



NorthlandInc

Growing Northland's Economy
Kia tupu ai te ōhanga o Te Tai Tokerau

Annual Snapshot

2024-2025 Financial Year



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CHAIR'S COMMENT

The past year has been one of meaningful progress and continued collaboration across Te Tai Tokerau. Guided by a strong sense of purpose, Northland Inc has worked alongside local and central government, iwi, hapū, and industry partners to deliver projects that create lasting benefit for our region. Our shared commitment to resilience, innovation, and sustainable growth continues to shape the economic future of Te Tai Tokerau.

From enterprise development to destination management, investment attraction to infrastructure planning, the breadth of Northland Inc's mahi reflects the strength of its partnerships and the skill of its people. Taking a leadership role in the development of the Northland Regional Deal proposal, alongside advocacy for key regional funding and investment, demonstrates an organisation that is both future-focused and deeply grounded in its regional identity.

On behalf of the Board, I want to acknowledge the dedication of the Northland Inc team in supporting our region. They have delivered exceptional outcomes in a challenging environment. As we look ahead, we remain confident in the direction of this organisation and its ability to drive positive, enduring change for Te Tai Tokerau.



Suzanne
Duncan

CHAIR, NORTHLAND INC BOARD

**NO REIRA, NGĀ MIHI
MAIOHA, NUNUI HOKI KI A
KOUTOU KATO A O TE RAKI.
TĒNĀ KOUTOU, TĒNĀ
KOUTOU, TĒNĀ TĀTOU
KATO A.**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S COMMENT



Paul Linton

CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
NORTHLAND INC

This year has been defined by collaboration, connection, and an enduring belief in what Te Tai Tokerau can achieve when we work together. Across every portfolio, our focus has remained clear: enabling growth that is inclusive, sustainable, and distinctly Northland. Whether it's supporting hundreds of local enterprises through the Business Innovation and Growth team, strengthening the visitor economy through domestic and international promotion, or supporting new investment in infrastructure and innovation, our collective efforts have helped unlock opportunity across the region.

Advocacy has been a central part of our work this year, particularly around infrastructure and roading resilience. Working closely with our shareholders, the four councils of Northland, we have continued to act as a strong economic and destination voice for the region. We also worked alongside NZTA and regional leaders to progress solutions for the Brynderwyns, advocate for a four-lane highway, and support wider infrastructure priorities spanning food processing, energy resilience, and regional connectivity. These efforts reflect the strength of our partnerships and a shared determination to build a resilient, opportunity-rich future for Northland.

As we look ahead, the path before us is one of momentum. The foundations we have built, through collaboration, capability, and courageous leadership, position Te Tai Tokerau to continue growing as a region that not only thrives economically, but does so in a way that honours our people, our culture, and our place.

KAUPAPA MĀORI, ENTERPRISE & INNOVATION

BUSINESS, INNOVATION & GROWTH

Across 2024/25, Northland Inc's Business, Innovation & Growth (BIG) Team continued to be a trusted partner for enterprises navigating change, growth, and innovation. Working across Te Tai Tokerau, the team engaged with 358 businesses through the Regional Business Partner Network, supporting local businesses to build capability, connect with funding, and strengthen resilience. Businesses most often sought guidance on planning and marketing, with manufacturing, construction, and professional services among the most engaged industries. Nearly a third of all engagements identified as pakihi Māori, reflecting our ongoing partnership with Te Hiringa Trust to ensure equitable access to support. The team also maintained an exceptional client satisfaction rating, with a Net

Promoter Score of 73, consistently above national benchmarks (>50), demonstrating the value of trusted local relationships and tailored advice.

