



BEYOND 2025

SOUTHLAND

Regional Long Term Plan

He ara whakamua, he ara hou a Murihiku i tēnei ao hurihuri

Moving forward, new pathways for Murihiku Southland in a constantly changing world

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Murihiku

The South Land

The world looks different from down here.

Here, we live in one of the southernmost places on the planet - a southern land, under southern skies, surrounded on three sides by the southern oceans.

We are guided not by the North Star but by southern stars, just as the earliest navigators to Murihiku were.

Our special place is at the southern edge of the world and it has shaped where we've come from, who we are and the future we are navigating towards.

We have a unique story that we believe is worth sharing with the world.



Murihiku was the name given to the southern part of Te Waipounamu and the sub-antarctic island by Māori.

Tā Tipene O'Regan characterises Murihiku as a Hawaiiki name – a name brought here by Polynesian settlers, variations of which are found commonly across the Pacific to denote the southern extremities of land masses.

The name means 'tail end' or 'whale's tail' – the end of the land, or the tail that propels the whale forward.

One story goes that the South Island is Te Waka a Māui - the canoe from where Māui fished up Te Ikaroa a Māui, the 'great fish', which is the North Island. The southern edge of the South Island represents the 'tail end' or stern of Māui's waka, from where it would have been steered.

Rakiura is Te Punga o Te Waka a Māui, the anchor stone of Māui's canoe which was tethered to the waka by Ngā Kahukura O Hine Nui Te Pō, the Aurora Australis also known as Māui's ropes.

Under the colonial government, the whole of the southern region of the South Island was part of the Province of Otago. In 1857 the settlers of the southernmost region petitioned Parliament for separation from Otago, because of 'misrule and injustice'. Petitioners included a number of prominent Kāi Tahu men, and some 'takata pora' former whalers and sealers who had lived and intermarried with Kāi Tahu in the region for upwards of 60 years.

They asked for the new province to be called Murihiku but the powers-that-be decided instead to name the new province Southland.

Executive Summary

This Plan is about our people - the place we all live in and our ability to make a living to ensure we can live the way we want to. What is clear is that the future is not set and what we do today, will influence tomorrow. This is the key purpose of this Plan - it's a tool to support us to embrace the opportunities of the future.

The Plan places significant importance on regional coordination and leadership. We're already good at working collaboratively and this needs to continue.

Our People

We're embracing that we're changing as a population. We need to make sure we provide the right amenities, services, facilities, and infrastructure to meet our needs – now and into the future.

While our people are our lifeblood, our communities are our veins. We have over 2,300 community groups (p43) who enable our way of life and we need to keep supporting them as they face challenges such as attracting and retaining volunteers.

We also want to make sure Southlanders have the same opportunities for equity in wellbeing as other New Zealanders. It shouldn't matter where you live in terms of quality and access to healthcare, education or other services. However, it is different in our region often because our small population cannot economically sustain some services, such as public transport networks for example. We therefore have to think differently to find innovative solutions, and we have to be strong together as a region to make sure we advocate for the things that matter.

Having a small population in the second largest geographic region in the country has its advantages and disadvantages. We have a way of life envied by many, but we also have a small ratepayer base to look after a large area. Local and central government are aware of this, and this Plan considers how to support them particularly through regional planning and strategies. These plans can clearly articulate our priorities. Our mahi has highlighted the need for accurate data and insights to help inform decision making.

It is still very important to attract people to the region as outlined in Southland Regional Development Strategy (SoRDS) in 2015. However, we also need to focus on retaining people in our region by helping newcomers to settle in quickly and streamlining our welcoming approaches. We will create regional ambassadors by building pride about our people and place.

Our Economy

Our region is a powerhouse for the country. We significantly contribute to national exports and we need to keep supporting our businesses and export sector to sustainably grow and thrive.

On the whole, our economy weathered the Covid period well, with only a \$50 million decrease in GDP in 2021 followed by an increase of \$255 million in 2022.

The engine room of our economy are the 14,000 or so, mostly small and medium sized businesses. Over two thirds of all our businesses are looking for staff and our unemployment levels remain at almost record lows. This means we have to be innovative to support our businesses using our competitive advantages. We're looking to do this by helping them use the 'place' and 'lifestyle' of the region to help recruit people.

However, the future of our economy will not just be labour focused. There is an exciting emerging digital and technology industry driven by the innovative and curious spirit of our people. In some instances, we are already seeing how we can achieve even better outcomes through the use of technology and we need to ensure we have an ecosystem to enable this.

Our rural sector is our backbone and it's facing a multitude of challenges at the moment. This presents opportunities which we are embracing and while we've endured challenges like this before, there are some significant issues which have the potential to fundamentally change the sector and our region – carbon forestry is one of these.

Meanwhile, we must remain focused on diversifying our economy to ensure we can face any challenges arising from major changes to our larger employers and industries. This will be done by building on our strengths and successes to date, including leveraging a strong primary sector foundation and our natural advantages of location and climate.

Two significant opportunities are aquaculture and tourism. We've got an aspirational goal to unlock the potential of Murihiku Southland aquaculture to be a \$1 billion industry. We could be the number one region in the world utilising our natural advantages of a cooler climate and clear waters. We've got a pathway defined built on efforts and learnings of the past, which will require leadership and strategic planning to ensure we have workers, infrastructure, supply chains and knowledge.

Tourism has recovered faster than we expected from the pandemic. People are attracted to our place and in particular, the things that make us special and what we value. The switch in focus to managing our destination is important with projects like Milford Opportunities and the refresh of the region's destination strategy leading the way.

A key area of focus is encouraging visitors to disperse around the region therefore managing places with pressures, but also ensuring we spread the benefits. Developing unique experiences, particularly those around our 'Southland Story', is important as is ensuring we have appropriate infrastructure, air connectivity and accommodation.

Our Environment

We're aware of the changes and challenges associated with a changing climate and we're going to make sure that we're prepared to make good decisions and build resilience.

Similarly, we're on a net zero journey and it's pleasing to see progress we've already made. Our region contributed 9.7% of the country emissions in 2018 and this has reduced to 9.2% in 2021. This is due to partnerships with Government, the private and public sector and many individuals. There's a clear pathway to achieving net zero by 2050, and it's going to require everyone to keep playing their part.

Having an affordable and reliable energy supply is also a competitive advantage for our region and country. This has to be the central objective of a renewable energy future, ensuring affordability for our communities and globally competitive energy pricing for exporters and industry.

There are also other key issues that we need to focus on right now and in particular the rules that control them e.g. land use (carbon forestry); transport; housing, water to name a few. It's important policy makers acknowledge that regional variation is crucial – one size rarely fits all. The rules need to look after our people and place, but also allow us to thrive.

The way we do this is to make sure we continue to input into planning and rule change processes such as spatial planning (part of the Resource Management Act reform (RMA)). We also need to ensure alignment and for all this change to make sense together. Everything is interconnected and can't be looked at in silos.

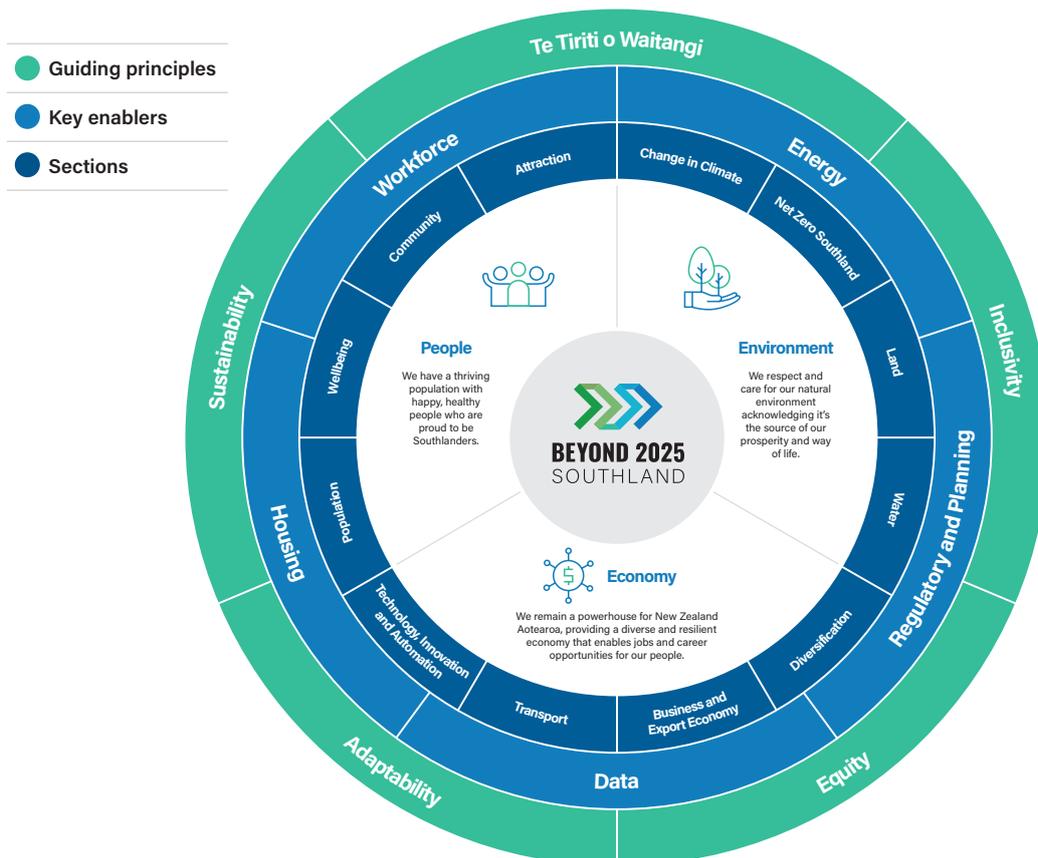
The Beyond 2025 Plan

This Plan reflects our desire to align our regional development aspirations with the rules which will enable them to happen, and the wider context and setting within which everything sits. This is the only way we believe we can truly achieve the aspirations that we have identified for our people, our environment and our economy.

It is divided into four key sections. The key enablers section is first and speaks to how these areas underpin many parts of the Plan and should be a priority. The next three sections are People, Economy and Environment. In each of these sections, the applicable enablers are highlighted down the left-hand side of the page and recommendations are highlighted at the bottom of the page. There is also an overall summary of key recommendations at the end of the Plan.

The circle diagram reflects our integrated and interconnected approach including the guiding principles which have guided us through the process – Te Tiriti o Waitangi, inclusivity, equity, adaptability and sustainability.

The following two pages provide a snapshot of some projects suggested in the Plan which are focused around empowering us to look after our people and place while also embracing change and opportunities.



Empowering Us and Our Region

To look after our people...

- Particularly our older people, who we will have more of
- During natural emergencies acknowledging we may have more in the future
- Support all our people by working with our rūnaka and other cultural groups as we become more ethnically diverse
- Focus on ensuring there is equitable healthcare services and that people can access them (acknowledging our lack of public transport)
- There is a balance between exporting the food we grow and having affordable options for our people
- Making sure everyone has a home and shelter.
- Community organisations are supported to attract and retain volunteers
- Focus on new and existing multi-purpose facilities which provide places for people to connect

To grow the potential of our people...

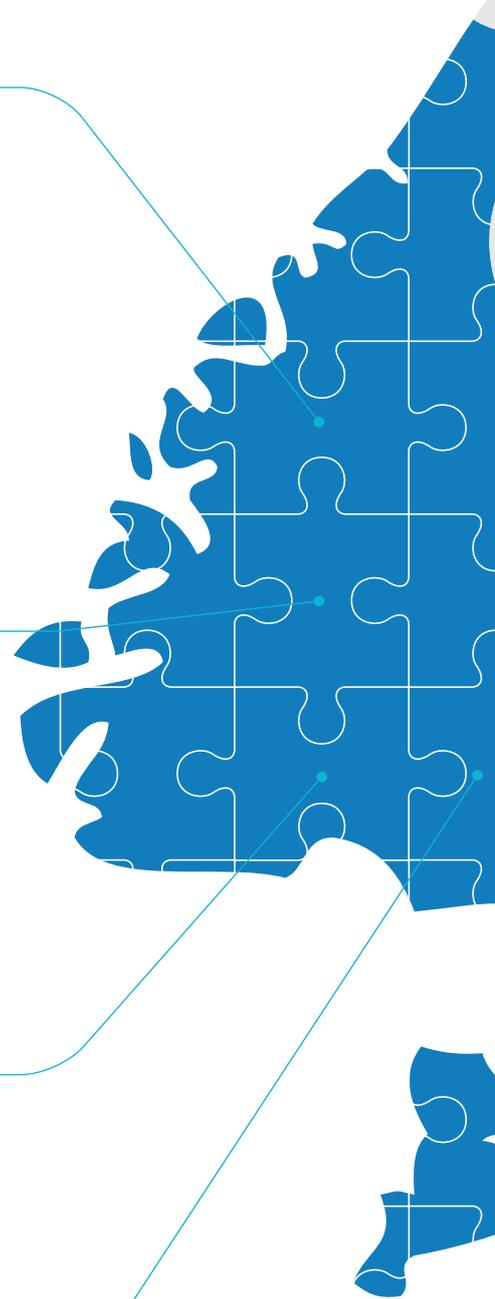
- Provision of quality training and education opportunities at our schools and institutions
- Opportunities to support older workers and people who have been out of the workforce to upskill especially with regard to digital technologies.
- Continuation of the Southland Youth Futures programme
- Supporting the Strong Communities Murihiku initiative
- Support other workforce programmes and activities such as Te Ara Aukati Kore, E tū Job Match programme and those focused on people with disabilities

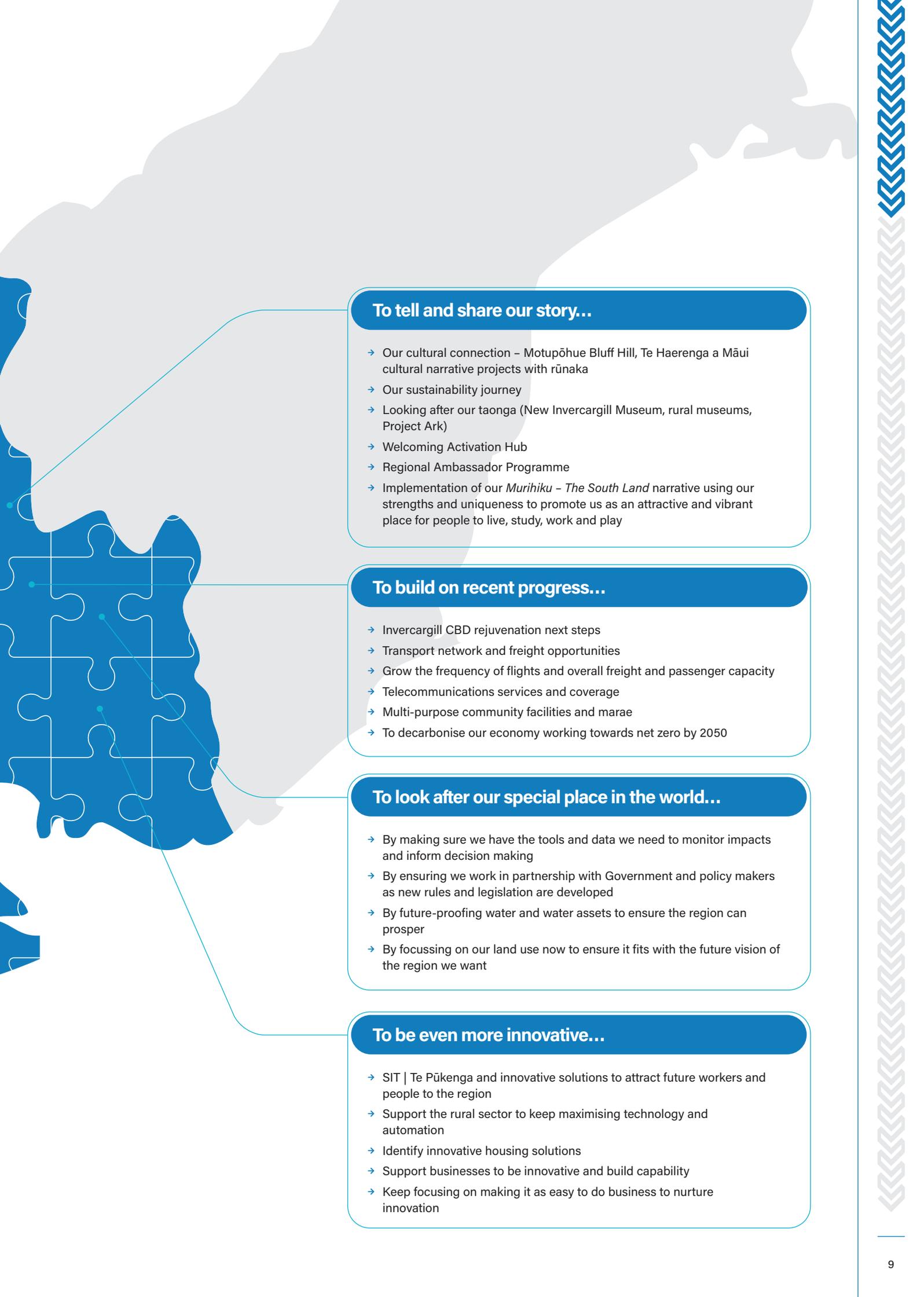
To build on our natural advantages...

- Keep exploring diversification opportunities such as aquaculture, tourism, data centres, Space OpsNZ, new crops, food and fibre opportunities
- Generate more renewable energy
- Develop our regional 'Provenance Story' to enhance the value of our products, especially to overseas markets through the story of origin and the NZ Inc brand values

To make our businesses even stronger...

- Support them to recruit staff
- Supporting the rural sector
- Grow the value of exports even more
- Support businesses on their sustainability journeys
- Develop clusters of businesses
- Attract new and international business opportunities





To tell and share our story...

- Our cultural connection – Motupōhue Bluff Hill, Te Haerenga a Māui cultural narrative projects with rūnaka
- Our sustainability journey
- Looking after our taonga (New Invercargill Museum, rural museums, Project Ark)
- Welcoming Activation Hub
- Regional Ambassador Programme
- Implementation of our *Murihiku – The South Land* narrative using our strengths and uniqueness to promote us as an attractive and vibrant place for people to live, study, work and play

To build on recent progress...

- Invercargill CBD rejuvenation next steps
- Transport network and freight opportunities
- Grow the frequency of flights and overall freight and passenger capacity
- Telecommunications services and coverage
- Multi-purpose community facilities and marae
- To decarbonise our economy working towards net zero by 2050

To look after our special place in the world...

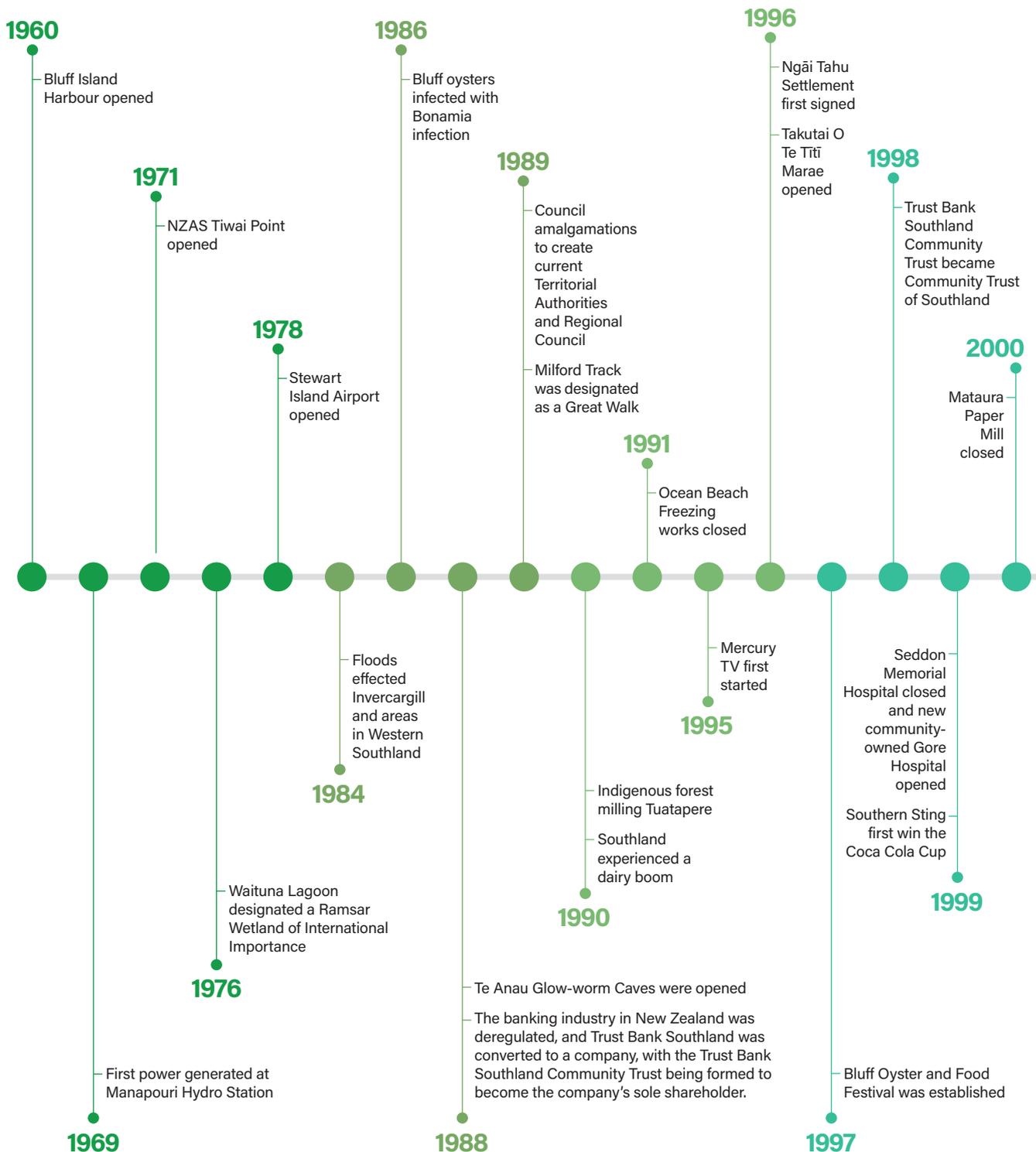
- By making sure we have the tools and data we need to monitor impacts and inform decision making
- By ensuring we work in partnership with Government and policy makers as new rules and legislation are developed
- By future-proofing water and water assets to ensure the region can prosper
- By focussing on our land use now to ensure it fits with the future vision of the region we want

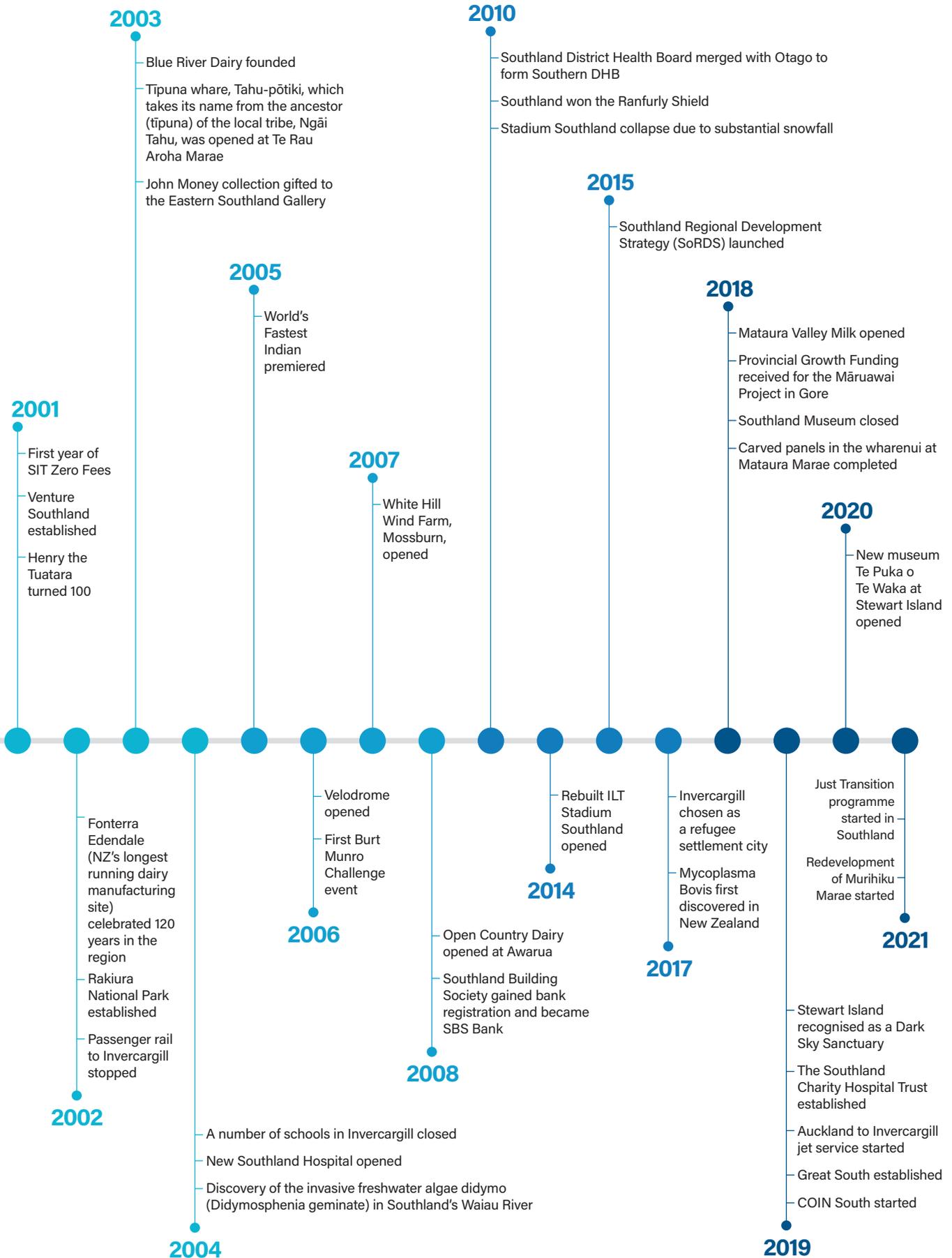
To be even more innovative...

