

Kia ora,

The end of 2023's third quarter has arrived quickly for the Te Waka team as we've continued to build on the momentum established in the first half of the year.

First, we'd like to acknowledge the great progress made so far building the bridge that will reopen State Highway 25A and reconnect the Coromandel Peninsula to the state highway network. It is vital that this work remains a priority for the economic prosperity of the district. Though recovery after Cyclone Gabrielle is still needed, in this quarter we've remained focused on building resilience and are looking forward to supporting the district's future growth.

A highlight was our annual Agribusiness Seminar, hosted in partnership with KPMG and BNZ, which was another thought-provoking discussion about the opportunities for our region's agribusiness economy. The post-event survey gathered highly positive feedback that emphasised the value attendees came away with.

We also hosted the Infrastructure Commission for a breakfast discussion which explored how the Waikato and Aotearoa can rise to the regional growth challenge. The event, held at The University of Waikato's new venue, The Pā, reinforced the need to position ourselves to capitalise on future growth opportunities for our region.

Workforce development initiatives this quarter focused on supporting Smart Waikato's 'Get Ahead with Gen Z' workshops, preparing to launch a pilot programme to empower solo parents to achieve economic stability, and contributing to the development of a 'tech apprenticeship' model in the Waikato.

These activities are just a few of the many that Te Waka has worked on this quarter; you'll find more in the body of this report.

Looking ahead to the final quarter of 2023 we are in for a busy period, amid which of course is the General Election.

In our most recent Business Sentiment Survey, we asked respondents their top priorities for the incoming Government. The highest-rated priorities were named as health, inflation/cost of living, crime, education, and skill shortages (in descending order). Like you, we await the formation of a new Government and with this the certainty that will hopefully lead to the uptick in business activity.

At Te Waka we have invested time and energy into sharing key updates and information on the region as well as building relationships across the House. This means that regardless of the make-up of the new Government Te Waka is well positioned to engage on behalf of the region and ensure we have a voice at the central government decision making table.

Ngā mihi



Fiona Carrick | CEO

Industry Growth

Agribusiness Seminar

In August Te Waka partnered with BNZ and KPMG to deliver the 2023 Agribusiness Seminar, taking a strategic view of the agricultural economy, market structure, global context and investment trends.

Over 110 guests attended to hear expert insights from BNZ Senior Economist Doug Steel and KPMG Global Head of Agriculture Ian Proudfoot before engaging in a Q+A with panellists General Manager Māori Business at BNZ Rēnata Blair, Director of Sustainable Finance BNZ Peter Savage and Greengrower co-founder and CEO Tom Schuyt.



The speakers provided reasons to be optimistic about the future of the agriculture sector despite painting a realistic picture of current economic headwinds. Working together to harness the potential of our agritech industry and the increasing flow of capital towards sustainable food production systems are priorities that will further strengthen the Waikato regional economy.



Progressing the Freight Action Plan

We have continued our industry engagement to progress the Waikato & Bay of Plenty Freight Action Plan this quarter.

It was great to see the Government launch the Aotearoa New Zealand Freight and Supply Chain Strategy at the Ruakura Superhub, reflecting the importance of the Superhub to the long-term performance of the country's freight system. This strategy document aligns closely with the objectives of Te Waka's Waikato & Bay of Plenty Freight Action Plan, including its focus on improving network capacity and resilience and accelerating emissions reduction through new technologies.



This quarter we also celebrated the opening of Kmart's distribution centre at the Superhub. At 40,000 square metres the distribution centre is the hub's largest occupier to date and has created more than 100 new jobs at Kmart.

The Freight Action Plan steering group is considering how the national Freight and Supply Chain strategy will inform our ongoing work and will be reconvening after the general election to agree next steps.

Waikato Offshore Wind Event

We continue to focus on supporting renewable energy generation in the region through our partnership with BlueFloat Energy and Elemental Group. This quarter we hosted an information evening for future participants in the offshore wind supply chain.

The event was an opportunity for Waikato businesses to learn more about plans to provide the Waikato region with a new source of clean renewable energy and enduring employment opportunities for local people.



Waikato Infrastructure Breakfast

It was a pleasure to host the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, Te Waihanga, for the Waikato Infrastructure Breakfast: how we move from planning to action.

The event received a fantastic turnout and was our first event held in The University of Waikato's new venue, The Pā.

The engaging conversations from this event will continue, focused on infrastructure as a key enabler for our region's growth and prosperity. We shared our reflections from the event and the opportunity for the Waikato to rise to the regional growth challenge on our website [here](#).