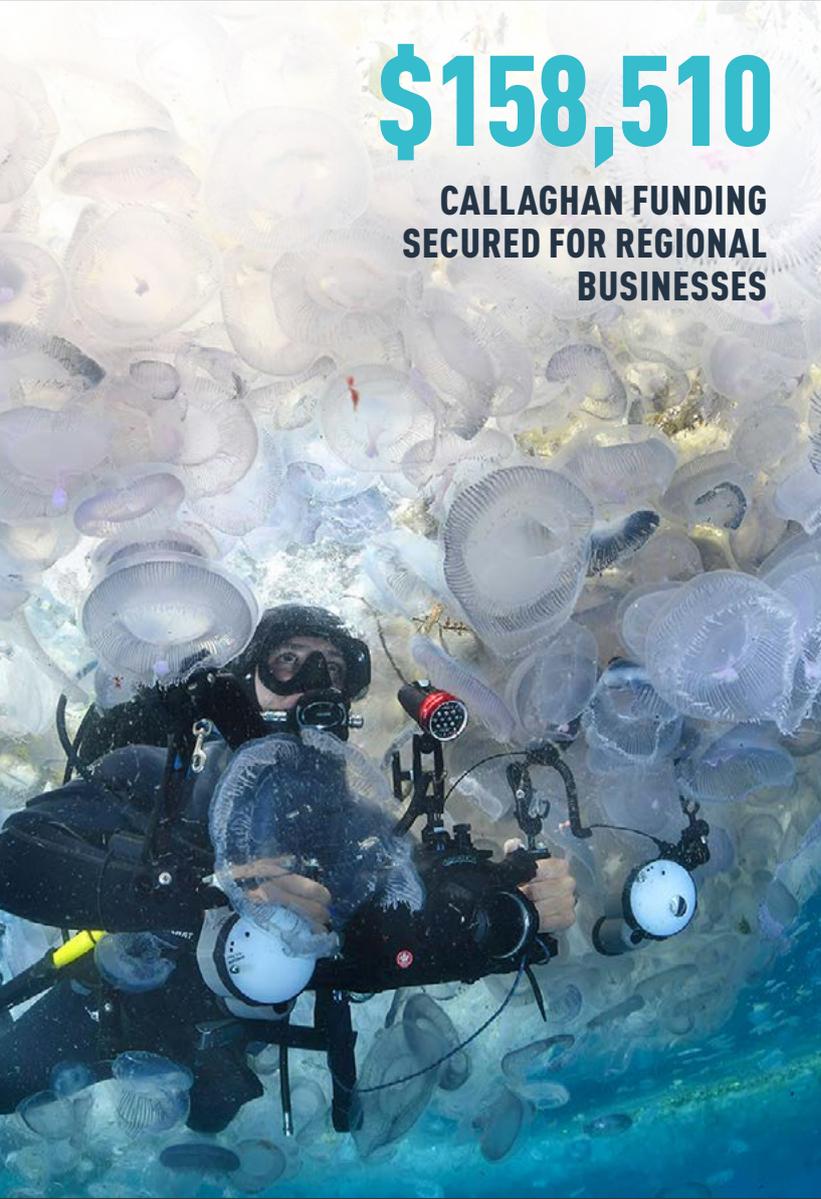
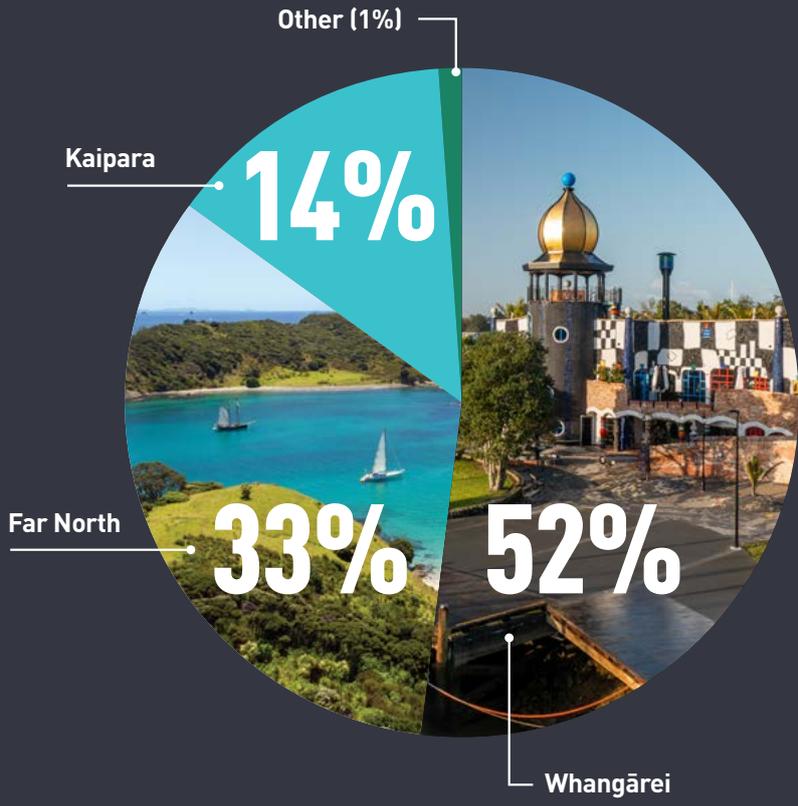
Through Callaghan Innovation, Northland Inc helped regional enterprises access \$158,510 in grant funding to advance research, technology, and product development, with many stepping into innovation and R&D pathways for the first time. From the rollout of one-to-some learning programmes to targeted workshops across Kaikohe, Dargaville, Kerikeri, and Whangārei, the BIG Team's reach and impact continues to grow, helping Northland's businesses adapt, innovate, and thrive.

**“HAVING A CUSTOMER NAVIGATOR
[VIA NORTHLAND INC] HAS BEEN
KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF NAUT.”**

- FIONA BYFIELD, CEO, NAUT



BUSINESS ENGAGEMENTS BY DISTRICT (%)



\$158,510
CALLAGHAN FUNDING SECURED FOR REGIONAL BUSINESSES



32.68%
PAKIHI MĀORI ENGAGEMENTS

181 NEW REGIONAL BUSINESS PARTNER NETWORK REGISTRATIONS

70 NET PROMOTER SCORE (BENCHMARK >50)

\$51,638 IN REGIONAL BUSINESS PARTNER NETWORK FUNDING INTO REGIONAL BUSINESSES



Spotlight on **BONNO DOG CHEWS**

Born out of a backyard moment in Northland, Bonno creates natural, eco-friendly dog chews made from waste Mānuka wood. What started as a curious accident turned into a purpose-driven business committed to sustainability, quality, and innovation - with a little help from Northland Inc along the way.