- SIT | Te Pūkenga and innovative solutions to attract future workers and people to the region
- Support the rural sector to keep maximising technology and automation
- Identify innovative housing solutions
- Support businesses to be innovative and build capability
- Keep focusing on making it as easy to do business to nurture innovation

Pathway to the Beyond 2025 Plan

Our region has embraced change before and below are some key moments that have shaped our region. The following pages outline the process undertaken to develop the Beyond 2025 Plan.





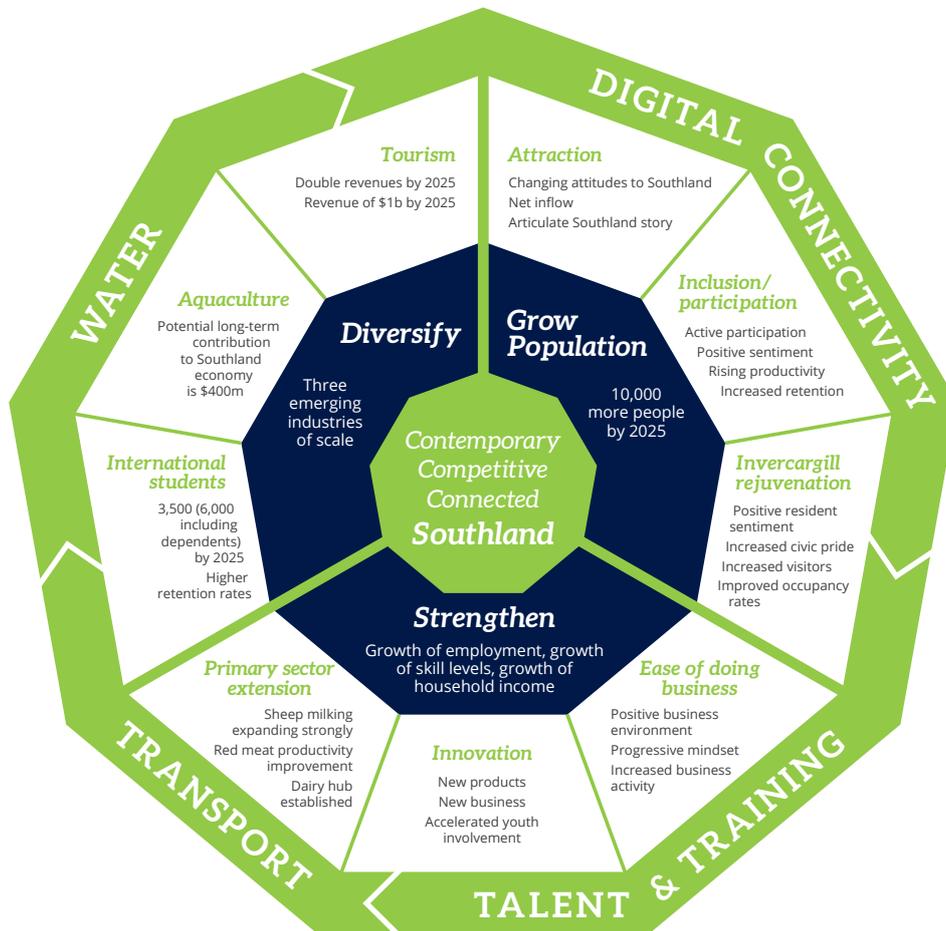
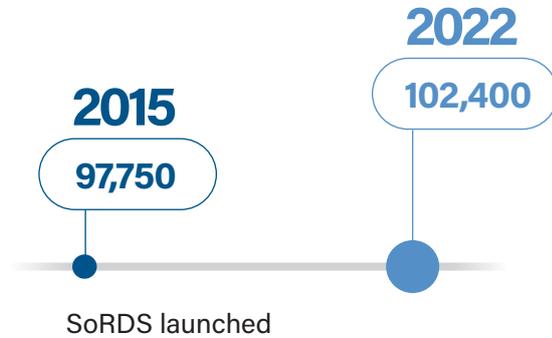
SoRDS | Southland Regional Development Strategy

Project Goal: Achieve 10,000 more people in Southland by 2025.

The Southland Regional Development Strategy (SoRDS) was launched in 2015 and had one big goal to achieve 10,000 more people by 2025.

Even with an unforeseen pandemic to contend with, since 2020 we have been tracking well to achieve this population goal.

Nine action teams were at the heart of SoRDS and these action teams prepared action plans focused on identifying specific and achievable activities that would contribute to the strategy's goal of 10,000 more people by 2025.



From those actions plans, there were 51 actions identified and to date **two thirds** of these have been completed or are underway.

Some of the completed projects from the action plan include:

- Air New Zealand jet service to Invercargill from Auckland
- Milford Opportunities Project
- The Langlands Hotel
- Invercargill Central - rejuvenated Invercargill CBD
- Southland Murihiku Destination Strategy 2019 – 2029
- Curio Bay tourism development
- Motorcycle Mecca tourism development
- Southland Murihiku Events Strategy 2020 – 2025
- Establishment of COIN South
- Intergenerational Gore

The timing was right to review the SoRDS in line with Southland's Just Transition Work Plan.

Southland Just Transition

Project Goal:

Help Southland build its economic, environmental and social resilience through and beyond the planned closure of NZAS Tiwai Point in December 2024.

The Southland Just Transition process is supported by an active partnership between iwi, local government, communities, business, unions, education, and central government (MBIE).

To oversee the Southland Just Transition, an Enduring Oversight Group (EOG) and associated Secretariat group were established and in February 2022 Murihiku Southland's Just Transition Work Plan was launched.

Within the work plan are seven pou (workstreams) which Southlanders have made clear will make a meaningful difference to the future of Murihiku Southland: Clean Energy, Aquaculture, Land Use, Worker Transitions, Community

Capability Building, Business Transitions and Long Term planning. Each workstream has had a lead agency driving outcomes and for Beyond 2025 Southland, the lead agency was Great South (Murihiku Southland's Regional Development Agency).

The Beyond 2025 Southland regional long-term plan has had a dual purpose as:

- a workstream within Southland's Just Transition Work Plan, providing a long-term lens over the other workstreams and;
- an update to the Southland Regional Development Strategy 2015 - 2025 (SoRDS)



Beyond 2025 Southland

Purpose

The purpose of the Plan is to create a pathway for Murihiku Southland beyond 2025. This will be based on whakamana - empowerment and aspirations we've identified for our people, environment and economy. We can only achieve this shared vision when all moving parts come together, therefore our focus has been on identifying projects or actions which embrace change and build resilience and capability for our people.

The arrows represent the main pillars of the project - people, economy and environment.



The arrows symbolise moving forward into the future and are joined to symbolise a pathway and a shared journey.

'Beyond 2025' represents a desire to build on SoRDS. This is also in line with council planning processes and timeframes.

BEYOND 2025
SOUTHLAND
Regional Long Term Plan

The colours represent the Southland landscape - wilderness, farmland, rivers, lakes and the sea.

Whakataukī gifted by Waihōpai Rūnaka.

He ara whakamua, he ara hou a Murihiku i tēnei ao hurihuri

Moving forward, new pathways for Murihiku Southland in a constantly changing world

This statement represents the long-term plan's desire to use the learnings of the past to guide the future.

Guiding Principles

As we've looked at how to achieve the vision through the development of this plan, we've been guided by five principles.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

We honour the principles and spirit of the Treaty by working collaboratively with our Treaty partners to ensure aspirations for mana whenua and Māori are reflected.

Inclusivity

We've understood that the process to develop the Plan is just as important as what the plan says. So, we've endeavoured to provide opportunities for many to be involved and share their views with significant surveying, research, hui and conversations over the past 18 months.

Equity

We've focused on achieving equitable and fair outcomes, taking into account the needs and perspectives of all members of the community so that everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, has opportunities to thrive.

Adaptability

We're acknowledging what we do (or don't do) now will affect the future, so we need to ensure we are both resilient and adaptable in our approach. This way we can best respond to change and challenges considering things we can and cannot control.

Sustainability

We've focused on a sustainable long-term view for the region, ensuring there is balance between our people, our environment, and our economy now and for the future.

Wide Input and Partnership Approach

The process to develop the Beyond 2025 Plan has taken 18 months and involved the establishment of 16 workstreams. These workstreams sat within five areas of focus which built on the structure of SoRDS and each had clear objectives and its own bespoke approach to achieve them. These were established after a comprehensive situation analysis process which identified existing gaps as well as how to avoid duplicating existing work.

There were four Advisory or Working Groups established in the Future Energy, Housing, Destination Development and Management (Tourism) and Retention and Attraction workstreams to guide the delivery of specific outcomes (p82).



Using the information gathered through this workstream structure and process, we have identified the five key enablers and people, economy and environment sections of the Plan. These sections are how we have structured the Plan and where the information we have gathered over the last 18 months has been fed in.

The process has been supported by multiple stakeholders including valued partnerships with councils, mana whenua, the business sector, local community organisations, individuals and central government agencies.

It has been a key priority to understand and incorporate other work and consolidate under the umbrella of Beyond 2025, and our collaborative approach has enabled this to happen.

Evidenced Based

We identified there were gaps in our knowledge particularly across housing, energy, tourism and future population and demographics insights. Subsequently, Beyond 2025 commissioned eight pieces of work in partnership with key stakeholders:

- Population, Demographic, Industry Profiling & Future Modelling (21 reports for 4 Councils)
- Regional Housing Needs Assessment (Great South)
- Southland Murihiku Regional Energy Strategy 2022-2050 (Great South, Murihiku Regeneration)
- Southland Volunteer Sector Independent Research
- Southland Murihiku Employer Workforce Research
- Invercargill City Council CBD Rejuvenation Community and Retailer Surveys
- Settlement Support Programme (Southland Business Chamber)

Beyond 2025 also partnered with Great South and other Just Transition workstreams to review a number of datasets and reports and these enabled snapshots of the rural and business sectors to be updated. Great South also undertook to facilitate a review of the tourism recovery pathway forward through the Destination Strategy (and associated inputs) with support of Government Covid recovery funding. These have all been inputs into the plan.

- Murihiku Southland Destination Strategy Review (Great South)
- Community Sentiment Tourism Research (Great South)
- Murihiku Sustainable Tourism Programme Pilot (Great South)
- Southland Story Stage 3 (Great South)
- Mobile Black Spot Assessment (Great South)
- Aquaculture Strategy Preliminary Investigation (Just Transition Aquaculture Workstream)
- Farm Carbon Abatement Pilot (Thriving Southland, MBIE, Great South)
- Social and Economic Implications of Land Use Change from Pastoral to Carbon Forestry in Murihiku Southland (Great South)
- Southland Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory for 2021 (Great South)
- Net Zero Southland report 2021 Economic Mitigations Pathways (Great South)
- Business Support & Service Mapping (Great South)

Inclusive Journey

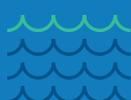
We believe the journey to develop this Plan is as important as its outcomes. With this in mind, we have endeavoured to provide an inclusive process for people to be involved and stay connected.

- 100+ presentations and hui with community groups, organisations, businesses, iwi and agencies throughout the region
- Opportunities provided which has enabled 200+ businesses to provide their insights
- 12 public roadshow events held around the region
- Let's Talk digital feedback platform
- Website with general feedback form

Murihiku Southland Regional Indicators



12% of Aotearoa New Zealand land mass (2nd largest region in Aotearoa New Zealand)



3,613 kilometres of coastline with 11 marine reserves and 2 marine sanctuaries



58% of land is public conservation estate, most of which is in two national parks; Fiordland National Park and Rakiura National Park.



5 of the 11 Great Walks (Kepler Track, Milford Track, Rakiura Track, Routeburn Track, and upcoming Hump Ridge Track)



The **southernmost International Dark Sky Sanctuary** in the world (Rakiura Stewart Island)



Regional emissions are 5,125,135 tCO₂e (9.2% of Aotearoa New Zealand net emissions)



Population of 102,400 people (2% of Aotearoa New Zealand)



\$7.3 billion GDP (2.0% of Aotearoa New Zealand)



\$72,200 GDP per person (4th highest region in Aotearoa New Zealand)



14,499 registered businesses (2.3% of Aotearoa New Zealand)

Top 5 Murihiku Southland industries by Employees are:



AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & FISHING

9,630 employees
17.3% of economy



MANUFACTURING

8,240 employees
14.8% of economy



HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

5,450 employees
9.8% of economy



RETAIL

5,100 employees
9.2% of economy



CONSTRUCTION

4,650 employees
8.4% of economy

Regional Snapshot and Trends

People

Population

The region's population has increased from 97,750 in 2015 to 102,400 in 2022, which is a 5.7% increase, compared with a national increase of 11.2%. With a slower than national average increase and slightly higher proportion of people aged over 65 (18.3%), compared to nationally (16.4%) these historical trends were the catalyst for SoRDS in 2015 and the one big goal of 10,000 more people by 2025. As current projections see the number of people over 65 continue to increase for the next couple of decades, it continues to be a building block of the Beyond 2025 Southland plan.

Ethnicity

There's a higher percentage of Europeans in our population than nationally (87% compared to 70%). Between 2013 and 2018 the European population grew by 6% however, Māori grew by 25% and Asian grew by 90%, indicating the region is becoming more ethnically diverse.

Wellbeing

The region performs well on most of the 2018 Index of Multiple Deprivation domains (income, housing quality, health outcomes, employment, and crime) but is slightly below in education outcomes and significantly below on access to services (reflecting the distances in region). Fewer households have internet access (80.5%) compared with nationally (86.1%). Murihiku Southland has a higher level of volunteering (44%) compared with the rest of the country (37%).

Education

With a lower proportion of tertiary qualifications (34%) compared with nationally (43.5%) the region represents 5.1% of the national agriculture qualifications compared with 2.2% of total tertiary qualifications. The region also has a high amount of food, hospitality, and food services tertiary qualifications (8.7%).

Housing

The region has a high level of home ownership (69.6%) compared with nationally (64.5%), due to relatively low average house value (just over half the national average). Rents are about one third cheaper and housing occupancy is below average (88%) compared nationally (90%). The region's housing stock is old with 36.8% of housing over 70 years old.

In recent years housing has become less affordable, however remains one of the most affordable regions in the country.

Economy

The region's economic 5-year growth has been slower than the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand (1% regionally compared with nationally 2.3%).

GDP

The region's economy weathered the Covid period well, with only a \$50 million decrease in GDP in 2021 followed by an increase of \$255 million in 2022.

The main industries are Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing (22.3%), Manufacturing (14.4%), Electricity, Gas & Wastewater Services (6%), Construction (5.3%), and Health Care and Social Assistance (5%).

Export

Murihiku Southland contributes significantly to Aotearoa New Zealand's exports. The key industries are Agriculture (Dairy, Meat) and Aluminium production. From 2022 figures, this represents 11.7% of Aotearoa New Zealand's Pastoral exports, 8% of Primary exports, and 8.1% of Merchandise exports.

Businesses

The number of businesses continues to increase since 2000 (25.5% compared with nationally 54.9%), however businesses have less average numbers of employees (3.9 compared with nationally 4.4) primarily due to the number of farms within the region.

Income

- Household income under \$50k
 - Murihiku Southland 42% nationally 34%.
- Household income over \$100k
 - Murihiku Southland 28% nationally 37%.

Government Benefits

The region has a slightly lower benefit dependency, 9.4% compared with nationally 9.6%. The main benefit in the region, Jobseeker Support is 47% compared to nationally 52%, reflecting low unemployment in the region 3.2% compared with nationally 3.4%.

Employment

Since 2011 Murihiku Southland annual employment growth has been slower, 0.9% compared with 2.1% nationally. Tourism jobs have been adversely affected during the Covid pandemic (5,050 in 2020, 3,750 in 2021).

Possible Future Scenarios

There are several possible futures for Murihiku Southland which will be influenced or determined by a range of factors. This section models possible scenarios regarding new and existing industries and the impact they have on key indicators such as employment, population, housing and annual GDP.

Beyond 2025 have prepared these scenarios by analysing data sourced from the Southland region forecasting scenarios (Infometrics March 2023) and social and economic implications of land use change from pastoral to carbon forestry in Murihiku Southland (Great South May 2023).

📁 Employment

Number of jobs which will include part-time and full-time workers (not FTE). The names of the key industries are aligned to the ANZSIC codes used by Statistics New Zealand.

👤 Population

Number of people living within the area, even if they work in another area.

🏠 Households

Number of houses occupied by a group of people (can differ from housing as some houses may be unoccupied e.g., holiday homes).

📈 Annual GDP

Annual Gross Domestic Product (Annual GDP) is an indicator of economic benefit and activity calculated on an annual basis.

These are best estimates based on the most current and relevant information available, however are ultimately dependent on the availability of capital, commodity pricing, global competition, climate change and change in regulation out of the region's control.

For the purposes of modelling, we have identified a 'base scenario' which is the 'business as usual' scenario. We've then modelled four possible scenarios New Zealand Aluminium Smelter (NZAS Tiwai Point) Closure, Aquaculture, Unconstrained Forestry and Southern Green Hydrogen which allows them to be compared to the 'base scenario'.

These scenarios were chosen over others due to their significant impacts on the Murihiku Southland region and the probability that they will occur. The Tourism scenario sits within the Tourism section (p56) as it measures different outputs. Economic equilibrium means employment and industries will readjust to any short-term shock (like closure of a plant) with new businesses and employment being created to replace the loss of jobs in the region.

Base Scenario: Business as usual

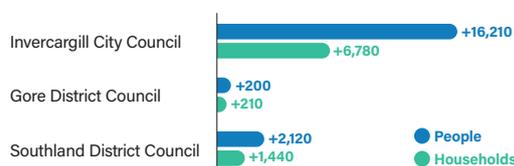
The base scenario is that the Murihiku Southland economy continues on its pre-Covid trajectory. These assumptions include:

- NZAS Tiwai Point remains open beyond 2024.
- Murihiku Southland has an ageing population.
- Recent pre-Covid trends have been used to forecast future changes (e.g., agriculture decreasing).
- Migration will resume to pre-Covid levels.
- Improvements in technology and productivity e.g automation and robotics will lead to higher annual GDP per person.
- The number of people per household will decrease (due to an older demographic and smaller families).
- There is increasingly diverse workforce skills and training.

	2022	2054	Change
EMPLOYMENT	📁 55,610	📁 64,260	+ 8,650
POPULATION	👤 102,400	👤 120,930	+18,530
HOUSEHOLDS	🏠 41,690	🏠 50,110	+ 8,420
ANNUAL GDP	📈 \$7,290M	📈 \$11,270M	+ \$3,980M

👤 Population and Households

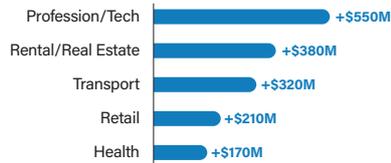
In the base scenario, all the populations and households increase for each territorial authority:



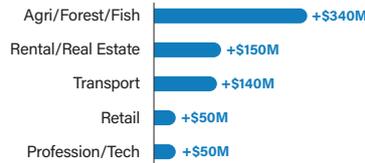
Annual GDP

Positive for all regions and almost all industries (except mining) despite the loss of employment in those industries noted below.

Invercargill City Council (+\$2,680M)



Southland District Council (+\$1,040M)



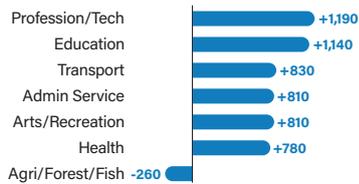
Gore District Council (+\$270M)



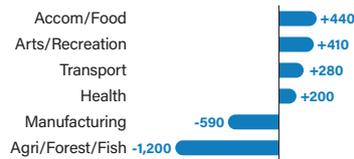
Employment

The key industries impacted by the base scenario for each territorial authority are:

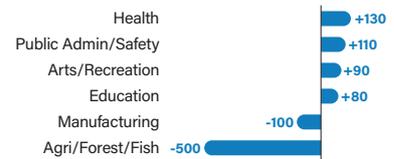
Invercargill City Council (+8,130)



Southland District Council (+440)



Gore District Council (+70)



Each of the following scenarios NZAS Tiwai Point Closure, Aquaculture, Unconstrained Forestry and Southern Green Hydrogen are considered largely independent of each other, which allows them to be combined together to consider more complex scenarios.

The changes shown under each of the four scenarios relate to the 2054 projections from the base scenario on the previous page in terms of the key indicators of Employment, Population, Housing and Annual GDP.

If you want to understand the **impact on employment if both Aquaculture and NZAS Tiwai Point Closure scenarios happen**, then you add the impacts together:

$$-950 + 2,940 = +1,990$$

NZAS Tiwai Point Closure Scenario Employment + Aquaculture Scenario Employment

If you want to know what the final employment figure would be, add this result (+1,990) to the base scenario employment figure for 2054 (+1,990 + 64,260 = 66,250).

Scenario 1: NZAS Tiwai Point Closure

This scenario considers the implications of NZAS Tiwai Point closing in late 2024.

Key assumptions:

- The above figures do not include the economic impacts of the decommissioning of the plant (approx. \$800 million over 10 years) as the benefits on employment and annual GDP will have returned to normal in 32 years (end of the forecast period).
- Electricity previously used for NZAS Tiwai Point will be diverted to other industries and regions due to there being sufficient time for the infrastructure to be put in place. This means there is no annual GDP impact from the manufacturing of the electricity itself within the Murihiku Southland region.
- That there is economic equilibrium and impacted employment and economic activity will be diverted to other similar industries.

Scenario 2: Unconstrained Forestry

This scenario considers the impacts of conversions of productive farmlands into carbon forestry.

EMPLOYMENT	 -9,040
POPULATION	 -11,230
HOUSEHOLDS	 -5,220
ANNUAL GDP	 +\$430 M

The above figures relate to the 2054 projections

Key assumptions:

- That the NZU carbon price continues to increase as per its current trajectory, reaching a threshold of (\$140 NZU) projected by 2030.
- That 50% of the pastoral lands (35,000ha of dairy and 438,000ha of sheep and beef will convert to forestry) as it becomes more commercially viable as a carbon forest (i.e. the returns for carbon credits and harvesting the timber at maturity exceed farming the land with animals) and therefore farmers will either sell their lands to corporate forestry organisations or convert their land themselves.
- That no alternative uses of land will exceed the benefits of carbon credits for farmers.
- Employment within the forestry sector will be low until forests are harvested and processed by sawmills. Experience with the east coast of the North Island shows that contractors from out-of-region are typically brought into the region to maintain forests (e.g. pruning).
- That there are no additional regulations or Council interventions.
- The scenario assumes that some farmland will not be viable as forestry due to soil type, natural hazards, geography or cultural reasons.

EMPLOYMENT  -950

POPULATION  -1,250

HOUSEHOLDS  -500

ANNUAL GDP  -\$150 M

The above figures relate to the 2054 projections

Key take outs:

- The impacts of this scenario are mostly felt in the Invercargill City Council area and within the manufacturing industry (with other industries slightly impacted).

Key take outs

- **Southland District Council bears most of the loss in**
 - ↳ employment (-4,680, -26% of 2022 value),
 - ↳ population (-5,810, -18%),
 - ↳ households (-2,700, -21%), and
 - ↳ annual GDP (+\$620M, +23%)

Southland District Council area gains the most from GDP due to the carbon credits. This scenario presumes that this benefit is spent within the region, however this may be significantly less as corporate ownership of forestry may be in other regions or countries.
- **Gore District Council area has losses in:**
 - ↳ employment (-1,740, -24%),
 - ↳ population (-2,160, -17%),
 - ↳ households (-1,010, -18%), and
 - ↳ annual GDP (-\$70M, -8%).
- **Invercargill City Council area has losses in:**
 - ↳ employment (-2,630, -9%),
 - ↳ population (-3,270, -6%),
 - ↳ households (-1,520, -7%), and
 - ↳ annual GDP (-\$110M, -3%).

As seen from above, Unconstrained Forestry will have devastating impacts on Murihiku Southland and rural Aotearoa New Zealand and therefore we would expect a regulatory response and the probability of this scenario is unlikely to occur.

Scenario 3: Aquaculture

This scenario is based around the rapid development of the aquaculture sector known as 'farming in water', which is the aquatic equivalent of agriculture or farming.

Key assumptions:

- Assumes timely consenting approvals of key aquaculture projects and in particular open ocean farming of salmon.
- That the sector will be supported with increased processing facilities, inland smolt breeding and rearing, and increased shellfish, seaweed and whitebait production.
- This scenario assumes that some financial assistance will be given to support research and development, upgrades to infrastructure and training of the required workforce.
- This is modelled on the assumption that most of the smolt is bred out of the region.
- Aquaculture was modelled to reach \$1 billion in sales revenue by 2035 and then continue to grow to \$2.6 billion by 2054. Note that GDP is only a small proportion of the overall figure of sales as it removes all the inputs to the processes that are either generated by other industries or in other regions.

Scenario 4: Southern Green Hydrogen

This scenario explores the impact of building a hydrogen plant within Murihiku Southland by 2030.

Key assumptions:

- The plant would use renewable energy (hydro, wind or solar) therefore it is considered green, and it would produce hydrogen (international and domestic supply) and ammonia (fertiliser). There is increasing global demand for green hydrogen. Aotearoa New Zealand's geographic location to Asian markets (Japan and Korea) and the abundance of local renewable energy sources and facilities make Murihiku Southland an ideal location for a green hydrogen plant.
- To maintain independence of scenarios, it is assumed the additional electricity generation is outside the region, however, this is more likely to occur within the region, so it is a conservative estimate of the impacts on the region.
- The scenario also assumes that some of the head office functions will be outside of the region, hence the minimal impacts to other industries within the region.
- The construction of the plant will have significant impacts on the construction industry whilst it is built over a 5-year period, but these effects are not evident in the projection above as they are short-term.

