

Memo

3 May 2019

To: Finance and Performance Committee members
From: Alastair Cameron, Manager CCO Governance and External Partnerships

Subject: Growing a regional event into a major event

Purpose

To provide information on the council group events landscape, particularly as it relates to regional and major events. This responds to a query raised at the Finance and Performance Committee meeting on 16 April 2019 on roles and responsibilities for growing regional events into major events.

Responsibilities

There are two primary areas within the Council group that lead on events; the Events unit in Auckland Council and the Major Events unit at Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED), who work in partnership with a variety of parties such as event producers, sponsors and venue operators.

- The Events unit plans and delivers regional, local board and civic events such as Music and Movies in Parks, the Auckland Heritage Festival, Parnell Festival of Roses, local board Christmas events, Citizenship ceremonies and blessings to name a few.
- The Major Events unit manages the major events investment portfolio on behalf of Auckland Council to generate benefits for Auckland and the people who live and visit here. This includes annual events such as the ITM Supersprint, Auckland Lantern Festival, Sculpture on the Gulf and Elemental AKL to name a few.

There is regular interaction and communication between the two teams and the two unit's differing areas of focus are complementary.

Event focus

ATEED's major events work and investments are guided by the Destination AKL 2025 strategy and Auckland's Major Events Strategy 2018-2025.

The emphasis is on promoting domestic and international tourism – increasing visitor nights, targeting high-value visitors, promoting longer stays and increased tourism activity, and generating visitation in the shoulder or low seasons. ATEED seeks events which tell Auckland's unique story externally and generate positive media exposure for the region, particularly in target markets.

This falls into three major programmes:

- Major programme – driving international and domestic visitation
- National programme – driving predominantly domestic tourism
- Winter programme – attracting domestic and international visitors in the winter months.

The Auckland Council events unit's regional event work is guided by the Events Policy (2013). This includes a focus on connecting Auckland's diverse and regionally dispersed communities and special interest groups, developing pride in Auckland and enjoyment of what it offers, making life in Auckland vibrant and stimulating.

Auckland Council also administers an annual Regional Events Grant Fund which supports these event outcomes.

Growing regional events to major events

There are a number of factors to consider when exploring potential for growing a regional event to a major event. These factors include:

- Aspirations/growth plans (if any) of the event organisers
- Resource capacity available to support growth (for example, by volunteers or professional event organisers)
- Funding available to support growth (grant, sponsorship etc)
- Risk appetite – growth may require some commercialisation
- Capacity of the current event location to support growth

Successfully growing an event can include factors over and above purely the number of attendees or participants. For example, this might capture the quality or sophistication of the event experience.

Growing a regional event into a major event is not currently an area of focus for either ATEED or Auckland Council's event unit. Growing an event would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with its own business case. In these circumstances consideration would need to be given to which unit it is more appropriate to manage this. As a first step, the event organisers would need to initiate engagement on their aspirations/plans for growing a regional event into a major event.

Contact

Should you wish to discuss any aspects of this memo further, please contact:

Stuart Turner, Head of Major Events, ATEED
stuart.turner@aucklandnz.com

David Burt, Manager Events, Auckland Council
david.burt@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz