.	Stronger regional leadership: a ring-fenced portion of funding is assumed to be allocated to regions to support central–regional partnerships, local co-investment, anchor events, and regional event delivery, with more flexible co-funding expectations and more localised decision-making.	Significantly expanded regional role: this option assumes regions receive sustained funding to support anchor events and broader regional event investment through an appropriate mechanism (subject to policy development), with local government becoming a more durable co-investor in the system rather than relying primarily on ad hoc central support.
What it enables	Better value for money, clearer decisions, and improved portfolio reporting, but limited change in the scale or ambition of the national pipeline.	Stronger national pipeline, better coordination, improved regional participation, and stronger growth in national anchor events and business events.	Stronger ability to pursue major and mega events, support the development of nationally significant anchor events, strengthen business events, and build a distinctive national events portfolio.
Degree of system change	Incremental: improves the current model without materially changing the overall system architecture.	Moderate: introduces stronger coordination, regional co-investment, and selective new tools, but remains within an evolved version of the current system.	Transformational: creates a broader investment platform with new funding sources, stronger tools, and a wider system-building role for government.
Implementation pathway	Low-disruption: can be implemented through changes to existing funds, objectives, criteria, performance measurement, and reporting.	Moderate change programme: requires regional funding design, co-investment frameworks, and stronger accountability settings.	High-complexity reform: requires new funding or revenue decisions (such as on a levy or alternative mechanism), expanded operating support, stronger national machinery, and more active governance and risk management.

This comparison highlights that the three investment and funding options are additive rather than mutually exclusive. Each successive option builds on the investment discipline and transparency established by the previous one, offering decision-makers choices about the scale of public investment, the range of funding and risk-sharing tools available, and the extent to which government supports a broader national and regional events portfolio.

Across the three options, the principal difference is not simply the amount of funding provided, but what that investment enables. Option 1 improves the effectiveness of existing funding within the current system; Option 2 adds more deliberate co-investment, regional participation, and support for anchor and business events; and Option 3 provides the investment architecture and operating support needed for a more ambitious national portfolio.

Relationship between strategy and investment

The funding pathway presented in this report should be read as illustrative rather than prescriptive.

The review has identified indicative funding ranges associated with different levels of system ambition and different international comparators. However, major changes to future investment should ultimately be determined through the National Events Strategy, once priorities and outcomes have been agreed.

A less ambitious strategy would likely require lower levels of investment and fewer intervention tools. A more ambitious strategy focussed on portfolio growth, stronger prospecting, expanded leverage activity, increased business-event attraction, and greater international competitiveness would likely require higher and more sustained investment.

More modest changes in investment could be accelerated independently of those decisions. Examples include increased prospecting activity, expanded business-event attraction tools, targeted growth support for selected national anchor events, and additional leverage and legacy funding. These investments would provide opportunities to test aspects of a more ambitious strategy and operating model, and to build evidence for future investment decisions.

Actions available within or close to existing resources

Within existing or reprioritised resources, government could begin developing a focussed National Events Strategy; clarify existing investment criteria and central–local co-investment principles; establish an initial shared view of the pipeline; strengthen portfolio reporting; introduce proportionate leverage and legacy expectations; improve navigation for event organisers; and develop targeted regulatory guidance. These measures would improve discipline and coordination but would not provide the additional event investment, prospecting, business-event support, regional capability, data infrastructure or operational stewardship required under Options 2 and 3.

Recommended funding and investment pathway

This review recommends that Option 3: National Events Investment Platform be adopted as the preferred longer-term direction for New Zealand's events funding system, subject to the National Events Strategy confirming the level of ambition, outcomes sought, and case for increased investment. Option 2: Coordinated Co-investment should provide the practical first phase from 2026/27. Any increase in funding should be staged and durable, and linked to agreed strategic priorities, pipeline quality, investment discipline, fiscal affordability, and delivery capacity.

Consistent with the Enabling strategic direction, Option 2 would establish the foundations for a more sophisticated investment system. It would strengthen coordination, clarify central–local co-investment principles, support greater regional leadership and introduce a targeted funding uplift, while improving the transparency and discipline of investment decisions.

Priority steps should include establishing a multi-tier investment framework; developing a central–local funding partnership framework covering cost and risk-sharing; improving the visibility and active management of the national pipeline; expanding targeted prospecting; introducing more systematic leverage and legacy planning; piloting selective risk-sharing tools within agreed fiscal parameters; and examining sustainable local or regional revenue mechanisms, potentially including the use of an accommodation levy for event activity.

Progression to Option 3 should not be automatic. A move to the higher-ambition model could be considered from 2029/30, following implementation and evaluation of the initial phase, if there is a credible long-term pipeline, evidence of additional net public value, secure and durable Crown funding, an appropriate local co-investment mechanism, sufficient national and regional delivery capability, agreed governance and decision rights, and detailed design of the investment platform and associated risk management arrangements.

Minimum discipline for leverage and legacy planning

Leverage and legacy requirements should be proportionate to the scale of public investment, the type of event and the public-value outcomes being claimed. For events receiving significant national support, the minimum discipline should include:

- the primary and secondary public-value objectives being identified during feasibility and investment assessment
- a named lead and delivery partners for each material leverage or legacy outcome
- a proportionate budget and confirmed source of funding
- baseline information and realistic targets or indicators
- delivery milestones beginning before the event, where required to realise the outcome
- a reporting and evaluation period suited to the nature and timing of the expected outcome
- consideration of displacement, substitution, adverse distributional effects, and other unintended consequences, and
- a process for returning event-level evidence and learning to future portfolio and investment decisions.

Not every event should be expected to pursue every form of public value. The purpose is to ensure that material outcomes used to justify public support are deliberately planned, owned, resourced, and assessed rather than assumed to arise automatically.

Line of inquiry 3: Governance and system coordination

This line of inquiry assessed how roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities are distributed across organisations, and whether changes to governance arrangements or the allocation of functions are needed to improve coordination, decision-making, and performance. It also considered how activities that extend beyond individual events, including investment, pipeline planning, bidding, delivery coordination, and leverage and legacy activity, are managed across the wider portfolio.

Current governance and coordination arrangements

As described in the overview of the events system, governance and coordination are distributed across a range of national, regional, and sector-specific arrangements. Key features include the following:

National leadership and oversight

- **MBIE is the lead central government agency for major events.** Through the NZME team, MBIE leads major event prospecting and bid coordination, leverage and legacy coordination, and all-of-government event coordination. Regular reporting and performance monitoring are built into related governance. Portfolio-level and major event-level key performance indicators are used, with six-monthly reporting to Ministers and post-event evaluation processes informing ongoing investment and portfolio management decisions. The Minister for Tourism and Hospitality is responsible for all MEF investment decisions.
- **The Major Events Ministers Group (MEMG) provides cross-portfolio strategic oversight.** The Group comprises the Ministers responsible for Tourism and Hospitality (Chair), Economic Growth, Foreign Affairs, Trade, Sport and Recreation, and Arts, Culture and Heritage. It receives regular reporting on portfolio performance, strategy implementation, and major event opportunities.
- Governance of business events operates through separate but connected arrangements. TNZ leads and coordinates international business event attraction.

Operational and sector coordination

- **Cross-government operational coordination is undertaken through formal mechanisms.** NZME coordinates central government agencies involved in border management, immigration, security, transport, customs, emergency management, and regulatory approvals to support major event delivery. Specialised interagency coordination groups support mega and large-scale major events. These include bodies such as the Major Events Security Committee and Major Events Border Steering Group, which coordinate security and border-related matters associated with major events.

- **Sport New Zealand and NSOs are stewards for sporting events.** These organisations play an important coordination role within the sporting events system. Sport New Zealand helps shape strategic priorities and investment settings for sport, while NSOs (often with other system partners) identify event hosting opportunities, engage international rights holders, develop bids, and coordinate delivery partnerships with host cities, event organisers and government agencies. Together, they help align sporting event attraction and delivery with broader sport, participation and high-performance objectives. Sport New Zealand also leads the cross-government Sport Diplomacy Strategy, which leverages New Zealand's hosting of international sporting events for wider strategic "soft power" gains.
- **Coordination across the cultural events sub-system is more dispersed.** Unlike the business events sector or the sports sector, New Zealand does not have a single national peak body that coordinates the full cultural events system. Instead, coordination occurs through a combination of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH), Creative New Zealand, Te Puni Kōkiri, individual event trusts and organisers, Māori organisations, local government agencies, and arts sector networks.
- **Industry associations and sector bodies provide coordination, advocacy and capability support.** Organisations such as BEIA and NZEA provide important coordination, capability-building, advocacy and convening functions across the events system, complementing formal governance arrangements led by central and local government.

Regional coordination and delivery

- **Local councils and council-controlled organisations play a major coordination role.** Council groups, RTOs and EDAs act as regional coordination hubs, bringing together councils, venues, tourism operators, event organisers, and central government agencies around event attraction, funding and delivery. Regional convention bureaux (typically housed within EDAs/RTOs) coordinate business event attraction and bidding at the regional level. They work closely with TNZ, universities, industry sectors, and conference organisers to identify and pursue opportunities.

  The local-government side of the system is not uniform. Some councils deliver event functions directly, while others use economic development, destination or regional agencies such as WellingtonNZ or Tātaki Auckland Unlimited. These different delivery models affect how central government coordinates with regions, because the relevant counterpart can be a council, a RTO, a convention bureau or a combined EDA.

These arrangements provide identifiable leadership within particular event streams and functions, especially major events and international business events. However, no organisation currently holds a comprehensive stewardship mandate across public and business events, central and local government, the national pipeline, and the full event lifecycle. This distinction between leadership within individual parts of the system and stewardship of the system as a whole is central to the diagnosis that follows.

Strengths and challenges

Strengths

New Zealand's events system has the following governance and system coordination strengths:

- **Existing capability and collaboration enable effective coordination for mega and substantial major events.** For major and mega events, governance arrangements are typically formalised on a case-by-case basis, with clearly defined roles, escalation pathways, and cross-agency coordination. Evidence from stakeholder interviews and case examples indicates that, when roles, escalation pathways, and shared priorities are clear, the system can coordinate effectively and deliver complex events to a high standard.
- **Clear, although distributed, role architecture across system actors for public events.** Central government primarily acts as investor, coordinator of mega and major events, and provider of national system levers (for example, legislation, border, security). Local government functions as the operational backbone, responsible for facilitating, regulating, funding, leveraging, and delivering events within its jurisdiction. Sector organisations and delivery partners bring specialist expertise, initiate bids, and manage event operations. While not often connected to individual event delivery, associations such as NZEA and the Entertainment Venues Association of New Zealand (EVANZ) play an important role in capability building and convening the sector. This role distribution reflects a logical alignment with capability and mandate.
- **Clear, although distributed, role architecture across system actors for business events**. Often driven by relationships more than the system itself, there is a broadly understood division of roles between TNZ, regional convention bureaux, venues, and business event suppliers for the largest events. TNZ's role in leading a national brand for business events is valued by the broader sector. The bureaux are well established within their regions to support regional marketing and bids (or provide content to bidders) with strong place-based knowledge and bid capability. Business events also benefit from the focus of BEIA as an association which supports industry coordination at all levels.
- **Established coordination mechanisms for delivery and risk management.** Cross-government coordination groups and processes for security and border control ensure major and mega events are delivered safely and with appropriate oversight. Regional events are also supported by local government place-based facilitation and event compliance support. This provides a strong foundation that can be extended into broader coordination functions.
- **Local governance innovation is evident in some regions.** Certain city and regional councils have introduced different governance approaches, such as advisory panels, forward-planning tools, and public–private partnerships to improve local coordination and decision-making. These structured approaches, seen especially in areas that frequently host major events, demonstrate that robust governance and coordination can be deliberately designed and implemented within the current system.

- **Events have high-level political visibility.** Responsibility for both major public events and business events sits within the Tourism and Hospitality portfolio, providing a basis for aligned ministerial oversight, advocacy and cross-agency engagement. This signals the importance of events and can help mobilise government attention around significant opportunities.
- **Small-country scale and established networks support rapid collaboration.** New Zealand's relatively compact institutional environment and established relationships across government, regions, and industry can enable agencies and partners to coordinate quickly when opportunities or delivery pressures arise. This agility has supported successful delivery of high-profile events despite New Zealand's relatively small scale.

Challenges and weaknesses

Although there are several strengths in the system, there are also a range of governance and system coordination challenges and weaknesses:

- **No organisation currently holds a comprehensive system-stewardship mandate.** A consistent issue highlighted by system stakeholders is the absence of a clearly defined system steward at the national level with a mandate to coordinate the system. Event responsibilities are spread across various central government bodies (MBIE, TNZ, regulatory bodies, and leverage agencies), resulting in dispersed leadership and inconsistent decision-making. Coordination relies heavily on personal relationships, informal networks, and ad hoc arrangements rather than structured mandates and processes. While this can work in specific contexts, it creates systemic fragility, with performance depending on individuals rather than institutions. Stakeholders described how the introduction of the Events Attraction Package (EAP) disrupted long-established relationships and systems (stakeholder feedback is detailed later in this section).
- **Departmental settings can constrain commercially agile engagement.** Event markets are increasingly shaped by promoters, commercial rights holders and privately operated event properties. Stakeholders noted that departmental processes, accountability requirements and risk settings can make it difficult for NZME to negotiate and contract at the pace, and on the terms, expected in these markets. Stakeholders highlighted recurring tensions around official information management obligations, policy change clauses, indemnity provisions, intellectual property rights and reputation clauses, where government requirements can differ significantly from standard commercial expectations. Some of these tensions arise from necessary public-sector obligations and would continue under any publicly funded model. However, clearer commercial mandates, specialist capability, fit-for-purpose contracting tools and appropriately delegated decision rights could help government engage more effectively while retaining the required safeguards.

- **Governance and investment remain fragmented by agency, event type and lifecycle stage.** Major public events, business events, regional events, and community events largely operate through separate funding, pipeline and decision-making processes. This parallel operation limits information-sharing, creates complexity for event organisers, and makes it difficult to manage events as an interconnected portfolio or maximise their collective value. Unclear funding thresholds and criteria, compounded by the introduction of the EAP, have also reduced predictability and added inefficiency.
- **Pipeline management is reactive and insufficiently coordinated.** New Zealand's events pipeline is widely described as reactive and opportunistic rather than strategically managed. While NZME and some regions maintain forward event pipelines, this is not consistently shared or integrated across the system, limiting broader planning and coordination. There is no integrated long-term view of upcoming event opportunities spanning agencies and regions, and limited coordination in prospecting or bidding (especially across different streams of events). This leads to duplicated bids, missed opportunities, suboptimal event scheduling, and reduced ability to target events that require multi-year planning. Potential partners like iwi and private sponsors are often not involved in pipeline planning, which can limit broader benefits and support.
- **Decision-making can be too slow for competitive event markets.** Decision rights for event investments are distributed among Ministers, central agencies, and local governments with different thresholds and approval processes. This can make funding decisions slow, cautious, and misaligned with the pace, commercial realities, and competitive nature of event bidding. Smaller MEF investments (under $750,000), which once could be approved by officials, now require ministerial sign-off, increasing the complexity and time taken to make decisions. Stakeholders note an ongoing conflict between strict public-sector accountability requirements and the need for speed and flexibility in event negotiations, and attempts to streamline these processes have not yet fully resolved this tension.
- **Central–local alignment remains largely informal.** Collaborative arrangements between central and local government for events remain mostly informal, negotiated case-by-case, although some central government agencies do try to meet regularly with groups of local government representatives on events. There is no standard framework for joint decision-making, co-investment or risk-sharing, which can lead to inefficiencies and occasional friction. In general, central and local partners maintain strong relationships, but misalignments arise because they have different drivers – central agencies focus on national economic outcomes, while local councils must balance community benefits and tight budgets.

- **Local-government capability and fiscal capacity are uneven.** Local councils' ability to support events is inconsistent and often limited by financial pressures, staff capacity, and infrastructure gaps. Smaller councils in particular struggle to contribute resources or expertise for complex events as the infrequency of such events makes it impractical for them to build or maintain dedicated capability and capacity. At times, limited local capability or experience can create barriers (like stringent regulations) for event organisers. These constraints also cause tension when central government offers one-off funding boosts (such as the EAP) without giving councils time or resources to match the opportunity.
- **System-wide capability development and knowledge transfer are limited.** There is an uneven distribution of experienced events professionals in New Zealand, with skills concentrated in central agencies and larger urban centres. Training and knowledge sharing rely largely on industry bodies (with limited resources), which means best practices and lessons from past events are not systematically shared across the whole system. This can result in repeated inefficiencies and variability in how events are managed.
- **Measurement, evaluation and system learning remain inconsistent.** Measurement and evaluation have improved in recent years, including the move from conventional economic impact assessment towards cost–benefit analysis for major public events. However, benefits beyond immediate economic outcomes, including longer-term leverage and legacy outcomes, remain difficult to measure consistently and credibly. Many smaller events are not evaluated because the cost would be disproportionate, while differences between the approaches used for business events and major public events limit comparability across the portfolio. Post-event evaluations also do not consistently capture regulatory or delivery problems, aggregate lessons across events, or feed those findings into a system-wide process for improvement.
- **Agency involvement in investment decisions does not always translate into sustained ownership.** Relevant agencies are engaged during the assessment of MEF-supported events to identify potential leverage and legacy opportunities aligned with their mandates. However, an agency's interest at the assessment stage may not translate into delivery several years later if mandates, work programmes, resources or personnel change. This can leave responsibilities unclear and weaken continuity between investment assessment, event delivery, and leverage and legacy activity. A more effective model would distinguish between agencies that need to participate in a decision, agencies that are being consulted for specialist advice, and agencies that are prepared to take enduring ownership of a particular outcome.

The EAP illustrates the consequences of weak central–local coordination

The introduction of the EAP illustrates how accelerated national decision-making can create delivery pressures when regional partners are not engaged early enough. The package was designed to provide a rapid funding response for concerts, sporting competitions, and other major events expected to attract visitors, increase expenditure, and raise New Zealand's profile. Its processes differed from standard MEF arrangements and were intended to allow funding decisions to be made more quickly. However, the top-down nature of the rollout and limited local input affected relationships between central government and some local authorities and regional event agencies.

Several councils and regional event agencies spoken to felt sidelined during EAP implementation. As one local events leader put it, the package's invitation-only process meant that funding decisions were made in Wellington 'without us being in the loop or consulted'. Existing central–local communication channels were sometimes bypassed, which 'cut across some established relationships' between local councils, RTOs/EDAs, central government, and venues. At times, this fuelled frustration and confusion among local stakeholders, who sometimes disagreed with the choices of events funded.

Local councils also had immediate practical challenges from EAP-funded events. Short lead times for approved events (often just a few months from funding announcement to execution) put pressure on local agencies to deliver supporting services (such as logistics, facilitation, and regulatory approvals) at short notice, causing friction and challenges in servicing the events.

Lessons from international comparators

New Zealand's system and scale are distinctive, and no overseas model can simply be transferred into the New Zealand context. Across the international destinations reviewed, the governance and coordination arrangements differ, but there are common features which could be adapted or adopted for New Zealand's needs: shared direction; a recognised lead agency but with clear roles across partner agencies and structured coordination mechanisms to align tourism, economic development, and event outcomes; and strong central–local partnerships.

- **Successful jurisdictions have a shared direction.** Across Scotland, Wales, Queensland, Victoria, and New South Wales (NSW), governance arrangements are anchored by a long-term strategy which provides clarity about the purpose of public investment in events and the roles of different organisations. Scotland has operated under some version of its strategy "The Perfect Stage" since 2008, with successive iterations providing continuity of direction across governments and agencies. Scotland's strategy is jointly owned by government, agencies, and industry, and functions as the primary mechanism for aligning behaviour across the system. Similarly, the National Events Strategy for Wales is positioned as a whole-of-nation strategy developed jointly by government and industry, while NSW's Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 also provides a single framework for public and business events.

- **Many successful systems have a recognised lead agency.** Most jurisdictions reviewed have a clearly recognised organisation responsible for coordinating the events system, even if some roles are the responsibility of other agencies. Scotland exemplifies this with a long-standing lead-agency model: VisitScotland coordinates public and business events (recent restructuring has seen responsibilities for mega events shift towards the Scottish Government, and the impact on system coordination is not yet clear). Queensland uses Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) as the lead agency for event attraction, development, and promotion; NSW centralises responsibility through Destination NSW and Victoria uses Visit Victoria as the coordinating agency under a broader "Team Victoria" model.
- **More mature and coordinated systems operate as partnerships.** A recurring theme across Scotland, Wales, and Australia is the emphasis on collaborative models. Scotland's "One Scotland" approach relies on strong relationships between government, local authorities, and industry rather than just contractual arrangements (including through an events industry advisory group). Wales uses an independently chaired Industry Advisory Group bringing together sport, culture, and business events sectors to provide advice, challenge and coordinate. As noted, Victoria frames event delivery as a "Team Victoria" model spanning government, tourism agencies, convention bureaux, councils, and industry. Queensland has a cross-agency business events working group. Denmark operates a sector-specific governance model, with Sport Event Denmark leading international sports events through a structured 'sport triangle' partnership between the agency, host city, and national federation.
- **Strong event systems integrate public and business events strategically.** Many jurisdictions are moving towards treating public events and business events as part of a single event ecosystem. Scotland formally includes cultural, sporting, and business events within one national strategy and portfolio framework. Wales has explicitly incorporated business events into its National Events Strategy and coordinates them through common governance and strategic goals. Queensland's events framework incorporates major events, destination events and business events within a single visitor economy system. However, operational delivery is not always well integrated.

Opportunities to strengthen governance and coordination in the events system

The diagnosis and international evidence point to four broad requirements for a more effective governance and coordination model. These requirements are interconnected and could be implemented to different degrees. Together, they provide the basis for the three options assessed later in this section.

Provide recognised national stewardship and commercially capable leadership

- **Establish a clearly mandated system steward:** This opportunity could involve formally assigning stewardship responsibility to a single entity or function (either by expanding the NZME team's mandate or establishing a new coordinating body or group). The stewardship function could focus on maintaining a national pipeline view across all key event types, coordinating cross-agency involvement at key event lifecycle stages, acting as a primary interface for delivery partners, and, subject to institutional design, administering relevant support mechanisms.
- **Enable more commercially agile engagement with event owners and operators:** The opportunity is to ensure NZME, or any future coordinating body, has the mandate, capability, and operating settings needed to engage effectively with increasingly commercial event markets. This could include fit-for-purpose contracting tools, clearer risk and negotiation parameters, specialist commercial capability, and the ability to respond within the timeframes required by competitive bidding, promoter-led events and commercial rights holders. This would help government secure national value from commercial opportunities while managing public-sector obligations around transparency, indemnity, intellectual property, information management, and reputation risk.

Improve portfolio governance, pipeline visibility and joint planning

- **Introduce portfolio-based event pipeline governance:** The opportunity is to shift the system towards a more deliberate, portfolio-based approach to pipeline governance, building on existing practices but extending pipeline visibility, the planning time frame and alignment with funding across the system. This could involve:
  - developing and maintaining a forward-looking pipeline covering at least five to ten years, with a longer horizon for opportunities that require it, across all prioritised event categories, aligned with the national strategy
  - establishing clear portfolio objectives (balanced across regions, event types, timing, and outcomes)
  - improving the visibility of future events to enable coordinated planning by both central and local partners, and
  - establishing a formal platform (for example, a forum or steering group) that institutionalises collaborative planning.

  Portfolio governance would also provide an opportunity to assess interactions across the wider events system. This would allow decision-makers to understand where events complement each other, where they support regional diversification, and where they may simply displace existing demand. The purpose is not necessarily to avoid overlap, but to ensure that the overall national portfolio delivers greater value than could be achieved through disconnected event-by-event investment decisions.

Clarify partnership arrangements, interfaces and decision rights

- **Formalise central–local partnership frameworks and co-investment models:** This opportunity would involve establishing a structured partnership framework that defines roles and responsibilities across bidding, funding, delivery, and leverage; establishes co-investment expectations, including flexibility for smaller regions and recognition of where national and regional benefits accrue; sets risk-sharing principles and escalation pathways; and establishes information-sharing protocols and planning processes. This could be enabled through standardised agreements on ways of working for different event tiers (for example, major events compared with regional events), supported by ongoing joint planning forums.
- **Strengthen the interface between government and the broader industry:** The opportunity is to establish a mechanism that is an enduring connection point for communication and coordination between government and the event industry. This mechanism could inform policy, test whether proposed settings are workable, align government and industry intent, and improve delivery.
- **Clarify decision rights and delegate routine decisions:** The opportunity is to introduce a clear decision-rights framework with delegation thresholds aligned to the time-sensitive, competitive nature of event bidding. This could include
  - delegation of routine funding and portfolio decisions to officials, an inter-agency panel, or agency under agreed criteria
  - defined thresholds for escalation to Ministers or Cabinet (for large-scale and mega events)
  - clear articulation of who has authority at each stage of the event lifecycle, and
  - differentiation of decision-making requirements by event type or funding stream to ensure decision-making is proportionate and aligned with the realities of each stream.

Strengthen lifecycle coordination, shared practice and system capability

- **Strengthen coordination across the full event lifecycle:** This opportunity aims to formalise partnership and planning across all lifecycle stages, including bringing relevant agencies and partners into prospecting, feasibility and bidding work earlier, integrating central and local government, iwi and Māori partners, and private sector partners during planning and delivery, and embedding leverage and legacy planning from the feasibility stage.
- **Strengthen shared system-wide platforms and practice (information sharing, knowledge sharing, measurement, and capability):** The opportunity exists to create common platforms and practices across agencies, industry associations, and regions, for example, a shared national calendar and pipeline for public and business events, standardised measurement and evaluation frameworks (scaled to event type), regular knowledge-sharing forums or communities of practice, and improved communication of event outcomes and system value.

The opportunities above are not mutually exclusive. The options below differ primarily in the strength of the coordinating mandate, the degree of formalisation, and the extent to which stewardship and decision-making are consolidated. Each successive option combines these elements within a broader and more authoritative model.

Proposed events system governance and coordination options

Consistent with the incremental to transformational change scale and the identified opportunities, there are three potential governance and coordination options to improve the events system.

These options are:

- **Option 1: More deliberate coordination** (incremental improvements) – Government keeps the current governance model, but improves role clarity, communication, transparency, and early information-sharing across agencies and partners. In practice, this is a "status quo plus" option that strengthens coordination without changing who leads the system.
- **Option 2: Coordinated partnership** (moderate change) – Government introduces a more structured partnership model, with a shared pipeline view, clearer central–local working arrangements, and a more accessible "no-wrong-door" interface into government. In practice, regions and partners play a stronger role in shaping and coordinating event opportunities within a clearer national framework.
- **Option 3: National stewardship** (transformational system change) – Government establishes a dedicated national stewardship function to provide a clear centre of gravity for portfolio planning (moving beyond a "no-wrong-door" approach to a clearer "front door"), coordinated bidding, investment oversight, and leverage across public and business events. In practice, this creates a more integrated national system with clearer authority, faster decision-making, and stronger accountability.

These options are presented as coherent packages rather than a menu of unrelated interventions. In practice, some individual elements could be brought forward or sequenced differently. However, the options have been grouped because many of the governance, funding, pipeline, regional-partnership and leverage changes are mutually reinforcing. For example, new coordination structures without clearer resourcing or decision-making authority could add process without fundamentally improving system performance.