Workforce Development

Get Ahead with Gen Z Workshop



We supported Smart Waikato to deliver 'Get Ahead with Gen Z' workshops in Kirikiriroa Hamilton and Morrinsville. These workshops offered powerful insights into what motivates Gen Z talent and dived into the challenges they face.

Our very own Marketing and Communications Manager Sophie Walton teamed up with Smart Waikato's Gen Z team members to speak on the ideal qualities they seek in a workplace. As tech-savvy innovators, agile problem solvers, and forward-thinkers, our young professionals bring a unique perspective.

Supporting Under-served Communities

In line with our Workforce Action Plan objective to 'support under-served communities to improve diversity and unlock the potential of the Waikato workforce' we have developed a pilot initiative focussed on solo parents. The pilot aims to empower solo parents to achieve economic stability by helping them discover their skills and talents, explore new job opportunities in high paid and sustainable jobs, and connect with potential employers. We will run the first pilot sessions next quarter in partnership with the Hauraki District Council.



During the quarter we also supported Hanga-Aro-Rau, the Workforce Development Council for Manufacturing, Engineering and Logistics, in a hui focused on Māori workforce development at O-Tāwhao marae in Te Awamutu. The hui was an opportunity to share perspectives on the importance of Māori workforce development and the need for new approaches to enable a thriving and sustainable workforce.

Technology Talent

We are supporting the Waikato Tertiary Tech Alliance, hosted by the Ministry of Education, to develop a pilot for delivery of a ‘tech apprenticeship’ model in the Waikato. This is a key priority within the Regional Workforce Plan developed by the Waikato Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG), of which Te Waka is a member. We look forward to continuing to engage with our local educators and local tech employers to co-design the pilot.

Collaborations & Partnerships

Treasury Visit

Te Waka had the pleasure of hosting a group of executive leaders from the New Zealand Treasury here in the Waikato, in collaboration with the Waikato Pacific Business Network.

This was an opportunity to demonstrate firsthand the growth opportunities, challenges and priorities in the region with a specific focus on Pasifika businesses and communities. The day ended with a Networking and Nibbles event for Pasifika businesses to speak directly to Treasury.



Fleet Day



In July Te Waka presented alongside Waikato Regional Council at Fleet Day 2023, providing an overview and update on progress on the Waikato & Bay of Plenty Freight Action Plan.

The themes for Fleet Day this year were road safety, sustainability, and fleet efficiency – all key industry priorities that are reflected in the Freight Action Plan. We spoke about the opportunities to increase capacity of the freight network to meet growing demand, highlighted key areas of industry concern about the resilience and safety of critical roading routes in the region, and shared about the work we have been doing to advocate for improvements to truck driver training pathways.

ShadowTech Day

Te Waka partnered with TechWomen to support the delivery of ShadowTech Day 2023 in the Waikato. ShadowTech Day provides secondary school girls with a ‘day in the life’ experience of working in tech, encouraging them to pursue education pathways that lead to roles in the sector.

With women making up only 29% of the country’s tech workforce, events like ShadowTech Day play an important part in increasing the pipeline of young women entering the industry. We thank the local tech employers that supported ShadowTech Day 2023 and look forward to supporting the event again in 2024.



Waikato Economic Development Forum

Te Waka hosted the Waikato Regional Economic Development Forum in August, attended by district and regional economic development representatives from a range of iwi, local government and community organisations. The Ministry for Primary Industries also joined the forum to introduce the group to On Farm Support, a service aimed at supporting farmers and growers to take an integrated approach to farm planning, tackling environmental challenges, adapting to change and accessing existing services.



We also hosted several members of the forum at the Waikato Pacific Business Network's inaugural Waikato Pacific Business Excellence awards. We were inspired by the leadership, success and community impact demonstrated by the award winners.

Advocacy

Paving the Way for a Waikato Regional Agreement



The Waikato is experiencing rapid growth, and keeping pace with appropriate infrastructure is critical. We need long-term, strategic infrastructure investment, and we're calling for the region's leaders to pave the way there together.

In July we published a [paper](#) highlighting the way forward: a Waikato regional agreement with the government, supported by the private sector, to ensure long-term strategic infrastructure investment that builds resilience, enables growth, and improves wellbeing for us all. This paper was well received and has supported our regional advocacy with central government.

