



Celebrating new ideas

2008 New Zealand Post Group
Local Government Excellence Awards

Project Submission Template

Name of Project

'Team Taranaki' and the World Cup Triathlon series

Name of entering council/s

New Plymouth District Council (NPDC)

Category

Joined Up Local Government

Your write-up should use the following headings and address each point

1. The Rationale for the Project and Expected Benefits

Historically, the Taranaki region and New Plymouth district have not been major players in the New Zealand major events market. For many reasons, including population, perception and geographic location, we have struggled to divert events away from the country's traditional main centres.

The response to this problem has been the ultra-successful Team Taranaki model, in which numerous organisations combine resources, experience and commitment to secure and successfully host major events within the region.

In simple terms, the theory is that a collective region-wide approach brings a greater chance of securing major events than by NPDC, or any other individual organisation, 'going it alone'.

Evidence to date strongly suggests this is true.

In recent years, the Team Taranaki model has ensured a regular stream of major musical and sporting events, including concerts by major artists such as Elton John, Michael Crawford and R.E.M., festivals such as WOMAD and G-TARAnaki, and the annual New Zealand leg of the World Cup Triathlon series.

Coming up this September, the region is looking forward to the All Blacks v Manu Samoa test match (the only All Blacks game to be played outside the main New Zealand centres in 2008) and the New Zealand v China Davis Cup tennis tie. In April next year the New Zealand University Games will come to town for the first time.

For the purposes of this award entry we will focus primarily on the New Zealand leg of the World Cup Triathlon series (particularly under the evaluation framework criterion), which has been successfully held in New Plymouth since 2005 with the next race due for April 2009.

This event is a perfect example of how the Team Taranaki approach has delivered an event to the region, along with numerous associated benefits, that would previously have been regarded as beyond our reach.

New Plymouth District Mayor Peter Tennent says: "Team Taranaki is about punching above our weight, setting lofty goals and achieving them, and elevating our region to the upper reaches of the New Zealand major events league table."

2. Linkage to Council's Strategic Direction

The goals of Team Taranaki link directly to NPDC's Statement of Strategic Intent – "That New Plymouth District will offer an attractive living environment that compares favourably nationally and internationally".

There are also strong links to two of the New Plymouth district's seven Community Outcomes:

Vibrant: A district that provides high-quality and diverse cultural and recreational experiences and where independence and creativity are encouraged.

Prosperous: A district that boasts a sustainable, resilient and innovative economy that prospers within the natural and social environment.

In addition, the Major Events Strategy - approved by NPDC and carried out by the independent charitable trust Venture Taranaki - sets out the strategic criteria for supporting major events based around four areas:

1. Economic gains (attracting national and international visitor spend).
2. Social and cultural benefits (positively profiling New Plymouth and upholding the attributes of the Taranaki brand).
3. National and international marketing exposure.
4. Potential return on investment.

Key goals include the retention of existing sustainable events, the growth of new and existing events, and attracting new major events to New Plymouth.

NPDC attaches great importance to the attraction of events in creating vibrancy for our district and enhancing our ability to attract visitors and new residents.

The council's Manager Corporate Strategy and Policy Rory Palmer says: "The Local Government Act 2002 requires that local authorities take a sustainable development approach to their activities, taking into account the social, economic and cultural well-being of their communities.

"Through consultation, the New Plymouth District community has very clearly told NPDC that the local economy is the most important area for improvement.

"In Taranaki, research shows that skill shortages are the foremost obstacle to sustainable growth.

"Analysis of the local labour market and research on reasons why people choose to relocate to new jobs, or stay in current jobs, show that lifestyle and environmental factors are often more important than the job itself. New Plymouth District Council has identified the quality of the local living environment as the common and unifying rationale for all our diverse activities.

"Due to an increasingly mobile workforce, the council has also identified that this living environment needs to be nationally and internationally competitive if skills are to be attracted and retained.

"The emphasis placed on the quality of the living environment reveals that economic sustainability cannot be separated from the environmental, social and cultural dimensions of life in the district. NPDC, for a council of its size, has placed considerable emphasis on cultural well-being, to which events are a major contributor.

"People living in, or considering a move to, New Plymouth District do not have to travel to Wellington or Auckland to see world class events. NPDC and its strategic partners have ensured that these events come to them. The value placed on this is revealed annually in the National Research Bureau's community satisfaction survey, which rates events as a 'front of mind' issue when people are asked – 'What has the council done well?'.

"Not only do events contribute to making this district attractive to live in, they also bring people here to see the district at first hand. The feedback is almost always favourable and opens visitors' eyes to the possibility of moving here."

Stuart Trundle, Chief Executive of regional development agency and Team Taranaki member Venture Taranaki, says events such as the forthcoming All Blacks test match and the annual World Cup Triathlon series in New Plymouth position Taranaki on the world stage for both young people considering where they should study and work, and for a global audience thinking of relocating to Taranaki.

