



# Why is growth important and how does a Destination Management approach enable this?

*Prepared for the West Coast Tourism Summit:  
3 September 2025*



**GREAT SOUTH** 

Southland Regional Development Agency

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

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

# This Presentation

1. About Great South
2. Embracing and planning for change and growth opportunities
3. Implementation update on the Murihiku Southland Destination Strategy





# Great South's Vision

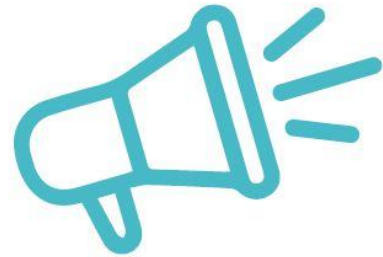
Even better lives through  
sustainable regional  
development



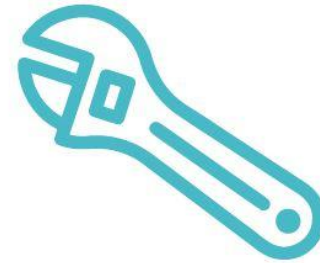
# Our Priorities



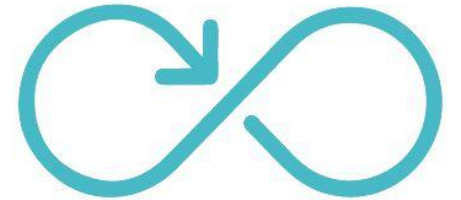
**Regional  
Development  
and  
Leadership**



