

Rotorua Destination Management Plan

Annual Report YE Dec 2022

KIA ORA

We are pleased to present this summary of highlights for the 2022 calendar year. Our purpose at RotoruaNZ is to unlock the potential of Rotorua and we do this by partnering with Rotorua Lakes Council, Te Tatau o Te Arawa and our key stakeholder groups.

The Rotorua Destination Management Plan (DMP) was adopted by Rotorua Lakes Council and Te Tatau o Te Arawa in November 2021.

Despite the numerous restrictions Covid-19 presented over the past financial year, there is much to be proud of, including a number of firsts for Rotorua that were a direct result of the actions set out in the DMP.

We look forward to continuing to facilitate the implementation of the Destination Management Plan in line with our destination values and aspirations.

WHO WE ARE

RotoruaNZ is a values-led organisation committed to developing and promoting Rotorua as a destination of choice to work, study, visit, invest and live in. We connect people, land, capital and ideas.

Our work directly supports the development of the Rotorua economy, unlocking opportunities for commercial investment and providing employment, wealth and wellbeing for all of our people. RotoruaNZ works in partnership with iwi, the private sector, community organisations, and local and central governments to support the growth aspirations of Rotorua, and enhance the city's identity and reputation.

We operate as a neutral entity and a trusted advisor, balancing the needs of each group of stakeholders for the benefit of the destination.

RotoruaNZ is a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO), 100% owned by Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC). RotoruaNZ is the Economic Development Agency (EDA) and Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) for the Rotorua district. RotoruaNZ also operates as the Convention Bureau for Rotorua.



OUR PEOPLE

Destination Manager

In January 2022 a destination manager was appointed to oversee the implementation of the plan.

Melissa Craig is the destination manager and has been responsible for driving key initiatives over the past 12 months to support the delivery of the DMP. She has led projects such as the RotoruaNZ Talent Incubator, “Best Summer Ever” campaign, Tiaki Taiao sustainability mentoring programme, and regular industry forums. She has also ensured our stakeholder groups are kept informed, engaged and up to date with progress.

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The first year has been interesting, challenging and satisfying all at the same time. I'm enjoying working alongside our industry to make changes that positively impact our community, businesses, and the visitor experience.

Melissa Craig
Destination Manager

DESTINATION ADVISORY GROUP

A Destination Advisory Group was formed and consists of the following members:

- **Ann Gregor-Greene** - Rotorua Hotel GM Chairperson
- **Paul Button** - Rotorua Tourism Industry Partnership Board Member
- **Bronwyn Alton** - Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology Business Faculty
- **Jason Wright** - Eat Street Chairperson
- **Hine Te Rangī Elliott** - Rotorua Business Chamber
- **Nick Fitzgerald** - Rotorua Accommodation Network
- **Julie-May Ellison** - Rotorua Lakes Council
- **Rawiri Waru** - Te Tatau o Te Arawa

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As a member of the Destination Advisory Group, I am pleased to see initiatives in 2022 that have supported the development of capability and the retention of tourism and hospitality talent in our region. The RotoruaNZ Talent Incubator, Sustainability Mentoring programme, and the “Best Summer Ever” campaign have generated successful outcomes. I want to recognise the strong values-based leadership of the Destination Manager, Melissa Craig. Her ability to foster effective collaborations and progress ideas into SMART actions has been key. A lot of effective mahi was done in 2022, and to keep a strong momentum in 2023, resourcing projects and leadership is essential.

Bronwyn Alton
Toi Ohomai Institute of
Technology Business
Faculty



The role of the Destination Advisory Group is to advise and make recommendations based on analysis of feedback and information gathered from tourism and hospitality practitioners. The group also provides ideas and feedback in relation to the implementation of the plan.

The focus of the group is to ensure the best possible outcomes for the current and future needs of the Rotorua tourism and hospitality industries.

The group has committed to operate in accordance with our tikanga (Destination Management Plan Code of Conduct) to safeguard the integrity of the Destination Management Plan kaupapa.



OUR DESTINATION'S VALUES

Our destination's values are critical to the success of the DMP, as these values were co-designed by Rotorua businesses and people. It's the intention that these values help guide the development of the plan to ensure alignment and to strengthen the destination definition.



The DMP has 13 priority areas which have been divided into three tiers:

- Transformational change
- Investing in a positive future
- Creating stronger foundations

Work streams in 2022 were aligned to the support the tourism and hospitality industries needed while the Rotorua visitor industry recovered from the effects of the pandemic and started to welcome back international visitors.

TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

1 Implementing the Rotorua Destination Management Plan

- The DMP was adopted by Rotorua Lakes Council and Te Tatau o Te Arawa November 2021.
- We employed a destination manager who began in January 2022. The purpose of this role was to ensure that the DMP had a champion to ensure that the work was undertaken and integrated into the various work programmes of RotoruaNZ.
- We set up the Destination Advisory Group in accordance with the outline of the plan and have representatives from Rotorua Lakes Council, Te Arawa, RotoruaNZ, and tourism and hospitality leaders. Meetings take place monthly.

2 The Rotorua Commitment

We completed research on best practise around the world and have a concept to socialise with the wider stakeholder groups as identified in the DMP. We propose the next steps to take are: to look at how to stage the roll out over the next five years; review the objectives, tasks and costings; how to get stakeholder buy-in; and how we measure the impact.

3 Aotearoa Tourism and Hospitality Innovation Hub

- We have put an application in to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) for match-funding to support the building of a business case for the innovation hub. This will enable us to speed up the work through using a contractor. Our aim is to submit a full application for the Stream Two innovation recovery fund by 30 June 2023.
- We are currently running a talent incubator to support workforce development through improving capability as a test case for building the full business case for the innovation hub.

4 Rotorua Centre of Wellness for Aotearoa

- We will commence the development of this action in Q2 2023.
- We have worked with the local spa businesses and Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology (Toi Ohomai) to create a business case for the development of a new Diploma in Spa Health and Wellness that will help position Rotorua as the industry leader in New Zealand and result in the city being recognised internationally for producing the highest skilled staff in the sector. This is now with Toitū te Waiora to create the proposal for NZQA.



INVESTING IN A POSITIVE FUTURE

5 Rotorua Inner City Revitalisation

- Led by Rotorua Lakes Council, a strategy is being developed for the inner city, and work is underway with a focus on Tūtānekai Street connectivity from Lakefront to Central Mall. A full survey of Tūtānekai Street businesses was completed Dec 22/Jan 23 which will help inform where spend is allocated.
- A change in the District Plan has been notified to allow the intensification of residential properties in the inner city.

6 Planning for Quality Accommodation

- We supported the business case for the development of inner city commercial accommodation as part of the inner city revitalisation and to bring more people/footfall into the CBD.
- A focus group commenced work late February 2023 to discuss gaps in the accommodation sector and where we need to attract investment.
- We have strongly lobbied and supported the tourism industry at large over the past 12 months to minimise the impact of emergency housing on the visitor economy. This has included proactively working with accommodation providers coming out of emergency housing and looking to re-enter the visitor market.
- We developed and published dashboards on our website to openly share forward-looking accommodation demand, as well as a list indicating the operating status of all commercial short-term providers. This means that operators and potential investors have a near real-time view of accommodation demand at any time.

7 Workforce Development

- We have progressed with the update of the Manaaki Programme of work to deliver a Rotorua-focused training accessible to all tourism and hospitality businesses. A full upgrade to the platform, technology and content is currently underway.
- Toi Ohomai, in conjunction with RotoruaNZ and Rotorua Lakes Council, officially opened The Junction on Fenton café in October 2022 as an opportunity for Rotorua hospitality businesses to 'poach' staff members for their own businesses. This is utilising the students currently studying at Toi Ohomai, and set events will be rolled out in 2023 to showcase future employees to businesses.
- Based on a workforce support gap analysis, we identified that talent development and retention is an area of need for the hospitality and tourism sector. We launched the RotoruaNZ Talent Incubator in December 2022 to help address this.



- We conducted a workforce survey mid-2022 to ascertain business requirements leading into high season 22/23 for staffing, retention and training. This survey then informed our approach to how we could best support the industry. In the longer term we will use some of these initiatives as an annual work plan.

Outputs included:

- Working with Toi Ohomai to ascertain what training opportunities they could deliver in workplaces to support retention.
- Working with Toi Ohomai to engage students in workplace internships with the Rotorua i-SITE. We hosted six business degree students, completing 200 hours each across accounting, project management and research.
- Having a dedicated workforce hui which included presentations from Toi Ohomai, Go with Tourism, MBIE.
- Development of a short-term marketing campaign to support businesses looking for summer workers – this was a partnership with Student Job Search.
- Development of the Best Summer Ever campaign whereby high school students could learn about and seek a job in tourism and hospitality via drop-in sessions located at the i-SITE. More than 500 people came through over three sessions.
- We supported Ministry of Social Development with the Eat Street job fair and have also worked with them to identify opportunities to connect job seekers to paid work and training within the visitor economy. This included developing a business case for RotoruaNZ to be an employment agency. The RotoruaNZ board opted not to pursue this due to associated cost and risk.



