

# Quarterly Report 2025-26

Quarter One (July to September 2025)

**venture**

TARANAKI

Te Puna Umanga





A photograph of three people (two men and one woman) walking across a suspension bridge over a dense, green forest. The bridge has a metal grate floor and a chain-link railing. The background is a lush, hilly landscape with many trees and some palm-like plants. The word 'Contents' is overlaid in white text on the left side of the image.

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# Message from the Chair

## Tēnā koutou

As we step into the 2025/26 financial year, Taranaki finds itself at a pivotal juncture. The challenges facing our region, from the rapid evolution and decline of the energy sector to the wider pressures on the national economy, underscore the need for continued focus, collaboration, and long-term investment in economic development.

Venture Taranaki continues to play a critical role in connecting the dots between local opportunity and national policy. Our active engagement with the Central Government, through the review of the Regional Business Partner (RBP) network and wider discussions on the future funding of economic development, ensures that the region's voice and experience are represented at the table. Similarly, as the Taranaki Regional Tourism Organisation, we are contributing to the conversation with MBIE and the Minister of Tourism around reimagining a tourism system that is fit for the future and enables regional growth, innovation, and resilience.

Across our major strategic focus areas, food and fibre, tourism, new industry and investment, and energy, we continue to demonstrate what meaningful, outcomes-driven regional development looks like. Each of these areas presents a significant opportunity: to diversify our economy, unlock new export potential, future-proof employment, and ensure that Taranaki continues to be recognised as a region of innovation and action.

More recently we brought over 60 local business leaders, manufacturers, engineers, and technology providers together for an event to explore how

local industry can participate in the Government's \$12 Billion Defence Capability Plan. Guest speakers from Latent, a consultancy specialising in the national security sector, provided guidance on navigating the defence procurement process. The discussion reinforced the depth of the region's advanced engineering and manufacturing capabilities and ability to support complex national projects, opening doors for local firms to diversify, scale, and compete for high-value contracts. This opportunity will require proactive funding by the region to enable its success.

Now more than ever, Taranaki requires strategic and sustained investment. We call on our shareholder, partners, and communities to remain familiar with our major initiatives and to invest in and advocate boldly for Taranaki's development. These investments are not just about projects - they are about people, prosperity, and long-term impact.

As national policy and Government priorities shift, our region must stay agile while remaining true to our long-term strategic direction.

Through collaboration, evidence-based planning, and a focus on measurable impact, Venture Taranaki will continue to champion a prosperous and future-ready Taranaki.

**Grant McQuoid**  
**Chair, Te Puna Umanga**  
**Venture Taranaki**



# Message from the CE

## Tēnā koutou

Quarter one marked a strong start to the 2025/26 financial year.

The pace of change in the energy landscape remains rapid and requires agility, therefore we brought industry leaders together to prioritize actions under the Energy Future section of Tapuae Roa. Several refinements have been made and will now be integrated into the strategy ongoing. Meanwhile the development of an Energy Prospectus, and hosting the Treasury's visit all reflect our leadership in advocating for national policy development.

Our Branching Out land diversification project continues to build momentum, as we identify commercialisation pathways and market-entry opportunities for our priority crops. Significant progress has also been made in the development of our GIS Land Modelling Tool, which will support landowners to make informed decisions about diversification and crop suitability in the region.

As the region's Convention Bureau, we were thrilled to secure the bid to host the 2026 FMG Young Farmer of the Year Grand Final. This national event will bring over 1,000 people to the region for four days, generating an estimated \$2.1M for the regional economy, and demonstrating the significant impact that business events can deliver.

The Destination team also headed offshore to Australia as part of the Kiwi North collective in August, proudly flying the Taranaki flag with over 200 frontline travel trade sellers and showcasing how the region fits seamlessly into a North Island escape.

It was fantastic to host our 'Positioning for the Future' economic briefing event, which was our largest yet, with over 180 attendees. The event explored the latest regional economic insights while challenging attendees to embrace bold business moves and adopt new technologies to drive growth.

Meanwhile, our PowerUp programme continues to build a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, with the flagship Business Ready programme kicking off its fourth edition in September. The six-week course is supporting 14 early-stage entrepreneurs to build their capability and validate their ideas.

Looking ahead, work is underway to establish a 'Taranaki Alliance' to connect our region's world-class heavy industrial and engineering capability with advanced manufacturing opportunities.

This presents a significant opportunity to support our local businesses to diversify into new markets and ensure we can retain our highly skilled workforce in region.



**Kelvin Wright**  
**CE, Te Puna Umanga**  
**Venture Taranaki**










# Economic overview

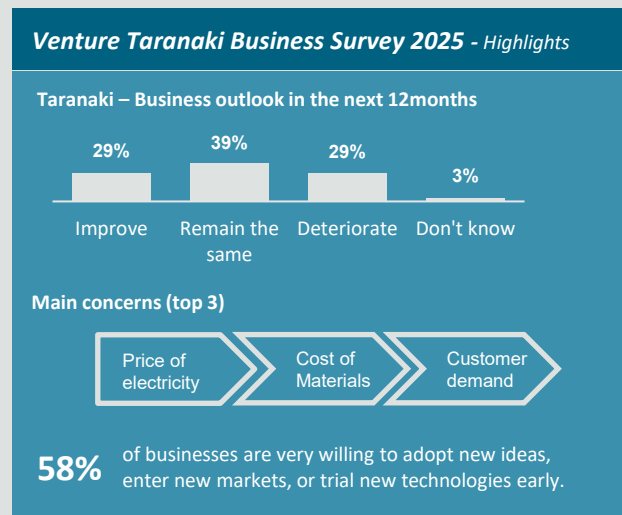
Based on the Quarterly Economic Monitor figures published for the June 2025 period, the Taranaki economy follows similar trends to national movements, though results vary across districts.

Provisional GDP for the region declined more sharply than nationally, reflecting ongoing weakness in energy and manufacturing, particularly in New Plymouth. In contrast, building activity remains stable, with both residential and non-residential consents increasing, especially in Stratford and South Taranaki. House sales also rose, indicating steady confidence in the property market despite broader economic pressures.

During this quarter, we also conducted the Venture Taranaki Business Survey 2025, with key highlights summarised in the graph on the right.

Annual Results June 2024 - 2025	New Zealand	Taranaki Region	New Plymouth District	Stratford District	South Taranaki District
 Gross domestic product (provisional)	▼ -0.8%	\$10,882m ▼ -2.8%	\$7,510m ▼ -3.7%	\$692m ▼ -0.3%	\$2,680m ▼ -0.8%
 Business counts	▲ 0.9%	15,988 ▼ -0.3%	10,272 ▼ -0.3%	1,480 ▲ 0.3%	4,235 ▼ -0.3%
 Tourism expenditure	▶ 0.0%	\$462m ▼ -5.1%	\$362m ▼ -6.5%	\$25m ▼ -7.4%	\$75m ▲ 2.7%
 Residential consents (#)	▲ 1.0%	470 ▲ 28.1%	386 ▲ 44.6%	21 ▼ -25%	63 ▲ -12.5%
 Non-residential consents (\$)	▼ -0.9%	\$129m ▲ 28.4%	\$79.3m ▲ 4.8%	\$10.8m ▲ 208.6%	\$39.2m ▲ 81.5%
 Employment	▼ -1.5%	55,236 ▼ -2%	39,265 ▼ -1.9%	3,471 ▼ -1.6%	12,500 ▼ -2.3%
 Housing Sales (#)	▲ 15%	1,842 ▲ 13.2%	1,298 ▲ 10.9%	124 ▲ 10.7%	420 ▲ 21.7%

Source: Infometrics *Quarterly Economic Monitor*.



