



Responsible Camping 2018/19

End of season Summary Report

August 2019



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Summary Report

The Responsible Camping Working Group (the Working Group) was established by the Minister of Tourism in 2018 to identify ways to better manage the camping system. The Working Group recommended long-term policy and regulatory changes to the responsible camping system, and short-term practical actions that can be taken to help councils manage camping in their regions during the peak summer season.

In late 2018, Responsible Camping Funding of \$8.5 million was allocated to councils to address immediate issues ahead of the peak 2018/2019 visitor season with a focus on infrastructure, education and enforcement.

The funding was divided between three key programmes of work. Twenty seven councils received funding of \$7,723,875 for locally-managed infrastructure, education and enforcement programmes. \$400,000 was allocated to a technology-based camping pilot managed by Geozone (TH2Connect - a private company) and \$410,000 to Tourism New Zealand for a responsible camping summer campaign.

Council funded projects

The funding provided to local government was used for a total of 115 projects. The projects included toilets, wash facilities, rubbish, water, site development and security (see *Annex 1: Responsible Camping Funding 2018/2019 by Council and Project*). The Responsible Camping funding was spread throughout New Zealand, with the largest investment on the West Coast (\$2.22m) and then Canterbury (\$1.29 m) (see *Annex 2: Responsible Camping 2018/2019: map of funding allocation by region*).

Twenty-five councils reported back to MBIE about the outcomes of the funding. Feedback from councils was overwhelmingly positive (4.5 out of 5), with nearly all councils being 'satisfied' (4) or 'very satisfied' (5) with their projects.

A number of councils found that the funding enabled them to trial innovative ways to manage responsible camping within the current legislative settings. Councils reported that the funding contributed to their ability to influence more positive behaviour from campers that use local facilities.

The fund enabled councils to provide a greater presence of readily identifiable staff who acted as ambassadors for responsible camping and provided education and information to campers.

The funding allowed councils to gather data and information to help inform future decisions about managing campers in their regions.

One issue noted by a number of councils was the concerns of commercial accommodation suppliers (camping grounds, motels and hostels) who believed that the increase in support for responsible camping negatively impacted their businesses. In particular, commercial camping grounds felt that improving and developing responsible camping grounds put them in competition.

Some councils found the timeframe for funding rounds to be too tight. This delayed completion dates for some projects, while others were hastily put together without proper consultation. In response to this feedback, the 2019 / 2020 funding round was opened earlier in the year to allow greater planning from councils ahead of the peak visitor season.

Data and Technology pilot

In its report to the Minister of Tourism, the Working Group recommended that some work was completed to explore how technology can be used to manage responsible camping and to identify data sources to help decision making, both at a local level, and at a national policy setting.

Geozone received funding to create a data and technology pilot programme across ten council areas to guide camper behaviour and influence destination choice. The pilot, run through Geozone's Campermate app, alerted campers about space available at free camping sites based on data gathered from video cameras (at Wanaka, Akaroa, Kaikōura and Tauranga) and more than 100 sensors that detect parked camper vans. If spaces were occupied, campers were offered alternate camping destinations and discount coupons for nearby paid camping sites to encourage dispersal and stop free camp sites from being over-crowded.

In addition, Geozone agreed to provide local councils with data collected through their app relating to camper behaviour. This data showed where visitors travelled through a region, and key searches made by app users, for example, where visitors used the app to search for toilet or camping facilities.

The data collected during the pilot programme provided councils with better information about visitor behaviour and influenced visitor behaviour. The data has also been used to inform applications to the Tourism Infrastructure Fund. The trial conducted received positive press coverage and councils told MBIE that they have valued the information they received from Geozone.

Geozone had greater success with the camera technology over the sensors and intend on removing the sensors and extending the technology trial with an increase in camera sites into a number of new areas for the upcoming 2019 / 2020 season.

Tourism New Zealand Responsible Camping Summer Campaign

Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) created and delivered a multi-channel and multi-partner campaign to encourage responsible camping. It ran Dec 18 – March 19.

Informed by research

TNZ undertook research about 'visitor behaviour in nature' with the Department of Conservation and found that:

- Visitors want to do the right thing
- In the absence of clear guidance, visitors are likely to revert to behaviour that is the norm in their own culture
- Visitors require clear guidance on what is required of them
- It would help to provide visitors with an understanding of why New Zealanders value our natural environment
- Some visitors expect more sophisticated recycling systems based on what they have at home.

