

Ōtepoti Dunedin

Business Events Plan 2025-2028



dunedin

PLAN ON A PAGE

Vision:

To deliver economic, social and environmental benefit for our people, businesses and place, positioning Dunedin as a standout destination for business events that align with our city's strengths.

Goals:

Enhance sector strength and capability

Support sector awareness, infrastructure enhancement and city-aligned events

Drive year-round economic growth

Position Dunedin as a forward-thinking event destination

Actions:

2025-2026

- Create an active networked sector
- Support sector networks and capability
- Develop systems to collect and share information on events and their impacts
- Build sector relationships and knowledge sharing
- Position Dunedin's 'visit, live, work' attributes to delegates

2026-2027

- Highlight sectors of strength and influential individuals
- Attract and support city-aligned events
- Use data to measure impact, inform strategy and celebrate success
- Assess infrastructure needs and benchmark against other cities
- Build agility and contingency planning

2027-2028

- Encourage recurring events
- Leverage networks and ambassadors
- Support and promote environmental and inclusive event practices
- Use case studies to demonstrate the benefits of hosting business events
- Advocate for continued investment in venues, services and infrastructure

Ongoing

- Foster positive perceptions of Dunedin as a successful, safe, unique, vibrant and collaborative destination
- Develop unified leadership, networking, and communication structures with local and national partnerships



INTRODUCTION

Our compact and connected city, steeped in history but with the youthful vibrancy of a student city, is the ideal site for business events of all sizes. Boasting superb venues, numerous top-notch accommodation options, diverse hospitality providers and a range of remarkable natural and cultural attractions, Dunedin is perfect for business events.

Business events are a strong contributor to the city's economic, social and environmental performance. An important component of the broader tourism export sector, business events attract high-value visitors, encourage repeat visitation and help maintain year-round employment and economic consistency through off-peak activity. They attract talent and investment, promote knowledge exchange and strengthen the city's positioning as a centre of innovation and collaboration.

This strategy focuses on attracting the right events - those that can be delivered to a world-class standard, align with Dunedin's future focus areas and contribute to strengthening our local knowledge economy and global reputation. It sets a path for city-wide collaboration to grow business events in a way that aligns with the city's strengths, opportunities and aspirations and aims to create lasting positive legacy.

THE ROLE OF ENTERPRISE DUNEDIN

Enterprise Dunedin is Dunedin City Council's Economic Development unit focused on increasing skills, incomes and job opportunities for Dunedin's residents. Dunedin Business Events provides industry leadership for the business events sector and connects key local and national partners. It is a non-profit resource for events planners to access comprehensive, impartial information and support for hosting business events in Dunedin.

DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

Dunedin's business event sector and wider business community have been very forthcoming and generous with their time and expertise during the formulation of this plan. Consultation has shown clear consensus on the city's strengths, opportunities and challenges that must be considered as we plot and walk the path ahead.



SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

Strengths and Opportunities

- **History and Heritage**
Delegates experience the city's heritage through accommodation, venues, hospitality and activities
- **Compact, Walkable, Beautiful and Safe**
The city's size and design make getting around easy and enjoyable
- **Manaakitaka**
Southern hospitality, local connections and solid networks ensure nimble and successful outcomes
- **Strong Academic History and Reputation**
Home to highly regarded tertiary institutions and world-leading academics
- **Creation of New Events**
Leveraging city strengths to create new conferences to be held regularly in Dunedin
- **Partnerships with Tourism New Zealand**
Utilising the Conference Assistance Programme to attract events aligned with key pillars
- **Events and Tourism**
Use events and tourism offerings to attract events, activities, extended stays and return visits
- **Destination Marketing and Storytelling**
Reposition city brand to showcase our unique character and culture.