Source: *Taranaki Business Survey August 2025*

# Strategic focus areas update





# Initiatives performance and quarterly summary

Events, programmes or initiatives to drive change and support regional strategy objectives such as Tapuae Roa and Taranaki 2050.

#	Focus area	Initiative	Project Description	Status
1	Energy	Sector development	Driving industry engagement, strategic decision-making, and energy workforce development through market intelligence, project leadership, and advocacy for supply chain and cluster growth.	
2	Energy	Renewables Accelerator	Develop a prospectus and lead initiatives to identify, package, promote and attract energy-generation and offtake opportunities, while investigating the establishment of a strategic energy zone.	
3	Food and Fibre	Branching Out	Phase two (2023 – 2025): Regional scale land diversification and scaleup of Food and Fibre value chains to generate economic, social and environmental outcomes. Phase three: (2026 – 2028): scale land-use trials into commercially viable, export-focused ventures by building value-chains, infrastructure and capability Better off Funding: Delivery of funding contract through DIA/NPDC for a Hemp Processor and Dryer in region, securing critical components of the value chain for the Branching Out program and commercialisation. Contract delivery 30 June 2027.	
4	Food and Fibre	Platform to Launch	Providing emerging food and beverage businesses the chance to test and refine their product, engage with customers, generate income and build capability and connection across the Food and Fibre value chain.	
5	Food and Fibre	Link Taranaki	Transport and logistics infrastructure Understanding the full role, value, and future of rail services and infrastructure in the region, and what impact it can have on enabling better connections and reducing emissions in our logistical system.	
6	Food and Fibre	Dairy and Agriculture	Support establishment of sustainable business models for future growth, ensuring retention of export market share and positioning the region as a leader in dairy and agriculture.	
7	Food and Fibre	Food & Fibre Sector Development	A coordinated programme to support the growth, resilience, and sustainability of the food and fibre sector through workforce development, sector partnerships, and increased sector visibility and opportunity.	
8	Destination	MEF	Facilitation of the Major Events fund to support and encourage out-of-region visitation, and the smoothing of seasonality via events.	
9	Destination	MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions)	Facilitation of the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) sector to support and encourage out-of-region visitation, and the smoothing of seasonality via events.	
10	Destination	Visitor Trade	Continuing to develop and grow our visitor trade connections, working with trade-ready product to connect with international selling opportunity, and supporting trade-ready product development in partnership with the Enterprise team.	
11	Destination	Regional Film Office	Support a film-friendly region, liaising with stakeholders to streamline permitting and centralise film data. Providing reactive film support to productions on the ground and limited proactive business development of film opportunities for the region in line with budget.	
12	Destination	Product and Place. Sector Support and Development	Providing sector support in partnership with the Enterprise and Investment teams to catalyse and de-risk significant sector development opportunities through advice and support, funding and funding support, and cluster activities.	
13	Destination	Regional Promotion	Support a thriving visitor economy through the positioning of Taranaki as a must-visit NZ destination.	
14	Destination	International Education & Digital Nomads	Encouraging talent attraction, outward investment, regional growth and global connectedness.	

**Traffic light criteria**  Not started  On track  Under review  Cancelled / Off track

# Initiatives Performance and Quarterly Summary

Events, programmes or initiatives to drive change and support regional strategy objectives such as Tapuae Roa and Taranaki 2050.

#	Focus area	Initiative	Project Description	Status
15	New Industry and Investment	Prospectus and Promotion	Attraction of new businesses and investments to the region by creating a compelling destination proposition and addressing barriers, establishing competitive advantage, developing incentives and fostering an environment that is open for business and investment. <i>Develop a prospectus and lead initiatives to identify, package, promote and attract energy-generation and offtake opportunities—while investigating and advancing the establishment of a strategic energy zone.</i>	
16	New Industry and Investment	Taranaki Applied Innovation Centre	Establishment of regional science and innovation hub to connect, enhance, and elevate Taranaki's R&D activity. The Centre will establish services to support development of local IP, or attraction of external IP through piloting and scaling facilities. Initial research platforms are biotechnology, and integrated ecosystems. Alongside these services are initiatives to build regional science capabilities with coordinated education and outreach programmes.	
17	Foundations	Massey University Partnership and R&D Development	Partnership funding for an FTE located at Venture Taranaki to support R&D funding, food & fibre sector capability and students into Taranaki industries. Includes R&D for Grow Taranaki.	
18	Foundations	Skills and Talent	Ensure appropriate education pathways and in region training and skills development for school leavers and career transitions to support key regional sectors. Direct 'Talent & Skills' projects are delivered directly within each sector workstream.	
19	Foundations	Regional Data & Insights	This function ensures we have access to and development of the right data, dashboards and insights tailored to our unique region, which helps make informed decisions and capitalise on opportunities.	
20	Foundations	Tapuae Roa	Deliver a Regional Strategy function which includes ongoing maintenance and management of Tapuae Roa.	
21	Foundations	PowerUp	To foster, nurture, and grow the capability and confidence of start-ups and innovative enterprises ready to scale within the region by offering a range of support services and activities focused on the idea-to-maturity life cycle of an enterprise: PowerUp Business Ready, PowerUp Accelerator, PowerUp ScaleUp Grants, and PowerUp Supporting Activities.	
22	Foundations	Enterprise support - Regional Business Partners & Callaghan Innovation	Delivers tailored advisory and funding support to strengthen SME capability, innovation, and growth. Through MBIE's nationwide Regional Business Partner Network, businesses can access training, R&D grants (Callaghan Innovation), and connections that enable them to thrive.	
23	Foundations	Enterprise support - Business Mentor New Zealand (BMNZ)	Provides foundational mentoring support for SMEs by connecting them with experienced mentors who offer independent advice, fresh perspectives, and practical guidance to help them build confidence, capability, and long-term sustainability.	
24	Foundations	Enterprise support - Start up	Provides early-stage entrepreneurs with free, confidential one-on-one consultations focused on business planning, idea development, and access to advice and support networks. Includes: StartUp Clinincs, Start your own business (MSD) and Univentures 50+ Startup Programme	
25	Foundations	Emergent Opportunities	Keep sight of new regional opportunities, undertake due diligence and research, and maintain innovation ecosystem to support new opportunities to commercialise in Taranaki.	

**Traffic light criteria**  Not started  On track  Under review  Cancelled / Off track



# Strategic Focus Areas Snapshot

Below is a snapshot of the work undertaken in Q1 across Venture Taranaki strategic focus areas.