Better together – partnership approach

TNZ partnered with the i-SITE Visitor Information Network, Tourism Industry Aotearoa, rental vehicle companies, the two Cook Strait ferry companies, and regional tourism organisations to broaden the reach of the campaign.

Campaign components

The campaign included a 'Kete of Camping Knowledge' - a reusable shopping bag containing information about how to camp responsibly, and a WiFi system at selected i-SITEs around New Zealand - visitors were able to access free WiFi after watching a video about how to camp responsibly, including digital advertising targeting campers.

Key results included:

- 1.8 million video views on YouTube
- over 100,000 views on Facebook
- 30,600 views through the free WiFi at 10 i-SITEs
- 60,000 Trade Me users who searched for 'vans' viewed the ad
- Air New Zealand in-flight video 1778 views between April-June 2019
- Domestic news media: 75 news articles across TV, radio and print
- Over 194,000 page views on camping.org.nz from 1 December 2018 - 31 March 2019, with 86% of these from new visitors to the site. In comparison, there were around 71,000 page views during the three-month period following the campaign (1 April – 30 June 2019).
- March 2019 Mood of the Nation results – Kiwis less concerned about freedom camping
- Fewer complaints to Council relating to camping
- Peak media analysis shows camping reporting sentiment balanced.

Post campaign research

At the end of the 2018/2019 campaign, TNZ undertook research to determine the campaign's effectiveness. It found:

- Seeing is more effective than hearing - observing people following the rules in their campaign video helped with comprehension, especially for visitors whose first language was not English.
- Visitors liked seeing people like them – bringing a variety of voices / faces to the campaign added impact and a sense of collaboration.
- The responsible camping ketes - being given to campers provided a good conversation starter about camping responsibly and why Kiwis value our home.
- Leveraging the Tiaki -Care for New Zealand promise strengthened the message – the connection to Tiaki could be made more explicit in future campaigns.
- Language is important - Visitors don't always see what they are doing as 'camping'. Using language associated with camping doesn't always resonate with those living out of vehicles and this means they might not always pay attention to communication about camping.
- Data from the free WiFi provided valuable information about campers country of origin.

General lessons learned

A high level summary of the lessons learned at the end of the season for the Responsible Camping Working Group is attached at Annex 3.

Some takeaways and learnings from Government's 2018/19 responsible camping investment include:

- Generally, campers want to do the right thing
- Any responsible camping hubs need to be well resourced and monitored and managed to ensure good outcomes
- Suppliers of products for new amenities, such as toilet paper suppliers, were not necessarily able to keep up with the increased demand generated with new projects or initiatives
- In some regions, the service industry was happy with the increased business they have received as a result of an increase in responsible camping numbers
- Some people that may have been otherwise perceived as freedom campers were actually homeless
- Some campers provided feedback that they were encouraged by rental companies not to use the toilets in their self-contained vehicles as doing so would result in the return of a deposit for a clean toilet.

Community, political or media queries received by local councils

Most councils noticed a significant reduction in negative responses from the community over 2018/2019. Similarly, many councils reported that little to no media attention had been seen regarding issues around responsible camping.

Some councils reported a slight decrease in complaints, but compared against an increase in campers overall, which is a positive result. A few councils noted an increase in complaints, but proportionate to the increase in visitors to their region.

Increasing the number of staff available on-site meant that issues could be mitigated or resolved before becoming a larger problem.

Generally the community welcomes additional resources for amenities as it enhances areas that the community use as well as supporting responsible behaviour from visitors.

In some cases, local boards and councillors noted the success of more timely responses to bylaw breaches.