A SPARK OF INSPIRATION

While smoking fish one day, co-founder Tony noticed his dog chewing happily on a piece of Mānuka. Unlike other woods, it didn't splinter, and that sparked an idea.

Together with his partner Stef, the pair began testing, and eventually the idea took shape: Bonno Dog Chews, a sustainable treat for dogs and their humans alike.

NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY

Stef and Tony connected with Northland Inc early on, first through a workshop in Kerikeri, then more formally through a Northland Inc Growth Advisor.

The support they received ranged from product development advice to funding guidance and referrals to key contacts and training opportunities.

"The advice, the contacts, the follow-ups - it was just amazing. I kept thinking, 'What do I have to lose?' So, we followed the suggestions and picked what worked for us" says Stef.

One of those contacts led them to Marx Design, a sustainable packaging agency that helped bring Bonno's brand and packaging to life. They also completed the NZ Entrepreneur course, earning a

scholarship and building valuable knowledge around marketing, IP, and business strategy.

"From helping navigate funding pathways to making introductions to industry leaders, the support from Northland Inc has been both practical and motivating."

GAINING TRACTION

Bonno had a soft launch in late 2024, followed by organic growth through word of mouth and small local stockists. One retailer's post on social media sparked wider interest, and soon other pet stores came knocking.

Now, Bonno is stocked in multiple stores, is in talks with a national distributor, and has secured approval to use the New Zealand FernMark on its packaging - an important step for exports.

"If there's one thing we've learned, it's this: think big. You won't grow big unless you think big. Northland Inc helped us think that way - and gave us the tools to act on it."

THE ROAD AHEAD

With strong foundations in place, Bonno is now preparing for the next stage of growth. Exporting is on the horizon, alongside expanding its local retail network

"Northland Inc has been our go-to. We can call for advice, get contacts, and receive encouragement every step of the way. Without them, we wouldn't be here. The positivity, the follow-ups, the belief in our idea, it's kept us going when things felt overwhelming. And now, we're seeing the results." And as for the dogs? They're loving it too.



WHĀRIKI BUSINESS NETWORK

Northland Inc's partnership with Whāriki Te Tai Tokerau, formalised through the Waka Hourua Agreement in 2023, continues to strengthen the Māori business ecosystem across Te Tai Tokerau. Acting as the umbrella organisation to support Whāriki's mahi, Northland Inc helps enable events, capability building, and collaboration opportunities for pakihi Māori across the region. Over the past year, Whāriki delivered 15 events, including WhārikiX, Mana Mindset, Chat AI, and Pūtea Pū kōrero, connecting Māori businesses with expert advice, digital capability training, and growth networks. Highlights included the Boost by Meta workshop in Whangārei, attended by over 60 Māori entrepreneurs and professionals, and the Chat AI wānanga at Ngāwhā, where participants explored emerging technology tools. Together, Northland Inc and Whāriki continue to build pathways for Māori enterprise to thrive, grounded in connection, innovation, and shared prosperity.



“Northland Inc has truly helped amplify the voice and visibility of Māori enterprise across Te Tai Tokerau. Their partnership, belief, and genuine backing of our kaupapa have enabled Whāriki to grow into a powerful movement. A movement that uplifts, connects, and champions our people every step of the way.”

- CHOOK HENARE, CHAIR, WHĀRIKI TE TAI TOKERAU

Spotlight on TAITOKERAU BUSINESS RESILIENCE PROJECT

70+

WORKSHOPS

38% FAR NORTH
36% WHANGĀREI
26% KAIPARA

1,900

PARTICIPANTS

Launched as part of the Cyclone Gabrielle recovery effort, the Taitokerau Business Resilience Project was designed to strengthen Northland's business community following years of disruption - from severe weather and infrastructure failures to the lingering impacts of the pandemic. Funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and delivered by Northland Inc in partnership with NorthChamber, Whāriki Te Tai Tokerau, the Kaitiaki Business Boosters, Te Hiku Iwi Development Trust, and local Business Associations, the initiative offered practical, accessible support to help enterprises build confidence, capability, and connection across the region.

The programme was shaped by a regional survey of 270 businesses conducted one year on from Cyclone Gabrielle, which revealed that 30% of Northland businesses felt underprepared for future unexpected events. In response, Northland Inc designed a suite of workshops, mentoring, and resources to address the areas of greatest demand, including financial management, business continuity, marketing, and wellbeing. This followed Northland Inc's earlier advocacy for and administration of \$8.67 million in direct recovery funding to businesses on behalf of MBIE, and the successful advocacy for further business and tourism support through 2024.

By mid-2024, the programme had supported more than 1,900 participants through 70+ training events, workshops, and mentoring sessions, reaching

businesses across all districts - 38% in the Far North, 36% in Whangārei, and 26% in Kaipara. Participants praised the relevance and accessibility of the sessions, with many describing the experience as transformational for their planning, leadership, and confidence.