Weaknesses and Threats

- **Low Buy-In on Business Events**
Lack of prioritisation of business events through infrastructure and data on their value
- **Flight Connectivity and Costs**
In comparison to main centres, schedules can be inconvenient, lengthy, costly and off-putting
- **Perception Issues**
Dunedin has a perception problem, with many considering it cold, isolated and boring
- **Underdeveloped Industry Cohesion**
Lack of clear leadership and direction has hindered event attraction
- **Competition from Larger Cities**
Limited resources in terms of marketing, connectivity, infrastructure and accommodation
- **Non-viability of International Flights**
If the Dunedin-Gold Coast flight is not successful further connections will be unlikely
- **Economic Uncertainty**
Economic fluctuations and lack of competitive packages could impact event attraction
- **Sector Specific Financial Sensitivities**
Financial constraints within key sectors will impact event spend.

Strategic Alignment:

Enterprise Dunedin and Dunedin Business Events operate within a group of related strategic frameworks and plans at a local and national level. The Business Events Strategy and its vision, goals and activities have been developed with regard to and are closely aligned to the following documents






Dunedin's Economic Development Strategy

Dunedin's Economic Development Strategy aims to increase skills, incomes and job opportunities for Dunedin's residents.

Vision:

Dunedin is one of the world's great small cities. We are renowned as a confident, competitive knowledge centre, a community where enterprise and creativity support a productive and sustainable city.





Themes:

-  Business vitality
-  Alliances for innovation
-  A hub of skills and talent
-  Linkages beyond our borders
-  A compelling destination

Te Taki Haruru

Te Taki Haruru, Dunedin City Council's Māori Strategy Framework ensures support, integration and protection of the priorities of mana whenua and Māori, and reaffirms Council's commitment to a Treaty of Waitangi partnership approach.

Principles:

-  Autūroa - longevity, ongoing influence and leadership
-  Auora - health and wellbeing of people and the environment
-  Autikaka - protection of resources, people and place
-  Autakata - genealogy and taking the past with us

Destination Ōtepoti, Dunedin Destination Management Plan

Destination Ōtepoti focuses on sustainable development, community well-being and enhancing the visitor experience ensuring Dunedin is a great place to live, visit and invest.

Vision:

Growing the value of our visitor economy to the benefit of the wider Ōtepoti Dunedin area, and partnering to protect and enhance our environments, taoka and communities.

Priorities:

-  Resilient Destination Management
-  Transformation Destination Development
-  Effective Destination Marketing
-  World-leading Environmental Practices

Piata Mai – A National Statement of Strategic Direction

Piata Mai provides a shared future vision for the business events sector in order to achieve economic success for itself and the wider economy to the clear benefit of the taiao, communities, our people and manuhiri.

Vision:

A thriving sector, an enriched place and flourishing people.

Priorities:

-  Enduring and equitable sector funding
-  Data, for the sector and those it benefits
-  A resilient sector
-  Care for people and place
-  Creating greater value
-  Grow cultural integration and shared value
-  Telling our story