Option 1: More deliberate coordination (incremental change)

Option 1 retains the current governance and coordination model but applies greater discipline, transparency, and consistency to how government communicates, coordinates, and makes decisions. It aligns with the strategic investment ambition (outlined in Line of Inquiry 1), where government uses its existing funding tools, roles and levers more deliberately, without introducing any new structures or fundamentally altering roles.

Under this option, existing roles, responsibilities, and decision-making arrangements remain largely unchanged. MBIE/NZME continues to lead major events, TNZ continues to lead business events, and Ministers and agencies continue to make investment decisions through existing MEF and CAP processes. Local government, associations and industry bodies continue to participate through existing relationships and delivery arrangements.

The change would be in the discipline and consistency with which those arrangements operate. Central government would communicate more clearly which opportunities it is seeking to support, how funding decisions are made, and how investments align with stated priorities. Relevant agencies would meet earlier and more regularly to share information on major-event and international business-event prospects, improve forward visibility, reduce avoidable duplication, and identify opportunities for alignment before individual funding decisions are made.

Central–local relationships would remain case-by-case, but earlier engagement would improve visibility of regional priorities, delivery constraints, and feasibility. No new stewardship function, regional funding mechanism, co-investment framework or formal risk-sharing model would be introduced.

Overall, Option 1 should be understood as a "status quo plus" model. It could improve transparency, role clarity, and working-level coordination, but would not resolve the absence of a comprehensive system steward, fragmented pipeline governance, informal central–local arrangements or slow decision-making.

The key features of this option are summarised below.

Table 12: Key features of Option 1: More deliberate coordination

Category	Features
Leadership and stewardship	The existing leadership model remains in place. MBIE/NZME continues to lead major events and TNZ continues to lead business events, with government using current roles and levers more deliberately.
How partners work together	Agencies, local government, associations and industry bodies continue to work through current relationships and processes, with some earlier and more deliberate coordination around known opportunities.
Primary coordination mechanisms	Clearer role definition, more disciplined information-sharing (including regular cross-agency pipeline sharing), improved communication on priorities, stronger transparency on why events are supported, and better forward visibility of the pipeline within existing arrangements.
Decision rights and accountability	Ministers and agencies continue to make decisions through existing MEF and CAP processes, with clearer criteria, more transparent assessment, and more consistent communication of decisions, including clearer articulation of why particular events are prioritised and how they align with government objectives.
Role of regions and local government	Regions continue to play a supporting and delivery role under current arrangements. Central–local relationships remain case-by-case, with no new regional funding mechanism, co-investment framework or formal risk-sharing model.
Structural implications	Low-disruption change. Improves accountability, role clarity, confidence in the system, and portfolio reporting, but leaves decision-making authority and system leadership largely unchanged.

Category	Features
International reference points	Denmark is a comparator for distributed systems where roles sit across different agencies, cities or event streams. Coordination relies on existing relationships, targeted partnerships and clear roles within each stream, rather than an integrated national stewardship model.

The international examples in this table and subsequent tables for Options 2 and 3 are reference points rather than direct equivalents. Each combines elements that may sit across more than one option, and none should be treated as a model that could be transferred unchanged to New Zealand.

Option 2: Coordinated partnership (moderate change)

Option 2 builds on Option 1 but takes a further step towards a more deliberate and coordinated national events system. It aligns with the Enabling ambition, where government removes friction, connects effort, and supports regions and sectors to lead where they are best placed.

The key shift is towards a stronger and more structured coordination model that would support regional leadership and central–local co-investment, while establishing clearer pathways for major events, anchor and significant regional events, and strategically valuable business events.

The main governance and coordination shift is at the central–local interface. Existing engagement with local government would be strengthened into a more purposeful partnership mechanism with clearer terms of reference, purpose and accountability. This could take the form of a regular national events forum or coordination mechanism, but the emphasis is on function rather than form. It would support earlier sharing of intent, visibility of regional and national pipelines, identification of joint opportunities, coordination of bids, and practical problem-solving between central and local government. Business events may require different engagement settings, reflecting the role of venues, TNZ, and local convention bureaux/EDAs. Establishing a mechanism to link government with the broader business and public event sectors, such as an Industry Advisory Group, would support improved coordination.

Under this option, central government would share its own priorities, constraints, and opportunities with regions and councils earlier and more transparently. In return, regions and councils that have strategically prioritised events would also share their priorities with central government. Regions would have a clearer view of where government support is most likely to align, and central agencies would have better visibility of regional priorities, anchor events, delivery constraints, and capability needs. This would align the governance model with the corresponding regional co-investment approach described in Line of Inquiry 2.

Partnership principles would be agreed between central and local government. These would set expectations for co-investment, roles, responsibilities, decision-making, and accountability across different event types and scales. They would help clarify when central government is simply providing information or support, when agencies need to be actively involved in shaping an opportunity, and when regional partners should have greater autonomy to lead. They would also support more flexible co-funding expectations for smaller councils and clearer KPIs where funding is allocated to regions.

Decision-making would remain distributed but would become more structured and partially localised. As noted in the discussion on funding and investment, a ring-fenced portion of funding could be allocated to regions to support central–regional partnerships, local co-investment, anchor events, regional event delivery, and council-administered regulatory requirements. This would give regions a stronger role in identifying, shaping, co-funding, and leveraging events, while still operating within an agreed national framework. This recognises that increased central funding alone will not strengthen the system if councils with event ambitions lack the fiscal capacity to co-invest or support delivery on the ground.

Subject to appropriation, legal and delegation settings, routine MEF funding and support decisions could sit with officials operating within clear criteria agreed by Ministers. A governance model with clear decision rights, delegated authority proportionate to the size of the investments being made, and agreed escalation thresholds can improve coordination across the system by providing greater clarity of roles, more efficient decision-making, and a stronger focus on strategic priorities.

Business events generally involve lower funding levels and already operate through comparatively more streamlined mechanisms with CAP, particularly where business-event investment is driven primarily by scale and international visitation rather than by subject matter. This means most business-event support would be able to continue under its existing mechanisms. However, increased subvention for knowledge transfer or sector alignment may require stronger connection with the parts of government that lead work with those sectors, for both decision-making and leverage.

A "no-wrong-door" approach would make government easier to navigate (before having a more obvious "front door" under Option 3). Event proponents, regions, and rights holders would not need to know which agency to approach first; whichever agency is approached would help connect them to the right parts of government. MBIE/NZME could continue to provide the principal coordination point for major-event opportunities, while TNZ continues to lead international business events. However, proponents would be connected to the appropriate part of government regardless of where they first enter the system. The aim is a more coherent government interface, not a single agency controlling the system.

This option would also create clearer channels for agency involvement in leverage and legacy. Agencies would be brought into major events and business events where their outcomes, relationships, or long-term commitments are needed, without needing to be routinely involved in all decisions. This would help clarify who needs to be actively involved for different decisions, and when agencies can instead be kept informed through lighter communication mechanisms. Agencies should periodically identify strategic areas of interest, so MBIE/NZME can triage opportunities with better information.

The key features of this option are summarised in Table 13.

Table 13: Key features of Option 2: Coordinated partnership

Category	Features
Leadership and stewardship	Central government remains the primary investor and system enabler for major and business events, but with a more deliberate coordination role and a clearer whole-of-government direction.
How partners work together	Regions, agencies, and sector partners work within a clearer national framework, with stronger partnership at the central–local interface and earlier sharing of priorities, constraints, and opportunities.
Primary coordination mechanisms	An initially government-led National Events Strategy and priorities framework, developed through structured engagement with regional organisations, sector bodies, industry, and iwi and Māori partners. Other mechanisms would include a regular national events forum, an industry advisory group or similar coordination mechanism, a shared national pipeline view, clearer partnership principles, and a "no-wrong door" government interface.
Decision rights and accountability	Decision-making remains distributed but becomes more structured and partly more localised. Routine decisions would sit more with officials, agencies or delegated regional mechanisms, while Ministers remain involved for the largest or highest-risk opportunities.
Role of regions and local government	Regions have a stronger role in identifying, shaping, co-funding, and leveraging events, supported by clearer co-investment expectations, localised decision-making, and the potential for ring-fenced regional funding.
Structural implications	Moderate reform. Makes the system easier to navigate, improves pipeline visibility and coordination, and creates stronger foundations for anchor events, business events, and coordinated regional participation.
International reference points	**Scotland** illustrates a long-standing strategy-led partnership approach, with EventScotland/VisitScotland coordinating major event support under a national strategy and a "One Scotland" partnership model with local authorities and industry. Recent institutional changes mean that the future allocation of functions remains in development. **Queensland** combines strategic direction and mega-event assessment led by the responsible state ministry with event acquisition and development led by Tourism and Events Queensland. The model also includes collaboration between the state destination organisation and Brisbane's economic-development agency across relevant public- and business-event opportunities.

The capabilities required under the Coordinated partnership model can be delivered largely through existing institutional arrangements, provided MBIE and TNZ are resourced appropriately, and MBIE/NZME has a clear mandate and authority to coordinate across agencies and regions. The case for a more dedicated stewardship structure arises primarily under a full Championing model, where portfolio management, leverage and legacy, prospecting, investment coordination, and long-term system stewardship become substantially more complex and resource intensive.

Option 3: National stewardship (transformational change)

Purpose and rationale

Option 3 builds on Options 1 and 2 but establishes a more fully developed national stewardship model for events. It aligns with the Championing ambition, under which government actively co-leads and builds the national events system. The option combines stronger governance, increased and more coordinated investment, improved risk-sharing, dedicated leverage and legacy activity, capability development, and more durable central–local partnership arrangements.

The defining feature of this option is the establishment of a dedicated national events stewardship function. The function would provide a clear centre of gravity for national portfolio planning, pipeline coordination, prospecting and bidding, investment advice and oversight, leverage and legacy, capability development, performance monitoring, and coordination across government, regions, and sectors. It would support a more integrated approach across nationally significant public events and international business events while preserving the specialist markets, relationships, and delivery models associated with each stream.

Option 3 therefore differs from Option 2 primarily in the strength and scope of the stewardship mandate. Option 2 strengthens coordination through existing institutions, partnership mechanisms and shared processes. Option 3 gives a dedicated function the authority, capability and accountability needed to manage the national portfolio more actively and translate increased funding, risk-sharing tools, and capability investment into a more coherent and competitive national events system.

The establishment of the stewardship function would not predetermine its final institutional form or host organisation. These matters would be determined through further design, informed by the functions, mandate, operating requirements, and accountabilities set out below.

Functions of the national stewardship model

The national events stewardship function would bring together the capabilities needed to manage events as a strategic portfolio rather than primarily through separate decisions about individual events and funding programmes. Its principal functions would include:

- maintaining a long-term national pipeline and portfolio view across nationally significant public events, anchor events, and international business events
- coordinating national prospecting and bidding priorities while retaining specialist market relationships within the organisations best placed to lead them
- providing integrated portfolio and investment advice, and making routine investment decisions where authority has been delegated
- coordinating leverage and legacy activity across relevant government, regional, iwi and Māori, sector, and industry partners

- supporting early identification and resolution of regulatory, infrastructure, venue, workforce, and delivery constraints
- strengthening central–local alignment, including co-investment, risk-sharing, and accountability arrangements
- improving shared measurement, evaluation, performance reporting, and system learning
- supporting capability development across councils, regional agencies, sector organisations, and event-delivery partners.

These functions would be applied proportionately. The national stewardship function would focus principally on opportunities and system issues where national coordination, investment or strategic alignment is material. It would not assume responsibility for all regional, local or community events, or displace the established responsibilities of event owners, councils, regulatory bodies or specialist sector organisations.

The function would help ensure that increased investment supports a stronger national portfolio and wider system capability rather than simply increasing disconnected event-by-event decisions. It would also allow interactions across the portfolio to be considered, including complementarity, regional or seasonal diversification, and competition for audiences, venues, workforce, and public investment.

Relationship with specialist agencies and partners

National stewardship should connect and strengthen specialist capability, not absorb it. National sports organisations, cultural bodies, convention bureaux, industry organisations, councils, regional agencies, and other specialist partners should continue to lead the market relationships, sector networks and opportunity development for which they are best placed. The stewardship function would provide national pipeline visibility, strategic alignment, cross-government navigation, portfolio and investment advice, and coordination of leverage and legacy where national involvement is material.

Responsibility for individual opportunities should follow capability and mandate rather than defaulting to the stewardship function. Sport New Zealand and national sports organisations would retain important roles in sporting-event opportunities and rights holder relationships. Cultural organisations would continue to lead within their respective mandates. TNZ, convention bureaux, and sector partners would retain specialist international business-event relationships. Councils and regional organisations would continue to assess local feasibility and lead place-based delivery.

A stronger and more coordinated prospecting function would be central to this option. For public events, this would include monitoring rights holder and promoter pipelines, working with sport, cultural, regional and venue partners, and identifying opportunities aligned with New Zealand's priorities. For international business events, it would include offshore market engagement, convention-bureau coordination, priority-sector mobilisation, host identification, and bid support. Specialist organisations would continue to lead relationships where they hold the relevant mandate, expertise and market credibility.

Regional partners would become more durable participants and co-investors, supported by clearer frameworks for co-investment, delivery, risk-sharing, and accountability. These arrangements would need to recognise differences in regional fiscal capacity and where national and regional benefits accrue. They could be supported by a new local or regional revenue mechanism if one is introduced, but the governance model should not depend on a particular revenue instrument.

The stewardship function would also support a more systematic approach to leverage and legacy. Relevant agencies, iwi and Māori partners, sectors and regional organisations would be engaged early where events could support wider outcomes such as trade, investment, innovation, education, culture, participation, sport, and regional development. Responsibility for individual outcomes should be assigned to named agencies or partners with the relevant mandate and capability, with the stewardship function coordinating planning and monitoring delivery.

Further design would need to clarify the respective roles of the stewardship function, Sport New Zealand, MCH, national sports organisations, and other specialist bodies, particularly where opportunities and rights holder relationships are mediated through established sector channels.

Policy and operational responsibilities would remain distinct

The stewardship function would be responsible for operational portfolio leadership, pipeline coordination, market engagement, investment advice, delegated decisions, partnership coordination, leverage and legacy, capability support, and performance reporting within an agreed national strategy and mandate.

MBIE would be expected to retain core responsibility for ministerial policy advice, strategy, and regulatory work. This would include advising Ministers and Cabinet, maintaining the overarching policy and accountability framework, supporting appropriation and fiscal processes, advising on statutory or mandate changes, and connecting events policy with wider tourism, economic development, sport, culture, regional development, and local-government settings.

This division would allow operational and commercial functions to be undertaken with greater continuity and agility while retaining a clear departmental connection for public policy, ministerial accountability, and significant fiscal or regulatory decisions. Detailed design would need to define information-sharing, performance monitoring, and escalation and accountability arrangements between MBIE and the stewardship function.

Governance and decision rights

The stewardship function would require governance, mandate, and delegations that allow it to operate credibly across government, regions, sectors, and commercial event markets while maintaining clear public accountability. The final governance arrangement would depend on the institutional model selected. It could involve oversight by the host entity's board, a delegated investment committee, or another specialist governance arrangement established within clear statutory, financial, and ministerial accountabilities.

The governance model should support expert-led and timely decisions, protect the integrity of investment processes, and guard against capture by any single agency, region, sector, or event type. An Industry Advisory Group or similar system-wide mechanism could provide structured advice and strengthen the interface between government and the event industry, but should not blur responsibility for formal investment or accountability decisions.

Most routine event investment and support decisions could be delegated to expert decision-makers operating within the strategy, criteria, fiscal limits, and risk settings approved by Ministers. This would support faster and more consistent portfolio decisions while retaining appropriate public accountability.

Ministers and Cabinet would remain responsible for decisions above agreed fiscal or risk thresholds, mega-event opportunities, and commitments with significant strategic, legal, cross-portfolio, or political implications. The final thresholds would need to be determined through detailed fiscal, appropriation, and institutional design rather than fixed through the governance option alone.

The stewardship function would require specialist commercial capability and operating settings that support timely engagement with rights holders, promoters, venues, councils, industry partners, and international event markets. This could include fit-for-purpose contracting tools, established negotiation parameters, appropriately delegated authority, and access to relevant legal, commercial, and risk expertise.

Greater operational independence could provide more flexibility than direct departmental administration, but institutional form alone would not guarantee commercial agility. The function would also require a clear mandate, sufficient delegations, stable funding, appropriate governance, skilled personnel, and an operating culture that supports proportionate risk management and timely decision-making.

Principles for determining institutional form

The final location and organisational form of the stewardship function should follow its intended responsibilities. The following principles indicate which responsibilities should remain close to Ministers and departments, which may benefit from greater operational independence, and what conditions would be required for an arm's-length model to operate effectively.

- **Political oversight and operational independence:** Strategic direction, significant fiscal commitments and decisions involving substantial public risk require clear ministerial and departmental accountability. Operational and investment decisions may benefit from greater continuity and some insulation from day-to-day political involvement, provided they are made within an approved strategy, mandate, and fiscal framework. **Implication:** A hybrid model is likely to be appropriate, with strategy, appropriations and the largest or highest-risk commitments retained close to government, and routine operational and investment decisions delegated through an accountable arm's-length arrangement.

- **Specialist capability and industry engagement:** Event attraction, bidding, investment, and portfolio management require commercial, marketing, analytical, and relationship capabilities, together with credible engagement with rights holders, promoters, sponsors, and industry partners. An arm's-length setting may make it easier to attract, retain, and deploy these capabilities, particularly where employment settings, governance, and operating culture support a market-facing role. **Implication:** This principle supports consideration of an arm's-length model for operational and market-facing functions, provided the function has an appropriate mandate, governance, and resourcing.
- **Commercial agility and responsiveness:** Event markets are time-sensitive and competitive, requiring timely decisions, negotiation flexibility, and the ability to structure commercial arrangements within clear public-sector parameters. An arm's-length model can provide greater operational flexibility than direct departmental delivery, but only where decision rights, delegations, contracting tools, risk settings, and specialist capability are designed accordingly. **Implication:** This principle supports delegated and operationally independent delivery for bidding, investment, and portfolio-management functions, rather than assuming that organisational form alone will create agility.
- **Integration and specialised focus:** Responsibilities that must be closely connected to core government functions, including regulation, national security, fiscal policy, and significant infrastructure decisions, require strong departmental and cross-agency connections. Operational event functions also need a clear focus and close relationships with a specialised stakeholder and commercial ecosystem. **Implication:** The model should combine strong policy and regulatory connections with a distinct operational stewardship function. This does not, by itself, determine whether the function should be located within a department, a Crown entity or another institutional arrangement.
- **Funding model and financial sustainability:** Events investment is underpinned by public funding and requires clear fiscal accountability, transparency, and attention to national and regional equity. At the same time, event portfolios may involve co-investment, sponsorship, commercial contributions, and risk-sharing across several years. An arm's-length structure can provide flexibility in managing these arrangements, provided appropriations, delegations, financial controls, and reporting responsibilities are clear. **Implication:** Public funding and overall fiscal accountability should remain anchored to government, while routine investment decisions and portfolio management could operate through delegated arm's-length arrangements.
- **Stakeholder trust and credibility:** Regions, industry participants and event owners value transparent, consistent, and professionally informed decision-making, particularly where decisions involve commercial judgement or competitive processes. An arm's-length function may support continuity and confidence, but credibility will depend on the quality of its governance, evidence, engagement and decision processes rather than organisational form alone. **Implication:** This principle supports expert-led and transparent investment arrangements with clear safeguards against institutional, regional or sector capture.

Taken together, these principles support a hybrid allocation of responsibilities. Strategic direction, appropriations, policy advice, regulation, and the largest or highest-risk commitments should remain close to Ministers and departments. Routine investment, portfolio management, prospecting, commercial engagement, and system coordination may benefit from greater operational independence and specialist governance.

However, institutional form alone will not deliver these benefits. Effective stewardship will also depend on a clear mandate, sufficient delegations, stable funding, capable governance, specialist personnel, appropriate operating settings, and strong connections to government policy. These principles provide a basis for further design of an arm's-length operating model without predetermining its legal form or host organisation. International comparators provide useful reference points, but the New Zealand model should be designed around the functions it needs to perform and New Zealand's institutional context. It should not replicate any single overseas structure.

Institutional fit and possible organisational home

The final institutional form and host organisation should be determined through further design. The assessment should begin with the mandate and functions required, then consider which organisational setting can provide the necessary authority, commercial agility, policy connection, capability, legitimacy, and accountability.

Internationally, national or state event functions are often located within broader visitor, tourism, destination or economic-development organisations. New Zealand does not currently have a single organisation with domestic and international visitor responsibilities and a mandate spanning all the wider economic, social, cultural, and regional outcomes that the proposed stewardship function would need to support. If future tourism or visitor-system reforms created such a body, it could provide a potential home for the function.

TNZ and NZTE provide logical reference points for further assessment because of their existing market-facing, tourism, trade, investment, and international-engagement capabilities. However, neither organisation currently has a mandate that fully aligns with the proposed stewardship role, and neither should be treated as the predetermined host.

The assessment of possible hosts should consider:

- alignment between the organisation's mandate and the intended national-events outcomes
- the ability to operate across public and business events, government portfolios, regions, and sectors
- commercial and market-facing capability
- governance, delegations, and public accountability
- connection to MBIE's policy, strategy, and ministerial-advice functions
- cost and implementation complexity

- transition risk and continuity of existing relationships
- the ability to retain specialist major-event and business-event capability
- compatibility with any wider tourism or visitor-system reforms.

The preferred institutional direction is an arm's-length stewardship function within or alongside an existing organisation, subject to confirmation through further assessment. The option does not predetermine the host organisation, legal form, governance structure, transfer of functions or final allocation of investment powers.

A standalone national events agency could provide a clearly identifiable home for events, concentrated strategic focus, and visible accountability for national portfolio performance. Depending on its mandate and governance, it could also support specialist capability, industry engagement, and more active portfolio management.

However, a standalone agency is unlikely to be necessary if the required mandate, capability, delegations, and operational independence can be established within an existing organisation. A new agency would involve additional establishment and operating costs, add another institutional actor to an already complex system, and risk separating event functions from wider tourism, trade, economic-development, and regional-development strategies. It could also duplicate existing capability, disrupt established relationships, and take time to build credibility across government, regions, sectors, and international markets.

A standalone agency is not the preferred starting point. It should be considered only if detailed design shows that the required national mandate, operational independence, and cross-system legitimacy cannot be achieved through a more proportionate arrangement within or alongside an existing organisation.

Structural integration should support, rather than drive, reform

International comparators show that effective event systems operate under a range of institutional arrangements. Some integrate public events and business events within a single organisation or strategy, while others retain specialist delivery structures supported by strong coordination. The consistent features are not a particular organisational form, but clear stewardship, shared strategic direction, portfolio visibility, disciplined investment, and coordinated relationships across government, regions, and industry.

New Zealand could strengthen coordination between major public events and international business events without immediately changing organisational structures. The Option 2 measures, including a shared pipeline view, clearer priorities, regular coordination, and a "no-wrong-door" interface, could be implemented without waiting for institutional integration.

If operational major-event functions are subsequently moved from MBIE into a more arm's-length setting, there would be a stronger case for locating major-event and international business-event functions within the same organisational group or governance arrangement. This could provide a clearer external interface, improve portfolio planning and coordinated prospecting, and enable public and business events to be connected where doing so creates strategic value. However, integration should preserve the specialist markets, relationships, and delivery models of each stream.

Detailed design should determine whether closer alignment is best achieved through common governance, co-location within the same organisational group, integration of selected functions, or another arrangement.

Organisational integration could help enable national stewardship, but it is not the primary objective or a prerequisite for early improvement. The first priority is to establish the required functions, mandate, decision rights, and coordination arrangements. These requirements should then inform the institutional form and degree of organisational integration.

The key features of this Option 3 are summarised in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Key features of Option 3: National stewardship

Category	Features
Leadership and stewardship	A dedicated national events stewardship function provides national portfolio leadership, with a stronger mandate and closer strategic alignment across major public events and international business events. The final institutional form and host organisation would be determined through further design.
How partners work together	Central government, regions, sectors, and specialist event organisations operate within a more integrated national framework. Specialist organisations retain relevant market and delivery roles, while the stewardship function provides portfolio visibility, strategic alignment, investment coordination, and cross-system navigation.
Primary coordination mechanisms	A dedicated stewardship function, portfolio-based oversight, long-term pipeline development, coordinated prospecting and bidding, leverage and legacy planning, capability development, regulatory and commercial navigation, alignment of central and local investment, and an enduring interface with industry and regional partners.
Decision rights and accountability	Routine investment and support decisions are delegated to expert decision-makers within agreed strategy, criteria, fiscal limits, and risk settings. Ministers and Cabinet retain responsibility for the largest, highest-risk, or most strategically sensitive commitments. Final delegations and accountability arrangements would be determined through institutional and fiscal design.
Role of regions and local government	Regions become more durable participants and co-investors, supported by clearer frameworks for co-investment, delivery, risk-sharing, and accountability. These arrangements recognise differences in regional fiscal capacity and where national and regional benefits accrue.
Structural implications	Transformational functional reform. Establishes stronger national stewardship and portfolio capability. The extent of organisational restructuring, including the host organisation and alignment of existing functions, would be determined through further design.

Category	Features
International reference points	**Victoria/Melbourne** provides the strongest comparator, with Visit Victoria acting as the lead state-wide events and destination agency, supported by a coordinated "Team Victoria" model and aligned major, regional and business-event functions. **NSW/Sydney** is state-led, with strategy for public and business events led by the state destination marketing organisation. Depending on scale, public event delivery is shared by state and local government, while BESydney provides specialist business events capability.

Indicative decision rights

The final allocation of decision rights under Option 3 would depend on the institutional model, appropriations, statutory responsibilities, and delegations selected through detailed design. Table 15 illustrates how strategic, portfolio, operational, and high-risk decisions could be separated. It is not intended to predetermine the final legal or governance arrangements.

Table 15: Illustrative allocation of principal decision rights

Decision	Indicative lead	Principal supporting roles
National strategy, overall ambition, and fiscal envelope	Ministers and Cabinet, where required	MBIE and other relevant agencies provide advice; the stewardship function and partners provide evidence and market intelligence.
Portfolio priorities and performance framework	Ministers approve strategic direction, outcomes, and fiscal parameters; MBIE provides policy advice and monitors the stewardship mandate.	The stewardship function develops portfolio priorities and the performance framework with sector agencies, councils, iwi and Māori partners, and industry for approval within the agreed governance process.
National pipeline and portfolio reporting	Stewardship function	Specialist agencies, councils, regions, venues, and sector bodies provide pipeline information and identify constraints and opportunities.
Specialist prospecting and rights holder relationships	Organisation with the relevant market or sector expertise	The stewardship function supports national prioritisation and coordination; regional and sector partners support feasibility and bid development.
Local feasibility and deliverability	Relevant councils, regional partners, and delivery organisations	The stewardship function and central agencies support early assessment of infrastructure, venue, workforce, regulatory, and funding implications.
Routine investment decisions within approved criteria and delegations	Delegated expert decision-makers or investment body	The stewardship function provides portfolio advice; relevant agencies and local partners contribute specialist assessment.
The largest, highest-risk, or most sensitive commitments	Ministers or Cabinet, consistent with legal and fiscal requirements	MBIE, the Treasury, and relevant agencies provide advice; the stewardship function and delivery partners provide portfolio, feasibility, commercial, and risk information.
Leverage and legacy plans	Named lead agency or partner for each outcome	Event owner, the stewardship function, sector agencies, iwi and Māori partners, councils, and industry contribute according to the outcomes sought.