"Taranaki needs 16,500 additional skilled workers in core industries over the next 20 years," says Stuart.

"Offering such a variety of world class events to the people of Taranaki will help us to meet that challenge.

"We keep hearing from other economic agencies, from potential visitors and immigrants, and from people looking to develop their businesses here that they're attracted by Taranaki's lifestyle and these major events we keep bringing in.

"The Team Taranaki focus is on providing the people of Taranaki with world-class events. Not only does that mean great entertainment opportunities for locals and visitors, it also provides both inspiration and aspiration for Taranaki's future, on a personal and community level."

In recent years, the vast array of Team Taranaki members has included NPDC, Venture Taranaki, Port Taranaki, Sport Taranaki, Taranaki Arts Festival Trust, Taranaki Rugby Football Union, TSB Bank, TSB Community Trust, Stratford District Council, South Taranaki District Council, New Zealand Community Trust and the Noel and Melva Yarrow Trust.

3. Project Planning

In the Team Taranaki model, the first stage of planning is to ensure the four most important kinds of expertise are available. These are:

Financial – To help determine sources of revenue, expected expenditure level and timing of expenditures versus revenues, and to establish a system of financial accounting and control.

Marketing – To ensure we get the best audience possible, and the best sponsorship and support available.

Operational – To guide the overall operation of the event, including the management of any technology needed.

Legal – To advise on and negotiate the many contracts involved in an event

Another key element is the establishment of a collective vision among all Team Taranaki members.

Vision is vital to the success of any event of any size. It is the grand scheme of how the event will be perceived before, during and after it takes place. It is a view of what the event should be – who will attend, what they will buy, what the financial goals are – and, in general, what it should hope to accomplish.

The most important task for an event manager/promoter is to create reality from this vision.

Without vision we will never be able to attract the larger events, as it is integral to any bid plan that Team Taranaki will need to submit to selection committees or artist management in order to attract them to a proposition.

Vision is not just important for getting an event off the ground, it also plays a major role in ensuring it moves towards its goals. It is the best form of control management of those involved because it provides a shared goal.

Vision allows people to work independently towards a common end.

The best events articulate and develop a shared vision among all parties involved in planning and staging the event. In Team Taranaki the vision is established right from the start. This compounds the team's commitment – something money cannot buy.

4. Project Management

Team Taranaki runs a structured project management process for all its events, covering the following key areas:

- Initiating – Scoping.
- Planning – Project management plan (see below).
- Executing – Actions.
- Controlling – Regular status reports.
- Closing – Report sign off.

Each project management plan covers the following key considerations: purpose and background, goals and objectives, approach, benefits and success criteria, scope, deliverables, assumptions and constraints, timeline, budget and resources, risks, stakeholders, communication, implementation, approval and change requests.

A project team and manager is appointed to each event to ensure each step is carried out and that key deliverables are met on time.

5. Relationship Management and Communication with Stakeholders

Relationship management and communication form the very essence of Team Taranaki. Working together towards a common goal is the single most important aspect of the entire model. With any event, the liaison among Team Taranaki members is continuous – beginning with the mutual development of a collective vision right through to making sure the event is successful on the day (or days in the case of the World Cup Triathlon series and other events such as WOMAD and G-Taranaki).

For the World Cup Triathlon series, Team Taranaki members – including NPDC, Sport Taranaki, Venture Taranaki and Port Taranaki – meet on a regular basis to agree strategy and operational requirements. Other members of Team Taranaki who have played key funding roles with the triathlon since its inception in 2005 have included TSB Bank, TSB Community Trust, New Zealand Community Trust and Taranaki Electricity Trust.

It is natural that team members have their own considerations and objectives for any event but without exception, those on Team Taranaki share the common vision of ensuring a successful event that meets the goals of the Major Events Strategy.

6. Innovation and Originality

The concept of creating a team ethic among numerous and often disparate community leaders and stakeholders is, without doubt, innovative in New Zealand. In other cities and districts, events have often been lost due to the lack of an established collective vision and commitment. It is commonly accepted that the united front of the three Taranaki mayors (New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki) was a major factor in the region winning the right to host the 2009 New Zealand University Games.

In recent years we have seen a procession of major sporting and musical events coming to Taranaki. This is no accident – it is a direct result of the unique Team Taranaki model, which has been purposefully created to assist our economic growth through the attraction of major events.

Events organisers regularly praise the model and the single-minded commitment shown by Team Taranaki members. Dave Beeche, CEO of Triathlon NZ, says: “Tri NZ works right around New Zealand both in terms of delivering its own events and assisting others to deliver great triathlons. One of Tri NZ’s key properties is its triathlon festival in New Plymouth which incorporates an ITU World Cup – a truly world class event.

“Putting these events on requires the full support and engagement not only of the local council but also the broader community. Quite simply New Plymouth District Council, the tourism agency and other key stakeholders in the community have been outstanding to work with in delivering our triathlon festival – they have been incredibly proactive in making things happen – right from the funding side of things, to roading and park approvals, through to leveraging the event.

