



FAQs

Te Manahuna Ki Uta

What is Te Manahuna Ki Uta - Destination Mackenzie?

Te Manahuna Ki Uta - Destination Mackenzie is an ambitious project that will confirm a 100-year vision for Te Manahuna/the Mackenzie Basin. It will see a Destination Management Plan developed, encompassing Aoraki Mt Cook National Park, the upper Waitaki Valley and the Lindis Pass.

What will the project produce?

After we develop our 100-year vision, the next step is to create a Destination Management Plan.

Destination management is what happens when you bring together all the different aspects about a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience. These include the environment, residents, business and industry, Iwi and the visitors themselves, with the aim of creating sustainable growth and resilience that will benefit the local community.

Our Destination Management Plan will be the document that guides tourism over the next 30-50 years, protecting the region's precious values and creating exceptional visitor experiences.

The long-term goal is to achieve a vibrant, dynamic and sustainable future, one that speaks to visitors and our community – mana whenua, locals, farmers, adventure seekers, artists and conservationists.

Who is involved?

The project partners include Mackenzie District Council (MDC), Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Te Rūnanga o Waihao, Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), Department of Conservation (DOC), Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) and the Mackenzie Development Group (MDG).

Project stakeholders include representatives of the business, farming and tourism sectors along with emergency services, schools, service clubs and environmental protection agencies.

Members of the public will also play a key role in this project and include those who live and work in the Mackenzie District and surrounds, local and international visitors, seasonal workers and working holidaymakers, and people involved in the arts, heritage, culture and events sector.

How is the project being run?

A series of steps will take place over the next few months.

First we need to understand what's important to you about Te Manahuna/the Mackenzie Basin, as this will help us develop a shared vision for the area for the next 100 years.

We'll be asking questions like, what do you want the Te Manahuna/the Mackenzie Basin to be known for? What type of tourists do you want to attract? Which areas should be developed and which should be protected? How will this shape life for locals in the future?

We'll show you a range of New Zealand and international tourism destinations and their visitor spend profile and ask how you would like to see Te Manahuna/the Mackenzie Basin positioned in comparison.

During this time we'll also share ideas and findings from our technical work with you and test various concepts to help guide our decisions.

All the information we gather will help us develop the draft Destination Management Plan, which will include the scenario that has been identified as the preferred option.

We'll ask for your feedback again on this draft Plan, before we finalise it with our partners and share it with all stakeholders and the community.

Why is it needed?

In the past, the rapid growth of tourism put unsustainable pressure on our communities, the environment and infrastructure.

The Destination Management Plan will include actions, likely costs and benefits and policy and regulation guidance to help us move past that.

It will inform Master Planning Spatial Planning, and infrastructure investment to deliver on those outcomes. It will also help attract investment into the district.

Does this mean you're trying to reduce tourism in the Te Manahuna/the Mackenzie Basin?

That will ultimately be up to stakeholders and the community to decide, but we need to acknowledge that Te Manahuna/Mackenzie Basin is an incredibly special place and people will always want to come here. Tourism also provides considerable economic value to our region.

Looking objectively at the visitor experience in recent years though, there are things we can do better, and that includes the way we manage the visitor journey through the area. Some regions are focussing on attracting lots of visitor, while others focus on attracting visitors who prefer to stay for longer and spend more. It's up to us all to find the right balance and create a future for Te Manahuna/the Mackenzie Basin.

The development of a Destination Management Plan will help us identify ways to make sure visitors have a high-quality experience while we also protect our natural environment, promote culture, share history and preserve the fragile ecosystem.

We know this conversation is going to be a national one that many New Zealanders will want to be included in. That's why we are going through this process, to make sure everyone can have their say.

Why are you planning for visitors when Covid-19 means no one can travel?

Prior to Covid-19, Te Manahuna/Mackenzie Basin contributed \$221 million towards New Zealand's GDP, despite only having a tiny population of 4300 people.

However, the rapid growth in visitor numbers and traffic volumes had caused challenges – from congestion at key locations such as Aoraki Mt Cook village and Lake Tekapo, to increased litter and human waste in the environment, and growing pressure on vulnerable conservation areas.