Annex 1: Responsible Camping Funding 2018/2019 by Council and Project

Row Labels	Sum of Funding Approved	Sum of TOILET PROJECTS	Sum of WASH FACILITIES PROJECTS	Sum of EDUCATION PROJECTS	Sum of RUBBISH PROJECTS	Sum of WATER PROJECTS	Sum of SITE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS	Sum of SECURITY PROJECTS	Sum of OTHER PROJECTS
Bay of Plenty	\$ 640,000.00	2	1	2	3		1	2	2
Opotiki District Council Toilet facilities, signage and additional monitoring and compliance capacity.	\$ 50,000.00	1							
Tauranga City Council Education and information for campers, monitoring and enforcement, and infrastructure investments including signage, rubbish and recycling stations.	\$ 150,000.00	1		1	1				
Western Bay of Plenty District Council To establish a KiwiCamp facility, smart compactor bins, and for additional monitoring capacity across the district.	\$ 340,000.00				1			1	1
Whakatane District Council For a range of investments at Port Ohope, Maraetotara Reserve and McAlister Street Carpark with a particular focus on rubbish bins and rodent control.	\$ 100,000.00		1	1	1		1	1	1
Canterbury	\$ 1,229,000.00	4		3	2		4		1
Christchurch City Council Extra toilet facilities at New Brighton Beach, visitor information and education, including signage, and monitoring and compliance across the city council region, including Akaroa.	\$ 415,000.00	1		1			1		
Mackenzie District Council Toilets, signage, vehicle counters, fencing and monitoring, compliance at various sites along State Highway 8, including Lindis Pass, Ahuriri Bridge, Lake Poaka and Pattersons Ponds.	\$ 548,000.00	1		1	1		1		
Selwyn District Council Toilet facilities at Lake Selvie and Lake Georgina, camping system management, signage and data collection.	\$ 230,000.00	1		1			1		1
Timaru District Council Extra toilet facilities, site maintenance and information boards.	\$ 36,000.00	1			1		1		
Hawkes Bay	\$ 190,000.00				1		1		
Hastings District Council To install a range of extra facilities at Haumoana Domain.	\$ 190,000.00				1		1		
Manawatu-Whanganui	\$ 75,000.00	1			1	1			
Rangitikei District Council Toilet and rubbish facilities at Queens Park, Hunterville.	\$ 75,000.00	1			1	1			
Marlborough	\$ 195,000.00						1		
Marlborough District Council An upgrade of car parks at popular locations such as Collins Memorial Reserve, Double Bay and Ohingarua, and installation of temporary toilet facilities and additional signage.	\$ 195,000.00						1		
Nationwide	\$ 400,000.00								1
TH2Connect Pilot programme for sensor technology to be used to monitor responsible camping sites.	\$ 400,000.00								1
Northland	\$ 647,000.00	1		2	1	1	2		
Far North District Council toilet facilities, and to develop a camping facility with the Department of Conservation on the Karikari Peninsula.	\$ 347,000.00	1		1			1		
Whangarei District Council Infrastructure investments across a range of sites, and monitoring and enforcement initiatives.	\$ 300,000.00			1	1	1	1		
Otago	\$ 906,000.00	2		3	1		2		1
Central Otago District Council Toilets, signage, vehicle counters, fencing, and monitoring compliance at 3 sites at Lake Dunstan.	\$ 297,000.00	1		1			1		1
Dunedin City Council Increased monitoring of camping across the city, a community host trial, infringement management, additional bins and portaloos.	\$ 79,000.00	1		1	1				
Queenstown Lakes District Council 2 camping hubs, new signage, education and information for campers, and an increased monitoring and compliance regime.	\$ 530,000.00			1			1		
Southland	\$ 31,000.00			1					
Invercargill City Council For monitoring and education, and to provide information to campers.	\$ 31,000.00			1					
Taranaki	\$ 156,000.00	1	1		1		1		
New Plymouth District Council Extra facilities at Waiwhakaho River mouth and a relocatable toilet and shower unit.	\$ 156,000.00	1	1		1		1		
Tasman	\$ 362,875.00	1	1	1	1		1		1
Tasman District Council Monitoring and enforcement, a KiwiCamp facility, new facilities and improvements at areas including Decks Reserve, Alexander Bluff and Waitapu Bridge.	\$ 362,875.00	1	1	1	1		1		1
Waikato	\$ 1,082,000.00	3	3	4	2	2	3	3	1
Rotorua Lakes District Council For projects with a specific focus on monitoring and data collection.	\$ 69,000.00			1				1	
South Waikato District Council Shower blocks, barbecues and shelters, solar lighting, rubbish bins, and monitoring and enforcement.	\$ 428,000.00		1	1	1		1		
Taupo District Council An information, education and compliance system for campers across the district, and waste facilities, security, toilets, and cleaning at a site in Taupo.	\$ 225,000.00	1		1		1	1	1	1
Waikato District Council To resolve camping issues at Te Kauwhata and Onewhero Domain.	\$ 91,000.00	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Waitomo District Council Cooking and bathroom camping facilities at Te Kuibi, temporary toilet facilities at Mokau township during 2018/19, ahead of more permanent facilities being installed.	\$ 269,000.00	1	1						
West Coast	\$ 2,210,000.00	3		2	3		3		1
Buller District Council Camping infrastructure, monitoring and compliance staffing costs, education and signage, an incentive scheme to encourage people driving vehicles that are not self-contained to use camp grounds.	\$ 580,000.00	1		1	1		1		1
Grey District Council Recycling collection facilities, infrastructure investments and associated operating costs.	\$ 850,000.00	1			1		1		
Westland District Council New camping facilities and associated operating costs for peak season, education and enforcement.	\$ 780,000.00	1		1	1		1		
Grand Total	\$ 8,123,875.00	18	6	18	16	4	19	5	8