It won't surprise you to hear we're struggling to find the time to 'make it all happen' but Desirae has been very patient with us and kept us focused on the journey.

Desirae herself is incredible, her passion and diligence is to be commended. If she's unsure of something or we challenge her with a question she hasn't had before she undertakes further research to find the best solutions for us at this stage. She's also incredibly proactive in connecting us with new and practical solutions that enable us to put sustainable ideas into practice.

While we have a long way to go, we're delighted to be on the journey and our team are excited about making a positive sustainable impact across our business.

Anna Powell
Director, Fat Dog Café, and
The Fainting Goat





TIER 3

CREATING STRONGER FOUNDATIONS

8 Creating a More Connected Destination

- We hosted Destination Queenstown's trade team in 2022 for a familiarisation as a soft starting point to build future foundations, and we are discussing opportunities for joint marketing and presence in long-haul markets.
- Our chief executive Andrew Wilson has met with the chief executive of Destination Queenstown to discuss opportunities for greater collaboration.
- We identified Eastern Central North Island (ECNI) as the best forum to discuss destination issues with regional neighbours, and continue to work with them at multiple levels of the organisation.
- We have committed to holding quarterly destination forums to bring our local businesses together around a shared theme.

9 Markets and Visitation

- As the borders re-opened in 2022 our international manager visited our key markets to ensure that Rotorua was front of mind in the travel sellers' minds. This included Australia, UK, Switzerland, Germany, Singapore, India and Indonesia. Rotorua was also represented by eXplore Central North Island at KiwiLink North America.
- We undertook campaign activity in Australia with Grand Pacific tours and ANZCRO.
- With Covid-19 recovery, our focus was predominantly on the domestic market for the first half of 2022 and our marketing team worked hard to ensure that our industry was supported through campaigns. These are a few key highlights but not an exhaustive list:
 - RotoruaNZ hero campaign - Meet the OGs (Original Guides)
 - Trout fishing campaign and MTB content to develop strong affinity groups
 - Rotorua Matariki Dish Challenge
 - School holiday and long weekend campaigns to maximise when domestic visitors had the opportunity to travel
 - Crankworx Rotorua media centre
 - Hosted more than 45 influencer and media familiarisations

10 Rotorua Reorua | Bilingual Rotorua

- We are working in partnership with Te Tatau o Te Arawa and Rotorua Lakes Council to advance as a bilingual destination by bringing to life a reorua wayfinding strategy. This work includes



the development of an internal signage policy and templates to ensure a consistent wayfinding theme from entry to exit, while supporting visitors to the region to find their way. This work also supports Te Arawatanga expression throughout the CBD. Initial work is due to start at the Rotorua Lakefront in June 2023.

- Te Tatau o Te Arawa, with support from Rotorua Lakes Council and Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue, has installed a sound system in the heart of Te Manawa to be used regularly to provide the time and share Te Arawa kupu (words) or phrases, as well as local stories and Māori music.

11 Tiaki Taio

We developed a programme of work to support businesses on their journey to either starting out or taking the next steps for incorporating sustainability into their day-to-day work practises. The Rotorua Sustainable Charter has been contracted to deliver this on our behalf. We currently have 27 businesses participating.

12 Events Strategy

- We worked in partnership with Rotorua Lakes Council to create an events strategy to provide clear objectives for investment in events around four strategic outcomes, and a clear measurement and reporting framework for event managers.
- We worked with the hospitality industry to bring the first Rotorua Matariki Dish Challenge and indigenous food trail to life. The aim was to celebrate our place through food, culture and stories of Matariki, thereby strengthening our food story for visitors and bringing people together to enjoy delicious kai. Eleven restaurants participated by creating innovative dishes that were then independently judged and awarded.

Ambrosia Restaurant & Bar took out the overall category winner, with River's Catch winning the community choice award in 2022. We will be undertaking the Dish Challenge again in 2023.

13 Rotorua Trails Strategy

- Rotorua Trails Trust has already commenced work on the development of a Rotorua Trails Strategy; our office will provide support as this develops.
- To assist the development, we have partnered with the business faculty at Toi Ohomai to do baseline research to establish who the current forest users are.
- An assessment of the economic impact of mountain biking on the city was completed in 2022.

We would like to acknowledge our partnership with Te Tatau O Te Arawa in the ongoing implementation of the DMP. We look forward to continuing the work and projects over 2023.

If you would like to know more or discuss any items within this report, please contact:

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