ENERGY	FOOD AND FIBRE	DESTINATION	NEW INDUSTRY & INVESTMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Biogas Bridge Conference</li><li>• Energy Scenarios</li><li>• Treasury visit</li><li>• Tapuae Roa Energy</li><li>• Futures Update</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rural Energy Group</li><li>• Rural Water Security</li><li>• Platform to Launch</li><li>• Link Taranaki</li><li>• Branching Out</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Industry support</li><li>• Visitor trade</li><li>• Cruise</li><li>• Convention Bureau</li><li>• Regional Promotion</li><li>• Major Events</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investment attraction and promotion</li><li>• Taranaki Applied Innovation Centre</li></ul>

## FOUNDATIONS

Skills and Talent	Massey University Partnership	Regional Data and Insights	Enterprise Support	PowerUp
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• WITT Update</li><li>• Training Expo</li><li>• International students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sharkbait Project award</li><li>• Pivot funding</li><li>• Taranaki Field Trip</li></ul>	Positioning for the future: Embracing Bold Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• R&amp;D Support</li><li>• RPB – Let's Talk Tikanga</li><li>• BMNZ Updates</li><li>• Business Story - MEND</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business Ready</li><li>• Masterclass series</li></ul>



**ENERGY**





# Energy

*Renewables Accelerator*

## Biogas Bridge Conference

Venture Taranaki attended the Biogas Bridge Conference (17–18 July), which explored the potential of converting organic waste such as food scraps into renewable biogas through anaerobic digestion (AD). While this is well established overseas, this technology is still emerging in New Zealand.

With the region's abundance of organic waste, strong energy sector, and existing infrastructure, Taranaki is well placed to become a national hub for biogas innovation. Venture Taranaki is collaborating with local councils, the Taranaki Organics Group, industry, researchers, and agencies such as Ara Ake to advance this opportunity, while also contributing nationally through the NZ Bioenergy Association (BANZ) and several steering groups.

## Energy Scenarios

Venture Taranaki has worked with the Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) on future energy scenarios and their potential impact on regional spatial planning.

In Q1, this included industry interviews, a full-day workshop, and scenario development exploring centralised vs. decentralised energy systems under varying policy environments. The outcomes will inform spatial planning and regional development initiatives. Once released by TRC, key insights will be integrated into Tapuae Roa, the Regional Development Strategy.



*Thom Adams and Anne Probert of Venture Taranaki with keynote speaker Charlotte Morton OBE, Chief Executive of the World Biogas Association.*



# Energy

*Sector development*

## Treasury Visit

During Q1, Treasury engaged Venture Taranaki to better understand the implications of New Zealand's declining gas supply.

Venture Taranaki hosted senior Treasury executives in the region, convened an energy industry leadership roundtable, facilitated site visits, and delivered a post-meeting paper to support Treasury's work programme.

These engagements provide an important bridge between regional industry realities and national policy development.

## Tapuae Roa Energy Futures Update

During Q1, Chief Executives from the region's leading energy and supply chain companies reviewed the Energy Future actions within Tapuae Roa.

Tapuae Roa remains a living document, recognising the need for agility in the face of rapid developments and growing urgency around energy security.

These refinements have been integrated into forward actions, and Venture Taranaki continues to progress work with industry and project partners.



*Anne Probert, Kelvin Wright, Jo Hughes (Deputy Secretary, Treasury), James Beard (Chief Strategist) and other key members of the Treasury team.*





## Food and Fibre



# Food and Fibre

## Rural Energy Group

The Rural Energy Group, which VT facilitates, met twice during Q1 (8 July and 18 September). The '[Save Energy on Farms](#)' project, a major two-year initiative, saw Taranaki take a leading role nationally to foster greater understanding of energy use on dairy farms, behaviours and views of farmers towards energy efficiency and sustainability, and the development of practical on-farm energy toolkits and checklists.

These learnings have been advanced by the Government into a national programme, rolled out by EECA as a [Solar on Farms programme](#).

The Rural Energy Group is now progressing an 'exemplar farm' project, which will identify a Taranaki-based farm, and model the difference that could be made to its operations, through changes that would see it become an 'exemplar' in energy via farm practices and system changes, replacement of energy inefficient equipment, and new capital investments.

The group is also engaging with companies and agencies at the forefront of on-farm energy. An example being [FarmGenSolar](#), a local company, and VT client, leading a number of developments locally and nationally.

## Rural Water Security

Rural water security has emerged as a significant challenge for the Taranaki farming sector, particularly in South Taranaki, which has experienced two consecutive years of drought. At the initiative of Mayor Phil Nixon, Venture Taranaki convened a multi-agency discussion involving the South Taranaki District Council Mayor, MBIE, MPI, and the Taranaki Regional Council to initiate a coordinated work programme aimed at addressing this issue.

This work will now be led by the Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) in collaboration with multiple stakeholders from across the region. The focus is to identify key challenges, barriers, and opportunities for planning the infrastructure required to secure the region's long-term water needs.

The programme will also assess requirements to support horticultural growth, map current and future water availability, and determine where new infrastructure investment is needed. The goal is to ensure the region has a clear, evidence-based plan for improving water resilience through collaboration between government, industry, and the private sector.



# Food and Fibre

## Platform to Launch

Venture Taranaki supported seven Taranaki food and beverage producers to attend the Auckland Food Show (AFS) from 24 – 27 July, under the 'Taste of Taranaki' collective.

AFS is the country's largest food trade show and attracts more approx. 30,000 people across the four days. Many of our vendors reported sales that far exceeded weekend costs, positive product feedback from customers and new connections with industry representatives. This also provided a platform to strengthen the Taranaki – Like No Other regional brand, with a 'Win a Taranaki foodie weekend' giveaway onsite, and promotion of the Festival 2025 event.

## Link Taranaki

Venture Taranaki is working alongside Symons Group and Kiwirail to develop an Inland Port offering for Taranaki businesses. Operated by Symons Group, the service will offer one-way container freight options to and from the region, and freight aggregating services for smaller quantities.

The Inland Port will utilise the existing daily Kiwirail container service to and from New Plymouth. This service is not currently available in region, and it aims to reduce freight costs for Taranaki businesses, while increasing the amount of freight that is transported by rail, rather than road. A launch event for the Inland Port will be held in Q2.



*Taste of Taranaki collective features seven local producers at the Auckland Food Show*





# Branching Out

## Pilot Trial Year 2

Post-harvest activities continued, including initial processing and plant chemistry analysis. This work provides critical insight into product quality, stability, and potential end uses, informing both commercial feasibility and market positioning.