Northland Inc Chief Executive Paul Linton said the project directly reflected what local businesses had been asking for - sustained, practical support rather than short-term relief. The project's success lies not only in its reach but in its collaborative delivery model, which brought together government, iwi, and industry partners to co-design and deliver solutions that meet Northland's unique needs. Though the formal programme concluded in August 2024, its legacy continues through the strengthened networks, shared resources, and renewed resilience of Northland's business community.

“THE HR ESSENTIALS PACK WAS EXACTLY WHAT OUR SMALL BUSINESS NEEDED! THE COACHING SESSION WITH KIMBERLEY REALLY HELPED CLARIFY EVERYTHING TO GET OUR NEW SYSTEMS IN PLACE”.

DYLAN AND HOLLIE - NORTHLAND MOBILE WINDSCREENS



70 PARTICIPANTS

61% PAKIHI MĀORI

8 YEARS RUNNING

6 FINALISTS **1** WINNER

Spotlight on **THE PICK**

Now in its eighth year, Northland Inc's The Pick programme has become Taitokerau Northland's premier business ideas competition, helping aspiring entrepreneurs across the region turn great ideas into viable, scalable businesses. Founded by Northland Inc and delivered in 2025 by NorthChamber, in partnership with Whāriki Te Tai Tokerau and the Ministry of Social Development, the programme continues to grow in reach and impact. This year, nearly 70 participants took part in a 10-week journey of mentoring, capability-building workshops, and networking sessions - with 61% identifying as pakihi Māori in 2025. Participants explored everything from product innovation to social enterprise, reflecting the creativity and diversity that drive Northland's economy.

The programme culminated in a pitch night, where six finalists presented their ideas to a panel of judges and an audience of more than 70 regional business leaders and supporters. Georgia Keys was named overall winner for her product idea, MAED Innovations - a smartphone-integrated defibrillator designed to make lifesaving technology more accessible. The Pick continues to foster Northland's entrepreneurial pipeline, giving participants access to expert mentors and industry insights, and building the resilience and ambition of the region's start-up community. Each year, new businesses and ideas emerge ready to grow, employ, and contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive regional economy.



“[THE PICK] IS MORE THAN JUST A PROGRAMME. IT GAVE ME THE ENERGY AND THE ABILITY TO KNOW THAT WHAT I'M DOING IS RIGHT AND TO KEEP ON PERSEVERING...I'VE GAINED A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT.”

2025 Winner: Georgia Keys, MAED Innovations

IMPACT ON THE MĀORI ECONOMY



Northland Inc provided broad support to Māori organisations across Te Tai Tokerau throughout the year, helping strengthen enterprise, tourism, and sustainability outcomes. This included assisting iwi and Māori groups to develop new visitor products, undertake feasibility studies, and embed cultural storytelling within regional destination planning. Support ranged from eco-lodges and treks to local tourism strategies and marketing development. The team partnered with Māori business networks and regional programmes to build capability, resilience, and

access to funding and worked with iwi and hapū on strategic asset planning, leadership development, and alignment with wider regional economic priorities.

Northland Inc reconnected with national Māori organisations to secure project funding, strengthen relationships, and ensure Taitokerau operators are visible within the national tourism landscape. The collective mahi has helped grow Māori participation and leadership in Te Tai Tokerau's economy, driving sustainable, culturally grounded enterprise and regional prosperity.

25 IWI/HĀPU GROUPS AND MĀORI ORGANISATIONS ACTIVELY SUPPORTED DURING THE YEAR.

87% SATISFACTION RATE FROM MĀORI ENTERPRISES ENGAGING WITH NORTHLAND INC.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT & MARKETING

\$1.28M

GOVERNMENT-FUNDED MARKETING, AND NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'S BEST OF THE WORLD 2025 RECOGNITION.



61%

UPLIFT IN TICKET SALES
AIR NEW ZEALAND PARTNERSHIP

11.6M

AIR NEW ZEALAND PARTNERSHIP IMPRESSIONS

6M+

SOCIAL REACH
INDIA KEY OPINION LEADER FAMIL

REGIONAL PROMOTION

Northland Inc's marketing activity over 2024/25 focused on showcasing the region's unique stories, people, and experiences to both domestic and international audiences. Through strategic partnerships and creative campaigns, the team worked to inspire visitation, strengthen regional pride, and position Northland as a must-visit destination across all seasons. The Enjoy the Journey, #NorthlandStyle autumn campaign generated more than 500,000 views and 13,000 landing page visits, engaging 40 local operators through partnerships, giveaways, and shared storytelling. In spring, collaboration with Air New Zealand produced a high-impact national campaign featuring Northland across digital, social, and broadcast channels - achieving 11.6 million impressions, a 96% video completion rate, and a 61% uplift in ticket sales into the region.

Northland's marketing reach was amplified through strong media and publicity activity, including international and domestic famils that resulted in widespread coverage across publications such as Traveller Australia, AA Directions, Kia Ora Magazine, and Motorhomes, Caravans and Destinations. Highlights included a Tourism New Zealand India Key

Opinion Leader famil, reaching more than 6 million followers. Recognition of Northland's growing international reputation was further cemented when the region was named among National Geographic's "Best of the World 2025", shining a global spotlight on our region's culture, landscapes, and experiences.