Decision	Indicative lead	Principal supporting roles
Event delivery and regulatory approvals	Event owner and responsible regulatory or delivery bodies	The stewardship function supports coordination and escalation but does not displace statutory, regulatory, or delivery responsibilities.

Comparative summary of governance and coordination options

Table 16: Comparison of three governance and coordination options across key dimensions

	Option 1: More deliberate coordination	Option 2: Coordinated partnership	Option 3: National stewardship
Aligned strategic ambition	**Strategic Investment:** Government uses existing funding and levers more deliberately.	**Enabling:** Government removes friction, connects effort, and supports regions and sectors to lead.	**Championing:** Government actively co-leads and builds the national events system.
Governance and coordination approach	Refines the current model through clearer roles, stronger transparency, and more consistent coordination within existing settings.	Builds a more deliberate partnership model, especially between central and local government, while retaining an evolved version of the current system.	Establishes a dedicated national stewardship function with responsibility for portfolio leadership, coordinated investment, pipeline oversight, and stronger system-wide coordination. The final institutional form and host would be determined through further design.
Main mechanisms	Existing agency roles, clearer communication, improved information-sharing, and stronger pipeline visibility.	A national events forum or similar mechanism, shared pipeline view, partnership principles, and a "no-wrong-door" interface.	A dedicated stewardship function, portfolio-based investment and coordination, coordinated prospecting and bidding, leverage and legacy planning, capability support, and stronger central–local alignment.
Decision-making and process	Existing MEF and CAP decision-making processes continue, with clearer criteria, stronger transparency, and more consistent assessment.	Decision-making remains distributed but becomes more structured and, in some cases, more localised. Routine decisions sit more with officials, agencies or delegated regional mechanisms.	Decision-making becomes more coordinated and portfolio-based, with routine decisions delegated within agreed strategy, criteria, fiscal limits, and risk settings. Ministers and Cabinet retain the largest, highest-risk, or most sensitive decisions.

	Option 1: More deliberate coordination	Option 2: Coordinated partnership	Option 3: National stewardship
Roles	Central government remains the lead communicator, coordinator, and investor within current arrangements, without creating new leadership machinery. Regions mainly continue to have supporting and delivery roles under case-by-case arrangements.	Central government acts as system enabler and partner, providing clearer direction, reducing friction, and supporting stronger central–local coordination. Regions have a stronger role in identifying, shaping, co-funding, and leveraging events within an agreed national framework.	Central government actively co-leads and builds the national events system through a dedicated stewardship function and stronger national capability. Specialist organisations retain relevant market, sector, and delivery roles. Regions become more durable co-investors, with clearer roles in delivery, co-investment, and accountability.
What it enables	Better accountability, communication, role clarity, and confidence in investment decisions, with modest improvements in pipeline visibility.	Better navigation of government, stronger pipeline visibility, improved bid coordination, and a stronger platform for anchor, regional and business events.	More deliberate pursuit of major and mega events, stronger development of anchor events and international business events, and a more systematic approach to leverage, legacy and system capability.
Degree of system change	Incremental. Improves coordination within the current architecture without materially reshaping it.	Moderate. Introduces stronger coordination, clearer partnership arrangements, and more structured regional participation.	Transformational. Establishes a dedicated stewardship capability, stronger national portfolio management and broader system capability.
Implementation pathway	Low-disruption changes through clearer criteria, communication, transparency, and reporting within existing settings.	A moderate change programme requiring stronger partnership arrangements, coordination mechanisms, clearer delegations, and appropriate capability.	A high-complexity reform requiring development of the stewardship mandate and functions, institutional and fiscal design, strengthened policy and strategy capability, transition planning, and alignment with wider funding and regional co-investment decisions.

Across the three options, the principal difference is the strength of the coordinating mandate and the extent to which the system has a clear centre of gravity. Option 1 strengthens coordination within current roles and structures. Option 2 introduces more deliberate partnership arrangements, a shared pipeline view and a clearer interface with government. Option 3 establishes a dedicated stewardship function with greater authority and capability for portfolio planning, coordinated bidding, investment oversight, leverage and legacy, and wider system development across nationally significant public events and international business events.

Recommended governance and coordination pathway

This review recommends national stewardship as the preferred long-term functional model, with Option 2: Coordinated partnership implemented from 2026/27 as the first phase of transition. Option 2 aligns with the proposed initial Enabling direction for the National Events Strategy and the recommended coordinated co-investment funding pathway.

The recommendation is to develop the functions required for stronger national stewardship progressively. It does not predetermine the final host organisation, legal form, governance structure or precise alignment of the existing major-event and international business-event functions, which should be determined through subsequent institutional, fiscal and implementation design.

The first phase should be deliberately structured to begin the transition. It would include establishing a regular national events forum or coordination mechanism, creating a shared national pipeline view, agreeing central–local partnership principles, implementing a "no-wrong-door" government interface, clarifying agency roles in leverage and legacy, streamlining routine decision-making, and beginning detailed design of the future stewardship function. These measures would provide visible early improvement while building the relationships, evidence and capability required for the longer-term model.

A dedicated national events unit or new arm's-length structure is not required to implement Option 2. Its core activities can largely be delivered through existing institutions and governance arrangements, provided MBIE and TNZ have appropriate mandates, capability, and resourcing. Option 2 represents substantive reform in its own right and provides a foundation for any later progression to the full national stewardship model.

Progression to the full national stewardship model would depend on sufficient system maturity, funding certainty and implementation readiness. The principal preconditions would include:

- an agreed system-wide National Events Strategy and clearer long-term priorities
- established central–local partnership arrangements
- credible and sustainable regional co-investment settings, potentially supported by a new local or regional revenue mechanism
- improved local-government capability and readiness
- sufficient national funding and capability to support a more active portfolio model
- clearer roles for specialist agencies, sectors and delivery partners
- completed design of the stewardship mandate, governance, investment powers, and accountability arrangements
- an evidence-based assessment of the preferred institutional host and transition pathway.

The full set of preconditions is unlikely to be in place before 2028/29. A target of around 2030 for full implementation of the national stewardship model would provide a realistic planning horizon, while allowing progress to be accelerated if funding, institutional, and partnership settings mature sooner.

Accelerating the transition before these foundations are in place would involve trade-offs. It could require substantially greater public investment before strategic priorities and portfolio settings are fully established, place additional pressure on local government and industry partners, and result in governance or investment structures being created before their long-term mandate and relationships are clear.

These risks do not preclude earlier development of individual stewardship functions. Pipeline coordination, common portfolio information, improved decision delegations, structured industry engagement, and stronger leverage and legacy planning can all begin under Option 2. The distinction is between bringing forward useful functions and prematurely fixing the final institutional form.

Table 17 illustrates how the principal stewardship functions could mature through the Enabling and Maturing phases before a full Championing model is established. It describes the progressive development of functions and capability without predetermining the final host organisation or legal form.

Table 17: Indicative evolution of national stewardship functions

Function	Current position	Enabling and Maturing response	Possible Championing response
Pipeline and portfolio visibility	Public-event, business-event and regional pipelines are held separately and provide an incomplete national view.	Establish a shared national pipeline and calendar view covering confirmed events, prospects, regional priorities, venue capacity, and major constraints.	Maintain an active portfolio view that supports prospecting, sequencing, gap analysis, and investment decisions.
Partner coordination	Coordination largely relies on relationships, individual opportunities, and temporary cross-agency arrangements.	Establish standing coordination arrangements across relevant agencies, councils, sector bodies, iwi and Māori partners, and event specialists.	Provide a recognised national coordination point with the mandate and capability to convene partners around priority opportunities.
Prospecting and international relationships	Prospecting is undertaken through several specialist organisations and sector networks, with limited shared prioritisation.	Improve information-sharing, preserve specialist relationships, and agree priority markets, sectors and opportunities.	Coordinate a more active national prospecting programme while retaining delivery through organisations with the relevant market and sector expertise.
Investment advice	Advice is primarily organised around individual funds, programmes or opportunities.	Apply common public-value, additionality, risk, and portfolio tests across relevant funding pathways.	Provide integrated portfolio advice across a broader National Events Investment Platform.
Leverage and legacy	Practice varies by event, agency and sector, and is not	Introduce proportionate minimum requirements for early objectives, ownership,	Coordinate leverage and legacy across events and portfolios, including links to

Function	Current position	Enabling and Maturing response	Possible Championing response
	always planned or resourced from feasibility.	funding, measures, and reporting.	trade, investment, innovation, participation, culture and regional development.
Industry, regulatory and partner navigation	Event proponents and delivery partners may need to navigate several funding, contracting, regulatory, and agency processes, often relying on personal knowledge of the system.	Establish an interim "no-wrong-door" protocol, clearer guidance, named coordination contacts, and earlier identification of commercial, regulatory and delivery constraints.	Provide a visible and commercially credible national interface with specialist commercial capability, while coordinating access to the appropriate regulatory, sector or regional lead.
Data, performance and evaluation	Measures and evaluations vary, and lessons are not consistently aggregated or reused.	Establish common definitions, proportionate evaluation expectations, baseline measures, and portfolio reporting.	Maintain a system-performance view and feed evidence and learning back into strategy, portfolio management, and investment decisions.
System and workforce capability	Capability is strong in parts of the system but uneven across regions, functions, and event types.	Identify critical capability gaps and coordinate targeted guidance, specialist support, knowledge-sharing, and development.	Support longer-term capability investment across the national events ecosystem, including councils, industry, sector organisations, and delivery partners.

This staged pathway would strengthen coordination, capability and portfolio management from the outset without making institutional restructuring the first task. It would also preserve the ability to move to a more authoritative and operationally independent stewardship model as system maturity, funding certainty and implementation readiness develop.

Line of inquiry 4: Regulatory and legislative settings

This line of inquiry assessed whether New Zealand's regulatory and legislative settings enable or impede an effective events system and where improvement is best achieved through better coordination, guidance, capability, and system design rather than legislative change. It considered how existing national, local and cross-government settings affect event feasibility and delivery, where targeted regulatory or legislative change may be justified for different event types, and how any changes should align with the wider events reform pathway.

Current key regulatory and legislative settings

New Zealand's events environment is shaped by three broad groups of regulatory and legislative settings.

National legislation

- The Major Events Management Act 2007 (MEMA) provides commercial and integrity protections for nationally significant or "declared major events", such as the Rugby World Cup, with a focus on ambush marketing, ticket scalping, and unauthorised pitch invasions. [18] Event organisers can apply for this status through the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). In this line of inquiry, "nationally significant events" refers to events with characteristics that could support their declaration as major events under MEMA, including material national-level benefits and coordination requirements and a likely need for stronger cross-agency support and facilitation.
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 require event organisers and venue operators to identify risks, eliminate or mitigate hazards, and ensure the safety of attendees, staff, and contractors.
- The Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 regulates licensing, host responsibility, and alcohol service at events.
- The Building Act 2004 applies to temporary structures and related safety requirements.
- More general consumer and commercial protections include broader fair trading and ticketing settings that can affect consumer confidence in the events market.

[18] Under MEMA, the Governor-General can, by Order in Council on the recommendation of Ministers, declare that an event is a major event. Considerations include whether the event will attract a large number of international participants or spectators, significantly raise New Zealand's international profile, require a high level of professional management and coordination, attract significant sponsorship and international media coverage, attract large numbers of New Zealanders as participants or spectators, and offer substantial sporting, cultural, social, economic, or other benefits to New Zealand.

Environmental, planning, and local government settings

- Resource management and planning settings including district plans, unitary plans, and related consenting pathways that affect noise, temporary activities, land use, coastal or environmentally sensitive areas, and event duration.
- Local government bylaws and permitting processes including public-space permits, trading bylaws, road closures, traffic management, signage, waste management, and local alcohol licensing processes.
- Temporary activity and event management requirements, which are often shaped by local policy, practice, and capability as much as by legislation itself.

Cross-government operational and enabling settings

- Border, immigration, customs, and security settings including visa processing, border charges and levies, event accreditation arrangements, and all-of-government coordination for major events.
- Tax settings including the treatment of non-resident entertainers, GST treatment in some event-related contexts, and other settings that may affect New Zealand's competitiveness for internationally mobile events.
- Secondary legislation and delegated rules, which are an important part of the operating environment given that many detailed requirements sit in regulations, rules, notices, or agency-issued instruments rather than in primary legislation.

The relevance and effect of these settings vary considerably by event type. Public events that use public space, require temporary structures, or involve significant crowd management tend to face more regulatory friction than many business events. At the same time, business events can be more sensitive to border, tax, and delegate cost settings, particularly where New Zealand is competing against other destinations for internationally mobile conferences and exhibitions.

Strengths and challenges

Strengths

Based on the research, stakeholder feedback, and the broader review evidence, New Zealand's regulatory and legislative environment has several important strengths:

- **A safe, trusted events environment.** New Zealand benefits from a wider public law and institutional context that is itself an asset when attracting events. Stakeholders repeatedly described New Zealand as a safe, transparent, and reliable place to stage events. This is not solely because of event-specific legislation; rather, it reflects confidence in public administration, safety oversight, and the broader operating environment. That wider trust reduces perceived sovereign and operational risk for organisers, investors, and rights holders.

- **MEMA provides a solid foundation.** MEMA gave New Zealand an early institutional advantage, as New Zealand was relatively early in adopting event-specific legislation. MEMA was fundamental to the Rugby World Cup 2011 context and has since underpinned other declared events. Stakeholder discussion was clear that while this early-mover advantage mattered historically, that comparative advantage has now narrowed as Australian states and other jurisdictions have built more evolved major event frameworks. Although no longer a unique selling point, MEMA provides a solid legislative foundation for future updates to meet today's needs.
- **There is demonstrated regulatory agility when opportunities arise.** The government has shown flexibility in adapting regulatory and legislative settings for priority events. For example, special legislation for Rugby World Cup 2011 expedited approvals (such as consents and licensing hours), the temporary America's Cup Road Stopping Act 2018 allowed event infrastructure to be built, and other permanent changes to legislation have made specific events more viable (for example, the Medicines Act amendment for international medical conferences). These cases set a precedent for pragmatic regulatory solutions when events require them.

Medicines Act as an example of targeted regulatory improvements

In 2025, the Medicines Act 1981 was amended to allow certain unapproved medicines to be advertised at medical conferences and trade shows. Previously, New Zealand's broad prohibition on advertising unapproved medicines applied even in professional conference settings, creating a barrier to attracting international medical events.

The change introduced a targeted exemption allowing unapproved medicines to be advertised at medical conferences and associated trade shows where the intended audience comprises regulated health practitioners. Conference organisers must notify the Director-General of Health at least 30 working days before conference opens and provide information about the medicines' approval status.

The reform responded to concerns from the business events sector that New Zealand was losing opportunities to host large international medical conferences. BEIA estimated that up to $90 million in conference expenditure between 2025 and 2029 was at risk because of the restriction. The Ministry for Regulation produced a lower estimate using a different methodology, but concluded that removing the barrier would generate economic benefits.[19]

The Ministry for Regulation subsequently reported that two significant Australasian medical conferences had confirmed New Zealand as their 2026 host destination, together expected to attract around 3,300 delegates and generate more than $5 million in economic activity, demonstrating how targeted regulatory reform can improve New Zealand's competitiveness for international business events.[20]

[19] Ministry of Health, "Briefing for decision – Advertising of unapproved medicines at medical conferences and trade shows", Briefing for the Minister of Health and Associate Minister of Health, 26 June 2025, https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/2025-12/Briefing-Advertising-unapproved-medicines-medical-conferences-trade-shows-H2025068739.pdf.

[20] Ministry for Regulation, "No more missing out on medical conferences", https://www.regulation.govt.nz/our-work/what-weve-done/no-more-missing-out-on-medical-conferences/.

- **Emerging movement towards more proportionate regulation.** Another strength is the increasing willingness to apply more risk-based approaches rather than assuming a one-size-fits-all model. For example, the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Improving Alcohol Regulation) Amendment Bill proposes changes intended to streamline special licensing for events. The announced reforms include increasing the threshold at which additional requirements apply to large-scale events from 400 to 2,000 attendees, alongside a nationally consistent, risk-based framework for assessing special-licence applications. Key details would be set through regulations.[21] Ongoing local government and resource management reforms could further embed consistent risk-based approaches for event consents and compliance. This matters because frustration about regulation in the sector does not arise from the existence of regulation as such, but from settings and practices that do not differentiate well enough between event scale, event risk, and place context.
- **Regulatory facilitation capacity exists in important parts of the system.** Organisers value an identifiable human interface to help navigate complexity in the system. Many large cities and frequent event-hosting regions employ specialist local government staff to help event organisers navigate permits and compliance. While the rules are still complex, this guidance at the local level helps organisers manage regulatory requirements. Events backed by the MEF can also tap into MBIE's All-of-Government Coordination group – a one-stop national regulatory liaison. Immigration New Zealand provides dedicated visa case managers for large international business events, helping to streamline processes such as visa approvals. This facilitation does not remove the underlying complexity, but it can significantly improve coordination and delivery.

Challenges

The review has also identified several regulatory-related challenges in the system.

- **There is variability in local implementation and processes.** The most consistent challenge identified in this review is not a single difficult piece of regulation, but the variability, predictability, and proportionality of regulatory implementation across regions and localities. Organisers described a landscape in which event permitting, building approvals, traffic management, alcohol licensing, and local overlays can differ substantially from one council area to another, even where underlying statutory requirements are similar. This creates planning uncertainty, duplicate costs, and operational risk, especially where events move across boundaries or replicate the same infrastructure in different places.

[21] The Bill received its first reading and was referred to the Justice Committee on 2 April 2026. See Ministry of Justice, "Improving alcohol regulation", https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/key-initiatives/alcohol-reform/; and New Zealand Government, "Government to streamline regulations for events", 2 September 2025, https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-streamline-regulations-events.

Stakeholder voices on local variability:

- *"[First city] required an 80-page consent document… [second city] was a 400-page document. Same event, same marquees, same crowd size"* (council/RTO stakeholder).
- *"What you are being made to do in [a small district council] is completely different to what an event of this scale would be made to do in [a metro city] or somewhere else"* (system stakeholder).
- *"If you are an event organiser it is like starting from scratch every time you go somewhere new – and it is costing so much money"* (industry stakeholder).
- *"It is the interpretation… you can be charged differently depending on where you are"* (event organiser).

Stakeholder voices on late-stage risk and cost:

- *"We had a multi-million-dollar alcohol sponsor. We were telling them 72 hours out, we may not be able to serve your product"* (event organiser).
- *"We have had events paying nearly $250k on regulatory elements"* (system stakeholder).

Variability can turn into real delivery risk. Stakeholders described local approvals being unresolved within days or even hours of an event starting, and costs appearing disproportionate to context (for example, a small rural event needing a $40,000 traffic management plan).

- **Compliance settings often do not scale well for smaller events.** Smaller and volunteer-led events can face requirements that feel designed for much larger, higher-risk settings. Rules on health and safety, traffic management, or crowd control – typically designed for major events – are applied to modest local events without adjustment. Because compliance requirements rarely scale down for event size, small volunteer-run events can be overwhelmed by complex, costly processes.

Stakeholder voices on disproportionate compliance:

- *"Requirements for temporary structures are the same as permanent"* (system stakeholder).
- *"To get an 11-day temporary permit liquor licence for 500 people… you have to go through a process that allows objections. We had a four-hour hearing"* (event organiser).

This issue matters not only because it increases cost, but because it risks narrowing the event base. Community, cultural, and grassroots events generate local value, place-making, participation, and social cohesion. If the system makes these events too difficult to stage, the wider event ecosystem weakens over time.

- **There are national–local gaps and capacity issues.** Some frustrations described as red tape are better understood as system design and resourcing issues. For example, central government may support an event strategically, but local authorities carry much of the practical compliance and regulatory load. If a council lacks experience, specialist staff, or budget, approval processes can become ill-fitting and slow. In these cases the problem is not simply that regulation exists – it is that the system has not matched ambition with delivery capability.

Stakeholder voice on capability gaps:

- *"The… council did not have the capacity, capability, they just referred back to their standard policy and regulatory processes, which were not suitable"* (event organiser).

- **MEMA has its own limitations.** MEMA is considered too narrow for the role stakeholders expect major event legislation to play. The legislation remains valuable as a commercial protection instrument, but stakeholders repeatedly noted that comparable legislation elsewhere now does more, for example, providing clearer security support, easing local consenting, and activating agencies.

Stakeholder voices on MEMA limitations and future-proofing:

- *"The Australians use their major events laws for security arrangements and support by central government; ours is just an ambush marketing act… that is a shortfall"* (central government stakeholder).
- *"MEMA is inherently outdated… there is a lot in the customs, immigration, licensing, security area where other jurisdictions are more advanced and more advantageous to the event"* (central government stakeholder).
- *"The heritage of MEMA does not stand up against the test of our technological advancements"* (central government stakeholder).

Even within its current scope, MEMA does not address developments that were not prominent in 2007, such as drones, unauthorised digital broadcasting, cybersecurity, geolocated digital marketing, AI-enabled impersonation or deepfakes, and hybrid event formats. MEMA was developed in the context of Rugby World Cup 2011 and has worked most naturally for stadia-based events with defined venues, precincts and commercial-rights environments. Some contemporary events, including marine, dispersed, outdoor, multi-city, digital or hybrid events, raise different operational and commercial-protection issues. The America's Cup experience illustrates that major-event settings may need to work across non-stadia environments where boundaries, access, water-space interfaces, broadcasting, brand protection and public-realm management are more complex.

Although New Zealand has not experienced a comparable high-profile event-specific disruption, international experience demonstrates that major events can be exposed to significant digital and technological threats. Examples include the 'Olympic Destroyer' cyberattack at the 2018 Winter Olympics, which disrupted the official website, ticketing, and other event IT systems, and cyber activity during the Paris 2024 Olympics, when France's cybersecurity agency recorded 119 low-impact security events and 22 confirmed incidents, none of which disrupted the competitions.[22] Emerging risks also include unauthorised digital broadcasting and the use of drones to disrupt events or interfere with broadcasts.

The issue is not simply that the range of threats has expanded. It is that the operating model for major events now spans physical and digital domains, while MEMA was designed primarily around physical-space and marketing-rights protection.

MEMA historical review context

Questions about MEMA's currency are not new, and MBIE has initiated reviews of the legislation several times over the last decade. These processes have been paused or postponed due to various factors, including resourcing changes, reprioritisation of activity during COVID, operational demands on the NZME team arising from the delivery of significant events, and a desire to learn from more recent events such as FIFA Women's World Cup 2023.

This history is important for two reasons. First, it shows that opportunities to improve MEMA have been recognised but have been affected by recurring reprioritisation and delivery pressures. Second, there is a solid evidence base on the limitations of the current legislation, including:

- the purpose not being stated clearly enough
- the threshold for events in scope not being sufficiently certain
- some declaration processes being cumbersome
- a need for more reliable enforcement pathways, and
- the existing scope of protections, tools, and penalties not being broad enough.

The strategic question is whether major event legislation in New Zealand should remain focussed on narrow commercial protections or become a broader enabling tool for events of national significance.

- **There are perceived risks to our international competitiveness**. Some settings outside the traditional event-regulation framework may make New Zealand a less competitive location for international events. Some stakeholders noted that border requirements such as visa processes and rising levies can add time and cost for overseas participants to enter the country (see the additional commentary on this below). Additionally, stakeholders noted that the flat 20% withholding tax on foreign entertainers' earnings (with limited upfront relief) often reduces their net income compared with some comparator regimes that provide greater scope to adjust withholding in advance or recognise deductible expenses, and charging GST on conference fees

22 CCDCOE, "Olympic Destroyer (2018)", https://cyberlaw.ccdcoe.org/wiki/Olympic_Destroyer_%282018%29; and Agence France-Presse, "France reports over 140 cyberattacks linked to Olympics", 14 August 2024, https://www.rfi.fr/en/olympic-games/20240814-france-reports-over-140-cyberattacks-linked-to-olympics.

increases costs for foreign delegates (withholding tax and GST issues are considered further in a later section of this line of inquiry). The materiality of some of these issues has not yet been established. However, perceptions of cost, complexity and uncertainty can still influence whether promoters and organisers include New Zealand in international schedules.

Do border requirements have a material impact on event visitation?

For business events specifically, the general attendee profile suggests that a large proportion of arrivals have little or no exposure to visa-related costs and barriers.

Australia alone accounted for 57% of conference attendee arrivals in New Zealand in the year ended March 2026. [23] Australian citizens and residents generally have highly facilitated entry to New Zealand and are not the group most affected by conventional visitor visa barriers or International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) cost concerns.

Other important source markets, such as the US (10% of international conference attendees in the year ended March 2026), Canada (3%), UK (2.3%), Japan (2.3%), Singapore (1.2%), South Korea (1.1%), and Germany (0.9%) are generally visa-waiver markets. [24] Travellers from these countries may still face border requirements and IVL charges, but they are not usually dealing with the full visitor visa application process in the way travellers from non-waiver markets are.

The markets more likely to face friction from visitor visa processes and costs, for example, China (3.2%), India (1.9%), the Philippines (0.7%) and some Pacific markets depending on passport/status, generally represent a relatively small minority of conference attendee arrivals, although China is the third largest source market and India is the seventh largest. [25]

This suggests that, for business events, visa costs and processes are unlikely to be a dominant drag on attendance across the international attendee base. However, some factors suggest a more nuanced picture.

- Visa friction is likely to matter most for growth markets and target segments from non-waiver countries, especially when New Zealand wants to attract higher-value delegates, association conferences, sector-specific conventions, or rotating international events from Asia.
- The effect may be more important at the margin than in aggregate – even if only a small share of current attendees are affected, visa requirements may suppress demand from markets that are currently under-represented. That is, the current attendee mix may partly reflect the existence of barriers, not just underlying demand.

23 Tourism New Zealand, Corporate Website, "Tourism Data – International Visitor Arrivals (short-term)", April 2025 to March 2026 data on visitor arrivals that travelled for the purpose of attending a conference, https://www.tourismnewzealand.com/insights/tourism-data/.

24 As above.

25 As above.

- Process certainty may matter more than headline cost. For business events, organisers and delegates often need confidence months in advance. Delays, uncertainty, documentation requirements, or perceived hassle may have more impact than the absolute visa fee or levy, particularly for conferences with fixed dates and group travel decisions.

In addition, source market data is only available for business-event (conference) attendance, not broader event attendance, and it is not clear whether the international attendee profile at public events differs from business events (that is, there may be larger proportions of attendees at public events from markets more affected by visa processes and costs).

Overall, the conference attendee data suggests that visa costs and the IVL are unlikely to be a major across-the-board constraint on international business event attendance, because most attendees come from Australia and most other significant source markets are visa-waiver countries. However, visa settings may still be a targeted constraint for particular non-waiver growth markets, and may have a disproportionate effect on bid competitiveness, delegate conversion, and market development where organisers are seeking to attract attendees from China, India, parts of Southeast Asia, and some Pacific countries.