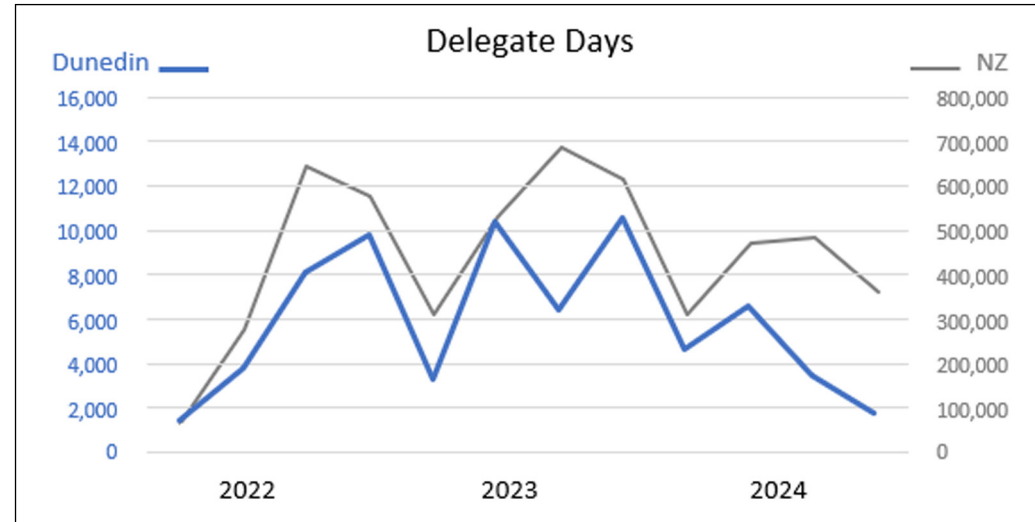
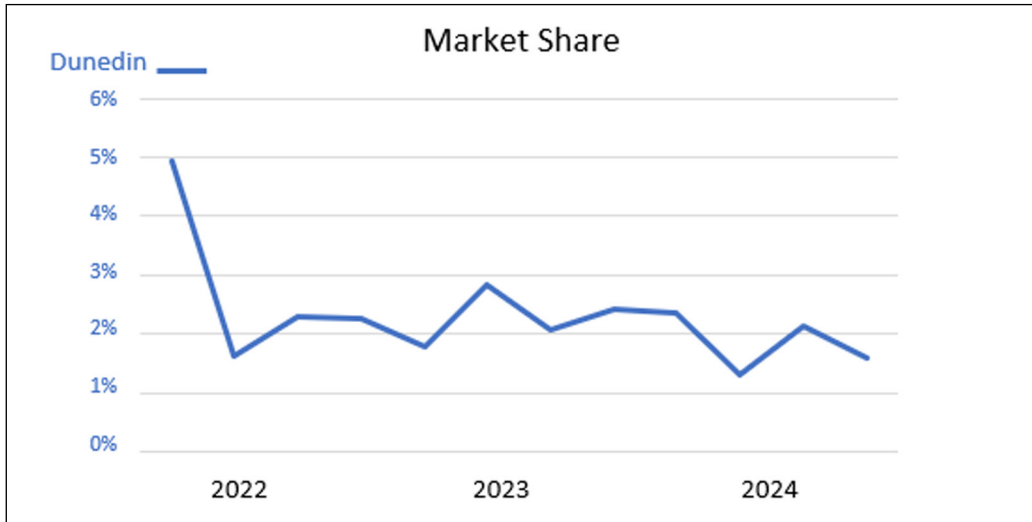


BUSINESS EVENTS – VALUE TO DUNEDIN

Business events encompass small to very large professional gatherings from meetings and conferences to exhibition and trade shows. They are powerful drivers of economic development, knowledge transfer and innovation:

- **Economic Impact** - business events are high-value contributors to the visitor economy, directly benefiting local venues, accommodation, hospitality, retail and experience providers. They indirectly benefit many other businesses as delegates spend more per day than leisure travellers and they are exposed to Dunedin's drawcards, encouraging future investment, residency and advocacy
- **Knowledge Economy** - by bringing global experts, decision-makers and influencers to the city, business events grow the city's knowledge base, fostering innovation, collaborative networks, commercial partnerships and long-term industry development
- **Seasonality and Dispersal** - business events tend to be held mid-week and during shoulder or off-peak seasons, helping to smooth demand and enhance regional tourism productivity. They have significant potential to generate extended stays and return visitation
- **Legacy and Sector Growth** - business events aligned with the city's education and industrial priorities leave lasting legacies, building capabilities and networks that endure well beyond the events themselves.

