

Marlborough

Brilliant  
EVERY DAY

# Marlborough

SMART AND CONNECTED VISITOR  
ECONOMY GROWTH PLAN

2015 - 2025



Only Marlborough

**This Smart and Connected Visitor Economy Growth Plan outlines the vision and direction for Marlborough's visitor economy, and looks at what is needed for the region to grow earnings from visitor spend to \$446 million by 2025.**

This Plan evolved from the outputs of the Marlborough - Smart and Connected economic development vision. It has been developed through extensive community and sector consultation overlaid with industry knowledge and expertise to create a cohesive plan that is regionally supported.

It defines Marlborough's natural advantages, competitive advantage and values into the visitor positioning that will convey that Marlborough is a desirable visitor destination offering an experience that is authentically Marlborough.

The Plan provides a foundation for informed regional infrastructure decisions and timing, and provides focus for industry and cross sector cooperation that will collectively build the resource base and capability of the region to achieve growth from the visitor economy.

It is intended that the implementation plan will be guided and delivered by a coalition of stakeholders and partnerships known as the Visitor Economy Steering Group, under the principles of the shared goals.

It also underpins the marketing activities of the region's tourism agency, Destination Marlborough, to position and promote Marlborough as a desirable visitor destination.



Only Marlborough



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## VISION

## Vision

- Marlborough is recognised internationally as a desirable destination, offering an experience that is authentically “Marlborough”.
- Marlborough expresses an exemplary natural and built environment through an enviable lifestyle, fabulous visitor experiences, and a community renowned for its hospitality, innovation, and leadership.
- Marlborough thrives on diversity, creativity, prosperity and fun.

## Values

Marlborough’s values express our identity, our way of life and our pride in our region and people.

**Abundant/  
Generous**

**Curious**

**Connected**

**Genuine**

**Up for it**



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## UNITY

## Visitor Economy Shared Goals

### Leadership and Unity

Local Government and private sector work together to resource and support the delivery of the Smart and Connected visitor economy growth plan.

The Marlborough Story is embraced to build Marlborough's regional identity.

The programme of activity to drive the region's destination marketing priorities is led by Destination Marlborough and supported by local businesses.

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### Connected

Collaborate regionally to compete nationally and internationally

Work together to access central government funding and resources for the benefit of Marlborough.

Build business capability to deliver quality visitor experiences and services.

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### Strong centres and community

Blenheim, Picton, Havelock, Renwick and sub-regions are an integral part of the Marlborough Story

Marlburians are cheerleaders for the region taking pride championing the positive stories of the region and encouraging friends and relatives and business contacts to visit, do business and live in Marlborough.

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### A growing visitor economy

Become New Zealand's leading year round destination with both recreational and commercial drivers that support the balance of year round aspirations with lifestyle agenda.

Champion new initiatives and projects to support visitor growth.



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## ADVANTAGE

## Marlborough's competitive advantage

Marlborough is unique; not for any one reason but for many.

This region is full of colour, complexity and diversity – making this part of New Zealand truly special. Only Marlborough offers an array of outdoor pursuits in such a distinctive and picturesque landscape. With one-fifth of New Zealand's coastline in the Marlborough Sounds, the land and sea offer unlimited accessibility for sports and leisure in a setting that is as geographically diverse as it is beautiful.

Only Marlborough has the environment that can produce its particular style of sauvignon blanc, celebrated the world over. The soils, the climate and our winemakers' vision are what make our award-winning wines impossible to imitate. From local iwi and early settlers to now, Only Marlborough attracts the brave and the innovative. It attracts the kind of people who realise the potential in the abundance this region offers, and those generous enough to share it.

Real people choose to live here. They are genuine. They are people who not only love our wines, water and wilderness but also value our way of life. They treasure the region's heritage and the natural environment. They connect. They start businesses. They grow. They are what make Marlborough a great place to be.

There are many reasons why Marlborough offers a way of life to dream of. Only Marlborough has all the ingredients for a better life – found here, in this one unique place.

## Marlborough's natural advantages

### Landscape, lifestyle, location and infrastructure

- Central location within NZ with access via road, rail, air and sea
- Enviably climate and high sunshine hours
- Deep water port and three marinas
- Purpose built convention centre and performing arts theatre.
- Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre
- The Wairau Bar is the earliest known settlement site in New Zealand, dating back to 1300AD.
- Molesworth Station – NZ's largest working farm.