**Regional  
Promotion**

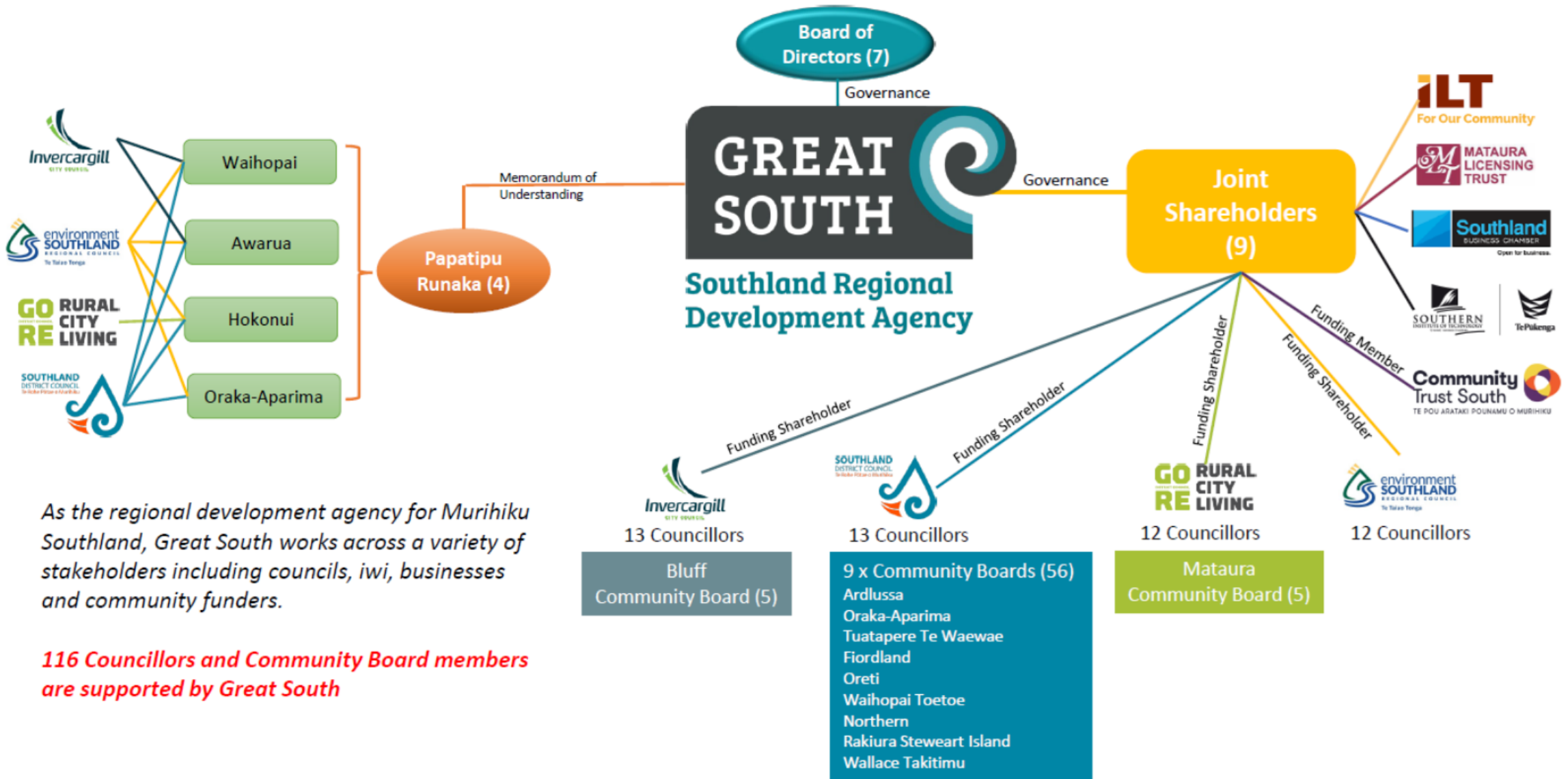


**Business Support  
and  
Diversification**



**Net Zero  
Southland  
(Decarbonisation)**

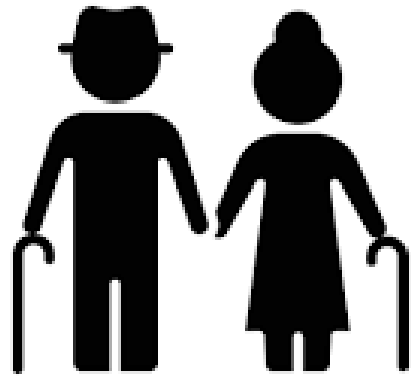
# How Great South works...



*As the regional development agency for Murihiku Southland, Great South works across a variety of stakeholders including councils, iwi, businesses and community funders.*

**116 Councillors and Community Board members are supported by Great South**

# Change will happen whether we want it to or not







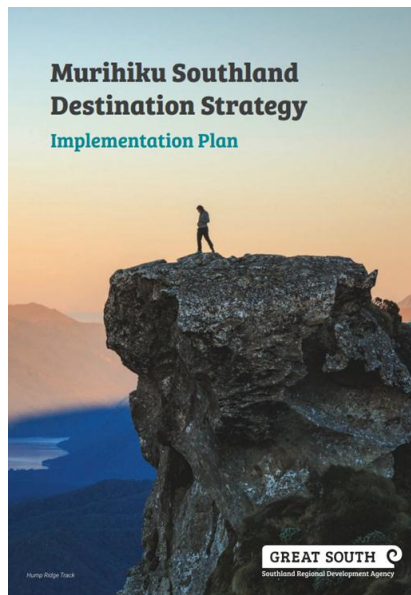
# BEYOND 2025 SOUTHLAND

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*

## If we understand change & plan for it, we can embrace it



Digital Strategy  
2015







# DISH



Data Insights Southland Hub



**Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

**Community  
Trust South**  
TE POU ARATAKI POUNAMU O MURIHIKU



**GO RURAL  
CITY  
RE LIVING**

**Invercargill**  
CITY COUNCIL

**environment  
SOUTHLAND**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
Te Taiao Tonga

**SOUTHLAND**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



## The Foundation for Regional Growth & Collaboration

**GREAT SOUTH**



Southland Regional Development Agency





Economy



Tourism



Housing



Environment



Wellbeing



Our Councils



Key Indicators

# Explore data and insights of Murihiku Southland

An all-in-one platform providing vital data and insights to help you navigate Murihiku Southland's economic, environmental, and social trends.

