MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

EVENT BRIEFING

Meeting with Committee for Auckland Board

To:	**Hon Simon Watts,** Minister for Auckland		
Date:	7 May 2026	**Time:**	2:45 pm - 4:15 pm
Security classification:	**In Confidence**	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032094

Purpose

This briefing provides context and suggested talking points for your meeting with the Committee for Auckland Board.

The meeting will take place on Thursday 7 May 2026, between 2:45 pm and 4:15 pm at the Auckland Policy Office.

Background

1. The Committee has indicated it wishes to discuss:
   - your perspectives on Auckland
   - the State of the City benchmarking reports and plans for the next report
   - its work to develop an Auckland narrative
   - the Auckland City and Regional Deal (CRD) and
   - future Committee for Auckland events.
2. This meeting is an opportunity to engage with a well-connected Auckland leadership group, hear external perspectives on the city's future and reinforce the Government's ongoing focus on Auckland.

The Committee for Auckland

3. The Committee for Auckland is an established organisation focused on Auckland's long-term success. Its influence comes through its networks, public voice, research and ability to convene senior leaders from business, academia and the public sector.
4. Its board members are drawn from across Auckland's leadership community and help shape wider discussion on economic performance, infrastructure and the city's long-term direction.
5. The Committee can also serve as an informal source of external feedback on how policy, delivery and government engagement are being experienced beyond official channels.
6. Recent material indicates the Committee is moving from a focus on framing Auckland's long-term direction to a stronger emphasis on coordinated, action-oriented work
7. Bios of Board members is attached at **Annex One**.

Topics for discussion

Your Perspectives on Auckland

8. The Committee has requested your perspectives on Auckland. This reflects interest in how Auckland features in the Government's thinking and what you see as the city's immediate priorities.
9. A useful framing is that Auckland is New Zealand's largest city, principal international gateway and most significant urban economy. Its success has wider national benefits through growth, jobs and investment confidence.
10. Auckland has clear strengths, including talent, diversity, innovation capability and connectivity. As noted in the annual State of the City reports, Auckland is underperforming in many of these areas compared to peer cities. The challenge is to convert those strengths into stronger productivity and visible progress.
11. It is also useful to reinforce that Auckland's future depends on effective partnership between central government, local government, business, iwi and communities.

State of the City Benchmarking Reports

12. The Committee will discuss its State of the City reports and plans for the next edition.
13. These reports benchmark Auckland against comparable international cities and have highlighted strengths in culture, resilience and sustainability, alongside progress in areas such as housing and innovation.
14. Persistent challenges remain in productivity, talent and skills, transport, spatial alignment and Auckland's international profile. The value of the reports lies in identifying these patterns over time and linking them to practical action.
15. The Committee is considering running a further report this year. This could be a helpful in providing an early indication of where stakeholders see progress and where confidence remains weak.
16. The reports have been funded from contributions from Auckland Council, Deloitte, Koi Tu and the Committee for Auckland. The Committee is seeking a modest financial contribution from government for a 2026 edition, which seems reasonable given the benefits the benchmarking deliver to helping to inform government policy.

Auckland Narrative

17. The Committee will brief you on work underway to develop a long-term Auckland narrative.
18. This work is positioned as a central part of the Committee's programme and is intended to strengthen confidence, attract investment and provide clearer direction for Auckland's long term development.
19. The narrative builds on the State of the City work and sits within a broader "New Agenda for Auckland", which focuses on:
    - how central government, council and partners work together
    - how Auckland's ambition and role are framed
    - how delivery and funding models are structured
    - where Auckland chooses to lead and differentiate
20. The aim is to move from analysis to alignment and coordinated action.

21. A useful perspective is that narrative is most effective when it supports practical decisions and is reinforced by delivery.

Auckland City and Regional Deal

22. The Committee will discuss the CRD and participation in next steps.
23. It has publicly supported the Deal as a significant step in strengthening alignment between central and local government and as a platform to advance Auckland's economic growth and productivity.
24. The Committee sees the Deal as providing a framework to focus investment and delivery across key areas such as innovation, transport, urban development and environmental outcomes.
25. It has also emphasised the importance of sustained implementation, strong relationships and shared accountability over time, as well as the role of the private sector in delivery.
26. Early visible progress would strengthen confidence in the Deal. A loss of momentum may invite scepticism about whether it will change outcomes in practice.
27. It is useful to reinforce that the Deal was an important milestone, that implementation is now the focus, and that progress needs to be practical and measurable.

Committee for Auckland future events and engagements

28. The Committee will provide you with an overview of their 2026 events programme. This will include convening senior leaders across sectors and hosting political engagement, including events with senior opposition figures.
29. This reflects the Committee's role as a cross-sector platform rather than a government aligned body.
30. Where aligned with Government priorities, these forums may provide opportunities for engagement.

Next steps

31. It would be useful to indicate that you would welcome being kept informed as the Auckland narrative and wider Committee work develops, particularly where it identifies areas requiring ministerial attention or wider government focus.
32. It may also be helpful to signal interest in ongoing engagement with the Committee as Auckland priorities progress.
33. Quarterly engagement could provide a practical mechanism to maintain dialogue, test external sentiment and surface emerging issues early.
34. Officials could also draw on Committee insights when considering Auckland priorities and stakeholder sentiment.

Biographies

	**Mark Spencer** Mark is a Group Director - Built Form/Buildings at Beca. He is a senior leader and engineer at the consultancy firm, focusing on building practices, industry improvements and addressing skilled worker shortages. He is Chair of the Committee for Auckland
	**Frank Bloomfield** Professor Bloomfield is the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) for the University of Auckland. Prior to this, he was Director of the Liggins Institute, one of the university's Large Scale Research Institutes. He is a Professor in Neonatology, having worked clinically for many years as a Consultant Neonatologist at Auckland City Hospital. Frank previously has been President of the Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Perinatal Society of New Zealand.
	**Sarah Sinclair** Sarah Sinclair is a highly regarded construction, infrastructure and energy specialist. She has extensive experience in acting for both government and private sector clients in large-scale, complex infrastructure projects and public sector reform programmes. Sarah is a partner at MinterEllisonRuddWatts and joins specialist corporate and commercial law firm Harmos Horton Lusk in July.
	**Ilona Haghshenas** Ilona is Warren and Mahoney's Auckland Studio Principal and a member of the firm's Executive team. She is a New Zealand Registered Architect with over twenty five years' local and international experience. Most recently, Ilona co-led the delivery of the New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC).

	**Nick Hill** Nick is Chief Executive of Tataki Auckland Unlimited. He was formerly Chief Executive of Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED), Auckland's legacy CCO economic growth agency. Previous roles includes Executive Director MartinJenkins., Chief executive of the Commerce Commission, and leading the formation of Sport and Recreation New Zealand.
	**Adithi Pandit** Adithi is a Partner and Government and Public Sector Leader at Deloitte. Adithi's portfolio includes leading large-scale organisation change with clients, including redesign of social housing services, welfare payment services, accident compensation services and child care and protection services.
	**Mark Thomas** Mark is a strategist and smart cities expert and leads Serviceworks. Mark received the Leadership Award for Outstanding Contribution towards building Smart Cities, and is part of the Top 50 Most Impactful Smart Cities Leaders. Mark has been instrumental in launching the annual State of the City report on Auckland.
	**Frances Valintine** Frances is founder and board director of academyEX, a postgraduate institute focused on professional development and knowledge in the fields of technological advancement, education, sustainability and leadership. Frances is a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for her lifetime contribution to education and technology.
	**Rupert Hodson** Rupert is Executive Director of the Committee for Auckland. He was appointed in 2026 for a fixed term on secondment from Beca. Rupert's substantive role is Regional Manager for Beca's Northern Region which is primary focused on overseeing the delivery of Beca's diverse services into the Auckland and Northland regions.

Annexes

Annex One: Suggested questions

Free and frank opinions

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
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MEETING BRIEFING

Meeting with Tracey Ryan (Chief Executive), Aurecon Group

To:	**Hon Simon Watts,** Minister for Auckland		
Date:	7 May 2026	**Time:**	9:00 am - 9:30 am
Security classification:	**In Confidence**	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032182

Purpose

You are meeting with Tracey Ryan, Chief Executive of Aurecon Group, for a thirty minute discussion. This briefing provides background and contextual information to support the meeting, including Aurecon's role in delivering major Auckland infrastructure projects, its engagement with central and local government, and matters likely to be of interest given your role as Minister for Auckland.

Logistics

1. The meeting will take place from 9:00 am to 9:30 am on Thursday 7 May 2026. It will be held at the Takapuna Beach Café, 22 The Promenade, Takapuna, Auckland.

2. The discussion is intended to be an introductory engagement focused on Auckland's infrastructure pipeline, delivery challenges and opportunities, and hearing Aurecon's perspective as a major engineering and advisory firm operating across transport, energy, water, and urban development in the region.

Background

3. Aurecon is one of the largest engineering, design and advisory firms operating in Auckland and New Zealand, with long standing involvement in the planning, design and delivery of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure. In Auckland, Aurecon has played key technical and advisory roles in the City Rail Link (CRL) as Principal Technical Advisor, supporting reference design development, geotechnical risk management and systems integration on New Zealand's largest transport project.
4. The firm has also contributed to the Western Ring Route and Waterview Connection Tunnel, which collectively transformed Auckland's motorway resilience and network connectivity, and worked extensively with NZTA and Auckland Transport on major road projects. Other landmark Auckland projects that Aurecon has been engaged in include the New Zealand International Convention Centre precinct, Te Hā Noa Victoria Street Linear Park, and the Drury rail stations programme, which is intended to unlock long term growth and improve access in southern Auckland.
5. At a national level, Aurecon maintains active engagement with central government agencies, including MBIE. This includes partnering with MBIE on research and advisory work such as the Mapping Emissions and Waste Stream Profiles and Opportunities for Achieving Net Zero Circular Advanced Manufacturing report, which supports emissions reduction, productivity and industrial innovation objectives. Aurecon regularly works with MBIE, NZTA, KiwiRail, Auckland

Council and Crown entities on policy development, business case preparation, and delivery of complex infrastructure programmes.

Topics likely to be raised

6. Tracey Ryan is likely to discuss Auckland's infrastructure pipeline, including lessons learned from delivering major projects through periods of disruption, cost pressure and skills shortages. She may highlight the importance of certainty, sequencing and coordination across central and local government to sustain investor and industry confidence. Tracey may also raise the implementation of the Auckland City and Regional Deal with you, along with progress on other deals.
7. Opportunities may be raised around CRL activation, city centre regeneration, future rapid transit delivery, and the role of engineering capability in supporting productivity, climate resilience, and economic growth in Auckland.

Biographies



Tracey Ryan – Chief Executive, Aurecon Group

Tracey Ryan is the Chief Executive of the Aurecon Group, one of the largest engineering, design and advisory firms in the Asia Pacific region. Appointed as Group CEO in 2023, she leads Aurecon's operations across infrastructure, energy, water, transport and advisory services, with a strong focus on sustainable growth and innovation.

Tracey is an experienced executive with deep expertise in professional services, strategy, and complex programme delivery. Before becoming CEO, she held senior leadership roles within Aurecon, including leadership of major market sectors and transformation initiatives.

Annexes

Annex one: Suggested talking points

Free and frank opinions

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
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BRIEFING

Overview of the Auckland Policy Office (APO)

Date:	5 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032492

Action sought		
	Action sought	**Deadline**
Hon Simon Watts **Minister for Auckland**	**Note** the contents of this report	12 May 2026

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Michael Quinn	Head of the Auckland Policy Office	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Andy Hill	Director Auckland		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Minister's office to complete:

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

Comments

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Overview of the Auckland Policy Office (APO)

Date:	5 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032492

Purpose

This briefing outlines the Auckland Policy Office (APO) and the role it plays in supporting coordinated and effective central government activity in Auckland.

It is provided following your discussion on how the APO can support your work as Minister for Auckland, including its potential role in supporting the Auckland City and Regional Deal.

Executive summary

The Auckland Policy Office is a shared platform that supports central government presence and coordination in Auckland. Starting in 2005, it is now an established part of how government operates in the region.

The APO currently consists of 17 agencies and more than 150 officials, forming the largest concentration of central government policy and sector leadership in Auckland, and a significant concentration of policy capability outside of Wellington. Agencies retain decision making and accountability, while the APO provides a setting in which they can work alongside one another on issues that cut across portfolios.

The APO helps maintain a day-to-day government presence in Auckland. It supports policy and delivery activity and provides a focal point for engagement with Auckland Council, iwi, business and community stakeholders. While much of its activity is Auckland focused, the APO also supports work programmes that contribute to national outcomes and sector priorities.

Its effectiveness reflects a combination of scale, location and focus. It brings together a critical mass of agencies in one place, is based in Auckland close to the issues and key stakeholders, and provides a dedicated focus on the region within the wider government system.

The APO also supports system resilience, including acting as a business continuity site and providing an Auckland base that can support continuity of Executive Government and ODESC functions if required.

Overall, the APO provides a practical mechanism for supporting coordinated government activity in Auckland, particularly where issues cut across portfolios and require alignment between agencies.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

a **Note** the contents of this report relating to the role and function of the Auckland Policy Office.

Noted

b **Agree** to meet the APO Leadership Team to help inform your Auckland work programme.

Agree/Disagree



Michael Quinn

Head of the Auckland Policy Office

05 / 05 / 2026

Hon Simon Watts

Minister for Auckland

..... / ..... / .....

Context

The role of the APO in Auckland

1. The Auckland Policy Office was established to strengthen central government's presence in Auckland and support more connected policy development in New Zealand's largest and most complex urban environment.

2. Auckland plays a central role in New Zealand's economic and social performance. It is the country's largest urban economy and the focal point for many of the government's most complex and interrelated policy challenges. Progress on a number of national priorities depends on how effectively government operates in Auckland.

3. These challenges cut across sectors and require input from multiple agencies. The APO has developed as a practical way of supporting government to operate effectively in that environment, providing a platform for agencies to work alongside one another in Auckland.

Government leadership presence in Auckland

4. New Zealand's public sector operates through a largely centralised model, with policy development and system leadership primarily based in Wellington. This supports national consistency, clear accountability and efficient use of resources.

5. At the same time, Auckland's scale and complexity mean that many national policy issues are most visible, and often most acute, in the region. The McKay review[1] noted that policy capability and senior leadership presence have been less consistently located in Auckland, and that approaches to engagement and coordination have varied across agencies.

6. Auckland accounts for a significant share of the public sector workforce, although much of this presence is operational. Policy capability and system leadership remain concentrated in Wellington. The APO helps bridge this by providing a practical policy presence in Auckland that connects national policy development with local context and delivery.

Operating in a changing environment

7. Auckland is entering a period where several major programmes and decisions are progressing in parallel. These include the Auckland City and Regional Deal, long term spatial planning, transport governance and investment, and city centre and precinct development.

8. Collectively, these programmes will shape Auckland's economic performance over the coming decades. They involve multiple agencies, intersecting portfolios and sustained engagement with Auckland Council and other partners. This increases the importance of maintaining visibility across activity and supporting coordination where required.

9. The establishment of the new Ministry for Communities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) will also shape how central government operates in Auckland. Agencies forming MCERT already have a significant presence within the APO, and the new Ministry will represent a substantial share of the government's Auckland work programme.

10. Bringing these functions together provides an opportunity to strengthen the integration of policy across land use, infrastructure, transport and local government, and to support a more spatially and regionally focused approach. This is a positive step in addressing long-standing coordination challenges in these areas.

[1] The "McKay review" refers to Doug McKay's August 2014 *Review of Central Government Policy, Implementation, Strategy and Leadership Effectiveness in Auckland*, prepared for the APO Chief Executives Governance Group, which examined how effectively central government operates in Auckland and recommended practical steps to strengthen senior leadership, cross-agency coordination and place-based delivery.

11. At the same time, Auckland's role as a major urban economy means that these programmes sit alongside, and need to be connected with, a wider set of government activity, including economic growth and social outcomes. While MCERT brings together several key functions, no single agency can encompass the full range of factors that shape outcomes in a city like Auckland.

12. In this context, having a cross-agency perspective remains important. The APO provides a practical setting in which agencies can work alongside one another across a broader set of portfolios, helping ensure that the benefits of greater integration within MCERT are complemented by continued connection to the wider system.

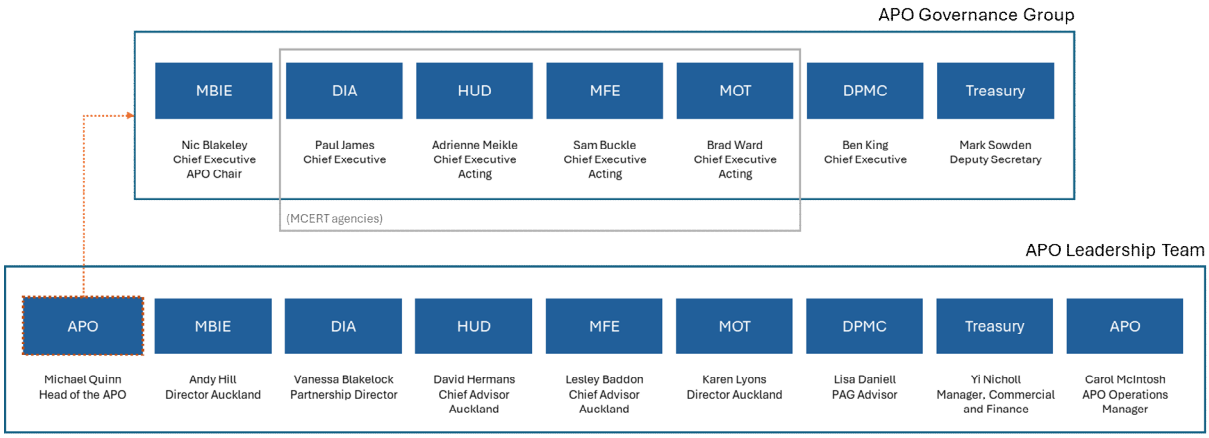
How the APO operates

How the APO is structured and governed

13. The APO operates as a voluntary arrangement between participating agencies. It currently consists of 17 agencies and over 150 officials in a single environment, representing the largest concentration of central government policy and leadership capability in Auckland.

14. The APO is hosted by MBIE and governed by a Chief Executives' governance group. Agency leadership, decision-making and accountabilities remain with individual agencies.

15. Day-to-day leadership is provided by the Head of APO, who reports to the APO Chief Executives' governance group via MBIE. The role focuses on convening, coordination and supporting collaboration across agencies. The Head of the APO is supported by an APO Leadership Team made up of the senior Auckland-based representatives from the governance agencies.



16. The APO operates as a platform rather than a hierarchy. It does not replace agency structures or decision-making, but provides a setting in which agencies can work alongside each other.

How the APO works in practice

17. The APO combines co-location with a collaborative way of working. It provides a practical base that helps agencies coordinate on cross-portfolio Auckland issues.

18. In practice, this includes testing emerging issues, aligning advice where programmes intersect and coordinating engagement where it is more effective to engage collectively than separately. It also provides a setting where agencies can share local insight and maintain visibility of related activity.

19. Having agencies in one place supports faster information sharing, stronger working relationships and more cohesive cross-agency ways of working. Over time, this sustained presence helps build a deeper understanding of Auckland's communities, sectors and institutions.

20. The APO is also distinctive in that it deliberately brings officials from different agencies together in a single location, creating the conditions for regular interaction and more connected ways of working.

21. Around one third of all Public Service departments and agencies are represented within the APO. This concentration supports a stronger connection between policy development, implementation and engagement in Auckland, particularly where issues cut across portfolios.

The APO's role across government

22. The APO supports agencies to operate in Auckland in a more connected way. It improves shared visibility of activity, supports coordination where it adds value and provides a setting for aligning advice and engagement across agencies.

23. It is most useful where programmes intersect or where agencies need to engage with Auckland partners in a coordinated way.

24. The APO also contributes to system resilience. It acts as a business continuity site for agencies and is the designated site base for the continuity of Executive Government (the PM, Ministers and Cabinet) and system-level coordination arrangements (ODESC) if there is a catastrophic Wellington event that requires the temporary relocation of leadership to Auckland.

25. The APO does not make decisions or replace formal governance arrangements. These remain with individual agencies.

Practical assistance for your work

How the APO can support you

26. For your Ministerial role, the APO provides a practical way to convene advice on Auckland issues and to bring together cross-agency perspectives in a single setting. It can support your engagement by improving visibility across programmes and helping agencies align advice and engagement where needed.

APO Leadership Team

27. To support your engagement with Auckland and maintain visibility across central government activity in the region, you could include regular engagement with the APO Leadership Team as part of your wider engagement programme. The APO Leadership Team comprises senior Auckland based representatives from key agencies: MBIE, DIA, HUD, MFE, MOT, Treasury and DPMC.

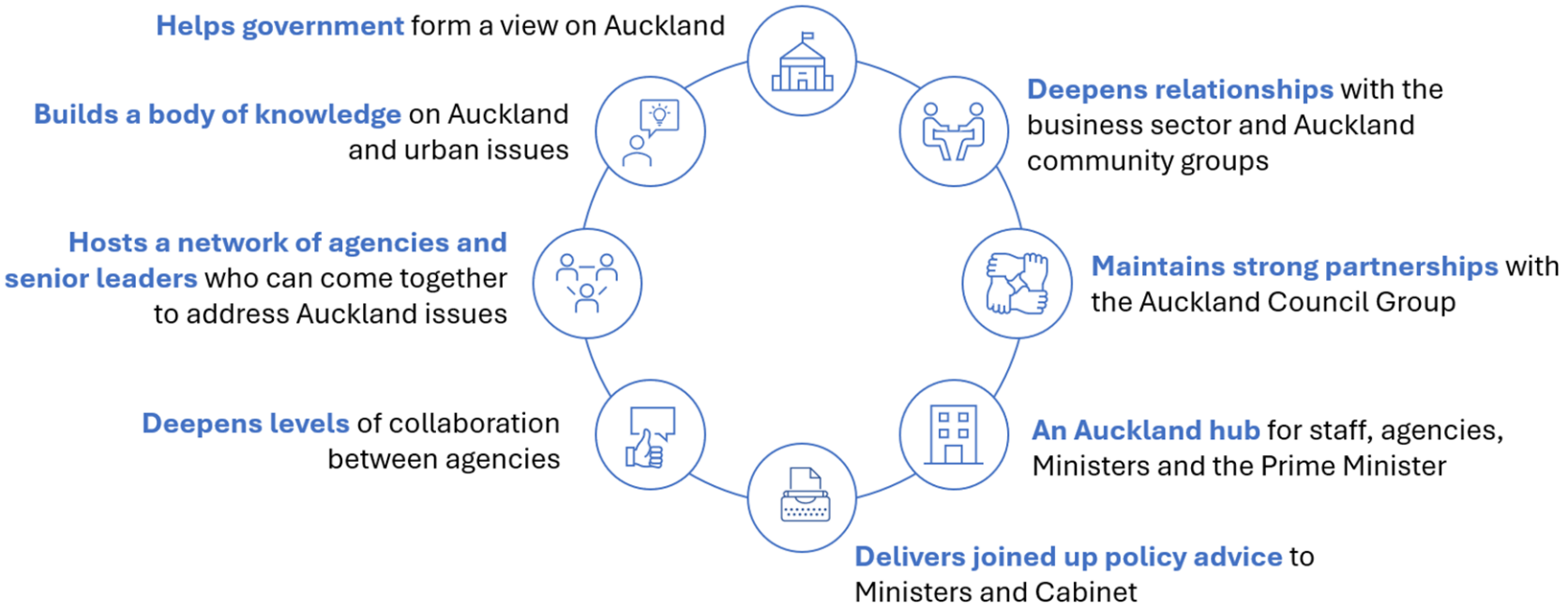
28. Meeting with this group on a regular basis, for example quarterly, would provide an opportunity to maintain visibility of activity across agencies, discuss emerging issues and support alignment where this would be useful.