Lessons from international comparators

Most of the destinations reviewed operate without bespoke, standalone events legislation, instead relying on broader regulatory frameworks that are adapted pragmatically for event delivery. Key findings from the international review are:

- **Dedicated events legislation is not the norm, and its absence is not a sign of a weak system.** Scotland, Denmark and British Columbia operate largely through general law and established regulatory practice, with no dedicated events legislation. In Denmark the system is widely viewed as effective, with no strong push for reform. In British Columbia, business events benefit from specific enablers such as accelerated visas and GST rebates, while major events rely on municipal, provincial, and federal rules that are understood and used pragmatically.
- **Where major events legislation exists, it is usually a targeted toolkit for declared public events.** New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria stand out with comprehensive major event legislation. This legislation allows the states to declare major events, and enables temporary controls and agency coordination for large public events, for example on trading, signage, access and venue operation. These powers sit alongside wider general law and local permitting.
- **Local government remains the operational regulator in almost every system.** Scottish local authorities retain responsibility for licensing and public safety, Vancouver municipalities handle road closures, licensing and public safety while other legal levers sit at provincial or federal level, and Victorian councils remain central to permitting, traffic management, and precinct activation. In practice, this means that event-system performance depends not only on state or national powers, but on how well those powers connect to local capability and local decision-making.

- **Proportionate regulation is a key lesson, especially for smaller public events.** Victoria's review of the Places of Public Entertainment (POPE) framework is a useful example because it shows that even capable systems revisit local permitting when safety-focussed settings become inconsistent, unpredictable or disproportionate. The lesson is not that regulation should be lighter, but that process, cost and thresholds should reflect actual event risk.
- **Temporary powers, exemptions and fast-tracking are generally used sparingly and for specific purposes.** The comparator evidence supports limited flexibility where ordinary rules would create unreasonable friction for significant public events.
- **Some of the most important event settings sit outside event law altogether.** British Columbia's bed-tax legislation and federal visa settings directly affect event competitiveness. Wales shows how broader legislation, such as the Well-being of Future Generations Act, can shape the public-value framework used to assess events. Evidence from Scotland also points to the importance of visa settings, rights protection, and trading controls. This means adjacent legal settings are seen as a critical part of the enabling environment.

Opportunities for improving regulatory and legislative settings

The system analysis and international lessons suggest several opportunities to enhance New Zealand's event regulatory environment. They include practical, policy, and legislative measures of differing scale and complexity. They are best understood as components of a sequenced reform agenda rather than a list of mutually exclusive choices.

Many current challenges can be addressed without legislative change

- **Prioritise non-regulatory solutions where they can solve the problems:** A large share of current friction appears to sit in system performance (including interpretation, capability, and capacity constraints) rather than in legislative deficiency. This creates a strong case for initially prioritising non-regulatory interventions, including better coordination, capability investment, and guidance. Examples are listed below.
  - Invest in local government event capability, including through training or access to specialist expertise.
  - Build on existing content and the work of event-related associations by developing national event guidelines and model bylaws for permitting, traffic management, and safety planning.
  - Establish formal central–local partnership protocols so that host councils receive appropriate logistical support or cost-sharing for compliance tasks when central government secures a major event in a smaller region.

  As business events are less likely to create temporary structures or use public space for event delivery, this is largely (although not exclusively) an opportunity for public events.

Wider reforms provide an opportunity to make event regulation more proportionate

- **Leverage wider system reform momentum to embed more proportionate event settings:** The opportunity exists for central government to build on reform momentum already underway across local government and resource management systems to embed more consistent, risk-based approaches to event-related consenting and compliance. Proposed changes, such as those in the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Improving Alcohol Regulation) Amendment Bill, already signal movement towards thresholds and obligations that are more proportionate to risk. This creates a foundation to extend similar principles through ongoing resource management reform, including providing clearer national direction for temporary event activities (for example, deeming certain events permitted where standard conditions are met), revisiting thresholds for 'major temporary activities' requiring consent, and aligning traffic management requirements with actual risk. Together, these changes could reduce duplication, improve consistency across regions, and reduce compliance burdens for lower-risk events without compromising safety or community outcomes.

Potential international competitiveness barriers require targeted evidence

- **Targeted review of potential barriers to international competitiveness:** Another opportunity is for central government to review potential barriers for international participants across visa, border, and tax settings to more fully understand how they influence decisions to include New Zealand in global event circuits and tours. It is important to note that while stakeholders identified a range of potential improvements, insights were drawn from a limited set of perspectives and may not represent system-wide constraints. These areas require further validation, testing, and evidence-gathering before policy action is considered.
  - **Border settings (visas, levies, and charges):** Consider whether there are opportunities to streamline visa processes and reduce cost barriers to entry. Stakeholders identified options such as group visa schemes or visa-on-arrival arrangements for accredited participants, and exemptions or discounts for visitor levies and border charges. Changes could reduce cost and complexity for both business and public events.
  - **Withholding tax settings:** Review the current tax treatment of non-resident entertainers, including the general requirement to withhold 20% from gross payments and the limited scope identified in published guidance for adjusting withholding upfront to reflect anticipated net income or deductible expenses. Stakeholders raised concerns that these settings may make New Zealand commercially unattractive to promoters and performers for marginal tour dates unless promoters or government compensate elsewhere. This does not by itself establish that reform is warranted on fiscal grounds, but it supports a targeted review of whether the current settings are unnecessarily rigid in an internationally mobile market. Options for improvement could include greater flexibility through deductions, thresholds, or

pre-approved reductions, consistent with approaches used in comparator jurisdictions. Further information on the withholding-tax challenge is provided below.

- **GST treatment:** Review opportunities to reduce the impact of GST on international participants in targeted contexts. Stakeholders argued that applying GST to conference registration fees increases the effective cost to overseas delegates and makes New Zealand less competitive than comparator destinations (for example, Australia and Singapore provide targeted GST relief or zero-rating for certain business-event services supplied to non-resident businesses).

  The practical issue identified is that GST may be theoretically recoverable in New Zealand in some circumstances, but many non-resident businesses are not registered and do not reclaim it in practice (due to the compliance costs associated with registering for GST and filing a GST return to claim irregular or one-off tax deductions). That means the tax can function as a real cost rather than a neutral pass-through, especially for conferences competing in tight international bid markets. Inland Revenue consulted on this issue through an officials' issues paper released in May 2026, including the possibility of zero-rating certain business-event services supplied to non-resident businesses. Consultation closed on 29 June 2026. The paper was intended to inform officials' advice, and at the time of publication Ministers had not made decisions on any change. [26]

Withholding tax (WHT) on payments to non-resident entertainers

WHT is income tax deducted at source from payments to a non-resident entertainer or sportsperson. In New Zealand, 20% is generally withheld from gross payments for performances or sporting activities carried out here. Inland Revenue describes this as a full and final tax, although a performer may choose to file a New Zealand tax return to claim expenses. The payer must deduct the tax and remit it to Inland Revenue unless an exemption or relevant double tax agreement applies. Exemptions include specified government-sponsored cultural programmes, programmes run by qualifying foreign non-profit organisations promoting cultural activity, and performances by sportspeople representing the national body administering their sport in their home country.

Withholding tax can create a significant immediate cash-flow cost where a performer has substantial expenses associated with the New Zealand leg of a tour. For example, $100,000 would be withheld from a guaranteed payment of $500,000, leaving a net payment of $400,000 at the time of payment. The performer may subsequently file a New Zealand tax return to claim expenses or seek a foreign tax credit in their country of residence, but the availability and value of either form of relief will depend on their circumstances and any applicable double tax agreement. For marginal tour dates, the combination of gross-basis withholding, substantial attributable expenses, compliance requirements, and uncertainty

[26] IRD, "Current GST issues – Consultation: Officials' Issues Paper", Issued 22 May 2026, https://www.taxpolicy.ird.govt.nz/-/media/project/ir/tp/consultation/2026/current-gst-issues.pdf?modified=20260522015128.

about the timing or availability of relief may affect the commercial attractiveness of including New Zealand in an international tour.

The withholding requirement ensures that tax is collected on New Zealand-sourced income earned by non-resident entertainers and sportspeople. The table below compares New Zealand's approach with selected overseas jurisdictions. It shows that several comparator regimes provide greater scope to align withholding in advance with anticipated net income or deductible expenses.

Jurisdiction	WHT rate and applicability	Relief options
New Zealand	20% is generally withheld from gross payments to non-resident entertainers and sportspeople. Inland Revenue describes this as a full and final tax. A performer with no other New Zealand income is not required to file a New Zealand tax return, but may choose to do so to claim expenses. The withholding requirements can also apply to payments made to another person on the performer's behalf and to payments made from outside New Zealand.[27]	Specified exemptions apply to income received for performances under cultural programmes of, or wholly or partly sponsored by, the New Zealand Government or an overseas government. Exemptions may also apply where a performance forms part of a programme run by a foreign non-profit organisation promoting cultural activity, or where a sportsperson represents the national body administering the relevant sport in their home country. A relevant double tax agreement (DTA) may alter the tax treatment. For example, payments to a United States resident are exempt in New Zealand where they do not exceed US$10,000. The published Inland Revenue guidance identifies these exemptions and possible treaty relief but does not set out a standard pre-event process for varying withholding according to anticipated net income or deductible expenses. A performer who files a New Zealand return to claim expenses will generally need an IRD number and incur the associated compliance requirements.
Australia	Foreign-resident withholding applies to relevant payments for entertainment and sporting activities carried out in Australia. It can apply to individual performers and sportspeople, sporting and entertainment groups, performing companies, touring bands, and some support personnel. Payments can include performance and appearance fees, sponsorship and endorsement payments, bonuses, expense reimbursements, prizes, and non-cash benefits. There is no single rate that applies uniformly to all foreign entertainers and sportspeople. The applicable treatment depends on factors including whether the payee is an individual or another entity, whether the activity is undertaken as an employee or independently, whether an	A foreign-resident payee may apply in advance for a Foreign Resident Withholding Variation so that withholding more closely reflects the expected Australian tax liability. The variation may take account of anticipated deductible expenses, treaty relief, or income that is not assessable in Australia. For foreign-resident performers at festivals, a variation to nil will usually be granted where the fee paid to a foreign-resident company is A$10,000 or less per touring-party member, including support personnel, subject to the relevant conditions. Where the fee exceeds that amount, the application is considered on its merits and generally requires a detailed budget of expected income and costs. Variations may still be granted above the threshold. A tax treaty may also alter the treatment. For example, withholding is not required from payments to a United States-resident entertainer or sportsperson where their gross income from working in Australia is less than US$10,000 in the financial year.

27 IRD, "Non-resident entertainers and sportspeople", https://www.ird.govt.nz/roles/non-residents/non-resident-entertainers-and-sportspeople.

	Australian Business Number is quoted, and whether a tax treaty applies. [28]	
UK	Withholding generally applies at 20%, the United Kingdom basic rate of income tax, where total relevant payments to a non-UK-resident entertainer or sportsperson exceed the applicable personal allowance threshold. The withholding is a payment on account towards the performer's final United Kingdom tax liability, rather than a full and final tax. Relevant payments can include appearance and performance fees, bonuses, endorsement and advertising income, broadcasting and media fees, expenses, prizes, merchandising and tour income, and other payments connected with the United Kingdom appearance. Where a payer knows that several payments made during the tax year will collectively exceed the personal allowance, withholding may apply from the first payment. [29]	No withholding is required where total relevant payments do not exceed the applicable personal allowance threshold. At the time of this review, that threshold was £12,570. A foreign entertainer or sportsperson, or their authorised representative, may apply in advance to the Foreign Entertainers Unit for a reduced tax payment so that withholding more closely reflects the expected final United Kingdom tax liability, including allowable expenses. An application is generally required for each tour or visit and should be made before the relevant engagement or payment.
Canada	15% withholding generally applies to gross payments for independent services provided in Canada by a non-resident, including relevant services provided by non-resident performers and athletes. The withholding is a payment on account of the non-resident's potential Canadian tax liability and is not the final tax. A non-resident may generally file a Canadian income-tax return to calculate their final liability and obtain a refund where the amount withheld exceeds the tax ultimately payable. [30]	A non-resident performer or athlete may apply in advance for a waiver or reduction where the standard 15% deduction would exceed their anticipated Canadian tax liability. A waiver or reduction may be based on estimated income and expenses or protection under a tax treaty. Standard waiver applications must generally be submitted at least 30 days before the services begin or the first related payment is made. If a waiver is not obtained, the payer must generally withhold the standard 15%, and the performer may file a Canadian return to calculate the final liability and claim any refund due. A simplified waiver process is available for qualifying self-employed non-resident artists and athletes whose total earnings in Canada do not exceed CAN$15,000 in the calendar year.

28 Australian Taxation Office, "Foreign resident entertainment, sports, construction and gaming junket activities", https://www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/hiring-and-paying-your-workers/payg-withholding/payments-you-need-to-withhold-from/payments-with-special-rules/foreign-resident-entertainment-sports-construction-and-gaming-junket-activities; and Australian Taxation Office, "PAYG foreign resident withholding variation application", https://www.ato.gov.au/forms-and-instructions/payg-foreign-resident-withholding-variation.

29 UK Government, "Pay tax on payments to foreign entertainers and sportspersons", https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-tax-on-payments-to-foreign-performers; and HM Revenue & Customs, "Pay tax in the UK as a foreign entertainer or sportsperson", https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-tax-in-the-uk-as-a-foreign-performer.

30 Government of Canada, "Applying for a waiver or a reduction of withholding", https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/businesses/topics/payroll/payroll-deductions-contributions/non-resident-deductions/applying-a-waiver-a-reduction-withholding.html; and Canada Revenue Agency, "Simplified income tax process for non-resident artists or athletes", https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/international-non-residents/film-media-tax-credits/behind-scenes-personnel/waivers-withholding-tax/regulation-105/simplified-process-non-resident-regulation-105.html.

Singapore	15% withholding applies to taxable income from services performed in Singapore by a non-resident public entertainer. Taxable income includes cash and non-cash payments, less allowable deductible expenses. The payer is responsible for withholding and paying the tax to the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore. The short-term employment exemption that may apply to some other non-resident workers does not apply to non-resident public entertainers.[31]	Expenses may be deducted when determining taxable income where they are wholly and exclusively incurred by the non-resident public entertainer in producing the Singapore-sourced income and are not reimbursed by the payer. The 15% withholding applies to taxable income after allowable deductions, rather than necessarily to the performer's entire gross receipts. The treatment of airfare, accommodation, benefits in kind, and other costs depends on the applicable rules and the date on which the income became due and payable. Any relief potentially available under a tax treaty would need to be assessed separately against the terms of the relevant agreement.

The future role of MEMA should match the system's strategic ambition

- **Modernise MEMA to match strategic intent:** A further opportunity relates to explicitly deciding what role major event legislation should play in the future system. One path is a targeted refresh and update to MEMA within its current commercial-protection mandate, for example, clarifying its purpose, tightening thresholds, modernising enforcement, improving digital relevance, and streamlining specific declaration processes. A second path is broader – making MEMA a more enabling statute for nationally significant events by incorporating mechanisms for more coordinated regulatory processes, integrated support, and selected relief or expedited processes in key areas (consistent with Victoria's major event legislation). For example, a future enhanced MEMA might provide for coordinated or expedited consenting, security planning, traffic management, and other temporary approvals for designated events, subject to appropriate statutory criteria and safeguards.

  The appropriate path depends heavily on the wider strategic ambition for the events system.

Proposed regulatory and legislative settings options

Consistent with the broader set of options for improving the events system, the analysis suggests three broad options for strengthening New Zealand's regulatory environment for events, ranging from system tweaks to legislative reform. The options should be read as increasingly ambitious packages within a staged pathway. Each option includes all the elements beneath it but differs in whether the system response stays primarily operational, becomes a targeted legislative refresh, or moves to a broader, supportive regulatory framework for nationally significant events.

[31] Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore, "Tax obligations of non-resident public entertainer", https://www.iras.gov.sg/taxes/withholding-tax/payments-to-non-resident-public-entertainer-%28artiste-musician-sportsman-etc-%29/tax-obligations-of-non-resident-public-entertainer; and Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore, "Treatment of income for non-resident public entertainer", https://www.iras.gov.sg/taxes/withholding-tax/payments-to-non-resident-public-entertainer-%28artiste-musician-sportsman-etc-%29/treatment-of-income-for-non-resident-public-entertainer.

Overall, the evidence supports prioritising non-legislative improvements, while progressing targeted legislative change where a clear gap or opportunity has been established.

- **Option 1: More deliberate non-regulatory alignment (incremental change)** – Government focusses on making the current system work better through guidance, model approaches, clearer protocols, and practical facilitation, without significant legislative change. In practice, this is about reducing avoidable friction and improving consistency within existing rules.
- **Option 2: Targeted legislative refresh, coordinated facilitation and selective barrier review (moderate change)** – Government combines stronger guidance and facilitation with a focussed refresh of MEMA and targeted review of the most credible competitiveness barriers. In practice, this modernises key settings and makes the system easier to navigate while keeping reform proportionate and targeted.
- **Option 3: Supportive regulatory framework for nationally significant events (transformational change)** – Government develops a broader event-enabling framework for nationally significant events, with stronger statutory tools to coordinate agencies, streamline selected processes, and modernise protections for contemporary event delivery. In practice, this creates a more predictable and competitive regulatory environment for significant opportunities, but requires wider system reform to support it.

Option 1: More deliberate non-regulatory alignment (incremental change)

Option 1 is most closely aligned with the strategic investment ambition. Under this option, government uses existing regulatory and legislative settings more deliberately and transparently, but without substantial statutory change. It has the strongest fit if the key challenges are that inconsistency and burden stem mainly from process variation, weak guidance, and uneven capability.

Under this option, central government would promote consistent interpretation of current rules across regions in several ways, for example:

- designing model templates and guidance for event permitting and management
- leveraging industry associations and improved information sharing
- developing clearer central–local protocols for events supported by the Crown, and
- adopting a more deliberate facilitation role for major and complex events.

This option would also seek to leverage wider reform programmes to achieve more proportionate event settings without creating a bespoke legislative programme for events.

For local government, this option would encourage more consistent practice through guidance, model templates, and informal alignment, but would not create any formal new obligations or powers. For central government, the role would remain primarily one of communication, coordination, guidance, and targeted facilitation, using existing statutory powers and institutional arrangements.

This option would improve transparency and modestly improve predictability, but it would leave core regulatory issues unresolved. For example, local variation could remain significant and MEMA would stay narrow and increasingly dated.

Key features of this option are summarised in Table 18.

Table 18: Key features of Option 1: More deliberate non-regulatory alignment

Category	Key features
Aligned strategic ambition	Strategic Investment – government uses existing settings and levers more deliberately.
Regulatory and legislative approach	No substantial legislative change. Focus on guidance, clearer communication, and more disciplined use of existing mechanisms.
Main mechanisms	National guidance notes, model documentation, clearer communication of roles, and improved use of existing all-of-government coordination.
Role of central government	Primarily communicator, coordinator, and selective facilitator within current settings.
Role of local government	Local government continues to operate within current powers and processes, with voluntary uptake of guidance and shared practice.
What it enables	Better transparency, modestly better predictability, and some reduction in avoidable friction.
Main limitations	Patchy consistency remains: no substantial shift in competitiveness or major event enabling capability.
Degree of system change	Incremental.
Implementation pathway	Low-disruption changes through guidance, communications, and process improvement.

Option 2: Targeted legislative refresh, coordinated facilitation and selective barrier review (moderate change)

Option 2 aligns with the Enabling ambition. It builds on Option 1 but takes a more active approach to reducing friction, improving consistency, and selectively updating the legislative framework where the case is already relatively clear.

This option would combine a targeted MEMA refresh with stronger practical facilitation across the wider system. The MEMA refresh would retain the Act's principal focus on major-event protections, while clarifying its purpose and declaration settings, modernising definitions and enforcement provisions, and improving its application to digital conduct and contemporary event formats. It would not seek to convert MEMA into a broader event-enabling statute or create new statutory coordination and fast-tracking powers.

Alongside this, government would establish a more structured event-facilitation model. This would include:

- a national package of event guidance and model approaches for common local processes

- clearer central–local protocols for events of national significance, and
- support for councils and regions, including practical advisory support for more complex events.

Under this option, there would also be a more deliberate work programme to review whether border, tax, and consumer settings are genuinely undermining competitiveness in priority areas. Administrative improvements could be pursued early where they sit within existing powers. Broader statutory changes in those areas would still require evidence and careful design.

The logic of Option 2 is that New Zealand does not need to move to significant regulatory reform immediately. It can instead review the existing legislative base and remove a small number of high-friction barriers. The downside is that it may still stop short of the more integrated enabling regime that some stakeholders believe is necessary for major and mega-event ambitions.

Key features of this option are summarised below.

Table 19: Key features of Option 2: Targeted legislative refresh, coordinated facilitation and selective barrier review

Category	Key features
Aligned strategic ambition	**Enabling**: Government reduces friction, connects effort, and improves the practical operating environment.
Regulatory and legislative approach	Targeted legislative update plus stronger facilitation and coordinated guidance.
Main mechanisms	MEMA refresh, national event guidance package, model local approaches, central–local event protocol, council capability support, and structured review of border, tax, and consumer issues.
Role of central government	Active enabler and connector, with stronger facilitation and clearer stewardship of event-enabling issues.
Role of local government	Retains local decision-making roles, but with stronger support, clearer expectations, and more consistent frameworks.
What it enables	Smoother event navigation, more consistent local treatment, reduced delivery friction, and a stronger platform for major and business events.
Main limitations	Does not fully resolve wider cross-portfolio competitiveness issues or create a more integrated national legal framework.
Degree of system change	Moderate.
Implementation pathway	A moderate change programme combining policy, operational, and selective legislative reform.

Option 3: Supportive regulatory framework for nationally significant events (transformational change)

This option represents the most ambitious pathway forward, aligned with the Championing strategic direction.

It would build on Option 2 but move beyond a narrow MEMA refresh towards a supportive regulatory framework for designated events of national significance or "declared major events". This could involve a combination of:

- **Substantive enhancements to MEMA.** MEMA would be more substantially revised or expanded beyond marketing protections to cover aspects of event implementation and support. Beyond strengthening protections, it could include new 'facilitative' provisions, for example,
  - empowering the government to streamline or fast-track certain consenting and permit approvals
  - implementing an explicit set of coordinated support such as stronger digital commercial protections, clearer agency responsibilities, stronger border and security coordination, and more structured interaction with local authorities, and
  - enabling specified temporary regulatory modifications, exemptions, or pre-arranged processes to be activated (like traffic management, extended trading hours) when an event is declared a major event, consistent with the Act, and subject to defined statutory criteria and safeguards.
- **Aligning event opportunities with broader regulatory reforms.** For example, with the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) reforms underway, this option would involve work to include provisions to ease consenting for events (or allow the enhanced MEMA to provide a nationally authorised pathway for modifying or expediting selected local approval requirements for designated events). Similarly, as part of local government reforms, this could involve potentially giving central government temporary authority to override local bylaws or coordinate across councils during major events.
- **Related reforms across adjacent policy areas** where the evidence supports it, for example, targeted changes to withholding tax, GST or border settings. However, these would need to be based on having a robust case for change (as per Option 2).

This option could create a predictable and potentially more competitive regulatory environment for nationally significant events. However, it would also be the most complex option to implement, and would be more credible if it is integrated with the broader governance, funding, and strategic reforms proposed in the other lines of inquiry. Overall, this option represents a potential future direction should evidence emerge that more targeted regulatory and facilitative reforms are insufficient to address persistent barriers to securing and delivering nationally significant events.

The key features of this option are summarised in Table 20.

Table 20: Key features of Option 3: Supportive regulatory framework for nationally significant events

Category	Key features
Aligned strategic ambition	**Championing:** Government actively helps build a nationally distinctive, competitive, event-enabling system.
Regulatory and legislative approach	Event framework for nationally significant events, supported by a wider package of validated statutory and regulatory reforms.
Main mechanisms	Expanded MEMA or successor framework, clearer designation effects, digital-era protections, coordinated agency duties, selective streamlined processes, evidence-based reforms to related border/tax settings, and durable facilitation and capability support.
Role of central government	Central government acts as a stronger system steward and event-enabler, working across portfolios and with local government.
Role of local government	Local government continues as a core delivery and regulatory partner within a clearer national framework and support model.
What it enables	Stronger predictability and competitiveness for nationally significant events, and better capacity to secure and deliver high-value opportunities.
Main limitations/risks	High design and implementation complexity, and greater dependence on preconditions and cross-portfolio agreement.
Degree of system change	Transformational.
Implementation pathway	High-complexity reform requiring detailed legislative design, stronger evidence, and integration with the wider events system reform programme.

Comparative summary of regulatory and legislative options

Table 21: Comparison of three regulatory and legislative options across key dimensions

	Option 1: More deliberate non-regulatory alignment	Option 2: Targeted legislative refresh, coordinated facilitation and selective barrier review	Option 3: Supportive regulatory framework for nationally significant events
Degree of change and legal impact	Low. No primary legislative reform. Relies on guidance, model practice, capability support, and use of existing reform programmes.	Moderate. Focussed amendments to MEMA and selected adjacent settings where evidence is strongest.	High. Substantive MEMA expansion and coordinated legislative change across multiple domains.
Main interventions	National guidance, model templates and bylaws, capability support, central–local protocols, event facilitation support in priority cases.	MEMA refresh within the existing mandate, clearer declaration criteria, modernised enforcement, clarification of digital issues, and targeted examination of GST, withholding-tax, and operational border settings where justified.	Expanded MEMA toolkit, statutory facilitation pathways, targeted tax and border reforms (if justified), stronger consumer protections, and embedded support for councils and designated events.
Role of central government	Primarily communicator, coordinator, and facilitator within current settings. Limited new exposure, but stronger expectation to coordinate and support consistency.	More active enabling role, but within bounded reform. Requires cross-agency coordination and some implementation support.	Government becomes an active system enabler with wider accountability for delivery settings and more formal cross-portfolio coordination.
Expected system effect	Reduces friction where process and capability are the main problem, but leaves hard statutory gaps and international competitiveness settings largely unchanged.	Improves certainty for major events and addresses the clearest competitiveness issues, within a proportionate framework.	Offers the greatest potential improvement in competitiveness, delivery certainty and future-readiness for major and mega events, but has higher implementation complexity and policy trade-offs.

As shown in the table, each successive option builds on the guidance, facilitation and improved operating practice established by the previous one, offering decision-makers choices about how far reform should extend from making existing settings work better to targeted legislative change and, ultimately, a broader regulatory framework for nationally significant events.

Across the three options, the principal difference is where the source of regulatory friction is judged to lie and how significant a response is justified. Option 1 is appropriate where inconsistency, process and capability are the main constraints; Option 2 adds a targeted refresh of the Major Events Management Act and examination of specific adjacent barriers where there is a credible case for change; and Option 3 provides a possible pathway where evidence demonstrates that more substantial statutory coordination or event-enabling powers are required.

Recommended regulatory and legislative pathway

The recommended pathway is Option 2, while preserving the ability to move towards Option 3 if the evidence supports a broader statutory response. This approach would address the clearest operating and legislative issues now, while avoiding commitment to a more extensive event-enabling regime before its need, scope and implications have been fully tested.

Four practical steps are proposed:

1. **Address operating-system problems that do not require legislative change**, including through national guidance and model documentation, clearer central–local protocols, stronger facilitation for complex events, and targeted support for local capability.
2. **Progress a targeted refresh of MEMA**, focussed on its purpose, declaration settings, enforcement, digital relevance, and application to contemporary event formats.
3. **Advance tightly scoped work on adjacent settings where the evidence of an event-competitiveness issue is strongest**, particularly the GST treatment of defined business-event services supplied to non-resident businesses, while further testing the case for changes to entertainer withholding tax, border processes, and other settings.
4. **Assess the case for a broader statutory framework for nationally significant events**, including through regulatory impact analysis of potential coordination, facilitation, and expedited-process powers. This work could begin alongside the earlier actions, but broader legislative reform should proceed only where evidence shows that targeted operational and legislative improvements would be insufficient.