[View the data >](#)

[View Reports](#)

[About DISH](#)







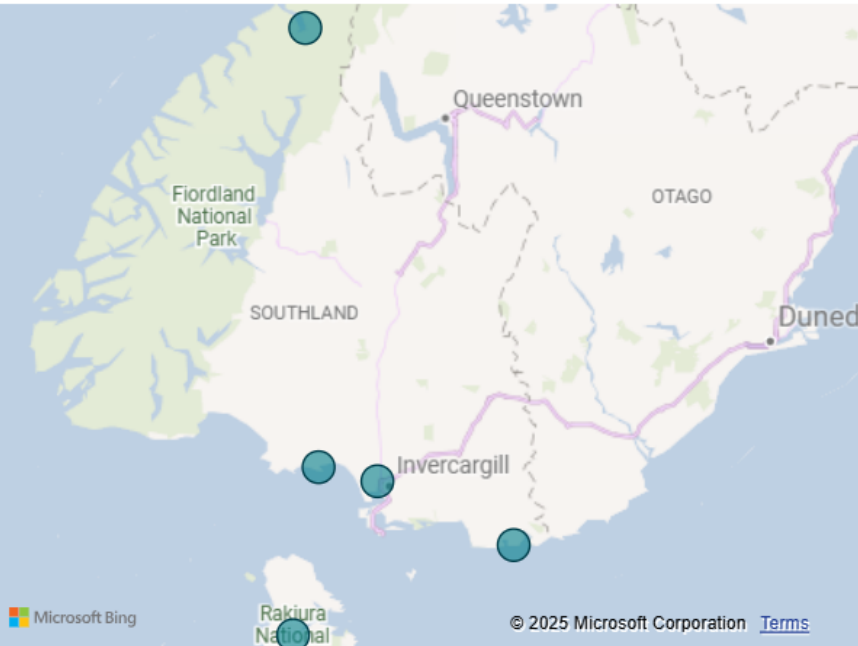
# Southland Tourism

## Visitor Numbers for Latest Month

Curioscape Curio Bay	Invercargill Airport	Milford Sound	Stewart Island	Te Hikoi Riverton
3,619	23,953	29,542	1,223	458

## Change From Same Month Previous Year

▲ 631	▼ 981	▼ 536	▼ 407	▼ 185
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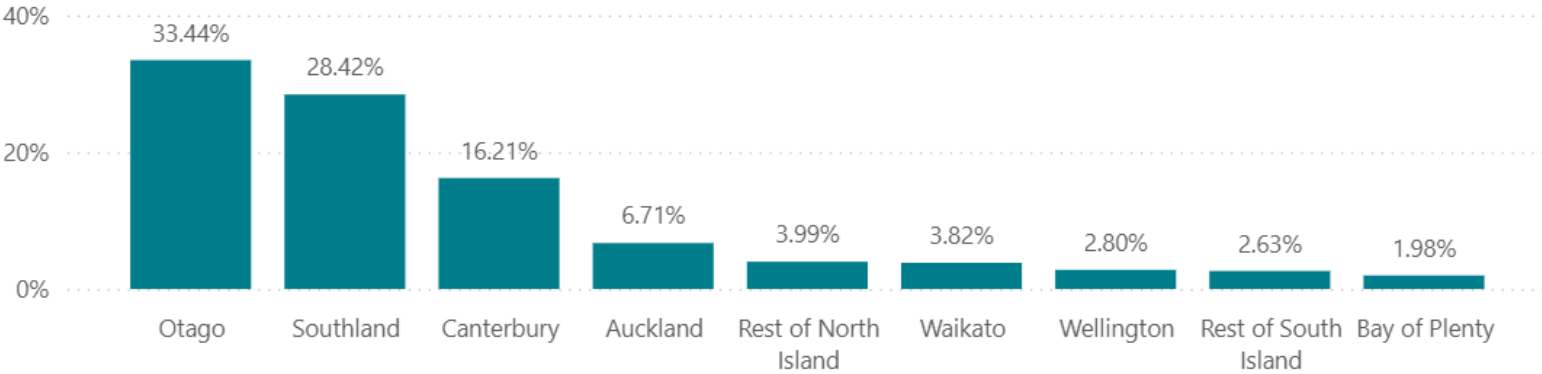
## AirBnB Listings

907  
vs prev -75 (-7.6% ▼)