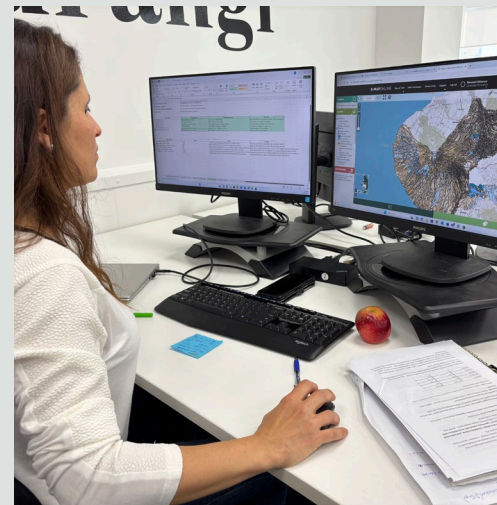
## Commercialisation Pathways

Work this quarter has strengthened engagement with industry, creating new opportunities for collaboration and investment. These discussions continue to shape the path toward market entry for priority crops. High-level strategies have been developed to outline value propositions for Taranaki-grown crops and identify the most effective routes to market. This provides a foundation for upcoming stakeholder workshops and will feed into crop-specific development plans.

## GIS Platform and Outcomes Modelling

A regional GIS platform has been under development. The purpose is to identify crops best suited to specific locations, down to the individual paddock or property level. The tool supports decision-making by linking crop suitability with forecast returns, yields, employment potential, and infrastructure requirements.

Using this data, economic and social outcomes will be modelled at the individual, group, and regional scales, providing an integrated view of the potential benefits of diversification across the food and fibre sector. Environmental outcomes modelling will be added in the next phase to complete the picture of regional impact.



*Venture Taranaki Branching Out team continues to develop a GIS Platform for land use modelling.*





Destination



Kiwi North trade event in Australia,  
Daniel Fleming, King & Queen Hotel Suites, Melissa Devine, Visitor and Events Adviser, Venture Taranaki



# Destination

## Industry support capability and connectivity

Our quarterly visitor industry hui was held in August at the Len Lye Centre/Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, featuring Sam Allen, Global Manager of Industry & Product Marketing at Tourism New Zealand. Sam shared global insights, upcoming campaigns, partnership opportunities, and ways Taranaki operators can engage with Tourism New Zealand to leverage international promotion.

To strengthen operator capability and build trade readiness, seven local tourism operators are completing monthly online training with trade expert Marijke Dunselman from Agritourism NZ. The training covers working with travel trade, pricing and packaging, product readiness, and relationship building. Feedback has been very positive, with participants ranging from established businesses to new ventures, including iwi-owned initiatives.

Several product familiarisations were also undertaken this quarter to experience and assess local tourism offerings, supporting their development and accurate promotion. These included Cabin Hill, The Quest, KareNZ Kit, and the newly opened Pouākai Hut.

## Visitor trade

In August, VT travelled to Sydney and Melbourne for Kiwi North with operator King & Queen Hotel Suites. Kiwi North is a new collaboration between 15 North Island regions, 58 tourism operators, and key partners including Tourism NZ, Air NZ, Jetstar, Qantas, and Auckland Airport. VT connected with four product managers, over 200 frontline sellers, and media - flying the flag for Taranaki and showcasing how the region can fit seamlessly into an unforgettable North Island escape.

This opportunity represents a chance to attract thousands of visitors to Taranaki each year, driving incremental visitation through high-volume trade activity and strengthening direct relationships with established in-market sellers. Kiwi North was born from the North Island Tourism Alliance MOU signed at TRENZ earlier this year.



# Destination

## Cruise

Venture Taranaki reconnected with the national and international cruise industry at the Cruise Conference in Hawkes Bay, with attendance from key cruise line representatives who make destination decisions.

VT also met with international liner reps to discuss cruise schedules in seasons ahead and how Taranaki could fit in with future vessel planning. This conference is extremely valuable as VT continues to build relationships with key cruise industry stakeholders.



*VT attends the 2025 Cruise Conference alongside Port Taranaki and Weir Tours*

## Convention bureau – business events and conferences

The 2026 FMG Young Farmer of the Year Grand Final will be held in Taranaki, after submitting a bid to host more than a year ago. This event will bring over 1,000 visitors to region across four days, generating an estimated \$2.1m to the regional economy (based off MBIE business event delegate survey report 2018, and an 80% out-of-region attendance rate).

Venture Taranaki continue to provide support to several venues and professional conference organisers for upcoming conferences and events, including the National Māori Energy Summit, Māori Women's Welfare Conference, and the Four Square NZ Conference. If all confirmed, these will bring significant economic uplift to our region with visitor spend, as well as encouraging delegates to consider a return visit.



# Destination

## Regional Promotion



Remix Magazine – Spring feature on Taranaki culinary scene

**Google Ads** – continue to be always on across our domestic market, as well as bursts into the Australian market. This activity gained 561,603 combined impressions and 12,129 clicks through to the visit page from 1 August – 30 September.

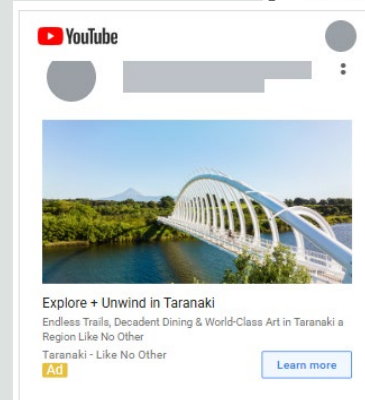
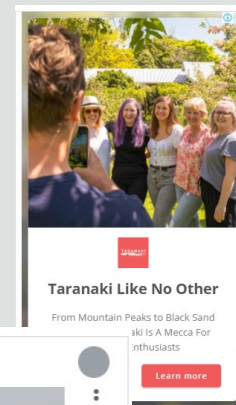
### Remix Magazine Partnership – Spring/Summer

Venture Taranaki has partnered with Remix Magazine, the leading lifestyle platform in New Zealand, to showcase Taranaki as a creative and culinary destination. The Spring campaign reached over 270,000 people across Remix digital, social, and newsletter channels through the feature “Eat, Stay and Play in Taranaki This Winter.” Highlighting FEASTival and King & Queen Hotel Suites, plus the vibrant food and arts scene across the region. A summer print feature is still to come.

### NZ Herald – Summer festivals and events guide

Taranaki featured in the NZ Herald Summer Festivals & Events Guide in September, profiling the TSB Festival of Lights and Rock the Bowl as standout national summer events.

**Fill Your Cup** - Campaign live in September to drive shoulder season arrivals from domestic market. Campaign live across YouTube, social, TVNZ, and digital display advertising. Early results show YouTube gained 68,113 impressions, social gained 37,507 impressions + 772 clicks to our website, while TVNZ drove over 66,000 impressions. This is our final burst of the Fill Your Cup campaign creative before we refresh next year.