Regional Development Funding

We welcomed government announcements for Kānoa regional development funding of two projects in the Waikato:

- ESP Medical's expansion of manufacturing capability and services, for the development of advanced medical products in Hamilton.
- Neocrete's investment in a low-carbon concrete manufacturing plant in Taupō.

These investments support the growth of advanced manufacturing in the Waikato and the transition to a low-carbon economy, recognising the region's potential as a thriving economic and innovation hub.

Submissions

Te Waka has submitted on the Draft 2024 Transport Government Policy Statement (GPS), which sets out the Government's transport priorities and guides investment in transport infrastructure. In alignment with our delivery against the Waikato & Bay of Plenty Freight Action plan, our submission on the Draft GPS focused on:

- The need for strategic investment in an interconnected, multi-modal transport network for the golden triangle, based on long-term scenario planning that factors in the strong population and industry growth that is expected in our region.
- The opportunity for the government to apply the same level of priority to the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Transport Programme as it places on the metro transport plans for Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.
- The need for the government to move faster to identify and implement new funding tools for transport infrastructure, including value capture and user-pay models that are attractive to potential investors.

We are also preparing submissions on the suite of energy policy documents currently out for consultation. Given the Waikato's role as a leading energy generation region, and the need to support industrial decarbonisation, we encourage engagement from business and industry leaders in the Waikato to inform the energy policy settings that will enable us to reach our climate goals and underpin our economic future. To learn more about Te Waka's advocacy in support of the energy transition, reach out to our General Manager Economic Development [Rosie Spragg](#).

International Delegations

Our Chief Executive Fiona Carrick presented to a delegation from Vietnam's Department of Personnel Training about the role strong economic fundamentals play in developing local communities. In the presentation we spoke to the Waikato's robust regional economy – driven by agriculture, manufacturing, construction, energy and freight and logistics – which provides a foundation for innovation, sustainable growth and prosperity.



The Te Waka team also hosted a delegation from Suizhou City, Hubei Province in China at Zealong Tea Estate. We discussed trade opportunities for the Waikato with particular focus on agriculture and infrastructure.



Insights & Intelligence

Regional Economic Data



Our newly launched interactive insights dashboard is a source of region-specific intelligence that will inform decision making for business owners, investors and talent considering the potential of our region.

The dashboard provides regularly updated regional economic data on sales and payments, labour market performance, social supports, housing and construction, which can be filtered by specific time periods. For some charts, district-level data is also available.

This is our first iteration of the dashboard replacing the static ‘Quarterly Economic Radar’. We welcome your feedback to help us continually improve the dashboard. You can check it out [here](#).

New Zealand Wind Energy Summit

At the New Zealand Wind Energy Summit 2023, Te Waka heard from a diverse range of energy industry leaders about the opportunity for wind energy to underpin the transformation of our economy.

We shared our insights from the conference across two articles, focused on the opportunity to embed clean energy in high-value exports, the need for bold leadership and structural changes to enable investment, and the opportunity to embody Treaty partnership in the development of the offshore wind industry. Read our reflections from the conference [here](#).



Climate Change & Business Conference



Following the Wind Energy Summit, Te Waka attended the 2023 Climate Change & Business Conference, which focussed on identifying effective adaptation pathways while maintaining momentum on achieving real emission reductions at pace.

In sharing our insights from the conference, we discuss the need to use a broad mix of tools to reduce emissions, increase sequestration, and adapt to a changing climate. We also share examples of where we can leverage existing knowledge to take meaningful action in our region and highlight the opportunity to benefit from bold action on climate change that helps to solve global problems.

Read our reflections from the conference [here](#) and check out the list of free resources for business leaders that we have collated on our website [here](#), to help you act on climate and sustainability.

Waikato Success Stories

Chasing Time English

For [Chasing Time English](#), they couldn't imagine a better place to produce their world leading English Language Learning TV drama style series than here in the Waikato. From script to screen to learner, Chasing Time English's engaging content library is produced by the Waikato company's long serving in-house team.

Chasing Time English began five years ago when founders Scott Granville and Ben Woollen saw a gap in the market for narrative drama series for English language education and filled it with their English Language education series, engaging a massive international market of learners.



ÖKU

When [ÖKU's](#) story began there was a notable absence of New Zealand native herbs in the natural health products market. Founders Scott Smith and Helen Paul-Smith recognised this gap and embarked on producing their own original blends and products.

Before ÖKU's inception, Scott experienced kidney failure. His health challenges prompted him to explore the combining of modern medicine with natural medicine and in particular, the use of New Zealand native herbs.