“There are only a couple of communities in the country who are this good to work with when it comes to delivering world class events, and New Plymouth is one of them.”

In the case of the World Cup Triathlon series, the volunteer base of marshals, athlete hosts and other helpers totalled more than 100 – a great example of a local community throwing its weight behind an event.

7. Evaluation Framework

Given the explicit economic requirements of the Major Events Strategy, Team Taranaki arranges economic impact assessments (EIAs) for the majority of major events held. These assessments provide statistical data on areas such as the direct expenditure created by the event, the number of temporary jobs created and the number of ‘bed nights’ enjoyed by local accommodation providers. EIAs are a crucial tool in measuring the performance of the events against key economic objectives.

Research into the 2005 triathlon estimates that event organisers and non-Taranaki based athletes, visitors and spectators injected an extra \$3.01 million into the local economy. In calculating this outcome, initial expenditure was evaluated to be \$2.07m with flow-on expenditure of \$0.94m.

In addition, it is estimated that the triathlon created the equivalent of 27 full-time jobs - as a result of money spent by event organisers, athletes and visitors/spectators - and that approximately \$560,000 was injected into local households in the form of wages/salaries resulting from the event.

On top of economic information, the EIA highlighted that elite athletes from out of town stayed an average of three nights, primarily in commercial accommodation rather than with friends or family. Some 72.5 per cent stayed in hotels/motels/backpackers or homestay accommodation.

Most of the visiting spectators were from the North Island with 32 per cent coming from locations other than Auckland or Wellington. And most of the visiting spectators said they enjoyed ‘other activities’ while in the region, such as enjoying New Plymouth’s Coastal Walkway, eating out, sight seeing and visiting facilities such as the city’s Puke Ariki museum and Govett-Brewster Art Gallery.

Besides the obvious financial benefits of the triathlon being held in New Plymouth, these statistics also reveal the benefits of the event in terms of the city’s perception and image among visitors.

Events like the triathlon attract many New Zealanders to the district for the first time in many years, or in some cases the first time ever. Once they are here, the vast majority are impressed by the quality of the living environment and the wide range of things to see and do.

Our geographical location means very few people ‘pass through’ Taranaki; they have to make a special journey. Holding a regular stream of major events in recent years has seen a sharp increase in the number of people heading our way.

8. Category Specific Criteria

The Team Taranaki model is a perfect example of the phrase ‘many hands make light work’.

Working in isolation, none of the individual team members could attract or run such a range of high quality events. For example:

- The World Cup Triathlon series was, and is, made possible by a Team Taranaki made up of NPDC, Venture Taranaki, Port Taranaki (on whose land much of the race takes place), TSB Community Trust and the Noel and Melva Yarrow Trust.
- The successful bid to host the forthcoming All Blacks v Manu Samoa test was made possible by a Team Taranaki comprising NPDC, Venture Taranaki, Sport Taranaki and the Taranaki Rugby Football Union.
- The annual WOMAD festival is made possible by a Team Taranaki made up of NPDC, Taranaki Arts Festival Trust, WOMAD, Shell and Todd Energy.
- The successful bid to host the forthcoming Davis Cup tennis tie was made possible by a Team Taranaki comprising NPDC, Sport Taranaki and the TSB Bank.

Aside from the obvious benefits, enjoyed by all, of bringing first class events to our region, Team Taranaki members are also benefiting on individual levels from the unique model.

Examples include Sport Taranaki who, due to the forthcoming Davis Cup tie and next year’s New Zealand University Games, have been able to expand the scope of their operations and achieve commercial benefits by acting as event managers.

All three of the region’s district councils have also benefited in a strategic planning sense, through the formation of the Regional Tourism Contract Management Group (RTCMG). This group has developed as a result of the increased contact between the councils in light of the collective actions and regular meetings of Team Taranaki. The RTCMG oversees the councils’ investment in marketing and tourism and is a bonafide regional body with terms of reference.

The three councils will also benefit directly from the forthcoming New Zealand University Games, with greater use of their respective sports venues by top class athletes. The media coverage of the games will be of great benefit to the councils in terms of perception and image of their respective districts and venues.

In addition, the Taranaki Rugby Football Union (TRFU) stands to benefit considerably from the forthcoming All Blacks test. In a changing rugby environment, with the potential for a revised Super 14 competition, the test match is helping TRFU to position itself as a bigger player in the competition to host major rugby matches.

In conclusion, the Team Taranaki model and its highly successful record of attracting events is playing a major role in raising the profile and image of the Taranaki region, not to mention creating a great sense of pride among locals.

With an increasingly mobile national and international workforce, a city or district’s lifestyle options have become a key consideration for those wishing to relocate. Team Taranaki has grasped this concept and is punching far above its weight in making it happen.

It is clear that major events are a big drawcard for a city or region.

As a recent arrival said in the local media: “If Taranaki can do WOMAD, I can do Taranaki”.