Support from Central Government's Regional Tourism Boost Fund enabled further collective marketing investment, with Northland participating in two successful applications worth \$1.28 million. These include the Upper North Island "2Easy" campaign, promoting self-drive itineraries to the Australian market, and the national "Explore More of New Zealand" campaign targeting North American travellers. Complementing these initiatives, niche product promotion continued to grow, including the rollout of Northland golfing itineraries and hero video in partnership with North Golf Association, positioning the region as a standout golfing destination. Together, these activities demonstrate Northland Inc's collaborative approach to building awareness, deepening industry engagement, product development and attracting high-value visitors to the region.



400+ TRADE ENGAGEMENTS

11 BUSINESSES REPRESENTED AT TRENZ

10+ MAJOR TRADE EVENTS ATTENDED

TRADE MARKETING

Trade marketing plays a vital role in raising Northland's international profile and helping travel sellers around the world confidently promote the region. This work connects Northland Inc with global travel agents, wholesalers, and inbound tour operators to ensure our stories, experiences, and people are visible in the itineraries that reach visitors before they even arrive in Aotearoa. Through presentations, appointments, training sessions, and familiarisation visits, the team works to equip trade partners with the knowledge and tools they need to sell Northland as a visitor destination.

Over the 2024/25 year, Northland Inc's Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) team, led by our Trade Marketing Manager, attended or hosted more than 10 major trade events and facilitated over 400 direct engagements with international agents across North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Highlights included a four-city sales trip across Australia, participation in Tourism New Zealand's Kiwi Link events in UK and Europe, with planning underway to attend Kiwi Link India next year, and the TRENZ 2025 trade show in Rotorua - where Northland's largest-ever delegation of 11 businesses showcased the region to global buyers. Closer to home, the team hosted multiple Chinese media and product manager delegations, an annual Mega Famil for top agents and Flight Centre's leading sellers, ensuring that trade partners experienced the region's manaakitanga firsthand.

TAITOKERAU NORTHLAND DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

It has been another strong year for the Taitokerau Northland Destination Management Plan (TNDMP), with progress made across several key actions. The Responsible Tourism Programme continued to grow, delivering workshops on regenerative storytelling, inclusive tourism, and Qualmark.

The Russell local destination planning process launched in April 2024, generating excellent community engagement and early implementation of identified actions. Northland Inc staff completed the Expedia Climate Champions programme, contributing valuable insights to a forthcoming Climate Action Plan for the regional visitor industry, while a new partnership with Maverick Digital saw the delivery of targeted digital marketing workshops for operators.



Spotlight on

TOURISM CARBON FOOTPRINT PROJECT

The Tourism Carbon Footprint Project was a Northland Inc initiative delivered in partnership with the Northland Regional Council to help tourism businesses measure and reduce their carbon emissions. Using CarbonTrail, an AI-driven emissions tool, tourism businesses across Taitokerau Northland took part in this pilot programme, gaining a clearer understanding of their environmental impact at no cost. Participants also received practical advice and tailored strategies from Dr. David Ermen (Destination Capacity) to improve efficiency, lower costs, and strengthen sustainability performance. The project took a business-first approach to sustainability, helping operators make informed decisions that were good for both the environment and their bottom line. It also contributed to a regional benchmark for tourism emissions, creating a data foundation to guide future sustainability planning and funding. Results from the pilot are due in October 2025, with follow-up actions already in planning to build on the

findings. By supporting tourism businesses to operate more efficiently and responsibly, this initiative strengthened Northland's reputation as a region that leads with care for its people, environment, and economy.



REGIONAL EVENTS SUPPORT

Northland Inc continued to support the growth of the region's events calendar through the administration of national and regional funding programmes designed to drive visitation and strengthen the local visitor economy. The fifth and final contestable round of the Northland Events Fund concluded during the year, with applications requesting more than \$500,000 in support. With only \$150,000 available, the allocation process was highly competitive, resulting in funding for 10 events, including Bay of Islands Sailing Week, Brew of Islands, Matariki ki Mangawhai, Vibes on Vine, Waitangi Day Commemorations, and the Lake Ōmāpere Matariki Festival. Established as part of central government's pandemic response, the Regional Events Fund formally concluded on 30 June 2025, marking the end of a four-year programme that played a significant role in encouraging domestic travel and showcasing the vibrancy of Taitokerau Northland's communities.

The first round of allocations from central government's Regional Events Promotion Fund was announced in August 2024, with six Northland events receiving support - the Bay of Islands Music Festival, Bay of Islands Walking Weekend, Fritter Festival, Mangawhai Lions Food and Wine Festival, Oktoberfest, and The Great New Zealand BBQ. Northland Inc worked closely with event organisers to prepare and submit applications, helping secure funding to boost marketing activity and extend audience reach.