EMPLOYMENT  +2,940

POPULATION  +5,310

HOUSEHOLDS  +2,110

ANNUAL GDP  +\$190 M

The above figures relate to the 2054 projections

Key take outs:

- The major impact is within the Invercargill City Council area due to the location of the fishing industry in Motupōhue Bluff.
- The fishing industry accounts for 1,970 jobs and manufacturing (processing of seafood) accounts for another 970 jobs.
- The GDP impacts are similarly distributed with \$130 million to fishing and \$60 million to processing.

EMPLOYMENT  +140

POPULATION  +270

HOUSEHOLDS  +110

ANNUAL GDP  +\$760 M

The above figures relate to the 2054 projections

Key take outs :

- The Southern Green Hydrogen scenario has the largest impact on the Invercargill City Council area and small impacts for the other Council areas in the region.
- All the above employment and GDP impacts will be in the manufacturing industry.



Raraunga Data

“We need access to timely, comprehensive, and accurate data to inform policy, assist decision-making, and prioritise resources for growth and development via collection, analysis, visualisation and data governance.”

Data which provides insights about our region’s people, economy and environment is required to support decision makers and policy makers.

The Beyond 2025 Southland Plan has been developed from a comprehensive process of primary research, analysis of existing data and insights and wide stakeholder engagement. This has ensured that the plan is as informed as possible to give us confidence in its recommendations. This has been particularly important considering that only 2018 census data has been available (which does not reflect 2023) and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Data-driven decision-making is essential to the success of our regions, enabling us to understand our challenges, identify our strengths, and take action to build more sustainable and resilient communities.”

Marianne Hedin
Senior Regional Development Specialist at the World Bank

Opportunities to improve how we use, access and share data became apparent during this process. This is based on there being gaps in the data we have, inconsistencies in how data is interpreted, issues with everyone not able to access data and wasted resources with multiple party duplication.

Data in Murihiku Southland

Our region has, and continues to make significant investment in data acquisition. The TopoClimate survey was a significant milestone and is an example of a data set that keeps on giving.

We are fortunate that we have a suite of data sets that provide vital insights into the region’s physical attributes. These range from satellite, LiDAR and hydrological data through to traffic monitoring and climate related data. In addition to this are datasets that relate to our economy and people such as population, tourism spend and unemployment data. Some of these are held locally and some reside within Government and state sector agencies.

Most of the locally held data sets reside in different repositories and often the information formats are difficult to integrate into user IT systems. Many are not actively curated and not readily shared.

For many years there has been a desire to establish a standard based GIS system and shared regional planning tools. This is even more relevant now considering the RMA and other regulatory and climate change planning underway is easily achieved with today’s data management technology and systems.

The key elements to improving the region’s data are:

-  **Decision-making:** Decisions are supported with data and evidence-based decision making, by acknowledging any assumptions or shortcomings and focuses on improving outcomes for individuals, organisations and our communities.



Next steps

Advocate

- That data partnerships are established with other organisations, sectors, and regions to share data, build capacity, and collaborate on data-driven initiatives.
- That national datasets align with regional datasets and acknowledge and support Murihiku Southland needs and aspirations.



Infrastructure: Data is stored in a highly available, fit-for-purpose repository and is managed with robust data governance, data standards, privacy and security.



Knowledge: Improved stakeholder engagement with data tools and platforms and strong understanding of the analytics.



Partnerships: Creating a strong working relationship with our data suppliers and stakeholders to provide relevant accurate data in a timely manner.



Continuous Improvement: A culture of continuing to improve understanding of the region via data and identifying areas of improvement through data analysis techniques to keep it relevant.

Regional Coordination and Approach

It is recommended to establish a Working Group of relevant sectors and key stakeholders. This group will facilitate an engagement process to ensure wider views across different sectors are included. It would also be reflective of other relevant data related projects, groups and processes underway to ensure alignment.

This Working Group would be tasked to develop the following:

Regional Data Strategy

This strategy would outline goals, objectives and actions to effectively collect, manage, analyse and share data for Murihiku Southland. It would:

- Consider data governance ensuring appropriate controls of the data for privacy and security.
- Include a stock take of current data to identify gaps but also ensure alignment with regional spatial planning processes underway.
- Investigate data sharing agreements (including ability to share with public), collaboration of data-driven projects, and sharing best practices.
- Identify datasets to inform KPIs which will measure successful implementation of the Beyond 2025 Southland plan.

Regional Data Repository

It is suggested that a regional data repository be established. This could enable outward facing data to be available to the public and technical data or non-public domain data be available to permitted users via ultra-highspeed access portals.

The benefits of this repository is that we can develop a standards-based regional data system and software tools that would eliminate duplication of systems and effort, aid collaborative planning and improve access to a wider range of data. It would also improve efficiency and reduce the cost of IT and geospatial systems while allowing IT personnel to become skilled in the use of contemporary digital tools and software.

The availability of data will also allow our region to measure its impact on the Aotearoa New Zealand economy and enable a wider range of stakeholders to access quality data.

Assessment of National Data Sets with a Murihiku Southland Lens

There are a wide breadth and number of data sets which inform Government decision making and allocation of resource. The Government is constantly reviewing and assessing their efficacy and we need to work alongside them to ensure they have an understanding of our region's needs.

This may require partnering with other regions, as well as advocacy to improve existing data sources. By providing data-based evidence, we can challenge flawed methodologies and create more equitable data that fairly reflects the region's true position.

Recommend

- That a Regional Data Strategy and Regional Data Repository are investigated and developed with this to be driven by a Working Group.



Waeture me te Whakakaupapa

Regulatory and Planning

“We want to align our regional development aspirations with the rules that dictate what we can and cannot do with our land, water and people, and we want rules that enable a prosperous and sustainable future.”

There has never been a better time to work together to align our regional development aspirations with the rules which enable delivery. There are several key pieces of legislation and policy currently being reviewed, many of which don't get reviewed often. This is an opportunity to inform decision making and address uncertainty around regulations which many see as a barrier.

Industry, businesses and Southlanders have told us it can be challenging to understand the rules and the ambiguity that is sometimes evident in regulatory settings. This has been exacerbated recently with the high number of policies and legislation being reviewed at the same time.

There is sometimes strong advocacy for change from policy makers without clear understanding of implications or perspectives from those affected. This means that the practical implementation of new policies can be challenging.

Overall, many see the need to find a balance to ensure the rules protect our people and place but also allow appropriate development and activity.

There are four suggested areas to focus on looking forward:

1 Improve Communication of Regulatory Change

The process to change rules and policies is extremely important, particularly to those affected by any changes. Therefore, identifying ways to make it easier for people to be involved will only ensure better outcomes.

This could be achieved with a centralised regional information repository. This 'one stop shop' could make it easier for people to see multiple policy processes being reviewed, complete with links on where to find more information. This would be a useful tool to support interactions between policy makers and policy users.

2 Recognition of Regional Variation

It is important that national policy acknowledges regional variations because 'one size fits all' rarely fits all situations. This can be achieved through advocacy on the needs of our region, working with regional policy makers and councils and directly participating in policy development processes.

3 Accurate Data and Insights Informs Policy Development

It is important that policy development and regulatory change is informed with accurate data and insights including mapping at a local and regional level. The proposed regional data repository would be a key tool, accessible to policy makers (p23).

Enhanced sharing of national datasets would also ensure everyone is using the same information.

4 Strategies and Regulatory Planning

There needs to be greater alignment between key national and regional strategies with associated planning and policy. The disconnect can create confusion for people and overall alignment of national, regional, and local planning should be the desired outcome. Here are some key areas of focus which could be prioritised looking forward.

Next steps

Advocate

- For greater alignment between national, regional strategies and associated regulation and policy.
- That the Government acknowledges the importance of regional variation and that a 'one size fits all' model isn't always appropriate.
- That national policy development and regulatory change is informed by accurate local and regional data and insights.

RMA and Regional Spatial Planning

The Government is repealing the 1991 Resource Management Act (RMA) and enacting new laws to transform the way we manage the environment. One of these is the Spatial Planning Bill which provides for development and implementation of long-term, strategic spatial planning across the country through the development of regional spatial strategies. There is significant work already underway in our region with the four councils and Te Ao Marama Inc, including a gap assessment of information needed to develop a regional spatial strategy. This will enable the establishment of a prioritised work programme for inclusion in the 2024-34 Long-term Plans.

Spatial plans are crucial tools, particularly for identifying suitable locations for housing considering hazards and climate change implications.

Southland Water and Land Plan

Known as Plan Change Tuatahi, there are changes underway which will give effect to the national requirement to set limits to manage freshwater by 2025. It also informs work programmes outside the plan change to improve our water and land.

Climate Change and Emissions Reduction Planning

Sea-level rise planning and methods need to be universally agreed, one standard adopted and interim guidance refined at agreed review dates.

One emissions calculator should be agreed for Aotearoa New Zealand, becoming the basis of all emissions planning and verification processes rather than a multiplicity of calculators which creates confusion.

Carbon Forestry

It is suggested that carbon forest development should be encouraged but needs to be focused on marginal lands, riparian plantings, wetlands and possibly permanent carbon native forests within the Conservation estate or other public land as modelled in the Net Zero Southland Report 2021 (p70-73). Regulatory intervention and alignment of policy settings is critically important and urgent action is required to give effect to change. Delaying decisions will have significant implications the longer the conversion of productive land to carbon forest is allowed to continue in a non-regulated setting.

Housing

There needs to be consideration of a number of regulations and policy settings in relation to housing.

- Housing intensification and medium density legislation opt in or out for Councils.
- There is a need for greater urgency to be placed on the need to designate land suitable for residential housing.
- Impacts of climate change, particularly sea-level rise, flood inundation risks and other factors such as seismic and liquefaction risks, are considered when designating new residential land.
- There is potentially a need to review the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (Sept 2022), as in many cases this does not contemplate the need for residential land outside of residential boundaries subject to Climate Change impacts and inundation risks where it is impractical to consider:
 - ↳ greater intensification in existing urban areas; and
 - ↳ rezoning of land that is not highly productive land as urban; and
 - ↳ rezoning different highly productive land that has a relatively lower productive capacity

Transport

It is crucial Murihiku Southland is included in significant planning that is already underway regarding the provision of resilient and critical transport infrastructure necessary to connect our communities and enable our economies to function. This includes development of a sustainable long-term planning, financing and funding model for land transport nationally which aligns with asset management best practise, climate change and decarbonisation (p62).

Council Long Term Plans

As required by legislation, Councils undertake Long-Term Plans (LTPs) every three years to outline how their spending will look over the next ten years. This process ensures the four wellbeings – social, cultural, economic and environment are included in council planning. These wellbeings guide Councils in thinking about their vision and community outcomes as well as ensuring Councils invest in the renewal and maintenance of infrastructure assets and the amenities they will provide for the community. This process includes consultation with the community and through this, people can influence Councils in their decision making. It is possible that through the Future for Local Government Reform this may change.

Recommend

- That there is a prioritised focus on policy and legislation changes regarding key areas such as carbon forestry, housing, transport, energy, climate change, emissions reduction, immigration, water and land.
- That policy makers prioritise how regulatory change is communicated including the possible development of centralised information repositories.
- That Murihiku Southland councils and Te Ao Marama Inc continue to work together to develop regional spatial planning.

Wharenoho Ahupori Housing

“We will support and enable the development of quality housing to better meet the needs of our people.”

Murihiku Southland has 2% of our country's population living in 2% of our country's houses. Our region is no different to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand in being confronted with a range of complex housing challenges. However, at the heart of it is a fundamental belief that everyone should have shelter and a place to call home.

It cannot be overlooked that we are one of the most affordable places to own a house in the country with the average house price just over half of the national average and rent is one third cheaper. However, household incomes are lower and have grown slower (not keeping up with increasing house prices) so for Southlanders, it's becoming

less affordable. This means there has been a 'lack of churn', with about half of Southlanders surveyed saying they don't intend to shift in the next 10 years and some older people remaining in the family home due to lack of suitable alternatives.

Approach and Insights

A Beyond 2025 Housing Group has facilitated a process to ensure we understand 'housing' from different perspectives (p82). This involved key research and a full housing stocktake resulting in the following insights:

A lack of availability of fit for purpose rentals and social housing is displacing whānau and local people, creating barriers for businesses to grow.



For the past 10 years, there have been **fewer rental properties** in the region (15%) compared to nationally (32%).



Social housing demand has grown quicker than the rest of the country with a lower number of houses to meet demand.



Southland District is the **country's second worst served region for public investment** in Public Housing ranked at 62nd of 63 and has the third highest relative waiting list.



52% of large employers told us that **housing is a barrier to recruiting staff**.

Limited housing choices is creating stress around long-term housing options for the ageing population and whānau.



Growing population of elderly who are looking for smaller, warmer homes.



Less availability of small, attached and large homes with **53% of all stock medium sized, 3-bed homes**.



Planning rules, sector capacity and cost of building are hampering new homes (especially smaller) being built.



Areas with **high tourism have a high percentage of short-term accommodation** (e.g. Te Anau has 13% as AirBnB)

The existing housing stock is old, poor quality and lacks diversity resulting in a lack of housing options and potentially poor health outcomes.



72% of homes were built prior to 1980 compared to 37% in Central Otago and 47% nationally.



Just over **20% of Māori live in mouldy homes** and it's likely to be families.

Looking Forward

Solving the housing issue is more complex than just building more houses. There are four areas of focus:

- ↳ **Regional Coordination**
- ↳ **Focus on Quality**
- ↳ **Supporting Councils**
- ↳ **Encouraging Supply**



Regional Coordination

The benefits of a collaborative and coordinated approach to housing have been realised during the Beyond 2025 process. Building on this momentum and to avoid a disjointed and siloed approach, ongoing regional coordination is recommended as below:

Regional Housing Forum

This forum will drive coordination of housing regionally; avoid a siloed approach and maximise efficiencies gained by a regional approach. It acknowledges that people work and live across different Council boundaries.

Ongoing Monitoring

Annual checks (using consent data and population estimates) will be undertaken to assess the growth trajectory of housing needs across the region against various scenarios (impacted by new industries etc). This will ensure we understand and are balancing ongoing supply and demand.

Regional Digital Housing Portal

A trusted 'one stop shop' for housing information in the region targeted at supporting 'those who wish to build' by providing updated data, insights, information and other tools and resources.



Focus on Quality

We know we have a lot more older homes than elsewhere and by 2052 about a quarter of all our homes could be 100 years old. This means we may need to replace 10,000 homes by then. We need to be actively encouraging brownfields development (replacing existing housing) as well as supporting people to maintain and insulate their homes.

Supporting Murihiku Southland Homeowners

For many people, buying a home is usually their biggest single investment, and they want to protect that investment by keeping it in good condition. We need to ensure people are connected to tools, resources, and information to look after their home and will use the Regional Digital Housing Portal as a way to share this information. Renewable energy options for consumers to support the development of warm and healthy homes should also be investigated.

Housing Stock Condition Investigation

Further work is required to assess the condition and useful life of the existing housing stock more accurately in the region. This can ensure better understanding of what percentage of the stock is currently in critical need of replacement, and what that will look like in the next 30 years.

Supporting Existing and New Initiatives and Groups

We need to build on success and ensure organisations such as the Southland Warm Homes Trust – who have insulated 8,500 homes to date – can continue. This will be alongside supporting new initiatives such as Ngāi Tahu Healthy Homes and other Community Housing Providers.

Brownfields Development

We need to incentivise homeowners and developers to redevelop existing sites and homes. Supporting people to understand potential finance options alongside possible incentives provided by Councils should be explored.



KEY ENABLER



Supporting Councils

Councils play a key role in enabling housing in the region through their leadership, planning and regulatory functions.



Invercargill's community has a variety of different housing needs required at different stages of people's lives. There is insufficient housing being delivered at insufficient speed and affordable cost to meet these needs in full, which could adversely affect future growth in the Invercargill city. Council is committed to supporting the provision of housing in a number of ways.

- The District Plan has been assessed for effectiveness and found to be largely aligned with community needs. There are some areas of improvement, including changing the provisions for medium density development, which will be addressed over the next five years, alongside collaborating with the region to develop a Regional Spatial Strategy which will show what new housing is needed where.
- As part of finalising the ICC Infrastructure Strategy for the 2024 – 2034 Long-term plan, Council will assess whether the city still has the right infrastructure in the right place to support future housing needs.
- Council will continue to provide housing for low-income older people, investing to bring our ageing housing stock up to the required standard.
- Council will explore opportunities for partnerships and working in new ways to enable more housing to be built more quickly and affordably.



Southland District Council is awaiting the release of the Housing Needs Assessment report which will provide data and information for the district as a whole, as well as individual towns. All of which have different challenges and desired outcomes.

The report will serve as a starting point for Council to determine next steps, by informing a Housing Strategy for the district, enabling discussion around the future of Community Housing, and informing the Long-Term Plan.

Any future areas for housing will be determined by the Spatial Plan, which will highlight where any future development will be encouraged/discouraged. This is also determined by the District Plan, whose regulatory settings direct the growth of our towns.

As part of the above, Council will explore traditional and innovative ways to increase housing supply, long-term rentals and worker accommodation. This will be undertaken alongside iwi, stakeholders, industry and potential partners to ensure the sector is working together to create a greater variety and number of healthy homes in the district, to meet the needs of our communities.



In the Gore District it is recognised there are similar challenges with regards to housing supply and demand as to other areas of the region and nationally.

This includes a shortage of housing supply being fit for future – in short that means traditional housing supply is not necessarily going to assist with relevant future needs.

It is a difficult road to navigate as the requirements for an ageing population (which is significant for Gore) alongside appropriate accommodation for trade and agricultural worker requirements mean the current and future housing supply requirements can be compromised.

Another issue for the wider Gore District is around how all parties can work together to ensure supply requirements are met. This is a challenge as central and local government regulatory standards need to be balanced by private property developers and government agency objectives. This provides real and constructive tensions which mean the community must work together on this issue.

As with most economic and community development solutions – housing is a team game and needs to reflect a partnership approach to meet and satisfy the needs of the wider community.

Council can play a role in facilitating and connecting the wide array of entities required to build and develop solutions – and it is recognised that accommodation is a significant lever in supporting, or not, other business, economic and community development opportunities for the Gore District.

Partnerships are the key to support the future housing requirements in the Gore District – and housing is recognised as a core building block to support future development.



Next steps

Advocate

- For ongoing funding of initiatives and groups that improve the supply of quality housing.
- For data and insights to support Government to increase the provision of social housing in the region.
- Renewable energy options for consumers to support the development of warm and healthy homes.
- For alignment between current spatial planning and residential land being designated for housing.
- That Councils enable housing in the region through their leadership, planning and regulatory functions.



The housing workstream of Beyond 2025 to date has been focused on the supply of affordable housing for the region. An important extension

to this will be ensuring the support and development of quality housing to meet the needs of our communities.

Environment Southland is tasked with ensuring the air quality of our region meets national environmental standards. It is also coordinating a regional approach to climate change with partner agencies.

As part of the work above, it is envisaged that a project will need to be undertaken in the future to understand the percentage of existing housing stock that meets minimum standards in terms of heating, insulation, ventilation and energy efficiency generally.

Any housing quality improvements that can be made will improve the wellbeing of our communities, improve air quality, and reduce the impact of climate change.

Environment Southland intends to work with partner agencies, including the Southland Warm Homes Trust, to progress the development of an understanding of the quality and healthiness of existing homes.



Encouraging Supply

Housing stock has expanded at a slightly faster pace than the population over most of the region in recent times.

The Southland Housing Situation Analysis October 2021 indicates a shortfall of 1,660 homes throughout the region and at least half of these are likely to be required for social and emergency housing. If this assessment is accurate, the level of housing construction will have to double its current annual builds to meet this surplus demand in the medium term.

It is agreed that there is a misbalance between the existing housing stock and that required to meet the community's needs (e.g. size, bedrooms). The region must work towards replacement and rejuvenation of old and poor-quality stock into one that provides an appropriate variety of housing typologies to match the demographics.

The level of population growth and build rates will determine the region's ability to keep up with the required expansion, remediating existing shortfall, rebalancing and rejuvenation of the housing stock, and will need to encourage a significant acceleration of new builds.

Social, Community and Papakāinga Housing

Current supply is inadequate with waiting lists growing. The waiting lists for Social and Emergency Housing have increased from 15 applicants in Dec 2017 to 267 applicants in 2023.

We need to support planned housing projects and encourage more homes to be built in the region to meet increasing demand:

- Kāinga Ora currently provides 445 houses in the region with 24 new homes under construction and 38 being investigated.
- There are 52 transitional places run by other agencies as well as housing provided by Community Housing Providers.
- ICC has 216 social/elderly houses with a waiting list around 89.
- SDC has 69 community houses with a waiting list around 42.
- Partnerships with rūnaka to develop papakāinga housing e.g., Waihōpai and Awarua Rūnaka.

Attracting Housing Developers

We need to make it as easy as possible for housing developers to build in our region. This can be achieved by providing them with relevant insights into demand and by supporting the identification of potential opportunities.

Greenfields Development

We must acknowledge that new and existing industries will require future Greenfields development. We need to identify potential sites, explore opportunities and incentives; and investigate district planning rules alongside key stakeholders. There is a need to have a particular focus on housing for older people including retirement villages and considering policies such as 'ageing in place' (p38).

Seasonal Workforce

Industry and key stakeholders need to work together to look at worker accommodation solutions for seasonal workers in order to alleviate pressure on other accommodation.

Construction Sector

We need to acknowledge the recent challenges with workforce and build costs. We need to support this sector to not only address workforce challenges, but also explore innovative ways to build houses such as prefabricated kitset housing and tiny homes.

Land Availability

There needs to be alignment with current spatial planning to ensure that the impacts of sea level rise and flood risks are considered, as there will be a need for more residential land to be made available.

Recommend

- Establishment of a Regional Housing Forum.
- Development of a Regional Digital Housing Portal.
- A focus on housing innovation (kitset, tiny homes, employer built, mobile housing for construction projects/seasonal workers).
- That there is a review of existing housing stock with a focus on incentivising brownfields development and supporting Southland homeowners (initiatives to modernise).
- Development of new social, community and papakāinga housing with a particular focus on housing for our ageing population.



Pūngao

Energy

“We will support the region’s future energy needs in a clean and resilient way, while ensuring affordability for our communities and remaining globally competitive for exporters and new industry.”

Affordable and reliable energy supply has been one of Aotearoa New Zealand’s competitive advantages. This has to be the central objective of a renewable energy future, ensuring affordability for our communities and globally competitive energy pricing for exporters and industry.

There are three areas of focus for a renewable energy future:



Energy efficiency will be a priority for housing, construction and transport and practical steps need to be taken to reduce exposure to energy costs.

Ensuring we prioritise the need to build warm and healthy homes to minimise future energy costs (p26) and the continued roll out of EV charging stations to accommodate growth in the use of EVs will be important.

The Southland Murihiku Regional Energy Strategy 2022 – 2050 is the fourth to be carried out for the region, with previous strategies completed in 2003, 2005 and 2011. These previous strategies have supported projects such as the lower South Island renewable energy grid investment, methane recovery on dairy farms and industry, establishment of Hydrogen production within the region, new generation and fossil fueled boiler replacements projects.

The aim of the 2022 - 2050 Strategy, developed in partnership between Murihiku Regeneration and Great South, is to support energy resilience and affordability for all and provide clean renewable energy to support the region becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

With the future of NZAS Tiwai Point and Southern Green Hydrogen having a significant impact on the direction and actions required to meet Murihiku Southland’s net zero vision (p70) the Strategy presents potential scenarios for balancing the region’s future energy demand and energy availability. It also identifies the critical need for increased and timely infrastructure investments.

It is possible that NZAS’s Tiwai Point will remain operating. While good for Murihiku Southland this means that there will be unprecedented demand for new renewable energy including electricity, wood biomass and innovative use of biogenic methane as an energy source and LPG substitute.



Next steps

Advocate

- For coordinated regional advocacy to inform the national policy frameworks.
- By linking in with national bodies to prepare for and understand new industry workforce requirements.
- Key new generation and renewable energy investment within the region, with particular emphasis on renewable opportunities for Rakiura Stewart Island and Piopiotahi Milford Sound.
- For government funding initiatives through the Climate Change Emergency Response Fund and Equitable Transitions Package to assist with regional decarbonisation efforts (Regional Hydrogen Industry Transition and Renewable Electricity Option on Rakiura Stewart Island).

Whichever potential scenario the region's future energy pathway may take, there are key focus areas that will enable the region to be adaptable, ensuring we can respond to change and challenges.

Market Leadership and Community Engagement

One of the challenges of the energy transition is many organisations lack scale and capital required to make infrastructure upgrades and setup supply chains. Bringing organisations together and coordinating their energy transition efforts ensures economies of scale, ultimately resulting in overall better outcomes.

Social license for proposed renewable energy projects, such as hilltop wind, large scale solar and potentially offshore wind, and the energy transition are important to deliver a secure and affordable energy future for the region which has community acceptance.

Policy and Planning

Ensuring that the region's energy requirements are clearly articulated into the Aotearoa New Zealand Energy Strategy is important. Regional planning processes including spatial planning, should ensure future energy infrastructure is woven into planning processes. This should ensure they are located in the right place and are resilient to the effects of climate change. Building consent processes should factor energy efficiencies.

Training a skilled workforce to meet the energy sector's needs will be a priority for the successful delivery of new energy sector projects in Murihiku Southland.

New Generation and Renewable Energy

Murihiku Southland has an abundance of new generation and renewable energy potential. There are already four major investments in wind generation within the region, either under construction or about to commence. Investigation of renewable energy options in Rakiura Stewart Island and Piopiotahi Milford Sound are prioritised.

Southern Green Hydrogen is a development being progressed by Meridian Energy, Woodside Energy and Mitsui & Co., with support from Murihiku Regeneration. The project proposes to produce up to 500,000 tonnes per annum of green ammonia and aims to market the product to both the export and domestic markets. Southern Green Hydrogen is in an early phase of development, currently working towards the commencement of front-end engineering design (p21).

The HW Richardson Group are developing refueling infrastructure, initially in Murihiku Southland, with a focus on the long-distance heavy haul transport sector. The initial pilot programme is focused on transitional technology of dual fuel, whereby hydrogen is co-combusted with diesel via the existing internal combustion engine (ICE) platform, Offsetting greater than 40% of Co2 emissions. This current technology can be implemented into any existing diesel ICE engine. As technology advances and FCEV's proliferate in greater numbers, hydrogen is well placed to be the future zero emissions fuel for all modes of transport, from passenger vehicles, agriculture heavy transport and marine applications.