BUSINESS EVENTS – VALUE TO DUNEDIN



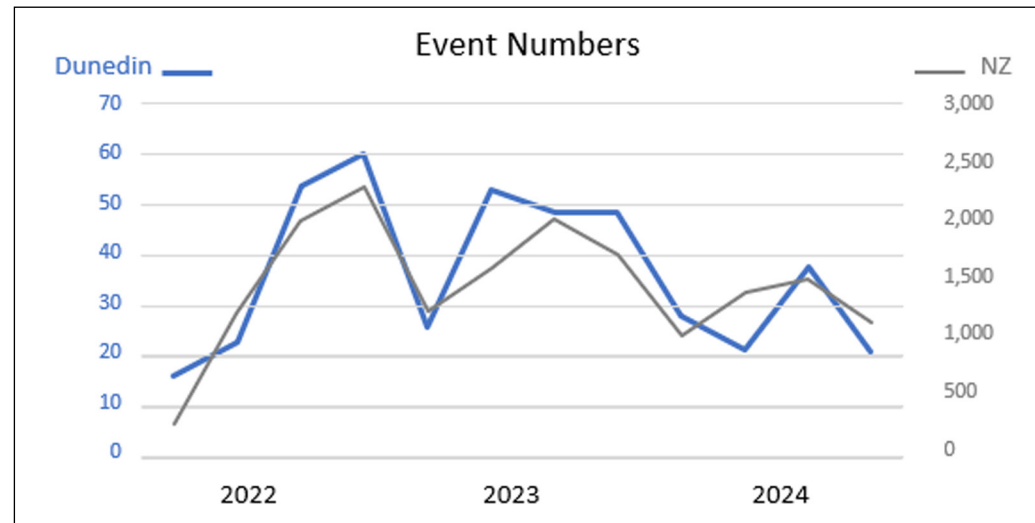
3 years 2022-2024

2.1% of national market share

438 events total, average of 146 events a year

125,996 delegate days total, average of 41,999 days a year

Contribution of \$22,938,664, average of \$13,691,674 a year
 (based on MBIE's nightly spend of \$326 - Business Events Delegate Survey Report 2019)



BUSINESS EVENT STRATEGY OUTCOMES AND GOALS

A series of outcomes were developed and prioritised in collaboration sector stakeholders and their alignment with relevant strategic frameworks is illustrated below. These outcomes were then grouped into four overarching goals based on their alignment with pathways identified in Destination Ōtepoti: Dunedin Destination Management Plan.

	Economic Development Strategy	Te Taki Haruru	Destination Ōtepoti	Piata Mai
Goal 01	Reposition Dunedin's Brand			
	Grow Economic Value and Year-Round Visitation			
	Promote Dunedin's Unique Assets and Advantages			
	Engage in Targeted Event Attraction			
Goal 02	Create Events that Fit the City			
	Increase Awareness of Business Event Benefits			
	Enhance Infrastructure and Connectivity			
	Value and integrate the principles of Te Ao Māori			
Goal 03	Strengthen Sector Cohesion and Capability			
	Leverage Local and National Partnerships			
	Monitor and Respond to External Threats and Competition			
04	Be a Sustainable, Tech-Enabled Destination			

Goal 01

Drive year-round economic growth by repositioning Dunedin's brand, showcasing its unique strengths and targeting well-aligned events.

2025 - 2026

Identify high performing academic areas, industries and people

Create channels and systems to gather, compile and communicate info on events, amenities, nature-based and tourism-centred offerings

Build information and contacts within associations and with PCOs

Identify and support bid champions from the city's tertiary institutions and businesses

Promote Dunedin's distinctive character by highlighting its unique culture, creativity and spirit of collaboration

Strengthen national and international awareness and positive views of Dunedin, presenting it as a vibrant, well-equipped city with outstanding heritage and natural assets

Promote Dunedin's safe, walkable centre, rich heritage and unique natural assets as key aspects of its appeal

Showcase the city's vibrant culture, academic excellence, unique wildlife and world leading industries

Position Dunedin as a unique event destination, leveraging its venues and environment through marketing and trade activity including regular industry familiarisation and trade events

2026 - 2027

Showcase high performing academic departments, thriving industries and their people