\$217,000+
ADMINISTERED IN EVENTS SUPPORT

22 **EVENTS SUPPORTED ACROSS
NORTHLAND IN THE 2024/25
FINANCIAL YEAR**

Spotlight on SAVOUR NORTHLAND



125
EVENTS

46
VENUES

36
CHALLENGE
ENTRANTS

49
DISHES

**REGIONAL SPREAD
FROM MANGONUI
TO MANGAWHAI**

October 2024 marked the inaugural Savour Northland event, a month-long celebration of Taitokerau Northland's food and beverage industry that brought together producers, chefs, venues, and visitors in a showcase of regional creativity and collaboration. The Taitokerau Northland Destination Management Plan identified a need to develop Northland's food and beverage offering as a key action, which later evolved into the Food & Beverage Action Plan. With support lead by Northland Inc over multiple years, Savour Northland was the first major initiative to activate that plan and bring the industry together under one regional banner.

Over 125 events took place at 46 venues across the region, featuring hands-on workshops, culinary collaborations, themed dining experiences, and festivals. Adding a competitive edge, the Savour Northland Challenge saw 49 entries from 36 venues showcase their take on the essence of Northland - expressed through locally inspired dishes and drinks that highlighted the region's creativity and flavour.

Developed in partnership with the local hospitality and producer community and supported through seed funding from Northland Inc and the Regional Events Fund, Savour Northland reflected the strength and ambition of the region's food and beverage sector.

The event was backed by a major marketing campaign featuring partners including The Northern Advocate, NZME, Coast FM, and Cuisine Magazine, alongside the Northland Winegrowers Association, Explore Group, and Air New Zealand Grabaseat. Together, these partnerships helped attract visitors, strengthen regional pride, and lift the national profile of Northland as a culinary destination. Building on years of industry collaboration and passion, Savour Northland 2024 laid the foundations for a signature annual event - one that celebrates local flavour, fosters innovation, and drives lasting benefit to the region's visitor economy.

“THE WORK NORTHLAND INC DOES HAS FLOW-ON EFFECTS ACROSS THE WHOLE COMMUNITY – SUPPORTING JOBS, BOOSTING TOURISM, AND KEEPING MONEY IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY.”

- NICK KEENE
SCHNAPPA ROCK & PRESIDENT, HOSPITALITY NZ



INVESTMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

The Investment and Infrastructure team supports Northland’s economic growth by creating an enabling environment for key economic development and infrastructure projects, working with key stakeholders to improve the investment readiness of the region and attract capital into it. Working closely with central government agencies such as NZTE, MBIE, MPI, and Kānoa – Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit, the team connects investors and industry partners with opportunities that strengthen regional industries and create quality jobs. Through project facilitation, feasibility support, and advocacy for enabling infrastructure, the team helps advance initiatives in key sectors like manufacturing, energy, agribusiness, and tourism, ensuring Northland is positioned as a competitive and sustainable place to invest and do business.

Over the 2024/25 year, the team has supported a range of projects through the Project Development Fund, which provides funding support to economic development projects within the region for the purpose of making them investment ready. Northland Inc have partnered with the private sector, Māori and central government on projects across the primary, aquaculture and tourism sectors leveraging every dollar contributed from the fund by four. If these projects come to fruition, they also have the potential to catalyse over \$100 million of future investment and create an estimated 800 jobs, delivering tangible benefits for Northland’s communities and economy.

The year also saw growing momentum in the energy and advanced manufacturing sectors, particularly following Channel Infrastructure’s announcement of an energy precinct at Marsden Point. This development has attracted significant domestic and international interest, with the six delegations the team hosted and over half of the high-impact projects supported by the team,

connected to emerging opportunities in alternative fuels and clean energy. Collectively, these projects, along with projects in the manufacturing and tourism sectors represent more than \$845 million in prospective investment, positioning Northland as a leader in the transition to a low-emissions economy.

Much of this work the team does is incorporated within or aligns closely with the Northland Regional Deal proposal, which provides a shared framework for enabling long-term, sustainable regional growth. By continuing to collaborate with government, iwi, industry, and local partners, the Investment and Infrastructure team remains focused on driving investment, unlocking infrastructure, and delivering outcomes that build prosperity and resilience across Te Tai Tokerau.



PRIMARY SECTOR

In 2024, Northland Inc launched Pūtake Whakatupu (Foundation for Growth), a transformative project designed to identify, support, and develop sustainable land use and value-add manufacturing opportunities across Taitokerau Northland. As the inaugural project under the Tuputupu Grow Northland initiative, it was delivered with funding from the Ministry for Primary Industries’ Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures Fund and the Joint Regional Economic Development Committee.

The initiative aims to ensure that Northland’s primary sector, people, and environment thrive through adaptation and innovation, leading to new commercial opportunities and longer-term resilience.

Through 2024, the project undertook extensive engagement with landowners, iwi and hapū, industry representatives, and growers to build a clearer picture of Northland’s primary industries and associated manufacturing landscape. This included a regional survey and a series of four workshops held across the region in November 2024, which were attended by almost 100 people, gathering insights that were used to inform a series of Market Opportunity Reports to be released in 2025. Insights from the workshops and other follow up engagements led to the Market Opportunity Reports focusing on newer and novel crops. They take a market led approach working back from retail pricing and commercialisation to capability to grow in region and include consideration of subtropical, specialty root and alternative arable crops.