# Major Events

Events contracted this quarter:

No.	Event Name	Contract Date	Event Date
1	Rock the Bowl - (Bowl of Brooklands Concert)	July 2025	29 December 2025
2	Americarna	July 2025	18-21 Feb 2026
3	Coastal Five – additional funding to leverage new partnership	September 2025	15-16 November 2025



*Coastal Five contracted in Q1 for November 2025*

*Americarna brought in 6,270+ out of region visitors during Feb 2025*

## Event spotlight – AmeriCARna



**63%**  
out of town visitors



**6,270**  
unique out-of-region  
visitors



**\$11 million**  
Total Expenditure



**\$5.5 million**  
GDP contribution

**64**  
full-time equivalent  
employees.





## New Industries and Investment



# New Industries and Investment

## *Investment attraction and promotion*

Venture Taranaki has prioritised the New Industry and Investment workstream to advance actions under Tapuae Roa 25/26. Guided by the regional strategy and shaped through engagement with over 40 industry stakeholders in Q1, this work focuses on positioning Taranaki to attract, enable, and retain high-value investment for long-term economic transformation.

The initial phase has mapped the regional, national, and international investment landscape and developed a workplan for the coming quarters. Key priorities include the development of a regional investment prospectus and digital landing site, along with tailored sector prospectuses for Energy and Heavy Industry, and Food and Fibre to support the Branching Out initiative. Ongoing work includes three Branching Out development plans (Crop Rotation, Functional Botanicals, and Hemp Fibre), regional post-harvest infrastructure analysis, and investment opportunities linked to the Taranaki Applied Innovation Centre (TAIC).

Venture Taranaki continues to facilitate new industry enablement by connecting emerging opportunities with established industries, such as data centres and the emerging defence capability opportunity, and by aligning local projects with national funding and policy settings. Engagement with councils remains a key focus to ensure regulatory environments are enabling and consistent with the region's "open for business" ambition.

Further work explores how immigration pathways, international partnerships, and government relationships can unlock regional investment, through initiatives with investor visas pathways, TEC and MBIE engagement, and links to EU programmes such as Horizon Europe and IURC. By building the conditions for sustained investment, fostering strong regional and national partnerships, and aligning with emerging global opportunities, Venture Taranaki is helping ensure the region remains resilient, competitive, and positioned for continued economic growth and diversification.





# Taranaki Applied Innovation Centre

The Taranaki Applied Innovation Centre is driving regional economic development through science, technology, and innovation. By investing in critical infrastructure, talent, and attraction programmes to grow advanced industries such as biotechnology, this initiative is strengthening the region's innovation ecosystem and creating high-value jobs.

Strong partnerships and MOUs have been established with national research institutes, supported by extensive commercial and stakeholder engagement. A detailed business case and feasibility assessment are now complete, with the full business model to be finalised and presented by year end.

## Conservation Technology Teacher Professional Development Workshops

Venture Taranaki, sponsored by TechStep, delivered two workshops to engage local educators with Micro:bit teaching tools. Teachers heard from local conservation professionals and learned how to use the programmable sensors to teach their students real-world applications of technology.

## Putaiiao Expo

Thom Adams, Innovation Lead at Venture Taranaki, delivered educational microbiology sessions to 250 rangatahi as part of the Why Ora Pūtaiao Expo. Students learned about biodiscovery, and how novel molecules can be sustainably and ethically turned into valuable products.



*Venture Taranaki delivered a range of STEM workshops for local educators this quarter*







# Taranaki Applied Innovation Centre

## Events

### Biotech Connect

Venture Taranaki hosted the 'Biotech Connect' event at Juno Gin, in partnership with BiotechNZ and Scion Research. Speakers Dr Alec Foster of Scion Research, and Dr Zahra Champion of BiotechNZ, presented an overview of biotechnology and the opportunity it presents for Taranaki. Attended by over 40 industry and science professionals, the event provoked further engagement with Taranaki businesses who are looking to explore this developing sector.

### Science Symposium

The first Taranaki Science Symposium saw over 100 attendees gather to hear from four high-calibre science researchers who are at the forefront of emerging science and technologies. Talks included genetic sequencing, wool science, and biotechnology, while encouraging science professionals, and encouraged attendees to spark conversation and collaboration around how science and innovation can help to shape a resilient and sustainable future for Taranaki.



*Biotech Connect held at Juno Gin.*



*Over 100 attendees at the inaugural Science Symposium*



# Foundations



# Skills and Talent

## Taranaki Skills Group - WITT

Venture Taranaki continues to co-chair the Taranaki Skills Group (TSG) on behalf of the Mayoral Forum, providing leadership and advisory input to ensure strong regional coordination on workforce and tertiary education matters. The TSG has worked closely with WITT leadership to navigate the Government reforms to the national vocational education system.

Through this process, WITT has demonstrated strong leadership and commitment to maintaining high-quality local delivery and ensuring that Taranaki learners and employers continue to have access to relevant, industry-aligned training. The TSG has provided consistent advocacy to ensure that regional needs remain visible within the national reform process, supporting WITT's goal of remaining viable and well-positioned to grow with renewed direction and capability as the region's key tertiary and vocational training provider.

During the quarter, the group met with Minister Penny Simmonds for a productive discussion that established a clear pathway forward. In addition the TSG has strengthened its relationship with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), the Government agency responsible for funding and overseeing New Zealand's tertiary education system, identifying new strategic opportunities for Taranaki within the national tertiary ecosystem.



*Students at WITT, the key Taranaki tertiary and vocational training provider.*

# Skills and Talent

## Taranaki Careers and Training Expo

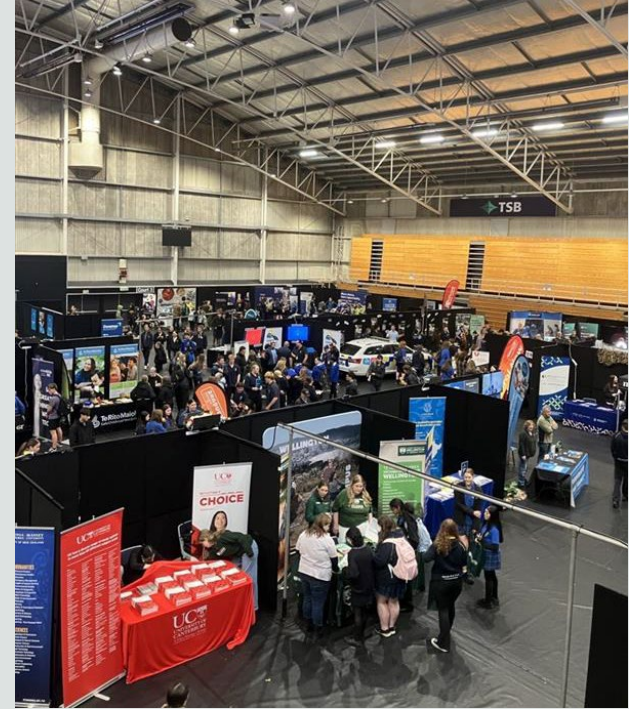
The Taranaki Careers and Training Expo was held on 18–19 August at TSB Stadium. Venture Taranaki supported the Career Expo Trust by securing an additional \$6,000 in external funding to help deliver the event.

Over two days, 19 high schools attended, alongside members of the public, jobseekers, and career changers. The Expo hosted 53 exhibitors and attracted close to 4,000 attendees who engaged in discussions on careers and training pathways. A record 12 scholarships were awarded this year, providing direct support for students' next steps in their education and training journeys.