### The Marlborough Sounds

- Sheltered waterways
- 20% of New Zealand's coastline
- Accessible all year round
- Wide range of accommodation, activities and transport services
- Queen Charlotte Track, a Great Ride on the NZ Cycle Trail
- Conservation sites & initiatives
- Predator-free islands and marine reserves
- Historic sites
- Waterfront towns of Picton and Havelock

### Food and Wine

- NZ's largest wine producing region responsible for 75% of NZ's wine exports and internationally recognised for sauvignon blanc.
- National centre for marine farming delivering 62% of New Zealand's Aquaculture production.
- Only salt production field in New Zealand
- NZ's largest garlic company
- Only commercial pine nut producer in the Southern Hemisphere
- NZ's longest running farmers market

Marlborough

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EVERY DAY

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EVERY DAY

## Positioning Marlborough to attract visitors

Destination Marlborough has developed the visitor proposition that applies the foundation story, values and attributes of Only Marlborough to position the region's visitor experience on an emotive level – a holiday or business meeting in Marlborough really is brilliant every day.

This will be applied consistently across all communications and marketing campaigns.

It serves as a unified message for visitors that reflects the attributes of Only Marlborough and promises visitors that no matter what their holiday style or expectations, the unique experiences and landscapes in Marlborough will make for brilliant memories any time of the year.

### Marlborough's Destination Marketing Priorities

- Grow visitor spend in Marlborough.
- Position Marlborough as compelling destination to visit.
- Prioritise effort on smoothing seasonality.
- Connect local government and private sector/partnership funding to achieve a single collaborative voice and scale in the marketplace.

Destination  
Marlborough



Destination Marlborough is the official Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) for the Marlborough region.

It is a not-for-profit Trust funded through a combination of Marlborough District Council rates, including a tourism targeted rate, private sector partnerships and i-SITE revenue.

Destination Marlborough's role is to market the region as a visitor destination. The organisation's marketing strategy is driven by the regional destination marketing priorities.



## Implementation Plan

This Visitor Economy Growth Plan has been compiled to direct and facilitate growth of the visitor economy.

This included identifying target areas of focus to prioritise effort and reinforce Marlborough's key selling points. These are outlined in the following pages.

Destination Marlborough – with the assistance of Marlborough District Council – will facilitate the establishment and operation of a Steering Group of regional agencies and community representatives who are leading the delivery of outcomes that support these priorities.

Destination Marlborough will communicate the Steering Group's reported progress, and monitor and share the region's performance data as it becomes available.

## Regional Gaps & Opportunities

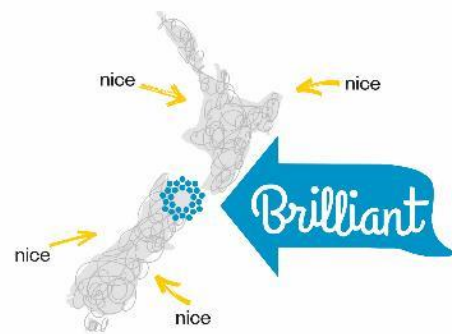
- Attraction, retention and skill-base of staff to support the growing visitor economy.
- Businesses and F&B outlets not consistently open for trading on weekends, public holidays and major event weekends.
- Lack of consistency and regional approach to tourist signage, way finding and communication with travellers in the region.
- Limited and in some cases no public transport options to some parts of the region.
- Accommodation capacity under one roof limited to 56 rooms.
- Development of the 'do business', 'invest' and 'live' hubs on MarlboroughNZ.com.
- Attract business and infrastructure investment in Marlborough.
- Towns of Picton, Blenheim, Havelock and Renwick define, develop and own their identity and contribute to the Marlborough Story.
- Alignment of functions and resources to grow demand for Marlborough as a destination to invest, do business, live, work and visit.
- Build the region's capability to respond to meeting the needs of a new and changing visitor mix, e.g. China and Halal.
- Define a freedom camping bylaw that balances the best interests of Marlborough from an economic and environmental perspective as well as from a visitor experience perspective.
- Develop and maintain the region's portfolio of target markets, priorities and approach to growing visitor demand.
- Sustain, expand and extend transport links and services.
- Improve broadband and cellular access across Marlborough.