Responsible Camping – 2018/2019 End of Season Report



27 Councils received funding

25 Councils reported on satisfaction on outcomes of funded projects

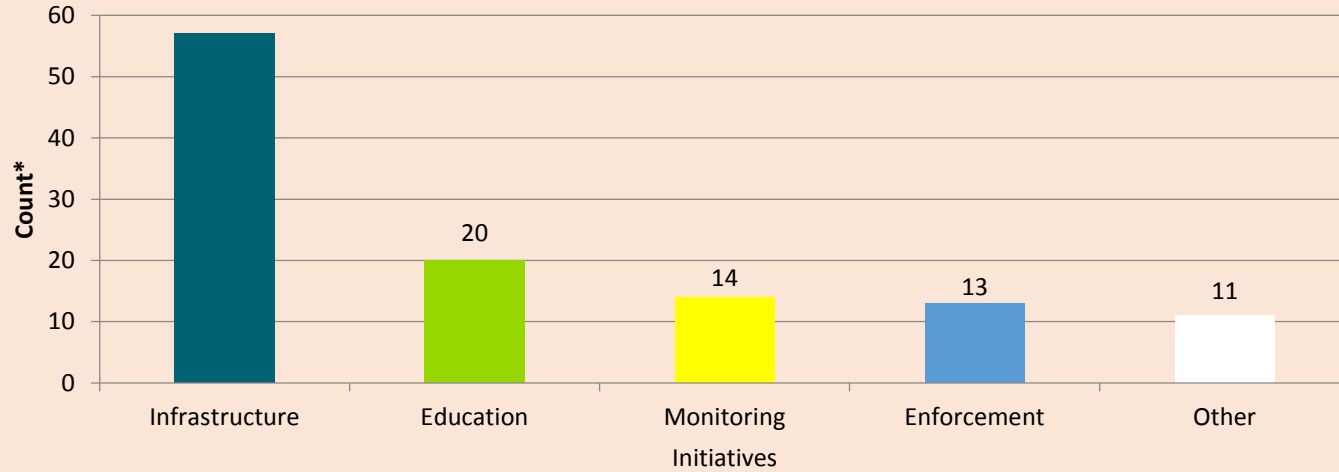
115 projects funded

25 Councils submitted reports

4.5/5 Average satisfaction

\$7,723,875.00 allocated to Councils

Management of Responsible Camping Summer 2018/19



Infrastructure

“The project has been very successful in reducing the incidence of human waste and rubbish being deposited in inappropriate places in Westland area. There has been a remarkable decrease in complaints regarding this type of behaviour.”

Education

“The signage we have installed now tells people where to find the things they are looking for... we’ve been able to communicate the things that are important to the local residents as well regarding care and respect for the environment.”

Monitoring and Enforcement

“Being visible in the community daily is important... Campers are feeling safer seeing us patrolling our peninsula. There has been less damage along the sand dunes and general awareness since the Kaitaki Rangers have started.”

* Categories were counted, so not indicative of total number of initiatives/sites within regions.

Focus areas of Report

Concepts

Themes

Infrastructure	Toilets, refuse collection and showers	Campground improvements e.g. landscaping
Education	Brochures and signage	Ranger programmes
Monitoring / Enforcement	More monitoring and enforcement	Data collection e.g. vehicle counters
Camper behaviour	Campers are well informed	Campers follow the rules
Environmental / human waste	Less rubbish and human waste	Less complaints from locals
Congestion	More parking available	CamperMate and Rankers
Outcomes	Improved camper behaviour	Fewer complaints from locals
Community attitudes	Mostly positive local feedback	Councils note fewer negative media stories
Unintended consequences	Delays	Increased camper numbers

Key Findings

Three main approaches to addressing responsible camping in summer 18/19

Three key outcomes achieved by way of the three main approaches:

- Better camper behaviour
- Improved environmental management
- More dispersal of vehicles

Initial end of year report findings show Councils satisfied by summer initiatives.

Local communities have been mostly positive.

Delays caused by demand outstripping supply of infrastructure, poor weather and tight turnaround. Initiatives are attracting more campers in some areas. Negative views of some campground owners.