Annexes

Annex One: APO roles and functions

Annex Two: APO agencies

Annex One: APO roles and functions



Annex Two: APO agencies

The following agencies are formally part of the APO:

- Department of Internal Affairs
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Electricity Authority
- Inland Revenue
- Kāinga Ora
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission
- Ministry for the Environment
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Social Development
- Ministry of Transport
- National Emergency Management Agency [p
- Taumata Arowai / Water Services Authority
- Te Waihanga / NZ Infrastructure Commission
- Treasury

Agencies not part of the APO but use the facility to connect with agencies:

- Police
- Te Puni Kōkiri

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
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MEETING BRIEFING

Meeting with Mayor Wayne Brown, Auckland

To:	**Hon Simon Watts,** Minister for Auckland		
Date:	7 May 2026	**Time:**	4:30 pm – 5:15 pm
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032406

Purpose

To provide you with background information and talking points ahead of you meeting with Mayor Wayne Brown on Thursday 7 May from 4:30 pm to 5:15 pm.

Logistics

1. You are meeting with Mayor Wayne Brown on Thursday 7 May from 4:30 pm to 5:15 pm.
2. The meeting will take place at The Terrace, Aotea Centre, 50 Mayoral Drive, Aotea Centre, Auckland.

Background

3. A central part of your role as Minister for Auckland is maintaining an effective working relationship with the Mayor of Auckland and Auckland Council on behalf of the government.
4. To that end, you have agreed to meet regularly with Mayor Wayne Brown and this meeting is part of that regular engagement. We understand that future meetings may also include the Prime Minister but he will not be joining you and the Mayor on this occasion.

Issues and opportunities likely to be raised

5. The Mayor's office have provided us with a list of topics that the Mayor may raise with you.
6. We suggest that a useful discussion topic for you would be establishing clear expectations around engagement protocols between central government and Auckland Council, particularly in the context of the Auckland City and Regional Deal (the Deal). The Mayor has publicly stated his dissatisfaction with how engagement on Auckland specific decisions have been handled since the signing of the Deal. He cites the SailGP funding decision and the announcement of the Indian FTA as two recent examples of where prior consultation with him should have been considered by Government.
7. Background information on these topics is included below with suggested talking points attached at **Annex One**.

Auckland City and Regional Deal

Summary

8. The Auckland Deal establishes a strengthened partnership between Central Government and Auckland Council, built on regular political and official engagement. It sets expectations for consultation and collaboration in defined circumstances, particularly for agreed Deal initiatives, Auckland-specific policy or regulatory settings, and where statutory consultation applies.

9. It is framed around coordination on shared priorities rather than a general consent or approval framework. Government commitments under the Deal remain subject to normal decision-making processes.

Nature of the partnership

10. The Deal is founded on a partnership based on mutual trust, collaboration and openness, with a shared commitment to improved outcomes for Auckland and New Zealand (Agreement, clauses 1.1–1.3). The Agreement also makes clear that it does not create a legal partnership, agency or representative relationship between the parties (Agreement, clause 9.7).

Political-level engagement

11. The Prime Minister and the Mayor are required to meet formally at least three times each year to discuss progress under the Deal and any issues arising (Agreement, clause 3.3(e); Schedule 1, Partnership for Growth). There is also an explicit expectation of regular engagement between the Mayor and senior Ministers on matters affecting Auckland, with the frequency determined by Ministers (Schedule 1, Partnership for Growth).

Consultation under the Deal

12. The Deal sets out consultation and engagement expectations in the following defined circumstances:

    - Deal initiatives and governance arrangements: Consultation and joint oversight occur through agreed governance mechanisms, including the Responsible Ministers and the Mayor, the Auckland Deal Oversight Board and Steering Groups established for specific initiatives (Agreement, clauses 3.1–3.6 and Schedule 2).
    - Auckland-specific policy or regulatory settings: Central Government commits to engaging with or consulting Auckland Council, as appropriate, on key policy and regulatory settings where Auckland or region-specific changes are being considered (Schedule 1, including Innovation; Global Trade; Transport; and Immigration and Investment settings).
    - Statutory consultation processes: Where legislation requires consultation (for example, tolling proposals or planning processes), the Deal confirms Auckland Council will be consulted in line with applicable statutory requirements (Schedule 1, Transport as an Enabler of Growth).

Scope and application

13. The Deal strengthens structured engagement and consultation between Government and Auckland Council in clearly defined areas, particularly for Deal initiatives and Auckland-specific policy or regulatory settings. It does not establish a general or automatic requirement for the Mayor or Auckland Council to be consulted on all significant Government activities affecting Auckland.

14. This represents a new way of working for Government, including Ministers, officials and agencies, and will continue to be embedded through regular engagement and use of the Deal's partnership mechanisms. There will need to be a period of time to bed this new way of working into processes across Government and establish a consistent practice across agencies. This might require follow up action with your Ministerial colleagues.

Confidential advice to Government

16. Further information on the concerns raised by the Mayor was provided for your recent meeting with Auckland's Deputy Mayor [BRIEFING-REQ-0031519 refers]. Additional reactive Q+A are attached at **Annex Three**.

Rates capping

17. As rates capping policy sits with you in your capacity as Minister for Local Government, you are across the detail of the proposal. Below is a summary of Mayor Brown's position on the proposal that he may raise with you.

18. Mayor Brown has publicly expressed his strong opposition to the proposed rates-capping policy. He argues that it is a blunt, centralised intervention that would undermine Auckland Council's ability to fund essential infrastructure and services.

19. Specifically, the Mayor considers that the proposed 2 - 4 percent cap "won't work" for a fast-growing city like Auckland and would simply defer costs, leading to higher pressures on ratepayers in future. He has highlighted the City Rail Link as a key example, stating that Auckland Council is being asked to fund operating and capital commitments arising from decisions jointly made with central government, while simultaneously being constrained on revenue. In his opinion, the cap ignores local government's understanding of its own financial realities, would not materially improve affordability, and risks increasing debt or forcing service cuts instead of delivering genuine value for Aucklanders.

Fast-track referral decision – Redvale Landfill extension

20. Minister Bishop has recently exercised his powers under the Fast-track Approvals Act to accept the referral application for the Redvale Landfill extension proposal, a significant waste management project in Auckland. This means that the project is now eligible to lodge a substantive application for consideration by an expert panel.

21. The proposal relates to the extension and expansion of the existing Redvale Landfill and Energy Park at Dairy Flat. The project would enable the continued operation of the current landfill beyond its previously anticipated closure date, providing additional waste disposal capacity while longer-term regional waste solutions are developed. The proposal includes landfill expansion within the existing site and the continued use of associated infrastructure such as leachate management and energy recovery. It is intended to address near- to medium-term waste capacity constraints for Auckland.

22. The referral decision reflects the Government's view that waste disposal and resource-recovery facilities are essential enabling infrastructure for housing, construction, and economic development. In announcing the decision, Minister Bishop emphasised the use of the Fast-track process, including independent expert assessment and the imposition of conditions to manage environmental effects, and framed the approval as an example of providing greater certainty and timely delivery for critical infrastructure.

23. Confidential advice to Government

New Zealand - India Free Trade Deal

24. The New Zealand - India Free Trade Agreement (the FTA) was signed on 27 April 2026 in New Delhi, marking a significant milestone in New Zealand's trade diversification strategy and its economic relationship with one of the world's fastest-growing major economies. The agreement eliminates or reduces tariffs on approximately 95% of New Zealand exports to India, while providing duty-free access for all Indian exports to New Zealand once the agreement enters into force.

25. The FTA creates new commercial opportunities for key New Zealand sectors, including horticulture, forestry, wool, meat, coal and education services, while protecting sensitive areas such as core dairy products, which remain largely excluded from India's tariff liberalisation. The agreement also includes commitments to regulatory cooperation, services trade, investment facilitation, and dispute resolution, alongside a New Zealand commitment to facilitate up to NZ$20 billion in investment into India over the next 15 years. These provisions are intended to improve certainty for exporters, support business expansion, and enable deeper economic integration beyond trade in goods alone.

26. For Auckland, the agreement is particularly relevant given the city's role as New Zealand's primary international trade hub, logistics gateway, and home to a large Indian diaspora and exporter base. The FTA is expected to support growth in Auckland-based exporters, professional services firms, and education providers, while enhanced visa and mobility settings for skilled workers and students may strengthen people-to-people ties and labour market connections. Over time, the agreement has the potential to reinforce Auckland's position as New Zealand's gateway to South Asia, with flow-on benefits for employment, investment attraction, and international connectivity.

Annexes

Annex One: Suggested talking points

Annex Two: SailGP letter

Annex Three: SailGP reactive Q+A

Annex Four: Redvale Landfill extension letter

Free and frank opinions

Free and frank opinions

Annex Two: SailGP letter

Confidential advice to Government

Free and frank opinions

Free and frank opinions

Free and frank opinions

Annex Four: Redvale Landfill extension letter

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

MEETING BRIEFING

Meeting with Peter Bradley, Chief Executive, Hato Hone St John

To:	**Hon Simon Watts,** Minister for Auckland		
Date:	8 May 2026	**Time:**	11:30 am - 12:30 pm
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0031912

Purpose

To provide you with background information ahead of your meeting with Peter Bradley, Chief Executive of Hato Hone St John, on Friday 8 May 2026 from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm at PYM's of Milford, 154 Kitchener Road, Milford, Auckland.

Background

1. Hato Hone St John is New Zealand's largest emergency ambulance service, providing approximately ninety percent of emergency and non-emergency ambulance coverage across the country, including Auckland. It operates as a charitable organisation rather than a fully government funded service.

2. Auckland represents one of Hato Hone St John's busiest operational environments, with consistently high call volumes and sustained growth in demand driven by population growth and complexity of patient needs. The organisation also delivers a range of community health services in Auckland, including first aid training, youth programmes, health shuttles and medical alarms, which are an important part of broader community resilience.

3. Peter Bradley has been Chief Executive of Hato Hone St John since 2012 and brings more than three decades of experience in ambulance service leadership in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Under his leadership, Hato Hone St John has overseen significant organisational transformation, managed responses to major national incidents, and navigated ongoing funding and workforce challenges.

Context setting

4. Hato Hone St John has faced financial and operational pressure in recent years, including rising demand for ambulance services, workforce constraints and funding shortfalls. While Government funding for emergency ambulance services has increased, including an additional funding uplift announced in late 2024, the organisation remains reliant on public donations and commercial revenue to cover a material portion of its operating and capital costs.

5. Auckland has been a focal point for these pressures, given its scale and complexity, and Peter Bradley is likely to provide an update on current service performance, workforce sustainability, station and fleet needs, and the implications for Auckland communities. He is also likely to sharing insights on how Hato Hone St John is managing Auckland operations and where central government awareness or support could be constructive.

6. Your familiarity with the organisation and firsthand understanding of ambulance operations will enable an open conversation on the operational realities for the organisation.

Biographies of key attendees



Peter Bradley – Chief Executive, Hato Hone St John

Peter Bradley has been Chief Executive of Hato Hone St John since 2012. His career in emergency ambulance services spans more than 35 years, beginning as a paramedic and senior operational manager in Auckland before moving to the United Kingdom.

In 2000, Peter was appointed Chief Executive of the London Ambulance Service, leading the world's busiest ambulance service through major incidents including the 2005 London bombings and the 2012 Olympic Games. He also served as the United Kingdom's National Director of Ambulance Services before returning to New Zealand to lead Hato Hone St John.

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Auckland Stakeholders

Date:	6 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032534

Action sought		
	Action sought	**Deadline**
Hon Simon Watts **Minister for Auckland**	**Note** the contents of this report	12 May 2026

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Michael Quinn	Head of the Auckland Policy Office	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Andy Hill	Director Auckland		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
None. Feedback will be taken as part of next steps from key agencies to identify additional stakeholders.

Minister's office to complete:

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

Comments

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Auckland Stakeholders

Date:	6 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032534

Purpose

This report responds to your request for a list or map of key Auckland stakeholders.

This report recommends using the Auckland City and Regional Deal as the organising lens for refining the long list into a shorter and more useful Ministerial stakeholder map.

Executive summary

Auckland has a large and complex stakeholder environment. Officials have provided an initial long list of approximately 100 stakeholders, but this should be treated as a broad first cut rather than a definitive list. Auckland's stakeholder environment could easily support a larger list, depending on the policy area, place-based priority or engagement objective.

Officials have not yet sought views on the draft list from other agencies. The list should therefore be treated as an internal working draft, designed to support your early direction on scope and priorities.

The key issue is that the stakeholder list would benefit from an organising lens. Without one, the list risks becoming a broad directory of Auckland interests rather than a practical tool for prioritising your engagement and effort.

Officials recommend that the Auckland City and Regional Deal be used as that organising lens. This reflects your previous feedback that the Auckland Deal should be the central pillar for your Auckland work programme.

We recommend you provide feedback on how you wish to organise the list.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

a **Note** that officials have prepared an initial long list of Auckland stakeholders, which is intended as a broad first cut rather than a definitive list.

Noted

b **Note** that the list could be expanded further, and that other stakeholders may need to be added depending on the priorities or areas you wish to focus on.

Noted

c **Note** that officials have not yet sought other agency views on the draft stakeholder list.

Noted

d **Agree** that the Auckland City and Regional Deal be used as the organising lens for a shorter Ministerial stakeholder list, reflecting your feedback that the Auckland Deal should be the central pillar for your Auckland work programme.

Agree / Disagree

e **Note** that officials will prepare a narrower and functional stakeholder map subject to your feedback.

Noted



Michael Quinn

Head of the Auckland Policy Office

06 / May / 2026

Hon Simon Watts

Minister for Auckland

..... / ..... / .....

Background

1. You asked officials to prepare a list or map of key Auckland stakeholders.

2. Officials have prepared a broad initial list of approximately 100 stakeholders. The list is intentionally broad. It provides a starting point for discussion rather than a final stakeholder map. The long list is attached (**Annex One**).

3. The long list helps in the identification of a stakeholder map to help understand the key entities and institutions that have an interest in or influence over Auckland's development.

Analysis

The current long list is useful, but not yet a Ministerial engagement map

4. The current long list should be retained as the underlying stakeholder register. It gives officials a broad view of the organisations, networks and interests that may be relevant to the Auckland Ministerial portfolio.

5. However, the long list should not be the main product for Ministerial use. A list of approximately 100 stakeholders is too broad to support clear decisions about who to engage with, why and when.

6. The list is also not definitive. Auckland's stakeholder environment is extensive and the list could easily be expanded further. Officials have not yet sought other agency views on the draft list, so it should be treated as an internal working draft rather than a settled stakeholder map.

The Ministerial engagement map needs an organising lens

7. The main issue is not whether the long list captures every relevant Auckland stakeholder. It does not, and it is not intended to. The more important issue is that the Ministerial stakeholder map needs to support your prioritisation of effort.

8. Without an organising lens, the stakeholder list risks becoming a broad directory of Auckland interests. That would be less useful than a map that shows how stakeholders relate to your Auckland priorities.

9. Officials recommend using the Auckland Deal as the organising lens. This reflects your previous feedback that the Auckland Deal should be the central pillar for your Auckland work programme. It also aligns the stakeholder list with the formal structure through which central government and Auckland Council have agreed to work together on Auckland's priorities.

The Auckland Deal helps turns the list into a practical engagement mapping tool

10. Using the Auckland Deal as the organising lens changes the question from "*who are my Auckland stakeholders?"* to "*who do I need to connect with to advance the government's Auckland priorities?"*.

11. It would also allow the stakeholder map to be updated as the Auckland Deal implementation arrangements and implementation programmes become clearer.

A narrower first cut could focus on the most immediate Auckland Deal areas

12. Officials recommend that the first Ministerial version focus on the six areas in the Auckland Deal that are most immediately relevant to your Auckland work programme:

    a. Partnership for growth

    b. Innovation, technology and science

    c. Global trade, tourism and investment

    d. Transport as an enabler of growth

    e. Urban development and growth

    f. Priority growth areas

13. This narrower first cut would provide a more manageable engagement map while still retaining the full long list as the underlying register. For example:

    a. Economic growth, trade, tourism and investment would include stakeholders such as Auckland Business Chamber, EMA, BusinessNZ, Auckland Airport, Ports of Auckland, Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, Tourism New Zealand, NZICC and Eden Park Trust

    b. Infrastructure, transport and freight would include stakeholders such as Auckland Transport, NZTA, City Rail Link Ltd, KiwiRail, Ports of Auckland, Auckland Airport, Watercare and Vector, Infrastructure NZ

14. This approach would give you a map, not a directory. It would show how stakeholders relate to the Auckland Deal and why they may matter to your engagement, while leaving the detailed list available for reference. An indicative set of stakeholders against these groupings is attached (**Annex Two**)

Auckland's hospitality stakeholders

15. You have asked for a list of key hospitality stakeholders in Auckland. We have provided your office with a separate list. Those stakeholders are not yet included in the long list attached to this report.

Next steps

16. Officials require feedback on the long list of stakeholders and your agreement for an organising lens. Subject to your feedback, officials will provide you with a more intuitive stakeholder map including proposed sequencing for early engagement.

Annexes

Annex One: Auckland stakeholder long list (draft)

Annex Two: Illustrative Auckland Deal aligned stakeholder groupings

Annex One: Auckland stakeholder long list (draft)

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder
Civic Leadership and Governance	Auckland Council Chief Executive
Civic Leadership and Governance	Auckland Council Governing Body
Civic Leadership and Governance	City Centre Advisory Panel
Civic Leadership and Governance	Mayor of Auckland / Mayoral Office
Civic Leadership and Governance	Upper North Island Strategic Alliance (UNISA)
Civic Leadership and Governance	Local board chairs / local board leadership
Peak Business and Employer Groups	Auckland Business Chamber
Peak Business and Employer Groups	BusinessNZ
Peak Business and Employer Groups	Employers and Manufacturers Association
Peak Business and Employer Groups	Hospitality NZ
Peak Business and Employer Groups	Retail NZ
Peak Business and Employer Groups	Tāmaki Makaurau Business Network
Peak Business and Employer Groups	Travel Agents Association of New Zealand
Economic Development	Auckland Airport
Economic Development	Auckland Council Economic Development Office
Economic Development	Auckland Council Future Fund
Economic Development	New Zealand International Convention Centre
Economic Development	NZ Super Fund
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	Auckland Transport
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	City Rail Link Ltd
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	KiwiRail
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	NZ Transport Agency / Waka Kotahi
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	Vector
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	Watercare
Freight, Logistics, Ports and Supply Chain	Automobile Association
Freight, Logistics, Ports and Supply Chain	National Road Carriers Association
Freight, Logistics, Ports and Supply Chain	Ports of Auckland
Freight, Logistics, Ports and Supply Chain	Road Transport Association NZ
Property, Development and Urban Growth	City-centre developers and landowners
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Eke Panuku Development Auckland
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Kāinga Ora
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Major property developers
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Property Council New Zealand — Auckland
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Tāmaki Regeneration Company
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	Auckland Tech Council
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	AUT
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	Infrastructure New Zealand

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	Koi Tū: The Centre for Informed Futures
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	The New Zealand Initiative
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	University of Auckland
Māori Economic Networks	Whāriki Māori Business Network
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Manuhiri
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Maru
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Paoa
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Rehua
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Tamaoho
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Tamaterā
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Te Ata Waiohua
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Wai
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Wai ki Aotea
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Whanaunga
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Reserves Board
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Trust
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Whai Rawa
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Te Ahiwaru Waiohua
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Te Ākitai Waiohua
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Te Kawerau ā Maki
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Te Patukirikiri
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whātua
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Te Tomokanga ki Tāmaki
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Te Uri o Hau
Mana Whenua and Iwi Institutions	Waikato-Tainui
Pacific, Asian and Ethnic Business	Pacific Business Trust
City Centre, Urbanism and Transport Advocacy	Generation Zero Auckland
City Centre, Urbanism and Transport Advocacy	Greater Auckland
Climate, Environment and Resilience	Auckland Emergency Management
Climate, Environment and Resilience	Forest and Bird Auckland
Climate, Environment and Resilience	Hauraki Gulf Forum
Homelessness and Community Housing	Auckland City Mission
Homelessness and Community Housing	Kāhui Tū Kaha
Homelessness and Community Housing	Lifewise
Homelessness and Community Housing	Visionwest Community Housing

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder
Tourism, Major Events and Visitor Economy	Eden Park Trust
Tourism, Major Events and Visitor Economy	NZICC
Tourism, Major Events and Visitor Economy	Tātaki Auckland Unlimited
Tourism, Major Events and Visitor Economy	Tourism New Zealand
Arts, Culture, Sport and Anchor Institutions	Auckland Art Gallery
Arts, Culture, Sport and Anchor Institutions	Auckland War Memorial Museum
City-Shaping Professional Bodies	Committee for Auckland
City-Shaping Professional Bodies	New Zealand Institute of Architects
City-Shaping Professional Bodies	New Zealand Planning Institute
Central Government	APO Chief Executives Group
Central Government	APO Leadership Team
Central Government	Auckland Regional Leadership Group
BIDS	Business Manukau
BIDS	Business North Harbour
BIDS	East Tāmaki Business Association
BIDS	Heart of the City
BIDS	Karangahape Road Business Association
BIDS	Newmarket Business Association
BIDS	One Mahurangi Business Association
BIDS	Parnell Incorporated
BIDS	Ponsonby Business Association
BIDS	Pukekohe Business Association
BIDS	Takapuna Beach Business Association

Annex Two: Illustrative Auckland Deal aligned stakeholder groupings

Partnership for growth

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder
Central Government	APO Chief Executives Group
Civic Leadership and Governance	Auckland Council Chief Executive
Civic Leadership and Governance	Auckland Council Governing Body
Central Government	Auckland Regional Leadership Group
Civic Leadership and Governance	City Centre Advisory Panel
City Shaping Professional Bodies	Committee for Auckland
Civic Leadership and Governance	Local board chairs
Civic Leadership and Governance	Mayor of Auckland / Mayoral Office
Civic Leadership and Governance	Upper North Island Strategic Alliance

Transport as an enabler of growth

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder
Economic Development	Auckland Airport
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	Auckland Transport
Freight, Logistics, Ports and Supply Chain	Automobile Association
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	City Rail Link Ltd
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	KiwiRail
Freight, Logistics, Ports and Supply Chain	National Road Carriers Association
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	NZ Transport Agency
Freight, Logistics, Ports and Supply Chain	Ports of Auckland
Freight, Logistics, Ports and Supply Chain	Road Transport Association NZ
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	Vector
Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery	Watercare

Urban development and growth

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Auckland Council Development Office
Property, Development and Urban Growth	City-centre developers and landowners
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Kāinga Ora
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Major property developers
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Property Council New Zealand
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Tāmaki Regeneration Company

Global trade, tourism and investment

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder
Economic Development	Auckland Airport
Peak Business and Employer Groups	Auckland Business Chamber
Economic Development	Auckland Council Future Fund
Peak Business and Employer Groups	BusinessNZ
Tourism, Major Events and Visitor Economy	Eden Park Trust
Peak Business and Employer Groups	Employers and Manufacturers Association
Tourism, Major Events and Visitor Economy	NZICC
Freight, Logistics, Ports and Supply Chain	Ports of Auckland
Peak Business and Employer Groups	Tāmaki Makaurau Business Network
Tourism, Major Events and Visitor Economy	Tātaki Auckland Unlimited
Tourism, Major Events and Visitor Economy	Tourism New Zealand

Innovation, technology and science

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	Auckland Tech Council
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	AUT
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	Infrastructure New Zealand
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	Koi Tū: The Centre for Informed Futures
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	The New Zealand Initiative
Research, Policy and Thought Leadership	University of Auckland

Priority growth areas

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Auckland Council (place-based programme leads)
Property, Development and Urban Growth	Kianga Ora
Economic Development	Major developers and anchor investors

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

MEETING BRIEFING

Thriving City Centre Stakeholder meeting

To:	**Hon Simon Watts,** Minister for Auckland		
Date:	8 May 2026	**Time:**	4:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032405

Purpose

To provide you with information to support your meeting with the Thriving City Centre Stakeholder group on Friday 8 May 2026, from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

The meeting will take place at the MBIE office at 162 Victoria Street West.