The Just Transition Clean Energy workstream led by Murihiku Regeneration, proposed six enabling policy actions and nine targeted activation projects to support a clean energy transition for the region. Steady progress is being made with the regional hydrogen transition \$100m package announced in May 2023 connected to three enablers and two identified project areas.

Future areas of focus include:

- Facilitating future regional wānanga and research (around oceans in particular) to enable sharing of new learnings and happenings
- Supporting the investigation of new renewable energy opportunities (onshore, offshore wind and hydro) and other process heat opportunities
- Further policy investigation and actions including developing a "Murihiku Renewable Energy and Industrial Zone"

Recommend

Establishment of a regional coordinated Energy Steering Group with a focus to

- Implement the Murihiku Southland Energy Strategy 2022 – 2050
- Provide technical and consent expertise to local authorities
- Ensure planning frameworks and spatial plans incorporate new energy investment, considering geographic location and resilience of networks
- Create a community-wide engagement awareness and education programme.

Ranga Kaimahi

Workforce

“We will implement a joined-up approach to labour market planning so we all clearly understand what our skilled workforce shortages are now and into the future and how we will work collaboratively together to address them.”

Over 85% of our region's businesses are currently recruiting for staff with 77% of these saying they are finding this challenging.

(Southland Murihiku Employer Workforce Research, March 2023).

In order for our region to remain an economic powerhouse for Aotearoa New Zealand, we need to ensure that we have the skills, flexibility and resilience to meet current and future labour market demands. This includes supporting our industries and businesses to meet the challenges of attracting and retaining skilled workforce and ensuring our approach to labour market planning is a joined-up one, with workforce, education and immigration settings working together.

While we have identified unique challenges to our region's labour market, constraints are a global issue with continuing pressures from the Covid pandemic. Globally there is an ageing population with a declining birth rate, so this combination will likely result in a much smaller global workforce in the next decade or two.

Whilst technology will improve processes and efficiency, there is still a need for people to develop and use this technology, requiring a more highly skilled workforce in the future. The skills gap in this area is expected to increase significantly in the next few years.

Low Unemployment

Aotearoa New Zealand has the lowest unemployment rate on record and since the GFC in 2008 and this is compounding the current labour shortage. The unemployment rate in Murihiku Southland has been generally lower than national rates at 3.2% and 3.4% respectively (year to March 2022).

Immigration

Prior to the Covid pandemic, many people from overseas played key roles in our workforce either as skilled migrants or as working holiday visa holders. As the borders closed and immigration settings become more restrictive, it highlighted shortages for some industries that were reliant on those workers.

We need to support employers in Murihiku Southland to better understand and navigate immigration processes. A coordinated approach to understand the Immigration New Zealand regulations on employing migrant workers and processes is required. Support and information for migrants who come to the region to ensure they settle in is also important.

Key Workforce Issues for Employers

The Southland Murihiku Employer Workforce Research from March 2023 provided insights from approximately 200 businesses regionwide. It identified the following key issues:

- **Low unemployment rates** – There are less people applying for vacancies creating a competitive environment.
- **Quality of applicants** – Many businesses are unable to attract people with the right skills and experience. There is also a need for a closer relationship with tertiary education regarding courses and modules to look at whether they are fit for purpose.
- **Housing** – Availability, affordability, quality and choice.
- **Regional promotion** – There's a need to proactively dispel myths and perceptions of Murihiku Southland and focus on a need to promote our region as a great place to live, study, work and visit.
- **Settlement** – Supporting those who have moved to the region to settle, both new employees as well as their families.



Snapshot of Murihiku Southland Workforce

The region's largest industries for employment of residents are outlined in the regional indicators (p16). This reflects the concentration of agricultural and manufacturing (food processing and aluminium) within the region.

- **Invercargill City's** employment is dominated by health (14%), manufacturing (12%), and retail (12%).
- **Gore District's** employment is dominated by agriculture (19%), manufacturing (15%) and retail (11%).
- **Southland District's** employment is dominated by agriculture (39%), manufacturing (19%) and transport (7%) reflecting its rural focus.

Low-skilled work makes up the largest proportion of employment in the region (39.8%) compared to Aotearoa New Zealand with only 34.8%. High-skilled work makes up 35.6% compared with 38.4% nationally.

The composition of business employee size across the region and nation as a whole are very similar, although average business size is slightly smaller in Murihiku Southland (3.9 employees per business), than Aotearoa New Zealand (4.4).

Workforce and Skills Research

Significant analysis has been undertaken on the region's labour market, including the 2014-2031 Southland Workforce Strategy (Jackson, 2015), Southland Region Labour Market Assessment 2014-2013 (Roskrug and Pawar 2015), and the Southland Murihiku Workforce Demand Report (2021). The Review of 2014-2031 Southland Workforce Strategy (Jackson, 2020) highlighted the need to continue focusing on our strategy target areas, but acknowledges the opportunities within these targets have limitations.

Many recommendations within this Beyond 2025 Southland Plan continue to support these four areas:

- **Target Area 1** – attracting a net 300 migrants of workforce per annum
- **Target Area 2** – increasing labour force participation rates at 55+ years to match those of the preceding age group
- **Target Area 3** – increasing labour force participation rates for those aged 15-24
- **Target Area 4** – raising the female participation rate relative to males

Regional Planning: Regional Skills Leadership Groups

In 2020, fifteen Regional Skills Leadership Groups (RSLGs) across Aotearoa New Zealand were created to identify and support better ways of meeting future skills and workforce needs in our regions and cities.

The groups are independent and regionally led advisory groups with 12-15 members, including two Co-chairs (one iwi/Māori). Members include iwi/Māori representatives,

employers, local government/economic development agencies, community groups, trade unions, skills training institutions and central government representatives, who contribute their knowledge, diverse perspectives, and local expertise about their region's labour market.

RSLGs are supported by regionally based analysts, advisors and workforce specialists from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). As part of the Review of Vocational Education (RoVE) reforms, RSLGs also work in conjunction with six national Workforce Development Councils (WDCs).

RSLGs lead coordination of workforce planning at a regional level, bringing together different groups, who have a stake in the labour market, to identify and address regional priorities. Collaboration is at the heart of RSLG mahi.

Te Kāhui Whakahaere i kā Pūkeka ā-rohe o Murihiku - Murihiku Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG)

The Southland Murihiku Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG) is the southernmost RSLG, incorporating Southland District, Gore District, Waihōpai Invercargill and Motupōhue Bluff, and Rakiura Stewart Island. The RSLG works in partnership with the four Papatipu Rūnaka across the region, and their mahi is underpinned by four aspirations:

- **System Change** – our region is prepared for future labour market needs
- **Change for People** – our region supports people to thrive in the labour market
- **Cultural Change** – our region is committed to equitable outcomes for Māori
- **Workplace Change** – our region is renowned as a great place to live and work

The 2022 Regional Workforce plan prioritises the following sectors (Pou):

- Rakatahi
- Food and Fibre
- Manufacturing and Engineering
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Tourism and Hospitality

The 2023 Regional Workforce Plan Update highlights a further three regionally important sectors for consideration of workforce and education requirements:

- Renewable Energy – Hydrogen
- Aquaculture
- Construction

Implementation of the RSLG's Regional Workforce Plans (RWP) are key in ensuring the development of a thriving regional labour market. It is acknowledged that the RSLG will not be able to address all workforce and skills gaps within the region, but that the group and the Regional Workforce Plan are key to addressing labour market challenges, both now and in the future.

Looking Forward

The future workforce required for the region is difficult to predict due to the ongoing economic uncertainty that has been a constant reality in recent times. This is compounded by challenges associated with an ageing population, increasing need for higher skilled jobs (re-training), increasing urbanisation, and impacts on our society from technological changes.

The rate of change in technology will have an impact not only on our occupations, but on how long we work for. Recent trends in employment indicate possible industry changes over the next 30 years.

The construction sector will be significantly impacted in the short-medium term as we update our housing stock, replace and build infrastructure, and construct new projects.

The following will support the development of a thriving regional labour market to transform the lives of all people living in Murihiku Southland, both now and in the future. The following areas are supported by, and are priorities for, the RSLG's Regional Workforce Plan.

Growing our Workforce

A coordinated approach in promoting the region across multiple audiences will support workforce growth. Developing the key projects identified in the Population and Attraction sections will focus on attracting and retaining people in our region.

We need to showcase businesses with excellent employment practices, especially in the sectors with the greatest labour market needs, such as engineers, agriculture, technology and manufacturing, healthcare and hospitality.

We need to support businesses and organisations to build stronger relationships with schools, polytechnics and universities, including through Gateway (a work placement initiative for senior school students) and other experiential learning programmes to meet skill shortages and labour market gaps.

Murihiku Southland has a large portion of its workforce in the agricultural and manufacturing industries, both of which are facing current and future workforce shortages. Technology is one solution to meet workforce needs, but we need to upskill our existing people to enable a shift to more technology use in business and industry.

There also needs to be a focus on supporting businesses to build their capability and efficiency using Lean Management principles and Design Thinking.

E tū Job Match is a union initiative linking displaced workers to decent work with fair pay, job security, quality work environments, and genuine worker voice. It further aims to minimise negative impacts of job loss and bridge industry skill gaps by linking workers to education, upskilling and training, and to CV and cover letter support.

It is also important that businesses are supported to become disability confident employers through the promotion of networks and tools that are available through Ministry of Social Development Employment Coordinators, along with wage and training subsidies. This includes in-work support for both employees and employers, job carving, job creation support, accommodation, and mainstream internship, work experience or employment opportunities.



Next steps

Advocate

- Implementation of key projects identified in the Population and Attraction sections.
- For the continuation and expansion of Southland Youth Futures.
- For the region's workforce programmes and activities such as Te Ara Aukati Kore, E tū Job Match programme and those focused on people with disabilities be continued.

Recommend

- Coordinated support within the region for organisations and businesses to understand Immigration New Zealand's regulations on employing migrant workers.
- Explore capability building opportunities for upskilling people (particularly older people) with regard to digital technologies.



Our Future Workforce

Regions thrive when their rakatahi can fully participate in and contribute to their community. The workforce, skills, and career development needs of rakatahi are a key consideration for the RSLG and region.

Identification of the future workforce and education needs for emerging and evolving sectors will be required. Providing advice to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) on education needs of the region is a key role of the RSLG. It is important that industry training remains relevant, available and supports job seekers and workers to access upskilling opportunities, especially for those who have been out of the workforce or who require additional skills to keep up with changes in the workplace. Reliable regional data is needed to support this.

Southland Youth Futures is Great South's regional career exploration programme and a further example of an initiative focused on improving outcomes for our region's youth. The programme hosts employer talks in schools, coordinates workplace visits for students, leads the delivery of a Southland Work Ready Passport, and helps to establish connections between students and local employers by encouraging employers to embrace youth friendly standards in their workplace and invest in the region's youth. To date 9,300 students have participated in the programme across 100% of the region's secondary schools and in association with over 140 employers.

There are many programmes that support rakatahi as they transition into and across the labour market. Murihiku Regeneration's Te Ara Aukati Kore (pathways without barriers) programme is a good example of this and should be supported. This is designed to ensure local people build the capability needed for emerging labour markets and broader social and cultural life opportunities in the region. While this programme is centred on rakatahi, it includes a focus on the transition between different types of work as new industries and opportunities become visible for those already in the workforce.

International education provides an opportunity for our region to gain a highly skilled workforce. It helps fill labour market shortages through tertiary level international students, their spouses, and their extended families. Having a high performing tertiary education institution in Murihiku Southland has had proven results in attracting and increasing our population in recent years. SIT | Te Pūkenga was instrumental in reversing a declining regional population in 2001, and over 23 years offered the innovative SIT Zero Fees Scheme, allowing domestic students to study without having to pay fees. The scheme was expanded to international markets through the Zero Fees English and Zero Fees Foundation programmes that grew international student numbers exponentially. International students enabled the institution to develop and run a range of different programmes across varying subject areas. This provided a range of qualifications for all students to enrol in.

At SIT | Te Pūkenga, international education has been used to target workforce needs in identified skills gaps for our region, including engineering, health services, hospitality, and management. This was accomplished through focused recruitment campaigns, and by working with international recruitment agencies and Education New Zealand to have a presence at large global exhibitions and expos.

International education at secondary schools in our region is also high value, as high school students typically move into tertiary education, and ultimately move into our workforce as educated, trained and skilled professionals.

- Continue to support the regional strategic approach to labour force planning including the implementation of the Southland Murihiku Regional Workforce Plan.
- Showcase businesses with excellent employment practices to other businesses, especially in the sectors with greatest labour market needs, such as engineers, agriculture, technology and manufacturing, healthcare and hospitality.
- Establish an International Education Working Group to identify:
 - ↳ current barriers to international education, in a post Covid-19 environment.
 - ↳ opportunities to support SIT | Te Pūkenga and the secondary schools to re-start international student recruitment activities.

Kāhui Tangata

People





*He whaikaha tō mātou
taupori, e koa ana, e ora
ana me te whakahihī ki tō
rātou Murihikutanga.*

We have a thriving population with happy, healthy people who are proud to be Southlanders.

We've identified four areas of focus:

Population

We will focus on retaining people and we acknowledge that our population is ageing and becoming more diverse.

Wellbeing

We want to ensure Southlanders have the same opportunities for equity in wellbeing, as other New Zealanders.

Community

We are able to embrace change due to our resilience and connectedness.

Attraction

We use our strengths and uniqueness to promote Murihiku Southland as an attractive and vibrant place for people to live, study, work and visit.



Taupori

Population

“ We will focus on retaining people and we acknowledge that our population is ageing and becoming more diverse.”

Our population makeup has changed over time and projections show that we'll keep changing. We're going to have more older people in our communities and be more ethnically diverse. Understanding who lives in Murihiku Southland, why and where is important as it guides what services, facilities, amenities and infrastructure we provide to enable a desired way of life, now and into the future.

The trends for our demographics are:

- ↳ Increasing diversity
- ↳ Ageing population
- ↳ Slower population growth rate
- ↳ Increasing Māori population

Slower Population Rate

The data indicates that we're growing at a slower rate compared to the rest of the country. Between 2015 and 2022, the region's population increased 5.7% (from 97,750 to 102,400), compared with a national increase of 11.2% (p17). We need to keep building on the SoRDS goal of increasing our population, but with a focus now on retaining people.

Understanding and Monitoring Future Data and Trends

The proposed regional data repository will provide accurate data and insights for use by everyone to ensure informed decision making (p23). It will also clearly define agreed assumptions to look at future scenarios including the importance of understanding the drivers for population and demographic change.

Meeting the Needs of an Ageing Population

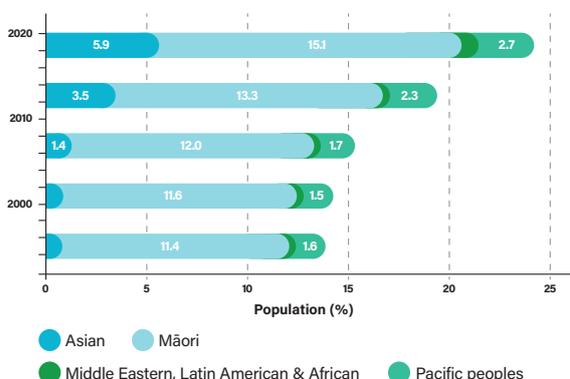
The implications of having more older people in our communities is significant. Not only do we need to ensure we can meet their needs in terms of appropriate housing, residential aged care and access to essential services and amenities, but we also need to ensure we balance this approach with attracting other age groups to our region who will be our workforce.

Many people are staying in their own homes for longer (known as 'ageing in place'). This is challenging considering the region's housing situation, and in particular, lack of long-term rental accommodation and housing (p29). This also means there is an increasing trend for residents to be older and sicker when they arrive at a rest home. This has implications for the health system but more importantly, significant impacts on the aged care sector which considers itself to be inadequately resourced and at, or near crisis point.

Gore has been proactively planning for older people with more than a third of its population already over 50 years. In 2015 the "Intergenerational Gore" project was identified in SoRDS which evolved into the "Ready for Living" programme. This community-led project facilitated by Gore District Council and P. H. Vickery Trust, aims to assist the Gore district to adapt and support their ageing population. An example of a project through this initiative is the "Living Well in Later Years" booklet.

Meeting the Needs of an Increasingly Diverse Population

Our population is becoming more ethnically diverse as we welcome newcomers from other parts of Aotearoa New Zealand as well as from overseas.



MBIE Regional Economic Activity Web Tool



Next steps

Advocate

- For consideration of the implications of the "ageing in place" policy on the healthcare and housing sectors.

Recommend

- That the region continues to prioritise growing our population through attraction and retention strategies outlined in Beyond 2025.
- That there is a prioritised and regionally coordinated approach to all welcoming activities.



Welcoming Communities



In 2019, the region gained accreditation through the Immigration NZ driven Welcoming Communities initiative. There are eight areas of focus within the Plan, and implementation has been mostly driven by individual Councils alongside other organisations including the Southland Multicultural Trust; Presbyterian Support and Red Cross.

- ↳ Inclusive leadership
- ↳ Equitable access
- ↳ Welcoming communications
- ↳ Connected and inclusive communities economic development
- ↳ Employment and business
- ↳ Welcoming public spaces
- ↳ Civic engagement and participation
- ↳ Culture and identity

There is a need for additional resource to support delivery of outcomes to meet the needs of our growing ethnic population. There is also a need for improved regional alignment ensuring the focus is broadened to target all newcomers, not just those from overseas.

Retaining People by Being Welcoming

While we actively look to attract people, we also need to focus on helping newcomers settle in as quickly as possible. Employers and other key organisations play a key role in this.

With support of Great South and Beyond 2025 Southland, the Southland Business Chamber trialed a Settlement Support Programme for a 6-month period. Eight Invercargill businesses participated in the successful programme, which focused on settling employees and their families with support of a coordinator.

Initial insights have shown new employees who have relocated to the region without family tend to require assistance with necessities but little support otherwise. When a new employee has relocated with their family, the non-working partner is typically happy to receive the support offered by the programme. Employees with families

who have been in the region for some time also joined the programme, primarily to assist their partners and families to integrate into the community.

A Welcoming Activation Hub in the Waihōpai Invercargill CBD will provide an opportunity to support newcomers to the region. It will provide a place for newcomers to seek out information on how to settle into our community by helping to find a soccer club, music teacher, doctor etc. complementing other services such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

It will have a wider scope as well in terms of providing tourism and i-SITE services and the Regional Ambassador Programme (p46). The hub will also provide support for organisations and businesses to enhance their attraction and retention efforts.

Support a Growing Māori Population

Between 2013 and 2018, the Māori population increased by 2,900 people (25% increase), and the Pacific ethnic group grew by 606 people (32% increase). In the same period, the European population grew by only 6%, causing the European share of the population to fall by 2.4 percentage points. This is a clear indication that our population makeup is changing and mechanisms to support this change must be identified and implemented.

Research has identified there are inequities experienced by Māori and Pacifica, not just here but across Aotearoa New Zealand especially for rakatahi Māori. Te Rourou One Aotearoa Foundation through their research have recognised that youth in Waihōpai Invercargill are experiencing higher rates of disadvantage and exclusion compared with the rest of the country.

Actions are already in place to address these concerns especially through the region's four Papatipu Rūnaka – Waihōpai, Awarua, Hokonui and Ōraka Aparima along with Te Puni Kōkiri, maata waka and central government agencies, who are actively supporting Māori through the provision of social, health, education and wellbeing services. Marae in particular are essential cultural and community hubs which also allow other wrap-around social services and papakāinga housing to be connected as is being seen with the redeveloped Murihiku and Mataura Marae and Te Rau Aroha Marae in Motupōhue Bluff.

- The development of a Welcoming Activation Hub.
- That there is support for our four Papatipu Rūnaka, maata waka and other organisations to meet the needs of a growing Māori population.
- Councils and others consider the best approaches to meet the needs of increasing numbers of older people.
- The delivery of the Settlement Support Programme.

Oranga Wellbeing

“ We want to ensure Southlanders have the same opportunities for equity in wellbeing, as other New Zealanders.”

The wellbeing of our people and communities is vital to having a thriving population with happy, healthy people. Both local and central government support this by applying a four wellbeings lens to their approach (social, economic, environment and cultural) and through the Living Standards Framework.

Of highest priority when looking at wellbeing is equity, including equity with the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Having a small population in the second largest geographic region in Aotearoa New Zealand has both advantages and disadvantages. It provides lifestyle and a valued way of life, but it also creates challenges with a small ratepayer base bearing the burden of looking after a large geographic area.

The following areas of focus are highlighted to ensure that our people are not disadvantaged because of where we live and by being a small population.

Equity is about understanding that everyone in society needs to be given an equal chance of succeeding in life; a lack of equity is often visible through inequality in outcomes. Inequities generally arise when certain population groups are unfairly deprived of basic resources that are available to other groups.

www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2017-12/hls-bg-equity-dec15.pdf

Access to Quality Healthcare

Current healthcare reform alongside a shortage of healthcare professionals is creating a high level of uncertainty and fear about what the future of healthcare will look like for Murihiku Southland.

- Employers have indicated a barrier to recruiting workforce is people perceiving there is poorer access to healthcare services in the region.
- Southlanders are telling us they feel disadvantaged compared to other parts of Aotearoa New Zealand, especially urban areas or cities:
 - ↳ They have longer delays in accessing specialist services.
 - ↳ They have to travel long distances to access healthcare and some people simply cannot do this and aren't getting the care they need.
 - ↳ There are challenges with accessing healthcare facilities such as hospitals and healthcare professionals especially dentists and GPs (particularly in rural areas) and there are lengthy waits to see a GP.
- Not-for-profit community organisations involved in the healthcare sector can find it challenging to access the right level of care locally for the families they work with.
- Significant challenges to fill skilled workforce gaps with a fear that there could be a significant exodus overseas.
- Provision of maternity services in rural areas has been an area of concern exacerbated by our large geographic size and seasonal weather conditions. These impact people's ability to access care located long distances away, and solutions at place need to be supported to ensure safety.



Next steps

Advocate

- For a strong aligned regional voice advocating for equity in the provision of healthcare, particularly considering rural areas.
- For healthcare facilities such as hospitals to be fit for purpose to meet our current and future people's needs.
- To ensure the benefits of agricultural exports are balanced with the needs and concerns of local residents.
- For Government to empower our region to deliver local solutions to local circumstances e.g. learnings of SIT | Te Pūkenga.





Food Resilience

It is essential that Murihiku Southland maintains a secure, affordable and sustainable food system in the face of external shocks such as natural disasters, economic disruptions, and climate change. This is important as our region produces significant agricultural exports for the country.

There is concern that Southlanders may not have access to the same quality or variety of food products that are being exported. Also, this may not be at affordable prices considering increased costs due to the region's geographic isolation. Policy makers, farmers, and consumers must work together to create a resilient food system that meets the needs of all stakeholders.

At a local level, initiatives like the Murihiku Kai Collective, the Longwood Loop and council initiatives to grow edible food in parks and reserves should continue to be supported and built upon to help support food resilience for the region. Murihiku Southland could also look to consider the need for a regional food resilience plan.

Active and Public Transport

Active transport is a way to travel from one place to another through being physically active. It supports physical wellbeing but also a low emissions future. To support a transition to active transport and less reliance on vehicles, the development of a Regional Active Transport Strategy is recommended.

The public transport system in Murihiku Southland does not meet the needs of the region. Southlanders are saying this is a significant area of concern for them for multiple reasons.

The lack of public transport makes it difficult for people to access essential services such as healthcare, education, and employment. It also limits opportunities for socialisation and community participation, particularly for those living

in rural or remote areas and newcomers (migrants). There are currently few public transport options connecting our towns within the Murihiku Southland region. A number of Council community board plans prioritise the need for public transport to access healthcare and employment.

While Waihōpai Invercargill has a local bus service, there are challenges with funding this (considering the size of the city and number of users). As a result, the focus is on providing a reliable quality core service and there is at present no ability to connect outlying districts or provide more extensive evening and weekend coverage.

Education

SIT | Te Pūkenga contributes about \$1571 million to the region's economy annually, equating to \$508.5 million in GDP from 2018 to 2022 (BERL, 2022). With 40% of graduates being employed by local businesses at the completion of study, it also represents a significant source of much needed labour for the region (p34).

The SIT Zero Fees Scheme contributes to the economic benefits as a successful and innovative driver of student enrolment. It has empowered the region with a compelling competitive edge and created awareness of the opportunities and benefits of studying and living in Murihiku Southland. SIT | Te Pūkenga has significantly contributed to attracting younger age groups who will be our future workforce.

SIT | Te Pūkenga has also supported overcoming perceptions of the region including its possible disadvantage with being located away from main population centres. It has alleviated the inequity of distance that the Murihiku Southland region faces.

Recommend

- The development of a Regional Active Transport Strategy.
- That it is a priority to ensure people can access healthcare through the provision of practical and affordable transport options, particularly where there is no public transport option.
- The region actively contributes to rural health strategic planning and ensures that new digital services such as telehealth are supported as long as they do not create inequities in service provision for our people.
- The Hokonui Localities initiative is supported including the next stages of implementation.
- Not-for-profit health organisations are supported to deliver community led health solutions at place.
- SIT | Te Pūkenga is supported to deliver innovative initiatives such as the SIT Zero Fees Scheme.
- That there is support for local initiatives to grow edible food in parks and reserves.

Hapori

Community

“ We are able to embrace change due to our resilience and connectedness.”

Our communities have deep roots; they are places where we want people to feel a sense of belonging, of being free to be themselves, valued and accepted for who they are.

When faced with challenges, our approach is to ensure we are as resilient and prepared as possible to embrace change and opportunity. A key part of this is ensuring we remain connected and have opportunities to be together.

We acknowledge that community is at the heart of who we are and we want to empower ourselves to be stronger to deliver our goals and dreams. We believe there are three key areas of focus - building resilience; providing facilities and spaces to enable people to connect and building digital capability to enhance people's ability to communicate.