There are also a number of projects underway across the sector, which are designed to build understanding, capability and support growers decision making across various industries, with the Tuputupu providing varying levels of support from being the project lead through to simply providing support or insights. Pūtake Whakatupu also focuses on collaboration with and by Māori, for a Māori approach ensuring that Māori aspirations for their whenua, whānau, and enterprise are embedded in future planning.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY COLLABORATION AND LEADERSHIP

Collaboration remains central to Northland Inc’s leadership role in driving regional and national economic development. Through the Primary Sector EDA Collaboration Initiative, Northland Inc continued to work alongside Venture Taranaki, Great South, Venture Timaru, and Central Economic Development Agency to share insights, streamline project delivery, and reduce duplication across regions. A visit to Southland in late 2024 further strengthened these relationships, enabling knowledge exchange around land use, value-add manufacturing, and diversification opportunities in the primary sector. The collaboration also led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Venture Taranaki, formalising joint work on de-risking the introduction of new and novel crops, leveraging expertise from Massey University and the respective regional initiatives.

Northland Inc also engaged with a range of national and research partners to ensure Northland’s voice was represented in key discussions shaping the future of regional development. The Climate Commission’s Taitokerau Northland visit provided an opportunity to share local insights on climate adaptation risks and opportunities, while ongoing collaboration with the Foundation for Arable Research (FAR) supported crop diversification trials across the region. Northland Inc also hosted representatives from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to highlight opportunities for increased exports and investment in Northland’s food and fibre sector. These engagements continued to reinforce Northland Inc’s leadership role in national conversations around sustainability, innovation, and the future of regional economies.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



**JOINT REGIONAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**



Northland Inc
Growing Northland's Economy
Kia tupu ai te āhanga o Te Tai Tokerau

**4 WORKSHOPS
HELD**

**1 REGIONAL
SURVEY**

**KEY FOCUS AREAS: SUSTAINABLE LAND USE,
VALUE-ADD MANUFACTURING, BY MĀORI FOR
MĀORI PARTNERSHIP.**

REGIONAL INSIGHTS & LEADERSHIP

Northland Inc continued to lead regional collaboration and insight-driven planning through the Northland Regional Deal, a proposal submitted to central government in February 2025 on behalf of the four Councils of Northland. The deal set out a bold yet achievable vision to increase Northland's GDP by \$977 million, create over 6,000 new jobs, and boost exports by \$877 million, while lifting incomes and reducing unemployment across the region. The proposal outlined four key sectors for growth - Future Energy, Marine Manufacturing, Primary Industries, and the Visitor Economy - supported by critical investment in infrastructure, policy reform, and private sector co-investment. The Regional Deal demonstrated Northland's readiness to deliver, building on strong partnerships between local government, iwi, and industry, and a proven track record of collaboration. It also showed how the four councils successfully work together through Northland Inc for increased regional prosperity.

In support of this ambition and to help the region plan ahead, Northland Inc commissioned a Social Impact Assessment Report to understand the effects of major infrastructure projects across the region. The study identified over \$10 billion in proposed infrastructure development over the next decade, assessing potential impacts on workforce supply, small businesses, and vulnerable communities. Funded in partnership with Te Whatu Ora, MSD, Kāinga Ora, and Northland Inc, the report provided valuable insights into how major projects could create jobs and regional opportunities while also guiding mitigation strategies to ensure growth is inclusive and sustainable.

Complementing these regional insights, Northland Inc joined MBIE's Angus & Associates Visitor Insights Programme to develop the first Market Perception Report for Northland. The initial findings, released in mid-2024, revealed that two-thirds (64%) of New Zealanders have visited Northland at least once, with the region's weather and natural scenery ranking among its strongest assets. For the Australian market, 24% of visitors to New Zealand had travelled to Northland - primarily families and travellers aged 30-39 - with the Bay of Islands remaining the most recognised destination. These insights are helping to shape future marketing and investment priorities, ensuring Northland's tourism and economic development strategies remain grounded in evidence and aligned with regional aspirations.

Advocacy and collaboration around roading resilience remained a key priority for Northland Inc throughout the year. Northland Inc worked closely with NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) around the timing of the Brynderwyn Hills closures for repairs - to bring our community voices together, to gather sector wide views and ensure Northland's transport priorities were well understood and effectively communicated to NZTA decision-makers. Significant focus was placed on the reopening of State Highway 1 over the Brynderwyn Hills, vital for reconnecting Northland with Auckland and the rest of New Zealand., and to ensure there was minimal impact on Northland's economy. Through this, Northland Inc has helped support a unified regional voice on roading, supporting the views of the Northland Mayoral Forum, and advocating for long-term investment that supports safety, connectivity, and economic resilience.