Background

1. In October 2025, the previous Minister for Auckland convened a meeting of relevant Ministers to discuss concerns that an increasing presence of rough sleepers and incidences of antisocial behaviour were having an impact on economic activity in the Auckland city centre.

2. Concerns about the condition of Auckland's city centre are significant because of the unique role the area plays in New Zealand's economy and identity. The city centre is the country's largest concentration of employment, business activity, higher education and visitor movement. It serves as the gateway to international investment, tourism and migration, and it shapes national and global perceptions of New Zealand as a place to live and do business. A decline in safety or amenity can reduce activity, deter investment and damage Auckland's and therefore New Zealand's economic performance and reputation.

3. As a result, Ministers agreed that coordinated attention across multiple agencies was warranted to address these safety and amenity concerns and enable a thriving city centre.

4. To ensure coordinated action, Auckland officials convened a cross-agency working group to develop and implement an action plan to focus and coordinate local and central government activities.

5. The initial focus of this group has been on services to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers and the incidence of anti-social behaviour in the city centre. Metrics to monitor progress are regularly collated and a Thriving City Centre stakeholder group was established with meetings held every 4-6 weeks, chaired by the Minister for Auckland.

6. Consistent with the initial priorities of Ministers, the stakeholder group meetings have to date focussed on city centre safety. The makeup of this group reflects this direction and includes representatives from social service providers (social housing providers, mental health and addiction services etc.) as well as city centre business representatives.

7. The most recent Stakeholder meeting was held on 2 April 2026. At that meeting, Minister Brown reflected on the solid progress that had been made. He indicated that, while agencies

would continue to focus on city centre safety, there would be a broadening of scope to include activation activities to maximise the economic opportunities provided by the recent opening of the International Convention Centre and the opening of the City Rail Link (CRL) later in 2026.

Focus for the 8 May Stakeholder meeting

8. Following your recent meeting with CRL partners, Auckland officials have engaged with their representatives to determine what information on timing and activation activities are able to be shared with city centre stakeholders. We are advised that this information remains sensitive, and while it cannot be shared at this time, it is anticipated that meaningful information will be available towards the end of June.

9. On that basis, we recommend that pivoting the focus of the Thriving City Centre stakeholder group to CRL-related city centre activation occurs at the next stakeholder meeting in early July. Given the change of focus, the membership of the stakeholder group may need to be amended, and we will provide advice to you ahead of invitations being sent out for that meeting.

10. A proposed agenda for the meeting on Friday 8 May is attached at **Annex One.** The current invitation list, indicating confirmed attendees for Friday's meeting, is attached at **Annex Two**.

11. Given this is your first meeting with the stakeholder group, it is an opportunity for you to introduce yourself, and your areas of focus for the Auckland portfolio. The group will be interested to know if you wish to continue with the Thriving City Centre programme. We recommend that you:

    - confirm that you will maintain the focus on city centre safety
    - but will broaden the scope to include economic activation activities associated with the CRL opening at the next meeting to be scheduled for July.

12. Minister Brown, supported by Minister Potaka in his capacity as Associate Minister of Housing, has been consistent in his desire to reduce rough sleepers and antisocial behaviour to enable all Aucklanders to enjoy a safe and vibrant city centre. The Ministers have also been clear that providing support and safe housing for those in need in the city centre is also key driver for government intervention.

13. Given the inclusion of service providers and business representatives on the stakeholder group, it will not surprise you that there has been some divergence of views expressed. While there has been generally positive support for the intent of the group, there has been some concern that the focus on the city centre will shift rough sleepers and anti-social behaviour to the city centre fringe and beyond; that focus on the city centre detracts from issues elsewhere in Auckland; and that interventions to increase police presence in the city centre unfairly targets the most vulnerable.

14. The programme has been carefully constructed to balance the two perspectives. A key component of success to date has been agencies working closer together to address individuals' specific needs. Close engagement between Police, Auckland Council Wardens and health officials providing mental health and addiction services is one clear example of a change in approach that appears to be making a material difference on the street. The agreed Action Plan for the city centre safety programme is attached at **Annex Three**.

15. Officials have compiled a progress update on the city centre safety work programme, attached at **Annex Four**. We note that, to date, this progress update has not been shared in writing with the stakeholder group. Rather it forms the basis of agency verbal updates at stakeholder meetings.

16. At the meeting, key officials will be available to provide a short update on progress on city centre safety since the last stakeholder meeting. The speaking order from agencies should be:

    - Police - Inspector Grae Anderson, Area Commander Auckland City Central
    - HUD - Malo Ah-You, General Manager Place Based Delivery
    - Auckland Council – Rachel Kelleher, Director Community

17. We then recommend that you facilitate an open discussion with those in attendance so that you can get a good sense of what has worked and what additional actions those in attendance recommend. Given this is your opening meeting with this group, hearing their views will be informative for you and your next steps for the programme.

18. Previous meetings have largely favoured detailed briefs from officials leaving little room for a more open discussion amongst participants. This meeting is a chance for you to facilitate a more in-depth discussion taking feedback from participants on the effectiveness of the programme and what else needs to be done or considered. This approach is likely to be welcomed by attendees. We recommend you invite comment from:

    - Helen Robinson, Auckland City Mission
    - Pam Elgar, Methodist Mission Northern
    - Barbara Browne, Kāhui Tū Kaha
    - Chlöe Swarbrick MP

19. Given the split of attendees interests between addressing social need and economic activity, we suggest that your facilitated discussion is clearly split between the two perspectives. The agenda has been structured to provide an opportunity for a discussion focussed on rough sleepers and social needs, followed by one focussed on economic activation. Several members of the group have strongly held positions and express them freely. Holding to this structure will ensure a measured and informative meeting.

20. We have recommended that the primary focus for this meeting is social need, noting that the next meeting will pivot towards activation activities associated with the opening of CRL.

Background information

City Centre definition

21. It has been agreed with officials and the stakeholder group that the area covered by the city centre in this context is the Auckland Council targeted rate area shown in **Annex Five**.

Homeless count

22. The homeless count is provided by Auckland Council based on their daily morning counts of visible rough sleepers in high visibility areas. It is not an accurate audit of all rough sleepers in the city centre, but is considered a comparable relative metric to show trends, particularly within the visible rough sleeping community.

Move-on orders

23. The proposed move-on orders are an area of contention for the group with some supporting the proposal (e.g. Heart of the City) but many strongly opposed (social providers and the city fringe business associations) [BRIEFING-REQ-0031623 refers].

24. Given the divergence of views, we recommend that if move-on orders are raised, you take the opportunity to hear the different perspectives rather than debating the proposal.

Annexes

Annex One: Agenda

Annex Two: Stakeholder group members and confirmed attendees

Annex Three: Thriving City Centre Action Plan

Annex Four: Status report on the Thriving City Centre Action Plan – 7 May 2026

Annex Five: City Centre targeted rate area

Annex One: Agenda

Thriving City Centre Stakeholder Meeting

Date: Friday 8 May 2026 4:00-5:00pm

Venue: MBIE Offices, 162 Victoria Street West, Auckland

Item	Lead	Timing
Meeting opening		
1. Introduction	Minister Watts	5 mins
City Centre Safety		
2. Agency and Auckland Council updates	Officials • Police - Inspector Grae Anderson, Area Commander Auckland City Central • HUD - Malo Ah-You, General Manager Place Based Delivery • Auckland Council – Rachel Kelleher, Director Community	10 mins
Facilitated discussion		
3. Social focus	Open discussion facilitated by Minister Watts	30 mins
4. Economic focus	Open discussion facilitated by Minister Watts	10 mins
Meeting close		
5. Next meeting and close	Minister Watts	5 mins

Annex Two: Stakeholder group members and confirmed attendees

Ministers/MPs		**Confirmed attendance**
Minister for Auckland	Hon Simon Watts	Yes
Minister of Justice	Hon Paul Goldsmith	
Minister of Social Development	Hon Louise Upston	
Minister of Police	Hon Mark Mitchell	
Associate Minister for Housing	Hon Tama Potaka	Official attending
Minister for Mental Health	Hon Matt Doocey	
Auckland Central MP	Chlöe Swarbrick	Yes
Government Agencies		
Head of the Auckland Policy Office	Michael Quinn	Yes
Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora	Pauline McKay	
Kainga Ora - Te Mātāwai	John Walker	
MBIE	Andy Hill	Yes
Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	Malo Ah You	Yes
Regional Public Service Commissioner	Jules Lynch	Yes
Ministry of Social Development	Dan Brunt	Yes
New Zealand Police	Inspector Grae Anderson	Yes
Oranga Tamariki	Tessa Oaariki	
Auckland Council		
Auckland Mayor	Mayor Wayne Brown	
Auckland Council	Rachel Kelleher	Yes
Auckland Ward Councillor	Julie Fairey	Yes
Auckland Ward Councillor	Bo Burns	Yes
Waitemata Local Board Chair	Alex Bonham	Yes
Business Associations		
Dairy and Business Owners	Sunny Kaushal	Yes
Heart of the City	Viv Beck	
K Road Business Association	Jamey Holloway	
Newmarket Business Association	Mark Knoff-Thomas	Yes
Parnell Business Association	Adirana Avendano Christie	Yes
Ponsonby Business Association	Viv Rosenberg	
Uptown Business Association	Brent Kennedy	
Community Groups		
Akarana Māori Wardens	Matarora Smith	Yes
Auckland City Mission	Helen Robinson and Joe Rich	Yes
Chair of the Collaborative to end Homelessness	Anne-Marie Searchfield	
City Centre Residents Group	Noelene Buckland	
Community Housing	Paul Gilberd	
Community Patrols NZ	Chris Lawton	
Grace Foundation	Ulalei Letele	

Kāhui Tū Kaha	Barbara Browne	
Kick Back	Aaron Hendry	
Ma te Huruhuru	Mahera Maihi	
Lifewise / Methodist Mission Northern	Pam Elgar	Yes
Tamaki Ki Te Tonga Maori Wardens	Matarora Smith	
That's It Property Management Ltd	Jurgen Dentener	Yes
Visionwest	Judy Matai'a	Yes
Iwi		
Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei	tbc	

Annex Three: Thriving City Centre Safety Action Plan

Released publicly by Hon Simeon Brown on 28 November 2025



Annex Four: Status report on the Thriving City Centre Action Plan – 7 May 2026

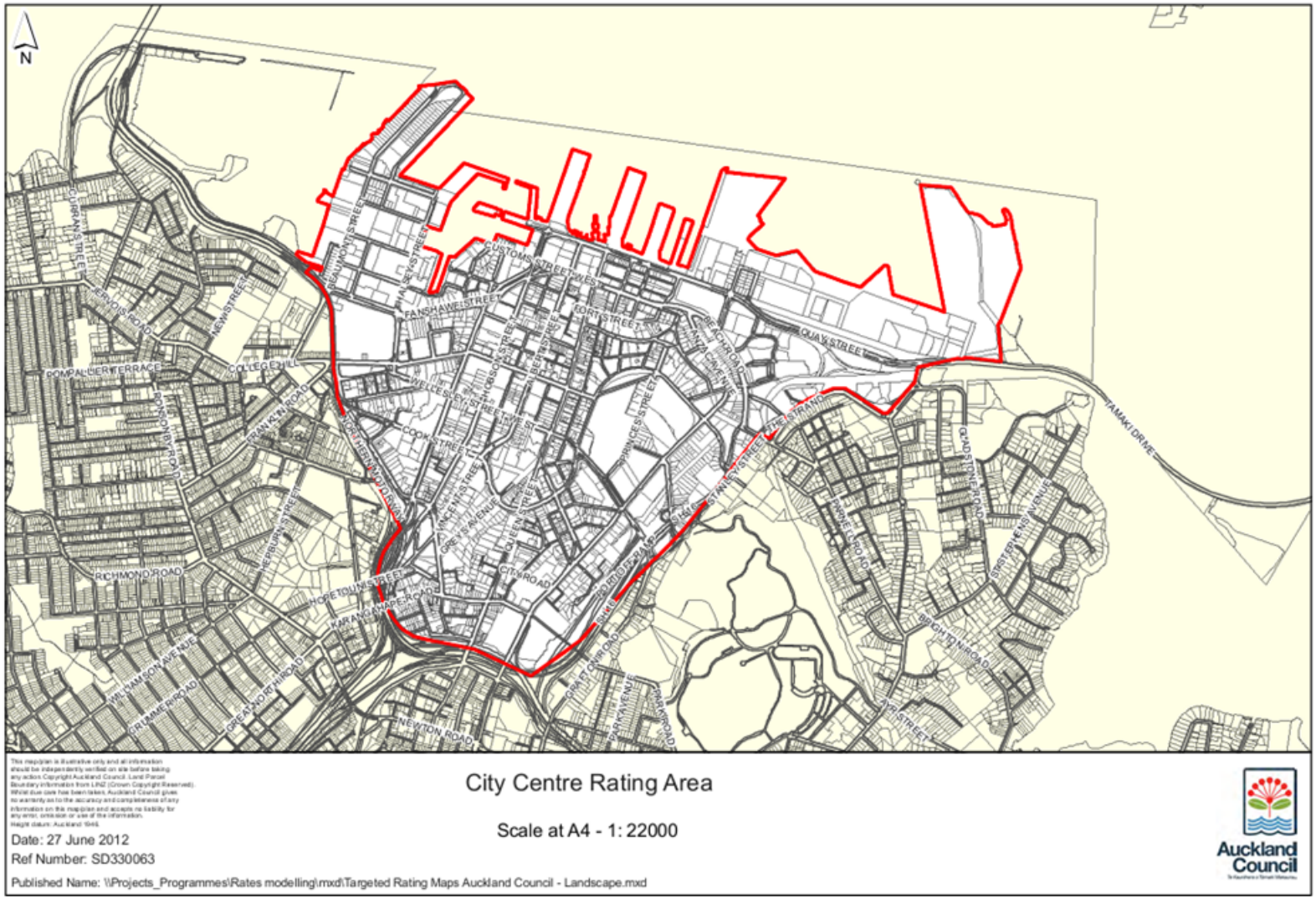
INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS	UPDATE
Safety and Compliance Measures				
Increase Police and Council presence in key areas to reduce harm, antisocial behaviour and improve public safety	a. Short term increased Police visibility in the central city b. Police and Council patrols focused on known 'hotspots' c. Police focus on enforcement of drug and alcohol laws	Police, Auckland Council	Transitioned to BAU	This work continues in a "Business as Usual" sense with Police and Council Compliance focused on priority locations and peak periods. Alcohol related disorder and public place violence connected to alcohol and several troublesome bars and clubs is an ongoing concern for police.
Support safer public spaces through environment design improvements	a. Implement redesign of Pocket Park (corner of Queen Street and Fort Street) b. Consider redesign of identified public 'hot spots'	Auckland Council	Ongoing	Work to address issues associated with repeat anti-social behaviour at the pocket park last year has been completed. Overall the number of hot spot areas have reduced. There remains a focus on the central Library, Ellen Melville, and ICBC. Work has been done to have trees trimmed around the CBD to allow better camera access particularly around areas known for anti-social behaviour.
Safety patrols	a. Explore opportunities for targeted patrols by private sector providers, Māori and Pacific Wardens	Auckland Council	In progress	Engagement with patrol partners is ongoing. Council is not commissioning any additional patrol services at this time.

				Safety hub on Queens wharf has been refurbished as a downtown base for Council Warden and CPNZ patrols.
Targeted enforcement actions on persistent offending	a. Focus enforcement actions on individuals and locations associated with criminal activity	Police, Auckland Council	In progress	Overall crime is trending positively. Police are concerned about increasing numbers of youths and young adults riding into the city in large groups on bikes and e-scooters, with risky behaviour creating safety risks. Several near-miss incidents have occurred. Enforcement action to date has included infringements and arrests, and activity is expected to continue through May. Compliance officers has raised concerns regarding one individual due to ongoing anti-social and abusive behaviour. Staff are working with Police to support consideration of appropriate enforcement options. Two previously housed individuals have returned to the streets and established an encampment. Outreach services are engaged to explore alternative accommodation, and planning is underway to remove the encampment and associated waste.
Social Assistance				
Enable support services to accompany Police, facilitating immediate referral for specific needs (mental health, drug and alcohol addiction, Temporary Housing)	a. Outreach teams accompany Police patrols, with office support available for immediate referrals to services	Shared responsibility	In progress	Outreach support alongside Police and Council continues, enabling real-time access to housing and wellbeing services. Kahui Tu Kaha and Compliance wardens remain engaged, supporting individuals into immediate access accommodation where appropriate. Health New Zealand and the Police are working to establish a co-response team in both Auckland and Counties Manukau. These teams will respond to mental health-related emergency calls and people in distress. Recruitment is underway, with a phased

				rollout planned across days and hours of operation. Go-live dates to be confirmed.
Review provision of hygiene/laundry/storage services in the city centre	a. Consider alternate sites for service provision	Auckland Council	In progress	Auckland Council considers that these services are currently operating without issue and for limited hours. A key focus is ensuring the surrounding areas are kept free from encampments and are well maintained. Community-led kai services are attracting large levels of uptake from individuals and families experiencing food poverty. Council has no active role in organising or controlling these events but is engaging with service organisers where there are issues that conflict with other activities in the city centre.
Provide additional housing options for rough sleepers	a. An additional 207 Housing First places (Auckland wide) b. Improved vacancy management of Housing First places within existing provision	HUD HUD	In progress	As of 29 April 2026, Auckland providers have finished leasing all 207 additional Housing First places. The programme has successfully housed 201 of these places so far. Providers continue sourcing properties from the private rental market to maximise capacity within existing contracts, with 81 tenancies commenced since September 2025. Overall at 29 April 2026, 463 new tenancies had commenced in Auckland through new leased places, maximising contracts and turnover of existing vacancies. In addition, 146 households over the last month, who were rough sleeping in Auckland have been housed in temporary accommodation (such as transitional housing) while awaiting social housing or other permanent housing. Outreach activity has supported ongoing engagement with rough sleepers, resulting in a consistent number of identified rough sleepers being connected into

				Immediate Access housing, health and social services and other housing pathways. Overall, the initiative has delivered continual growth in available housing and stable progress in placing people into homes.
Ensure city centre remains well managed and welcoming	a. Regular and consistent graffiti removal b. Rubbish collection to a high and regular standard	Auckland Council	Ongoing	
Expand daytime service provision	a. Provide funding for Day programme b. Provide collocated support services	HUD, Auckland Council MSD	In progress	Daily attendance at Aro ki te Ha continues strongly over the last month (23 March-29 April). with 1316 individuals having accessed the day programme. The Auckland City Mission Housing Assistance Centre has since supported over 450 people to access income or housing assistance, with 26 individuals housed to date and 141 added to the Housing Register. Auckland Council has confirmed funding to continue the programme beyond June 2026. HUD have sent advice to the Minister on continuing funding arrangements for the near-term initiatives after June 2026. Co-located services at HomeGround remain in place, supporting streamlined access to assistance as the programme beds in. Overall, agencies report continued momentum in increasing housing access and sustained placements.

Annex Five: City Centre targeted rate area



MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

EVENT BRIEFING

Carrington Road sod-turning event

To:	**Hon Simon Watts,** Minister for Auckland		
Date:	15 May 2026	**Time:**	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
Security classification:	**In Confidence**	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032117

Purpose

To provide you with logistical details, background information and a draft speech ahead of your attendance at the sod-turning event for the commencement of the Carrington Road Improvement Project on 15 May 2026 from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm.

Logistics

1. The Carrington Road Improvement Project sod-turning event will be held at Gladstone Primary School on Carrington Road in Mount Albert. You will be joined by the Mayor of Auckland, Auckland Transport senior leadership, local school representatives and invited stakeholders. The total duration of the event is approximately one hour and fifteen minutes.
2. The programme begins with a karakia, followed by introductory remarks from Stacey van der Putten, Acting Chief Executive of the transport council-controlled organisation (transport CCO, previously referred to as Auckland Transport). You are scheduled to speak for approximately 5-10 minutes, followed by a short address from Mayor Wayne Brown.
3. A kapa haka performance by Gladstone Primary School students will take place before invited guests cross Carrington Road at Unitec Gate 4 to participate in the sod-turning the Unitec campus site. Media interviews and photo opportunities will follow, along with light refreshments.

Background

4. The Carrington Road Improvement Project is a major transport infrastructure upgrade, currently led by the transport CCO, to support significant housing and population growth in the Mount Albert and Point Chevalier area. Carrington Road is a 1.6 kilometre arterial route that currently carries around 15,000 vehicles per day and plays a critical role in connecting residential neighbourhoods to public transport, local centres, State Highway 16 and the Northwestern Cycleway.
5. Over the next ten to fifteen years, at least 4,000 new homes will be delivered as part of Te Kukūnga Waka, the Carrington residential development on land formerly occupied by the Unitec campus. This large-scale development is being led by iwi partners in collaboration with the Crown and will substantially increase the number of people living, working and travelling along Carrington Road.
6. To respond to this growth, a comprehensive corridor upgrade is being delivered, which is funded through the Government's Infrastructure Acceleration Fund. The project includes upgrading underground services such as stormwater, wastewater, gas and utilities, undergrounding power along large sections of the corridor, improving safety and accessibility for people walking and cycling, increasing public transport reliability and capacity, and

improving overall corridor resilience. Construction is scheduled to commence in autumn 2026 and conclude in 2028.

7. The project has undergone extensive public and stakeholder engagement since 2023, including consultation with mana whenua, the Albert Eden Local Board, schools, residents and businesses. Feedback has shaped the final design, with strong support expressed for improvements that enhance safety and enable housing delivery while minimising long term disruption.
8. Parliament has recently enacted the Local Government (Auckland Council) (Transport Governance) Amendment Act 2026, which reforms transport governance, planning, and delivery arrangements in Auckland. Most local transport functions will shift from the transport CCO to Auckland Council. This includes responsibility for delivering the Carrington Road Improvement Project. A transition period of up to six months is underway, with the new arrangements expected to be implemented by October 2026.

Key messages

9. The Carrington Road Improvement Project is a practical example of coordinated investment in transport and housing infrastructure that supports Auckland's growth and liveability.
10. The project enables the delivery of thousands of new homes close to public transport, education, local services and employment opportunities, aligning with the Government's focus on housing supply in well-connected locations.
11. Construction starting in 2026 reflects the progress made in planning, funding and community engagement, and demonstrates momentum in Auckland's infrastructure pipeline.
12. The sod-turning marks not just the beginning of construction, but a long-term investment in safer roads, better travel choices and stronger neighbourhoods.
13. Responsibility for delivering the Carrington Road Improvement Project will soon transfer to Auckland Council, following the Government's reforms to transport governance, planning, and delivery arrangements in Auckland. These reforms are intended to strengthen democratic accountability in transport decision-making and support more effective long-term planning between central government and Auckland Council.

