INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF NEW ZEALAND'S APPROACH TO EVENTS: SUMMARY OF REPORT FINDINGS

NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY

*Events make a significant economic contribution to New Zealand, generating more than **$2 billion in direct economic impact** over the past year ($1.099 billion from public events and $925 million from multi-day business events). But the system is fragmented, inefficient, misaligned with international best practice and not set up to maximise the benefits. It is increasingly at risk of losing high-value opportunities to better-organised international competitors.*

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

	Current state	Future state
Strategy	Public, business and regional events are planned through separate pathways, weakening prioritisation, pipeline visibility and planning. Economic impacts are better understood than social, cultural, regional, trade and reputational outcomes.	A 10-year national strategy sets the vision, event typology, public-value framework, central government priorities, investment principles and shared outcomes measures. Public, business and significant regional events are treated as one connected portfolio.
Coordination	No single function holds the national portfolio, pipeline view or system-performance role. Coordination works when significant events occur, but routinely relies on informal networks and case-by-case effort.	A recognised stewardship function holds the portfolio and pipeline view and supports coordinated prospecting, bidding, investment advice, partner engagement, leverage, legacy planning and system learning.
Investment	MEF gives medium-term certainty and CAP allows agility, but funding settings do not reflect long lead times, rising costs or international competition. Business event support is narrower and smaller in scale.	A coordinated investment framework provides clearer criteria, co-investment expectations and decision principles, including underwriting, guarantees or other risk-sharing tools where the public-value case is strong.
Regulatory and delivery settings	Regional variation in regulation adds cost, delay and delivery risk, especially for complex or multi-location events. MEMA remains useful for commercial protections, but is narrow and dated.	National guidance, model approaches, protocols, capability support and targeted MEMA modernisation make delivery settings easier to navigate and more predictable before broader reform is considered.

INSIGHTS

Differentiating public and business events

A future system should bring public, business and significant regional events under a shared public-value framework and national portfolio approach while **retaining and acknowledging differences** between their markets, stakeholders and delivery models.

Public events are more affected by consenting, public-space use and compliance; international business events are more sensitive to border, tax and subvention settings.

Central and local government alignment

A future system should strengthen alignment between national priorities, regional priorities, co-investment expectations and local delivery planning through a more coordinated partnership and stewardship model.

Earlier visibility **of opportunities, venue requirements and co-investment expectations** would support better planning, while greater consistency in local regulatory and delivery settings would reduce avoidable friction and delivery risk.

Key stakeholder insights

ONE-OFF FUNDING HAS CREATED SYSTEM RISKS

Concerns about market distortion and expectations of continued subsidies as a result of the EAP and EBF.

MISSED PORTFOLIO CONNECTIONS

The core events system is well connected but iwi, industry and the private sector are not consistently engaged. This leads to missed opportunities to connect events to wider public-value objectives.

International comparators

International jurisdictions with leading events systems have the following characteristics:

- Long-term strategic continuity via an **enduring strategy**
- A **lead body** overseeing specialist delivery arms
- A sustained **multi-year investment model**, with risk distributed
- Efforts to make regulations **easier to understand and navigate** before considering legislative change.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION (NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY)

2026 – 2027
Establish enabling foundations

1 Develop a national events strategy

Government-led strategy covering public events, business events and selected anchor-event opportunities.

- **Public value framework** — Assess economic, trade, innovation, cultural, social, regional and reputational outcomes.
- **National calendar and pipeline view** — Show committed events, opportunities, regional priorities, venue capacity and business-event prospects.
- **Co-investment foundations** — Clarify roles, expectations, funding conditions and risk-sharing principles.

2 Modest increase in MEF and CAP support

Uplift of around $11m to $15m per year above current MEF and CAP settings, subject to strategic and fiscal decisions.

3 No-wrong-door government interface

Create a clearer entry point for organisers, rights holders, regions and industry partners, reducing reliance on informal relationships.

4 Regulatory guidance

Develop national guidance, protocols and model approaches for recurring delivery issues and local implementation variation.

5 Targeted MEMA refresh

Modernise event protections through practical improvements before considering wider legislative reform.

2027 – 2029
Mature and design end-state

1 Evolve strategy into a shared strategy

Transition from government-led settings to a system-wide strategy developed with local government, iwi and Maori, industry, venues and event partners.

- **Test and refine funding tools** — Review MEF, CAP, subvention, prospecting and risk-sharing tools against portfolio outcomes and strategic objectives.
- **Design the stewardship function** — Assess mandate, governance, capability, accountability and institutional location for a dedicated stewardship capability

2 Build portfolio performance measures

Establish measures across economic, social, cultural, trade, innovation, regional and reputational outcomes.

3 Assess regulatory progress

Evaluate whether guidance, operational improvements and MEMA changes have reduced delivery friction and improved system performance.

4 Strengthen regional readiness

Improve local capability, early engagement and preparedness for nationally significant opportunities.

2029 – 2030 onwards
Champion

- SYSTEM-WIDE NATIONAL EVENTS STRATEGY
- NATIONAL EVENTS INVESTMENT PLATFORM
- STRONGER PROSPECTING, LEVERAGE, LEGACY AND EVALUATION
- NATIONAL STEWARDSHIP FUNCTION IN PLACE
- DURABLE LOCAL CO-INVESTMENT MECHANISM IN PLACE
- INTEGRATED PUBLIC-BUSINESS EVENTS PORTFOLIO

MEF – Major Events Fund	MBIE's core fund for attracting and delivering major public events with significant international profile or visitation benefits.
CAP – Conference Assistance Programme	Tourism New Zealand programme that supports bids for international conferences and business events.
EAP – Events Attraction Package	One-off fund established in 2025 to secure major international sporting, music and cultural events, with a $40 million investment envelope for 2026–27.
EBF – Events Boost Fund	One-off $10 million contestable fund supporting the growth and promotion of events that increase international visitation and economic activity.
MEMA – Major Events Management Act 2007	Legislation that provides protections to support the delivery of major events in New Zealand.