While the economic and social impacts of Covid-19 are real and painful for our communities, Covid-19 has also given us a chance to catch our breath, take stock of what we have, and consider what we want in the future.

With many of us wondering, 'How do we strike the right balance, keep what we love about living and visiting here and create a more sustainable future?', the time is right to prioritise the protection of the environmental, cultural and community values we depend upon to thrive.

This work can only leave us in a better prepared, more focused and resilient position for when borders reopen and significant numbers of international visitors again head to New Zealand's shores.

How will this work capture all the different views of the wider community? Can members of the public have their say? How much influence can I have?

We know there's a wide range of people who live, work and play in Te Manahuna/the Mackenzie Basin with lots of different viewpoints so we'll be giving you plenty of opportunity to have your say over the coming months.

During the first public engagement period from 6 July – 13 August, we're encouraging you to come along to one of several drop-in information sessions that will be held in key locations around the

district. We'll have an online questionnaire hosted on the Mackenzie District Council engagement website 'Let's Talk' for you to share your ideas.

There will be another opportunity for public feedback once the preferred option is presented in the draft Destination Management Plan later in the year.

Will mana whenua have a voice in this?

Absolutely, manawhenua are project partners. We recognise kaitiaki as the guardians of our precious environment. Manawhenua have enduring connections to Te Manahuna and, as Treaty Partners, their aspirations for whanau will significantly shape the plan.

We see this project as an opportunity to celebrate our natural landscape and the science and spirituality behind it, our history and culture. It's time to rebalance our heritage story and reflect mana whenua experience and whakapapa too.

Will the plan look after the interests of the Mackenzie community? I'm worried it will put visitors first.

Absolutely, it's critical that the Plan meets the needs of those who live and work in Te Manahuna as this will determine the success or failure of our long-term visitor strategy.

The purpose of the Destination Management Plan is to create sustainable growth and resilience for the benefit of the community.

In fact, on our 'must have' list are *resilient and viable communities* and *high-quality liveability for residents*, as well as *quality experiences for visitors*.

What will it mean for farming in the region?

Farming is integral to Te Manahuna/Mackenzie Basin and this will be recognised in the Destination Management Plan. Beyond this though, we are still in the very early stages of this process and so we will be asking farmers for their views and input as with many other industries that are core to the region's economic activity.

When will the plan be ready? Will I be able to see it?

We're aiming to have the draft Plan available for public comment in October, with the final Plan completed by the end of 2021 when it will be available to everyone to see.

What will this cost and who is paying?

The Plan has been funded by a grant of \$711,000 from the Provincial Growth Fund (Ministry of Business, Industry and Employment) for destination planning in collaboration with the Department of Conservation.

Will it change any rules or regulations or is it aspirational? What does it actually do?

The Destination Management Plan will not change any rules or regulations in itself. However it will clearly articulate the aspirations, goals and objectives for tourism, community, conservation, business and employment, as well as Mana Whenua cultural values including economic development, for the next 30-50 years.

In doing so, it will assist master planning, inform decision makers and investors about our priorities for investment, develop an overall vision to take all our partners forward, address a variety of immediate and longer-term needs, improve conservation and help in our long-term recovery from Covid-19.

Will it lead to investment in the region? What will that look like?

Through developing the Plan, we'll explore options to unlock and enable sustainable growth and resilience for the District going forward. We'll end up with a clear picture about the types, location and level of infrastructure that we want to see in place in Te Manahuna the Mackenzie Basin.

This will attract investment from both the public and private sector because investors will have clarity and confidence that initiatives they look to invest in will be aligned with our vision for the region.

How is it different from the other Government programmes in Te Manahuna/the Mackenzie Basin?

We know that people have recently shared their thoughts with us during the development of the Mackenzie Spatial Plan and the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan.

Relevant information from both these engagement processes will feed into the Destination Management Plan but their purposes are quite different.

Now, we are asking you to think about how you want Te Manahuna/the Mackenzie Basin to be known for in two, three or four generations' time, when your descendants visit our unique region... or call it home. Because the area is so special, this conversation will be bigger and will involve people from around New Zealand and even people from other countries. It's important that we get it right and we want to involve as many people as possible.