# Marlborough's key selling points

Protected by mountain ranges, the temperate climate and high sunshine hours make Marlborough a Brilliant year-round destination.

Marlborough is centrally located at the heart of New Zealand, sitting at the head of the Southern Alps at the top of the South Island.

The region is easily accessed by road, rail, air and sea, with multiple daily direct air services between Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Paraparaumu, a coastal rail journey to Christchurch, and Cook Strait ferry services between Picton and Wellington.



## The Marlborough Sounds

The sheltered waterways of the Marlborough Sounds covering one fifth of the total coastline of NZ make it a marine playground and boaties' paradise.



## Wine and food

Marlborough is New Zealand's largest and most famous wine region and is the undisputed home of sauvignon blanc and world-class seafood.



## Nature and conservation

Endangered kiwi and other native birds thrive on predator-free islands in the Marlborough Sounds.



## Walking and cycling

Marlborough's mountain ranges and valleys deliver stunning tracks and trails for exploring by foot or by bike.



## Culture and heritage

Home of Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre, Captain Cook's favourite landing site and NZ's first known Maori settlement.



## Events

Marlborough plays host to a series of well-regarded annual events that attract visitors from NZ and around the world.



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## FREEDOM

## The Marlborough Sounds

The Marlborough Sounds is a marine playground and ecological haven covering one-fifth of New Zealand's coastline.

The sheltered waterways are home to secluded bays, historic sites, walking and cycling trails, marine reserves, island sanctuaries and places to stay tucked away in nature bush – the cruising grounds of the Marlborough Sounds are a boaties' paradise.

Marlborough is home to three world-class marinas, Havelock, Picton and Waikawa. The deep waters of the Marlborough Sounds and the port facilities allow the region to welcome cruise ships up to 300m in length.

### Areas of focus

**Product development, capability building and service & experience delivery**

- Build international recognition for the Marlborough Sounds as a significant marine environment.
- Contribute toward the integrated, sustainable management of the Marlborough Sounds.
- Build supply and demand for shoulder and winter season visitation in the Marlborough Sounds.
- Ensure infrastructure and facilities are in place to retain and grow cruise ship visits and attract leisure boaties.





## Wine and food



Marlborough is New Zealand's largest and most famous wine region and is the undisputed home of sauvignon blanc and seafood.

Marlborough is New Zealand's largest and most famous wine region and is the undisputed home of sauvignon blanc - internationally recognised for its intense and pure flavours. Marlborough wineries are also creating world-renowned pinot noir, aromatics and methode traditionnelle sparkling wines.

The pristine waters of the Marlborough Sounds provide the ideal environment for farming high value seafood such as King salmon and Greenshell mussels.

Craft brewers, food producers, viticulturists and wine makers passionately create the delicacies that attract food and wine lovers from around the world.

## Areas of focus

Product development, capability building and service & experience delivery

- Leverage the international reputation of Marlborough's wine and grow Marlborough's reputation as an internationally recognised epicurean destination.
- Build Marlborough's reputation as the destination source of high value seafood.
- Convert consumers of Marlborough's wine and food exports into visitors/investors/residents of Marlborough, and Marlborough's visitors into consumers/ investors and business partners of Marlborough's food and wine products.
- Inspire Marlborough's hospitality sector to embrace, use and promote local product.
- Target high profile chefs and restaurateurs to become ambassadors for Marlborough food and wine and to establish links /outlets in Marlborough.



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## CONNECTIONS

## Nature and conservation



Endangered kiwi and other native birds thrive on predator-free islands in the Marlborough Sounds.

The Sounds are home to dolphins, seals, and whales on their seasonal migration, with local operators offering a range of experiences to interact with the wildlife.

New Zealand's last commercial whaling station, the National Whale Centre and Picton Museum all boast rich stories of whales, whaling and whale conservation.

The historic Wairau Lagoons, accessible by foot, bike and kayak are home to more than 90 bird species.