This sequencing is recommended because it matches reform intensity to the diagnosis. It avoids over-regulating where better process or capability will solve the immediate problems, but it also recognises that broader improvements to MEMA and selected adjacent settings may be justified. In summary, the recommended regulatory pathway involves fixing operational issues first, modernising outdated settings, and developing the evidence and business case needed to determine whether major-event regulation should extend beyond the current regime.

Lines of inquiry 5 and 6: Central–local government interface and public–business events interface

As noted earlier, these lines of inquiry were treated as cross-cutting themes and were addressed within the other four lines of inquiry where relevant, rather than as standalone assessments. For completeness, the key findings relevant to the central–local government interface and public–business events interface are summarised here.

Central–local government interface

This cross-cutting line of inquiry considered how national and local roles, incentives, funding settings, information flows and regulatory responsibilities interact across the events system. Across the four vertical lines of inquiry, the central conclusion is that local government should not be treated as a downstream delivery agent to be engaged late in the process, but as a core potential co-investor, regulator, host partner and place-based convenor. Without a more deliberate and durable central–local partnership, national ambition risks exceeding local fiscal capacity, delivery capability, and regulatory readiness.

Line of inquiry 1: Strategic framework and outcomes

The strategic assessment shows that New Zealand has strong regional event capability and local commitment but lacks a durable framework that consistently aligns regional priorities with national objectives. It identifies weak formal alignment between central and local government, with collaboration often relying on informal relationships and case-by-case engagement rather than a clear partnership architecture.

The recommended strategic pathway seeks to change this dynamic. Under the Enabling approach, the system moves towards clearer planning between central government, councils and regional event organisations, with shared pipeline visibility, earlier engagement on priorities and constraints, and stronger partnership principles. Over time, the aim is for a more formalised national partnership model to emerge, subject to preconditions including clearer stewardship, more sustainable local co-investment capacity, and improved system readiness.

Line of inquiry 2: Investment, funding, and risk

Funding and investment settings are a significant source of friction at the central–local interface. The investment assessment highlights inconsistent co-investment arrangements, pressure on council finances, and the absence of standardised cost- and risk-sharing frameworks. It also shows how some recent short-term funding interventions placed additional delivery and resource pressures on local partners, particularly where the speed or design of the intervention limited their early involvement in decision-making.

The recommended pathway addresses this through a coordinated co-investment model, introducing clearer partnership principles, more predictable cost-sharing arrangements, and targeted support for regional capability and delivery. Over time, a more advanced investment platform would strengthen the interface further by providing more durable local funding sources, clearer co-investment expectations, and a more stable basis for long-term planning. This progression shifts the system from ad hoc negotiation to more transparent and predictable partnership arrangements.

Line of inquiry 3: Governance and system coordination

The governance assessment highlights that coordination is often informal, with limited shared pipeline visibility and inconsistent information flows between central and local actors. This can contribute to duplication, inefficiency and delivery pressure. However, this does not mean that central–local event relationships are generally weak: many are strong and productive. The most acute recent tensions appear to have arisen when the speed, design or short implementation timeframes of temporary funding initiatives limited early local involvement. The underlying issue is that the system lacks sufficiently durable mechanisms to protect productive relationships when new funding tools or fast-moving opportunities are introduced.

The recommended governance pathway aims to strengthen this interface through a coordinated partnership model, including a regular national coordination mechanism, a shared pipeline view, clearer decision rights, and a more accessible government interface. Over time, a more integrated stewardship model would embed these practices within a formal system, supporting more consistent planning, faster decision-making, and clearer accountability across central and local government.

Line of inquiry 4: Regulatory and legislative settings

The regulatory assessment shows that variability in local implementation is one of the most consistent challenges in the events system. Differences in permitting, compliance processes, and local capability create uncertainty, costs, and delivery risk, particularly for events operating across multiple jurisdictions or new locations.

The recommended pathway prioritises national guidance, model approaches, capability support, and clearer central–local protocols, alongside a targeted refresh of MEMA. These measures aim to improve consistency and reduce friction without moving immediately to a broader statutory framework. More comprehensive reform should be considered only if practical improvements and targeted legislative changes prove insufficient, and would need to build on a clearer partnership model between central and local government.

Taken together, the recommended pathway is to use the Enabling phase to strengthen the central–local partnership through clearer co-investment frameworks, earlier and more transparent planning, improved regulatory facilitation and stronger local capability support. These measures would also lay the foundations for a more durable and integrated national partnership model over time.

Lessons from international comparators

Across all the destinations reviewed except Singapore, which is a city-state, central or state government and local government have distinct but interdependent roles. National or state agencies generally lead or partner with others on event attraction, strategy and investment across both business and public events. This responsibility sometimes sits within government, as with Event Wales, but more often sits within agencies such as VisitScotland and Destination NSW. Local authorities provide much of the on-the-ground capability that makes events possible. The strongest systems treat this interface as a partnership rather than a hand-off.

Canada has a multi-level model, with major public events often supported by federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Vancouver leads operational delivery and host-committee coordination, while the federal government provides underwriting for mega events such as the FIFA World Cup. Local authorities manage permitting, road closures and public-domain operations, reflecting a clear division of responsibilities.

In Victoria (as in much of New Zealand), local government plays a consistently important role through co-funding, permitting, traffic management, marketing support, and operational expertise. In metropolitan Melbourne, where events often span multiple council areas, strong relationships between all the parties are essential. State-level regulation provides the enabling environment for major events, while local regulation shapes on-the-ground delivery, with each tier contributing different but complementary capabilities.

Across the jurisdictions reviewed, the central insight is that central or state leadership, or active partnership, is generally needed to secure and fund significant events. Local government is also essential, particularly for events using public spaces, because it enables safe and effective delivery that reflects local conditions and community needs. The strongest systems establish structured coordination between these levels so that strategic intent, investment, permitting, and delivery operate as connected parts of the same system rather than as fragmented layers.

A stronger partnership requires practical operating mechanisms

Overall, a stronger central–local partnership should be expressed through practical operating mechanisms rather than a general expectation of better collaboration. These should include:

- early regional and local feasibility assessment before national commitments are made
- voluntary local participation in nationally supported opportunities, recognising councils' statutory responsibilities, community priorities, and fiscal positions
- agreed principles for co-investment, cost allocation, risk-sharing, and treatment of commercial returns
- formal regional input into national pipeline and portfolio planning
- differentiated co-investment and delivery expectations that reflect the scale and distribution of benefits and the capacity of different councils and regions

- shared risk registers for the largest or most complex opportunities
- access to specialist regulatory, commercial, and delivery support, and
- explicit assessment of venue, infrastructure, transport, workforce, regulatory, operational, and opportunity-cost implications.

National ambition should not assume that local capacity, funding, or infrastructure will be available automatically. Nor should national investment weaken the local-event base that sustains suppliers, venues, volunteers, community participation, and delivery capability between larger events.

Public–business events interface

This cross-cutting line of inquiry considered the role of central government in business events, how public and business events should relate within a single national events system, and where stronger alignment is warranted while recognising legitimate differences in intervention, funding, governance, and delivery.

Across the four vertical lines of inquiry, the core conclusion is not that business events and public events should be treated identically, but that they should be managed as connected parts of one national portfolio, with shared strategic direction, better pipeline visibility, and more deliberate leverage between them.

Line of inquiry 1: Strategic framework and outcomes

The assessment of the strategic framework and outcomes found that business events are recognised as a complementary pillar of the system but are not yet fully integrated into the wider national events architecture. Treating business events and public events separately can result in missed opportunities to align pipelines, leverage delegate and visitor activity, and recognise the broader public value of strategically aligned conferences and exhibitions, including their contribution to identified social, economic, or sector priorities. International business events and major public events should sit more explicitly within a common public-value framework and long-term portfolio approach. Their markets, stakeholders, and delivery models differ, so closer strategic alignment does not require them to be treated identically.

A more integrated approach would treat public and business events as different parts of the same national portfolio. This is consistent with the Enabling phase described as part of the overall strategic framing and direction, which emphasises a shared public-value and outcomes framework, a national pipeline and calendar, and deliberate identification of linked public–business event opportunities. Under the longer-term Championing ambition, business events would form an explicit part of the national portfolio. The pathways differ in the depth of integration envisaged, rather than in whether integration should occur.

Line of inquiry 2: Investment, funding, and risk

Current funding settings reinforce the separation between the two streams. Major public-event funding mechanisms generally do not extend to business events, while enduring business-event support is smaller in scale and focussed largely on bid assistance and targeted direct investment. There is limited capacity to provide the subvention needed to attract or secure the largest strategically aligned business events. This constrains the ability to align investment across public and business opportunities where the wider public-value case is strongest, and leaves business events with a comparatively limited place in a system seeking to manage a balanced national portfolio.

The recommended funding pathway improves this interface first through a coordinated co-investment model, by increasing the scale and scope of business-event support, introducing more explicit and consistent subvention tools, and embedding business events within a broader multi-tier investment framework that also includes anchor and major public events. It then suggests moving, if conditions allow, towards a national investment platform in which business events sit within a single portfolio-based model alongside public events. In practical terms, this would allow investment decisions to be made more deliberately across the whole portfolio, including where major public events can be used to attract aligned conferences, trade events, investment activity or knowledge exchange, and where business events themselves warrant support because of their wider sector, innovation, and trade value.

Line of inquiry 3: Governance and system coordination

Governance arrangements currently mirror the strategic and funding split. The governance and coordination assessment highlights that public and business events are led through parallel arrangements, with no single body currently mandated and resourced to maintain a full portfolio view across both streams. This limits the system's ability to coordinate prospecting, share information early, avoid duplication, and manage trade-offs at a portfolio level.

There have already been attempts to strengthen the public–business events interface, including through an NZME–BEIA memorandum of understanding. However, feedback indicated that the memorandum has not yet been applied systematically, with recent funding initiatives and existing workloads creating operational pressures that have constrained its implementation. This reinforces this review's conclusion that an effective interface requires not only goodwill or agreements, but clear mandate, resourcing, routines, and pipeline mechanisms.

The recommended governance pathway addresses this first through a coordinated partnership model, which introduces a shared national pipeline view, a regular coordination forum, clearer agency roles, and a "no-wrong-door" interface across government. These changes would make greater public–business integration practical within existing structures. Over time, a national stewardship model would go further by bringing major-event and business-event functions into a more integrated national capability operating under a shared strategic direction and portfolio view, while retaining distinct delivery streams where required. At that point, the interface would move from improved coordination between streams to shared stewardship of a single system.

Line of inquiry 4: Regulatory and legislative settings

The regulatory assessment shows that public and business events interact with the regulatory system in different ways. Generally, public events are more affected by local consenting, public-space use, and compliance requirements, while competitive international business events are more sensitive to border, tax, and delegate-cost settings. The implication is that integration should not mean uniform treatment, but rather a coherent system approach that reduces friction for each stream while making government easier to navigate as a whole.

This is reflected in the recommended regulatory pathway. The Enabling phase focusses on improved coordination, national guidance, clearer protocols, and targeted review of competitiveness barriers affecting business events and public events, recognising they will not necessarily be the same challenges. A more comprehensive regulatory framework would be pursued only if the targeted measures prove insufficient. The overall lesson is that the public–business interface works best when shared strategic and institutional alignment is combined with differentiated regulatory tools.

Taken together, the recommended pathway is to use the Enabling phase to make public–business integration practical through a shared public-value framework, stronger pipeline and calendar visibility, improved business-event funding tools, earlier leverage and legacy planning, and a more coherent government interface. These measures would lay the groundwork for a more integrated national portfolio and stewardship model over time.

The analysis and recommendations relating to the public–business events interface also considered the following lessons from the international review.

Lessons from international comparators

The interface between public and business events tends to be strategically aligned but operationally separate in the overseas jurisdictions reviewed.

In Scotland, both business events and major events sit within VisitScotland as separate teams. They are brought together under the shared national strategy, which provides coherence and shared priorities, but day-to-day integration is light, focussed mainly on investment alignment and calendar coordination.

Under Denmark's decentralised model, the two streams are planned and delivered separately. There is limited coordination around timing and hotel capacity at a national level, with integration happening only at the city level.

British Columbia and Vancouver also operate parallel but connected streams, with regular communication to avoid clashes and manage accommodation demand. Destination British Columbia plays a coordinating role across tourism, public events and business events, but the two domains remain distinct in delivery.

Victoria shows a more actively integrated model, where business events benefit from the global profile generated by major public events, and public events gain from the trade, investment, and knowledge exchange associated with conferences and exhibitions.

Singapore demonstrates the strongest example of deliberate cross-leveraging. While public and business events are managed through different agencies, major public events such as Formula 1 Grand Prix act as anchors for high-value business programming. Singapore also applies a structured legacy approach to business events through its 'Meetings for Good' framework, encouraging long-term sectoral and social impact.

The comparator evidence shows that strategic alignment can be supported by different operating models and degrees of integration. Public and business events have distinct markets, expertise, funding tools, and delivery requirements, but there are clear opportunities to connect strategy, portfolio planning, investment decisions, pipeline and calendar management, and leverage activity more closely. New Zealand should consider the degree of operational integration that would best support a shared national portfolio, while retaining specialist capability where the two streams require it.

High-level implementation plan

Implementation pathway: moving from Enabling to Championing

The recommended direction is to move New Zealand's events system towards a **Championing model from 2029/30**, beginning with a practical **Enabling phase from 2026/27**. This sequencing recognises that the current system has important strengths, including established delivery capability, strong relationships, proven major-event experience, and increasing capability in business events. However, it does not yet have the shared strategic direction, funding certainty, stewardship arrangements, central–local partnership settings, structured industry engagement, or local government capacity required to move immediately to a more integrated national model.

The implementation pathway should be staged. The first phase should put in place the core foundations for a more coherent and effective system. The second phase should test, refine, and mature those foundations, while designing the more significant institutional and investment changes required for the end-state. From 2029/30, subject to the key preconditions being met, New Zealand would move to a more fully developed Championing model, with a national events investment platform, a clear stewardship function, and a genuinely portfolio-based approach to public and business events.

This staged approach reduces implementation risk, gives partners time to build trust and capability, and ensures that any step-change in funding or institutional reform is matched by stronger decision-making, clearer roles, and improved system readiness. It also recognises that the need for change is immediate, but that the case for larger-scale investment will be strongest if it is built on clearer priorities, stronger partnership settings, and a more credible national portfolio framework.

Phase 1 – 2026/27 to 2027/28: Establish the enabling foundations

The immediate priority in 2026/27 should be to shift the system from largely ad hoc coordination and funding towards a more deliberate **Enabling model**. This phase should focus on changes that can be progressed within the current institutional arrangements (or substantially similar arrangements), while laying the groundwork for more ambitious change.

Strategic direction and outcomes

MBIE should lead the development of a long-term National Events Strategy. In the first instance, this should be a government-led Enabling strategy that provides the foundation for its later development into a system-wide strategy, jointly developed with and supported by central and local government, regional event and tourism organisations, iwi and Māori partners, industry, and other system participants. The initial strategy would clarify the government's role in the events system, define the public value sought from public and business events, and establish a more consistent framework for prioritising investment and effort.

The strategy should include:

- a clear vision, or North Star, for New Zealand's events system
- an agreed event typology, covering mega events, major public events, international business events, national anchor events, regional public events, domestic business events, other regional events, and local and community events
- a shared public-value framework that recognises the economic, social, cultural, environmental, reputational, trade, innovation, and knowledge outcomes sought across the portfolio
- principles for assessing additionality, displacement and net national value across the events portfolio
- a performance framework with common success measures across event types
- clearer priorities for central government involvement, particularly where national spillovers, additionality, coordination failures or strategic opportunities justify intervention.

This work should also clarify that business events are part of the national events portfolio, while recognising that their markets, lead times, decision-making pathways, and delivery models differ from those of major public events.

Pipeline, calendar, and prospecting

A core early action should be to establish a shared view of the national pipeline and calendar across major public events, international business events, national anchor events, and significant regional events. This does not need to be a complex new system at the outset. The priority is to create a practical mechanism for improving visibility of:

- existing committed events
- prospective bids and opportunities
- regional priorities and anchor events
- potential linkages between public and business events
- seasonal constraints, venue and accommodation availability, and the capacity of suppliers, the workforce, volunteers, councils and delivery organisations
- future opportunity windows, including the lead-up to Brisbane 2032 and the longer-term programme of commemorative and related opportunities associated with 2040.

This should support more deliberate prospecting, better bid coordination, earlier identification of clashes, and stronger alignment between national and regional priorities.

Funding and investment

From 2027/28, the funding system should move towards **Coordinated Co-investment**. This would retain the Major Events Fund (MEF) and Conference Assistance Programme (CAP) as the core mechanisms, but operate them within a clearer multi-tier investment framework.

Early funding changes should include:

- clearer criteria and decision-making principles for public investment
- more explicit pathways for major events, business events, and anchor or significant regional events
- an initial increase in investment, where justified by the strategic direction and intended outcomes, including:
  - a moderate uplift in major event funding, targeted to opportunities with the strongest public-value potential
  - a modest increase in business-event funding to secure more strategically valuable international business events, particularly where they align with national sectors or wider public-value benefits
  - a modest increase in funding for prospecting activity, including event scanning, research, feasibility analysis, and representation at international industry events
  - ring-fenced support for regional capability, local co-investment, and development of anchor events
- selective testing of capped underwriting, guarantees, or other risk-sharing tools where the public-value case is strong and risks are well understood.

A central–local funding partnership framework should be developed to clarify cost-sharing, risk-sharing, roles, and expectations across different event types and scales. This would help move the system away from repeated case-by-case negotiation and reduce the cost, risk, and delivery difficulties that arise when local partners are expected to deliver or co-fund events without sufficient early involvement.

Governance and coordination

The governance priority over **2026/27 and 2027/28** should be to establish a more structured **Coordinated partnership** model. This should include a regular national events forum or an equivalent mechanism for structured coordination, involving central and local government, regional event and tourism organisations, iwi and Māori partners, event-sector representatives, and relevant industry bodies.

The mechanism should focus on function rather than form. Its role should be to:

- share national and regional priorities

- maintain a common pipeline view
- identify emerging opportunities and constraints
- improve the coordination of public and business events
- support central–local problem solving
- strengthen a shared understanding of investment and regulatory pressures
- provide a forum for capability building and system learning.

Design work should explicitly accommodate the possibility of future changes to local government structures and responsibilities, to ensure that national coordination arrangements continue to be effective under a range of regional delivery models.

At the same time, MBIE and partner agencies should implement a clearer "no-wrong-door" government interface so that event organisers, rights holders, councils, and regional organisers have a straightforward pathway into government. Whichever agency is approached first should be able to connect the opportunity to the relevant parts of government.

Routine decision-making should also be reviewed, with lower-value, lower-risk decisions delegated to officials or appropriate panels under agreed criteria, while Ministers remain focussed on the largest, highest-risk, or most strategically significant opportunities.

Integration of public and business events

The Enabling phase should give practical effect to stronger integration between public and business events. This does not mean merging all delivery activity or treating the two streams identically. Rather, it means managing them as connected parts of a single national portfolio.

Early actions should include:

- incorporating public and business events into the shared strategy and public-value framework
- aligning pipeline and calendar information across both streams
- identifying linked opportunities where public events can support aligned conferences, trade events or sector showcases
- clarifying how business events contribute to trade, innovation, knowledge exchange, investment, visitor value, and regional dispersal
- ensuring that leverage and legacy planning is considered for strategically important business events, not just major public events.

Central–local partnership

A stronger central–local partnership should be one of the most important early shifts. Local government should be treated as a core system partner, with roles that may include co-investment, regulation, hosting, and place-based coordination and delivery, rather than as a downstream implementation arm.

National ambition must not assume local capacity or unintentionally weaken the local and community base for events. Future arrangements should provide for early regional and local feasibility testing, voluntary local participation, and agreed co-investment and risk-sharing principles. Expectations should reflect regional capacity and the distribution of benefits. Shared risk registers should be used for the largest or most complex opportunities, alongside explicit assessment of venue, infrastructure, regulatory, workforce, and operational implications.

The Enabling phase should establish:

- agreed partnership principles
- earlier engagement with councils and regional agencies on prospective bids
- clearer expectations for local co-investment and in-kind support
- more flexible approaches for smaller regions with limited fiscal capacity
- shared protocols for events supported by central government
- practical support for councils dealing with complex event delivery or regulatory requirements.

This work should be closely connected to wider local government funding and reform processes, including any development of a sustainable local revenue mechanism, such as an accommodation levy or alternative mechanism.

Focussing on function over form also applies to local government arrangements. This review does not propose that councils and regional organisations should adopt a common delivery model. What matters is that the necessary functions are performed effectively. These include attracting and developing events, strategic planning, coordinating funding and investment, managing partnerships, planning leverage and legacy activity, building capability, and representing regional interests.

Different regions may legitimately deliver these functions through different organisational structures. Local government structures and responsibilities may also change in the next few years as a result of wider local government reform. The national events system should be designed around the critical functions that need to be delivered, rather than any particular set of regional and local institutional arrangements. This would allow governance and delivery structures to evolve while maintaining effective delivery of those functions.

Regulatory and legislative settings

The regulatory focus from 2026/27 should be on operational improvements first – that is, reducing avoidable friction, improving consistency, and supporting councils and organisers to navigate current settings more effectively.

Early actions should include:

- developing national guidance and model approaches for common event processes
- supporting more consistent approaches to permitting, traffic management, temporary structures, use of public spaces, and safety planning
- establishing central–local protocols for events of national significance
- creating access to practical expert support for councils and organisers where events are complex or unusual
- beginning a targeted refresh of MEMA, focussed on its purpose, declaration processes, enforcement, digital relevance, and application to contemporary event formats
- undertaking targeted reviews of border, tax and delegate-cost settings where there is evidence that they affect New Zealand's competitiveness, particularly for business events.

The intention should be to address operational and consistency problems first, modernise outdated legislation where the case is clear, and build the evidence base before considering a broader event-enabling legislative framework.

Capability, leverage and legacy

The Enabling phase should also begin to shift leverage and legacy activity from being an add-on to being a planned part of the event lifecycle. Events receiving significant public support should be expected to identify material leverage and legacy opportunities from the feasibility stage, with named partners, realistic commitments, and proportionate resourcing.

Early priorities should include:

- practical guidance on leverage and legacy planning
- clearer agency roles for outcomes in the areas of trade, innovation, sport, culture, tourism, education, and regional development
- modest dedicated funding for leverage and legacy activity
- stronger post-event evaluation and learning
- capability support for local government, regional agencies, event organisers, and industry associations.

Phase 2 – 2027/28 to 2028/29: Mature the system and design the end-state

Phase 2 would begin during 2027/28 as the initial Enabling arrangements are established and would continue through 2028/29. This phase should embed, test, and mature the Enabling model while completing the design work required for a future Championing model. Its purpose would be to turn the initial strategy and coordination arrangements into durable system capability.

Move from a government-led strategy to a system-wide strategy

During 2027/28 to 2028/29, the initial government-led National Events Strategy should evolve into a system-wide strategy, jointly developed with central and local government, regional event and tourism organisations, iwi and Māori partners, the public- and business-event sectors, industry, and other system participants.

This process should test and confirm:

- the long-term role and intended value of the national events portfolio to inform strategic direction, prospecting priorities and future portfolio decisions
- priority event categories and sectors
- the desired national portfolio mix
- how public and business events should be integrated at the portfolio level
- the role of regions and anchor events in the national pipeline
- how events align with the objectives for tourism, trade, innovation, culture, sport, regional development, and national identity
- the performance measures that will guide decisions over the next decade.

This should also be the point at which New Zealand determines whether there is sufficient partner support and system readiness to move to the Championing end-state from 2029/30.

Mature the investment framework

The coordinated co-investment model should be reviewed and refined over **2027/28 and 2028/29**. This should include assessing whether the initial funding increase, subvention tools, regional capability support and selective risk-sharing mechanisms are improving pipeline quality, bid competitiveness, regional participation, and public-value outcomes.

The system should also complete design work on the proposed National Events Investment Platform, consistent with the events system strategy. This should include decisions on:

- fund architecture and tiers
- the relationship between the Major Events Fund (MEF), the Conference Assistance Programme (CAP), and any future integrated fund

- ongoing business event subvention and bid support
- anchor and regional event pathways
- prospecting resourcing
- leverage and legacy funding
- risk-sharing instruments
- evaluation and accountability requirements
- the operational resourcing and capability required to administer the platform
- decision rights and ministerial escalation thresholds.

A key dependency will be whether a sustainable local revenue mechanism, such as an accommodation levy or another source of durable local funding, is available to support durable local co-investment.

Design the national stewardship function

During this phase, MBIE should assess future stewardship requirements and complete detailed design of the national stewardship function. This should include considering which functions can continue to be effectively delivered within existing institutional arrangements and which responsibilities would benefit from a more dedicated or arm's-length structure over time.

The end-state should provide a clear institutional home for system stewardship, portfolio planning, investment coordination, public–business integration, leverage and legacy support, central–local partnerships, and wider industry engagement.

Design work should consider:

- whether the function should sit within an existing agency or entity
- mandate and accountability arrangements
- governance and board settings
- the function's relationship to Ministers and Cabinet
- delegated investment decision-making
- the future relationship between NZME, TNZ's business-events function, and any new integrated events capability
- how to preserve specialist expertise in public events and business events while creating a shared portfolio view
- links to policy on tourism, trade, innovation, culture, sport, regional development, and local government.

The preferred model should avoid unnecessary proliferation of institutions, but it must still provide a recognisable centre of gravity for the events system. Design work should explicitly assess the degree of organisational integration required between major-event and business-event functions. If major-events functions are to transition to an arm's-length institutional home, co-location with business-events capability should be the initial option tested through detailed design, while retaining separate arrangements where there is a compelling case for them.

Strengthen central–local readiness

By 2028/29, central–local partnership arrangements should be more formal and more practical. Councils and regional organisations should have better visibility of national priorities, and central government should have a stronger understanding of regional event strategies, delivery constraints, infrastructure pressures, and capability needs.

This phase should focus on:

- refining the central–local funding partnership framework
- strengthening regional pipeline planning
- supporting smaller councils where major or anchor events create disproportionate delivery pressure
- clarifying how local revenue tools can support event investment
- developing more consistent approaches to regulatory delivery
- building local government capability through guidance, training, expert support, and peer learning.

A Championing model will not be credible unless local government has sufficient funding, capability, and confidence to participate as a durable partner.

Build evidence for further regulatory reform

By 2029/30, sufficient evidence should be available to determine whether operational improvements and a targeted refresh of MEMA are adequate, or whether nationally significant events require a broader event-enabling regulatory framework.

This assessment should consider:

- whether local regulatory variation has reduced
- whether event proponents find the system easier to navigate
- whether councils have sufficient support for complex events
- whether MEMA's scope remains insufficient for contemporary major-event delivery needs
- whether border, GST, withholding tax, or other adjacent settings affect New Zealand's competitiveness as an events destination sufficiently to justify policy or regulatory change
- whether designated nationally significant events require stronger statutory coordination tools.