## International Education

Venture Taranaki has maintained an advisory role in supporting WITT's international education initiatives, providing regional insights and connections. This support is assisting WITT as it prepares for upcoming offshore engagement across several Asian countries in Q2.

Venture Taranaki also continues to connect with Education New Zealand (ENZ), which leads the country's international education efforts, to advocate for greater recognition and resourcing for the Taranaki region. This ongoing collaboration helps ensure the region's education and training system remains globally connected and aligned with emerging workforce needs.



*VT supported the Taranaki Careers and Training Expo to secure an additional \$6,000 in external funding for event delivery*



# Massey University Partnership

During Q1, the Massey - Venture Taranaki partnership continued to strengthen research, innovation, and capability connections between Taranaki businesses and Massey University.

**Taranaki innovation wins awards:** Ongoing support for Egmont Seafoods/Ocean Pearl Fisheries Sharkbait Project continues. This quarter, the project gained significant industry recognition, receiving two national awards: Seafood New Zealand's Future Adaptation Award and MPI's Seafood Sustainability and Innovation Operational Innovator Award. Industry partners are now being supported to explore opportunities to scale and commercialise outcomes.

**Regional collaboration and funding:** Coordination of the Pivot Award funding round, with 12 regional entities supported to collaborate with Massey researchers and 6 applications submitted.

**Support for innovation projects:** Ongoing contributions to Branching Out's work programme, including Hemp Fibre for Construction and Gin Botanicals workstreams, and work on costing models, sustainability analysis, strategy development and quality testing.

**Industry connectivity:** The Massey Business Development Manager worked with 40 organisations this quarter, with 20 (50%) receiving R&D or advisory support through Massey expertise.



## Taranaki Field Trip – Student industry engagement

In collaboration with Massey's School of Agriculture and Environment, a Taranaki field trip for 23 Massey Agribusiness, Agriculture, and Horticulture students and three staff members took place on 25–27 August.

The visit included stops at Dairy Trust Taranaki, Roebuck Farms (**photo above**), Venture Taranaki (Branching Out project), 3 Sisters Brewery, Fonterra Bridge Street Eltham, and Salad Brothers Waverley, providing students with first-hand insights into regional innovation and industry collaboration.

# Regional Data and Insights

## Positioning for the future event: Embracing Bold Businesses

Held on 23 September at the Devon Hotel, 180 registered attendees gathered to hear the latest economic performance for Taranaki, plus a keynote from Rod Snodgrass, who encouraged business to embrace new business models, leverage technology, and pursue growth with confidence.

VT CE, Kelvin Wright opened the session, emphasising collaboration and resilience amid ongoing economic challenges. Anne Probert, Strategic and Sector Partnerships Director then presented key figures of the regional economy and findings from the Taranaki Business Survey 2025.

A panel discussion featuring Nick Carey (Green Meadows Beef), Sonia Kiser (Carac Group), Simon Moore (Q Golf), Toby Lecher (DFE Pacific), and Joshua Hitchcock (Te Atiawa), then showcased local stories of innovation, diversification, and practical leadership lessons.



*Feedback described the event as “phenomenal,” “motivating,” and “inspiring,” particularly valuing the mix of real business experiences, practical insights, and forward-looking discussions.*

'Positioning for the Future' hosted over 180 registered attendees to hear the latest insights on the regional economy.

# Enterprise Support

# Enterprise support

## Research and Development Support - Callaghan Innovation

Venture Taranaki continued to support innovation and research capability across the region, connecting local businesses with national funding opportunities and student talent.

The main focus being R&D Experience Grants, which fund the placement of STEM students within local companies to work as interns on R&D programmes during the summer university break. From approximately 50–100 Taranaki organisations approached, 16 companies applied for the fixed and contestable fund, and 14 student grants were approved before the funding limit was reached. Each grant is valued at \$11,580 (ex GST), representing a total investment of \$162,120.

Venture Taranaki also helped facilitate a 50% discount on recruitment fees for Taranaki businesses engaging interns through Summer of Tech.

In addition to the Experience Grant round, it is worth noting that one PowerUp Accelerator participant successfully secured an Ārohia Evidence Grant from Callaghan Innovation valued at \$25,000 (ex GST).

Furthermore, a PowerUp Kickstart finalist was awarded a repayable grant of \$750,000 earlier this year through Callaghan Innovation. Due to the timing of the funding process, this information has only recently been confirmed in the current financial year.



*Students developing real-world skills through R&D Experience Grants, connecting local talent with innovative businesses*



# Enterprise support

## Regional Business Partners (RBP)

This programme is now in its 15th year of delivery in Taranaki by Venture Taranaki, and continues to see steady demand from SMEs across a wide range of sectors. Venture Taranaki Enterprise Advisors have actively supported businesses and training providers through tailored advisory services and access to RBP co-funding in key areas such as succession planning, marketing, sales, strategic planning, HR (compliance, recruitment, and culture), leadership, Tikanga/Reo Māori, and system efficiencies (including Xero and MYOB support).

During Q1 Venture Taranaki worked with local training providers Ataarangi ki te Kahui Maunga to register their new training programme Let's Talk Tikanga, specifically for business. Dr Ruakere Hond is delivering this programme both in person and online, the first of its kind to be delivered through the RBP programme in New Zealand. Over 100 attendees have joined the sessions, showcasing Taranaki as a leader in building cultural competency for business.



### *Let's Talk Tikanga – Service provider feedback*

We know a lot of businesses in Taranaki want to bring te ao Māori into the way they work, and the RBP network has made that so much easier - genuinely affordable and with no strings attached. It's all about building capability and confidence. With Dr Ruakere Hond leading the Let's Talk Tikanga programme, and the ongoing relationship with He Toronga Pākihi ki Taranaki, the Taranaki Chamber of Commerce, and now Venture Taranaki as part of the RBP network, businesses can be confident they're getting quality tikanga training in a safe, supportive space.

*Mereana Hond - Reo Kōrero*

# Enterprise support

## Business Mentors New Zealand (BMNZ)

Business mentoring remains popular this quarter, with strong engagement supported by consistent social media activity through the BMNZ platform.

The most common areas of support requested include digital marketing, strategic planning, financials, and costings.

While most mentor matches have been with local experts, the “Choose a Mentor” function has also enabled access to mentors from outside the region. This has allowed businesses to tap into a broader pool of expertise from across Aotearoa, further enriching the mentoring experience.

A number of returning mentees have also signed up again with the same Mentor which shows that good relationships are happening and the program is working well.

We are also actively looking for new Mentors to join the pool and plan to run a recruitment campaign over the next few months to increase interest in the region.

*Chamber of Commerce showcase event August 2025 promoting  
BMNZ and Venture Taranaki services.  
Jenn Patterson , Jane Moffitt & Kayleen Schoeman*





# Enterprise support

## Business Success Story - MEND

Michelle Ackerman, founder of MEND Massage is on a mission to support wellbeing with her range of magnesium-based products. Learn how Venture Taranaki has supported her to refine her strategy and grow her business.