Previous Month	982
Current Month	907

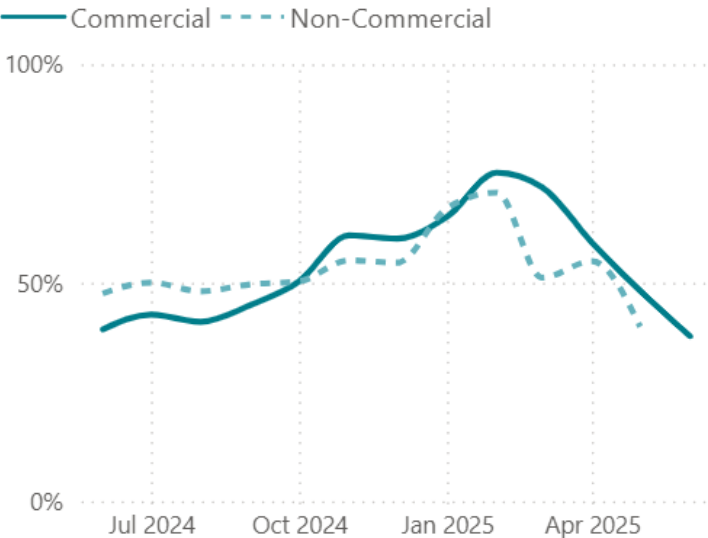
## Top Visitors Spending for Last 12 Months by Origin

Domestic International ?



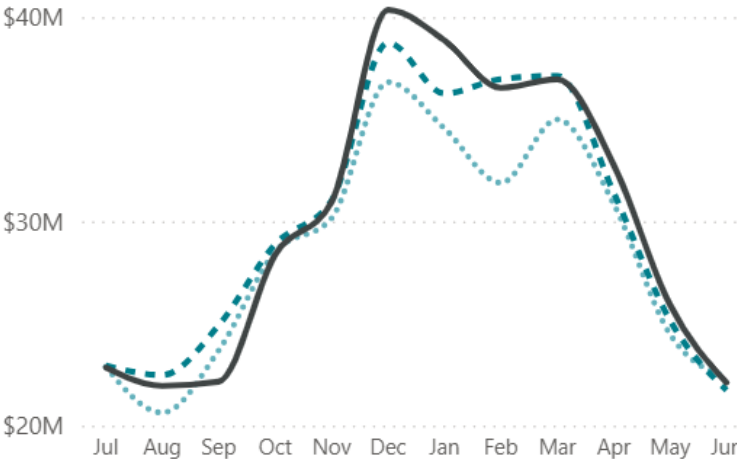
## Occupancy Rate for Last 12 Months Council Area