If the evidence supports broader reform, regulatory impact analysis and legislative design could then be progressed to establish a more enabling framework as soon as practicable.

Phase 3 – From 2029/30 onwards: Implement the Championing model

From 2029/30, provided the critical preconditions are in place, New Zealand should transition to the **Championing model**. This would mark a substantive shift in how New Zealand plans, funds, and coordinates events and derives wider value from them.

National Events Investment Platform

The Championing model would establish a National Events Investment Platform through which investment in major public events, international business events, national anchor events, and significant regional events could be managed as a coherent portfolio. The platform would also support related leverage and legacy activity, capability building and, where justified, selected investment in infrastructure readiness.

This platform would shift the system away from ad hoc or fund-by-fund decisions towards integrated portfolio management. Investment decisions would be guided by the National Events Strategy, the public-value framework and national pipeline priorities. They would also consider additionality, risk and each opportunity's contribution to the balance and performance of the overall portfolio.

The platform should enable:

- longer-term commitments to priority opportunities
- more deliberate pursuit of major and, where justified, mega events
- stronger support for large-to-major business events with trade, innovation, knowledge or sector-development value
- defined growth pathways for anchor events with national potential
- clearer expectations for central–local co-investment
- more systematic investment in leverage and legacy activity
- the use of more sophisticated risk-sharing tools where appropriate.

Any expansion of funding for major public events, international business events, national anchor events, and regional capability would need to be accompanied by sufficient resourcing for prospecting, leverage and legacy activity and for managing and administering the expanded investment portfolio.

National stewardship model

The Championing model would also require a clearly mandated national stewardship function. It would maintain a national view of the portfolio and pipeline, coordinate investment, and provide a clear interface between government and the wider events system. It would also support prospecting and bidding, leverage and legacy activity, and capability building across the system.

The stewardship function would need sufficient authority, capability, and operational independence to be credible with councils, regional organisations, rights holders, venues, industry partners, and central government agencies. It would also remain clearly accountable to Ministers for strategy, the use of public funding and decisions carrying significant fiscal, delivery or reputational risk.

Ministers would continue to set strategic direction and approve the largest or most sensitive commitments. Routine portfolio and investment decisions should, however, be made through delegated, expert-led processes operating within agreed strategy, assessment criteria, and fiscal and risk parameters.

Integrated portfolio of public and business events

From 2029/30, public and business events should be managed within a single national portfolio. This would not remove the important differences between the two streams. It would mean considering both within the same strategic framework, national pipeline, investment platform, and approach to leverage and legacy.

The system should be able to identify and act on opportunities where:

- a major public event can provide a platform for complementary business programming
- a business event can support trade, innovation, science, education or sector-development objectives
- public and business events can be sequenced or connected to strengthen visitor value and New Zealand's international profile
- business events can help address seasonal or regional demand gaps
- major public events can contribute to longer-term sector, cultural, diplomatic or knowledge outcomes.

Stronger central–local partnership

In the Championing model, local government would be a durable system and delivery partner, with co-investment roles reflecting local priorities, capacity, and the distribution of benefits. This would require:

- a sustainable local revenue mechanism or other means of providing sufficient funding certainty
- clear co-investment and risk-sharing frameworks
- earlier joint planning of event opportunities
- agreed roles in bidding, funding, delivery, regulation, leverage, and evaluation
- stronger support for councils hosting complex or nationally significant events
- formal mechanisms through which regions can help shape the national portfolio.

These arrangements are essential because national ambition may exceed delivery capacity unless local government is equipped to participate as a genuine partner.

More enabling regulatory environment

From 2029/30, the regulatory environment should be more consistent, proportionate, and enabling. By this stage, many improvements may have been achieved through guidance, agreed protocols, capability support, and a targeted refresh of MEMA. If evidence continues to show material barriers, a broader event-enabling framework for nationally significant events may be justified.

The intended end-state is a system in which regulatory settings support safe, efficient, and competitive event delivery without imposing unnecessary cost, delay, or uncertainty. Local decision-making would remain important, but would operate within clearer national expectations and with stronger practical support.

Preconditions for moving to the Championing model

Although the Championing model is the longer-term ambition, the transition to it should not be automatic. An explicit gateway decision should be made once there is sufficient evidence that the strategic, institutional, funding, and delivery foundations are in place. The gateway assessment should confirm that:

- a ten-year National Events Strategy is guiding decisions and has broad partner support
- a shared public-value and performance framework is operating effectively
- national pipeline and portfolio information is sufficiently complete and credible to support investment decisions
- viable central–local partnership, co-investment, and risk-sharing arrangements have been established
- greater funding certainty exists nationally and locally, including through a sustainable local revenue mechanism or equivalent arrangements
- a clearly mandated institutional home for national stewardship has been established
- the National Events Investment Platform has been designed, with appropriate governance, decision rights, and accountability
- local government, industry, and other delivery partners have sufficient capability and capacity to support the intended portfolio
- growth can be managed without placing unsustainable pressure on venues, suppliers, councils, regulatory agencies, or experienced event-delivery organisations
- regulatory and operational settings are sufficiently enabling, or a credible pathway to further reform is in place

- stronger prospecting, leverage, legacy, and evaluation capability has been developed across the system.

The gateway assessment should also consider whether the wider political and institutional environment is sufficiently durable to give partners confidence in the proposed investment, stewardship, and partnership arrangements.

If these conditions have not been met sufficiently by 2029/30, the system should continue to strengthen and mature the Enabling model rather than moving prematurely to the more complex Championing model.

Investment should follow strategic intent

The scale of investment under the Championing model should be determined by the role that events are expected to play in advancing New Zealand's economic, social, cultural, and international objectives. The funding pathways and outcome estimates presented in this report are indicative illustrations of what different levels of ambition may require and achieve. They are not standalone funding recommendations. Decisions on future investment should follow agreement on the strategy, intended outcomes, and level of national ambition.

Table 22: Indicative implementation roadmap

Period	Primary objective	Key activities and shifts
2026/27 to 2027/28	Establish the Enabling foundations	Map dependencies with existing MBIE and cross-agency programmes, including work relating to MEMA, the visitor economy, relevant sector strategies, and regional development. Allocate each recommendation to an existing or new workstream. Develop the government-led National Events Strategy and public-value framework; establish a national pipeline and calendar view; strengthen the integration of public and business events; begin moving towards coordinated co-investment from 2027/28; agree central–local partnership principles; begin regulatory guidance and a targeted MEMA refresh; and improve leverage and legacy planning.
2027/28 to 2028/29	Mature the system and design the end-state	Extend the government-led strategy into a system-wide National Events Strategy; refine funding and risk-sharing tools; design the National Events Investment Platform and stewardship function; strengthen regional readiness; test options for more sustainable local funding; and build the evidence base for any further regulatory reform.
From 2029/30 onwards	Implement the Championing model, subject to the gateway assessment	Launch the National Events Investment Platform; implement the national stewardship model; manage public and business events within a single national portfolio; embed durable central–local co-investment arrangements; scale up prospecting, leverage and legacy activity; and introduce broader regulatory reforms if justified.

Could a move to the Championing model happen earlier?

The recommended pathway is ambitious but designed to be achievable. The government could nevertheless choose to accelerate selected elements of the longer-term Championing model, including:

- stronger prospecting activity
- expanded support for attracting international business events
- additional support for selected national anchor events
- expanded leverage and legacy activity.

These elements are less dependent on final decisions about the National Events Strategy, stewardship arrangements, and wider institutional design. Introducing them earlier could build capability, test delivery approaches, and create momentum towards the longer-term model.

Selective acceleration should not, however, become an immediate wholesale transition to the Championing model. International experience suggests that more mature and coordinated event systems are built on clear strategy, trusted partnerships, stable funding settings, and mature governance arrangements. New Zealand has many of the capabilities and relationships needed for the longer-term model, but several critical foundations are still being developed.

The principal constraints are:

- the absence of a shared long-term National Events Strategy and system-wide priorities
- uncertainty surrounding local government reform, funding and delivery capacity
- the need to design and test future stewardship and investment arrangements
- the need to build evidence and confidence around expanded investment
- the long lead times involved in attracting many major public and business events.

Moving too quickly would increase implementation complexity and risk before the necessary strategy, partnerships and institutional arrangements were in place. A staged pathway allows the system to build capability, test new approaches and strengthen delivery confidence before larger funding commitments and institutional reforms are made.

Conclusion

The recommended pathway is deliberately staged. New Zealand should aim to **move to a Championing model from 2029/30**, but only once the strategic, institutional, funding, and delivery foundations are sufficiently mature. **The immediate priority is to establish the Enabling model and strengthen its foundations** through clearer strategy and outcomes, better pipeline visibility, coordinated co-investment, stronger integration of public and business events, a more durable central–local partnership, more consistent regulatory support, and improved leverage and legacy planning.

This sequencing reflects both New Zealand's opportunity and its present constraints. The country has a strong reputation as a host and an experienced network of government, industry, and regional partners. However, coordination remains uneven, funding is often short term, local capability varies, portfolio management is limited, and there is no clearly mandated national stewardship function.

The Enabling phase is a substantial programme of change that should improve system performance in its own right while establishing the foundations for any later transition. Selected Championing activities, including stronger prospecting and expanded leverage and legacy support, could be introduced earlier where they do not depend on unresolved strategy, governance or funding decisions.

This approach provides a credible bridge between ambition and deliverability. It would enable MBIE and its partners to strengthen the system now, while building the confidence, capability, and institutional foundations required for a more coordinated, competitive and public-value-focussed national events system over the longer term.

Appendix A: International comparators, detailed case studies

Scotland

Introduction

Scotland has a population of 5.5 million, similar to New Zealand's population. The populations of the wider Glasgow and Auckland urban areas are broadly similar, as are those of Edinburgh city and the Wellington region. With a degree of shared history, culture and language, this makes Scotland a good comparator.

The context for major events in Scotland is complicated by the division of responsibilities between the UK Government and Scottish Government. This summary focusses on Scottish arrangements but also covers relevant UK-wide institutions, particularly UK Sport, which have a role in events held in Scotland.

Scotland's approach to major events and business events is marked by its comprehensive national strategy that emphasises cultural diversity, economic impact, and international appeal. The strategy, *Scotland The Perfect Stage*, has been in place since 2008 and has been updated several times, although its core principles have remained broadly consistent. [32, 33] This consistency of strategic approach has helped align the industry and establish a shared understanding of why government supports events. The strategy is designated as an industry strategy, with EventScotland responsible for its development and political sign-off provided by government.

Strategic framework and outcomes

"Scotland The Perfect Stage" guides Scotland's approach to public and business events as a national, portfolio-based strategy which prioritises economic impact, international reputation, cultural value and community benefit. Public value is framed at a portfolio level rather than event-by-event, with alignment across tourism, culture, and economic objectives providing coherence and legitimacy. The strategy frames public value through a wellbeing economy lens, with "national priority outcomes", covering the economy, community, environment, workforce, reputation, and profile. Events are seen

[32] The Scottish Government, "National Events Strategy Review: Consultation", 2023, https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/consultation-paper/2023/03/national-events-strategy-review-consultation/documents/national-events-strategy-review-consultation/national-events-strategy-review-consultation/govscot%3Adocument/national-events-strategy-review-consultation.pdf.

[33] The Scottish Government, "Scotland The Perfect Stage: Scotland's National Events Strategy Summary 2024–2035", 2024, https://www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/tourism-and-events-industry/scotlands-national-events-strategy-2024-2035--summary.pdf.

as a tool to contribute to the visitor economy, international engagement, global profile, and wellbeing and community cohesion.

Outcomes tend to be primarily measured using gross value added (GVA) as the primary decision metric, with broader outcomes (reputation, community, sustainability) treated as secondary. [34] The use of the eventIMPACTS [35] framework provides a consistent measurement approach across event types and funders, enabling comparison and aggregation at portfolio level. In addition, the strategy has the "potential to positively impact on all the National Outcomes set in the National Performance Framework" and aligns with the Wellbeing Economy Monitor. [36]

EventScotland takes a long-term view of events, with the overall portfolio mapped ten years in advance. [37] Pipeline strength is supported through long-term planning, a balanced event mix (fixed, recurring, secured), and sustained investment in infrastructure and delivery capability. [38] Scotland's pipeline management is a core strategic function rather than an ad hoc bidding activity.

Investment, funding, and risk

Scotland uses a baseline, portfolio-based funding model with officer-led decision-making and differentiated treatment of major and mega events and business events, recognising different lead times, risk profiles, and benefit scales. Funding for major events is secured case-by-case through competitive business cases aligned to wider government priorities, with emphasis on maintaining a balanced core events portfolio rather than prioritising specific individual events.

Scotland uses practical underwriting models that demonstrate a graduated risk-sharing approach across government, local authorities, and organisers, with clear distinctions between routine public events and mega events.

Costs and risks are explicitly shared across central government, local authorities, and organisers, with local government playing a significant role through in-kind support, public safety, and underwriting. Benefits are implicitly shared through economic uplift and place reputation, though not systematically quantified.

[34] The Scottish Government, "Scotland The Perfect Stage: Scotland's National Events Strategy 2024–2035", 2024, https://www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/tourism-and-events-industry/scotlands-national-events-strategy-2024-2035.pdf.

[35] Tourism Northern Ireland, EventScotland, Welsh Government, UK Sport, "Making an impact", https://www.eventimpacts.com/.

[36] The Scottish Government, "Scotland's National Event Strategy 2024–2035: Full Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA)", 2024, https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/impact-assessment/2024/05/national-events-strategy-2024-2035-bria/documents/scotlands-national-event-strategy-2024-2035-bria/scotlands-national-event-strategy-2024-2035-bria/govscot%3Adocument/scotlands-national-event-strategy-2024-2035-bria.pdf.

[37] The Scottish Government, "National Events Strategy Action Plan 2025–2026: Implementation Update 2025–26", 2025, https://www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/tourism-and-events-industry/national-events-strategy-action-plan-2025-2026.pdf.

[38] As above.

Governance and system coordination

The distribution of roles and responsibilities across institutions appears to operate effectively and clearly. Scotland's events system is designed around a clear lead agency model, with VisitScotland (via EventScotland) positioned as the primary coordinating body for government investment and support. Public events and business events are both supported nationally through this agency, although now in different departments. Governance clarity is anchored in the national strategy, which is "owned" jointly by government, agencies, and industry, providing a shared reference point for decision-making and accountability.

The system structure works well, with coordination led by EventScotland under a clear national strategy. EventScotland leads coordinated bidding and pipeline planning across event types, with business events supported through parallel but aligned mechanisms. This coordination spans sport, culture, and business events within a single national strategy, helping to balance geography, timing, and event type. However, this configuration is currently changing. VisitScotland has been significantly restructured, and the Scottish Government is taking a more direct role in mega events, meaning responsibilities are shifting back towards central government (rather than a central agency). While EventScotland remains the lead for strategy implementation, the impact of these changes on system performance and coordination is not yet clear. VisitScotland is also considering retiring the EventScotland brand in favour of the VisitScotland and wider Brand Scotland identities.

Central–local government interface

There is a strong interdependency between national and local government, with EventScotland rarely investing in public or business events unless the host local authority is also providing funding or significant in-kind support. National strategy sets direction and priorities, while local authorities anchor delivery through funding, services, and statutory responsibilities.

A long-standing "One Scotland" partnership model underpins joint working, supported by a widely understood and consistently applied national strategy. [39] High levels of trust, shared objectives, and regular engagement across agencies and local authorities enable smooth joint decision-making rather than formalised contractual structures.

All 32 local authorities across Scotland support events, but there is varying capacity depending on scale, resources and whether councils are underwriting events directly. While local government remains central to delivery, fiscal pressures and reliance on in-kind support suggest there may be limits on future capacity.

Local authorities hold statutory responsibility for licensing, public safety, and safety advisory groups, making them critical gatekeepers in the events system. This regulatory role is well integrated with

[39] The Scottish Government, "Scotland The Perfect Stage: Scotland's National Events Strategy 2024–2035", 2024, https://www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/tourism-and-events-industry/scotlands-national-events-strategy-2024-2035.pdf.

national investment settings, with coherence achieved through alignment to the national strategy rather than legislative reform.

Regulatory and legislative settings

There is no single piece of bespoke events legislation in Scotland. Instead, it relies on a mix of reserved UK powers and devolved legislation that enables events, with visas and tax exemptions handled at UK level and applied pragmatically when required. Enabling conditions are created through targeted exemptions, licensing powers and established regulatory practice, which are considered workable and familiar to delivery partners.

There does not appear to be a specific case for legislative change. Analysis suggests that the existing frameworks, such as the Civic Government Act 1982, are broadly sufficient for current needs.

Scotland appears to rely primarily on non-regulatory levers, including strategy, public investment, coordinated bidding, partnership working, and capability support. The National Events Strategy itself is the main lever for alignment and influence, shaping behaviour across government, agencies, and industry without imposing new statutory requirements. Regulation tends to play a necessary, but secondary, role.

Public and business events interface

The Scottish Government's role in business events is primarily strategic and enabling rather than operational, exercised through VisitScotland and its Business Events Team rather than direct delivery. Government influence is expressed through the national strategy, targeted funding, bid support, and alignment with wider economic and research priorities, rather than through regulation or direct control.

There appears to be intentional, but limited, integration between business and public events that is focussed on strategic alignment, shared investment processes, and calendar coordination to spread demand and improve coordination. While there are occasional examples of thematic or place-based alignment, the relationship is complementary rather than actively co-programmed, with further leveraging recognised as possible but not yet systematic. [40]

The inclusion of both business and public events within Scotland's single national strategy supports coherence in priorities, governance and narrative while allowing for different delivery models and funding mechanisms. This system-wide approach supports consistency and coordination across the sector, even though operational integration between business and public events remains light.

[40] The Scottish Government, "Scotland The Perfect Stage: Scotland's National Events Strategy 2024–2035", 2024, https://www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/tourism-and-events-industry/scotlands-national-events-strategy-2024-2035.pdf.

Wales

Introduction

Wales is a particularly relevant comparator because its strategic approach connects overarching wellbeing legislation with a whole-of-sector strategy for public and business events.

It is also interesting as Wales is a nation with smaller-capacity venues and more limited budgets than its nearest neighbour, England. This places greater emphasis on ensuring events express a distinctive "Welshness" and deliver wider value for visitors and the nation, with cultural identity, authenticity, and community connection important points of difference to help Wales compete and stand out despite its smaller scale. Much like New Zealand and Australia, proximity to England and Scotland sometimes creates co-hosting opportunities to participate in major events that would be difficult, if not impossible, to secure alone, such as the *Grand Départ GB 2027*, which brings the Tour de France through Scotland, England and Wales. [41]

Strategic framework and outcomes

Wales' events system is grounded in the overarching policy direction set by the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, which requires all public bodies to work towards seven national wellbeing goals, including a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a more equal Wales, and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. [42] The Act sets the long-term, collaborative approach that underpins Welsh Government strategies (including tourism and events) and is the foundation for how Wales defines public value and the role of cultural and economic activity in supporting future generations.

Building on this legislative framework, *Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020–2025* set the national direction for tourism and the wider visitor economy over that period. [43] It positioned tourism as a driver of economic growth, community benefit, cultural expression, and environmental sustainability, and framed the visitor economy as a system that included hospitality, leisure, and events.

Within this structure, the *National Events Strategy for Wales 2022–2030* provides the dedicated long-term direction for events, within the Welsh Government's tourism and major events policy family. [44] It was developed as a whole-of-nation strategy in partnership with leaders from the public-events and business-events sectors. The strategy states that events make "a significant contribution to the Welsh economy, culture, language, and the wider visitor economy comprising tourism, leisure and

41 Tour de France Grand Départ Grande Bretagne, 2027, https://www.letourgb.com/.

42 UK Government, "Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015", https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents.

43 Welsh Government, "Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020–2025", 2020, https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/welcome-to-wales-priorities-for-the-visitor-economy-2020-2025.pdf.

44 Welsh Government, "The National Events Strategy for Wales 2022 to 2030", 2022, https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-07/the-national-events-strategy-for-wales-2022-to-2030.pdf.

hospitality," positioning events as a key lever for strengthening Wales' economic performance, supporting hospitality and tourism, and projecting Wales' identity and reputation.

The outcomes of the *National Events Strategy for Wales 2022–2030* focus on the contribution events make to the Welsh economy, the Welsh language and cultural identity, community wellbeing, Wales' national and international profile, industry capability, environmental sustainability, and the geographic and seasonal spread of events. It does not set numerical targets but describes what success by 2030 should look like, including a more authentically Welsh and nationally aligned portfolio, a stronger and more resilient industry, and events that deliver visible economic, cultural, social, and environmental benefits. [45] An accompanying implementation plan supports delivery through a phased programme of actions. It is updated regularly, including through the development and refinement of KPIs, to keep implementation aligned with the strategy's longer-term ambitions.

Investment, funding, and risk

The National Events Strategy places strong emphasis on co-funding and partnership approaches. Welsh Government investment is usually catalytic rather than a full underwrite. This creates a shared-risk environment in which event owners, venues, local authorities, and government each carry part of the financial and delivery responsibility. There is a long-term ambition to strengthen commercial returns and build a more resilient industry, reducing reliance on public subsidy over time. Looking ahead, Wales' visitor-levy legislation enables local authorities to introduce a charge on overnight stays from 2027, following local consultation. Revenue must be retained and reinvested locally to support tourism. Although the levy is not specifically an event-funding mechanism, it could support public spaces, infrastructure, destination development, and local services that help underpin event delivery. [46]

Welsh Government investment in events is delivered through *Event Wales*, which supports cultural, sporting, and public events, and *Meet in Wales*, which leads on business events such as conferences, meetings and incentives. Both sit within Welsh Government, not as standalone agencies.

The Welsh *Business Events Subvention Scheme* is currently under review. [47] Previous iterations aimed to add value to events with 100+ international visitors, to deliver positive economic and social impacts to Wales (in specified sectors of interest), or raise Wales' international profile, but did not offset core delivery costs. It was limited to £100,000 per year with between £5,000 and £25,000 per application as standard.

45 The shock of COVID-19 also informed the strategic approach, with a more deliberate focus on resilience, stronger partnerships between government and industry, and a renewed push to improve alignment, skills and competitiveness so the sector is better equipped to withstand future disruptions.

46 Welsh Government, "Visitor Levy", https://www.gov.wales/visitor-levy.

47 Welsh Government, "Business events: applicant guidance and funding criteria", https://www.gov.wales/event-wales-business-events-grant-scheme-html.

Event Wales supports sport, culture and major public events through two main schemes. The *Major Sporting Events 2022–2030 Subsidy Scheme* provides Welsh Government investment for major and mega sporting events that can deliver significant economic impact, raise Wales' profile and contribute to wider social, cultural, and environmental goals. [48] The estimated total expenditure on major sporting events for the full period "will be in the region of £36 million." There is no maximum allowable subsidy but most support is £500,000 or less, with awards over £100,000 published. [49] The application process directly refers to, and assesses against, the priorities of the national events strategy. Examples of events supported are the *Grand Départ GB 2027* and *PGA European Tour*.

Alongside this, the *Sport and Culture Events Fund* offers strategic investment to establish new events, grow existing ones or attract major cultural or sporting activity to Wales. [50] It does not fund core delivery, but supports additional or enhanced activity such as marketing, audience development, production uplift, rights fees or skills and job creation linked to event delivery. Organisers discuss proposals with Event Wales, which then assesses the documentation before advice is submitted to Ministers for consideration.

Governance and system coordination

The Welsh events system is a joint endeavour between government and industry. Oversight sits with Event Wales, but it works with an Event Wales Industry Advisory Group which brings together representatives from across cultural, sporting, and business events and operates through sector-specific subgroups. The group is independently chaired and provides structured channels for industry insight, challenge and collaboration. Event Wales reports to the Minister for Economy, continuing the alignment with tourism, place-making, and economic development priorities.

Stronger coordination across the system is needed to create a more aligned and connected events industry. Event Wales facilitates this through roadshows, "meet the industry" sessions and ongoing engagement with regional partners, helping to build shared understanding of priorities and opportunities. Visit Wales supports this work through coordinated marketing, portfolio analysis and destination positioning within the wider visitor economy.

Central–local government interface

While the Welsh Government sets national strategy, funding frameworks and branding through Event Wales and the National Events Strategy, it is local authorities that deliver on-the-ground. Councils host events, provide venues and public spaces, manage licensing, safety and infrastructure, and often act as co-funders or sponsors. National direction is combined with local design and delivery.

48 Welsh Government, "Major sporting events 2022 to 2030 subsidy scheme", https://www.gov.wales/major-sporting-events-2022-to-2030-subsidy-scheme-html.

49 UK Government, search for UK Subsidies, https://searchforuksubsidies.beis.gov.uk/scheme/?scheme=SC10591&perPage=100&page=1#searchresult-table.

50 Welsh Government, "Sport and culture events: application guidance and funding criteria", https://www.gov.wales/sport-and-culture-events-application-guidance-and-funding-criteria-html.

Cardiff is the only Welsh local authority with a significant, structured business events function, due to the scale of its infrastructure. [51] Only the larger cities have dedicated major events teams and strategies.

This sits within a wider devolved context in which tourism, culture and economic development are largely Welsh Government responsibilities, but UK-wide regulation still shapes the operating environment. The strategic and funding architecture for events is distinctly Welsh, grounded in the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* and aligned with national priorities for culture, language, sustainability, and regional development.

Regulatory and legislative settings

The regulatory environment for events is shaped by a combination of Welsh legislation, devolved policy frameworks and UK-wide statutory requirements. As noted, the most distinctive feature is the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*. The National Events Strategy is consciously aligned with this Act: its People–Place–Planet framework is derived from the Act's logic, and event funding decisions must consider long-term impact, prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement. As a result, events in Wales are assessed on visitor numbers and economic return but also on their cultural, social, and environmental contribution to wellbeing.

A further shift in the regulatory landscape comes from Wales' visitor-levy legislation, which enables local authorities to introduce a charge on overnight stays from 2027 after consulting their communities. Revenue must be retained and reinvested locally to support tourism. Depending on local decisions about its use, the levy could indirectly support events through investment in public spaces, infrastructure, destination enhancement and services that underpin event delivery.

Alongside these Welsh-specific frameworks, events operate within a combination of devolved Welsh and UK-wide regulatory requirements. Local authorities and Welsh institutions have important responsibilities for areas such as event licensing, alcohol licensing, planning, and local delivery, while reserved UK matters include immigration, broadcasting and aspects of national security and counter-terrorism. These settings shape the operating environment, but the strategic framing and wellbeing lens applied to events policy are distinctly Welsh, reflecting devolved responsibilities for culture, tourism, and economic development.

[51] Meet in Cardiff, https://meetcardiff.com/.

Public and business events interface

Wales positions public and business events as two interconnected parts of a single national events portfolio rather than separate or competing domains. Event Wales leads on cultural, sporting, and public events, focussing on activities that showcase the nation, attract visitors, strengthen national identity and contribute to community wellbeing. These events sit firmly within the visitor economy system but also play a wider role in promoting the Welsh language, celebrating culture and supporting social cohesion.

Alongside this, Meet in Wales represents the business events arm of the system, targeting conferences, meetings, incentives, and exhibitions that bring high-value visitors and align with Wales' priority economic sectors. Business events are considered catalysts for knowledge exchange, innovation, and inward investment.