Building Resilience in Our Communities

There are a significant number of ways to build resilience in our communities. We have focused on some key opportunities.

Strong Communities Murihiku

The Community Capability Building workstream through Just Transition was renamed Strong Communities Murihiku. Through this workstream a vision for community was developed “Strong Communities Murihiku – Everyone Connected and Valued”.

To achieve this vision, the “Connected Murihiku” project was developed. It aims to develop and manage an online platform, or “one stop shop” for the community and social sector. The platform will provide a range of services, opportunities and resources, including regular e-newsletters and shared training and events. A key goal of this project is to enhance sharing and connection to build resilience.





Volunteers

Murihiku Southland thrives due to a network of approximately 2,300 not-for-profit organisations providing a range of services, events, amenities, and facilities which enable our lifestyle. Most of these organisations are driven by volunteers and unsurprisingly, our region has higher than average volunteering participation rates (44% vs national average of 37%).

Recent research highlights that people's work situation has an influence on their ability to volunteer. Those with part-time roles have 'time' to volunteer but would possibly prioritise paid work over volunteering. While there needs to be a focus on attracting volunteers, there also needs to be a focus on how to retain volunteers. Community organisations may need to operate differently with more flexibility to allow people to give their 'time' in such a way that suits them.

Succession planning within organisations is also important, particularly as our population ages, many of our volunteers will be older and will hold considerable institutional knowledge. There also needs to be a balance with all age groups.

Connection Between our Urban and Rural Communities

Murihiku Southland is built on the strength of the connection between our urban and rural communities. As a large agriculturally based region much of our economic prosperity comes from the rural sector and it flows through into our urban centres. The rural sector relies on our urban centres to provide infrastructure and services as well as lifestyle opportunities.

Roading which connects our communities is extremely important to allow this interaction (p62). Digital connectivity can also provide a lifeline to rural communities where people may be isolated geographically. It is a priority to ensure we continue to enhance digital connectivity especially in isolated rural areas. Ubiquitous broadband services are available across the region, however there is an additional cost over terrestrial fibre and wireless broadband services. A recent review of mobile cell phone and internet service provision has identified significant improvements due in part to the support of the Rural Broadband Initiative, Mobile

Blackspot Cell Phone Fund and Ultra-Fast Broadband Initiative. To ensure that services provided meet the coverage and performance standards, it is recommended new installations are independently assessed and validated. Future connections to satellite services will further enhance some mobile provision. As outlined in the 2015 Southland Digital Strategy, the focus is to ensure our people and businesses have equitable access to affordable and reliable telecommunications.

Building Capability in Digital Skills in our People

In an increasingly digital world, we need to ensure people are able to be a part of it by ensuring they have access to, and can use, various digital tools and technology.

Te Rourou One Aotearoa Foundation has identified access as an issue for young people. Toitū te Toki, their Digital Equity programme, provides laptops donated by corporates to students. SIT | Te Pūkenga has provided similar educational opportunities for a number of years.

Libraries and Council service centres across the region offer services to support connectivity for our communities as well as support in using technology for those eager to learn.

SeniorNet and other similar type organisations provide educational opportunities to improve digital literacy and these need to be supported as we have more older people in our region.

With SeniorNet you will never be alone again. SeniorNet provides a community learning network that supports and motivates people to confidently use technology in their everyday lives.

www.seniornet.nz



Providing Facilities and Spaces to Enable People to Connect

The Regional Spaces and Places Strategy identifies the social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits of regional spaces. This work has recently been completed, and Active Southland is now facilitating its implementation alongside key stakeholders.

Caring for our heritage is a priority for councils and is done through the collection of a targeted rate through each of the three councils. The funding is distributed through the Southland Regional Heritage Committee. The region has 15 rural museums which are largely run by volunteers. Project Ark has been developed to support these museums by digitally cataloguing collections and recording their stories.

Each of the nine Southland District Council Community Boards have a plan which identifies their community's priorities and actions to achieve them. A range of themes are common across all nine plans including a desire for thriving communities, a strong economy, fit for purpose infrastructure and services including health and protection for the environment.

Our region is fortunate to have a number of excellent facilities and spaces which enable people to socialise and be together. Many of these are multipurpose with multiple services and functions being connected to a single space and some examples are listed below.

The Pod and South Alive

The Pod, South Invercargill's new community centre has two large community rooms, community gardens and stage. It has been developed by South Alive which is an urban rejuvenation project, led by the community.

Eastern Southland Gallery

Nicknamed the 'Goreggenheim' by Saatchi & Saatchi boss Kevin Roberts, the Eastern Southland Gallery is a regional public art museum, situated in the Arts and Heritage Precinct of Gore's central business district. Home of the internationally significant John Money Wing and Ralph Hotere Gallery, it provides a vibrant culture focus for the region.

Arts Murihiku

In 2023, Arts Murihiku received funding from Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage towards a programme of arts activations and support for the region. This includes support for a dedicated community arts space in Waihōpai Invercargill which will be activated to support a visible, vibrant and valued arts sector.

Gore Kids Hub

The Gore Kids Hub provides a one-stop-shop of support services for families with pre-school children. Their vision supports the wellbeing and education of adults and their children; and encourages collaboration between organisations to ensure that families in the Gore district have access to everything they need to support them.

Northern Southland Community Resource Centre

This community hub is located in Lumsden and provides a range of services and programmes for local communities. The Community Worker is located here and is similar to other community worker roles around western, northern, central Murihiku Southland and Fiordland. These people play a pivotal role supporting rural communities considering a continued withdrawal of services and amenities and changing demographics resulting in increasing need for support at both a community and personal level.

Murihiku Marae

The newly built \$15 million Murihiku Marae in Waihōpai Invercargill honours the past while meeting the present and future needs of the rūnaka. Seen as a vibrant community hub, it allows the Waihōpai Rūnaka to expand its community support services, operate as a civil defence emergency centre and provide a hub for educational initiatives in the region, also proposing provision of future facilities to cater for other health and support services.

Next steps

Advocate

- For Councils to consider communities of interest which means there is a need for a regional focus to ensure the best provision of services, facilities and amenities for Southlanders.
- For our people and businesses to have equitable access to affordable and reliable telecommunications and there is ongoing monitoring of current service provision.

Recommend

- Ongoing support and resourcing of the Strong Communities Murihiku initiative.
- Community organisations are supported to attract and retain volunteers.
- That the Invercargill City Council's continued leadership in focusing on "Our City with



New Opportunities or Enhancements of Existing Projects

New Museum for Waihōpai Invercargill and Murihiku Southland

The new museum for Waihōpai Invercargill and Murihiku Southland is currently underway and will deliver a storage facility, tuatarium and museum for the region. It will complement and be connected to a network of other museums located throughout the region - all of which play a key role protecting and sharing our precious taonga.

PHASE 1 - The Tisbury Storage facility is underway and will be finished in December 2023. Here is where the 4.5 million Southland Museum and Art Gallery collection items will be safely stored. The demolition of the existing museum to make way for the new build will begin in April 2024 and will be finished in December 2025. The museum is expected to be open to the public in the second half of 2026. Invercargill City Council has already agreed to invest \$39.4 million into the project and further funding will ensure a facility that will be enjoyed for generations to come.

The Grace Street Project

The Grace Street project is a community driven initiative to provide a mixed-use all-weather venue in the heart of south Invercargill. The long-term goals of the project are to bring positive change to the high level of disadvantage in south Invercargill.

The seven new flexible spaces within the 680m² building will allow people to learn, play, socialise and connect, and will complement and add to the community campus already begun by South Alive.

Invercargill CBD Redevelopment

The revitalisation of the CBD has been a key focus from SoRDS and has included Invercargill Central shopping centre, ICC streetscaping and The Langlands Hotel development. Two surveys were undertaken in early 2023 when a significant portion of the redevelopments were near completion. The findings indicate that the redevelopment has successfully achieved its objective.

80% of respondents are more likely to speak positively about Waihōpai Invercargill now compared to before the redevelopments and the main reason is because it looks good.

This was consistent across all age groups and pleasingly 91% of 15-39 year olds.

The next stages of the CBD revitalisation are currently being investigated as part of the City Centre Masterplan. Considerations will include the proposed new Distinction Hotel which will provide a further 150 rooms and connect Waihōpai Invercargill with other parts of Aotearoa New Zealand through the Distinction Hotel network. Similarly, the recent announcement proposing the closure of 12,000 sqm H&J Smith department store at the end of 2023 will require consideration alongside the changing face of retail with the increase in online shopping (p61).

The Invercargill City Council vision is "Our City with Heart – He Ngākau Aroha". Through this vision the city centre continues to be a focus for the Council. Building vibrancy to continue to attract people to the inner city is now a priority, and a key focus will be the delivery of events and activations in the CBD. There needs to be continued leadership of the City Centre Masterplan.

Heart – He Ngākau Aroha" will ensure the next stages of the Invercargill CBD rejuvenation are investigated and implemented.

- That people have access to and can use digital technology.
- That there is a focus on supporting the provision of new and existing multi-purpose facilities which provide places for people to connect.

- Active Southland and key stakeholders implement the Regional Spaces and Places Strategy.
- That there is ongoing support to protect our taonga and share our heritage through the Southland Regional Heritage Committee and other initiatives.



Whakamanea

Attraction

“ We use our strengths and uniqueness to promote Murihiku Southland as an attractive and vibrant place for people to live, work, study and visit. ”

Our unemployment rate is very low at 3.2% (annualised figure). There will continue to be a focus on supporting all people who can work, to be in the workforce. However there are not enough people in the region to meet all employment needs. Therefore, it is crucial that we prioritise attracting people to the region, particularly those in our workforce (p32).

The Business Transitions Research Report (*Southland Business Chamber June 2022*) identified the need for a coordinated approach at a regional level to develop a regional brand strategy to support worker attraction. This would also include recruitment tools and assistance to support more effective and efficient recruitment.

The Regional Skills Leadership Group’s (RSLG) Murihiku Southland Regional Workforce Plan (*released in July 2022*) identifies a priority action of ‘development of a clear strategy that promotes Murihiku Southland as an ideal destination for workers to live, work and play’.

Building on the platform established by SoRDS, we’ve recognised the importance of attraction and how the region needs to better define and tell its unique story. A comprehensive regional story *Murihiku - The South Land* has been developed and the focus is now to activate this story in a cohesive way across the region. This would be for all audiences and places, and would support the efforts our region’s businesses and organisations to attract workforce.

A regional communication toolkit will be developed with a focus on supporting businesses and organisations with their recruitment efforts. This could include targeted campaigns, development of various content and key messaging, and enable businesses and organisations to use the ‘place’ of Murihiku Southland and all its unique advantages as a selling point to attract people.

The region’s primary regional promotional website, southlandnz.com needs to continue to be prioritised and reflect the narrative of *Murihiku - The South Land*.

The site currently hosts over 800,000 visits each year. Increasing views reflect the growing interest in our unique natural beauty and offerings, and is helping to support local businesses and sustainably increase visitor numbers. It will continue to play a vital role in driving economic growth and promoting the best of Murihiku Southland to the world.

Our people and communities also need to know and share this regional story. A Regional Ambassador Programme would cover our unique stories, Māori history, early settlers, and key milestones up until the present day.

Using *Murihiku - The South Land*, the programme is designed for anyone and develops a host community where business owners, senior managers, leaders, operational teams, front-line or customer service representatives become passionate advocates for our region.

While the programme supports the attraction efforts of new residents to our region, it is also intended for anyone engaging with visitors, supporting them to authentically connect and share knowledge about the region.

Cohesive Regional Approach

The reasons why people visit our region are aligned, or the same, as why they would choose to live, study, work and visit. Therefore, there needs to be alignment in all approaches which will ensure consistency in messaging and regional positioning.

Nationally, Murihiku Southland is seen as an excellent example of how to achieve an integrated approach across live, work and visit. The region’s two regional tourism organisations (RTOs) Visit Fiordland and Visit Southland are located within the regional development agency, Great South. This organisation is also the trusted partner with the Government to provide regional business partner support for the region’s 14,499 businesses.



Next steps

Recommended

- Ensure a cohesive and regionwide approach to attract people to live, study, work and visit Murihiku Southland.
- To support wider sharing of our regional story, *Murihiku - The South Land*, a Regional Ambassador Programme is established and there is consideration of alignment with sub regional branding and positioning.



Murihiku – The South Land

The world looks
different from
down here.

Here, we live in one
of the southernmost
places on the planet
– a southern land,
under southern skies,
surrounded on three
sides by the southern
oceans.

We are guided not by
the North Star but by
southern stars, just as
the earliest navigators to
Murihiku were.

Our special place is at
the southern edge of the
world and it has shaped
where we've come from,
who we are and the
future we are navigating
towards.

We have a unique story
that we believe is worth
sharing with the world.

The Southern Edge is about what it means to live in this unique place at the southern edge of the world. Our place in the world, what it means to be us, and what it meant to those who came before us has shaped who we are, how we think, how we act, how we live and what we value. Living at the southern edge gives us *our* southern edge. It means we look at the world differently, it fuels our spirit and enthusiasm for making the most of a place with more space, freedom and opportunities.

It makes us who we are.

The southern edge is the central pillar in the narrative and is supported by:

Nature at its wildest

Here at the southern edge we understand the meaning of remoteness. Here, nature is part of everyday life. We experience nature, close up, at its wildest, most elemental and most bountiful. We care deeply about the natural taonga that we live with and the ecosystems we are part of.

More life, less pressure

At the southern edge we live with more time, more space, more light, less noise. We are not swept along by the pace, dictates and stresses of more crowded places. We are hardworking and ambitious. Here in the south, we relish the time and space we have to think and the freedom and opportunities we have to create the lives we want.

Ground breakers and dealmakers

Living on the southern edge comes with unique challenges and opportunities. We've got big

imaginations and big ambitions, and our remoteness has always spurred our entrepreneurial spirit and independent mindset. We don't stand back, we get in there, boots and all!

Hapori whānui - thriving communities

Living on the southern edge means that we have always understood the importance of living as part of a community. Our communities have deep roots, they are places where we want people to feel a sense of belonging.

Rich in the things that matter

Here at the southern edge we have an abundance of resources, stories, ideas and opportunities and a strong sense of what is really important. We care deeply about the natural treasures and resources that surround us and using them wisely. We are rich in stories, characters and creative energy.

- A regional communication toolkit is developed to support businesses in recruitment of workforce.
- The development of a Welcoming Activation Hub (p39).

- The regional destination website www.southlandnz.com is the primary digital promotional tool and reflects live, study, work and visit.



Ōhanga Economy

← Centre Management
Offices
Car Park P
↑ Farmers

MERCHANT
EST. 1948

MERCHANT
EST. 1948





*Ka noho tonu mātou hei kaupapa
hiranga mō Aotearoa, mā te
whakarawe i tētahi ōhanga
kanorau, manawaroa e taea ai e
ō mātou tangata te rapu mahi, te
kimi wheako hoki.*

We remain a powerhouse for Aotearoa New Zealand, providing a diverse and resilient economy that enables jobs and career opportunities for our people.

We've identified four areas of focus:

Diversification

A more diverse region and economy means we are less exposed if one of our large employers or industries changes.

- Aquaculture
- Tourism

Business and Export Economy

We will position Murihiku Southland as a globally competitive marketplace by identifying pathways for existing local businesses to grow through exports and new market development and by attracting new business to our region with minimised barriers to entry.

Transport

We will ensure that our region's transport system (road, rail, air and sea) enables and supports regional growth and wellbeing, while we understand and plan for new opportunities and challenges.

Technology, Innovation and Automation

We support growth and innovation of Murihiku Southland businesses including our emerging digital and technology industry by building a strong ecosystem and through capability building.



Kanorautanga

Diversification

“A more diverse region and economy means we are less exposed if one of our large employers or industries changes.”

Murihiku Southland continues to maximise opportunities to diversify its economy building on a strong primary sector foundation and its natural advantages of location and climate. The region's record high GDP of \$7.3 billion will only be bolstered by significant large-scale projects and new industries which will not only ensure we have a more resilient economy, but also will provide job and career opportunities for our people.

The two most significant opportunities are aquaculture and tourism because of their scale and potential. However, the cumulative impact of a number of other opportunities alongside existing sector extension is also important. These include southern green hydrogen, data centres, land use diversification and satellite ground stations to name a few. Modelling of these indicate economic benefit which also needs to be considered alongside each project's timeframe for implementation, workforce, housing and energy requirements (p18).

With this in mind, it is important that there is regional coordination and advocacy to support many of these private sector driven initiatives. The five key enablers identified in this Beyond 2025 Southland plan are important including the availability of data and insights to support investigation of opportunities, enabling regulatory and planning rules, and available housing, workforce and energy.

Calder Stewart's Awarua Quadrant near Waihōpai Invercargill is an example of a private sector development that could positively support a number of sectors such as agriculture, freight, heavy and light industry, storage and specialised services. The master planning is underway and includes the potential for renewable energy generation.

Murihiku Southland's Regional Development Agency, Great South coordinates diversification initiatives for the region while also progressing individual opportunities.



New Zealand Functional Foods

By looking at alternative land use possibilities, oat milk as an alternative plant-based protein product was identified. The region has been growing oats for over 150 years and is the main oat growing region for Aotearoa New Zealand. As a result, New Zealand Functional Foods (NZFF) was born.

The initial concept got off the ground with support from Great South and K1W1 investments with a further commitment of NZ\$6 million that has been signalled from Kānoa, the Government's Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit. The company has now received strong intent from an inspiring global partner, that would see them take a majority shareholding, of what was to be a \$60 million investment into Murihiku Southland, to a staggering NZ\$105 million, world leading facility.

NZFF promises to be so much more than just an "Oat Milk Factory". Their vision is to be the most nutritious and lowest carbon footprint plant-based business in the world. They would then become Aotearoa New Zealand's first oat-led functional food business to fully utilise the entire plant, through a vertical integrated eco-system, that delivers zero waste and maximum triple bottom line impact. All of this will be brought to life via a unique 'soil to sip' consumer story.

Many benefits will be brought to Murihiku Southland, including the 100+ new jobs that will be created during construction and 70 direct skilled jobs thereafter. There will be new intellectual properties developed that will unlock future food product innovation and enable NZFF to lead the movement towards plant-based consumption.

NZFF is looking to be operational with product to market by early 2025.

Next steps

- That the region continues to focus on and maximise its natural advantages of climate and geographic location.

WORKFORCE



ENERGY



HOUSING



REGULATORY & PLANNING



DATA



REGIONAL LONG TERM PLAN

BEYOND 2025 SOUTHLAND





Space Operations New Zealand

Murihiku Southland was identified as the ideal location for a satellite ground station, given its proximity to the South Pole, low horizon, sparse population density and no radio interference. This led to the Awarua Satellite Ground Station being established in 2004 by Great South in conjunction with the European and French Space Agencies.

In October 2021, Great South founded Space Operations New Zealand (SpaceOps NZ) as a standalone company that now owns the Awarua Satellite Ground Station. SpaceOps NZ is a fully owned subsidiary of Great South.

The Awarua Satellite Ground Station hosts customers' and SpaceOps NZ's antennas to provide southern hemisphere ground segment support for space agencies and commercial satellite operators. Customers' satellites are used for all manner of purposes, including tracking shipping containers, measuring the atmosphere, imaging the Earth, calibrating satellite navigation systems and providing internet services. Some of the antennas provide downrange support for international launch companies, including Rocket Lab, founded by Waihōpai Invercargill's Peter Beck.

It is the first station with spacecraft visibility on the western side of the Pacific Ocean and is Aotearoa New Zealand's only commercial low Earth orbit satellite ground station.

SpaceOps NZ currently hosts more than 35 antennas and will add two new 11-metre antennas to the station as part of a recent collaboration with Lockheed Martin Australia. This will see a SouthPAN (Southern Positioning Augmentation Network) satellite uplink station, supported by a mission operations centre in Waihōpai Invercargill, come to fruition, providing New Zealanders and Australians with centimetre accuracy positioning from their smartphones.



Data Centres

Hyperscale data centres are large-scale facilities designed to support the computing and storage requirements of major technology companies and public institutions. The only hyperscale data centre currently servicing Aotearoa New Zealand is based in Auckland. If this data centre was operating in Murihiku Southland, it would be 15% more energy efficient due to our region's cooler climate. Murihiku Southland based data centres will also only be serviced by renewable energy and widely available precipitation which is another key advantage for establishing them in this region.

There are two proposed data centre opportunities for the region - Datagrid and T4 Group. Datagrid is planning a large facility in Makarewa near Waihōpai Invercargill that will use up to 150MW of power. T4 Group is developing a smaller scale data centre utilising 10MW of power.

The Datagrid project is related to the proposed Hawaiki Nui, a submarine cable that plans to connect Waihōpai Invercargill to Australia's east coast. This cable would provide wider benefits for the region enabling improved international connectivity for businesses and internet service providers in particular. In regard to job creation, Datagrid have indicated that 100-200 workers will be required to build the facility which will be operated by up to 45 employees at full capacity.

Data centres as facilitators of technology in the digital space, can enable high value direct and indirect career opportunities for Southlanders. This nurtures a skilled and highly sought-after workforce, which in turn powers the development of the region's digital and technology industry which supports our businesses.

Other medium to long-term opportunities include:

- Enabling further digitalisation and digital economy development by providing world-class infrastructure.
- Improving connectivity to the region.
- Contributing to regional and national power security.
- Avoiding significant CO2 emissions associated with data centre operations by bringing non-latency sensitive IT workloads closer to power generation and avoiding grid losses.

Ahumoana

Aquaculture

“ Murihiku Southland is a world-leader in aquaculture innovation and best practice, producing premium products, and is a \$1 billion industry for our region.”

Known as ‘farming in water’, Aquaculture is the aquatic equivalent of agriculture or farming on land. It can be defined as the breeding, growing, and harvesting of fish and other aquatic plants.

Murihiku Southland has an opportunity to be the number one region in the world for aquaculture, utilising our natural advantages of a cooler climate and clear waters. This would build on a proud 50 year foundation. Aquaculture can provide genuine regional prosperity and resilience;

productivity growth, high paid jobs and has a low carbon footprint compared to existing primary industries.

There is a high focus on Open Ocean Aquaculture (OOA) because it allows for larger-scale production of fish and other seafood with a smaller footprint. Integrated land-based aquaculture and processing will also be very important in enabling the OOA to function at an optimum level and needs to be considered strategically.

Why Aquaculture?

World’s fastest-growing primary industry

The global demand for premium seafood is high and expected to grow.

96% of Aotearoa New Zealand territory is under water

We have a lot of this unique resource.

15,000 known marine species in our waters (10% of the world’s diversity)

Our coastlines and water purity make Aotearoa New Zealand an ideal country for growing seafood.

4th largest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the world

Aotearoa New Zealand EEZ is up to twenty times the size of our land area and covers approximately 4.4 million square kms of ocean.

Aotearoa New Zealand produces 1% of the world’s fish catch

There is significant growth potential as Aotearoa New Zealand uses just 35% of its available fishing waters despite our large EEZ.

20-50ha of surface space can support \$150-250m in revenue & 500 employees

A salmon farm producing 10,000T of salmon would only require 20-50ha of surface space.

New Zealanders love eating fish

Almost 90% of New Zealanders eat fish at least once a month, with just under half eating fish at least once a week (sanfords.co.nz).

3,613km of coastline in Murihiku Southland

Murihiku Southland has a lot of coastline with 11 marine reserves and two marine sanctuaries.

\$1 billion by 2035

Currently aquaculture is worth \$670 million to the Aotearoa New Zealand economy and employs approximately 3000+ FTEs. Murihiku Southland currently farms 22% of Aotearoa New Zealand salmon and 3% of Aotearoa New Zealand mussels.

NZ Aquaculture Strategy 2019

It is proposed to grow aquaculture in Murihiku Southland to become a \$1 billion industry by 2035 contributing one third of Aotearoa New Zealand \$3 billion goal. This would equate to the region increasing its salmon production from 5000T per annum to approximately 40,000T. Currently Aotearoa New Zealand produces 15,000T which would grow to 150,000T by 2035 to meet this target.

One possible scenario sees aquaculture growing the region’s population by 5,180 with 2,940 new jobs (p21).



There is no doubting that this is a brave and aspirational target and will require the region to launch from a well-established foundation, by maximising technology, location and innovation opportunities and ensuring there is a coordinated approach and pathway forward. Government commitment and co-investment can significantly increase investment confidence and help the industry grow to a sustainable and viable scale.

Key Areas of Focus

Ocean Beach Aquaculture Hub

Ocean Beach is the only onshore aquaculture site in Murihiku Southland spread over 13ha near Motupōhue Bluff. It has a unique location, sitting on Aotearoa New Zealand’s narrowest stretch of land at 200 metres wide, and is able to extract and discharge water from two different harbours.

Ocean Beach has a fish farming licence and coastal permit in place to extract seawater from Foveaux Strait for use in aquaculture production. Coastal permits are also in place to extract seawater from the Motupōhue Bluff Harbour, which is suitable for shellfish and seaweed farming.

To date over \$10 million has been invested into the site which has a blend of industrial, aquaculture and seafood tenants on site.

- Its subsidiary, The New Zealand Abalone Company’s pāua farm had its first small commercial harvest in 2023 with a look to gradually scaling up production over time.
- Aotearoa New Zealand’s first and only commercial whitebait farm, Mānaki Whitebait, relocated to the site from its Warkworth location, and has recently had its first harvest. It is on track to produce up to 50T per annum.
- CH4 Global are cultivating asparagopsis amarta, a NZ native seaweed which reduces methane emissions when fed to cattle. Their plans include the construction of a multimillion-dollar ecopark to maximise opportunities of the seaweed sector which globally is thought to be a US\$14 billion industry.
- Land based salmon farming is being actively investigated and is globally a growing segment in the industry.
- Mussel, seaweed and oyster hatcheries are also a future possibility.
- Planning is also underway for an artisan food and retail hub overlooking Foveaux Strait on the site, which will include a distillery and cellar door / restaurant where you can eat the food farmed on site as well as the wider region. Tours of the aquaculture facilities will also be run from this central tourist area.