All



## Visitor Tourism Spend by Year

2 yrs ago 1 yr ago Most Recent






**Change can bring growth, the trick is  
to understand what type, where,  
when and how it should happen.**









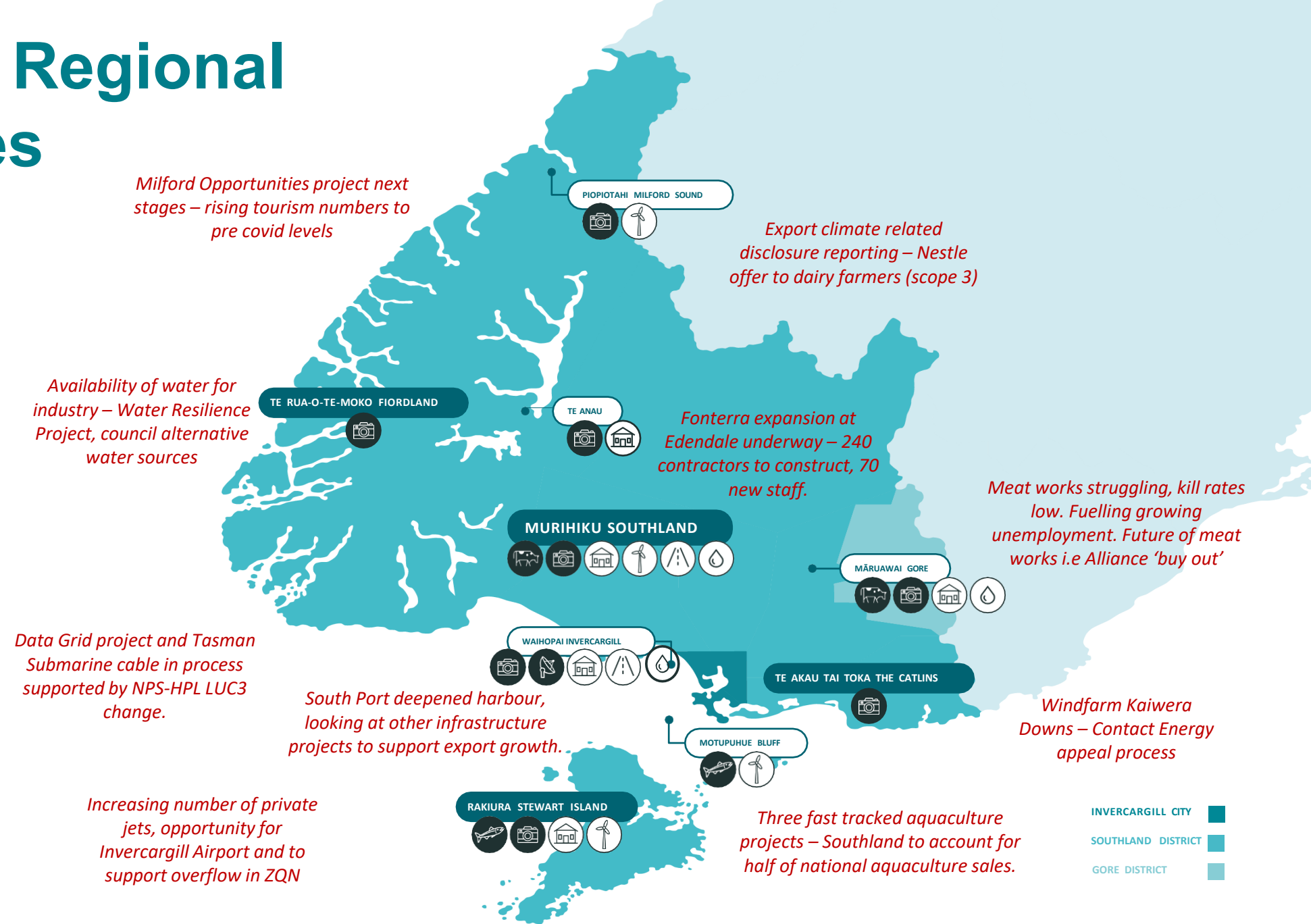
# Snapshot of Regional Opportunities

DIVERSIFICATION OPPORTUNITIES:

-  Aquaculture
-  Agriculture
-  Tourism
-  Space Operations

ENABLERS:

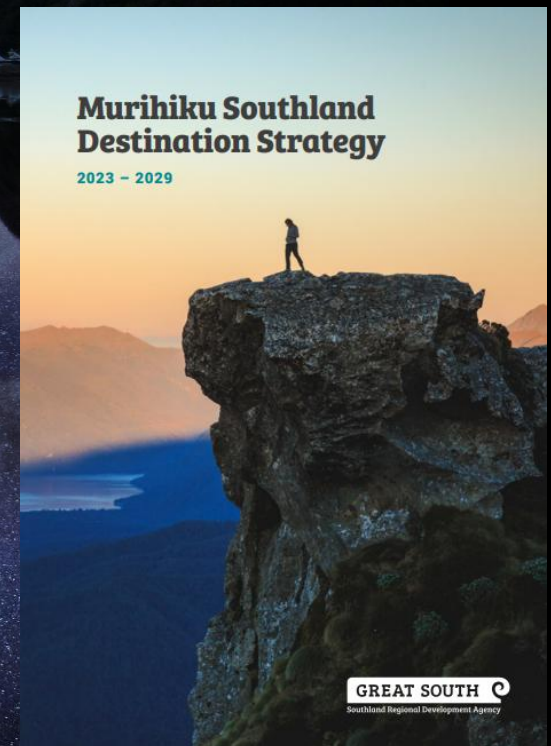
-  Housing
-  Energy
-  Transport & Roothing
-  Water







The Murihiku Southland Destination Strategy (MSDS) has been refreshed in 2023. It has guided the recovery from COVID-19 and fits within Beyond 2025 and wider planning.