Although public and business events are delivered by different teams, both contribute to the same wellbeing, economic, and place-making goals set out in the National Events Strategy. Operationally, they are coordinated through Visit Wales and the Event Wales Industry Advisory Group and can collaborate on marketing, portfolio development, and stakeholder engagement.

Copenhagen and Denmark

Introduction

With a population of approximately 6 million, Denmark works at a similar scale to New Zealand. Copenhagen has just under 1.5 million inhabitants and the next largest city, Aarhus, has 250,000. This parallels Auckland and other New Zealand cities, especially as the Copenhagen urban area extends across a wider geographic area. Denmark also has similar political systems to New Zealand. Denmark consists of five regions, which are divided into 98 municipalities.

Denmark has a segmented events system

Denmark's events system is led in different ways depending on the subject.

For international sports events, *Sport Event Denmark* is a dedicated organisation which bids for, secures and assists in the delivery of international sporting events. Where sports events are more participatory or national, the lead is taken by the national sporting organisations or by cities.

Cities and regions lead the approach to cultural and business events. For business events, there is a network of cities that cooperate, although a great deal of power rests with Copenhagen. Denmark has only five cities with populations above 100,000 and the four largest cities outside Copenhagen have a combined population of 600,000.

Denmark has a strategy for international sports events which currently runs 2023–2026. This describes the approach to targeting events that 'are of interest to the Danish people' and 'have the power to unite.' [52] It is led and implemented by Sport Event Denmark. For each event, it applies a 'sport triangle' approach with the event at the centre of the triangle and Sport Event Denmark, the Host City, and the relevant national or international federation at the three points. [53] The three parties then cooperate and collaborate to design the best model for the individual event. Sport Event Denmark would normally expect a city to at least match its investment. Sport Event Denmark is funded by takings from the National Lottery.

For business events the approach is much more regionally led. *Visit Denmark* has a Business Events team that provides overall coordination and helps raise Denmark's profile among business event rights holders. It links with the five regional convention bureaux that have the capacity to deal with international conferences. The aim is to stay neutral, only offering a single site when it is the only viable option. There is also some cooperation between convention bureaux in the different regions, who will pass work to each other if they do not have adequate venues. Copenhagen has a business-event strategy which is operated by the *Copenhagen Convention Bureau* but is an intrinsic part of the overall strategy for *Wonderful Copenhagen*, the tourism authority for the region. The largest

52 Sport Event Denmark, "Strategi 2023–2026", https://sporteventdenmark.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/strategi-2023-2026-final.pdf.

53 As above.

convention centre outside of Copenhagen is in Aarhus, which can host conferences for up to 3,500 delegates. Copenhagen therefore is the only place where larger industry conferences can be hosted.

For cultural events, each city or municipality leads its own work. Most cultural events in Denmark are recurring annual events which are embedded in the destination. These events are largely supported by municipal and regional budgets. The *Ministry of Culture*, which is also the sponsor ministry for Sport Event Denmark and Visit Denmark, does provide some organisational funding for organisers of cultural events.

Strategic framework and outcomes

The division into five regions and the ability for those regions to set their own priorities within a national framework seems a natural fit for Denmark. The Copenhagen region has the largest population which is almost exclusively urban and suburban. The contrast to central or northern Denmark, where the population is spread over a much wider area, is extreme. Therefore, the setting of strategic priorities regionally makes sense. An interview with Lars Valentin Christensen of Wonderful Copenhagen indicated that this system has evolved over time in response to the demographics of the country. Copenhagen's proximity to Malmö and Helsingborg (both in southern Sweden) means the surrounding region functions as a larger, well connected urban area.

For international sport events, Sport Event Denmark has been operating for many years. It has a strategy that is refreshed every four years. The focus is on sports which are important to Danes. The original focus was on economic and media benefits, but it became clear that these outcomes are still achieved by focussing on the sports that matter most to Danes. The focus is therefore on around ten sports, particularly cycling, football, badminton, handball, and sailing.

Measures of success do cover the traditional indicators for economy and media coverage, but studies often have a focus on social outcomes. Sport is very important to Denmark, and there is significant investment in what is recognised as one of the best sporting systems in Europe. Tracking the impacts of events on public interest, volunteer recruitment, and increased participation in sport is considered highly important.

Sport Event Denmark takes a long-term view with some events mapped out up to 10 years in advance. They have also been innovators, striking a multi-year agreement with the Union Cycliste Internationale to host events across a seven-year period in multiple disciplines.

For business events, the objectives are mainly economic, but there is also a desire to advance key sectors in the country by hosting larger business events within those important genres. These indicators and outcomes are broadly shared across the convention bureaux and regions, although each expresses them differently depending on local demographics and priorities.

Denmark has been taking an increased interest in legacy and legacy planning. They have established a unit called Copenhagen Legacy Lab with a small team focussed on creating legacy from events, in particular congresses and conventions.

Investment, funding, and risk

The funding mix for events in Denmark depends upon the type of event. There is no single overarching strategy or agency.

National Lottery funding, from the Ministry of Culture through to Sport Event Denmark, is used to secure international sports events. [54] It is usually less than 50% of public funding and a significantly smaller proportion of overall budget. If an event is too large for Sport Event Denmark from their allocated budget, then they will seek additional national-level funding. This would have been the case with the Tour De France Grand Départ in 2022. The Danish Strategy states: "In the bidding phase we bid with extensive experience across sports and take on the role of leader, including coordination and preparation of bid material, and we are willing to bear the largest financial share."

For these larger sports events Denmark generally tries to avoid taking on an underwrite, preferring this to sit with the event organiser, who also can make profits. If an underwrite is required, it would be likely to be shared by the city and national government. Financial risk is often shared across government, local authorities, and organisers, with distinctions between the way routine events and mega events are underwritten.

In cultural events the risk share is normally between the city, region, and event organiser. The allocation depends on the nature of the event, but in most cases the majority sits with the event organiser.

Municipal authorities will often make significant in-kind contributions to events, which are usually attributed a value and added to the budget. In general, the partners in each event are seeking similar benefits, so they are measured and attributed in similar ways.

Governance and system coordination

The distribution of roles and responsibilities appears to operate effectively, with leadership for some functions provided nationally and for others at regional or municipal level. Events are not treated as one homogeneous sector but as separate elements of sport, culture and tourism.

There is little interface between Sport Event Denmark and either cultural or business events. If there is cultural activity around a sporting event it is likely to be led by one of the other two points of the triangle. Equally, business elements are only likely to be included where there is a clear advantage to future bidding, or at the behest of the international federation. There is some calendar coordination.

54 The annual budget for Sport Event Denmark fluctuates. The most recent budget that could be sourced is from 2022, in the Danish Ministry of Culture Framework Agreement for Sport Event Denmark. This puts the annual budget at 30.2 million DKK, approximately NZ$8 million. Source: https://kum.dk/fileadmin/_kum/2_Kulturomraader/Idraet/Rammeaftaler/Sport_Event_Danmark_rammeaftale_2019-2022.pdf. The online annual reports for Wonderful Copenhagen do not include budgets for comparison.

As cultural and business events are organised mainly at regional and municipal levels, some calendar coordination and joint working do take place. However, the two systems generally operate quite separately, even when they sit within the same organisation. In organisations such as Visit Denmark and Wonderful Copenhagen, although staff may work across both culture and business, the two functions remain distinct.

Central–local government interface

There is a strong interdependency between national and local government in international sports events, with Sport Event Denmark as a clear leader and partner for host cities. They rarely invest in events unless the host local authority is also providing match funding. The interface is less obvious in cultural and business events with cities tending to lead the work.

All five regions across Denmark support events, but there is varying capacity depending on scale and resources. Equally many municipalities are involved in events although some of these are at a very local level.

Municipalities have responsibility for licensing and public safety, while matters such as work permits, import licences and work visas are controlled nationally.

Regulatory and legislative settings

Denmark does not have bespoke events legislation. There are many laws and regulations that relate to the events industry, but few are specific to events. Most cover areas such as temporary licensing, health and safety, road closures, and noise reduction and are generic across areas of public life, although having an impact on events.

In general, it appears that this works well and there is no strong lobby to introduce event-specific legislation.

Sustainability is an important outcome area across all public policy areas in Denmark and the regulatory environment is changing to ensure that events play their part in developing a more sustainable economy. This sustainable focus is evident in the strategy produced by Wonderful Copenhagen, *All Inclusive 2024-2030*, which focusses on tourism but applies across all Wonderful Copenhagen's activities and partnerships, including events in the city. [55]

Public and business events interface

There is limited evidence of systematic coordination between public-facing and business events in Denmark other than some calendar management. Government policy across business, sport and cultural events emanates from the Ministry of Culture so at least in policy terms there is a level of congruence on outcomes, although operational integration is largely absent.

[55] Wonderful Copenhagen, "Copenhagen, All Inclusive: Tourism in the capital of Denmark 2024–2030", 2024, https://www.wonderfulcopenhagen.com/sites/wonderfulcopenhagen.com/files/2024-09/20053%20WOCO%20Strategi%202024-2030_FINAL_UK.pdf.

Singapore

Introduction

Singapore may have a similar size population to New Zealand, but its government structure, land mass, and hub location are vastly different to New Zealand. Despite this, there are useful lessons to draw from Singapore's experience; notably the clear top-down strategic direction that guides event decision-making, the way it supports event organisers through the regulatory environment (for all event types), and the focus on leverage and legacy from event delivery (particularly business events) to extract maximum value.

Strategic framework and outcomes

Singapore's broad strategic context is informed by Forward Singapore, a national exercise launched in 2022 to refresh the country's social compact and develop a roadmap for the next decade and beyond. [56] It sets out shared expectations among citizens, communities, businesses and the state, and a long-term vision for a more vibrant, fair, and resilient society.

This shapes the strategic environment in which events in Singapore operate. Singapore positions its events as core drivers of tourism growth, global profile, economic activity, and social cohesion.

Specifically, *Sport Singapore* aligns its events strategy with ForwardSG and the *Vision 2030*, emphasizing social cohesion, national identity, and both mass and high-performance participation. [57]

The *Singapore Tourism Board*, which is home to the *Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau*, positions events as central to strengthening Singapore's status as an international lifestyle and business events hub. [58]

Collectively, this means events are used to:

- enhance Singapore's global reputation as a premier events destination (sport, lifestyle, business) [59]
- drive tourism demand and visitor spend (Singapore Tourism Board mandate)
- strengthen social cohesion and national pride through shared experiences (Sport Singapore), and
- support athlete development and community participation in sport (Sport Singapore).

56 Singapore Government, Forward Singapore, "Building our Shared Future, Together", https://www.forwardsingapore.gov.sg/.

57 Sport Singapore, "Vision 2030", https://www.sportsingapore.gov.sg/about-us/vision-2030/vision-2030/.

58 Singapore Tourism Board, "Driving the Next Bound of Quality Growth", https://www.stb.gov.sg/.

59 The Strait Times, "$165 million Major Sports Event Fund to enhance Singapore's status as premier events hub", 7 March 2024, https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/165-million-major-sports-event-fund-to-enhance-singapore-s-status-as-premier-events-hub.

Investment, funding, and risk

Singapore uses a highly structured, multi-funded investment model, with clear roles for Sport Singapore and the Singapore Tourism Board.

Major Sports Events Fund

The *Major Sports Events Fund* is a S$165 million fund (approx. NZ$216m) over four years designed to attract and support major international sporting events. [60] Its objectives are:

- enhancing Singapore's global sports profile
- boosting local sports participation
- providing competition opportunities for national athletes, and
- increasing opportunities for residents to watch and participate in sport.

Tourism Development Fund – Singapore Tourism Board

The *Tourism Development Fund* includes a *Tourism Event Development Scheme* which supports events that reinforce Singapore as a lifestyle and business events hub. Sub-schemes are:

- *Business Events in Singapore*, which aims to "attract and grow high-quality events in Singapore in the long-term, as well as catalyse the innovation of new content." [61]
- *Leisure Events Fund*, which aims to support the launch and development of world-class leisure event experiences in Singapore. [62] Its criteria include the following:
  - drive foreign visitation and tourism receipts
  - incorporate unique, authentic and innovative programming
  - profile Singapore as a destination positively
  - drive local engagement and advocacy, and
  - incorporate sustainability practices.
- *Kickstart Fund*, which "supports creation and test-bedding of innovative consumer- or business-focussed events/concepts/products (including new growth areas) with tourism potential in Singapore and scalability." [63]

60 Sport Singapore, "Supporting Major Events", https://www.sportsingapore.gov.sg/our-work/industry-development/supporting-major-events/.

61 Singapore Tourism Board, "Business Events in Singapore", https://www.stb.gov.sg/licensing-support/grants/business-events-in-singapore/.

62 Singapore Tourism Board, "Leisure Events Fund", https://www.stb.gov.sg/licensing-support/grants/leisure-events-fund/.

63 Singapore Tourism Board, "Kickstart Fund", https://www.stb.gov.sg/licensing-support/grants/kickstart-fund/.

An interesting example of Singapore's approach to investment was Taylor Swift's Eras Tour: government sources confirmed that an incentive had been paid, and Prime Minister Lee subsequently confirmed that Singapore had provided an incentive for exclusive regional hosting. [64, 65]

Governance and system coordination

Singapore has a system that is highly centralised, with coordination primarily between Sport Singapore and the Singapore Tourism Board.

The available public material does not specify whether proposals are jointly assessed. However, the agencies share objectives relating to global positioning and tourism, and some large event owners (like the F1) engage with both.

Central–local government interface

As a city-state, Singapore does not have a central–local government split.

Regulatory and legislative settings

Singapore's regulatory environment is characterised by strong national control over public safety, licensing, and venue regulation.

While Singapore doesn't have separate Major Events legislation, the government has the power to regulate public assemblies, processions, and special event areas through its Public Order Act 2009. It does not appear that Singapore has any specific legislation for commercial protections along the lines of MEMA.

The Singapore Tourism Board facilitates business and tourism-related events by helping organisers navigate licensing, funding, and regulatory requirements. Sport Singapore plays the same role for sporting events, helping organisers align with national objectives and obtain necessary approvals. The Government provides a centralised channel to connect event organisers to regulatory and funding support: an "Events Proposal Box" and e-adviser for events. [66] This helps event owners understand and meet regulatory requirements.

Public and business events interface

Public and business events are managed through distinct institutional channels, but there is evidence of deliberate alignment and cross-leveraging around selected major opportunities. Common regulatory and facilitation mechanisms also provide a shared government interface for event organisers.

[64] Parliament of Singapore, "Order Paper Monday 4 March", March 2024, https://www.parliament.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/orderpaper---4-march-2024.pdf.

[65] Ratcliffe, Rebecca, Reuters and Associated Press. "Taylor Swift: Singapore prime minister defends deal to secure exclusive access to Eras tour." *The Guardian*, 5 March 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2024/mar/05/taylor-swift-singapore-exclusive-southeast-asia-eras-tour-deal.

[66] Go Business Singapore, "Guide to organising events", https://licensing.gobusiness.gov.sg/e-adviser/organising-events.

The shared leverage is most evident around the Singapore Grand Prix, which acts as an anchor for a range of high-value business events, including the Milken Institute Asia Summit, TOKEN2049, All That Matters and the Forbes Global CEO Conference, as well as investor, technology and creative-industry forums. This increases visitor yield, encourages cross-sector networking, and aligns leisure-driven visitation with business tourism.

It is interesting to note the approach to legacy that is taken for business events by Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau. *Meetings for Good: Building a Purposeful Legacy in Singapore* seeks to maximise the value of business events for sectoral, social, environmental and economic benefit – well beyond tourism. [67] The toolkit guides business event hosts through a process to develop and implement legacy plans, and notes that the Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau can "support your efforts to drive long-term, meaningful impact through events."

67 Visit Singapore, "Meetings for Good", https://www.visitsingapore.com/mice/en/plan-your-event/sustainability/meetings-for-good/.

Vancouver and British Columbia

Introduction

With a population of 5.68 million, British Columbia works at a similar scale to New Zealand. The City of Vancouver has a population of around 662,000, while Metro Vancouver has a population of approximately 2.6 million. Outside of Metro Vancouver there are only five cities with populations at or around 100,000; the largest is Abbotsford with a population of 154,000. It forms part of the wider Vancouver conurbation, although it is not technically within Metro Vancouver. [68] Population, venues, and accommodation are therefore more concentrated than in New Zealand, particularly given that British Columbia has approximately three times New Zealand's land area.

Another relevant area of comparison is how public institutions engage with Indigenous peoples and recognise Indigenous rights, interests and cultural requirements, although the constitutional and cultural contexts differ.

Vancouver leads British Columbia's events system

In Canada there are three levels of Government: Federal, Provincial, and Municipal. Canada has ten provinces, one of which is British Columbia. British Columbia is divided into 161 municipalities. For some functions those municipalities are rolled up into 27 regional districts to assist with efficiencies in delivering certain services.

While Victoria on Vancouver Island is the capital of the province, Vancouver is its largest and most international city. In a similar way to Auckland in New Zealand, Vancouver is an important gateway, is the most ethnically diverse place in the province, and a huge economic driver.

The *City of Vancouver* works with the wider urbanised area around it, known as Metro Vancouver. The *Metro Vancouver Destination Development Strategy* [69] identifies major events as one of the six key motivating experiences on which to build tourism. The public and commercial sectors both value tourism and within that have a focus on major events. The system and structure are different for sport, culture, and business but across all three, Vancouver and sometimes Metro Vancouver lead the British Columbia events system.

[68] British Columbia Provincial Government Website, https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/home.

[69] Destination British Columbia, "Metro Vancouver Destination Development Strategy", 2019, www.destinationbc.ca/content/uploads/2020/06/Metro-Vancouver-Destination-Development-Strategy_Final.pdf.

The main way sporting events are attracted to British Columbia is through *Sport Hosting Vancouver*. This is a partnership between the *City of Vancouver*, *Destination Vancouver* (the destination marketing organisation which, although not a public-sector organisation, receives bed tax funding to promote the city) and *Vancouver Hotels Destination Association*. [70] Under this three-way partnership, each partner contributed $500,000 to a fund used to bid for sporting events. It works to a targeted events list aligned with the *Vancouver Sport Strategy*. [71] This partnership evolved in 2015 when it became apparent to the City of Vancouver that, while it funded events, most income streams went elsewhere, including hotel tax to Destination Vancouver and licensing funds to the province. [72]

As is often the case, most of Vancouver's cultural events are homegrown. Vancouver classifies these homegrown festivals as "cultural events" and commercial concerts as "entertainment." Generally, entertainment events do not require or receive subvention. There is limited emphasis on attracting new cultural events, although some funding is available at the city level. [73] British Columbia's *Destination Events Program* offers up to $150,000, or 10% of an event's budget, to support both sport and cultural events. For cultural events outside Vancouver, this is the primary source of public support.

Business events occur all over British Columbia and receive support from Destination British Columbia. Most events outside Metro Vancouver are smaller meetings or conferences, and usually in specific interest areas such as natural sciences or incentives. Larger business events tend to be held in Vancouver, with benefits extending across Metro Vancouver, and Destination Vancouver generally acts as the lead organisation. As Destination Vancouver is not public sector, it can collect funds from different levels of government to create subvention funds (neither the federal nor the provincial government provides funding directly to another level of government). [74]

Strategic framework and outcomes

Sport Hosting Vancouver has a target list of events it seeks to attract. It has one full-time employee, Michelle Collens, who coordinates partners and gets agreement on the target list. This list is not publicly available. Sport Hosting Vancouver has had significant success in attracting events, including the Invictus Games and the Laver Cup.

The approach of Sport Hosting British Columbia is more reactive. It has some funds that are issued through various programmes, including the Destination Events Program mentioned above, and a Hosting British Columbia programme. [75] These cover events of different sizes across sport, culture, and business events, and allow homegrown and bid events to apply. The nature of these funds means

70 The Vancouver Hotels Destination Association (VHDA) is made up of 43 downtown Vancouver hotels. A destination marketing fee equivalent to 1.5% of gross room revenue is passed to visitors through a hotel-collected levy. These funds are used to assist in destination marketing, including event investment.

71 City of Vancouver, "Vancouver Sport Strategy", 2008, https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Vancouver-Sport-Strategy.pdf.

72 Interview with Michelle Collens, Sport Hosting Vancouver. Content from this interview is captured through the case study.

73 Destination British Columbia, "Destination Events Program", https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/tourism-immigration/tourism-resources/tourism-funding-programs/destination-events-program.

74 Interview with Michael Drake, Destination Vancouver. Content from this interview is captured through the case study.

75 viaSport British Columbia, "Hosting BC Program Guidelines", 2025, https://viasport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2025_01_HBC_Guidelines.pdf.

most funding goes to homegrown events. Vancouver does receive some support through this hosting programme, but the funding is largely reactive and is designed to serve events across the entire province. As a result, this programme represents the primary source of provincial support for cultural events.

The overall objectives of the many players involved are overlapping but not the same. Sport Hosting Vancouver has three sets of goals for its partners: Destination Vancouver prioritises attracting tourists and extending visitor stay; the Vancouver Hotel Destination Association focusses on generating bed nights; and the City of Vancouver, while interested in economic outcomes, also places significant emphasis on social benefits. For economic impact analysis, standard Canadian modelling tools are used to allow comparability with other provinces.

The Vancouver and British Columbia experience of the 2010 Winter Olympics demonstrates the potential for events to generate a long-term social legacy. In the lead-up to the Games, a legacy organisation was established to plan long-term legacies in advance of the Games. This continued after the Games, transforming into a new company called *LIFT Impact Partners*. [76] This company has been raising funds through sponsorship and philanthropic giving to support and drive social purpose organisations and projects, using the 2010 Games as an initial catalyst and a transformational moment in Vancouver, British Columbia and Canada as a whole.

Another significant area of work is the focus on Indigenous populations. British Columbia is home to more than 200 distinct First Nations communities and 30 different languages. Destination British Columbia has undertaken extensive work with these communities, including creating a specific site for Indigenous tourism. [77] This work also forms part of broader event-planning efforts, with a much stronger emphasis on incorporating Indigenous themes and culture. The case-study interviews indicated that land acknowledgements are now standard practice in relevant event settings. Destination Vancouver is currently developing an Indigenous guide for conference and business event organisers, covering protocols, cultural expectations, and ways to engage Indigenous sector specialists who can contribute to programme content (this could be a significant area for future exploration and collaboration between New Zealand, British Columbia and Canada).

Investment, funding, and risk

There is no single funding model for events in British Columbia. As mentioned previously, Sport Hosting Vancouver has funds to secure events under a three-way partnership. The various funds and support systems at Provincial level support a wide range of events across the whole of British Columbia and ensure support for homegrown events.

[76] LIFT Impact Partners, "2010 Legacies Now: Transforming into a national social impact leader and global influencer", https://www.liftpartners.ca/work/2010-legacies-now-lift.

[77] Indigenous Tourism BC, https://www.indigenousbc.com/.

For the very largest events, such as Vancouver's co-hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2026, funding invariably comes from all three levels of government. In the case of the FIFA World Cup, the underwrite has come from federal government and provincial government. While Vancouver leads a great deal of the event work on the ground, it is legally prevented from being an underwriter.

While Sport Hosting Vancouver has created a clear "front door" for international sports events, the picture across the rest of British Columbia is complex, with multiple organisations across the three levels of Government involved, and many different support programmes for organisations staging events. As is often the case, the system is successfully navigated by having the right people in place who understand how it works and where support for each event can best be found.

Governance and system coordination

The distribution of roles and responsibilities across the three levels of government appears to operate effectively although it seems the system has evolved rather than being designed.

The province does not take any role in event delivery, except where it is the owner of a facility, such as for the FIFA World Cup. Normally the province will provide funds to a Host Committee, and it may identify specific areas where funds must be spent. In many cases the province will be represented on the Host Committee, as was the case for the Invictus Games. The City of Vancouver, with a lead from Sport Hosting Vancouver, normally leads the public-sector requirements on the ground and is key to forming and operating the Host Committee.

Central–local government interface

There is significant collaboration between federal, provincial, and municipal governments in Canada, with many major events being supported by all three levels of government in one way or another.

For most major events the lead comes from Vancouver across both business and sport. The models allow Destination Vancouver and Sport Hosting Vancouver to act as vehicles for collecting funding from the three levels of government for event subvention or an event budget.

The strongest tourism lead comes from Destination British Columbia, which supports a range of projects and initiatives to increase visitation into Vancouver and disperse visitors across British Columbia.

The federal government is the only level of government able to provide the relevant event underwrite. For the FIFA World Cup 2026, all three levels have active roles, but the federal government has provided the guarantees.

Municipalities have responsibility for local licensing, road closures and public safety, while matters such as liquor licences and work permits are controlled provincially. Import licences and work visas are controlled nationally.

Regulatory and legislative settings

While British Columbia has a range of legislation relating to events, especially in terms of licences and permits, there is no overall events act. Legislation allowing for the charging of a bed tax has been passed and is in operation in Vancouver as well as wider British Columbia. This funds several initiatives including a contribution to Sport Hosting Vancouver and to individual events. [78]

Canada's Foreign Convention and Tour Incentive Program provides GST/HST relief for certain eligible costs associated with qualifying foreign conventions. A convention generally qualifies where its sponsor is based outside Canada and it is reasonably expected that at least 75% of admissions will be supplied to non-residents. The detailed treatment depends on whether the claimant is the convention sponsor, organiser or an exhibitor, and on the nature of the expense. [79]

At a federal level, provision exists for accelerated visa processing for events. This was originally established for business events, but the same process has been used for sporting events. [80] This appears to work well and ensures ease of access for visitors from countries requiring visas.

Public and business events interface

While there is a high level of communication between those responsible for public-facing events and those responsible for business events, it is also clear that the two workstreams exist in parallel rather than being fully integrated. There is certainly a degree of calendar management, particularly in relation to the management of hotel stock, and regular communication ensures that clashes are avoided before they arise. As Destination British Columbia has responsibility for tourism across the Province, it plays a coordinating role across the different types and scale of events, and the interface between events and wider tourism.

78 Destination British Columbia, "Municipal & Regional District Tax Program (MRDT)", https://www.destinationbc.ca/what-we-do/funding-sources/mrdt/.

79 Destination Vancouver, "Helpful tips and resources - Vancouver Hotel Taxes", https://www.destinationvancouver.com/meeting-professionals/plan/customs-and-taxes.

80 Government of Canada, "Business visitors: Attend conferences, events and meetings in Canada", https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/business.html.

Brisbane, Queensland

Introduction

Queensland's events system, like much of Australia, is shaped by long-range strategies that span from community-level festivals right through to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. There is strong alignment between state and local government, a maturing investment framework, and a clear focus on predominantly economic outcomes, driven by tourism, event spend and job creation.

Strategic framework and outcomes

Queensland's strategic direction for events is anchored in *Destination 2045: Delivering Queensland's Tourism Future*, [81] the state's 20-year tourism and events plan. Destination 2045 positions Queensland as "Australia's event capital" and commits AU$80 million to the state's first dedicated *Mega and Strategic Events Attraction Fund*, designed to secure major and strategic events in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032 and beyond. [82] The fund is administered by the *Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation* (DETSI) and is explicitly linked to the state's ambition to grow visitor expenditure and global profile.