Ngāi Tahu Seafood Ltd

The Hananui Project application from Ngāi Tahu Seafood Limited is in the Covid recovery fast track consenting process with a decision expected in August 2023. The scope of this project is to construct and operate open ocean salmon farming within a 2,500ha area of the coastal marine area, approximately 2 - 6 kilometres off the north-eastern coast of Rakiura Stewart Island. The southern end of the site is approximately 10km north-west of the settlement of Oban (Half Moon Bay).

The Hananui application is in line with the New Zealand Government Aquaculture Strategy to develop aquaculture through a sustainable growth pathway into open ocean areas. It proposes to use the best available international technology.

“As a Ngāi Tahu business, we are charged to ensure that all our operations are carried out in a manner that is mindful of the impact we are having on the environment and upholds the principles of kaitiakitanga. In everything we do, we strive to care for, protect, and nurture the environment so it can prosper through the generations.”

Sanford

Sanford owns 19% of the Aotearoa New Zealand seafood quota and has already had a substantial commitment to salmon farming in Murihiku Southland. It farms in the cool, clear waters of Big Glory Bay, Rakiura Stewart Island and operates a processing plant in Motupōhue Bluff. The listed New Zealand company has plans underway to grow those facilities in line with its longer-term vision of investing in open ocean aquaculture in Foveaux Strait.

- Sanford has lodged an application to farm salmon on a site 28km from Motupōhue Bluff in Foveaux Strait which is currently on hold. They have a second application close by in Otago.
- Sanford is in the final stages for consenting the first commercial Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) salmon hatchery to be built in Murihiku Southland. The facility will produce between 1.5-2 million smolt once commissioned and provide new direct and indirect roles to the local area with investment around \$25 million.



Realising the Potential

There are seven enablers which will support the realisation of the potential of this industry. Each of these requires further investigation and resourcing and should be considered alongside each other, to understand timing implications and investment prioritisation.

Leadership

The aquaculture workstream of Just Transition was guided by the Murihiku Aquaculture Group. This Group has now ceased to exist, having completed its purpose which was to identify required investment to establish and accelerate an environmentally and economically sustainable OOA industry.

It is proposed that regional coordination and momentum continue with the establishment of an “Enduring Aquaculture Group”. Supported by an Executive Manager, it would aim to achieve the following:

- Provide regional leadership and facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders.
- In partnership with Great South, facilitate the development and implementation of the refreshed Murihiku Southland Aquaculture Strategy.
- Support the development of a thriving and resilient aquaculture sector that meets the needs of present and future generations.

Supply Chain

Collaboration between industry and investors is required to ensure timing and that stocks of supply components are aligned to meet the needs of industry. There is also a desire to maximise opportunities aquaculture will bring including its ability to act as a catalyst for other supporting spinoff businesses. It is therefore proposed to develop the “Murihiku Southland Aquaculture Cluster” which would be supported with an “Aquaculture Cluster Manager”. Consisting of businesses across the value chain, it would identify collaborative projects to help build a robust regional supply chain.

Strategic Direction

The Murihiku Southland Aquaculture Strategy was undertaken in 2012. It is timely that this is now refreshed to ensure the region has a clear and coordinated pathway forward to achieve its aspirations of becoming a \$1 billion industry. This strategy will:

- Provide actionable recommendations to maximise the social and economic benefits of aquaculture, while ensuring sustainable management of resources.
- Ensure multiple stakeholders are involved and clearly identify what investment is required in infrastructure and training.
- Ensure alignment between Murihiku Southland's aspirations and approach with the New Zealand Government Aquaculture Strategy.



Next steps

Advocate

- For national, regional and district planning to include open ocean farming and create a stable regulatory framework to encourage investment confidence, innovation and sustainable growth to unlock the scalable aquaculture opportunity of this industry.
- For ongoing investment in research and development.

Recommend

- Educational opportunities for students (who could be our future workforce) to learn about seaweed, finfish and shellfish farming at Ocean Beach, including the proposed OOA Skills Pilot.
- That new and existing aquaculture initiatives are encouraged to sustainably grow and diversify.



Regulatory

It is acknowledged that the future of aquaculture in the region is contingent on resource consents for OOA being granted. However, there are regulatory complexities regarding aquaculture because of its significant footprint and numerous community connections relating to servicing and operations. It is therefore difficult to see an entire picture and there are numerous regulatory agencies involved across the industry and its associated supply chains.

- At a national level, the current regulatory framework is primarily based around the RMA including the Aotearoa New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. RMA replacement legislation (including the Natural and Built Environment Bill and Spatial Planning Bill) could provide increased recognition of aquaculture and its regulatory management.
- The current suite of regional and district planning documents in Murihiku Southland, including Te Tangi o Tauria, are due for review. None of those documents take open ocean farming into account. Changes at a national level will impact regional and district planning and a new single coordinated plan is proposed that will cover all land, air, water and coast development activities for the region rather than having multiple plans as at present.
- Crown settlement obligations are reviewed/revisited every five years and may have to take into account any new aquaculture projects.

The goal should be to have a stable regulatory framework to create investment confidence, innovation and sustainable growth to unlock the scalable aquaculture opportunity of this industry.



Infrastructure

Infrastructure and utilities need to support a growing aquaculture sector in the region including nurseries, hatcheries, processing plant additions and port facilities. Without this infrastructure, investment, planning and growth will be constrained which will limit the ability to achieve the regional and national aspirations.



Workforce

Access to skilled labour is an initial risk, particularly in the short term due to the sector's emerging nature. Early planning will ensure the local community are well placed to benefit from job creation and provide greater confidence for further investment. A pilot programme called the "OOA Skills Pilot" is planned through a partnership with Ngāi Tahu, Aquaculture New Zealand and SIT | Te Pūkenga.

Ocean Beach has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Auckland University of Technology and a close working relationship with SIT | Te Pūkenga. A Masters in Aquaculture paper is being developed as well as Level 3 and 4 certificates utilising the globally unique opportunity for students to learn about seaweed, finfish and shellfish farming at Ocean Beach.



Research and Development

Testing and understanding new OOA technology in our southern conditions is critical to success of this relatively new industry. Therefore, ongoing investment in research and development is important to understand technology advances, environmental adaptation and growth and innovation.

- The Enduring Aquaculture Group is established including an Executive Manager position.
- The Murihiku Southland Aquaculture Cluster is established including an Aquaculture Cluster Manager position.

- The Murihiku Southland Aquaculture Strategy is refreshed in 2023/24.
- Business cases are developed investigating infrastructure and utilities required to support aquaculture.

Tāpoi

Tourism

“ We will support well-managed growth of our tourism and events sector, dispersing visitors around the region to share benefits and create balance for areas under pressure.”

Visitors from around the world are attracted to Murihiku Southland’s plethora of contrasting landscapes from rugged coastlines and rolling plains to snow-capped mountains and native forests. Aotearoa New Zealand’s most recognisable international icon Piopiotahi Milford Sound is in our region which hosts two national parks and five of the eleven Great Walks. The three strengths that differentiate Murihiku Southland as a visitor destination are our unique location, landscapes, and wildlife. In addition to this, our friendly and welcoming locals, less crowds, and more open spaces are also strong drawcards.

Events are another key driver of visitation, encouraging a longer length of stay and celebrating aspects of our unique southern culture, while utilising our world class facilities and amenities. Of particular note is a growing business events, meetings and incentives sector.

Southlanders understand the value of tourism with 85% of residents surveyed indicating an acceptance for growth of the sector, with the proviso that this is well managed (Community Sentiment Tourism Research 2023). This view aligns well with the aspirations and priorities identified with the strategic plans of our community boards, which all include reference to building tourism in their place, seeing it as a way to bring vibrancy, investment, job opportunities and more activities to their communities.

Our Papatipu Rūnaka are also interested in being at the forefront of tourism development going forward. Working together in partnership, they have a key role to play in sharing their stories, an important part of what makes Murihiku Southland unique and special.

Covid

At its highest peak in 2019, the Murihiku Southland tourism sector reached \$700 million in visitor spend and was well on track to achieve \$1 billion by 2025. However, Covid had an immediate, catastrophic effect with international borders closed and domestic travel severely limited for over two years. The impact of the pandemic was felt differently across the region depending on how reliant businesses were on international visitors.

The regional development agency Great South, manages the two regional tourism organisations (RTOs) Visit Fiordland and Visit Southland. Visit Fiordland covers predominantly Manapouri, Te Anau and Piopiotahi Milford Sound while Visit Southland covers the rest of the region.

- Visit Fiordland was the worst affected RTO in the country, with 77% of all its visitors originating from overseas. Job losses were significant, and many businesses went into hibernation. Its isolation and distance from larger domestic populations were also factors.
- Visit Southland has ‘bounced-back’ quickly and, at times has outperformed prior spend levels. This has been due to its traditionally strong domestic market. This includes people travelling for business, to visit friends and family and having a desire to visit “bucket list” destinations such as Rakiura Stewart Island.

The post-Covid world is full of uncertainty, so we have considered two possible recovery scenarios for tourism, referred to as a Big World and a Small World. Both scenarios assume that the Milford Opportunities Project has been activated and Te Anau becomes a hub for tourism with longer stays within the area. The outcomes for both scenarios are very similar but what comprises them will be significantly different. However, both scenarios outline strong growth for tourism and illustrate its importance as a key diversification opportunity for the region. The implementation of the revised Murihiku Southland Destination Strategy will be essential to ensure this growth is well managed and that tourism retains the support of our communities.

Scenario 1: Big World

Key assumption:

- International travel returns to its pre-Covid levels through more affordable travel options, increased connectivity, and by Aotearoa New Zealand being viewed as a premium destination to visit.

(including business travel), events, and increased accommodation capacity.

- Visit Fiordland will take until the end of 2025 to fully recover to pre-Covid levels due to its high reliance on international tourism, delayed reopening of Asian markets and current capacity issues (e.g., accommodation, workforce).

Key take outs:

- By the end of 2023, Visit Southland should have fully recovered to pre-Covid levels due to its high percentage of domestic tourism
- By 2029, guest nights as a percentage of pre-Covid levels are expected to reach 165% in Visit Southland and 142% in Visit Fiordland.



Scenario 2: Small World

Key assumptions:

- A combination of impacts make travel beyond short haul destinations severely constrained i.e., unaffordable travel costs, environmental impacts of travel, and/or geopolitical uncertainty.
- This results in a greater focus on domestic and Australian tourists who are expected to stay longer within the region. These visitors will also be constrained from travelling to other countries, growing the popularity of Aotearoa New Zealand as a travel destination.

Key take outs:

- By the end of 2023, Visit Southland is again expected to have fully recovered to pre-Covid levels due to its high percentage of domestic tourism (including business travel), strong calendar of events, and increased accommodation capacity.
- Visit Fiordland will take until the end of 2026 to fully recover to pre-Covid levels as it currently relies significantly on international tourism
- By 2029, guest nights as a percentage of pre-Covid levels are expected to reach 160% in Visit Southland and 136% in Visit Fiordland.

Destination Management Approach

The rapid rate of growth seen prior to Covid meant parts of our region were under pressure – particularly areas like Piopiotahi Milford Sound. On top of this, our small population was struggling to provide fit for purpose infrastructure for a significant number of visitors across a large geographic region.

The Southland Murihiku Destination Strategy 2019 - 2029 (SMDS) was released prior to Covid and signaled a significant change in our approach to the management of our tourism sector. Instead of aiming for just economic benefits, it outlined how tourism could offer much more for our people and region.

While still a key opportunity for the diversification of our regional economy by driving population growth and livability, the Strategy clearly articulated potential for the sector to deliver more than it takes and become regenerative.

Murihiku Southland was fortunate to have the SMDS in place prior to Covid. It guided the recovery of tourism post the pandemic, providing leadership and assurance to the sector. Implementation has been prioritised and faster than expected, with two thirds of the 68 recommendations either complete or in progress.

In light of this, a review of the SMDS has recently been undertaken and a summary of the overall vision, key enablers and projects is on page 58. This plan is intrinsically linked to our communities, to mana whenua and to our sustainability aspirations.

By developing our tourism sector in a gradual way that is deeply grounded in our people and place, we will not only create shared benefits for all, but develop a destination which offers a welcoming, connected and memorable experience for visitors to Murihiku Southland.

There are five key enablers which will support well managed growth of our tourism sector:



Regulatory and Planning

Within the tourism sector there are many national issues and challenges that are important to our communities and businesses. The perspectives of our region need to be represented in decision making which will be achieved through advocacy and involvement in key processes.



Accommodation

Accommodation is in short supply across the region and there are gaps in the higher quality accommodation segment. Addressing these shortages will support tourism sector growth and reduce pressure on housing which is being utilised to bridge these gaps in some locations (p26).



Leadership

Achieving successful destination management requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving multiple stakeholders. Establishing a Regional Tourism Leadership Group will provide strong direction for our tourism sector and support continued implementation of the Murihiku Southland Destination Strategy.



Data

Tourism data is essential for the planning, development, marketing and management of our tourism sector. Accessing accurate and timely information allows us to inform our sector and track progress across key measures i.e., community sentiment, visitor satisfaction, economic benefits and sector sustainability. This will be connected to the regional data repository (p22).



Workforce

Our tourism sector workforce is facing significant and critical shortages, worsened by the impacts of Covid. Recruiting and retaining staff within our region who see tourism and hospitality as a pathway of value, is critical to our visitor economy.

Murihiku Southland Destination Strategy



Vision

Murihiku Southland is a world-class tourism destination that showcases our stunning natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and exceptional hospitality. By prioritising sustainability and community collaboration, we create unforgettable experiences for visitors, while benefiting residents, businesses, and the environment.

Priority Projects

A WORLD-CLASS DESTINATION

- Milford Opportunities Project
- World renown dark skies destination
- Predator Free Southland including Rakiura
- Māruawai cultural precinct
- Motupōhue visitor experience - Te Taurapa o Te Waka
- Home to Great Walks

SHOWCASING EXCEPTIONAL HOSPITALITY

- Regional ambassador programme
- Destination promotion to locals
- Southland Murihiku Food Tourism Strategy implementation
- Regional visitor information and Invercargill Waihōpai welcoming activation hub

PRIORITISING SUSTAINABILITY

- Regional spatial planning and tourism
- Murihiku Southland Sustainable Tourism Programme and sector support
- Cycling infrastructure and trail development

SHOWCASING RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Cultural narrative and experience development
- New museum for Waihōpai Invercargill and Murihiku Southland
- Punanga Manu o Te Anau Te Anau Bird Sanctuary development
- Tutarau cultural storytelling
- Cultural storytelling in Waihōpai Invercargill

CREATING LASTING BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS

- CBD rejuvenation in Waihōpai Invercargill and Māruawai Gore
- Town story and identity development
- Community engagement in tourism
- Public transport network investigation
- Business events attraction (MICE)
- Enhanced air connectivity – Waihōpai Invercargill and Te Anau

Enablers

Tourism Leadership Group

Data and Insights

Advocacy and Regulatory Planning

Workforce Attraction and Development

Quality Accommodation Development

Next steps

Recommend

Implementation of the updated Murihiku Southland Destination Strategy including:

- A focus on the five key enablers (Workforce, Data, Leadership, Regulatory and Planning and Accommodation).
- Development of a clear implementation plan alongside key partners identifying required resource and areas of responsibility.
- Provision of fit for purpose infrastructure meeting the needs of local communities and visitors, including air connectivity into and around the region (Waihōpai Invercargill and Te Anau).



Dispersal of Visitors

There are some parts of our region that currently experience high levels of visitation. To alleviate the pressure this can cause, one of our key goals is to encourage visitors to travel further into our region, particularly in areas where fit for purpose infrastructure exists. This spreads the benefits of tourism across our communities and aligns with one of the key objectives of Milford Opportunities, to “facilitate broader Murihiku Southland benefits”.

Suggested approach:

- Promote regional initiatives which create awareness of and encourage travel to other parts of the region.
 - ↳ Touring route development e.g. The Southern Way (connecting Otago/Murihiku Southland).
 - ↳ Town story and identity development.
 - ↳ Regional sustainability, cycling, walking and predator free positioning.
- Activate the *Murihiku - The South Land* regional story alongside sub regional positioning (p46) and development of our Provenance Story for exports (p61).
 - ↳ Enable visitors to travel into, and around the region
 - ↳ Importance of public transport network, roading and other infrastructure e.g., public toilets.
 - ↳ Air connectivity and connection to international flights.
 - ↳ Visitor information and Waihōpai Invercargill Welcoming Activation Hub.
 - ↳ Develop experiences across the region to drive visitation and prioritise opportunities to connect them together (examples on the map above).

- Prioritise focus on the following:
 - ↳ Motupōhue Visitor Experience - Te Taurapa o Te Waka.
 - ↳ Supporting Papatipu Rūnaka to develop cultural narrative projects around the region.
 - ↳ Milford Opportunities Project.
 - ↳ Supporting the sector on its journey towards sustainability and meeting our net zero goals through delivery of the Murihiku Southland Tourism Sustainability Programme (which is connected to wider decarbonisation outreach programmes, p61).
 - ↳ Integrated regional promotional positioning using *Murihiku - The South Land*.

Pakihi me te Hoko Whakawaho

Business and Export Economy

“ We will position Murihiku Southland as a globally competitive marketplace by identifying pathways for existing local businesses to grow through exports and new market development, and by attracting new business to our region with minimised barriers to entry.”

Murihiku Southland generates around \$7.3 billion annually in GDP with only 2% of Aotearoa New Zealand’s population. The region ranks fourth highest for GDP per person, highlighting the importance of our economy for the country and how we are punching well above our weight.

The engine room of our economy consists of 14,499 registered businesses that support 51,000 employees (p16). A significant portion of these businesses are thought to be shell or shelf companies and not operational businesses, however the data does not clarify this.

In 2022, our region is estimated to produce 11.7% of national pastoral exports (dairy, meat, livestock) and 8.1% of national merchandise exports (physical goods). However, this number is likely to be understated as it is difficult to identify the exact figures of the region’s exports as the statistics are derived from the final port that goods leave the country, rather than region that originated the export. For example if dairy exports are transported to Port Chalmers for export, they are treated as Otago dairy exports even if the milk and processing was all done within Murihiku Southland.

Additionally, our region also strongly contributes to non-merchandise exports through Tourism and Education, but due to the recent pandemic, these activities have been lower than previously recorded in recent years.

Business Capability Building

The key to building capability in our businesses is to invest in and realise the potential of the people who already live here. This means we do not need to exclusively rely on people out of the region to fill our skills gaps. There is significant effort underway to identify what competencies we don’t have, particularly where we may have a lot of specialisation, but not integrated capacity e.g. in the agricultural industry, new future industries.

Apart from education and training, it is essential our businesses and people continue to have access to advice, funding, and upskilling opportunities to improve business productivity and performance. Many businesses seek advice from accountants, and mentors. There are also approximately 150 other courses and programmes provided each year through a range of business support agencies and professional business support entities. The goal should be to provide a more coordinated approach to better meet the needs of businesses and ensure the best use of resources.

More support in areas such as exports, succession planning, automation and sustainability would also benefit the sector.

Considering labour market challenges, businesses need to think about producing goods efficiently through lean management techniques, automation and control, and advanced data systems. This includes constant evaluation of the market and changes in consumer preferences. Efficacy



Next steps

Advocate

- To attract new and international business opportunities to the region looking at 5, 10 and 20 year horizons and for our businesses to access foreign trade events, international best business practices and skills development.
- That the Government review the way exports are measured to reflect where they are grown and manufactured.
- For the streamlining of consent processes at a council and governmental regulatory level to increase the ease of doing business within the region.





in production will be increasingly important and businesses need to be committed to low emissions production to remain competitive.

Retail Sector Challenges

The retail sector is experiencing pressures from workforce and supply chain challenges, rapid changes in consumer demand and competition from low-cost online retail platforms. The Covid pandemic in particular has seen an accelerated transformation to online services.

In response to this:

- Businesses are adapting and reinventing themselves through the adoption of online services or offering niche non-online offerings.
- Some businesses are re-evaluating their business models completely and have closed parts or all of their business.
- Towns such as Gore are collectively focussing on encouraging “buying local” to support local retailers, and this also includes using events to drive visitation and rejuvenation of CBD areas.

While the Invercargill Central shopping centre is attracting new business and shopping experiences, it is also important that ongoing viability of these businesses (and others) is considered as the retail sector landscape keeps evolving.

Engineering and Manufacturing Cluster

In response to NZAS Tiwai Point closing and as part of the Business Transition workstream of Just Transition, the Southland Business Chamber is looking to develop an engineering and manufacturing services cluster in partnership with the Government. Supported with a Cluster Manager, these groupings of businesses would build on the specialised engineering and services capability that has been built around NZAS Tiwai Point. Other clusters are recommended including aquaculture.

New Business Attraction

Murihiku Southland is on the edge of transformational change, with a significant probability of new industries likely to progress. However, it is important that we continue to investigate other new industries and associated businesses including new opportunities based on land diversification. Accessible data and insights to inform good decision making is important in supporting new business development.

Often new large-scale businesses take time to set-up, therefore new business attraction needs to be looked at over a five, ten and twenty year period. Creating a positive business environment in the region is crucial to attracting businesses of all sizes, ensuring their successful establishment and growth. This is relevant to businesses of all kinds including new retail businesses and small and medium sized enterprises.

Streamlining consent processes at a council and governmental regulatory level could increase the ease of doing business within the region, and this was a key focus in SoRDS. It is recommended to keep looking at ways to reduce regulatory red tape and potentially reduce consent timelines. There is already effort to do this with a recent council collaboration which has seen the development of a single code of practice for subdivision, land use and development.

Diversification through Export and New Markets

Murihiku Southland is known globally for exports in agriculture, aquaculture, aluminium, education, and manufactured goods.

While the region has a history of high-volume low-value commodity exports, there is an increasing need to extract value from what is produced. Twenty-first century export requires a detailed knowledge of export markets, consumer decision-making processes and preferences, and the importance of provenance and branding. In addition, production efficacy and responsible environmental practices are critical for export success.

New market creation through exports is a well-known business growth strategy and supporting our businesses to investigate expansion into offshore markets is encouraged. This would be through appropriate skills development, international sales and cultural training, government agency connections and actively encouraging businesses to attend overseas trade events.

There is also an opportunity to develop the region's “Provenance Story” which provides customers with a better understanding of the value and origin of Murihiku Southland products. This “Provenance Story” should be linked to the overarching *Murihiku - The South Land* pillars and themes including “soil to sip” NZFF story (p50) and Ocean Beach Aquaculture Hub (p53). Celebrating Murihiku Southland export success stories to encourage new industries and businesses to the region is also a key focus.

Recommend

- The development of our regional ‘Provenance Story’ to enhance the origin story and value of our products for domestic and international markets.
- The establishment of the Engineering and Manufacturing Cluster.
- That there is a review of Murihiku Southland’s contribution to tradeable exports for the country.
- The provision of business capability building programmes and services in topics such as exports, lean management, succession planning, automation and sustainability.
- The ongoing provision of funding and investment opportunities from organisations such as Callaghan Innovation to support local businesses seeking capital and expertise for growth.

Tūnuku

Transport

“ We will ensure that our region’s transport system (road, rail, air and sea) enables and supports regional growth and wellbeing, while we understand and plan for new opportunities and challenges.”

Murihiku Southland is home to the largest unsealed and second largest overall roading network in the country. We’re also home to the southernmost commercial deepwater port and the third longest civilian airport runway which enables us to be the only regional airport with jet services. Our

communities, businesses and export economy rely heavily on a strong and robust transport network. This is critical for people to connect, move in and around the region, as well as for moving goods and produce to domestic and international markets.

Snapshot of Murihiku Southland’s Transport Sector



Road

777km of state highways; 6,452km of local roads (3,623km unsealed; 2,829 sealed)

Waka Kotahi Arataki 2021-31 Regional Summary states that the age of the region’s infrastructure is becoming an issue, with a significant number of bridges coming to the end of their design life (134 of the 1,070 bridges in the Southland District over the next 11 years). Please note that some bridges are not able to handle increased weight required by new industry such as windfarms and this needs consideration.



Rail

195km of rail (90km of main trunk rail line and 105km of branch line)

Rail moves significant volumes of bulk and containerised freight into Port Chalmers and other parts of the South Island

Parts of the rail network in southern Aotearoa New Zealand are underutilised.



Sea

South Port handles over 3.4 million tonnes of import and export cargo in a normal trading year

South Port established its off-port Intermodal Freight Centre (IFC) in July 2016. Strategically located adjacent to the KiwiRail railhead in Waihōpai Invercargill.

The region’s major cargo producing sites are all situated within 30 - 80km of the Port.

With 3,613km of coastline, the region has numerous wharves, jetties, and ports that serve a variety of purposes, including commercial fishing, transportation, and tourism.



Air

Invercargill Airport plus sealed airports in Stewart Island, Manapouri and Milford Sound

Invercargill Airport serves as a strategic air access point for Waihōpai Invercargill and the Murihiku Southland region with flights direct to Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch providing national and international connections.

Scheduled services also provide domestic freight capability.

Airports in Fiordland meet tourism demand. There is currently an investigation underway to look at Manapouri Te Anau Airport.



Next steps

Advocate

- For a national sustainable long-term planning, financing and funding model for land transport which aligns with and considers asset management best practice, climate change and decarbonisation.
- For more equitable allocation of funding for roading and rail in Murihiku Southland including an increase in the FAR for rural councils to reduce local share levels.



Resilient Transport Systems

Economic prosperity will be built around resilient and fit for purpose transport systems which need to be integrated across all four modes.

Important recent upgrades include the Stead Street stop bank and pump station which provides necessary protection for the Invercargill Airport. Through its Ten-Year Asset Management Plan, South Port has recently completed a rebuild of the petroleum berth on the town wharf to meet current building standards including seismic resilience.

A key challenge for our region is funding a large roading and bridging network with a low ratepayer base. Underinvestment in local roading bridge replacement is adding to transport costs, time of travel, travel distances and is increasing transport emissions.

Our rural councils believe that they are receiving an inequitable share of hypothecated funding from Waka Kotahi i.e. revenue collected from road user charges etc in our region is not coming back to the region and is funding major projects in other parts of the country. They are advocating for a sustainable long-term planning, financing and funding model for land transport which aligns with and considers asset management best practice, climate change and decarbonisation. This includes reviewing road user charges, and funding assistance rates (FAR) to reduce the local share level. New funding models need to take into account the movement of people, goods and services from a regional perspective today and into the future.

The Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-2031 sets the strategic direction for future development of the region's land transport network. It is the primary document that allows for the region's Road Controlling Authorities to apply for and receive funding from the National Land Transport Fund. Resilience of the network is a key priority area and the strategic objectives are road safety, asset condition, connectivity and choice, and environmental sustainability.

Low Emission Transport System

Waka Kotahi identify that low emission options for travel and freight movements will be an increasing challenge. The development of transport infrastructure for the region needs to align with the Southland Murihiku Regional Energy Strategy (p30) and our target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 (p70). The recent Government announcement of \$100 million for green hydrogen provides an opportunity for the region to incentivise significant new and early-stage hydrogen projects. This could support our goal of 60% of heavy vehicles being powered by renewable energy by 2050.

Growing our Freight Capability and Capacity

Our economy and in particular, our export focused businesses produce a substantial portion of high value time sensitive products which require freighting. Current observations and challenges:

- Many businesses and new industries producing new products are in an emerging or growth stage so their true demand and potential has not been realised – growth is expected.
- Many of our export products are best served with rapid logistics, such as air freight. Yet, many of these products are not being air freighted direct from Waihōpai Invercargill.
- A significant portion of our products are being moved using the roading network. More freight on the roads contributes to them needing more maintenance and is a safety issue.
- The region is also linked to South Island destinations for rail freight via the main trunk line which has capacity to provide more options for freight and is considered significantly underutilised.

South Port is currently deepening the channel into Bluff Harbour. This will create benefits such as supply chain efficiencies, less steaming, and more direct lines of shipping in and out of Motupōhue Bluff for both importers and exporters.

Invercargill Airport is actively trying to grow the frequency of flights and overall freight and passenger capacity. This is important to realise the potential of tourism as a key diversification opportunity and is supported by new and planned hotel developments in Waihōpai Invercargill (The Langlands and Distinction hotels).

Airfreight for produce (especially aquaculture) would be strengthened by direct flight linkages and more scheduled flights at certain times of the day to meet forward international connections. Increased freight volumes would create demand for additional jet flights (which could also help keep passenger travel affordable) and could create the need for dedicated freighters.

Intermodal freight and distribution facilities based in the region need to be investigated now to service future industry requirements. These would consider the type of freight that needs moving e.g., fish vs fertiliser and would seek to make it as easy as possible for exporters (considering customs and MPI requirements). It would also require an integrated understanding of how all modes of transport connect so it is suggested timely to review the Regional Integrated Transport Strategy 2005.

The region also needs to ensure its approach aligns with national and global understandings and approaches to freight including Aotearoa New Zealand's first Freight and Supply Chain Strategy.

Recommend

- Investigation into the development of intermodal freight and distribution facilities to service future industry requirements.
- The consideration of implementation of recommendations regarding low emissions transport in the Southland

Murihiku Regional Energy Strategy and Net Zero Southland Reports alongside existing strategies such as the Regional Land Transport Plan.

- That there is a review of the Southland Integrated Transport Strategy 2005 to ensure alignment of all transport modes and future freight requirements.

Hangarau Auaha me te Whakaaunoa

Technology, Innovation and Automation

“ We support growth and innovation of Murihiku Southland businesses including our emerging digital and technology industry by building a strong ecosystem and through capability building. ”

There is an exciting and emerging digital and technology industry in Murihiku Southland. Driven by the innovative and curious spirit of our people, new and emerging technologies are already being used to achieve even better outcomes.

However, many opportunities are in their infancy such as the Satellite Ground Station at Awarua and the proposed development of two data centres (p51). Our focus will be to ensure we build a strong ecosystem which will support these and many other digital and technology opportunities to thrive.

It is also important that we continue to facilitate connections between potential capital investors and start-up ventures to encourage investment opportunities in this emerging sector.

The region has many small to medium sized businesses and supporting them to operate more efficiently, including using lean techniques, is vital to our economic growth. There are a range of opportunities already on offer in the region, and continuing to promote these and showcase innovative businesses will support continued improvement.

We also acknowledge that industries of the future and solutions to our workforce challenges won't necessarily be labour based, so we are trying to understand how technology and automation can play a role.



Processing Data

Murihiku Southland may soon be home to two data centres. We should explore and support digital infrastructure requirements to process and store data. If the region secures this digital infrastructure, this will enable new data processing businesses to be established. Enabling data processing within the region will add value to the data centres, provide skilled jobs and retain earnings in our local economy.



Retaining Technology Graduates and Workforce

SIT | Te Pūkenga provides technology education and training opportunities. Often graduates leave the region and go on to have successful careers in gaming, animation and other creative industries. It is imperative that we find ways to keep graduates in the region if we are to develop technology, innovation and automation as a pathway for economic and business growth in our region.

An example includes opportunities to develop the gaming industry in the region. Revenue growth in Aotearoa New Zealand's gaming industry increased from \$276 million in 2021 to \$407 million in 2022, the majority of which is made up of exports. The Government has recently announced a sector rebate for game development businesses, to encourage them to stay in Aotearoa New Zealand which in turn supports job creation and sustainable growth of this emerging sector. With state-of-the-art facilities and opportunities at SIT | Te Pūkenga, there is potential to look at developing a creative hub. This could be part of existing infrastructure or a new development.



Next steps

Advocate

- For ongoing resources and funding to support exploration of further opportunities for the business and rural sectors to embrace technology and innovation to enhance productivity, efficiency and sustainability.

Recommend

- The development of a Regional Technology and Automation Strategy.
- Supporting startups and the expansion of COIN South to deliver innovation and business growth services to individuals, businesses and industry.





Supporting Businesses

Innovation is a driver for positive economic change especially when it supports new investments, new industries, and therefore new employment opportunities. The startup ecosystem in our region is growing which means we need to design, develop and appropriately resource support mechanisms for these startups. We also need to support existing businesses with innovation and implementation of automation and technological solutions for increased productivity and efficiency. This will allow our businesses to become more competitive and open new markets and income revenues. It will also support diversification opportunities.

Key Projects

Innovation Ecosystem

COIN South is currently looking to expand their role and services to grow the innovation ecosystem. This will be achieved by working alongside individuals, businesses and industries to create new opportunities quickly through tested techniques and tools. This would create solutions to meet needs, using universally recognised and locally proven methodologies, processes and tools of innovation to unlock their potential, grow revenues and drive innovation.

Automation Opportunities

The benefits of automation and technology are particularly evident when rising costs and labour shortages are considered. Automation opportunities exist for large scale processing plants and manufacturing however, there are significant barriers around further development including cost of this technology as well as skills and capability gaps in the region.

Initiatives to improve the business community's uptake of automation could include: identifying opportunities for automation, talking to business leaders and businesses about the problems they need solved, communicating the benefits of automation to the business community, providing training and support, and showcasing automation success stories.



Rural Sector

The rural sector plays a significant role in our economy, primarily centered around agriculture, farming, and horticulture (p72). Technology has become increasingly important, transforming the way farming and related activities are conducted. Advancements in technology have enabled precision farming techniques, such as GPS-guided machinery, remote sensing, and automated systems for irrigation and livestock management. These innovations can enhance productivity, efficiency, and sustainability. Additionally, technology facilitates better data collection and analysis, improving decision-making processes and enabling farmers to optimise resource utilisation and minimise environmental impact. Embracing technology in our rural sector will contribute to its growth, competitiveness and long-term sustainability, and should continue to be embraced.

Regional Technology and Automation Strategy

A Regional Technology and Automation Strategy is required to identify a clear pathway forward to maximise the opportunities of the region's emerging digital and technology industry. This would identify key enablers, infrastructure and priorities and the connection to regional development aspirations. It would look to build on current strengths and projects to create an enabling ecosystem and consider how the opportunities we have can be realised. It should also consider the challenges and opportunities of AI.

The strategy would look at the benefits of technology and automation in supporting our businesses and industries, particularly as we move to a low emissions future and grapple with labour market challenges. Understanding digital connectivity and infrastructure is also a key component building on previous regional digital strategic planning from 2015.

The strategy would also include an Automation Development Plan aimed at increasing automation in the region. This would require working with key partners like Callaghan Innovation and key stakeholders such as Great South, the Southland Business Chamber and COIN South to investigate opportunities.

- Retaining technology graduates by providing job and career opportunities based around new infrastructure and technology industries.
- Support businesses to maximise the opportunities of the data centres including the provision of infrastructure to enable data processing.

- The development of innovation skills through targeted and focused events.

Taiao

Environment





*He mea tiaki te taiao
e mātou, koia tonu
te pūtake o tō mātou
tōnuitanga, oranga hoki.*

We respect and care for our natural environment acknowledging it's the source of our prosperity and way of life.

We've identified four areas of focus:

Change in Climate

We understand the changes and challenges associated with a changing climate and we will empower ourselves to be prepared, make good decisions and build resilience and capability to respond and thrive.

Net Zero Southland

To support and enable Murihiku Southland to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Land

We're making sure our land use now fits with the future vision of Murihiku Southland we all want.

Water

To prepare for and understand how to future-proof water and water assets to ensure the region can prosper.

Āhuarangi Hurihuri

Change in Climate

“ We understand the changes and challenges associated with a changing climate and we will empower ourselves to be prepared, make good decisions and build resilience and capability to respond and thrive.”

For the last 12 years, climate change has been identified as the most important issue facing the world by New Zealanders (Landcare Research, 2022).

Our climate is changing and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future as evidenced by a warming of 1.1°C in the past 100 years. Lowering emissions can reduce the impacts of climate change but won't eliminate them all.

Many impacts are already with us and in our region, the general trend is a more dynamic, less benign regional climate, punctuated by more frequent extreme weather events. It will be warmer and wetter, yet with increased hot days, heatwaves, droughts, and wildfires, as well as more intense rainfalls and flood events. The increasing intensity and extremes can be expected to place additional stress and pressure on both natural and production ecosystems. (NIWA, 2018). Warmer temperatures, particularly with milder winters, could increase the spread of pests and weeds to the agriculture and aquaculture industries and environments.

By 2040 climate change effects in the Murihiku Southland region will include:

- Increases in annual mean and minimum temperatures, with the greatest warming increases experienced during the autumn season.
- Decreased annual frost days.
- Increased annual hot days (where the temperature is 25 °C or above) and increases in high temperature extremes.
- Increased heatwave days each year, more so in the northern parts of the Ōreti and Matāura catchments.
- The risk of wildfire is expected to increase, and fire seasons are expected to increase in duration.
- Significant decreases in seasonal snow (MFE)
- Increased rainfall, with the greatest increase occurring during the winter season.
- Decreased number of annual wet days in Fiordland, Waiau, and the southern extents of the Ōreti and Matāura catchments.
- Increased number of annual wet days in central parts of the region.
- Increased annual number of heavy rain days – heavy rainfall events are expected to occur three to four times as often, relative to the current climate.
- Increased river flow rates with seasonal differences and River Mean Annual Flood (MAF) levels are expected to increase.
- Water supply reliability will be more variable with some parts of the region experiencing increased reliability (e.g., Waihōpai Invercargill), and others decreased reliability.
- Central and Northern Southland are projected to experience the largest increase in drought conditions - a 20% to 30% increase.
- An increase in extremely windy days by 2090 of between 2 and 7 per cent
- Increased storm intensity, local wind extremes and thunderstorms
- Sea level rise (SLR) within the region is expected to continue, possibly at accelerating rates, accentuating the effects of storm tides and flood events, exacerbating existing coastal erosion, and raising groundwater levels in coastal and estuarine fringes.

Reference: MFE 2018, NIWA 2018



Next steps

Advocate

- For alignment of all planning – nationally, regionally and locally and with key partners such as DOC, Ngāi Tahu, Government etc.

Recommend

- The development of the Murihiku Southland Regional Climate Change Strategy.



Alignment of Planning

Aotearoa New Zealand's first national adaptation plan will help us adapt to the effects of climate change now, and better protect us against changes to come. It focuses on getting the foundations right and sets out what the Government will do over the next six years to enable better risk-informed decisions, drive climate-resilient development in the right locations, help communities assess adaptation options (including managed retreat) and embed climate resilience into their own work.

"Te tāhū o te whāriki, Anchoring the Foundation" is the name of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu's Climate Change Strategy. This Strategy provides direction across the whole spectrum of Ngāi Tahu interests, assets and activities.

“ Seven generations of Ngāi Tahu tūpuna fought for resolution of Te Kerēme, enabling all the opportunities we now have to lift and strengthen our people. We now have a new set of challenges, and we will do all we can to create a legacy for those whānau to come in response to the effects of climate change. We stand strong in the belief that amidst change and loss there is also hope, and opportunities to thrive.”

*Te tāhū o te whāriki,
Anchoring the Foundation, August 2018
Climate Change Strategy - Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (ngaiahu.iwi.nz)*

Our Response

Local Government

Councils have statutory responsibilities to avoid or mitigate natural hazards and must have regard to the effects of climate change when making certain decisions. They are also responsible for civil defence and emergency management, as well as improving community resilience through public education and local planning.

Our councils are already working with communities and iwi/Māori to understand, plan for and address climate change impacts. This includes the development of a regional climate change strategy alongside regional spatial planning (p25) and emissions reduction.

Emergency Management Southland

Events around the world and in our country continue to remind us of the need to understand the environment that we live in and to be prepared for when an emergency happens. Our region is a place of outstanding natural beauty, but due to its landscape it has associated significant natural hazards that we need to be aware of. On top of this, our changing climate is predicted to result in emergency events that we have not yet experienced, and these events could cause loss of human and animal lives, injury, damage, and widespread disruption for many weeks, months and years.

Emergency Management Southland provides the region's Councils and emergency service partners with a service that can coordinate our Civil Defence Emergency Management work across the 4Rs (Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery) in a seamless way. This shared service model is now being adopted across the country and its success is a tribute to our region's cooperative and pragmatic approach to life.

Department of Conservation (DOC)

The direct effects of climate change already include damage to infrastructure or habitat caused by a rising sea level and more frequent storm and flood events e.g., the Murihiku Southland flood events in February 2020 caused the closure of two Great Walks and the removal of Lake Howden Hut. Indirect effects include the shifting of habitats and species distributions, including the movement of potentially invasive species into new areas. Changing climate will also affect tourism distribution patterns and visitor risks in many locations used for outdoor recreation.

DOC has a Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (CCAAP) which aims to increase the resilience of wildlife and public conservation land and assets, to the impacts of climate change. The CCAAP will guide planning, resource prioritisation and operational work. The actions range from governance and regulatory systems to developing ways to recover ecosystems and species after severe climate related events. Sharing relevant findings with local government from existing or reactive operational work is a priority for DOC.

→ That there is continued and possibly increased investment in Emergency Management Southland to enable them to respond to a possible increase in emergency and civil defence events.

→ DOC to implement their Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (CCAAP).
→ Councils and communities to drive climate-resilient development in the right locations based on accurate data and planning.

Murihiku Tukuwaro Kore

Net Zero Southland

“ To support and enable Murihiku Southland to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. ”

The Aotearoa New Zealand Government has committed to reaching net zero emissions of long-lived gases by 2050, and to reduce biogenic methane emissions between 24-47% by 2050. Our first emissions reduction plan contains strategies, policies and actions for achieving our first emissions budget, as required by the Climate Change Response Act 2002. In doing so, it also outlines how we intend to play our part in global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Murihiku Southland currently contributes 9.2% of Aotearoa New Zealand’s net emissions, which is a reduction from 9.7% from the emissions recorded in the 2018 baseline year.

Net emissions include the offset created through forest sequestration (2021)

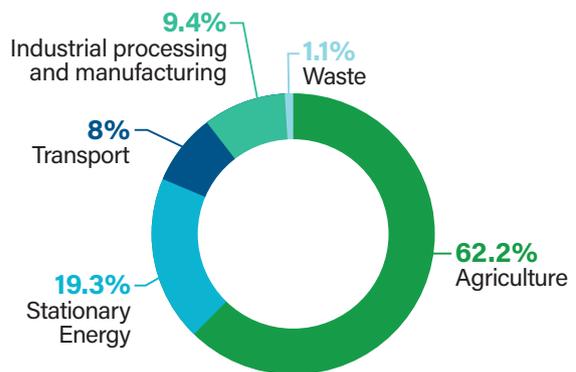
Net emissions (Aotearoa New Zealand):	55,746,419 tCO2e
Net emissions (Murihiku Southland):	5,125,135 tCO2e
Net emissions (%):	9.2% of Aotearoa New Zealand Net Emissions

The economic mitigation pathways analysed in the Net Zero Southland report (2021) established a baseline for carbon abatement and models a technology and agricultural pathway. It also highlights the importance of all sectors being actively engaged in driving the reduction of emissions. The report shows that decarbonisation investment is almost entirely NPV positive and that net zero emissions is achievable in Murihiku Southland without creating economic and/or social shock. It follows the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventories (GPC), which is considered the current best practice model.

Great South measures regional emissions annually and the most recent report (Southland Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory for 2021) shows there is a progressively downward trend, which is positive. This reduction in emissions is expected to continue as large-scale decarbonisation projects are completed and as coal use at Huntly is progressively phased out.

For the three-year period from 2018-2021, Murihiku Southland’s emissions have reduced 402,387 tonnes of CO2e mainly because of a reduction in the number of dairy cows and sheep (p72) resulting in a 4.7% reduction in the agriculture emissions. Forestry sequestration in Murihiku Southland has increased by 307,046 tCO2e or 20.5%, primarily due to an increase in total forest area.

Graph below shows the source of Murihiku Southland emissions (tCO2e) for 2021



Next steps

Advocate

- For more timely release of data from Government to inform emissions assessment and reporting.
- That one emissions calculator is agreed for Aotearoa New Zealand, becoming the basis of all emissions planning and verification processes.
- For more enabling policy and legislative change.
- To expand the Waihōpai Invercargill Decarbonisation Contestable Fund to include all of the region.



Achieving Net Zero

Prioritised Implementation of the Net Zero Southland Report

While there has been pleasing progress achieved to date, we won't reach our net zero aspirations by 2050 unless implementation of the Net Zero Southland report is prioritised and appropriately resourced. This includes focussing on technology and innovation, land use and agriculture and transport and collective action across all sectors, encompassing the social, environmental and cultural values important to our region.

Farm Carbon Abatement Pilot

This pilot is a partnership between Thriving Southland, MBIE and Great South and aims to provide farmers with a tool to measure soil carbon capture on stock excluded farmland. It will quantify and illuminate the good work currently happening on farms by creating case studies and increasing spatial information resources for farms. This enables and grows robust science for farms regarding carbon management which enables base monitoring of soil carbon, microflora and vegetation carbon sequestration.

Supporting Private and Public Sector

To date, almost half of all industrial boilers have been converted, but many of these are of a smaller size and many of the very large boilers and heating systems are still to be completed. Ongoing support and coordination of infrastructure development for the successful delivery of reliable renewable energy, and in some cases, the supply of long-term contracts for biomass such as woodchips, is critically important for the successful completion of these projects. EECA's contribution for capital funding via the GDI and the Waihōpai Invercargill Decarbonisation Contestable Fund has created the impetus for the formation of strong public and private partnerships to facilitate decarbonisation investment.

Annual Emissions Tracking and Reporting

Emissions assessment, tracking and modelling needs to be undertaken annually which clearly monitors the region's

progress. Please note that due to delays in reporting by Government sector agencies, there is an 18-month lag in availability of data which then delays regional reports.

It is recommended that one emissions calculator is agreed for Aotearoa New Zealand, becoming the basis of all emissions planning and verification processes rather than a multiplicity of calculators which creates confusion.

Regional Sustainability and Climate Change Information Portal

It is important to ensure everyone is aware of the pathway and progress ensuring a regional and inclusive approach. By developing a 'one stop shop' digital portal, various data, resources and progress reports can be easily accessible as well as examples of success. It could also be a regional repository for key documents such as Net Zero Southland; Regional Climate Change Strategy and the establishment of decarbonisation case studies and information sharing which will enable trail blazing work to be shared with those that follow, creating confidence to invest in decarbonisation.

Regional Coordination

It is important there is coordination of multiple efforts to ensure everyone's effort is aligned and is counted. Alignment between emissions reduction, land adaptation and other climate change activities could be achieved through regional coordination through the inter-agency Regional Climate Change and Spatial Planning Groups, as well as alignment with regional planning. i.e. Regional Climate Change Strategy. We need to work together and ensure alignment and best use of resources and effort.

Public Outreach and Education

To date, over ninety leading businesses, councils and community organisations have completed the Murihiku Southland Decarbonisation Programme and have had their key staff trained and empowered to create emissions baseline abatement plans. The resourcing of a more expansive approach is an essential part of accelerating the decarbonisation process and this includes the Tourism Sustainability Programme (p59).

Recommend

- That there is a clear action plan and appropriate resourcing to review and consider the implementation of the Net Zero Southland report, including continued strong partnerships with the private and public sector.
- That there is consideration of regional coordination through a Regional Climate Change Group.
- Development of the Regional Sustainability and Climate Change Information Portal.
- For continued annual monitoring and reporting on regional emissions.
- That the findings of the Farm Carbon Abatement Pilot are considered.
- Great South to expand the Murihiku Southland Decarbonisation Programme.



Whenua Land

“ We’re making sure our land use now fits with the future vision of Murihiku Southland we all want.”

The Murihiku Southland region is the second largest in Aotearoa New Zealand and covers an area (3.2m ha). Just over half (58%) of the region is managed as conservation estate predominantly within the Rakiura and Fiordland National Parks. Farmland occupies 85% of the non-conservation land and of that, about 890,681 ha is classified as pastoral lands, predominantly supporting sheep and beef or dairy farming.

Between 1996 and 2018, most land cover classes have decreased in area; exotic forest, cropping/horticulture, and urban areas being the exceptions, all of which have increased. A steady decline in indigenous forest, tussock grassland, and other herbaceous vegetation (mainly wetlands) is also evident, as the land is continually developed (lawa.org.nz).

Rural Sector Snapshot

→ Land Use

Between 2016 and 2019 Murihiku Southland’s farm area decreased 10.3%.

→ Export

Agriculture has a significantly larger impact on manufactured goods processing and is the most significant contributor to exports and employment in the region.

→ GDP

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing contribute 21.8% of regional GDP (minus manufacturing).

→ Number of Businesses

There are 3,594 agricultural focused businesses. Over half (1875) are associated with sheep, beef cattle and grain farming and of those, 1029 are specific to sheep. There are 1,281 dairy farming businesses.

→ Employment

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing contribute 17.3% of employment to the region FTEs – over 9,000 people are employed in Agriculture and Forestry and a further 4000 are employed in meat and dairy product manufacturing in Murihiku Southland.

→ Stock Numbers - Sheep

Between the years 1991 – 2019 sheep numbers in Murihiku Southland have had a sharp decline and have reduced by 60% over the period. In 2021, there were 3,395,747 sheep which is a reduction of 341,765 from 2018.

→ Stock Numbers - Cattle

The number of dairy cattle is decreasing with 642,689 in 2021 which is 38,322 less animals since 2018. Beef cattle have increased from 173,770 animals in 2018 to 203,928 in 2021.

Rural Sector Challenges

The rural sector is the backbone of our regional economy and is currently facing a number of significant challenges. Numerous reports and surveys consistently validate these issues which are causing people to leave the industry or make different choices about how to use their land.

→ Climate

The region has seen increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather drought events, and stock water availability is the source of many challenges. However, there are also new food and fibre opportunities being explored by Thriving Southland and others such as NZ Functional Foods as well as hops, hemp, and grain growers.

Next steps

Advocate

For Government regulation and policy to consider the development of carbon forestry on appropriate land and not at the expense of productive farmlands. This also includes consideration of:

- Amendments to the Emissions Trading Scheme.
- Amendments to the Conservation Act.
- A review of Overseas Investment Office decision making.

Recommend

- That there is continued investigation into new crops which can be a catalyst driving land-use changes including the Murihiku Southland Food and Fibre Investment Acceleration Project.
- That there is coordinated rural sector leadership to support farmers through regulatory change and in particular increased support for the Southland Rural Support Trust.





→ Financial

For some, farm operational expenses have risen by 20% in recent times alongside rising interest and compliance costs and supply chain challenges.

→ Regulatory

The rate and complexity of regulatory reforms is challenging to understand and manage, and this alone is responsible for many leaving the sector (p25).

→ Lifestyle

Other lifestyle factors include mental health stresses, farm ownership and succession planning, and the increasing age of farmers.

→ Workforce

Significant challenges including seasonal workforce requirements for meat processors, on farm operating staff as well as a lack of professional services such as farm consultants.

The multitude of challenges currently being faced is creating uncertainty particularly as the future remains unclear. The Southland Rural Support Trust assists rural individuals and their families to get back on their feet following challenging circumstances such as financial, personal, or other adverse events and is seeing increasing need for their services. We need to support this Trust as well as sector organisations such as Dairy NZ; Beef and Lamb NZ; Federated Farmers to provide advice, support, data and insights to help support farmers with their decision making.

New Crops, Food and Fibre

The ability to grow crops in a manner that limits nutrient losses, addresses water quality and water scarcity, all without any harmful chemical residues, presents exciting opportunities for the agricultural sector. New crops can act as a catalyst driving land-use changes especially where there are significant constraints affecting existing farm systems.

Thriving Southland is driving an initiative called the Food and Fibre Investment Acceleration Project which is developing regional profiles for 10 new opportunities to support investors and farmers to consider uptake.

New crops would generally fit into a rotational cropping system or be able to augment a mixed farming system designed to maintain soil health and optimise the natural characteristics of soils and the climate attributes locally. The potential impacts of climate change demand a strong resilience focus for new crops to avoid the proliferation of diseases. Addressing the loss of soil carbon, typically as a result of current cultivation techniques, will benefit the region's emission reduction targets.