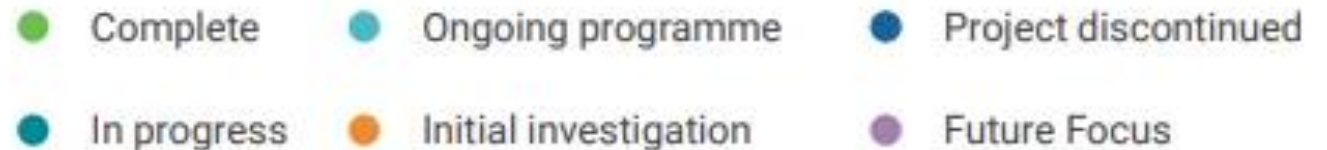




# Implementation Progress

The MSDS 2023 identified **63 projects** and **145 action points**

Of these **48%** are now part of an ongoing work programme or complete







# Implementation Plan Highlights



# Hump Ridge Track launched as New Zealand's newest Great Walk



# Opening of New Zealand's newest hotel in Invercargill

## 150-room Distinction Hotel





A hiker wearing a blue jacket and a large backpack stands on a rocky trail, looking out over a vast mountain range and a lake. The scene is captured during sunset or sunrise, with warm golden light illuminating the landscape. The text "Get a life" is written in a large, white, cursive font, and "get Southland" is written in a smaller, white, cursive font below it.

*Get a life*  
*get Southland*



# Opening of Te Wāhi Tākaro o Motupōhue Adventure Park





# Improvements in sustainable tourism practices



## Sustainable Activities & Experiences

Southland, New Zealand offers a range of sustainable activities and experiences for eco-conscious travelers. Visitors can explore the natural beauty of the region by taking a guided tour of the Fiordland National...

[READ MORE](#)

## Sustainable Businesses

Murihiku Southland boasts breathtaking natural scenery, from pristine white beaches to ancient rock walls rising from the sea, crystal clear lakes, lush native bush, and diverse marine life. As a community, we are...

[READ MORE](#)

## Sustainable Travel Ideas & Itineraries

Planning a holiday down and need some inspiration on what to do or where to go when visiting Southland? These recommended itineraries will make sure you take in all ...

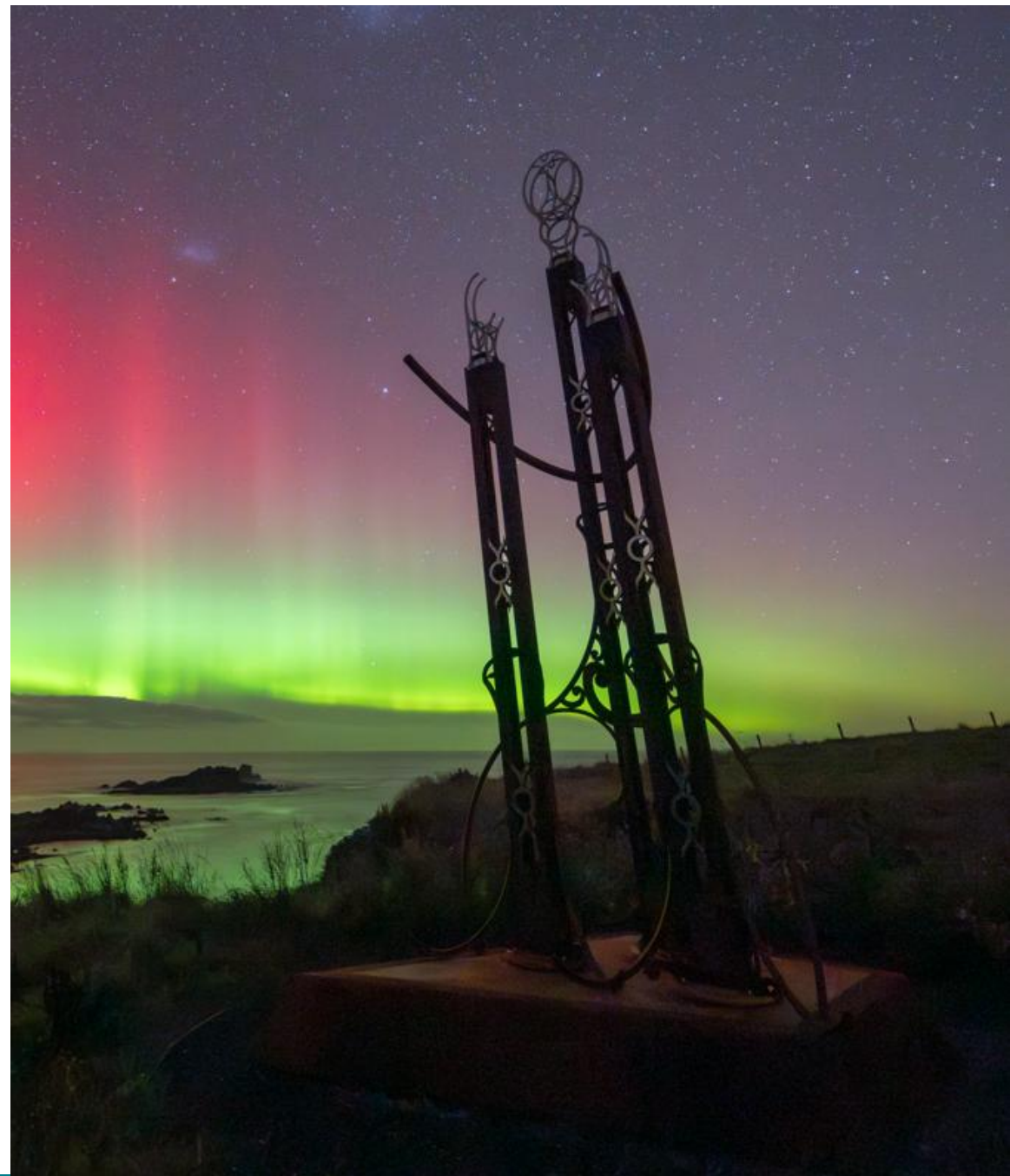
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## Kaitiakitanga Guardianship