Risks and mitigations

14. Construction will result in disruption for residents, schools and road users along Carrington Road. Auckland Transport has committed to ongoing community communication, staged construction planning and measures to minimise impacts during peak periods.
15. No specific Ministerial risk issues have been identified for this event.

Communications and media

16. Media attendance is anticipated, with filming and photography opportunities scheduled immediately following the sod-turning.

17. Messaging could emphasise partnership between central and local government, iwi, the transport CCO and the community. Any media questions are likely to focus on construction impacts, housing delivery and the Government's infrastructure priorities in Auckland.

Biographies



Stacey van der Putten, Incoming CEO, transport CCO

Stacey van der Putten is the incoming Chief Executive of the transport CCO, appointed to lead the organisation through a period of transition and reform from May 2026. An experienced public transport leader, she has served the transport CCO (previously Auckland Transport) since 2017 in a range of senior roles, most recently as Director of Public Transport and Active Modes.

Prior to joining Auckland Transport, Stacey spent more than 16 years in senior leadership roles across the private sector, including public housing, healthcare, construction and defence.

Annexes

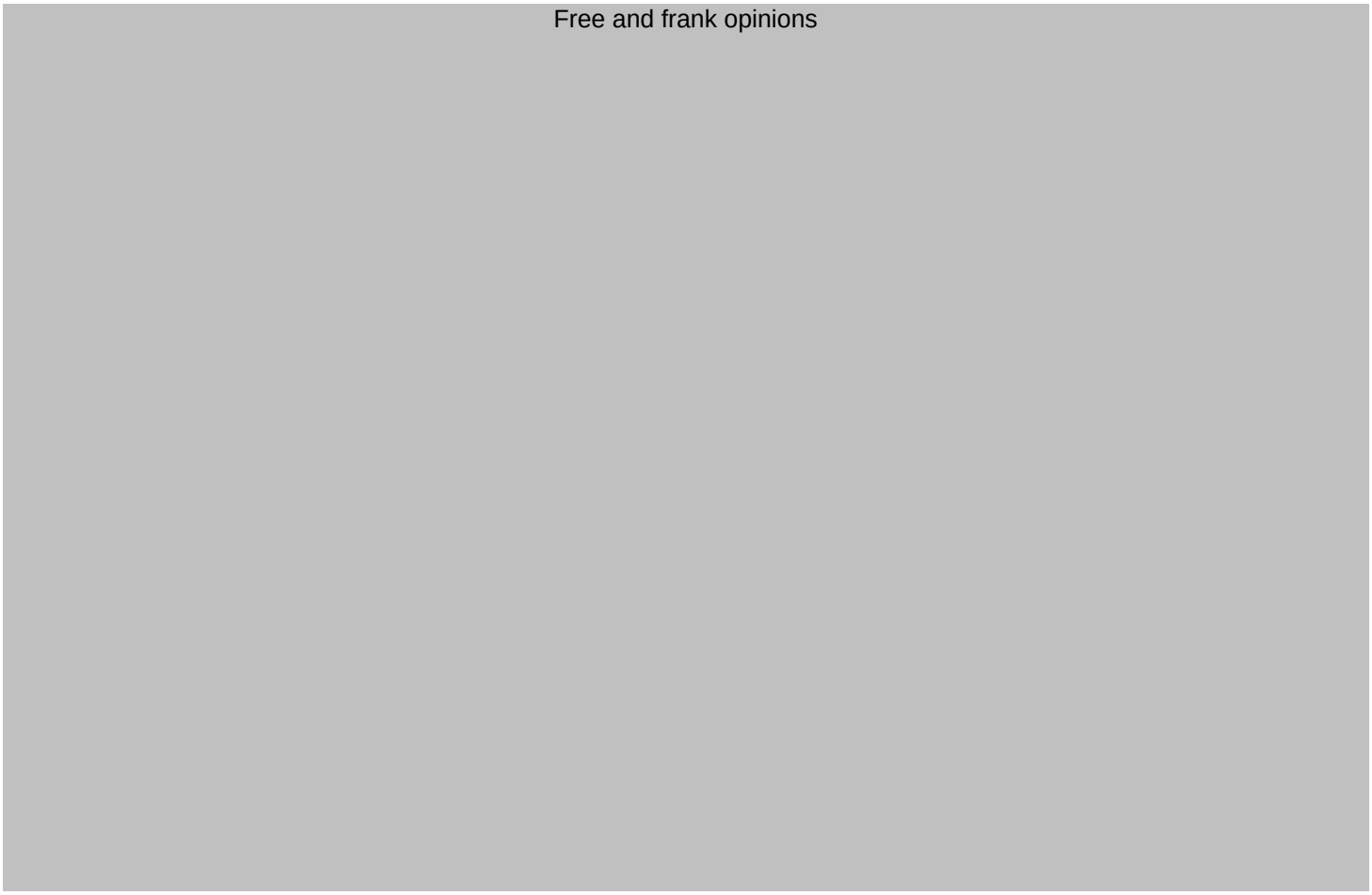
Annex one: Draft speech

Annex Two: Q+A and informal talking points

Free and frank opinions

Free and frank opinions

Free and frank opinions


Free and frank opinions

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

MEETING BRIEFING

Martinus Rail

To:	**Hon Simon Watts,** Minister for Auckland		
Date:	20 May 2026	**Time:**	12:00 pm - 12:30 pm
Security classification:	**In Confidence**	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032502

Purpose

To provide you with logistical details and background information ahead of your online meeting with representatives from Martinus Rail on Wednesday 20 May from 12:00 pm to 12:30 pm.

Logistics

1. The meeting has been requested by Martinus Rail and will be attended by Graham Bradley, General Manager of Martinus New Zealand, alongside Fletcher Tabuteau, Director Capital Government Relations and Communications and representative for Martinus Rail.

Background

2. Martinus Rail is an Australasian rail infrastructure contractor with operations across Australia, New Zealand, North America and South America. In New Zealand, the company has been operating since 2016 and is based in Auckland. Martinus specialises in complex rail systems, including track, civil works, overhead traction and possession management. It is the only rail contractor in New Zealand to hold a Rail Operator Licence issued by NZTA, allowing it to operate specialist machinery directly on the KiwiRail network under its own rail safety case.
3. Martinus played a significant role in the delivery of Auckland's City Rail Link (CRL), completing approximately 48 million dollars of track and overhead wiring works between 2020 and 2022 as part of the Link Alliance programme. This included installation of track, ballast and overhead systems through the CRL tunnels and at Waitematā Station.
4. CRL is scheduled to open to passengers in the second half of 2026 and will significantly increase rail capacity across Auckland's network. Once operational, CRL is expected to enable trains to run every four to five minutes on core routes at peak, substantially increasing train movements on the Western Line, Southern Line and other connected corridors. Responsibility for service patterns and timetables will sit with Auckland Transport and KiwiRail once the infrastructure is fully handed over.
5. Martinus has raised concerns that increased train frequencies will exacerbate congestion and disruption at remaining road and rail level crossings, particularly on the Western Line where 21 level crossings remain. They argue that frequent barrier closures will cause significant congestion and may constrain Auckland Transport's ability to operate the level of rail service anticipated from the investment in CRL. These concerns align with public statements from the Auckland Transport acknowledging that level crossings will become a binding constraint as rail frequencies increase.
6. Martinus notes that Auckland Transport's current programme focuses primarily on conventional grade separation solutions such as road overbridges. Martinus contends that alternative

engineering approaches could deliver separation outcomes more quickly, at lower cost and with less community disruption, and wishes to outline these ideas in a preliminary discussion.

7. Auckland Transport are currently in the process of producing a Single Stage Business Case for the next stage of the level crossing programme (for the Western line). At this stage, no decisions have been made with regards to solutions and the Ministry of Transport expects all options to be considered through the business case process. The business case is scheduled for completion in 2027.

Meeting context

8. Martinus has emphasised that it is not seeking immediate intervention or commitment. Its stated objective is to ensure that the implications of CRL-driven increases in train frequency are fully understood, and that a wider range of technical solutions to level crossings is considered early, particularly in light of the recently signed Auckland City and Regional Deal which identifies transport network constraints as a priority area.
9. The meeting presents an opportunity to listen to industry perspectives.

Risks and mitigations

10. The purpose of Martinus Rail in meeting with you is to present their concerns related to level crossings impacting the effective operation of CRL, present their solution to the issues and will likely advocate for their involvement in ongoing work. Decisions related to level crossing removal currently sit outside your formal portfolio responsibilities.

Biographies

	**Graham Bradley, General Manager, Martinus New Zealand** Graham Bradley is the General Manager of Martinus New Zealand, leading the company's rail infrastructure operations across the country. He has more than 15 years of experience in the rail and infrastructure sector, with a career spanning New Zealand, Australia and international projects. In New Zealand, he played a leadership role in the City Rail Link, overseeing track and overhead works through complex underground environments.
	**Fletcher Tabuteau, Director, Capital Government Relations and Communications** Fletcher Tabuteau is a Director with experience in public policy, infrastructure and economic development. He served as a Member of Parliament from 2014 to 2020 and as Deputy Leader of New Zealand First, holding Parliamentary Under-Secretary roles covering Regional Economic Development, Foreign Affairs and Trade. Since leaving Parliament, Tabuteau has advised businesses on navigating government, infrastructure investment and regulatory processes. He works with Martinus Rail in a strategic advisory and director capacity.

Annexes

Annex One: Suggested talking points

Annex one: Suggested talking points

Confidential advice to Government

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Letter to Auckland Mayor Brown

Date:	13 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032973

Action sought		
	Action sought	**Deadline**
Hon Simon Watts **Minister for Auckland**	**Sign** the attached letter to Mayor Brown	15 May 2026

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Michael Quinn	Head of the Auckland Policy Office	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Andy Hill	Director Auckland		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Minister's office to complete:

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

Comments

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Letter to Auckland Mayor Brown

Date:	13 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032973

Purpose

To provide a follow-up letter to the Mayor of Auckland, confirming key points of alignment your meeting on 7 May 2026.

Executive summary

You met with Mayor Brown on 7 May 2026, and you requested a follow-up letter to confirm key points from the meeting.

A draft letter is attached for your signature. It notes that the discussion was constructive and records agreement to focus on maximising the benefits of the City Rail Link opening. It also emphasises the need to proceed at pace to operationalise the Auckland City and Regional Deal.

Free and frank opinions

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

a **Sign** the attached letter to the Mayor of Auckland.

Agree / Disagree

Michael Quinn

Head of the Auckland Policy Office

13 / May / 2026

Hon Simon Watts

Minister for Auckland

..... / ..... / .....

Annexes

Annex One: Letter to the Mayor of Auckland

Annex One: Letter to the Mayor of Auckland

Hon Simon Watts

Minister of Climate Change
Minister of Local Government
Minister of Revenue
Minister for Auckland

Free and frank opinions

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand | +64 4 817 6814 | s.watts@ministers.govt.nz

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Auckland City Rail Link Sponsor Letter

Date:	14 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0033072

Action sought		
	Action sought	**Deadline**
Hon Simon Watts **Minister for Auckland**	**Sign** the attached letter to the Minister of Transport	21 May 2026

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Michael Quinn	Head of the Auckland Policy Office	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Andy Hill	Director Auckland		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Minister's office to complete:

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

Comments

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Auckland City Rail Link Sponsor Letter

Date:	14 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0033072

Purpose

To provide you with a letter to the Minister of Transport regarding your participation in City Rail Link sponsorship arrangements.

Executive summary

You asked for advice on how you could become more involved in the City Rail Link project at a governance level, particularly as the project moves toward commencement of operations and the focus increasingly shifts toward activation, city centre outcomes and wider economic benefits.

You also asked about the City Rail Link Sponsors Group and the options for formal participation within those arrangements. (BRIEFING-REQ-0032203 refers)

Subsequent to that advice, the Minister of Transport agreed to invite you to attend the CRL Sponsor meetings. You have indicated an interest in exploring whether your participation could now be formalised given the significance of the next phase of the project and its connection to your Auckland portfolio responsibilities.

Confidential advice to Government

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

a **Note** the contents of this report

Noted

b **Agree** to send the attached letter to the Minister of Transport, copied to the Minister of Finance

Agree / Disagree



Michael Quinn

Head of the Auckland Policy Office

14 / May / 2026

Hon Simon Watts

Minister for Auckland

..... / ..... / .....

Annex

Annex One: Draft letter to the Minister of Transport

Annex One: Letter to the Minister of Transport

[Attached]

Hon Simon Watts

Minister of Climate Change
Minister of Local Government
Minister of Revenue
Minister for Auckland

Free and frank opinions

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand | +64 4 817 6814 | s.watts@ministers.govt.nz

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

AIDE MEMOIRE

Information on Government's major events involvement

Date:	15 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032403

Information for Minister(s)
Hon Simon Watts **Minister for Auckland**

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Deborah Jones	Manager, Major Events	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Lisa Gibson	Principal Advisor, Major Events		
Katie Ayers	Advisor, Major Events		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
N/A

Purpose

To provide you with information on Government's involvement in major events and support for Auckland-based events.

Deborah Jones
Manager, Major Events
Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE

14 /05 /2026

Background

1. This paper provides an overview of Government's involvement in major events, and outlines how the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and Tātaki Auckland Unlimited collaborate to secure and support the delivery of major events in Auckland.

Role of central and local government in events

2. New Zealand's events sector is broad, involving a wide range of organisations and entities that support delivery of various types (eg sporting, arts, culture and business events) and scales. These include local events (primarily for local audiences), regional events (with mainly domestic participants), major events (with international participation and strong economic benefits) and mega events (large-scale international events delivering significant national impact).

3. While many smaller events are delivered without government support, local government typically invests in events that deliver targeted regional benefits, such as economic activity and community outcomes. Central government intervention addresses market gaps, supporting events that generate wider national economic, social and cultural spill-over benefits that would otherwise not occur or be fully realised.

Government's involvement in major events

4. Major events deliver important benefits for New Zealand. Government defines major events as those that are, or have the potential to be, internationally significant—generating interest, profile and visitation from outside New Zealand. To meet this threshold, events should showcase distinctive New Zealand elements, demonstrate clear international interest and provide opportunities to promote New Zealand on a global stage. Examples of upcoming major events include The Ocean Race 2027 and Women's British and Irish Lions Tour 2027.

5. A Major Events Strategy (the Strategy) guides government's involvement in events. A summary of the Strategy is attached at **Annex One**. The Strategy was updated in September 2024, to align it with Government's key priorities, including economic growth. Major events generate direct economic benefits by attracting international visitors and increasing visitor spend. They also deliver indirect outcomes by using event platforms to raise New Zealand's international profile as a tourism and business destination, helping to stimulate future travel and investment.

6. The Major Events Fund (MEF) supports the implementation of the Major Events Strategy by enabling investment in events that deliver targeted national benefits. The MEF is a circa $60 million fund managed in five-year multi-year appropriations (MYA). Demand for MEF investment is increasing due to rising global and domestic event delivery costs, financial pressures on event organisers and constrained local government event funding.

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

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

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

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

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

9. There are also other avenues through which events can be supported by Government. The one off $40 million Events Attraction Package and $10 million Events Boost Fund were established under the Government's Major Events and Tourism Package announced in September 2025. See **Annex Two**.

New Zealand Major Events – key functions

10. New Zealand Major Events (NZME) at MBIE is Government's lead agency for major events across prospecting, investment and 'whole of Government' coordination and facilitation functions. NZME sits in the Tourism and Hospitality branch and reports to the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality. The team's role includes the below key functions.

Providing Ministerial advice on how events align with government objectives

11. NZME provides strategic advice to Ministers on major events and the implementation of the Strategy. The Minister for Tourism and Hospitality holds decision-making responsibility for the MEF and approves all investments. NZME undertakes robust due diligence on MEF applications and provides investment advice to the Minister.

12. The investment advice provided by MBIE includes an assessment of an event's alignment with MEF criteria, cost–benefit analysis of the proposal and feedback from relevant government agencies. The Minister for Tourism and Hospitality may seek input from Ministerial colleagues, where appropriate, to inform investment decisions. This may include seeking your views on proposals of particular significance to Auckland.

Partnering with stakeholders to attract, deliver and leverage major events

NZME prospects for new major events content

13. NZME identifies internationally significant major events that deliver targeted outcomes and support a consistent pipeline of event content for New Zealand. This involves partnering with stakeholders to identify, assess and bid for viable opportunities. Event prospecting is guided by a 'portfolio by design' approach, which considers factors such as seasonal spread, regional distribution and a balanced mix of content across sports, arts and cultural content. The three MEF investment focus areas inform the identification and prioritisation of event opportunities.

New Zealand's event hosting reputation

14. Despite challenges such as high travel costs, climate-related impacts, infrastructure constraints and limited funding (compared to other countries), New Zealand has established a strong global reputation as a high-quality host of international events.

15. Building and maintaining strong relationships with international event rights holders, owners and key stakeholders is critical to effective event prospecting. This requires ongoing offshore engagement to sustain connections and ensure decision makers

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

remain aware of New Zealand's capacity and capability to successfully host major international events.

Mega events

16. Mega events are the largest and most complex events to host. They can deliver significant targeted outcomes with long-lasting national impacts as they can catalyse broader change, infrastructure development and wider benefits.

17. Mega events, seeking investment over $10 million, are funded outside of the MEF through a separate Cabinet process. This process is informed by robust analysis, including feasibility studies and detailed business cases. Under the Strategy, mega events are targeted approximately every five years, recognising the significant planning, investment and long lead times required to successfully secure and deliver them.

ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2028 is a mega event that will be co-hosted with Australia

18. New Zealand and Australia secured joint hosting rights for the 2028 International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's T20 World Cup, Negotiations On 23 February 2026, the Cabinet Business Committee Confidential advice to to support New Zealand co-hosting the T20 with Australia. NZME will establish a project team to support delivery of this event.

MEF events are leveraged to maximise and secure benefits

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

Event coordination and facilitation

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

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

Major Events Management Act 2007 (MEMA)

22. The MEMA provides protections for events that are declared to be 'major events' under the Act. These protections are designed to prevent unauthorised commercial exploitation (eg through ambush marketing) that could undermine the interests of event organisers and official sponsors, thereby supporting the smooth running of the event.

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

Auckland and Tātaki Auckland Unlimited are central to New Zealand's major and mega event hosting capability

24. Auckland and Tātaki Auckland Unlimited (TAU) have a vital role in New Zealand's events ecosystem. In many cases, Auckland is the only city capable of meeting international event requirements for major and mega events due to scale, infrastructure and international connectivity. TAU supports and delivers a range of Auckland-based events. The TAU team:

    a. funds and delivers major regional events (Auckland Lantern Festival, BNZ Auckland Diwali Festival, Moana Festival and Pasifika Festival)

    b. co-invests in MEF and Cabinet-funded major and mega events (e.g., The Ocean Race 2027 and FIFA Women's World Cup 2023)

    c. leads event prospecting and bid activity; and

    d. coordinates regional facilitation to support event delivery.

25. NZME and TAU maintain a close and collaborative working relationship. This includes regular monthly meetings as well as previous joint participation in international delegations to support event attraction and prospecting efforts.

Recent Auckland event support

26. Auckland based MEF supported events include the New Zealand Sail Grand Prix (2025–2026), the World Dance Crew Championship (2025), the Ocean Race Auckland Stopover (2027) and State of Origin (2027). A list of upcoming Auckland events receiving central government support[2] is at **Annex Three**. The wider MEF portfolio of events is at **Annex Four**.

Matters for your awareness

Auckland major event underwrite fund

27. In 2024, Auckland Mayor Wayne Brown released a Draft Mayoral Proposal which showed a $7 million events funding shortfall. In 2025, Auckland Council approved the creation of an underwrite facility to support major events. Mayor Brown continues to call for an accommodation levy to provide a long-term funding source for major events.

Auckland City and Regional Deal

28. In April 2026, an Auckland City and Regional Deal (the Deal) was signed by central government and Auckland Council. The Deal includes commitments to co-design a destination management and major events strategy recognising the role of major events in supporting tourism, enhancing Auckland's international profile, and contributing to broader economic outcomes.

29. The Auckland City Deal recognises Eden Park as New Zealand's national stadium and commits to reviewing its ownership and operating model, alongside investment in related infrastructure and the wider stadium network. It also supports planning changes to increase the number and scale of events the venue can host, strengthening its role in attracting major international events. NZME will engage with TAU representatives and

[2] Including the Major Events Fund, Event Attraction Package and the Events Boost Fund.

other key stakeholders to support the development of these initiatives and ensure alignment between national and regional priorities for major events.

Events Review

30. The Minister for Tourism and Hospitality has commissioned a review of New Zealand's events system, examining how events are planned for, funded, and delivered across the full ecosystem. Confidential advice to Government

Major events and Auckland portfolio connections

31. As noted, the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality may seek your views on major event proposals with significance for Auckland, particularly as the Deal is now in place. You may also receive invitations from the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality to attend Auckland-based MEF-supported events.

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

How NZME can support you

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

Annexes

Annex One: The Major Events Fund and the Major Events Strategy

Annex Two: Additional central government event funding initiatives to support event investment

Annex Three: Upcoming Auckland portfolio of central government supported events

Annex Four: Current Major Events Fund Portfolio

Annex One: The Major Events Fund and the Major Events Strategy

Attached as a separate document.

NEW ZEALAND MAJOR EVENTS

Purpose and Vision

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

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

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

www.majorevents.govt.nz

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

Major event priorities

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

PRIORITY ONE: Securing economic benefits

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

PRIORITY TWO: Driving international exposure

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

PRIORITY THREE: Building national pride

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

PRIORITY FOUR: Enhancing our reputation

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

PRIORITY FIVE: Advancing government priorities

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

Evaluation

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

Leverage and Legacy

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

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

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

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

NZME 11165

NEW ZEALAND MAJOR EVENTS

Investment criteria

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

- Be a major event by government's definition:

  Government defines a major event as an event that is, or has the potential to be, internationally significant by which it generates international interest or visitation from outside New Zealand, profiles New Zealand on an international platform and offers elements that are uniquely New Zealand.
- Be a sports, arts or cultural event delivered onshore.
- Meet baseline application requirements listed on www.majorevents.govt.nz.

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MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Investment criteria

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

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

Criteria:

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

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

Criteria:

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

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

Criteria:

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

Events that do not align with Investment Focus Areas

This avenue is considered by exception and by invitation only. It can be used to proactively fill gaps in the major events portfolio.

NEW ZEALAND MAJOR EVENTS

Portfolio by Design

To actively curate a balanced portfolio, prospecting activity is conducted under a 'portfolio by design' approach which considers factors such as seasonal and regional distribution, balance of content (sport versus art and culture, sport code and genre variety) and cluster alignment. Criteria presented in the three investment focus areas guide prospect identification.

The major events portfolio is presented across four pillars:

PILLAR ONE: Targeted
These events are the core focus of the prospecting function and form most of the Major Events Fund portfolio. The identification of these events is informed by the portfolio by design approach - identifying where portfolio gaps lie, specific events of interest (with consideration to government objectives) working in conjunction with stakeholder partners at national sport, arts and cultural organisations and host cities. *Example events include IRONMAN 70.3 World Championships, World Choir Games, The Ocean Race, British and Irish Lions Women's Tour.*

PILLAR TWO: Anchor
Major events delivered on a recurring basis that drive strong economic, reputational, and social benefits that require government investment to secure benefits. We aim to have five or six anchor events in the Major Events Fund portfolio at any time, with new events coming online as current events become more sustainable. *Example events include Crankworx Rotorua, Winter Games NZ, New Zealand Sail Grand Prix, ITM Taupō Super 400, New Zealand Open.*

PILLAR THREE: Homegrown
Nurture and support for homegrown events that ensure intellectual property is owned and retained for New Zealand, that drive business for New Zealand companies and where investment secures targeted benefits for government. Government works closely with event owners to shape an event to secure greater leverage and legacy opportunities for New Zealand. The growth of creative and cultural events is supported through this pillar. These events may also sit under the Anchor pillar. *Example events include World Dance Crew Championships, Pasifika Festival, Winter Games NZ, Rainbow Games, Global Youth Sevens.*

PILLAR FOUR: Mega
Mega event opportunities require significant investments of time and money to secure. Those seeking investment of over $10 million are funded via a separate Cabinet process (outside the Major Events Fund). Due to cost and scale we aim to secure one mega event every 3-4 years. The ICC T20 World Cup 2028 is New Zealand's next mega event. Noting that not all will be secured, we are actively targeting four other mega events over the next ten years. *Examples of past events include 36th America's Cup, FIFA Women's World Cup 2023.*

Prospecting

Prospecting work is conducted over a ten-year lens.