New agronomic models should be developed to address both the growers and the customers as attributes of production efficacy and provenance can be compelling for the purchasing decision maker. Furthermore, there is capacity for significant value-added potential, and crops grown at commercial scales should ensure processing capability is optimised and market growth potential is accommodated. It is imperative that new crops are high value to meet the proven market need. Notably this does not require a well-established market beforehand, rather that emerging opportunities will prove profitable as long as they are not based on transitory trends. Some of the highest value crops are derived from nutraceuticals and companion crops and these categories must not be neglected.

Forestry

Forestry is an important industry for the region especially noting the significance of biological carbon sequestration in forests as an offset for the region's carbon (p70). There is untapped potential for greater value-added processing in the forestry sector.

Across the region, we are seeing conversions of productive farmlands into carbon forestry as farmers facing financial and social pressures view forestry as an attractive and viable option (Social and Economic Implications of Land Use Change from Pastoral to Carbon Forestry in Murihiku Southland, May 2023). Should wide-spread conversions eventuate, there would be dramatic impacts on the Murihiku Southland economy, employment, communities, and residents, threatening the viability of most small towns. This has been modelled as an unconstrained forestry scenario (p20). Our leaders and many Southlanders share concerns as outlined by the Climate Change Commission and advocate for urgent regulatory intervention and alignment of policy settings.

→ In partnership with forestry companies, the following process is undertaken:

↳ That all councils jointly develop in partnership, the policy direction considering carbon forestry and that these are fed through relevant regional and district plans including the Southland Regional Policy Statement, the Water and Land Plan and District Plans. These will consider wider existing and proposed legislation including (NPS Highly Production Land; NES Plantation Forestry; NPS Freshwater and Biosecurity Act).

↳ That policy settings be considered and incorporated into the RMA reforms and Spatial Planning and Natural Built Environment processes to prevent the creation of carbon forest planting on productive farmlands and areas such as flood paths and secondary flow channels, or in areas subject to instability.

Wai

Water

“ To prepare for and understand how to future-proof water and water assets to ensure the region can prosper. ”

Three per cent of Murihiku Southland’s land cover is surface water including six of Aotearoa New Zealand’s 25 largest lakes (by surface area). There are tens of thousands of kilometres of rivers and streams, including the Waiau, Aparima, Ōreti, and Mataura rivers.

Water and rivers are the ‘living blood’ of Papatūānuku (earth mother) and are held in reverence. Water is a taonga and it plays a unique role in the traditional culture and economy of Māori. Without water, no living thing, plant, fish or animal can survive.

Water is held in the highest esteem because the welfare of the life that it contains determines the welfare of the people who rely on those resources

Wai Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku, 2019

Water is a valuable natural resource, and it is vital and necessary to ensure the region continues to thrive. While we plan for new and diversified industry, we accept there are significant challenges at present with water quality and quantity of available water which is impacting our economy, our people and our environment. It is intended that regional development opportunities should not exacerbate impacts on water resources, and opportunities should be sought to positively contribute to the current situation.

Climate

Rain is a critical part of the region’s water resources. For the past two years the region has experienced late summer/autumn droughts which have impacted our regional communities, stock water, and processing water for industries such as dairy processors. Areas such as Northern Southland, Te Anau Basin and parts of Central Western Southland are highly vulnerable to the effects of prolonged drought and in some areas, existing land use will be challenged as climate change impacts are felt.

Potable Water

There are significant challenges for many of our communities and in particular Gore, Mataura, Riverton, Oban and Invercargill in regard to supply of potable water including availability of alternative emergency potable supplies. Water volume requirements for emergency water supply for Waihōpai Invercargill need to be carefully set, and appropriate consideration needs to be given to requirements of processors that are supplied from the Waihōpai Invercargill water supply.

Groundwater

Progressive intensification of land use within the Murihiku Southland region has led to the degradation of regional groundwater quality (Hughes, 2011). Spatial mapping processes identify some areas or ‘hot spots’ (which coincide with basins and river headwaters) which have a higher susceptibility to nitrate accumulation.

Rivers, Lakes, and Other Surface Water

The most sensitive parts of Murihiku Southland’s catchments – the estuaries, lagoons and coastal lakes – are also showing signs of stress and deterioration due to excess



Next steps

Advocate

- For the establishment of real time monitoring of all water abstraction consents.
- For the completion of a regionwide Sky TEM electromagnetic survey to map regional aquifers.
- Regional Council in partnership with Māori and alongside catchment groups enable, empower and lead water quality improvements across the region.
- The development of improved regulation and policy to better improve the quality and provision of water.



sediment and nutrients. This includes three of Murihiku Southland's main river catchments, Jacob's River Estuary, New River Estuary and Waiau Lagoon (*Wai Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku, 2019*).

Surface Aquifers

There are also reports that many of our surface aquifers are contaminated and are not suitable for human consumption and that overall, bore yields are declining and this is expected to worsen. It is unknown if this is due to deteriorating bores and screens (and lack of maintenance) or whether it is related to aquifer storage.

In terms of aquifer's recharge rates, we have little knowledge on some specific recharge mechanisms, but there is good data around rainfall (and land surface recharge) which causes the majority of groundwater fluctuation.

There is also very little knowledge of the interrelationship between surface aquifers and the deep aquifer systems such as the Chatton and Pomahaka.

Forestry

With increasing areas of forestry in the region, an assessment of associated water demand is required to aid the effective management of the regional hydrology and hydrogeological systems.

Our Approach

A strategic and collaborative programme of action is immediately required that will identify a clear pathway for the sustainable use of water resources which includes having resilient water supplies and assets. In particular, the work of our regulators, catchment groups, mana whenua and industry should continue to be enabled and empowered for them to lead improvements across the region.

Research, Data and Information

There are a range of things we need to know and/or understand better about our changing climate and economic diversification, and this will require us to undertake new research as well as to build on existing initiatives such as the Government's science platform – Aqua Intel Aotearoa. This has included aerial electromagnetic surveying (Sky

TEM) which now needs to be expanded to map all regional aquifers.

A key concern for Māori is about water abstraction and that resource management agencies do not know enough scientifically about the relationship between groundwater and surface water flows (*Wai Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku, 2019*).

Regulation and Policy

The People, Water and Land Programme was completed in 2022. It involved a significant programme of work to understand the communities' aspirations for freshwater and advice from a community-based group, known as the Regional Forum, on how to best achieve these aspirations. This work is now being used to inform a plan change to the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan, known as Plan Change Tuatahi, to give effect to the national requirement to set limits to manage freshwater by 2025. It is also informing work programmes outside the plan change to improve our water and land.

Water Supply

The Affordable Water Reform is underway as improvements to drinking, waste and storm water are important for community wellbeing especially in our rural communities. A new Drinking Water National Environmental Standard is expected soon and both that and how we treat stormwater and wastewater has impacts on the wellbeing of our environment. Key infrastructure assets largely relying on a small ratepayer base to maintain and replace them and for some communities this is unsustainable.

Strategic Planning

The complexity and interdependency of different parts of the hydrological system should be considered when developing policy and managing water resources. Most of the current challenges have been articulated in key plans and strategies including the Draft Murihiku Southland Freshwater Objectives November 2020, the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan 2016 and Southland Water Resources Study 2003.

It is agreed that there is a need for a regional water resilience plan which will build on learnings and previous plans, but which looks forward seeking to understand the impact of climate change alongside water demand and supply for existing and new industry and communities. The development of this plan would occur alongside regulators, businesses, farmers, existing and new industries.

Recommend

The development of a Regional Water Resilience Plan which will:

- Provide understanding of the impacts of changing environmental standards on security of water supply.
- Align with other planning as well as plan for the impacts of Climate Change and drought events on groundwater and river flows.
- Assess the impact of forestry and carbon forestry on all water yields in the region.
- Consist of a water demand needs assessment which will include issues and demand from current and new industry.
- Encourage and promote water efficiency, storage and water reuse.

Key Enablers

Data

We need access to timely, comprehensive, and accurate data to inform policy, assist decision-making, and prioritise resources for growth and development via collection, analysis, visualisation and data governance.

- Establish data partnerships to enable more sharing of data
- Align national and regional datasets.
- Establish a Working Group to drive the investigation and development of a Regional Data Strategy and a Regional Data Repository.

Regulatory and Planning

We want to align our regional development aspirations with the rules that dictate what we can and cannot do with our land, water and people, and we want rules that enable a prosperous and sustainable future for Murihiku Southland.

- Focus on policy changes currently happening in key priority areas for the region.
- Improve the communication of policy changes including investigation into a centralised information repository.
- Regional Spatial Planning is critically important and should remain a regional priority.
- Ensure there is better alignment between strategies and policy.
- Ensure new policy better reflects our region by providing better data and insights and by the acknowledgement of the importance of regional variation.

Housing

We will support and enable the development of quality housing within the region to better meet the needs of our people.

- Focus on increasing the supply of quality homes including the Government to provide more social housing and homes for older people.
- Support homeowners to modernise their homes and provide renewable energy options for their consideration.
- Support councils and others to plan for and enable housing in the right places e.g. land designated for housing, intensification, review of rules and connection to spatial planning.
- Focus on regional coordination through the proposed housing forum and housing portal.
- Look at innovative housing solutions in partnership with the private and public sectors.
- Focus on brownfields (building on current sites) considering the age of our houses and the need to replace them.

Energy

We will support the region's future energy needs in a clean and resilient way, while ensuring affordability for our communities and remaining globally competitive for exporters and new industry.

- Focus on regional coordination through the establishment of a new Steering Group which will also facilitate implementation of the recently completed Regional Energy Strategy.
- Ensure the sector's workforce requirements are understood and met.
- Focus on new generation including key priority areas.
- Ensure there are tools and funding to support ongoing decarbonisation.
- Ensure Murihiku Southland's voice is represented in national strategic and policy planning.

Workforce

We will implement a joined-up approach to labour market planning so we all clearly understand what our skilled workforce shortages are now and into the future and how we will work collaboratively together to address them.

- Continue to support the regional strategic approach to labour force planning including the implementation of the Southland Murihiku Regional Workforce Plan.
- Focus on supporting businesses to recruit by providing tools which tell the story of the region's unique attractions and 'way of life'; providing enhanced immigration support and sharing best practice examples of various options.
- Support the RSLG to identify skill gaps and training opportunities.
- Support SIT |Te Pūkenga and our secondary schools to attract international students acknowledging they will be part of our future workforce (set up an International Education Working Group).

People

“We have a thriving population with happy, healthy people who are proud to be Southlanders.”

Population

We will focus on retaining people and we acknowledge that our population is ageing and becoming more diverse.

- Focus on growing and retaining our population through attraction and retention initiatives.
- Support Papatipu Rūnaka, Councils and others to plan for, and meet the needs of our future communities which will have more older people and be more ethnically diverse.
- Focus on retaining people by being ‘welcoming’ including the development of a Welcoming Activation Hub; Settlement Support Programme and regionally coordinated implementation of all activities.

Wellbeing

We want to ensure Southlanders have the same opportunities for equity in wellbeing, as other New Zealanders.

- Healthcare is a key focus and the need to ensure there is equitable access for all Southlanders.
- Ensure people can access healthcare through the provision of practical and affordable transport options, particularly where there is no public transport option.
- The region is empowered to develop innovative initiatives and local solutions to address local challenges (such as SIT Zero Fees scheme).
- Further investigate active and public transport as well as food resilience considering the needs of our people.

Community

We are able to embrace change due to our resilience and connectedness.

- Consider the provision of services, facilities and amenities regionally and according to communities of interest in order to best meet the needs of Southlanders.
- Focus on supporting the provision of new and existing multi-purpose facilities which provide places for people to connect.
- Investigate and implement the next stages of the Invercargill CBD rejuvenation.
- Ensure our people and businesses have equitable access to affordable and reliable telecommunications and can access and use digital technology.
- Support Strong Communities Murihiku and ensure our community organisations are supported to attract and retain volunteers.
- Support the ongoing protection and sharing of our taonga through appropriate facilities and initiatives.

Attraction

We use our strengths and uniqueness to promote Murihiku Southland as an attractive and vibrant place for people to live, work, study and visit.

- Ensure a cohesive and regionwide approach to attracting people to live, work, study and visit.
- Support wider sharing of the *Murihiku – The South Land* story through the Regional Ambassador Programme, Welcoming Activation Hub and the region’s primary destination website.
- Support businesses to recruit workforce by providing them with tools and resources which articulate the region’s unique advantages.

Economy

“We remain a powerhouse for Aotearoa New Zealand providing a diverse and resilient economy that enables jobs and career opportunities for our people.”

Diversification

A more diverse region and economy means we are less exposed if one of our large employers or industries changes.

- Focus on maximising our natural advantages of climate and geographic location and in particular focus on the two key opportunities of tourism and aquaculture.
- Ensure coordination of diversification opportunities to consider resource requirements (workforce, energy, housing etc).

Aquaculture

Murihiku Southland is a world-leader in aquaculture innovation and best practice, producing premium products, and is a \$1 billion industry for our region.

- Encourage existing and new aquaculture initiatives to sustainably grow and diversify.
- For there to be a stable regulatory framework to encourage investment confidence, innovation and sustainable growth to unlock this new industry's scalable opportunity.
- Focus on future workforce by providing educational and training opportunities.
- There is regional leadership with the establishment of an Enduring Aquaculture Group and refresh of the Regional Aquaculture Strategy.
- Next stages of investigation into infrastructure, research and development, and wider business and supply chain development occurs (with new Cluster Group formed).

Tourism

We will support well-managed growth of our tourism and events sector, dispersing visitors around the region to share benefits and create balance for areas under pressure.

Implementation of the updated Murihiku Southland Destination Strategy 2023 - 2029:

- Including a focus on the five key enablers (Workforce, Data, Leadership, Regulatory and Planning, and Accommodation).
- Provision of fit for purpose infrastructure meeting the needs of local communities and visitors.
- Prioritised focus on supporting Papatipu Rūnaka to develop cultural narrative projects around the region including the Motupōhue Visitor Experience - Te Taurapa o Te Waka.
- Supporting the next stages of the Milford Opportunities project.
- Supporting the sector on its sustainability journey.
- Consistent integrated regional positioning across live, work, study and visit platforms.

Business and Export Economy

We will position Murihiku Southland as a globally competitive marketplace by identifying pathways for existing local businesses to grow through exports and new market development and by attracting new business to our region with minimised barriers to entry.

- Streamline consent processes at a council and governmental regulatory level to increase the ease of doing business within the region.
- Develop our regional "Provenance Story" to enhance the origin story and value of our products for overseas markets.
- Build on specialised engineering and services capability in the region through the development of clusters.
- Be able to accurately measure the value of exports regionally and nationally.
- Support businesses to grow by primarily investing in workforce and local people, as well as providing a more joined up approach to business support services.
- Provide more business capability building programmes in key areas currently not serviced well.

Transport

We will ensure that our region's transport system (road, rail, air and sea) enables and supports regional growth and wellbeing, while we understand and plan for new opportunities and challenges.

- Investigate intermodal freight and distribution facilities to service future demand.
- Focus on low emissions transport opportunities and innovation.
- Review the Regional Integrated Transport Strategy.
- Ensure there is more equitable funding for road and rail.
- Advocate for a national, sustainable, long-term planning, financing and funding model for land transport which aligns with and considers asset management best practice, climate change and decarbonisation.

Technology, Innovation and Automation

We support growth and innovation of Murihiku Southland businesses including our emerging digital and technology industry by building a strong ecosystem and through capability building.

- Ensure there is strategic coordination to realise the potential of this sector including leveraging opportunities of having data centres in our region (Regional Technology and Automation Strategy).
- Ensure we have resources and funding to support exploration of further opportunities for the business and rural sectors to embrace technology and innovation to enhance productivity, efficiency and sustainability.
- Support the expansion of COIN South services.
- Ensure we have a workforce for this sector including retaining digital and technology graduates.

Environment

“We respect and care for our natural environment acknowledging it’s the source of our prosperity and way of life.”

Change in Climate

We understand the changes and challenges associated with a changing climate and we will empower ourselves to be prepared, make good decisions and build resilience and capability to respond and thrive.

- Develop a Regional Climate Change Strategy which provides an umbrella for all activity (including net zero).
- Align all climate change planning locally, regionally and nationally.
- Support the development of climate-resilient development in the right locations by ensuring planning aligns (spatial planning), and there are partnerships with key stakeholders.
- Support Emergency Management Southland to respond to a possible increase in emergency events.

Net Zero

To support and enable Murihiku Southland to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

- Regional coordination is a focus including development of a digital information portal and sharing of annual emissions reporting.
- Government supports us by providing more timely release of data; more enabling policy and agreeing on a single emissions calculator.
- Ensure there is fit for purpose resourcing to implement the pathway outlined in the Net Zero Southland report.
- Continue to support businesses to decarbonise through delivery of education outreach programmes, funding and partnerships with EECA etc.

Land

We’re making sure our land use now fits with the future vision of Murihiku Southland we all want.

- Urgent national regulatory intervention and alignment is required to advocate for the development of carbon forestry on appropriate land and not at the expense of productive farmlands.
- Partner with forestry companies and other key regional stakeholders to investigate policy and planning in relation to carbon forestry.
- Ensure there is ongoing rural sector leadership and support for farmers to navigate regulatory changes and other challenges.
- Continue investigation into new crops, food and fibre opportunities which can be a catalyst driving land-use change, particularly in areas with constraints.

Water

To prepare for and understand how to future-proof water and water assets to ensure the region can prosper.

- Ensure regional development opportunities do not exacerbate existing water pressures and opportunities should be sought to positively contribute to the current situation.
- Develop a Regional Water Resilience Plan alongside regulators, farmers, businesses and existing and new industry.
- Encourage ongoing partnerships, regulations, mapping and data to support water quality improvements across the region including real time monitoring of water abstraction consents.

Implementation

The key to success of Beyond 2025 is regional coordination and leadership, and even more collaboration and connection. Through the process to develop this Plan, we discovered a lot of amazing work, projects and passion in the region. There is an opportunity to make sure all this work is well connected. It also makes sense to ensure that everybody's efforts are recognised, valued and leveraged for even more benefit.

Focus Area: Regional Planning and Implementation

Beyond 2025 identifies the importance of regional planning which will ensure the region can provide a single, clear regional voice to Government and others, but also ensures the best use of resources. This is complementary to regulatory planning such as the Southland Regional Policy Statement, the Water and Land Plan and District Plans.

It is also a priority to ensure there is enhanced alignment between various plans (particularly alongside regulatory planning) and that plans are as informed as they can be. It is important that resources are clearly aligned to implementation of identified recommendations within various plans and these are realistic.

The following are suggested within the Beyond 2025 Plan. They will be further considered as part of the implementation planning including timing, resourcing and prioritisation.

The development of new regional plans:

- Regional Climate Change Strategy
- Regional Spatial Plan
- Regional Data Strategy
- Regional Technology and Automation Strategy
- Regional Provenance Story for Export Markets
- Regional Water Resilience Plan
- Regional Active Transport Strategy

The refresh of existing plans:

- Regional Aquaculture Strategy
- Regional Integrated Transport Strategy

The implementation of recently refreshed or existing regional plans:

- Net Zero Southland Report
- Southland Spaces and Places Strategy
- Murihiku Southland Destination Strategy 2023-2029
- Hokonui Localities Plan
- Southland Murihiku Regional Energy Strategy 2022-2050
- Southland Workforce Strategy 2020
- Invercargill City Centre Master Plan
- Southland Murihiku Regional Workforce Plan
- Te Rautaki Huka Mahi Ā Roha 2022
- *Murihiku - The South Land* Regional Story

Focus Area: Improving Communication, Engagement and Collaboration

It is essential that we prioritise communication with people, businesses and stakeholders. This needs to consider the value of having 'one-stop shops' to make it easy to find information as well as providing opportunities for people to be involved and informed. Considering existing initiatives, approaches and facilities, Beyond 2025 suggests that this be achieved as follows:

Digital Portals and Repositories:

- Regional Housing Portal
- Regional Digital Sustainability Portal
- Regional Data Repository
- Centralised information repository detailing policies and legislation being reviewed/developed
- Strong Communities Murihiku

Partnership Approach:

- Essential key stakeholders continue to value collaboration and work together.
- We honour the principles and spirit of the Treaty by working collaboratively with our Treaty partners to ensure aspirations for mana whenua and Māori are reflected.
- Clusters of businesses (Aquaculture and Engineering/Manufacturing).

Physical Hubs

- Welcoming Activation Hub
- Expansion of COIN South Hub
- Intermodal Freight and Distribution Facilities
- Ocean Beach Aquaculture Hub

Focus Area: Regional Coordination and Leadership

The benefits of regional coordination through Steering and Advisory Groups are clear as evidenced with the successful Beyond 2025 process. There is a desire to continue this collaborative approach in key areas such as tourism, housing, energy, aquaculture, climate change and data, while also acknowledging other existing regional groups as detailed below.

It will be an initial priority of the Beyond 2025

Implementation Plan to clearly identify the next steps to establish these groups as well as their confirmed purpose, areas of responsibility and required resourcing. It's also important that these groups do not act in silos and there are opportunities to connect and align.

GROUP	DETAILS	RESPONSIBILITIES
Tourism Leadership Group	Will ensure a cohesive regional approach to tourism across both Visit Southland and Visit Fiordland RTOs. Will be supported by Great South (who looks after the region's two Regional Tourism Organisations - RTOs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Will support Great South to implement the Murihiku Southland Destination Strategy by providing oversight and stakeholder input. → Key role to advocate for the tourism sector.
Regional Energy Steering Group	Will build on the success of the Advisory Group which was set up to guide the development of the Regional Energy Strategy 2022-2050 with representatives of the energy sector, councils, iwi.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Implement the Regional Energy Strategy 2022-2050. → Provide technical and consent expertise for local authorities. → Enable alignment between spatial planning and new energy investment.
Regional Housing Forum	Will ensure coordination of multiple activities and efforts to address housing challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Will coordinate implementation of housing related recommendations in Beyond 2025 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Support for initiatives which improve quality and supply of housing. ↳ The development of a Regional Digital Housing Portal. ↳ Undertaking ongoing annual monitoring (using consent data & population estimates).
Enduring Aquaculture Group	Will build on momentum gained from the Murihiku Aquaculture Group which has now ceased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Provide regional leadership and support the development of a thriving and resilient aquaculture sector that meets the needs of present and future generations. → Alongside Great South, facilitate the refresh of the Murihiku Southland Aquaculture Strategy in 2023/24.
Regional Climate Change Group	Based on a recently established structure consisting of a governance group and a staff group, review existing terms of reference and membership in line with Beyond 2025 goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Provide regional coordination and leadership across climate change and emissions reduction activities which are being undertaken by multiple parties including facilitating the development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Regional Sustainability and Climate Change Information Portal. ↳ Regional Climate Change Strategy.
Regional Data Working Group	Beyond 2025 identified significant opportunities to improve how we use, access and share data. This needs regional leadership and coordination to achieve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → This Group will facilitate the development of the Regional Data Strategy and the Regional Data Repository. → This Group will also identify gaps in data provision with a priority on informing decision making, particularly that which informs Government funding for facilities, services and amenities.
International Education Working Group	Will identify current barriers to international education, in a post-Covid environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Focus on identifying opportunities to support SIT Te Pūkenga and secondary schools to re-start international student recruitment activities.

Development of the Beyond 2025 Implementation Plan

The development of the implementation plan will need to be done in partnership with the wider community, key stakeholders, mana whenua, funders and leaders.

This process will be facilitated by Great South in partnership with the Mayoral Forum, Government and other key stakeholders. It will:

- Require deliberation of projects and recommendations.
- Require an understanding of the alignment with other projects and areas of focus e.g. connection to Council long-term planning processes.
- Acknowledge that some projects and recommendations will require multiple stakeholder partnerships and facilitation will be required.
- Identify short, medium and long-term priorities and associated timeframes.
- Identify existing and possible funding support.
- Identify datasets to inform KPIs which will measure success and outcomes of the Beyond 2025 Plan.

The end outcome is a clear prioritised action plan with allocated areas of responsibility, resources and timeframes for implementation.

Review of Beyond 2025 Southland

It is recommended this Plan is reviewed and that this process aligns with Council long-term planning processes, and if possible, is held one year after the next national census. This would ensure the most up to date data is available and also that this regional development approach can align with local government processes and timeframes.

In saying this, if there are key occurrences in the region such as a significant natural emergency, a confirmed decision on the future of NZAS Tiwai Point and/or change in local government structure, this could trigger the need to review this document.

The Beyond 2025 Plan is a living document. There are many unknowns including NZAS Tiwai Point's future, new industry possibilities and changes to our region. The Plan should be seen as a tool or guide to support future planning.

Acknowledgements and Bibliography

The Beyond 2025 Southland Plan reflects our desire to align our aspirations with the processes which will enable them to happen, ensuring the Plan sits within the wider regional development context. This is the only way we can truly achieve the aspirations identified for our people, our economy and our environment.

It has been a key priority for us to understand and incorporate other work and consolidate their findings under the umbrella of Beyond 2025. This is arguably the biggest achievement of this Plan – the development of our regional jigsaw highlighting how intrinsically interconnected all pieces are and they simply cannot be looked at in silos.

We've understood the process to develop the Plan is just as important as what the Plan says. So, we have endeavoured to engage with a wide stakeholder group including councils, mana whenua, iwi, the business sector, local community organisations, key stakeholders, individuals and central government agencies undertaking significant surveying, research, hui and conversations over the past 18 months. The process to develop the Beyond 2025 Plan reinforces how good our region is at working collaboratively.

We would like to acknowledge our four Working/Advisory Groups who successfully guided the delivery of specific outcomes:

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Bibliography

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A full bibliography can be found online at www.beyond2025southland.nz

Tribute to Graham Budd

Great South and the Beyond 2025 team would like to acknowledge former Chief Executive Graham Budd, without whom this Plan would not be a reality.

Graham was instrumental in setting up the Beyond 2025 workstream and advocated with central government for Great South to be the contract holder for this piece of work. His commitment to the project alongside finding additional resourcing when needed resulted in the completion of this mahi on behalf of the region.

We attribute this piece of work to Graham and are indebted to his leadership and foresight.

This Plan was authored by the Beyond 2025 Southland team comprising of Bobbi Brown (Project Lead), Nic Wills (Project Advisor) and Becs Amundsen (Project Advisor), with support from Great South.

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