### Michelle had clear goals:

- Grow the product side of the business
- Develop a long-term business strategy
- Sharpen her brand messaging
- Reach more professional users and grow her client base

"Building a brand isn't just about great products, it's about the right guidance. Thanks to Venture Taranaki I've been able to refine my marketing strategy and solidify the foundation of my business. Their workshops and support have helped bring products like my Pre-Taping Massage Gel and Anti-Inflammatory Massage Blends to the hands of therapists who need them most —physios, osteos, and massage therapists. If you're a small business looking for direction, I highly recommend checking them out!"

Michelle Ackerman, MEND.



### Venture Taranaki supported Michelle with:

- Business advisory and strategy sessions
- Regional Business Partner Network co-funding for marketing strategy and business growth fundamentals workshops
- Tools to understand her target market and scale effectively

# Power Up

## PowerUp Business Ready

Applications opened in August for the fourth edition of Business Ready, VT's flagship eight-week capability-building programme delivered in partnership with SODA Inc.

The programme supports a selected cohort of early-stage entrepreneurs and individuals to explore and validate their business ideas.

A total of 21 applications were received, including three from South Taranaki and three from Stratford, with 14 participants selected (one from South Taranaki and two from Stratford).

The programme kicked off on 16 September, with weekly sessions featuring local guest speakers who share their expertise. Contributors includes GQ Law, Baker Tilly Staples Rodway, and DOSO (business experts), alongside Marcel's Pancakes, Skin Aware, and Brokers United.

## PowerUp Masterclass series

Held on 3 September, this PowerUp Masterclass, "Close with Confidence: Sales Strategies for Growing Businesses", focused on sales essentials and practical strategies, led by Mike Clark from Think Right.

The session attracted 21 attendees and received highly positive feedback. Participants highlighted the speaker's energy, clarity, and relatable real-world examples, describing the content as easy to follow and immediately applicable. Feedback reflected strong engagement and enthusiasm to continue building business capability through future masterclasses.



*PowerUp Business Ready kicked off on 16 September.*



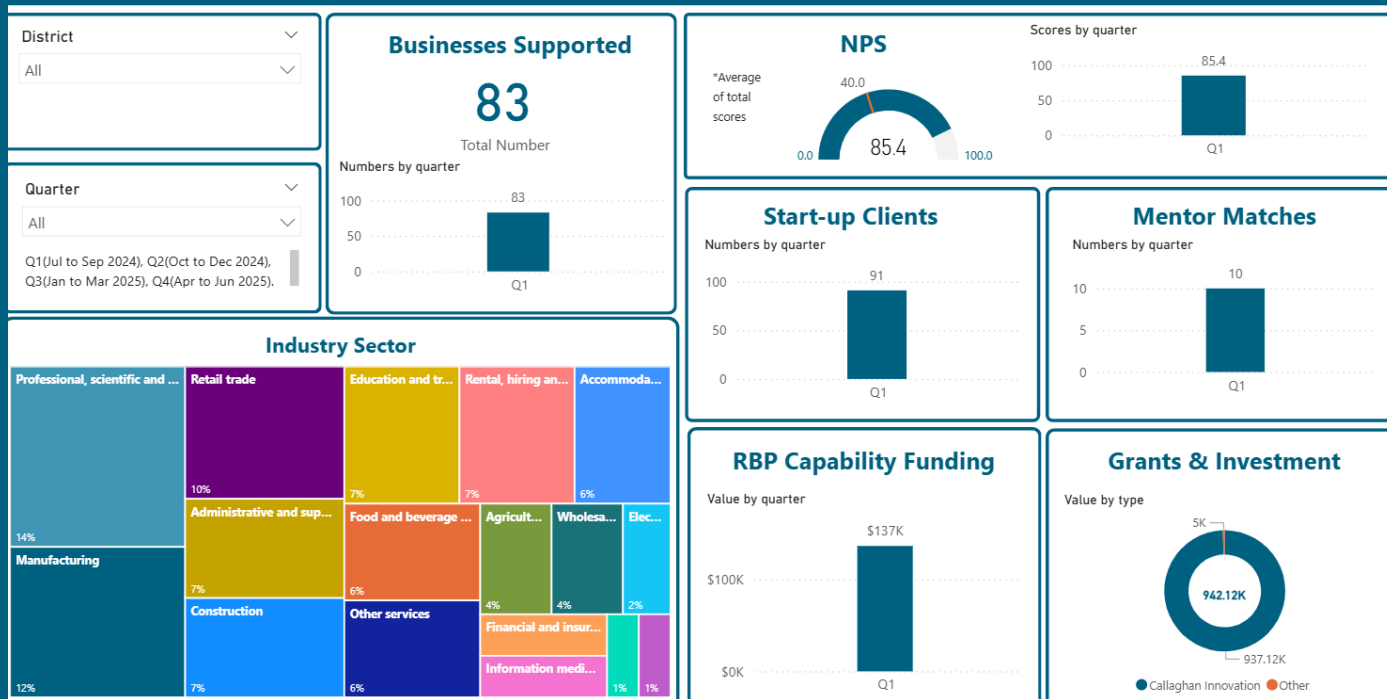
# Performance reporting



# Enterprise support snapshot

venture  
TARANAKI

## District Council Quarterly Report Dashboard 2025/26



Venture Taranaki offers an interactive dashboard that provides a comprehensive overview of key performance metrics by district, month, and quarter. This live dashboard is able to be viewed here:

<https://www.venture.org.nz/regional-intelligence/performance-dashboard/>

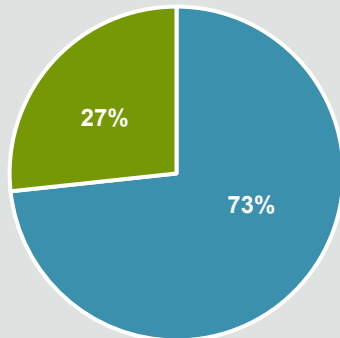
Note: The dashboard is for internal use only and is not linked to the public website.

# Leveraged Revenue Summary

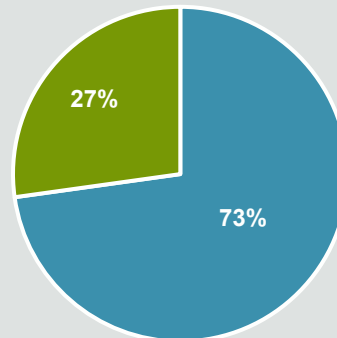
BUDGET SUMMARY	Q1 2025-2026 Year-to-date Actual					Q1 2025-2026 Year-to-date Budgeted				
END OF Q1 2025-2026	Revenue	NPDC Core Investment	NPDC other*	Leveraged Revenue	Expenditure	Revenue	NPDC Core Investment	NPDC other*	Leveraged Revenue	Expenditure
<b>Total</b>	\$1,625,966	\$984,849	\$282,335	\$358,782	\$1,537,959	\$1,701,739	\$984,849	\$348,798	\$368,091	\$1,680,504