Strategic Clusters

Clustering events by themes within the portfolio can amplify benefits for New Zealand and accelerate the advancement of government objectives in targeted areas. Themed clusters can raise New Zealand's global profile and provide consistency of product to both the sector and the community. The aggregated value of clustered events has been proven to exceed that of ad-hoc programming.

Alongside prospecting to secure globally significant events (including mega events) that align with criteria and resonate with New Zealanders, two strategic clusters will guide proactive prospecting activity:

Women and Girls:
Building on the momentum generated delivering four major women's events from 2021 to 2023, the Major Events Fund portfolio will feature at least one women and girls' focused sports event per annum. This consistent programming supports the advancement of Sport NZ's strategy in high-performance sport and women and girls' priority areas.

› ***Eleven event opportunities*** *delivered from 2024 to 2031 have been identified under this cluster.*

Potikitanga:
Events that showcase New Zealand's creativity, ingenuity, diversity, and adventurous spirit amplify our potikitanga. Major events focusing on urban, nature, or adrenaline-based content appeal to new audiences and speak to our adventurous and innovative values. These events provide a point of difference when positioning New Zealand as a global event host and create new leverage and legacy opportunities

› ***Twenty event opportunities*** *delivered from 2024 to 2031 have been identified under this cluster.*

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MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
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New Zealand Government

NZME 11165

Annex Two: Additional central government event funding initiatives to support event investment

In September 2025, Cabinet approved a $40 million Events Attraction Package (EAP) for 2026–2027, alongside a $10 million Events Boost Fund (EBF) for 2026, funded through the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy [CAB-25-MIN-0307]. These initiatives form part of the broader Major Events and Tourism Package. NZME has operational responsibility for both funds.

Event Attraction Package (EAP)

The EAP is designed to enable a more agile and coordinated "NZ Inc" approach to securing high-profile international events. It complements the MEF by:

- Supporting time-sensitive opportunities where New Zealand must respond quickly to secure events.
- Targeting large-scale, internationally significant events that deliver strong economic and destination-marketing outcomes.
- Enabling a whole-of-government response, supported by a dedicated Secretariat within NZME.

Events supported through the EAP are to be delivered from 2026 – 2027 and are expected to drive significant international visitation, media exposure, and economic impact.

The Events Boost Fund (EBF)

The EBF is a $10 million, time-limited fund supporting events delivered by December 2026. The EBF focuses on driving immediate international visitation and short-term economic activity, supporting the recovery and growth of the tourism and events sectors. To be eligible, events must:

- Be delivered in New Zealand before the end of 2026.
- Demonstrate the ability to attract international visitors within a short timeframe.
- Be investment-ready, with delivery plans largely in place.
- Show clear, measurable economic benefits.

The EBF portfolio of events has been confirmed, with most contracting completed.

Annex Three: Upcoming Auckland portfolio of central government supported events

Event	Event Type	Funding Mechanism	Multi-year investment	Investment level	Event dates	Announced
UNESCO City of Music 2026	Campaign	EBF	No	$150,000	January 10 – December 30 2026	Yes
& Juliet* 2026	Musical	EBF	No	$275,000	9 April – 13 June 2026	Yes
Forever Tomorrow: Chinese Art Now 2026	Exhibition	EBF	No	$90,000	2 May – 23 August 2026	Yes
Auckland Writers Festival Waituhi o Tāmaki 2026	Festival	EBF	No	$100,000	12 – 17 May 2026	Yes
FIH Nations Cup 2026	Sport	EBF	No	$250,000	15 – 21 June 2026	Yes
Doc Edge: Life Unscripted Festival 2026	Festival	MEF (Incubator)	No	$100,000	24 June – 12 July 2026	N/A
NZ International Football Festival – Tottenham Hotspur vs. Auckland FC 2026	Sport	EAP	No	Commercially sensitive	26 July 2026	Yes
NZ International Football Festival – Chelsea Women vs. Auckland XI 2026	Sport	EAP	No	Commercially sensitive	8 August 2026	Yes
New Zealand Fashion Week and Christchurch Spring Fashion Festival* 2026	Festival	EBF	No	$250,000	17 August – 1 November 2026	Yes
India/NZ: 100 Years of Unity through Sport 2026 [IN CONFIDENCE]	Sport	EBF	No	$640,000	1 – 30 November 2026	No
Robbie Williams* 2026	Concert	EAP	No	Commercially sensitive	24 November 2026	Yes
New Zealand Women's Open Championship 2027 Confidential advice to	Sport	MEF	Confidential advice to Government		March 2027 (exact dates TBC)	No
Confidential advice to Government						
The Ocean Race Auckland Stopover 2027	Sport	MEF	No	Up to $4,000,000	19 February – 14 March 2027	Yes
State of Origin	Sport	MEF	No	Confidential advice to Government	May/June TBC	Yes
Women's British Irish Lions Tour*	Sport	MEF	No	$3,900,000	4 – 25 September 2027	Yes
ILCA Sailing World Championship 2028	Sport	MEF	No	$250,000	29 January – 18 February 2028	Yes
Confidential advice to Government						

*Multi-region event

Annex Four: Current Major Events Fund Portfolio

Provided as a separate document.

Major Events Fund Pipeline 2026-2031+

Date: 14 May 2026

	2026	$(M)	2027	$(M)	2028	$(M)	2029	$(M)	2030	$(M)	2031	$(M)
1	ITM NZ Sail Grand Prix 2023-2026 Auckland	2.34	The Ocean Race Auckland	4.00	Confidential advice to Government		Confidential advice to Government		Confidential advice to Government		Confidential advice to Government	
2	World Triathlon Cup 2026 Tauranga	0.10	World Triathlon Series 2027 Tauranga	0.75	World Triathlon Championship Finals 2028 Tauranga	1.80						
	ITM Taupo Supercars 440 2024-2026 Taupō	1.00	ITM Taupo Supercars 400 2027-2028 Taupō	1.60	ITM Taupo Supercars 400 2027-2028 Taupō	1.60						
3	ITM Supercars Christchurch 2026-2028 Christchurch	1.30	ITM Supercars Christchurch 2026-2028 Christchurch	0.70	ITM Supercars Christchurch 2026-2028 Christchurch	0.70						
4	New Zealand Open 2025-2027 Queenstown	1.00	New Zealand Open 2025-2027 Queenstown	0.60	The World ILCA Sailing Championship Auckland	0.25						
5	Women's Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship (Golf) Wellington	0.40	New Zealand Womens Open 2027 Auckland	1.00	Confidential advice to Government							
7	Crankworx Rotorua 2022-2027 Rotorua	0.80	Crankworx Rotorua 2022-2027 Rotorua	0.80								
8	Crankworx Christchurch 2022-2027 Christchurch	0.75	Crankworx Christchurch 2022-2027 Christchurch	0.75								
9	NRL Indigneous Allstars 2026 Hamilton	0.31	British Irish Lions Women's Series Multi-City	3.90								
10	ASB Polyfest 2025-2027 Auckland	0.10	State of Origin Auckland	2.55								
11	World Buskers Festival 2025-2027 Christchurch	0.10	ASB Polyfest 2025-2027 Auckland	0.10								
12	NZ International Science Festival 2025-2027 Dunedin	0.10	World Buskers Festival 2025-2027 Christchurch	0.10								
13	Doc Edge Film Festival 2024-2026 Auckland & Wellington	0.10	NZ International Science Festival 2025-2027 Dunedin	0.10							**Opportunities 2032 onwards:**	
14	Confidential advice to Government		Confidential advice to Government								Confidential advice to Government	
15	*NB: PLUS Events Boost Fund events*											
16	*NB: PLUS Events Attraction Package events*											
17												
19												
20												
21												
22												
23												
24												
25												
26												

Metro:
Non-metro:
Multi Region
TBC:

KEY:

Focus Area ONE	Focus Area TWO	Focus Area THREE	Incubator	Mega event (cabinet)
Confirmed / Contracted	**Application / EOI / Strong Prospect**	***ACTIVE Prospecting***	***Other Opportunities***	

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

MEETING BRIEFING

Meeting with Dr. Madan Mohan Sethi, Consul General of India

Date:	19 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032845

Action sought		
	Action sought	**Deadline**
Hon Simon Watts **Minister for Auckland**	**Note** contents of this report	29 May 2026

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Michael Quinn	Head of the Auckland Policy Office	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Andy Hill	Director Auckland		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
MFAT

Minister's office to complete:

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

Comments

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

MEETING BRIEFING

Meeting with Dr. Madan Mohan Sethi, Consul General of India

Date:	19 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032845

Purpose

You have agreed to meet with Dr. Madan Mohan Sethi, Consul General of India on Tuesday 2 June 2026. This brief provides information to support the meeting.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

a **Note** the contents of this report.

Noted

b **Note** you do not require a pre-briefing from MFAT officials

Noted

a **Note** that an MBIE official will accompany you to the meeting

Noted

Michael Quinn

Head of the Auckland Policy Office

19 / May / 2026

Hon Simon Watts

Minister for Auckland

..... / ..... / .....

Background and logistics

1. You have agreed to meet with Dr. Madan Mohan Sethi, Consul General of India.

2. The meeting will take place at the Auckland Policy Office (APO) on Tuesday 2 June 2026 between 4pm and 4.30pm.

3. You do not require a pre-briefing from MFAT officials. An MBIE official will attend the meeting to record any key points or follow-up actions.

Topics for discussion

4. Dr Sethi contacted you in April to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Auckland. Dr Sethi sought to meet with you to discuss "areas of mutual cooperation and to explore how the Auckland portfolio might best leverage this engagement to secure enduring benefits for the region".

5. The following information has been supplied by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

Bilateral relationship

6. Strengthening relations with India is a priority for New Zealand. India is the most populous country in the world, on track to be the third largest economy and is an increasingly active and influential global actor. Developing a broad-based relationship with India benefits New Zealand's security and prosperity.

7. On 27 April 2026, the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement was jointly signed in New Delhi by Minister McClay and India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal.

8. Political engagement has increased significantly in recent years. MFAT are preparing for a visit by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi to New Zealand in July 2026 (this is not yet confirmed nor publicly announced). This would be the first visit to New Zealand by an Indian Prime Minister in 40 years and would be a significant undertaking.

International relations

Economic contribution of Auckland's Indian ethnic community

12. A 2026 study on the economic contribution of ethnic minority communities to Auckland identifies the Indian community as one of Auckland's largest ethnic groups. The study indicates that, in 2023, the Indian population in Auckland was approaching the size of the Māori population.

13. The study identifies Indian and Chinese communities as major contributors to Auckland's recent ethnic diversification. It also notes that Asian communities have a younger age profile than the Auckland average and are concentrated in family-formation and prime working-age groups.

14. The study also records broader labour market findings for ethnic minority communities in Auckland that are relevant context for the Indian community. These include comparatively high rates of tertiary qualification and labour market participation, alongside lower average incomes and lower representation in managerial roles than the wider population. The study attributes these patterns, in part, to structural barriers such as non-recognition of overseas qualifications and limited access to professional networks.

15. Overall, the study presents Auckland's Indian community as a significant and growing component of the city's population within a broader pattern of increasing ethnic diversity and a rising ethnic minority share of Auckland's working-age population.

16. The study was jointly commissioned by the APO, MBIE, the Minstry for Ethnic Communities and the Waitakere Ethnic Board and undertaken by economist Shamubeel Eaqub and completed in January 2026.

Annexes

Annex One: Biographies of Attendees

Annex Two: Talking Points

Annex One: Biographies of attendees

	**Dr. Madan Mohan Sethi, Consul General of India** Dr Sethi joined the Indian Foreign Service in 2006. Before that he worked in the healthcare sector in India. Dr Sethi has served in various diplomatic positions in Myanmar, Italy and Viet Nam, and held senior roles in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. He was appointed Consul General to New Zealand in November 2024.

Free and frank opinions

International relations

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Government - Industry Cruise Forum: Additional Auckland Context

Date:	19 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032827

Action sought		
	Action sought	**Deadline**
Hon Simon Watts **Minister for Auckland**	**Note** the contents of this briefing	26 May 2026

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Michael Quinn	Head of the Auckland Policy Office	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Andy Hill	Director Auckland		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Minister's office to complete:

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

Comments

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Government - Industry Cruise Forum: Additional Auckland Context

Date:	19 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032827

Purpose

You are joining the Cruise Forum on 26 May 2026. This is a two-hour Ministerial and industry stakeholder meeting chaired by the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality. You will attend for the first 30 minutes.

A briefing has been prepared for the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality outlining the issues that will be discussed. The Minister has agreed to share briefing with you which is attached (BRIEFING-REQ-0030417).

This note does not repeat that briefing. We have provided Auckland-specific information to assist you in any discussions that involve Auckland.

Executive summary

Auckland plays a distinct role in New Zealand's cruise system. It is the primary gateway for cruise into the country, captures the largest share of economic activity and is where cruise most directly intersects with a working urban system.

The trends outlined in the shared briefing are most visible in Auckland. Declines in national cruise activity translate directly into fewer ship calls and lower passenger volumes in Auckland's city centre. At the same time, investment in port infrastructure and the ambition to develop turnaround capability position Auckland at the centre of the sector's future direction.

Auckland's role is therefore not only that of a destination, but also of the place where national settings, global deployment decisions and local urban impacts converge. For Auckland, the key issue is not only demand, but whether national and local settings together provide sufficient certainty for cruise lines to continue including New Zealand in their itineraries.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

a **Note** the contents of this briefing

Noted



Michael Quinn

Head of the Auckland Policy Office

19 / May / 2026

Hon Simon Watts

Minister for Auckland

..... / ..... / .....

Background

1. You have agreed to attend the Cruise Forum on 26 May 2026. This is a two-hour Ministerial and industry stakeholder meeting chaired by the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality. You will attend for the first 30 minutes.

2. In addition to you and Minister Upston, the Minister for the South Island, the Minister for Biosecurity and the Minister of Customs will also attend. Officials from MBIE, Tourism New Zealand, the Ministry of Transport, Maritime New Zealand, Ministry of Primary Industries, Customs and the Department of Conservation will be present.

3. The objective of the Cruise Forum is to provide a single, transparent platform for strategic oversight and coordination between Ministers, agencies and cruise industry leaders, with a focus on addressing barriers to cruise connectivity and strengthening the Government's relationship with the sector.

4. You have been provided with a copy of the briefing to the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality (BRIEFING-REQ-0030417) which sets out the purpose of the meeting and key information on the sector and attendees. That briefing also includes the meeting agenda.

Analysis of Auckland's cruise sector

5. The following information provides Auckland-specific context for the discussion.

Auckland cruise overview

6. Auckland is the first port of arrival for most cruise itineraries and remains the country's dominant cruise port. Activity is concentrated on the downtown waterfront, with passengers arriving directly into the city centre and dispersing quickly into surrounding retail and hospitality areas.

7. In a typical season, Auckland hosts around 100 ship calls and more than 300,000 passengers, generating around $600 million in regional economic activity and supporting more than 4,000 jobs. Cruise is therefore a material contributor to the city centre economy and one of the most visible forms of visitor activity in Auckland.

8. Spending is concentrated over a short period and largely within the central city. This creates a noticeable uplift in activity on cruise days but limits the extent to which benefits disperse across the wider region.

How Auckland's role differs

9. Auckland's role differs structurally from that of other New Zealand ports.

10. Auckland functions as the gateway to the national cruise system. Most itineraries begin or first arrive in Auckland, so decisions by cruise lines about whether to include New Zealand are effectively decisions about Auckland. Regional ports depend on those decisions and are downstream of itinerary design.

11. Auckland also captures a disproportionate share of the economic benefit. The direct interface between the port and the city centre means spending is immediate and concentrated, compared with more dispersed and excursion-based activity in other regions.

12. The city operates as a system hub as well as a destination. Cruise passengers arrive into an active city centre and interact with transport networks, ferries and public space. This requires coordination between port operations, transport agencies and local services, reflecting the cross-agency coordination described in the shared briefing.

13. Auckland is also central to the sector's future positioning. The shift toward increasing turnaround and homeport activity is primarily about Auckland, supported by its port scale and international connectivity.

14. These dynamics are likely to be reflected in contributions from Port of Auckland as well as industry representatives from NZCA and CLIA at the forum.

Infrastructure and future positioning

15. Cruise operations are currently enabled through Queens Wharf and Princes Wharf, which operate as adapted facilities and constrain the size and number of vessels that can be accommodated.

16. Ports of Auckland is addressing this through investment in Te Waharoa, a new international cruise terminal at Bledisloe Wharf due to open next year. This will improve passenger processing, enable larger vessels and support higher volumes over time.

17. This investment aligns with the wider focus in your shared briefing on improving cruise connectivity and enabling future growth. It also supports Auckland's role as a turnaround port, shifting the city from primarily a port of call toward a more central role in servicing itineraries.

18. This would increase economic value but also place additional demands on infrastructure and connectivity between the port, airport and city.

City centre interface

19. A defining feature of cruise in Auckland is its interaction with the city centre. Passenger disembarkation occurs over a short window, creating concentrated peaks in demand across transport networks and public space.

20. This includes pressure on the downtown ferry basin and surrounding streets. These effects are actively managed through coordination between port operations, transport agencies and other services.

21. Unlike other ports, where cruise activity is more separated from urban systems, in Auckland it is embedded within them. This reinforces that cruise in Auckland is not only a tourism issue but also one that intersects with transport, planning and city centre management.

Economic characteristics

22. Cruise delivers high visitor volumes into Auckland but for short stays. Spending is typically limited to the day of arrival or departure and is concentrated in the city centre.

23. This creates immediate and visible economic benefit but means overall value is sensitive to itinerary design and the extent to which activity extends beyond the waterfront. This aligns with the focus in your shared briefing on increasing value through turnaround activity and improved connectivity.

Auckland City and Regional Deal

24. The Auckland Deal includes a trade and tourism focus. This could be a useful lever to position cruise, particularly turnaround activity, as part of a broader effort to strengthen Auckland's role as an internationally connected gateway.

Talking points

Free and frank opinions

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

AIDE MEMOIRE

Cruise Forum – Tuesday, 26 May 2026

Date:	15 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0030417

Information for Minister(s)
Hon Louise Upston **Minister for Tourism and Hospitality**

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Amanda Harrison	Manager, Tourism Economy	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Svetlana Sabitova	Senior Policy Advisor		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
N/A

Purpose

To support your attendance at, and chairing of the Cruise Forum on Tuesday, 26 May 2026, 7:00–9:00pm in the Cabinet Committee room at the Beehive.

Amanda Harrison
Manager, Tourism Economy
Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE

15 / 05 / 2026

Cruise Forum – 26 May 2026

Meeting Details	• **Time:** 7:00 – 9:00pm • **Location:** Cabinet Committee room at the Beehive
Key Contacts	• Amanda Harrison, Manager, Tourism Economy Privacy of natural persons

Run sheet

Time	Agenda
6:45 – 7:00pm	Visitors arrive MBIE officials, NZCA and your private secretary meet participants on arrival
7:00 – 7:05pm	Welcome and introductions
7:05 – 7:07pm	Adoption of the Terms of Reference
7:07 – 7:15pm	Introduction to Roundtable 1: Reflections on the 2025/26 season and progress on the Cruise Workplan
7:15 – 7:55pm	**Roundtable 1: Reflections on the 2025/26 season and progress on the Cruise Workplan**
7:55 – 8:10pm	Introduction to Roundtable 2: Strategic opportunities, including: • Presentation from Joel Katz, Managing Director, Cruise Lines International Association – Global Industry Outlook • Update from Jacqui Lloyd, New Zealand Cruise Association, on Cruise 2040 Strategy
8:10 – 8:55pm	**Roundtable 2: Strategic opportunities**
8:55 – 9:00pm	Closing remarks
9:00 – 9:15pm	Visitors will be escorted out of the Beehive by MBIE officials.

Background and purpose of the meeting

1. On Tuesday, 26 May 2026, 7:00–9:00pm, you are chairing the Cruise Forum, a cross-government and industry meeting to improve cruise connectivity.

2. This is the second joint government-industry meeting, with the first held on 22 July 2025. That first meeting led to the following three outcomes:

    a. Ministers released a Joint Ministerial Statement to confirm the Government's support for cruise tourism

    b. government and industry jointly developed a Cruise Connectivity Workplan to contribute to the Tourism Growth Roadmap, and

    c. the Cruise Forum was established as a regular platform to improve coordination and collaboration for cruise connectivity.

3. This is the first official meeting of the Cruise Forum and completes delivery of the outcomes above. This meeting of the Cruise Forum is an opportunity to:

    a. demonstrate the Government's ongoing commitment to improving cruise connectivity

    b. reflect on the positive progress since the previous roundtable on 22 July 2025

    c. identify opportunities for further government and industry cooperation over the next 12 months

    d. hear from the industry about ongoing barriers to deployment in New Zealand, and

    e. signal your forward priorities for cruise connectivity, including continued coordination across Ministerial portfolios, clarity on cruise data and insights, trans-Tasman cooperation, and improving turnaround and homeporting opportunities in New Zealand.

4. A full meeting pack is included at **Annex Two** and will be shared with all attendees in advance of the meeting. The pack contains: Agenda, Attendee list, Terms of Reference, Cruise Workplan 2025/26, a Cruise Strategy Brief provided by New Zealand Cruise Association and an infographic on the value of cruise tourism provided by the Cruise Lines International Association.

5. An annotated agenda and suggested talking points for the substantive agenda items have been provided to your office separately.

Meeting participants

6. The following Ministers will be in attendance:

    a. Hon Simon Watts, Minister for Auckland (attending for first 30 minutes only)

    b. Hon James Meager, Minister for the South Island and Associate Minister of Transport

    c. Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity

    d. Hon Casey Costello, Minister of Customs

7. The Minister for Conservation, Hon Tama Potaka, was also invited but is unavailable.

8. Officials from the following government agencies will be in attendance:

a. Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)

b. Tourism New Zealand

c. Ministry of Transport

d. Maritime New Zealand (MNZ)

e. Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)

f. New Zealand Customs Service

g. Department of Conservation

9. The New Zealand Customs Service will be represented by their Chief Executives, Christine Stevenson.

10. Cruise industry participants include executives from the following organisations:

a. New Zealand Cruise Association (NZCA)

b. Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)

c. Carnival Corporation

d. Royal Caribbean

e. Heritage Expeditions

f. Port of Auckland

g. Port Company CEO Group

h. Inchcape Shipping

i. ID Tours

11. Rebecca Ingram, Chief Executive of Tourism Industry Aotearoa will also be in attendance.

12. **Annex One** contains biographies of all industry participants.

13. The full meeting pack at **Annex Two** contains a detailed attendee list.

14. You will be supported in the meeting by the following MBIE officials: Anna Clark, Deputy Chief Executive Labour, Science and Enterprise; Nora Burghart, General Manager Tourism and Hospitality, and Amanda Harrison, Manager Tourism Economy.