Destination 2045 sits above two other long-term frameworks which provide continuity and stability: *Towards Tourism 2032* and the *Queensland Business Events Industry Strategy 2032* [83] [84]. The Business Events Strategy has an overarching KPI of increasing Queensland's market share to 20% by 2027 and explicitly links to five key industries: aerospace, biofuels, biomedical, defence, and METS (mining equipment, technology and services). [85]

Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) is the state's statutory authority responsible for attracting, supporting and promoting tourism and events, with its core functions and investment priorities mandated in the *Tourism and Events Queensland Act 2012*. [86, 87] TEQ's current operational focus is on implementing the event-related actions within Destination 2045 and delivering programmes such as

81 Queensland Government, "Destination 2045", 2025, https://www.detsi.qld.gov.au/tourism/destination-2045.

82 Queensland Government, "Mega and Strategic Events", https://www.detsi.qld.gov.au/tourism/tourism-development/mega-events.

83 State of Queensland (Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport), "Towards Tourism 2032 – Transforming Queensland's visitor economy future", 2022, https://www.dts.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1647120/22268-Towards-Tourism-2032-ONLINE-STRATEGY-v5-.pdf.

84 Tourism and Events Queensland, "Queensland Business Events Industry Strategy 2032", https://teq.queensland.com/content/dam/teq/corporate/corporate-searchable-assets/industry/strategies/2024%20QBEIS%20Flyer%20FINAL.pdf.

85 Queensland Government, State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, "Key Industries", https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/strategic-industries/key-industries.

86 Tourism and Events Queensland, "Who we are", https://teq.queensland.com/au/en/industry/who-we-are.

87 Queensland Government, "Tourism and Events Queensland Act 2012", https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2012-044.

Homegrown – Queensland's Destination Events Fund. [88] The *TEQ Events Strategy 2025* [89] aligns with the longer-term frameworks to 2032 and 2045, with a focus on economic contribution, visitor attraction, and profile enhancement. This event-specific strategy is in the process of being updated and, under the consolidated funding approach, is expected to apply more differentiated assessment thresholds and return-on-investment expectations across event types, supporting variety and balance in the portfolio.

Outcomes across the system are measured through consistent indicators: economic impact, visitor nights, out-of-region visitation, media reach, community benefit, and (for business events) knowledge and trade legacy. Until TEQ's updated event strategy is released, event-specific targets are not publicly available. The earlier Towards Tourism 2032 framework set a target of AU$44.4 billion in overnight visitor expenditure by 2032, while Destination 2045 now sets the longer-term ambition of doubling the visitor economy to AU$84 billion annually by 2045. [90] This is through direct spending, incremental visitation (that is, attracting visitors who would otherwise not have travelled), filling shoulder and low seasons, and spreading benefit into the regions.

Investment, funding, and risk

Queensland's most significant investment mechanism is its AU$80 million Mega and Strategic Events Attraction Fund, which supports the assessment, bidding and hosting of major and strategic events. This fund involves relevant departments (sport, arts, treasury, the Premier's office) at officer level in testing strategic alignment. DETSI leads bid development and whole-of-government coordination, including quantifying costs, managing hosting agreements, and administering funding to agencies such as TEQ.

TEQ owns and runs three investment programmes. The largest is Homegrown – Queensland's Destination Events Fund, refreshed in 2025 to align with Destination 2045. It has supported more than 1,000 events with more than AU$25 million in funding since inception. Its tiers include:

- Destination Signature Events, up to AU$40,000 per year
- Destination Significant Events, for higher-value support with multi-year options
- Destination Indigenous Events, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural events

[88] Tourism and Events Queensland, "Homegrown – Queensland's Destination Events Fund", https://teq.queensland.com/au/en/industry/what-we-do/queensland-events/queensland-events-funding/destination-event-funding.

[89] Tourism and Events Queensland, "TEQ Events Strategy 2025 – Executive Summary", 2022, https://teq.queensland.com/content/dam/teq/corporate/corporate-searchable-assets/industry/strategies/industry-strategic-plans/TEQ-Events-Strategy-2025.pdf.

[90] State of Queensland (Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport), "Towards Tourism 2032 – Transforming Queensland's visitor economy future", 2022, https://www.dts.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1647120/22268-Towards-Tourism-2032-ONLINE-STRATEGY-v5-.pdf.

- Destination Kickstarter Events, supporting new events in Queensland. [91]

The programme runs two rounds per year and continues to prioritise events that generate economic activity, attract external visitors, and enhance destination appeal. Investment decisions are mostly approved at officer level within TEQ; decisions above a specified threshold are referred to the TEQ Board, but there is no ministerial involvement.

Mega-event risk is shared across government through DETSI's whole-of-government coordination model.

Governance and system coordination

DETSI leads mega-event assessment and bidding, manages the Mega and Strategic Events Attraction Fund, and coordinates whole-of-government support for major and strategic events. Its remit includes identifying resourcing requirements, quantifying costs, managing hosting agreements, and administering funding to agencies such as TEQ.

TEQ is responsible for attracting, supporting, growing, and promoting regional and major events. TEQ's role includes event development, marketing, regional activation, and administration of Homegrown and other event investment programmes. TEQ works closely with RTOs and councils to ensure state-level acquisition aligns with local delivery capacity.

Brisbane Economic Development Agency (BEDA) leads Brisbane's major and business events strategy, manages city-level investment and subvention, and acts as the city's convention bureau. [92] BEDA collaborates with TEQ on joint bids, marketing integration, and event leverage, ensuring alignment between state and city priorities. Similar structures exist in other parts of the state, such as Cairns, the Gold Coast, and the Sunshine Coast.

State–local government interface

Queensland's system demonstrates a structured interface between state and local government. DETSI and TEQ provide strategic direction, investment, and marketing support, while councils and RTOs provide on-the-ground delivery capability, local infrastructure, permitting, and co-funding.

The Homegrown programme illustrates this approach: achieving the objectives of economic activity, external visitation, social outcomes, and destination profile requires collaboration. TEQ provides funding and strategic oversight, while councils and RTOs support delivery, local marketing, and community engagement.

[91] Tourism and Events Queensland, "Homegrown Queensland's Destination Events Fund - Funding Guidelines", Feb 2026, https://teq.queensland.com/content/dam/teq/corporate/corporate-searchable-assets/industry/what-we-do/events/homegrown/Homegrown%20-%20Queensland%E2%80%99s%20Destination%20Events%20Funding%20Guidelines%20Feb%202026.pdf.

[92] Brisbane Economic Development Agency, https://beda.brisbane.qld.au/.

In Brisbane, BEDA and Brisbane City Council work together to support major events, business events, and community events. As is often the case in New Zealand, BEDA leads event investment focussed on economic development, while Brisbane City Council provides community-event grants, precinct activation, and regulatory support.

Regulatory and legislative settings

The Tourism and Events Queensland Act 2012 establishes TEQ's statutory objectives, which then underpin event investment decisions.

Regulation of events in Queensland is shared across state and local government, with councils responsible for permitting, land-use approvals, noise and environmental management, temporary structures, traffic management, and public safety. These local regulatory functions are routinely integrated into state-level planning through joint working groups and event-specific operational committees, particularly for major and mega events. As an example, Brisbane 2032 has 15 local and state government Games Delivery Partners, with the *Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning* (DSDIP) helping to coordinate and monitor the broader Games infrastructure including venues, villages, and transport initiatives.

Unlike Victoria, Queensland has no single piece of legislation for major events. Instead it uses event-specific legislation (for example, for the Commonwealth Games), general legislation (for example, police, transport), coordinated through multi-agency committees. While councils hold the regulatory levers, Queensland delivers events through integrated, multi-agency planning structures so that local approvals, state priorities and event-specific operational needs are aligned.

Public and business events interface

Business events are governed by the Business Events Industry Strategy 2032 and supported by TEQ (as a more transactional partner), BEDA (for Brisbane, but replicated elsewhere in Queensland) and major state-owned convention centres through subvention, bid support, and legacy planning.

While business events and major events are housed within the same government entities, and linked under a single visitor economy strategy, there is no consistent policy-driven connection between the two streams. Links are nevertheless made in some cases. As an example, World Science Festival Brisbane, now an annual event, combines large-scale public programming with academic symposia, research roundtables and industry forums, creating a hybrid model that attracts mass audiences and high-value delegates. [93] The Australian Mass Participation Sporting Events Alliance 2026 conference was hosted in the lead-up to the ASICS Gold Coast Marathon, allowing behind-the-scenes experiences for delegates. [94]

93 World Science Festival, https://worldsciencefestival.com.au.

94 AMPSEA Conference, https://www.ampsea.com.au/conference.

Sydney, New South Wales

Introduction

The events system in New South Wales (NSW) is built on a strongly centralised model in which the State Government, through *Destination NSW*, sets the strategic direction, attracts major events, and coordinates whole-of-government delivery. Sydney, as the state's global gateway, is at the centre of this system but its role (as for other cities in the state) is shaped more by state-level strategy than by its own event-attraction mandate. Local government, including the City of Sydney, plays a critical but complementary role focussed on public-domain management and activation, civic and community events, and event permitting and compliance. Tourism-driven event acquisition sits almost entirely at state level.

Strategic framework and outcomes

NSW operates under a single, unified strategy for tourism and events: the *Visitor Economy Strategy 2035* (VES 2035), published by Destination NSW. [95] This strategy positions public and business events jointly as one of five core pillars.

Leisure events are seen as catalysts for growth, to "attract visitors, stimulate local economies, support jobs, reflect the state's identity and enhance NSW's global reputation as a tourism and major events destination by delivering compelling cultural, sporting, entertainment and lifestyle experiences that encourage repeat visitation." The calendar for leisure events focusses on winter and summer festivals, and annual "marquee events."

Business events focus on driving innovation and opportunity, with the aim of becoming Australia's leading business-events destination and a global business-events hub. This is supported by investment in venues, regional promotion, and a commitment to sustainability and innovation to drive economic growth, support regional development, and foster knowledge sharing across key sectors.

There are no separate NSW or city-level strategies for major events or business events. Instead, the VES 2035 provides the overarching framework, and the operational detail is delivered through DNSW (for major/public events) and *BESydney* (for business events). This unified strategic approach ensures coherence across event types while allowing specialised agencies to execute their respective mandates.

This single unified strategy aims to achieve $91 billion in visitor expenditure by 2035, average annual growth of 4.9% in visitor expenditure, and support 150,000 new jobs across the visitor economy.

The Annual Report 2024/2025 for Destination NSW measures results against a long list of public KPIs and results specific to events, including: [96]

[95] Destination NSW, "NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035", https://cdn.sanity.io/files/faycjvmy/production/3c9663f974fc468621e7469e39908d069668ee16.pdf/Visitor%20Economy%20Strategy%20Document%20Accessible.pdf.

[96] Destination NSW, "Annual report 2024-2025", https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/destination-nsw-annual-report-2024-25.

- 72,961 international visitors for Sydney events
- 9,847 international visitors for regional events
- $536.8 million (61 events evaluated) of visitor expenditure for Sydney events
- $307.5 million (58 events evaluated) of visitor expenditure for regional events.

The balance in the portfolio is also seen in the measures across different event types:

- Culture, entertainment, and creative industries events visitor expenditure of $344 million
- Sport and destination events visitor expenditure of $500 million
- Business event direct expenditure by delegates of $236 million.

Investment, funding, and risk

The strategy may be unified, but the funding and investment streams are differentiated.

Destination NSW manages the state's major event investment programme, supporting large-scale sporting, cultural, and entertainment events that drive visitation and global visibility.

Destination NSW's *Regional Event Fund* is a long-term fund (established in 1996) which supports public regional events that attract visitors from outside their local area. [97] In the 2024/2025 year, $1,436,660 was committed by the fund, supporting 68 events across the state. The programme has three tiers providing annual support: incubator funding of up to $20,000 for new events in their first two years, up to $20,000 for emerging events to lift their profile and visitation, and $30,000 to support growth initiatives in the strategic plans of established events.

Destination NSW also owns, manages and produces two events: Vivid Sydney and Australia Day. Budgets are not publicly available but the annual report highlighted 2.54 million attendees in the 2025 event, supporting hotel occupancy of 89.1% in May.

Beyond this, there is an annual programme of larger (major) public events supported by Destination NSW. No details are available on the process or scale of this support. The NSW Government was very public with its ambition for events in 2018, aiming for 10 World Cups in 10 years. Nine events were on a published wish list from 2019 to 2029; seven of these were secured. [98]

Business events are primarily supported via BESydney, which provides bid funding, incentive support, and partnership programmes to attract conferences, exhibitions, and incentive travel. [99]

[97] Destination NSW, "Regional Event Fund 2024-25", https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/regional-event-fund-2024-25.

[98] Ministry of Sport, "10 World Cups in 10 years: Pass or Fail?", 23 July 2018, https://ministryofsport.com/10-world-cups-in-10-years-pass-or-fail/.

[99] Business Events Sydney Website, https://www.besydney.com.au/.

BESydney's financial reports do not publish the dollar value of the bid fund or meetings fund, but it operates at a meaningful scale, with FY25 revenue of about $13.9 million, most of it coming from government contributions and cooperative funding. [100] Financial reports also show approximately AU$1.5 million in accrued bid funding, representing incentives committed in relation to future conferences and meetings. This indicates that bid support is material, although the reports do not disclose the total annual value of the bid-funding pool.

What BESydney does publish is its outcomes. In FY2024–25, BESydney secured 73 new events, generating $236 million in future direct expenditure. It also tracks the impact of business events on the knowledge economy through delegate surveying, with agreement that conferences enable and contribute to trade and investment (57%), support of vulnerable communities (71%), improved social policy (77%), attraction of global talent to Sydney (88%), industry innovation (88%), and scientific advancement (97%).

Destination NSW manages the operational, reputational, and commercial risks associated with major public events while BESydney manages the competitive bidding and commercial risks associated with securing international conferences and incentive programmes. Both streams ultimately contribute to the same top line visitor economy targets.

Governance and system coordination

Destination NSW is the state's lead agency for the visitor economy, governed by an independent board reporting to the Minister for Jobs and Tourism. [101] Its remit spans tourism development, major event attraction, marketing, research, partnerships, and investment.

Within Destination NSW sits Business Events NSW, the unit responsible for strategy, policy, and industry development for the business events sector. [102] It ensures business events are embedded in the Visitor Economy Strategy 2035, supports precinct and industry development, and provides research and coordination across government. While it promotes the wider region (that is, everywhere but Sydney), it acts as the strategic and policy centre of the business events system.

Most major conferences are held in Sydney. Destination NSW is a significant investor in BESydney, an independent public–private partnership which acts as the sales arm, securing international and domestic business events for Sydney. [103] BESydney leads bidding, sales, and client-facing activity for international conferences, corporate meetings, and incentive programmes. It manages global sales teams, provides bid funding and incentive support, and works directly with associations, corporates, and incentive houses to secure events that deliver economic and social impact.

100 Business Events Sydney, "Our Year in Review FY2024-2025", https://www.besydney.com.au/about-us/annual-reports/.

101 Destination New South Wales, "About Us", https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/about-us.

102 Business Events New South Wales, https://bensw.com.au/.

103 Business Events Sydney, "About Us", https://www.besydney.com.au/about-us/.

Destination NSW is also the lead for securing and delivering major public events. Its events division includes teams dedicated to the acquisition of cultural, entertainment, creative, sport and destination events, as well as the delivery of hallmark events such as Vivid Sydney and Australia Day. Destination NSW invests in, acquires and evaluates major events, manages event leveraging programmes, and coordinates whole-of-government support. This includes working with transport, police, emergency services, and local government to ensure major events deliver economic and social benefits for the state.

State–local government interface

In New South Wales, the basic distinction between state and local government is that the state leads event attraction, strategy and investment, while local government leads place-based delivery, public-domain management and civic programming. The NSW Government is responsible for bringing events to the state and shaping the broader visitor economy strategy, while councils focus on how events operate on the ground.

For business events, Destination NSW (as a state entity) sets the strategy, and BESydney (state funded but independent) manages all bidding, sales, and international client relationships. Councils generally do not lead conference bidding, operate convention bureaux, or provide business event-funding, but they do assist with venue approvals, public-space access, and local operational support. The state-level system secures the business, while councils enable local delivery.

For major events, Destination NSW leads acquisition, investment, and all-of-government coordination. Councils support traffic management, public-domain operations, safety, and compliance, working within a state-led governance structure. Again, the state secures and coordinates major events, and Councils help to deliver them on the ground. For community and civic events (which require no "attraction"), councils operate entirely in their own domain: planning, producing, and permitting events without state involvement.

Regulatory and legislative settings

New South Wales' events system is underpinned by legislative and regulatory frameworks that define how events are governed, who is responsible for what, and how state and local government work together. At the centre is the Major Events Act 2009, which gives the NSW Government the power to declare major events, establish event authorities, coordinate government agencies, and protect commercial rights such as anti-ambush marketing. [104] When an event is declared under the Act, the state assumes formal leadership and can direct any "government agency", including councils, to support delivery.

[104] NSW Government, "Major Events Act 2009", https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2009-073.

Destination NSW was established under the Destination NSW Act 2011, which merged several tourism and events bodies into a single agency responsible for tourism development, major event attraction, marketing, and investment. [105] The Act provides Destination NSW with the mandate to secure major events and shape the visitor economy at a state level, while partnering with Councils and other agencies on delivery.

Local government plays a regulatory and enabling role within this system. Councils manage the public domain through event permitting, noise and waste controls, traffic and safety requirements, and local planning approvals. Tools such as the *City of Sydney's Event Guidelines* help event organisers navigate local requirements for events of all scales. [106]

New South Wales' 24-Hour Economy reforms have also made the region more event-friendly by simplifying approvals, extending trading flexibility, and supporting night-time activation. [107] Although part of a broader strategic focus, it is now easier to run events later, activate public spaces, coordinate with Councils, and integrate programming into a more vibrant night-time economy. [108]

Public and business events interface

The strategic oversight of both public and business events is brought together within the same organisation, Destination NSW, and through the shared NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035.

Beyond that, funding and operational delivery are separate. Major events are led by a specific team within Destination NSW, while business events are largely secured by BESydney, an independent public–private partnership that is largely funded by Destination NSW. The two organisations are not co-located and maintain distinct pipelines, funding mechanisms, and client relationships. Both Destination NSW and BESydney contribute to precinct-based visitor economy planning, and collaborate on specific research projects.

105 NSW Government, "Destination NSW Act 2011", https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2011-021.

106 City of Sydney, "Event Guidelines", https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/guides/event-guidelines.

107 Parliament NSW, "24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2024", https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bills/Pages/bill-details.aspx?pk=18665.

108 NSW Government, "24-Hour Economy Strategy", 2024, https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2024-09/24-hour-economy-strategy.pdf.

Victoria, Australia

Introduction

Victoria has a long-established major-events system and a substantial recurring events portfolio. Like New Zealand, it relies on a mix of two levels of government to secure, fund, and regulate its largest events: state government and local government. It seeks to generate public value from both public and business events, and has adapted its approach to meet the needs of Melbourne (as its metro centre) and regional Victoria.

Victoria's events system has been built on long-term vision and portfolio thinking

What distinguishes Victoria is the long-term vision that sits behind its growth: decades of investment in infrastructure, which in turn has supported the development of a substantial portfolio of recurring anchor events. These anchor events provide certainty of activity for the event sector, for visitors and the visitor economy, and for residents. The portfolio is strengthened by clear and consistent funding mechanisms which support smaller scale and one-off public events and business events that are driven by tourism outcomes, while also seeking wider social and community benefits.

Strategic framework and outcomes

Victoria's events system is anchored in a clear and cohesive strategic framework that positions major, regional, and business events as core drivers of the state's visitor economy. Two overarching strategies, *Experience Victoria 2033* and *Visit Victoria 2030*, sit under a unified ministerial portfolio for tourism, sport, and major events, reflecting the integrated way the visitor economy is conceived and governed. [109, 110] These strategies articulate a long-term ambition to strengthen Victoria as an internationally competitive, sustainable, and inclusive destination, with tier-one anchor events such as the Australian Open and Melbourne Cup treated not simply as tourism products but as state-defining assets. The state's sustained investment in infrastructure, event certainty, and precinct development underpins this strategic clarity and reinforces Victoria's global reputation for excellence in event delivery.

Within this stable strategic environment, Victoria maintains flexibility in execution. Long-term events provide certainty for industry and enable businesses to invest, hire, and scale, while agile decision-making allows Visit Victoria to respond to emerging opportunities, shifts in audience behaviour, and changes in the global events landscape. Outcomes are assessed primarily through their contribution to the visitor economy, with core metrics centred on visitor spend, jobs, hotel nights, regional dispersal, and private investment.

[109] Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, "Experience Victoria 2033", 2023, https://djsir.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2394070/Experience-Victoria-2033.pdf.

[110] Visit Victoria, "Visit Victoria 2030", https://corporate.visitvictoria.com/about/visit-victoria-2030.

These measures support a long-term target to grow the visitor economy from approximately $40 billion in 2024 to $53.4 billion by 2030. While economic impact remains the dominant lens, broader outcomes such as inclusion, First Peoples tourism, sustainability, and community pride are deliberately planned for and leveraged, complementing the high-level economic objectives that drive investment decisions.

Investment, funding, and risk

Victoria's events system is underpinned by stable, multi-year funding mechanisms that enable a sustainable pipeline of major, regional, and anchor events. The state blends baseline investment with flexible top-ups, recognising the different lead times, competitiveness, and benefit profiles across event types. Three core mechanisms structure this approach: the *Major Events Fund* for state-significant events; the *Regional Events Fund* for events outside Melbourne (including capability-building streams); and bespoke long-term arrangements for Tier 1 anchor events, often tied to major infrastructure investment.

The Regional Event Fund's published guidelines and streams provide transparency and discipline, while Visit Victoria's direct engagement with councils and regional tourism bodies ensures that investment decisions remain grounded in community outcomes such as regional dispersal, seasonality management, and local economic resilience.

Risk and cost sharing are calibrated across government levels and event types. Anchor events such as the Australian Open, AFL Grand Final, and Boxing Day Test are largely secured through substantial state investment in infrastructure. For example, the state invested AU$1 billion in the Melbourne Park redevelopment, with the Australian Open secured until 2046. [111] Approximately AU$500 million in stadium upgrades also underpins arrangements for the AFL Grand Final through to 2057. [112] Other events, such as the Australian Grand Prix, require ongoing annual contributions, with the 2023 event costing the state approximately AU$100 million. [113]

For multi-state or international events, state governments typically carry operational-delivery, venue, and policing costs, while the federal government provides national services and supports legacy programmes.

Governance and system coordination

Victoria's events system is defined by clear role distribution and strong institutional coordination, enabling coordinated statewide decision-making across prospecting, bidding, delivery, and performance. Responsibilities are shared across the *Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions* (DJSIR), *Visit Victoria*, the *Melbourne Convention Bureau* (MCB), *Business Events Victoria* (BEV), and

111 Development Victoria, "Melbourne Park", https://www.development.vic.gov.au/projects/melbourne-park-redevelopment?page=overview.

112 Nine News, "Disappointing': SA angry after Victoria locks in AFL grand final til 2057", 13 April 2018, https://www.nine.com.au/australia-news/afl-grand-final-south-australia-victoria-anger-over-new-deal-20180413-p5wbnm.html.

113 Australian Grand Prix Corporation, "2023 Annual Report", https://resources.agpc.pulselive.com/agpc/document/2026/08/31/84c18269-436c-40d5-9982-a52f1562c2b5/Australian-Grand-Prix-Corporation-2023-Annual-Report.pdf.

local government partners, each contributing distinct capabilities. This structure can reduce duplication, strengthen strategic alignment, and help ensure that metropolitan and regional priorities are reflected in the event pipeline.

System coherence is reinforced through the shared strategies mentioned above, and a common performance framework supported by DJSIR's data and economic analysis. Visit Victoria leads prospecting and bidding for major sporting, cultural, and business events (through MCB), operating under a coordinated "Team Victoria" model.

State–local government interface

Local government plays a variable but consistently important role in Victorian events, contributing through co-funding, permitting, traffic management, marketing support, and operational expertise. In metropolitan Melbourne, where events often span multiple council areas, strong local relationships are essential to seamless delivery.

Councils act as applicants, co-investors, and hosts, leveraging their rates revenue, venue ownership, and place-making responsibilities. Their regulatory functions interact directly with state investment and policy, making coordination critical. State-level regulation provides the enabling environment for large-scale events, while local regulation shapes the on-the-ground delivery experience, creating a system in which responsibilities are distinct but interdependent.

Regulatory and legislative settings

Victoria's events industry operates within a clear and supportive legislative framework that provides confidence for rights holders, clarity for organisers, and safeguards for the public. The *Major Events Act 2009* is central to this system, enabling the state to declare "major events" and activate tailored protections around ticketing, safety, crowd management, and commercial rights. [114] Victoria also uses legislation to establish and empower key event and venue authorities, such as the *Australian Grand Prix Corporation* and the *Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Trust*, providing stable governance structures and clear mandates for the delivery of complex, high-profile events.

While state-level legislation provides the enabling environment for major events, local government regulation shapes the practical delivery experience, although there is some variability in how this is delivered across the state.

Public and business events interface

Victorian business events benefit from the global profile generated by Melbourne's major public events, while public events gain from the trade, investment, and knowledge-exchange opportunities that business events bring.

[114] Victorian Government, "Major Events Act 2009", https://content.legislation.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-09/09-30aa025%20authorised_0.pdf.

At the state level, the Melbourne Convention Bureau leads the attraction of high-value conferences, exhibitions, and incentive programmes, aligning bids and destination branding with the strategic priorities set out in Visit Victoria 2030. At the regional level, Business Events Victoria and local councils focus on smaller meetings and incentives, supported by regional marketing and the Regional Event Fund, ensuring a balanced pipeline of metropolitan and regional business activity.

Victoria actively seeks opportunities to align business events with major public events to strengthen bids, improve visitor experiences, and increase economic benefits. For example, NFL Week has conferences, trade missions, and sector-specific events alongside public festivities. Other international events may have business programming built alongside, adding a professional dimension to encourage visitation.

Appendix B: Stakeholder consultation

Representatives from the following groups and organisations were consulted as part of this review:

Domestic stakeholders
Major Events Ministers Group
Events Attraction Package Panel
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
Tourism New Zealand
Sport New Zealand
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
New Zealand Customs Service
New Zealand Trade and Enterprise
New Zealand Story
Invest New Zealand
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Ministry for Culture and Heritage
Tātaki Auckland Unlimited
WellingtonNZ
Wellington City Council
ChristchurchNZ
Christchurch City Council
Tauranga City Council
Destination Queenstown

Taupō District Council
H3 Group
RotoruaNZ
Business Events Industry Aotearoa
New Zealand Events Association
New Zealand Rugby
Athletics New Zealand
Netball New Zealand
Former Crankworx representative
Blues Rugby
Māori Touch NZ
World Surf League
Eccles Entertainment
Live Nation
TEG Experiences
Te Matatini
World of WearableArt
New Zealand National Fieldays Society
Eden Park Stadium
Spark Arena
Hnry Stadium
Venues Ōtautahi
Te Pae
New Zealand International Convention Centre

SkyCity Entertainment Group
Sudima Hotels/Hind Management
The Conference Company
XPO Exhibitions
Sky Network Television
Fresh Info
Air New Zealand
ASB Bank
New Zealand Media and Entertainment

International stakeholders
Visit Victoria
EventScotland
VisitScotland
Sport Event Denmark
Wonderful Copenhagen
City of Vancouver
Destination Vancouver
Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI)
Tourism and Events Queensland

Additional input was received from representatives of Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, Tourism New Zealand, Yachting New Zealand, and the New Zealand Events Association, as well as from an independent event adviser.

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