“Previous years, Council received a lot of complaint calls from neighbours and legitimate users of the reserves. This year, due to the proactive stance taken, they have received none.”

- Ōpōtiki District Council

GeoZone/CamperMate Findings



10 sites went live



82% did not visit location once full



6,500+ users checked availability



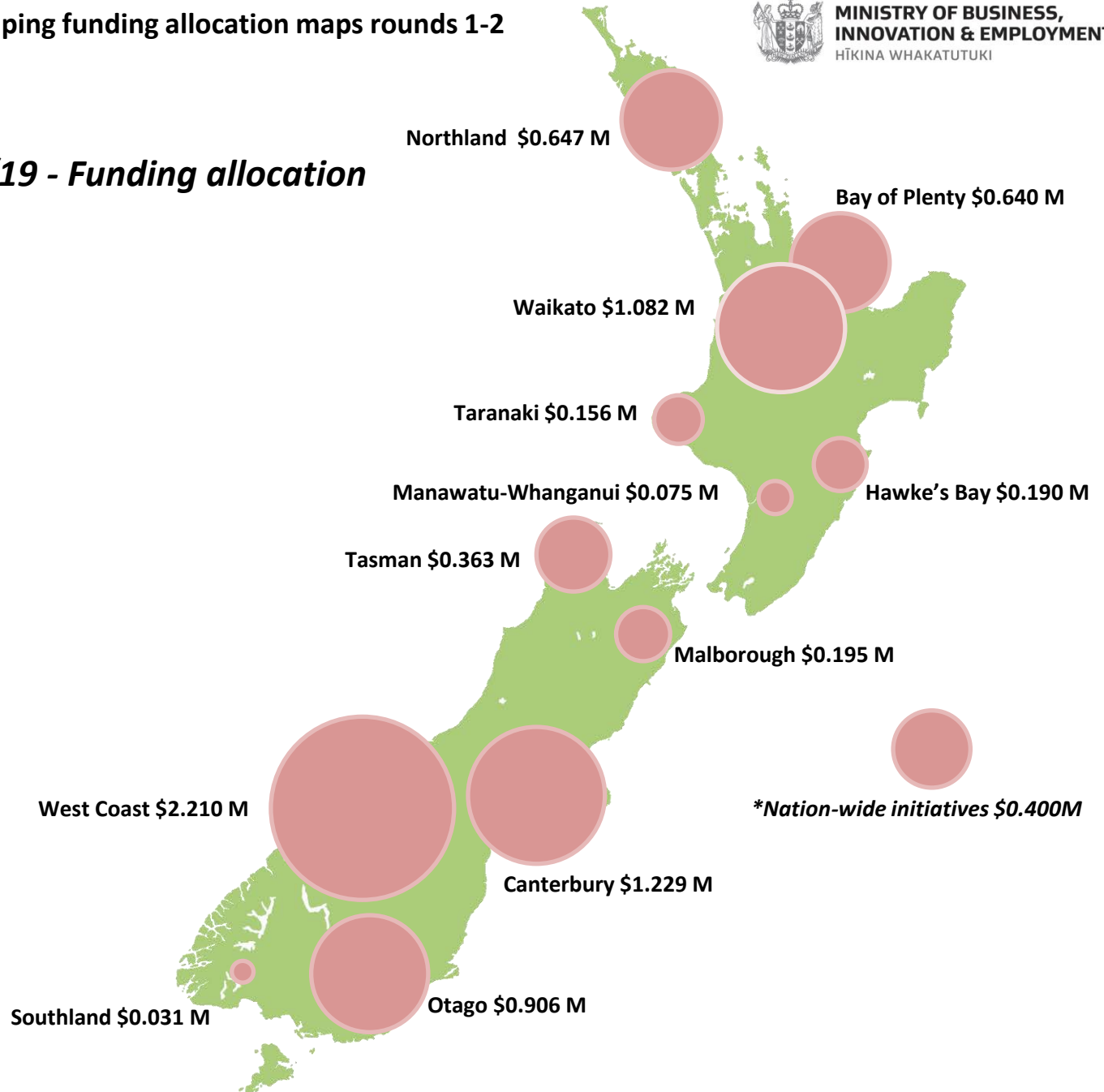
Cameras were more effective than vehicle sensors