Background information and context for agenda items

Adoption of the Terms of Reference (agenda item 2)

15. The Terms of Reference for the Cruise Forum were developed in consultation with participating agencies, industry representatives and your office. The final Terms of Reference are included in the full meeting pack (attached at **Annex Two**) and will be circulated prior to the meeting.

16. The Terms of Reference set out the Cruise Forum as a single, transparent platform for strategic oversight and coordination between Ministers, agencies and cruise industry leaders, with a focus on addressing barriers to cruise connectivity and strengthening the Government

relationship with the sector. They also confirm expected membership and arrangements for biannual meetings aligned with the cruise season.

17. We propose that you move to formally adopt the Terms of Reference by exception at this meeting.

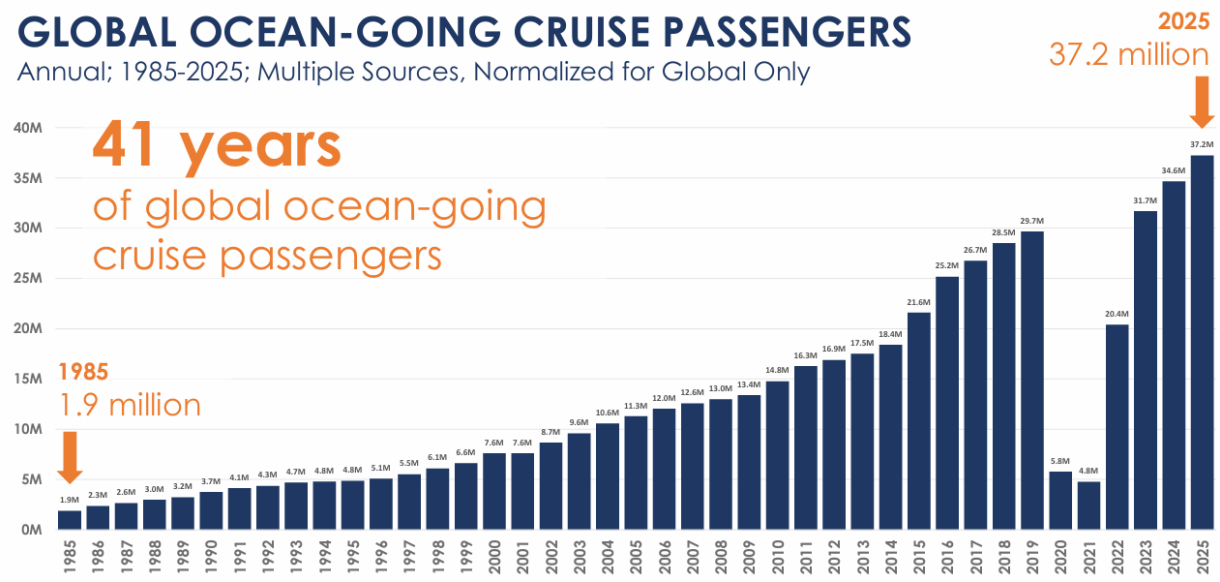
Reflections on the 2025/26 season and progress on the workplan (Roundtable 1)

18. You will provide introductory remarks to introduce the first roundtable. Talking points have been provided to your office separately. This first roundtable will focus on identifying progress since the last meeting in July 2025 and reflections on the recent 2025/26 cruise season. Background information to support this agenda item and discussion points likely to be raised by attendees is provided below.

Globally, cruise remains the fastest-growing tourism sector…

19. Globally, cruise tourism continued to grow strongly in 2025. CLIA reported 37.2 million ocean cruise passengers in 2025, up 7.5 per cent on 2024 (refer to **Graph One** below). This includes 1.5 million cruise passengers in the Australasia region, up 7.4 per cent on 2024.

Graph One: Global ocean-going cruise passengers for 2025 (Cruise Lines International Association)



20. The Middle East conflict has only impacted a small share of global cruise capacity, particularly in the Red Sea and Gulf regions. Broader impacts on global cruise have not been observed, and demand in regions outside those directly impacted by the conflict remains high.

…however, in New Zealand the 2025/26 cruise season saw a further drop in port calls

21. Despite positive global trends lifting cruise tourism, New Zealand continues to see a decline in cruise visitation. There were 22 per cent fewer cruise passengers this season than the previous season (157,962 for the period 1 October 2025 – 30 April 2026 versus 200,232 for the same period a year ago).[1]

[1] Source: Customs New Zealand Operational Update of 27 April 2026.

22. Actual passenger numbers for this period are only 94 per cent of the forecast, 55 per cent of the peak 2023/24 season and about 50 per cent of the pre-COVID, 2018/19 season. Lower than forecast results this season were primarily due to weather-related disruption throughout the season.

23. Early indications are that next season (2026/27) will deliver a similar level of cruise port calls as this year indicating that the decline in cruise to New Zealand is likely plateauing.

Recent Government actions have contributed to significant gains in industry confidence

24. Sustained government action over the last 12 months has demonstrated the Government's commitment to growing cruise tourism in New Zealand and led to increasing industry confidence in the New Zealand market. Your discussions with cruise lines at Seatrade in Miami in April highlighted their appreciation of this work and commitment to considering New Zealand in future deployment decisions. Industry actions have also contributed to lifting New Zealand's competitiveness as a cruise destination.

25. The key actions that have led to this lift in industry confidence include:

    - the **Joint Ministerial Statement** released in August 2025 confirming the Government's commitment to growing cruise tourism in New Zealand
    - your attendance at **Seatrade Cruise Global 2026** in Miami where you were able to further demonstrate the Government's commitment to cruise tourism and understanding of the economic value of cruise
    - positive collaboration between government agencies and the cruise sector to develop practical **biofouling treatment solutions**
    - early indication of upcoming **maritime levy changes** that demonstrated understanding of the long lead-time for cruise ticket sales, and
    - **emerging infrastructure investments**, including the new cruise facility at Bledisloe Wharf, a new ship in Heritage Expeditions' fleet, Port of Auckland's investment in an innovative biofouling cleaning solution, and the Auckland Deal's ambition to position Auckland as a turnaround port.

26. Your suggested talking points for this agenda item acknowledge the decline in cruise this past season but highlight the positive progress made across the above areas. As you know, recent government actions are focused on generating positive shifts in cruise line deployment decisions for the 2028/29 season and beyond given the long lead time for cruise sales.

Policy and regulatory concerns may continue to dampen confidence

27. It is likely that industry attendees will raise ongoing policy and regulatory challenges which have contributed to the reduced cruise volumes in 2025/26. Issues may be raised in Roundtable 1 (focused on looking back over the last 12 months and reflecting on progress) or in Roundtable 2 (focused on looking forward at the next 12 months are focus areas for making further improvements). The specific challenges generally fall within the portfolios of your Ministerial colleagues, some of whom will be in attendance and can respond to issues raised.

28. Key challenges that remain of concern to the industry include:

    - biofouling requirements, and
    - government fees and levies (both in terms of increased costs and timeframes for notifying changes).

29. Uncertainty about **biofouling management** remains a key concern for the industry, including whether and how in-water cleaning can occur. Since the July 2025 meeting, progress has been made on both the implementation and practical operation of New Zealand's biofouling regime. MPI has been working with the industry on how the settings operate in practice.

30. At the same time, Port of Auckland, in partnership with New Zealand Diving and Salvage Limited and supported by MPI, has developed an innovative in-port niche-area cleaning solution to help vessels manage biofouling safely alongside the wharf. This gives cruise operators a more practical compliance pathway and helps reduce operational uncertainty without weakening New Zealand's biosecurity protections.

31. The progress made on biofouling management in the last 12 months has been welcomed by the industry. There remains some uncertainty amongst cruise lines about how the new cleaning solution operates in practice and the operational burden. As the new solution embeds and evidence builds demonstrating its successful operation, we expect increased confidence and certainty of our biosecurity operating requirements. This is likely to take some time though.

32. We expect that MPI and/or Port of Auckland will provide an update on this work as part of Roundtable 1.

33. **Government fees and levies** also continue to be an area of concern for the cruise sector. Maritime New Zealand's estimate of cruise voyage costs shows an increase of over 80 per cent in fees and levies between 2019 and 2026[2]:

Table 1: Changes in costs of a cruise voyages with four port calls (MNZ)

Levies and fees	2019/2020	2025/2026	Increase	
Border processing levies	$76,902	$161,280	+$84,378	110%
Maritime levy and oil levy	$59,828	$111,230	+$51,402	86%
Port charges	$272,712	$469,572	+$196,860	72%
Overall	**$409,442**	**$742,082**	**+$332,640**	**81%**

34. You wrote to NZCA and CLIA to explain the recent Cabinet decision to increase the Maritime Levy by 6.5 per cent from 1 July 2027. Industry participants will likely acknowledge improved engagement and recognition of the long-lead time for cruise sales but will also likely raise ongoing operational costs of operating in New Zealand and the wider region. The recent decision in Australia to increase their Passenger Movement Charge by A$10 from 1 January 2027 has generated significant attention from the cruise sector. With the cruise sector having already sold voyages into 2027/28, the increased cost of the charge in Australia will be borne by the cruise lines, impacting voyages to New Zealand as well.

35. Further upcoming levy changes for the maritime sector in New Zealand are noted below. MBIE is working with border sector agencies to improve transparency of upcoming reviews and likely levy increases. Confidential advice to Government

[2] Modelling parameters: a cruise ship of 110,000 gross tonnage, 15,000 deadweight tonnage, 3,000 passenger, 1,200 crew making four port visits (port fees are based on the Port of Lyttelton publicly available pricing tariffs.

Table 2: Upcoming changes in the maritime fees and border levies (MNZ)

Levy	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Maritime Levy (reviewed every three years)	Cabinet decision (7 April 2026)	New rates (1 July 2027)		Consultation for 2030 levy implementation
Oil pollution levy (reviewed every three years)				Consultation for 2030 levy implementation
Border levy (reviewed every three years)		Capped increase (1 July 2027)	Levy review consultation	New levies

Strategic opportunities (Roundtable 2)

36. You will provide introductory remarks to introduce the second roundtable. Talking points have been provided separately. This second roundtable will focus on identifying strategic opportunities and focus areas for the next 6 – 12 months. Background information to support this agenda item and discussion points likely to be raised by attendees is provided below.

37. NZCA and CLIA will also provide brief presentations to introduce this session following your remarks:

    a. Global Outlook for Cruise – Joel Katz, Managing Director of CLIA

    b. Cruise 2040 Strategy – Jacqui Lloyd, Chief Executive Officer of NZCA.

38. We recommend that you invite discussion and feedback on four key focus areas for the next 12 months:

    i. continued **cross-government coordination** to improve regulatory certainty

    ii. strengthening **trans-Tasman cooperation**

    iii. attracting and enabling more **turnaround and homeport** opportunities in New Zealand, and

    iv. understanding what is required to improve cruise **data and insights**.

39. Further information on each of these four areas is provided below.

Cross-government coordination to improve regulatory certainty

40. There has been a significant increase in optimism and confidence in the New Zealand cruise market in recent months. We recommend that continued cross-government coordination on cruise policy and regulations remains a priority for the next 12 months to maintain this momentum and demonstrate continued commitment to improving cruise connectivity.

41. A key focus area that is likely to be sought by industry is providing increased certainty about the biofouling management solution. While development of the solution and collaboration with the sector on regulatory requirements has been a positive development, there remains a reasonable level of uncertainty and caution around biofouling management. It is likely to take some time to embed the new solution, demonstrate how it works, and build sector confidence in our biosecurity management.

42. We also understand that some cruise lines, particularly Commercial Information have been frustrated with inconsistent and duplicative enforcement of biofouling requirements by regional councils in addition to MPI national-level enforcement. This may be raised in the meeting and could be an area for further coordination across central and local government.

Strengthening trans-Tasman cooperation

43. As you know from your discussions with cruise lines at Seatrade, despite strong demand, local ship deployment in Australia has declined. Industry reporting indicates that cruise lines are increasingly allocating ships to regions offering greater regulatory certainty and lower operating complexity. Current Australian policy settings are influencing cruise line decisions for trans-Tasman itineraries for the 2028/2029 seasons, as cruise lines plan deployments several years in advance.

44. This trend has direct spillover effects for New Zealand. New Zealand is reliant on Australia both as a cruise source market and as a home port base for trans-Tasman and South Pacific itineraries, due to most cruises to New Zealand originating from Australian ports. Customs' operational cruise calendar data for the 2025–26 season shows that around 70 per cent of port calls to New Zealand arrived from an Australian port.

45. In particular, the current **review of the *Coastal Trading Act 2012*** is creating significant uncertainty for cruise lines. We understand that the current exemption for cruise ships from the cabotage licensing regime is set to expire at the end of this year, affecting certainty of operations for cruise lines from 1 January 2027. While the Government has not yet made decisions following the independent review of the Act, there is concern in the sector that changes to the Act could limit itinerary flexibility, raise costs and ultimately impact Australia's (and the wider region's) competitiveness as a cruise destination.

46. Following your meeting with Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism in Australia, we recommend that improving trans-Tasman cruise cooperation is a priority. The industry attendees will appreciate hearing about your recent meeting with Minister Farrell, your commitment to continued dialogue with him through future bilateral meetings and your efforts to encourage certainty regarding the review of the *Coastal Trading Act*.

47. You may also wish to acknowledge the industry-led coordination, including the Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian and New Zealand cruise associations renewed at Seatrade 2026, and close cooperation between NZCA and CLIA.

Attracting and enabling more turnaround and homeport opportunities in New Zealand

48. Recent operational challenges in Australia have highlighted the importance of New Zealand strengthening its turnaround port capability to improve resilience and maximise the economic value of cruise tourism. Cruise lines reinforced this message at Seatrade, emphasising the role of reliable turnaround ports in itinerary planning and long-term deployment decisions. In this context, expanding homeporting and turnaround activity is a strategic priority for New Zealand's cruise settings, with Auckland central to this ambition.

49. Turnaround ports are where a cruise itinerary begins and ends. The cruise lines use this port to fully service the ship before the next itinerary. Homeports fulfil a similar function but are considered the home base for a cruise ship. "Open-jaw" cruises begin in one port and conclude in a different one and are common between Australia and New Zealand. Open-jaw cruises also bring significant economic value in terms of ship servicing and passenger arrivals or departures.

50. Based on discussions with NZCA and CLIA, we consider that attraction and enablement of more "open-jaw" cruises between New Zealand and Australia is the first step to demonstrating turnaround or homeport capability. This is likely where the most traction can be achieved in the short-term.

51. The recent **Auckland City and Regional Deal**, signed on 10 April 2026, commits central government support to enabling Auckland to be a turnaround port for cruise ships. This will leverage the new Bledisloe cruise terminal and bring broader economic benefits to Auckland.

We expect that most of the work to enable this will be in the form of infrastructure and airport to seaport connectivity.

52. MBIE will work with Auckland Council on this specific initiative to establish the next stages of work feeding into the overall Implementation Plan and governance arrangements for the Deal. This will include timelines, cross-agency engagement and roles and responsibilities for this action.

Understanding what is required to improve cruise data and insights

53. Since Statistics New Zealand stopped collecting cruise data following the pandemic, NZCA has been raising concerns that current official data under-represents cruise activity. According to NZCA, border statistics do not fully capture in-transit cruise passengers or passenger port-days. Inconsistencies between Statistics New Zealand, New Zealand Customs Service and New Zealand Traveller Declaration data also limit comparability with other tourism segments and international destinations, limiting analysis on economic contribution, infrastructure impacts and levy or cost-recovery settings.

54. As previously discussed with you, there are challenges with identifying viable, cost-effective improvements to capturing cruise data. Confidential advice to Government

55. We recommend inviting suggestions from participants for how existing data mechanisms can support strategic opportunities for cruise. Cruise lines should also contribute to building cross-sector insights to improve the understanding of the value of cruise tourism and regional insights.

Risks, communication and media

56. No media will be attending this event.

57. The New Zealand Cruise Association is planning to publish the cruise calendar for the 2026/27 season prior to the meeting. Based on the current information, some ports, including Auckland and Wellington, will see a significant drop in cruise visits. We have suggested you acknowledge this in your talking points while also highlighting that current work is focused on generating positive momentum for the 2028/29 season.

58. There is increasing media coverage from Australian and New Zealand media are around the hantavirus outbreak on a cruise vessel in the South Atlantic. This may impact public perception of cruise and may be raised at the meeting.

59. We will work with your office should media enquiries arise.

Annexes

Annex One: Biographies of industry participants

Annex Two: Full meeting pack for attendees

Annex One: Biographies of industry participants

New Zealand Cruise Association (NZCA) is the industry body for the New Zealand cruise sector and has been operating for over 24 years. NZCA mainly represents the domestic supply side of the New Zealand cruise industry; its membership includes cruise lines, Air New Zealand, entities from local government, RTOs, ports, transport sector and tourism operators. NZCA has a Memorandum of Understanding with Tourism New Zealand.



Jacqui Lloyd, Chief Executive*

Jacqui has been Chief Executive of NZCA since 2023. Prior to this, Jacqui held the position of NZCA Chair. Jacqui has more than 20 years of tourism, cruise and senior management experience, including through her most recent role as General Manager of Destination Marlborough.



Tansy Tompkins, Chair*

Tansy has broad knowledge and career experience across a range of industries including tourism, hospitality and events, and culture and creative. She has held several senior management roles in the public, private and non-profit sectors both in New Zealand and internationally.

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) is a global cruise line trade association established in 1975. Across several categories of membership for cruise lines, key suppliers and partners to cruise lines and global travel agent members, CLIA represents a large proportion of the cruise lines that operate in Australia and New Zealand.

The Australasia branch of CLIA operates from Sydney and works closely with NZCA under a Memorandum of Understanding. CLIA has been actively involved in several initiatives in New Zealand to support the cruise industry in post-COVID-19 recovery and growth.



Joel Katz – Executive Director, CLIA Australasia*

Joel Katz has 25 years of international experience in the cruise and hotel industries. In his current role, Joel leads the Sydney-based team responsible for the promotion and development of the cruise industry in the region.

Prior to joining CLIA in January 2016, Joel held executive roles at Grand Circle Cruise Line in the United Kingdom (2014-2016) and Orion Expeditions.



Hugh Cavill, Australasia Director Government Affairs

Hugh has extensive experience in Australian state government, tourism and transport with senior policy and strategy advisor roles for several New South Wales Ministers.

Hugh also served as a past advisor to former New South Wales Tourism Ministers Adam Marshall and George Souris and assisted with the New South Wales Cruise Development Plan.



Peter Little, CLIA Board Chair, Senior Vice-President and Country Manager, **Carnival Australia**

Peter was elected CLIA's Chair and member of the Executive Committee in May 2024 for the two-year term.

As a Senior Vice President of Carnival Corporation, Peter is responsible for leading Carnival Corporation operations in Australia New Zealand and the Pacific. With a background in marine engineering, Peter has been with Carnival Corporation for over 20 years.

Carnival Corporation, the biggest global cruise company with a fleet of 90 vessels, generates over 37 per cent of global cruise market revenue and captures close to 43 per cent of global passenger traffic. Carnival Corporation owns eight cruise lines: Carnival Cruise Line and Carnival Australia; Carnival Maritime (AIDA Cruises and Costa Cruises); Carnival UK (Cunard Line and P&O Cruises); Holland America Group (Holland America Line and Seabourn Cruise Line); and Princess Cruises.

Carnival Cruise Line has 29 ships in the Australasian region with over 500,000 people expected to cruise with Carnival in Australia in 2025, departing from Sydney and Brisbane.



Sandy Olsen, Vice President Corporate and External Affairs, Carnival Corporation*

Sandy Olsen returned to Australia in 2025 after three years in the United States leading government and stakeholder relations in California, Washington State and Canada. She first joined Carnival's Australian business in 2007 and has held senior corporate affairs roles across multiple periods, including responsibility for Australia, New Zealand and Pacific destinations.

Royal Caribbean Group, the second-largest cruise operator in the world, generates about 24 per cent of global cruise market revenue and captures 26 per cent of global passenger traffic. Headquartered in Florida, USA, it owns three house lines: Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises and Silversea Cruises, with 65 ships in the current fleet and five ships on order by 2028.



Gavin Smith, Vice President and Managing Director, Australia and New Zealand, Royal Caribbean International

Gavin Smith leads the company's commercial strategy, government and industry engagement, and market development across the region. Gavin has over 30 years of experience, including establishing Royal Caribbean's presence in Australia in 2008 and overseeing the expansion of its cruise operations in Australasia. He has also held leadership positions with other cruise brands in the region, including Managing Director of P&O Cruises Australia. He has served multiple terms as Chair of CLIA Australasia and, in March 2026, was inducted into the CLIA Hall of Fame in recognition of his contribution to the cruise sector.

	**Josh Dolgoy, Head of Government Relations, Royal Caribbean*** Prior to joining the Royal Caribbean Group in 2022, Josh was the Lead Ministerial Adviser on domestic space policy to the Australian Minister for Science and Technology. He has held several other policy roles across the Australian government, including International Policy Manager for Defence Australia.
	**Tim Jones, VP and Managing Director, Australia and Asia Pacific, Celebrity Cruises** Prior to becoming the Managing Director of Celebrity Cruises in 2020, Tim was Vice President of Travel for the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions. Prior to that, he was Managing Director for Australia and New Zealand for National Geographic Partners. Tim spent 10 years with Tourism Australia before joining National Geographic. Earlier, he held various positions with Qantas Holidays and Thomas Cook in the UK.
Heritage Expeditions is a family-owned, Christchurch-based New Zealand company that provides boutique cruises and specialised group tours, including international research and university field trips to Antarctica/the Ross Sea, Japan and South-East Asian islands, South Pacific, Australia's Kimberley Coast and New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands, Fiordland and Stewart Island, Marlborough Sounds and Abel Tasman National Park.	
	**Nathan Russ, Chief Operating Officer** Nathan is the co-owner, Chief Operating Officer and Expedition Leader at Heritage Expeditions. Nathan has worked on expedition ships around the world. He manages the Heritage fleet and is in charge of the company's innovative operating model that offers alternative ways to attract international cruise visitors to New Zealand, targeting those who are interested in academic research and environmental education.
New Zealand ports	
	**Ian Bonnar, Executive Director, New Zealand Port Company CEO Group** Ian has been Executive Director of the Port CEO Group since March 2026. In this role, he supports collaboration among New Zealand's major ports and leads engagement with central government on national policy, regulatory and infrastructure issues affecting the port system. The Port CEO Group provides a coordinated, system-wide industry perspective, while recognising the different commercial contexts of individual ports. Mr Bonnar has held senior leadership roles across public and private organisations, including Chorus NZ and the Financial Markets Authority.

	**Roger Gray, Chief Executive Officer, Port of Auckland*** Before joining the Port of Auckland as CEO in 2022, Roger was the CEO of Lyttleton Port Company. Prior to his career in the maritime sector, Roger held leadership positions at Air New Zealand, including the role of Group General Manager Airports, in which he managed operations at 55 airports around the world. Earlier in his working life, Roger served for 20 years in the Australian Army, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel.
	**Richard Carvalho, NZ Cruise Operations Manager, Inchcape Shipping Services-McKay (ISS-McKay)** ISS-McKay is the leading port agency in New Zealand, providing full coverage of the North and South Island of New Zealand through its network of eight port offices and 41 local staff. In 2023 McKay was acquired by Inchcape Shipping Services, a British maritime services provider of global strategic maritime, cargo and supply chain solutions. Richard has been with the ISS-McKay for over 10 years, overseeing cruise operations in various New Zealand ports.
Tourism Industry Association	
	**Rebecca Ingram** Rebecca Ingram joined TIA as Chief Executive in March 2022, bringing with her over 20 years of experience across tourism, marketing, event management, advocacy and stakeholder relations. Before TIA, she was General Manager of New Zealand and Government Relations at Tourism New Zealand (TNZ). Rebecca's career includes leading positions at Telecom (now Spark) and Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand.
	**Debbie Summers, Managing Director, IDNZ** Debbie is a Board Member of Tourism industry Aotearoa. She has also been on NZCA Board for 15 years. For the past 30 years, Debbie has been advocating for the tourism industry within national and international forums. Having moved to New Zealand in 2007 to work for IDNZ, New Zealand's largest ground handler, she has been involved in a wide range of cruise shipping operations: port agency, shore excursions, on board port lecturer, itinerary planner, product and infrastructure development and on-board environmental observer.