### Areas of focus

Product development, capability building and service & experience delivery

- Develop product experiences that open up access to Marlborough's conservation assets and initiatives for visitors.





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## PATHS

## Walking and cycling



Marlborough's mountain ranges and valleys provide the platform for exploring the region on foot or by bike with a number of acclaimed on and off road tracks and trails including a Great Ride and three Trails along *Nga Haerenga, The New Zealand Cycle Trail*.

Marlborough's Great Ride, the Queen Charlotte Track, is a dual access track. With 70km of coastal scenery, native bush and stunning views spanning almost the entire length of Queen Charlotte Sound this flexible track is made exceptional by its easy access, pack transfers and wide range of accommodation.

The Wither Hills is an 1100 hectare working farm and home to numerous tracks for walkers and cyclists of all abilities providing some of the finest vantage points of Marlborough.

With more than 17 winery cellar doors within a 5km radius of Renwick, cycle hire and guided cycle tours between the vines are a popular way to explore the Marlborough Wine Trail.

## Areas of focus

Product development, capability building and service & experience delivery

- Encourage walk and cycleway initiatives to support a diverse and unique network of roads, trails and tracks in Marlborough that showcase and enhance the region's unique strengths and are enjoyed by cyclists and walkers every day.



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## STORIES

## Culture and heritage

Marlborough's history is layered with rich stories, significant for all of New Zealand.

The country's first known Māori settlement was at the Wairau Bar in 1300AD, about which more information is daily gleaned through ongoing archeological research.

Captain Cook stood on Motuara Island in 1770 and proclaimed British sovereignty over the South Island. Nearby Ship Cove was one of Cook's favourite landing sites while exploring New Zealand.

Marlborough is privileged to be home to the Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre, the world-renowned display of Sir Peter Jackson's rare collection of WWI aircraft and memorabilia, with a stunning World War II exhibit planned to open in mid-2016.

Preserved and on display at the Picton waterfront is the Edwin Fox, the ninth oldest ship in the world.

## Areas of focus

Product development, capability building and service & experience delivery

- Celebrate Captain Cook's 250th anniversary.
- Develop visitor experiences and capabilities that reflect Marlborough's significant maritime and regional history and the stories of regional Maori heritage and other early settlers.
- Stage 2 development of the Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre.
- Grow the vibrancy of town centres and attractiveness to visitors
- Utilise the region's performing arts capabilities and infrastructure to position Marlborough as a vibrant Top-of-the-South performing arts hub including the development of a cultural precinct in the Blenheim CBD.



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## TIMES

## Events

Community, regional, niche, major & business



Marlborough plays host to a series of well-regarded annual events.

The country's first known Māori settlement was at the Wairau Bar in 1300AD, about which more information is daily gleaned through ongoing archaeological research.

From the iconic Marlborough Wine and Food Festival, Omaka Classic Fighters (biennial), Garden Marlborough, Saint Clair Vineyard Half Marathon to the Forrest GrapeRide; all of which attract visitors from New Zealand and abroad.

With a purpose built convention centre, new performing arts theatre, central location, easy access and a wide range of accommodation and activities, Marlborough is a brilliant conference and incentive destination.

## Areas of focus

Product development, capability building and service & experience delivery

- Align the Regional Events Strategy with the Business Event Attraction Strategy to optimise venue and facility utilisation throughout the year.
- Develop a Marlborough Events Matrix where events will be evaluated on criteria such as social and economic benefits (GDP), visitor nights, exposure of the region and seasonality. This will highlight any gaps in the matrix where bids for events can be targeted.
- Along with national conference attraction, target international business events and specialist business visitors in conjunction with Tourism New Zealand.





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TARGET

## Regional Performance Target:

The NZ visitor industry strategy 'Tourism 2025' released in early 2014 defined a framework to unite the country's tourism industry with an end goal of contributing \$41 billion per year to the economy by 2025. Marlborough is well positioned to rise to the challenge set by the framework.

Marlborough visitor economy target:

# \$446 million by 2025

**Updates from the Steering Group and reports on regional performance will be published via DMail, Destination Marlborough's weekly e-newsletter.**

To connect with this process please contact Destination Marlborough:  
03 577 5523 or email [info@MarlboroughNZ.com](mailto:info@MarlboroughNZ.com).