TNZ Responsible Camping Campaign

- 1.8 million video views on YouTube, over 100k on Facebook, and 30,600 through the free Wi-Fi at i-SITES.
- 60,000 Trade Me users who searched for ‘vans’ on Trade Me viewed the video, with 1,300 click throughs to the responsible camping website.
- 40,000 kete of camping knowledge delivered to i-Sites, rental vehicles, and two Cook Strait ferries.
- 54,500 visitors to camping.org.nz (87% new visitors)

Annex 3: Responsible Camping funding allocation maps rounds 1-2 (and total) by region

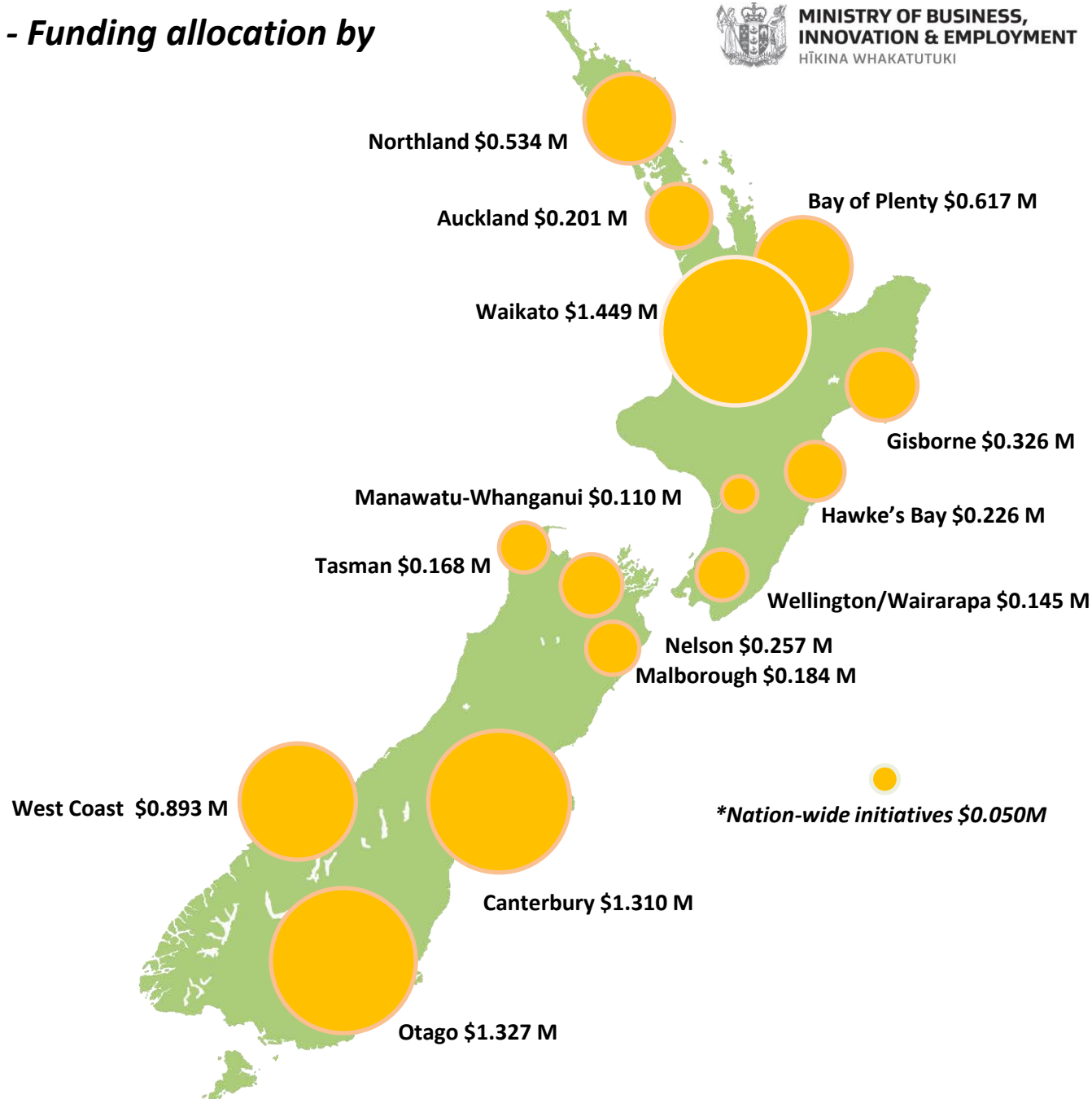
Map A: Summer 18/19 - Funding allocation by region



Map B: Summer 19/20 - Funding allocation by region



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Map C: Total funding allocation by region (combined rounds 1 and 2)