\$10B

**IN INFRASTRUCTURE
PROJECTS ASSESSED**

\$977M

PROJECTED GDP GROWTH

6,000

POTENTIAL NEW JOBS

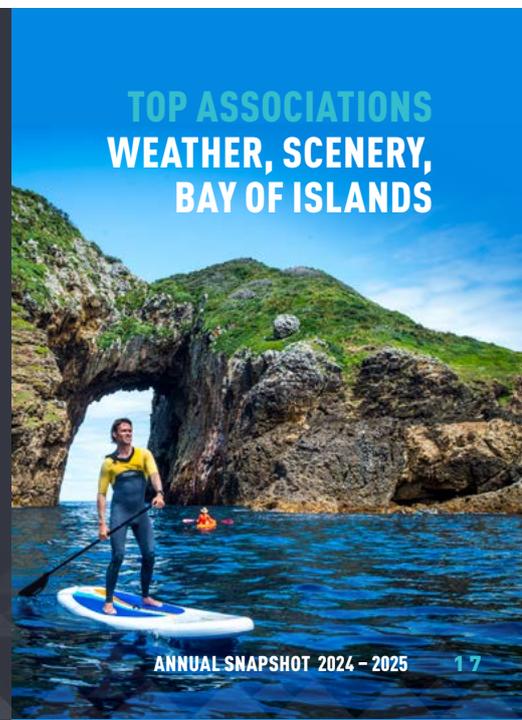
24%

**DOMESTIC
VISITATION**

64%

**AUSTRALIAN
TRAVELLERS**

**TOP ASSOCIATIONS
WEATHER, SCENERY,
BAY OF ISLANDS**





Spotlight on

NORTHLAND RESILIENCE FUND

Following advocacy from Northland Inc, Northland MP Grant McCallum and regional leaders, the region secured a \$1 million Resilience Fund from Transpower and its service provider Omexom, established to improve energy and economic resilience in the wake of the June 2024 power outage. The first allocation from the fund provided \$250,000 in seed funding ring fenced to progress development of a Health Simulation and Training Centre at Whangārei's new Knowledge, Education & Arts (KEA) Hub - Northland's first purpose-built facility of its kind. This world-class centre will replicate real-life clinical environments to train health professionals, emergency responders, and care workers, addressing critical workforce shortages and positioning Northland as a leader in health training and education. Further allocations from the fund are supporting the development of a Regional Infrastructure Strategy, led by Northland Inc, to align regional priorities and attract long-term investment.

In parallel, the Te Tai Tokerau Impact Fund, also supported through Transpower's regional commitment, was established to strengthen community and kaupapa-driven projects across Northland. Administered by Northland Inc and NorthChamber, the fund was designed to back initiatives that deliver long-term regional benefit through collaboration and enterprise. Across two

funding rounds, a total of \$430,000 was distributed to 32 projects throughout Taitokerau, supporting initiatives in education, business development, community safety, events, and environmental action. The projects were wide ranging in their support of our communities, such as a joint Kerikeri and Bay of Islands Business Association project focussed on CCTV installations and community safety. Nearly half of all successful projects were Māori-led.

Together, these funds reflected the success of Northland Inc's ongoing advocacy for meaningful, locally delivered investment. By securing and administering targeted funding streams, Northland Inc ensured that resources were directed where they could make the most lasting impact - supporting regional resilience, enabling new infrastructure, and empowering communities and businesses to lead Northland's growth from the ground up.

“On behalf of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rēhia Trust, I'd like to sincerely acknowledge and express our deep appreciation for this support. This investment will enable us to activate the first phase of our eco-tourism development at our Sanctuary and help bring to life a kaupapa that blends cultural storytelling, environmental restoration, and whānau-led enterprise.”

- ANITA TIPENE, TE RŪNANGA O NGĀTI RĒHIA TRUST

\$1M RESILIENCE
FUND SECURE

\$250K HEALTH
SIMULATION
CENTRE

\$430K DISTRIBUTED THROUGH
THE IMPACT FUND
(32 PROJECTS, 47% MĀORI-LED)



The More FM Touristy Tour crew interview Dr Joost de Bruin, Director of the Hundertwasser Art Centre in Whangārei

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Northland Inc received notable national and international recognition during the year - acknowledgements that, while not the focus of our mahi, reflected the quality, professionalism, and impact of the work delivered across Te Tai Tokerau.

A major highlight was Northland's inclusion in National Geographic's Best of the World 2025 list, placing the region on the global stage and celebrating the cultural and natural experiences that set Taitokerau apart.

At the Economic Development New Zealand (EDNZ) Awards, three Northland Inc initiatives received Highly Commended recognition:

- Te Rerenga (Integrated Strategy)
- Northland Peanut Trials (Innovation)
- Primary Sector EDA Collaboration Initiative (Collaboration)

These acknowledgements highlighted Northland Inc's leadership in forward-thinking strategy, regional innovation, and cross-agency collaboration, all central pillars of our approach to delivering long-term regional impact.

The organisation also celebrated national success at the New Zealand Radio and Podcast Awards, where the Touristy Tour campaign won Best Single Station Promotion. Developed to keep visitation flowing during the Brynderwyns closure, the campaign was recognised for its creativity, community connection, and strong regional reach.

Together, these recognitions demonstrated that while awards are not the goal of our work, they affirm the calibre of the initiatives delivered for our communities, partners, and the wider region.



Pic's Peanut Butter founder, Pic Picot, at the harvest

NorthlandInc

Growing Northland's Economy

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