Annex Two: Full Meeting Pack for attendees

Ther full meeting pack for attendees includes:

A. Agenda
B. Detailed Attendee List
C. Cruise Forum Terms of Reference *(attached separately)*
D. Cruise Connectivity Workplan 2025/26 *(attached separately)*
E. Strategy Brief (provided by NZCA) *(attached separately)*
F. The Value of Cruise Tourism Infographic (provided by CLIA) *(attached separately)*

A. Government-Industry Cruise Forum - Agenda

Time: **7:00pm – 9:00pm, Tuesday, 26 May 2026**

Venue: Cabinet Committee Room, the Beehive, Wellington

Chair: Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Tourism and Hospitality

	Item	Lead
1	**Welcome and initial comments (5 mins)**	Hon Louise Upston
2	**Adoption of the Terms of Reference (2 mins)**	Hon Louise Upston
3	**Introduction to Roundtable 1: Reflections on the 2025/26 season and recent progress on the Cruise Workplan (8 mins)**	Hon Louise Upston
4	**Roundtable 1: Reflections on the 2025/26 season and progress on the Cruise Workplan (40 mins)** Progress/updates since the last Government-Industry Roundtable update on key achievements may include: fee and levy reviews, biofouling, infrastructure, cooperation, marketing updates relevant to each participant.	All attendees
5	**Introduction to Roundtable 2: Strategic opportunities (15 mins)** • Presentation from CLIA on Global Industry Outlook • Presentation from NZCA on industry Cruise Strategy	Hon Louise Upston Joel Katz, CLIA Jacqui Lloyd, NZCA
6	**Roundtable 2: Strategic opportunities (45 mins)** Roundtable and reflections, with particular interest in discussing: • Trans-Tasman cooperation • Homeport opportunities and barriers • Data and insights	All attendees
7	**Closing and next steps (5 mins)**	Hon Louise Upston

B. Detailed Attendee List

Name	Organisation
Hon Louise Upston (Chair)	Minister for Tourism and Hospitality
Hon Simon Watts (first 30 mins)	Minister for Auckland
Hon James Meager	Minister for The South Island and Associate Minister of Transport
Hon Casey Costello	Minister of Customs
Hon Andrew Hoggard	Minister for Biosecurity
Jacqui Lloyd	New Zealand Cruise Association
Tansy Tompkins	New Zealand Cruise Association
Joel Katz	Cruise Lines International Association
Hugh Cavill	Cruise Lines International Association
Peter Little	Cruise Lines International Association, Carnival Australia
Sandy Olsen	Carnival Australia
Josh Dolgoy	Royal Caribbean
Gavin Smith	Royal Caribbean
Tim Jones	Celebrity Cruises, Royal Caribbean
Nathan Russ	Heritage Expeditions
Ian Bonnar	Port Company CEO Group
Roger Gray	Port of Auckland
Richard Carvalho	Inchcape Shipping
Debbie Summers	ID Tours
Rebecca Ingram	Tourism Industry Association
Bjoern Spreitzer	Tourism New Zealand
Anna Clark	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
Nora Burghart	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
Amanda Harrison	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
Stuart Day	Maritime New Zealand
Christine Stevenson	New Zealand Customs Service
Stuart Andersson	Ministry for Primary Industries
Stephanie Rowe	Department of Conservation
Ruth Fairhall	Ministry of Transport

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

MEETING BRIEFING

Meeting with Matthew Cockram, Cooper and Co.

To:	**Hon Simon Watts,** Minister for Auckland		
Date:	2 June 2026	**Time:**	5:00 pm-6:00 pm
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032831

Purpose

To support your meeting with Peter Cooper and Matthew Cockram on 2 June 2026. The meeting will take place at Cooper and Company's office at Maritime Building, Level 2, 130 Quay Street, Auckland Central.

Background

1. Peter Cooper and Matthew Cockram represent the ownership and executive leadership behind the Britomart precinct, widely regarded as a successful example of long-term, privately led urban regeneration. Britomart combines heritage restoration, commercial development, hospitality, public space and major public transport investment.

2. With both Cooper and Cockram present, the meeting provides an opportunity to explore not only current city-centre performance, but also longer-term confidence in Auckland as an investment environment. The discussion is likely to focus on how safety, activity and coordinated public sector settings influence decisions by long-term, Auckland-anchored capital. This aligns directly with your leadership role on the Auckland City and Regional Deal and the Auckland Thriving City Centre Project.

3. Background on attendees is attached (**Annex One**).

The Britomart precinct

4. Britomart spans multiple blocks at the eastern end of Auckland's city centre and is anchored by the Britomart Transport Centre and shortly the City Rail Link. For more than two decades, Cooper and Company has pursued a long-term investment model focused on mixed use, high-quality public spaces, environmental performance and a strong sense of place. The precinct now plays a central role in Auckland's office market, hospitality sector, visitor economy and international city brand.

5. Peter Cooper, as founder and long-term owner, brings an intergenerational investment perspective. Matthew Cockram, as Chief Executive, brings an operational and market-facing view shaped by investment through economic cycles, major infrastructure disruption and the impacts of COVID.

City Centre activity, safety and economic buoyancy

6. From a city-centre revitalisation perspective, both Peter and Matthew are likely to emphasise that economic buoyancy follows people rather than projects. Sustained activity comes from layering workers, residents, visitors and events across the day and evening, supported by reliable transport access and a high-quality public realm. Physical renewal or one-off activations are unlikely to substitute for this underlying intensity.

7. Safety is likely to be raised as a key issue. Matthew has previously linked both real and perceived safety directly to commercial performance, noting that investment confidence and after-hours activity fall quickly when public spaces feel unmanaged or unsafe. From a private-sector perspective, fragmented responsibility across agencies can be as damaging as the underlying issues themselves, particularly where responses appear reactive or short-term.

8. Government's role is likely to be characterised less as directing development and more as stewarding the system in which long-term investment occurs. This includes consistent signals about the future role of the city centre, durable alignment across transport, planning, safety, and economic development decisions, and regulatory certainty that supports decades-long capital commitments. Britomart is often cited as evidence that high-quality public infrastructure and public space, delivered with certainty, can crowd in substantial private investment.

Your leadership of two key projects is relevant to the discussion

9. The Auckland City and Regional Deal and the Auckland Thriving City Centre Project provide a framework for addressing the themes Matthew is likely to raise. His insights will be useful in testing whether these initiatives are experienced by investors and city-centre businesses as genuinely integrated and impactful programmes, or as a series of disconnected actions.

10. Britomart offers a practical case study of how transport investment, public space quality, safety, and economic outcomes reinforce one another over time. A key opportunity for the Auckland Deal will be extending these conditions more broadly across the city centre and the wider Auckland region, while recognising that successful revitalisation depends on long-term confidence.

Free and frank opinions

Annex One: Biographies of key attendees

	**Peter Cooper** **Founder & Executive Chairman, Cooper and Company** Peter Cooper, a Californian-based New Zealander, is the founder and Executive Chairman of Cooper and Company. He is a former Executive Director of listed Australasian company Lion Nathan, CEO of LD Nathan and Joint Managing Director of Mace Development Corporation. He practiced law and was partner at Auckland law firm Russell McVeagh, where he specialized in commercial and property law.
	**Matthew Cockram** **Chief Executive, Cooper and Company** Matthew Cockram is Chief Executive of Cooper and Company, the privately owned Auckland investment firm responsible for the long-term redevelopment of the Britomart precinct. He has led the Britomart regeneration for more than two decades. Matthew is a former commercial property and major projects partner at Bell Gully.
	**Mike Holm** **Partner, Holm Majurey** Mike Holm is a director at AHJMLaw (Holm Majurey) and a senior environmental and public law specialist. He has advised governments and major developers on planning, resource management and regulatory issues, and is widely recognised for his experience with large, complex infrastructure and urban development projects.
	**Wayne Eagleson** **Director, Thompson Lewis** Wayne is a Wellington based Director of Thompson Lewis. He is also a Director of Wellington International Airport Limited. Prior to joining Thompson Lewis, Wayne was Chief of Staff to Prime Ministers John Key and Bill English from 2008 to 2017, and prior to that was in that role in the Leader of the Opposition's office prior to the 2008 election.

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

AIDE MEMOIRE

Auckland Council: Making Space for Water Programme

Date:	20 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0033294

Information for Minister(s)
Hon Simon Watts **Minister for Auckland**

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Michael Quinn	Head of the Auckland Policy Office	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Andy Hill	Director Auckland		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Minister's office to complete:

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

Comments

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

AIDE MEMOIRE

Auckland Council: Making Space for Water Programme

Date:	20 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0033294

Purpose

You have expressed interest in the Making Space for Water initiatives that are jointly funded with the Crown. This report provides an overview of the broader Making Space for Water programme and a draft press release re-enforcing government support for the programnme.

Executive Summary

Making Space for Water is Auckland Council's long-term flood resilience programme developed in response to the severe weather events of January and February 2023. It is part of the Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Recovery Plan and is intended to reduce flood risk, improve system performance and strengthen resilience to future weather events.

The programme represents a significant, multi-year investment in Auckland's stormwater system, with an indicative value of approximately $760 million over 10 years. It combines infrastructure upgrades with restoration of natural systems, targeted property interventions and improved modelling and data.

Delivery is firmly underway, with an initial focus on areas where risks to life and property are highest. The programme is jointly funded by Auckland Council and central government, with the Crown funding a majority share of the first tranche of projects. [auckland.scoop.co.nz]



Michael Quinn

Head of the APO

20 / May / 2026

Context

1. The Making Space for Water programme was initiated following extreme rainfall events in early 2023. The programme reflects a shift in approach, from attempting to contain water within existing systems to enabling water to move more safely through the landscape, reducing impacts on people, property and infrastructure.

Programme scope and approach

2. Making Space for Water is designed as a system-wide response that combines multiple interventions across the stormwater network and the wider urban environment.
3. A central feature of the programme is the delivery of blue-green infrastructure. This involves restoring and expanding waterways and floodplains so they can carry and temporarily store larger volumes of water during storm events. Works include stream widening or realignment, upgrading bridges and culverts, and enhancing adjacent parkland to function as flood storage areas during heavy rainfall.
4. Alongside this, the programme includes targeted upgrades to existing stormwater infrastructure and increased maintenance activity to improve network performance and reduce blockages.
5. Interventions are identified and prioritised at a catchment level, enabling a coordinated response across waterways rather than isolated site-by-site works. In areas of highest risk, physical works are supported by property-level interventions, including acquisition of properties where necessary to enable floodplain restoration and to reduce risk across a wider area.
6. The programme is also supported by investment in flood intelligence, including improved modelling, forecasting and public information tools to support planning and preparedness.

Delivery to date

7. Implementation is being phased, with early projects focused on locations where risks to life and property are most acute.
8. The first major projects are located in Māngere, at Harania Creek and Te Ararata Stream. These works involve stream improvements, infrastructure upgrades and associated flood mitigation works, with a combined budget of $53 million and should be finished in September 2026. They are expected to reduce flood risk for approximately 376 properties, including some previously assessed as facing an intolerable risk to life.
9. Auckland Council advise that you will soon receive an invitation to the Te Ararata project completion ceremony which will be taking place on 14 August.
10. In Rānui, a further project is underway that involves the acquisition of around 50 properties to enable the creation of new floodplains and the restoration of a previously piped stream. This work is intended to reduce flood risk for surrounding communities and improve overall system performance.
11. An independent review by the Office of the Auditor-General in May 2026 examined the initial Māngere projects and found that Auckland Council had established structured governance, procurement and cost management processes to support delivery. This included defined approaches to managing cost, risk and performance across the lifecycle of the projects.

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Auckland labour market information

Date:	22 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0033312

Action sought		
	Action sought	**Deadline**
Hon Simon Watts **Minister for Auckland**	**Note** the labour market information for the Auckland region contained in this report.	22 May 2026

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Michael Quinn	Head of the Auckland Policy Office	Privacy of natural persons	
Andy Hill	Director Auckland		
Stuart King	Senior Policy Advisor		✓

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Ministry of Social Development have jointly provided the information contained in this report.

Minister's office to complete:

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

Comments

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Auckland labour market information

Date:	22 May 2026	**Priority:**	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0033312

Purpose

This briefing provides you with labour market statistics and related information for the Auckland region. MBIE and MSD have worked together to provide the information contained in this report.

Executive summary

You requested information on labour market conditions in the Auckland region. Recent data indicates that Auckland's labour market is weaker than the rest of New Zealand, with unemployment at 6.6 per cent in March 2026, rising underutilisation and an elevated NEET rate. The impacts have been felt disproportionately by Māori, Pacific Peoples and young people, and employment has fallen across several major industries, including professional services, health, education and construction.

Auckland has also accounted for most national growth in Jobseeker Support in recent years, although the rate of growth has been slowing since mid-2024.

This report draws together information prepared jointly by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Ministry of Social Development.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

a **Note** the labour market information for the Auckland region contained in this report**.**

Noted

Michael Quinn

Head of the Auckland Policy Office

22 / May / 2026

Hon Simon Watts

Minister for Auckland

..... / ..... / .....

Background

1. You requested information on Auckland's labour market. This follows engagement with several business groups that referenced recent labour market statistics.

Labour market information

Recent data suggests Auckland's labour market performance is weaker than the rest of the country

2. In March 2026, Auckland's unemployment rate reached 6.6 per cent, the highest it has been since March 2014 (when it was 6.7 per cent).

3. This is 1.3 percentage points higher than the national unemployment rate of 5.3 per cent. Figure 1 below shows Auckland's unemployment rate has been trending upwards since 2023 and has grown faster than the rest of the country.

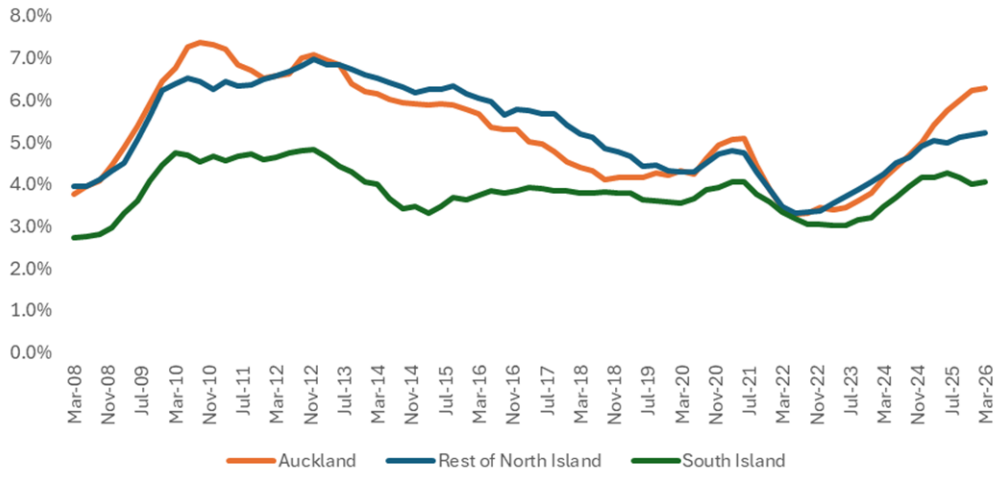
4. The unemployment rate is just one sign of Auckland's labour market weakness:

    a. The underutilisation rate (a broader measure of labour market slack) is 14.0 per cent - a 10-year high (compared to 12.9 per cent for the entire country).

    b. The NEET rate (which measures the proportion of 15-24 year olds not in employment, education or training) is at an all-time high of 17.6 per cent (compared with 14.4 per cent for the country).

5. Labour market outcomes tend to lag economic performance, as businesses wait for a sustained increase in demand before raising headcount. We would not expect to see improvements in Auckland's labour market until the economic recovery becomes more established.

Figure 1: Unemployment rate (%) by region, rolling yearly average (source: Household Labour Force Survey, Stats NZ)



In recent years, employment in Auckland has fallen across professional services, health, education and construction

6. Annual averages provide the best way to assess trends in regional employment by industry. Figure 2 below sets out employment changes in Auckland across major industries.

7. Between the year ending March 2024 and the year ending March 2026 (the two-year period where labour market weakness emerged):

    a. Total employment in Auckland fell by 29,700 (2.9 per cent).

i. The rest of the country saw flat employment growth over the same period.

b. The biggest employment falls within that two-year period were:

i. Professional and administrative services (down 11,200, or 7.1 per cent).

ii. Health care and social assistance (down 9,200, or 9.0 per cent).

iii. Construction (down 8,300, or 7.8 per cent).

iv. Education and training (down 5,600, or 7.6 per cent).

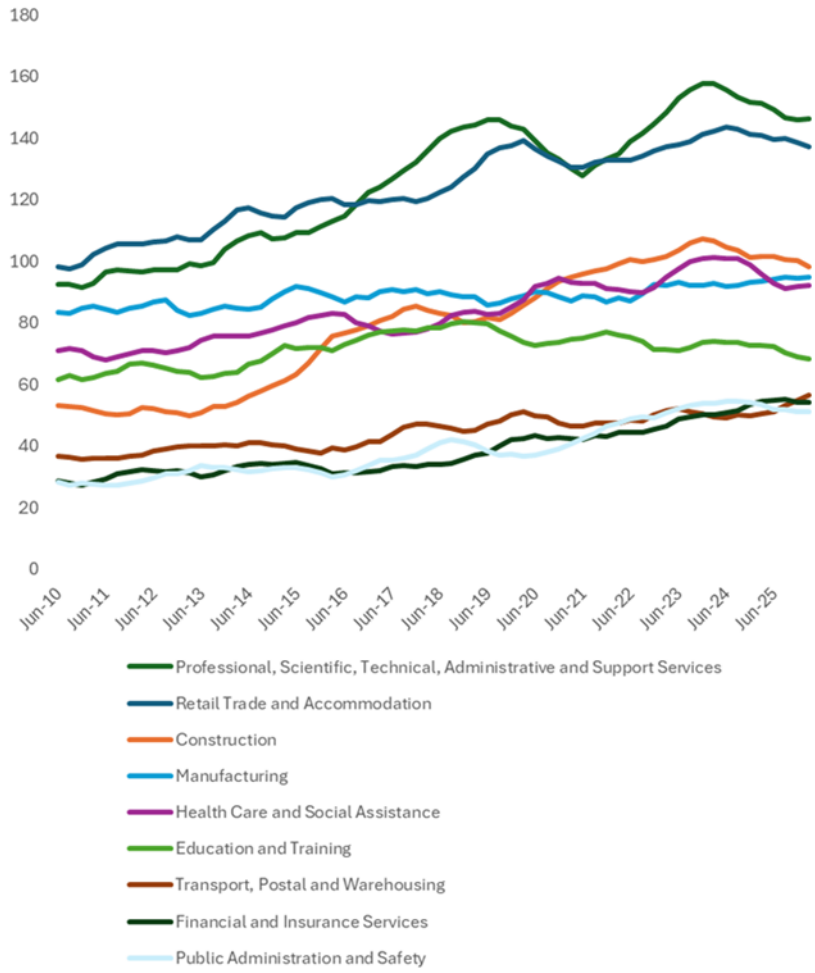
8. The fall in professional and administrative services employment may be linked to the fall in construction, as this sector includes labour supply firms that supply the construction sector.

9. The falls over this two-year period were partially offset by employment increases in:

a. Transport, postal and warehousing (up 6,900, or 13.9 per cent).

b. Financial and insurance services (up 4,200, or 8.4 per cent).

Figure 1: Employment in Auckland (000s) for selected major industries, rolling annual average (source: Household Labour Force Survey, Stats NZ)



The impacts of weaker labour market conditions in Auckland have been disproportionately felt by Māori, Pacific Peoples and youth

10. Weaker labour market conditions are likely to be felt unevenly within the population. While unemployment rates have risen for all ethnic groups over the past three years, they have risen far more sharply for Māori and Pacific Peoples (Figure 3).

11. Similarly, the NEET rate for 15–24-year-olds has risen sharply in recent years, which differs from other major regions, where NEET rates have been more stable (Figure 4).

12. Historically, South Auckland and West Auckland have higher unemployment rates than the rest of Auckland, and this is unchanged in recent years (Annex One provides a full breakdown at a sub-regional level):

    a. South Auckland's unemployment rate is 9.2 per cent in the year ending March, up 0.9 percentage points from the previous year.

    b. West Auckland's unemployment rate is 7.4 per cent in the year ending March, up 1.4 percentage points from the previous year.

Figure 2: Unemployment rates by ethnicity in Auckland, rolling annual average (source Household Labour Force Survey, Stats NZ)

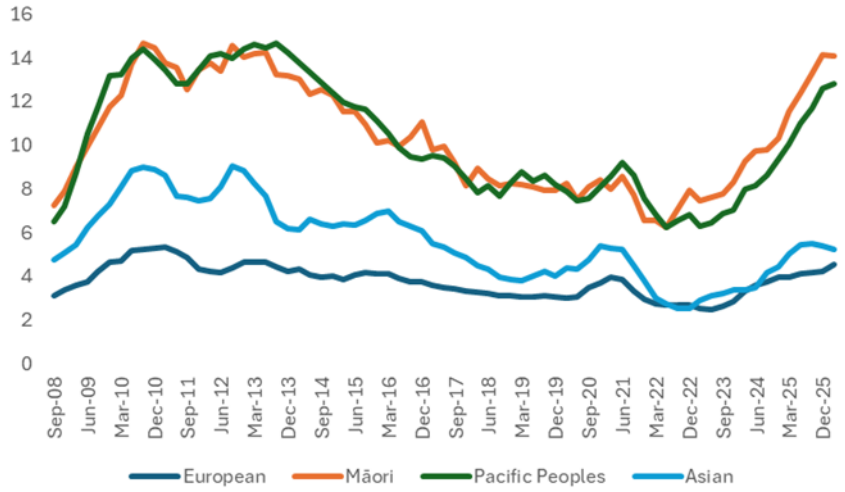
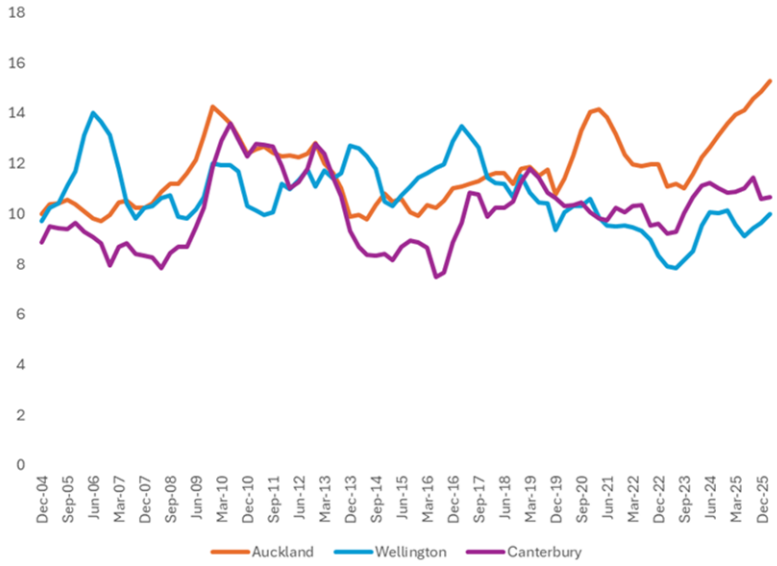


Figure 4: NEET rate for major regions, rolling annual average (source Household Labour Force Survey, Stats NZ)



Annual Jobseeker Support growth in Auckland[1] was higher than national growth for the quarter ended March 2026, though the rate of growth has been slowing since mid-2024, it has not slowed as quickly as national growth[2]

13. Of the 134,600 people on a main benefit in Auckland in the March 2026 quarter, 82,300 were receiving Jobseeker Support (JS). JS clients in Auckland represented 38.2 per cent of all JS clients nationally in March 2026, up from 34.7 per cent in March 2021.