Leverage events, amenities, natural treasures and tourism offerings to attract business events and encourage in-programme activities, extended stays and return visits

Promote the city to delegates as an ideal place to visit, live and invest in

Target events that suit Dunedin's venue capacities - multi-day events of up to 400 delegates

Attract events aligned with key industries and sectors of strength, utilising existing infrastructure and world-leading activities

2027 - 2028

Measurements

- Number of campaigns, events, releases or media coverage
- Engagement with campaign materials, social media, city information and resources
- Perception and satisfaction surveys: general audience, organiser, delegate and stakeholder
- Promotional materials distributed to organisers and delegates
- Number of industry trade events and famils conducted and event organisers participating

Goal 02

Deliver activities that support city-aligned events, promote the value of business events, improve infrastructure and connectivity, and embed Te Ao Māori.

2025 - 2026

2026 - 2027

2027 - 2028

Identify high performing academic areas, industries and people	Support development of events aligned with Dunedin's industries and sectors of strength	
	Encourage recurring signature conferences	
Build relationships within associations and with PCOs	Target times when people and venue resources are typically underused	
Create channels and systems to gather, compile and communicate info on economic, cultural and social impacts	Collect analyse and communicate data on Dunedin's business events and their impacts	
	Use case studies to showcase benefits to the city and to organisations and individuals involved in hosting business events	
Engage with manawhenua on systems for upcoming events can be circulated and appropriate people engaged as required	Encourage and support venues and event organisers with integrating cultural capabilities	
	Understand current and ideal situations for infrastructure and connectivity	Support and advocate for investment in venues, services and infrastructure
Build visibility and understanding of the scale of Dunedin's business event industry to encourage community support and both civic and private investment		
Champion, encourage usage of and advocate for improvements to flight routes, schedules and pricing		

Measurements

- Growth in bids and events aligned to Dunedin's key pillars or sectors
- Number of releases, media coverage and engagement with content related to business events
- Attendance and presentations at relevant city events/forums
- Perception and satisfaction surveys: community, sector, organiser and delegate
- Gap analysis completed and shared with stakeholders

Goal 03

Enhance sector strength and capability through local and national collaboration, partnerships and proactive threat response.

Goal 04

Position Dunedin as a forward-thinking event destination through sustainability and technology-based solutions.

2025 - 2026

Create channels and systems to gather, compile and communicate info on economic, cultural and social impacts

Develop leadership, networking and communication structures to unify the sector

Support networks and capability building, encouraging collaboration, info sharing and regular engagement

Create channels and systems to gather, compile and communicate info on events, amenities, natural and tourism offerings

Build on and refresh 'Village of Learning' towards a strongly networked sector active in event attraction and support

Strengthen partnerships with Tourism New Zealand, RTOs and other key organisations to grow visibility and attract international events aligned with our key strengths and pillars

Support implementation and communication of authentic environmental and inclusive practices

Support accessible, hybrid or remote event delivery

2026 - 2027

Collect, analyse and communicate data, shaping sector direction and championing achievements

Build sector agility and responsiveness, supporting excellent service delivery and contingency planning

Benchmark against other cities to understand comparative strengths, infrastructure and outcomes, and stay informed about competitor developments

Directly compete or showcase aspects that 'fill the gaps' in others' offerings

Develop networks and ambassadors encouraging participation in event attraction, programming and sector development

2027 - 2028

Measurements

- Engagement in sector meetings and training and development events
- Sector benchmarking and data reports
- Number of releases, media coverage and engagement with sector success stories
- Number of international event bids
- Perception and satisfaction surveys: organiser, delegate and stakeholder
- Sector participation in sustainability and inclusion activities
- Perception and satisfaction surveys: organiser and delegate

MARKERS OF SUCCESS

Positive perception change about Dunedin and its attributes



Growing positive economic, social and environmental outcomes



Securing and successfully delivering high-value events



Wider understanding of the sector and its value