\* \*\*"NPDC other" includes NPDC funding towards MEF and additional non-core projects (Branching out, Taranaki Innovation centre, Emergent opportunities)

Q1 2025 / 26  
Actuals



Q1 2025 / 26  
Budgeted



NPDC Core Investment    Leveraged Revenue

# Externally Funded Projects 2025–26

	Title	Cost Centre	Funder	Start Date	End Date	Traffic Light	Commentary	Description
1	Massey University Partnership	Regional Investment	Massey University	1/09/2012	30/06/2026		Partnership agreement for Massey Business Development role working within Venture Taranaki. Role 75% Massey Funded, 25% VT funded	Connection for Taranaki industry, businesses and organisations with Massey University expertise, knowledge and innovation to encourage greater development, innovation and growth.
2	BTAG	Economic Development	MSD	15/03/2021	N/A		Referral-based informal funding agreement. No formal contract in place for work ongoing.	To support emerging businesses with developing a business plan, training in business skills, advice and project reports.
3	Branching Out Phase 2	Regional Investment	NPDC; STDC	1/07/2022	1/2/2026			To diversify food and fibre value chains to generate better economic, social and environmental outcomes for Taranaki.
4	Branching Out Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures Grant	Regional Investment	MPI	16/12/2022	1/2/2026		Milestone 8 report completed 30 June 2025.	To diversify food and fibre value chains to generate better economic, social and environmental outcomes for Taranaki.
5	Branching Out - Better Off Funding	Regional Investment	DIA via NPDC	5/05/2023	30/06/2027			Capital/operational grant for a dryer and hemp processing/manufacturing.
6	STDC Contract for Service	Economic Development	STDC	1/07/2024	30/06/2027		Funding amount reflects approximate total amount received over a three year period.	To provide regional development services to South Taranaki
7	SDC Contract for Service	Economic Development	SDC	1/07/2024	30/06/2027		Funding amount reflects approximate total amount received over a three year period.	To provide regional development services to Stratford District
8	Taranaki Applied Innovation Centre	Regional Investment	Toi Foundation	20/11/2024	20/11/2025			Establishment of an Applied Innovation Centre to connect, enable, develop and accelerate Taranaki's science and technology sector.
9	Taranaki Applied Innovation Centre	Regional Investment	NPDC	1/01/2025	31/12/2025			Establishment of an Applied Innovation Centre to connect, enable, develop and accelerate Taranaki's science and technology sector.
10	New Industry Acceleration - Applied BioTech	Regional Investment	NPDC	1/01/2025	31/12/2025			This project will assess Taranaki's existing capabilities for biotechnology industry while identifying essential steps to attract startups and established companies for scaling and commercialisation.
11	Taranaki Applied Innovation Centre	Regional Investment	Taranaki Regional Council	1/01/2025	30/06/2026			Establishment of an Applied Innovation Centre to connect, enable, develop and accelerate Taranaki's science and technology sector. Funding up to \$40,000
12	Branching Out	Regional Investment	AGMARDT	5/01/2025	30/06/2026		Contract in partnership with Norhtland Inc.	De-risking the process of introducing novel crops: A collaboration to develop a seed/propagation toolkit for Taranaki and Northland landowners

### Traffic light key

- All KPIs met, contract complete or reporting period complete
- All KPIs substantially met (within 90%), contract complete
- All KPIs on track to be substantially met by completion of contract
- Some KPIs not on track to be substantially met by completion of contract
- Some or all KPIs not substantially met, contract complete
- Contract yet to commence



# External Project KPI 2025-26

	Title	Cost Centre	Funder	Start Date	End Date	Traffic Light	Commentary	Description
13	Branching Out Pivot Award Research Project	Regional Investment	Massey University	1/04/2025	1/4/2026		Project commenced in April 2025. Of the \$34,594, \$2,000 is in direct funding to VT.	Testing the power of sensory consumer science in distinguishing Taranaki crops and value-add products for market advantage. In partnership with Massey University (who will receive the funds) and Begin Distilling.
14	Central NZ	Destination	MBIE	28/04/2025	31/12/2025		Total contract value of \$600k with MOU in place between Wellington and VT.	To attract visitor to Central NZ in shoulder and off-peak. Wellington is lead agency, receiving and managing funding of all activities in partnership with VT and other Central North RTO's.
15	Univentures 50+ Startup Programme Contract	Economic Development	MSD	6/05/2025	04/07/2025		Three way contract for service between OFS, VT and Univentures.	The purpose of this contract is to engage Univentures to deliver a programme director role and integration support services as part of a pilot Hybrid Model business startup programme for individuals aged 50+ in Taranaki.
16	Regional Event Promotions Fund	Destination	MBIE	24/06/2025	24/06/2026			To support regional dispersal, visitor growth and attraction via major regional events.
17	Stratford Economic Development Strategy	Regional Investment	SDC	27/06/2025	31/03/2026			Develop a new Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan for Stratford District that will inform and guide Council's economic priorities, partnerships, and investments over the next 10+ years.
18	Regional Business Partnership Programme	Economic Development	MBIE	1/07/2025	30/06/2027			To support business growth by providing businesses with access to advisory services, training, and funding opportunities.
19	Business Mentors New Zealand	Economic Development	BMNZ	1/07/2025	30/06/2026			To facilitate delivery of the Business Mentors programme to mentors and mentees on behalf of BMNZ.
20	PKW Farms Branching Out Trial MOU	Regional Investment	PKW Farms LP	1/07/2025	31/12/2025		Funding to be put towards the cost of seed.	To support the optimisation of agronomic practices in preparation for a potential staged expansion of cultivation and processing operations.
21	Branching Out Phase Three	Regional Investment	NPDC	1/01/2026	31/12/2028		Phase three to begin on 1 January 2026. Agreement to access up to \$50,000 prior to project for project continuity.	Contribution to the delivery of Branching Out Phase Three

Traffic light key

All KPIs met, contract complete or reporting period complete

All KPIs substantially met (within 90%), contract complete

All KPIs on track to be substantially met by completion of contract

Some KPIs not on track to be substantially met by completion of contract

Some or all KPIs not substantially met, contract complete

Contract yet to commence



# Coming up next quarter

## October 2025

- 7 October – Defence Taranaki Capability Event
- 15 October – Young Enterprise Scheme (YES) Regional Award Night
- 16 October – Avocado Open Day
- 21–24 October – Primary Sector EDA Exchange (Timaru)
- 31 October–1 November – Hempcrete Construction Course
- 31 October – Scaleup Grants outcome advised

## November 2025

- 3–5 November – IURC Phase 2, Barcelona Conference
- 3 November – Conservation Technologies Professional Development Workshop
- 18 November – Visitor Industry Hui
- 18 November – PowerUp Masterclass: Unlock Funding for R&D Success
- 18–25 November – Recording of PowerUp Podcasts
- 25 November – NZ Business Events Expo
- 1–30 November – Applications open for PowerUp Accelerator
- Late November – Gin and Genes Workshop

## December 2025

- 2 December – Taranaki Tourism Summit
- 12 December – PowerUp Accelerator selection outcome advised