14. Nationally, in March 2026, there were 215,200 people receiving JS, up by 5,400 over the year. Auckland accounted for 4,500 (83.8 per cent) of this growth, while other regions grew more slowly or recorded some declines in JS receipt.

15. Although Auckland has contributed the most to overall JS client growth across New Zealand in recent years, the annual growth rate of JS in Auckland has been slowing since June 2024. In June 2024, the annual growth rate for JS in Auckland was 17.4 per cent; by March 2026, it had fallen to 5.8 per cent.

16. The slowing rate of growth in JS in Auckland reflects wider national trends. The rest of New Zealand (excluding Auckland) has also experienced slower growth in JS receipt since June 2024, when annual growth was 11.4 per cent; by March 2026, this had slowed to 0.7 per cent.

Next steps

17. When requesting this information, you also asked about options to reduce unemployment. This was in connection with comments made by the EMA and the Whāriki Business Network about construction workers and the winding down of major infrastructure projects such as the City Rail Link and Auckland Airport.

18. We will discuss next steps with MBIE and MSD and provide further advice as appropriate.

Annexes

Annex One: Summary of sub-regional key statistics within Auckland (annual averages)

Annex Two: Jobseeker Support recipients

[1] Auckland refers to MSD's Work and Income region for Auckland, rather than regional council. Work and Income region are based on the service centre the client is registered at, and not where they live.
[2] Source: Benefit Fact Sheets - Ministry of Social Development – Work and Income regions data tables March 2026

Annex One: Summary of sub-regional key statistics within Auckland

Annual averages

		Auckland			South Auckland			West Auckland			Rest of Auckland		
		Mar-26	Change from last year	Change from 5 years ago	Mar-26	Change from last year	Change from 5 years ago	Mar-26	Change from last year	Change from 5 years ago	Mar-26	Change from last year	Change from 5 years ago
Employed people	Total	979,700	- 17,600	71,200	181,600	2,100	24,600	174,000	- 5,600	22,000	624,100	- 14,000	24,600
	Maori	87,500	- 3,500	8,800	22,200	1,200	- 3,000	19,000	- 2,900	4,000	46,300	- 1,700	7,900
	Pacific Peoples	111,600	5,600	7,700	51,500	200	- 4,900	28,100	2,900	9,900	32,000	2,400	2,800
Unemployed people	Total	65,800	8,800	17,400	18,500	2,300	6,700	13,800	2,300	6,500	33,500	4,200	4,100
	Maori	14,400	2,600	7,500	5,400	600	2,600	3,400	200	2,500	5,600	1,800	2,600
	Pacific Peoples	16,400	4,400	6,600	8,600	1,700	2,700	3,800	1,300	2,600	4,000	1,400	1,300
Unemployment rate	Total	6.3%	0.9 pp	1.2 pp	9.2%	0.9 pp	2.2 pp	7.4%	1.4 pp	2.8 pp	5.1%	0.7 pp	0.4 pp
	Maori	14.1%	2.6 pp	6.1 pp	19.5%	0.8 pp	9.4 pp	15.2%	2.4 pp	9.5 pp	10.7%	3.4 pp	3.3 pp
	Pacific Peoples	12.8%	2.7 pp	4.2 pp	14.3%	2.5 pp	4.9 pp	12.1%	3.0 pp	5.9 pp	11.0%	3.0 pp	2.4 pp
Underutilised people	Total	145,900	14,400	28,600	32,400	3,200	9,900	28,700	2,600	9,500	84,900	8,700	9,300
	Maori	26,000	2,900	10,800	9,200	1,200	3,300	5,800	- 1,400	2,900	11,000	3,100	4,500
	Pacific Peoples	28,100	5,700	7,900	13,700	2,100	3,200	7,200	1,700	4,100	7,200	1,900	600
Underutilisation rate	Total	13.5%	1.4 pp	1.7 pp	15.5%	1.1 pp	2.7 pp	14.7%	1.6 pp	3.0 pp	12.5%	1.4 pp	0.9 pp
	Maori	23.7%	2.7 pp	6.9 pp	30.1%	1.8 pp	10.6 pp	24.1%	-1.7 pp	7.4 pp	20.0%	5.3 pp	5.1 pp
	Pacific Peoples	20.8%	2.7 pp	3.9 pp	21.6%	2.5 pp	5.5 pp	21.3%	2.5 pp	6.4 pp	19.2%	3.5 pp	-0.4 pp
NEET youth	Total	36,600	4,000	4,000	13,600	2,400	1,900	7,500	300	2,200	15,600	1,400	-
	Maori	11,400	2,000	3,500	5,100	900	1,500	3,100	200	1,800	3,100	800	100
	Pacific Peoples	12,200	2,400	1,900	7,100	1,400	300	2,700	700	1,600	2,300	300	- 100
NEET rate	Total	15.3%	1.3 pp	1.2 pp	25.0%	2.6 pp	4.2 pp	17.4%	0.3 pp	1.8 pp	10.9%	0.8 pp	-0.2 pp
	Maori	26.4%	3.3 pp	2.7 pp	38.8%	5.5 pp	8.0 pp	27.5%	1.2 pp	2.7 pp	16.9%	3.4 pp	-1.4 pp
	Pacific Peoples	23.2%	3.1 pp	2.9 pp	26.7%	4.4 pp	4.7 pp	21.2%	2.6 pp	4.0 pp	18.0%	1.1 pp	0.3 pp

Annex Two: Jobseeker Support recipients

Jobseeker Support recipients, by Jobseeker Support type and ethnicity, by Auckland and Rest of New Zealand (aged 18-64) (source: Ministry of Social Development)

		Auckland[3]			**Rest of New Zealand (exc. Auckland)**		
		Quarter ended March 2026	Change from March 2025	Change from March 2021	Quarter ended March 2026	Change from March 2025	Change from March 2021
Jobseeker Support	Total	82,263	4,506	12,396	132,951	870	1,518
	Jobseeker Support - Work Ready	45,579	2,145	3,630	72,780	-1,212	-8,142
	Jobseeker Support - Health Condition or Disability	36,684	2,358	8,769	60,168	2,082	9,651
	Māori[4]	23,850	888	3,156	55,656	1,020	534
	Pacific[4]	21,600	1,842	4,863	7,689	336	903

[3] Auckland refers to MSD's Work and Income region for Auckland, rather than regional council. Work and Income region are based on the service centre the client is registered at, and not where they live.
[4] MSD reports on ethnicity using the 'total response' approach, which means that people can appear more than once in MSD's reporting, so ethnic group totals will add to more than 100 percent of clients. Improving how we report ethnicity - Ministry of Social Development

Funding and government contribution

12. The programme is jointly funded by Auckland Council and central government as part of the wider response to the 2023 severe weather events.
13. The overall programme is currently estimated at approximately $760 million over 10 years,
14. For initial projects, central government has provided a majority share of funding. The first Māngere projects are funded on a basis of approximately 62 percent Crown funding and 38 percent Auckland Council funding.
15. Government funding in the wider recovery programme included support for property buy-outs in areas assessed as facing high flood risk.

Government monitoring and continued involvement

16. The government's investment oversight was previously overseen by the Cyclone Recovery Unit (CRU) in DPMC. The CRU was disestablished in 2025 and functions were transferred to DIA and NIFFCO to help close out the programme.

Draft press release

17. A draft press release re-enforcing government support for the programme is attached at **Annex One.**

Confidential advice to Government

Free and frank opinions

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

MEETING BRIEFING

Meeting with Auckland FC

To:	**Hon Simon Watts,** Minister for Auckland		
Date:	2 June 2026	**Time:**	1:30 pm - 2:00 pm
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0033256

Purpose

To provide background information and suggested talking points ahead of your meeting with Nick Becker, Chief Executive Officer of Auckland FC, on 2 June 2026 from 1:30 pm to 2:00 pm at Auckland FC's offices, Level 3, 25 College Hill, Auckland.

Background

1. Auckland FC is a professional football club based in Auckland, established in 2024 and competing in the A League Men competition. The club has achieved rapid success, winning the A League Championship in May 2026 in just its second season, becoming the first New Zealand team to win the competition. The championship was secured with a 1–0 victory over Sydney FC at Go Media Stadium in front of a sold-out crowd of 28,374 spectators, reflecting strong public engagement and support.

2. The club has quickly built a strong following in Auckland, with consistently high attendances and strong fan engagement. During its debut season, more than 235,000 spectators attended matches at Go Media Stadium, with an average of over 18,000 fans per game, the highest in the A League. This momentum has continued into the 2025 to 2026 season, with large crowds attending finals matches and multiple sell out games contributing to a vibrant event atmosphere in Auckland.

3. Auckland FC's success has had a broader impact beyond sport, contributing to the city's events calendar, supporting hospitality and local businesses, and building a sense of regional identity and pride. The club's fixtures and finals series have created major events attracting tens of thousands of attendees, as well as additional public viewing opportunities and celebrations across the city.

4. Nick Becker was appointed CEO in 2024 and has extensive experience in international football administration, including senior roles with Manchester City, Melbourne City FC, and New York City FC. His leadership has focused on building a strong fan base, commercial partnerships, and a sustainable club model grounded in community engagement and innovation.

5. The International Football Festival in Auckland is being supported through the Government's Events Attraction Package. Tottenham Hotspur FC will play Auckland FC on 26 July and Chelsea FC Women will play an Auckland FC Women's Invitational XI on Saturday 8 August, both matches will be held at Eden Park. You will receive invites to both games.

Issues and opportunities for Auckland

6. Auckland FC is likely to emphasise the role of professional sport in driving economic activity, enhancing the city's global profile, and fostering community connection. The club's strong attendance figures and recent championship success demonstrate the potential for major sporting events to attract large crowds and create vibrant city experiences.

7. Grassroots participation in football is growing, and Auckland FC is likely to advocate for improved facilities and support for community clubs. This aligns with broader government objectives to increase participation in sport and physical activity and to support youth development.

8. The Auckland FC Foundation, including initiatives such as work with corrections facilities, highlights the club's role in delivering social outcomes beyond sport, including engagement with at risk communities.

National sports facilities strategy

9. The club may raise infrastructure and stadium development as a priority, including ambitions relating to North Harbour Stadium and Go Media Stadium. There may be interest in how central and local government can support investment in sporting infrastructure to meet growing demand and support both professional and grassroots football.

10. Sport NZ Group is leading the National sport facilities strategy, creating a coordinated view of national-level sport facilities. The work involves assessing how well facilities are supporting the training and competition needs of high-performance athletes and fans. They will be developing national guidelines for improving coordination between government agencies on infrastructure priorities.

11. The strategy is currently on hold and will be revisited in the next parliamentary term. If Nick has any questions about this, he can contact Nick Kingston at SportNZ.

Topics for Discussion

12. This meeting provides an opportunity to acknowledge Auckland FC's recent success and its contribution to Auckland's economy and social fabric. You may wish to recognise the significance of the club's A League championship win and the strong public support it has generated, as well as the role of major sporting events in enhancing Auckland's vibrancy and international reputation.

13. You could also explore how government can support the continued growth of football in Auckland, including through infrastructure investment, community partnerships, and alignment with broader economic and social objectives for the city.

14. Suggested talking points are attached at **Annex One**.

15. Auckland FC have suggested that Nick may ask who your favourite player is. The team is listed at **Annex Two** with key stats and career highlights.

Biographies of key attendees



Nick Becker, Chief Executive Officer, Auckland FC

Nick Becker was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Auckland FC in 2024, leading the establishment and growth of the club in the A League Men's competition.

Originally from Auckland, he brings more than 20 years of experience in global sports management, including senior roles with Manchester City, New York City FC, and Melbourne City FC. His expertise spans marketing, events, and commercial development.

At Auckland FC, he has overseen the club's rapid rise, including its early competitive success and strong fan engagement, positioning it as a major contributor to Auckland's sporting and cultural landscape.

Annexes

Annex One: Suggested talking points

Annex Two: Auckland FC players

Annex One: Suggested talking points

Free and frank opinions

Annex Two: Auckland FC players

Nick may ask who your favourite player is. The team is listed below with key stats and career highlights.

Player	Age	Position	Highlights
Michael Woud	27	Goalkeeper	All Whites international; played in Netherlands & Japan before joining club
Oliver Sail	30	Goalkeeper	Experienced A-League goalkeeper; national team caps
James Hilton	23	Goalkeeper	Emerging young professional keeper
Joseph Knowles	21	Goalkeeper	Academy-developed prospect
Hiroki Sakai	36	Right Back Defender	3× World Cup player; ex-Marseille; Auckland captain
Nando Pijnaker	27	Central Defender	Regular starter; New Zealand international
Daniel Hall	26	Central Defender	Key defensive starter with most minutes played
Francis de Vries	31	Left Back Defender	Team's top assist provider (7 assists)
Callan Elliot	26	Right Back Defender	Versatile defender; international experience
Adama Coulibaly	21	Central Defender	Emerging young defender with high potential
Jake Girdwood-Reich	21	Central Defender / Midfielder	Regular starter; strong versatility
Luka Vicelich	18	Central Defender	One of youngest first-team players
Louis Verstraete	27	Central Midfielder	Top-rated squad player; technical playmaker
Jake Brimmer	28	Central Midfielder	Creative midfielder; strong A-League pedigree
Cameron Howieson	31	Central Midfielder	Experienced national team midfielder
Luis Felipe Gallegos	34	Central Midfielder	Extensive career across Europe & Americas
Finn McKenlay	20	Central Midfielder	Young rotation player
Oliver Middleton	20	Attacking Midfielder	Academy-developed talent
Van Fitzharris	18	Attacking Midfielder	One of youngest players in the squad
Sam Cosgrove	29	Striker	Top scorer (11 goals); ex-Aberdeen standout
Jesse Randall	23	Forward	9 goals + 6 assists; NZ international; Olympic goalscorer
Lachlan Brook	25	Winger	8 goals; key attacking contributor

Player	Age	Position	Highlights
Guillermo May	28	Striker	Technical forward with strong goal contributions
Logan Rogerson	27	Winger	Experienced All Whites attacker
Liam Gillion	23	Winger	Top scorer in OFC competition (5 goals)
Marlee François	23	Winger	Creative attacking option
Jonty Bidois	21	Striker	Young forward prospect

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

EVENT BRIEFING

Visit to Auckland Airport

To:	**Hon Simon Watts,** Minister for Auckland		
Date:	3 June 2026	**Time:**	9:00 am–10:30 am
Security classification:	In Confidence	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0033306

Purpose

1. To brief you ahead of your visit to Auckland Airport by outlining the strategic context, the main issues likely to arise and the points you may wish to emphasise in discussion.

Executive summary

2. Auckland Airport matters to Auckland not only as New Zealand's primary international gateway, but as a major employment, logistics and growth precinct in the south of the city. It is central to passenger connectivity, air freight, trade and tourism and it plays an increasingly important role in Auckland's wider economic performance.

3. This visit follows your earlier meeting with Carrie Hurihanganui and gives you an opportunity to see firsthand how the airport's redevelopment programme connects to broader Auckland issues. These include precinct employment and growth opportunities, freight and logistics, surface access and the airport's role within the Auckland City and Regional Deal.

4. From your Auckland portfolio perspective, the key value of the visit is in testing how Auckland Airport sees its contribution to Auckland's future growth and how its plans align with wider city outcomes. In particular, the discussion can help draw out how the airport sees opportunities around jobs, productivity and trade, how it views the importance of better access for passengers and freight and how it sees partnership with central government and Auckland Council supporting delivery over time.

Logistics

5. The visit will take place on Wednesday 3 June 2026 from 9:00 am to 10:30 am at the Transport Hub, Auckland Airport International Terminal. Auckland Airport has indicated the visit will begin with a short briefing on its infrastructure programme, followed by a tour of the Domestic Jet Terminal construction site. The visit is also expected to include a stop at Auckland Airport's electric heat pumps, which have replaced gas-fired pumps as part of its work to reduce Scope 1 emissions.

6. Carrie Hurihanganui and Clodagh O'Connor-McKenna will meet you on arrival. Normal business attire is suitable. Additional PPE, including a hard hat, safety glasses and steel-cap boots will be provided. Photography is permitted with some limitations.

Background

7. You previously met Carrie Hurihanganui on 13 April 2026 [BRIEFING-REQ-0030852 refers]. That discussion focused on Auckland Airport's infrastructure programme, including ground transport and on fuel resilience.

8. In a letter dated 23 April 2026, Carrie Hurihanganui followed up by setting out Auckland Airport's short, medium and long-term priorities for improving access to the airport precinct, linked to the Auckland City and Regional Deal and the importance of the precinct within it.

9. Your visit allows you to see the airport's redevelopment programme and surface access issues in context and to test how Auckland Airport sees its role in Auckland's next phase of growth. It also provides an opportunity to discuss where stronger alignment across Auckland Airport, Auckland Council and Central Government may be needed to support long-term capacity, resilience and productivity.

Why Auckland Airport matters

Auckland Airport anchors New Zealand's international gateway

10. Auckland Airport is New Zealand's primary international gateway and one of the country's most strategically significant infrastructure assets. It handles around 90 percent of overseas visitors to New Zealand and connects approximately 18 million travellers each year to more than 60 domestic and international destinations. The airport also handles about $26 billion of freight annually, making it the country's largest airfreight gateway and third-largest trade port overall.

11. For Auckland, the airport is more than a point of arrival and departure. It is a strategic enabler of tourism, trade, business travel and investment and a key part of the city's outward-facing economic identity. For New Zealand more broadly, the airport plays a central role in sustaining international connectivity and economic resilience, including through its importance to high-value freight movement and supply chains.

12. International connectivity remains central to Auckland's role as New Zealand's primary international city. For Auckland, the key issue is whether those connections continue to support tourism, business engagement and trade as demand grows and the aviation system adjusts to wider global constraints.

The airport precinct drives jobs, logistics and economic activity

13. The wider airport precinct covers around 1,500 hectares and supports aeronautical operations, logistics, commercial and industrial activity, retail and hospitality. It is also a major employment hub, supporting around 20,000 to 25,000 jobs. A 2022 Auckland airport precinct profile estimated about 25,500 jobs and 1,077 business units in the area, with especially strong concentrations in transport, warehousing, wholesale trade and manufacturing.

14. This makes the airport precinct one of Auckland's most important employment and industrial locations, with a role that extends well beyond aviation alone. Its concentration of logistics, freight, warehousing and business activity gives it broader significance for regional productivity and key supply chains. The precinct's scale and development potential also mean it is likely to remain a major focus of Auckland's future urban and economic growth.

15. Freight is a critical but less visible part of the airport's role. Auckland Airport is central to New Zealand's high-value, time-sensitive trade and links exporters to global markets, while also connecting into wider upper North Island supply chains. From an Auckland perspective, this reinforces that the airport is not only a passenger gateway. It is also a strategic logistics node with strong links to inland freight, warehousing and port activity.

The redevelopment programme is reshaping future capacity

16. The precinct is undergoing its largest redevelopment since the airport opened 60 years ago. Auckland Airport's long-term master planning anticipates substantial upgrades across terminals, airfield infrastructure and transport systems, with the airport positioning itself to accommodate around 38 million passengers annually by the mid-2040s.

17. The current programme is intended to increase capacity, improve resilience and modernise core infrastructure over time. The significance of the redevelopment lies not only in its scale, but in what it means for Auckland's preparedness for future growth and whether supporting infrastructure keeps pace.

18. The airport also plays an important role in shaping South Auckland growth. The wider precinct is emerging as one of New Zealand's largest concentrations of employment and logistics activity, with strong links to industrial development, labour markets and housing growth in the south. This creates an opportunity to think about airport development not in isolation, but alongside wider spatial planning, transport investment and workforce access.

Surface access will shape the airport's future performance

19. Surface access remains one of the most important strategic issues for the airport. Auckland Airport has emphasised that future growth in passenger numbers, freight volumes and precinct employment will increase pressure on the surrounding transport network and has called for a mix of near-term road improvements, better public transport access and longer-term rapid transit connections. The Auckland City and Regional Deal identifies the Auckland Airport Precinct as a priority growth area and includes a commitment for the Crown and Auckland Council to work with Auckland Airport on a development and investment plan for the precinct, with an early focus on improving freight and people access.

20. In its recent correspondence to you, Auckland Airport highlighted a set of short, medium and long-term priorities to improve access to the precinct. These include near-term improvements around Pūkaki Bridge and George Bolt Memorial Drive, stronger public transport connections and the longer-term Airport to Botany rapid transit corridor. The broader strategic issue is that access to the airport cannot be treated as a site-specific question alone. It sits within Auckland's wider transport system and will require sustained coordination across Auckland Airport, Auckland Council, NZTA and central government if growth is to be supported efficiently.

Pricing and regulation remain part of the wider context

21. Auckland Airport's aeronautical activities are regulated through the Commerce Commission's information disclosure regime. In March 2025, the Commission found the airport's targeted returns for 2022 to 2027 were unreasonably high, although its forecast investment was within a reasonable range. The airport subsequently reduced charges.

22. This is not expected to be a major focus of the visit, but it remains part of the wider context in which Auckland Airport is making large capital investments and engaging with government and stakeholders about future growth.

23. The underlying tension is that long-term infrastructure renewal is necessary, but the costs of that investment ultimately flow through the system. For Auckland, this creates an ongoing balance between enabling the airport to invest for future capacity and resilience, while remaining attentive to affordability impacts for airlines, passengers and the wider economy.

24. Resilience and system integration are also becoming more important. As a critical national gateway, Auckland Airport's performance during disruption matters well beyond the precinct itself. This reinforces the need for strong coordination between the airport, airlines, infrastructure agencies and government so that connectivity and recovery can be maintained when systems come under pressure.

What to focus on during the visit

25. The visit provides an opportunity to frame discussion around Auckland outcomes and Auckland Airport's role within them. This includes how the airport supports jobs, productivity, passenger connectivity, air freight and wider economic performance.

26. You may also wish to explore how Auckland Airport sees the next phase of precinct growth, how it is working with government and Auckland Council on landside access, and how the airport's priorities align with the Auckland City and Regional Deal.

27. The tour should help illustrate how terminal redevelopment, surface access, freight movement, resilience and lower-emissions investment connect in practice and where the main opportunities or constraints lie from a wider Auckland system perspective.

Biographies of key attendees



Carrie Hurihanganui – Chief Executive, Auckland Airport

Carrie Hurihanganui has been Chief Executive of Auckland Airport since February 2022. She has more than 25 years of leadership experience in aviation and customer-facing operations.

Before joining Auckland Airport, Carrie spent more than two decades at Air New Zealand, where she held a range of senior operational roles, including Chief Operating Officer. She has also held senior executive roles outside aviation, including at National Australia Bank.

Free and frank opinions