Kaitiakitanga, a concept deeply rooted in Māori culture, plays a pivotal role in Murihiku Southland's approach to guardianship, sustainability, and conservation. In Southland, kaitiakitanga is not just a term...

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# Progress in celebrating the region's cultural heritage



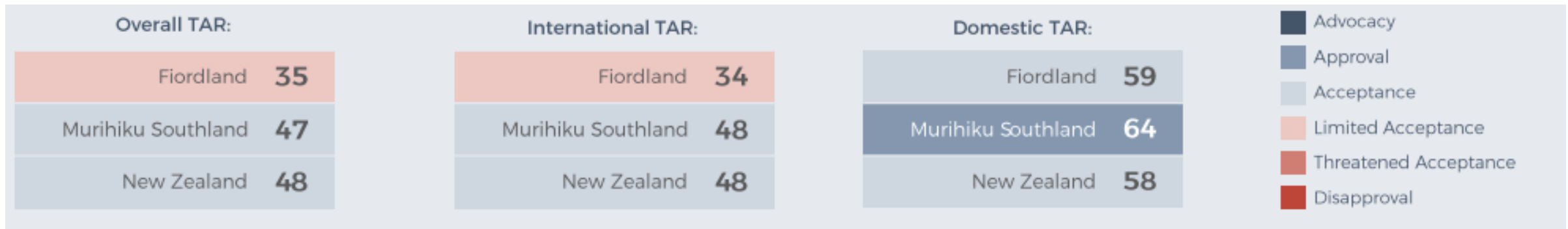


# Community Sentiment Research

## Positive attitudes towards tourism in Murihiku

- Residents view domestic tourism more favourably than international
- Residents have high exposure and engagement with tourism - 93%
- The majority feel they have personally benefited from tourism activity – 93% (employment, support for local businesses)
- The majority also feel they have been adversely impacted by tourism – 83% (litter/ waste, driver safety, environmental damage, housing affordability)

## Tourism approval rating:



# Jet capability connecting Invercargill to Auckland







**Invercargill Airport Redevelopment  
underway**



**The next stages of Invercargill's CBD rejuvenation are underway**





# THIS IS SOUTHLAND.

Business Events

The region's business events industry is growing from strength to strength





**Support for farmers to diversify into Agritourism**





Thank you and  
Questions?