
In attendance:

Trustees: David Battin (Chair), Dan Jex-Blake, Rehette Stoltz, Ron Aitken Te Pūoho Katene and Warren Williams.

Cultural Advisors: Tā Derek Lardelli and Lady Rose Gould-Lardelli.

Trust Tairāwhiti executive team members: Doug Jones – Chief Executive Officer, Audine Grace-Kutia – General Manager Hapori, Hayden Green – General Manager Economic Development, Laura Stonehouse – Chief Financial Officer and Melonie Brouwer – Board Secretary,

Item 2.6a Te Tairāwhiti Arts Festival representatives from 9:10am

Tama Waipara, Wayne Ngata and Sharon van Gulik

Tā Derek Lardelli opened our meeting with a karakia.

Acknowledgement to representatives from Te Tairāwhiti Arts Festival and Wayne Ngata responded to the mihi.

2.0 Open meeting – Public included

2.1 Apologies: Nicki Sutherland – Trustee

2.2 Declaration of trustee and CEO interests

Hayden Green – General Manager Economic Development noted his interests as Chair of PBRFU and of Tairāwhiti Voyaging Trust.

Te Pūoho Katene advised his interests prior to the board meeting and will be noted at the September meeting.

2.3 Confirmation of Agenda and Late items – Nil

2.4 Approval of Open Minutes and Matters Arising

2.4.a Approval of the open minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2025 were taken as read and approved.

Unanimous Approval

2.4.b Action register from 10 June 2025 noted

2.5 Strategy and decision making – Nil

2.6 Beneficiary Presentations and Public Forum

2.6.a Te Tairāwhiti Arts Festival presentation by Tama Waipara

Trustees welcomed representatives of the Te Tairāwhiti Arts Festival as part of the Board's ongoing request for significant investment recipients to report on outcomes and impact.

Trustees acknowledged the strong relationship with the Festival and expressed appreciation for its achievements in building a kaupapa that is deeply connected to the people and place of Tairāwhiti.

The Festival team highlighted the unique kaupapa that sets it apart nationally and internationally: being of the place and its people, celebrating the arts, and providing a platform for connection.

Since its establishment in 2018–2019, the Festival has grown into a recognised event on the national calendar and is now internationally connected. Despite challenges including the Tuia 250 commemorations and the COVID-19 pandemic the Festival has demonstrated resilience, becoming the first in Aotearoa to return post-lockdown.

Community engagement has been a hallmark of the Festival. Te Ara i Whiti, the light and sculpture trail in Kelvin Park, has expanded from two works to a major free event attracting tens of thousands of visitors across ten days. The Festival's audience profile is younger than national arts averages, with strong engagement from rangatahi and whānau, alongside specific programmes for kaumātua. Accessibility and inclusivity remain central, ensuring all sectors of the community are welcomed into safe creative spaces.

The Festival has also nurtured significant artistic development. Many artists have used the Festival as a launching platform, gaining new opportunities and careers in theatre, music, and film. Importantly, the Festival has built pathways for young people through training in event production, security, and arts management, growing local capacity and strengthening the creative economy.

Trustees heard that the Festival contributes substantially to the regional economy by attracting visitors, supporting hospitality and tourism, and generating commercial opportunities for local businesses. While financial sustainability remains a challenge in the wider arts sector, the Festival has leveraged Trust support to secure Creative New Zealand backing and attract further investment, validating its national importance.

Looking forward, the Festival will continue with a seasonal approach to programming, building on Matariki and summer initiatives. Leadership succession is underway, with a new Artistic Director appointed from within the region, ensuring continuity and local representation. Trustees noted the importance of this transition and the opportunity it presents for further growth.

The Board expressed appreciation for the Festival's achievements to date, recognising its role in cultural identity, creative leadership, intergenerational engagement, and economic development. Trustees affirmed the significance of the kaupapa for the region's future and looked forward to continued collaboration in shaping the next phase of the Festival under new leadership.

2.7 Board Updates

2.7.a CEO quarterly report April – June 2025 taken as read and noted.

The CEO presented the quarterly report, noting that it reflected trustee feedback by providing greater detail than previous iterations.

Under **Fostering Innovation**, the CEO reported strong progress in supporting small businesses, with 41 businesses engaged in the first quarter. A clear theme emerging across the region is growing demand for AI in business workshops. These have been well received, with workshops delivered across the Coast including Tolaga Bay and Ruatōrea. The workshops focus on helping businesses explore efficiencies gained through AI, with strong uptake from participants.

The CEO noted that most KPIs are currently tracking well, with a high proportion showing positive results this early in the reporting period. The **Future Leaders Business Programme** has now commenced, with Trust Tairāwhiti one of the pilot participants alongside AgFirst Engineering and other partners. The programme, which originated in the horticulture sector, aims to support business owners and supervisors to strengthen leadership skills, communicate vision effectively, and build team capability.

The pilot phase introduces innovative tools, including an AI-enabled “virtual COO” to assist supervisors and managers in developing practical leadership skills such as communication, problem-solving, and performance conversations. The Trust’s senior leadership team is also trialling this tool to test its effectiveness before wider roll-out. The CEO emphasised that this approach aligns with the Trust’s commitment to lead by example and provide businesses with tested, effective support tools.

In addition, the CEO confirmed progress on the regional wellbeing survey, which will officially launch at the A&P Show in October. This will contribute to the upcoming State of the Region report, planned for release the following month.

Trustees discussed anticipated strong demand for the Future Leaders programme, the role of AI workshops as an entry point for businesses, and the importance of supporting supervisor capability and confidence. The Board acknowledged the Trust’s proactive leadership in AI and innovation, noting that this work is positioning the region at the forefront of applied business technology.

2.8 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC FROM PROCEEDINGS

Moved by Trustee Williams and seconded by Trustee Stoltz.

SECTION 48 – LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL INFORMATION AND MEETINGS ACT 1987

THAT: The public be excluded from the following part of the proceedings of this meeting, namely for discussion or decision on agenda items:

3.0 Strategy and Decision Making

4.0 Operational Updates including approval of closed minutes and matters arising

5.0 Risk management

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

Item No.	General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter check	Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
Item 3.0	Strategy and decision making	Sections 7(2) (b(ii)) (c) (f) (i) (j)	48(1) (a)
Item 4.0	Operational updates	Sections 7(2) (b(ii)) (c) (f) (h) (i) (j)	48(1) (a)
Item 4.2	Approval of closed minutes and matters arising	Sections 7(2) (a) (b(ii)) (c) (f) (g) (h) (i) (j)	48(1) (a)
Item 5.0	Risk management	Sections 7(2) (a) (f)	48(1) (a)

This resolution is made in reliance on Section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 of that Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are as follows:

Content

Section 7(2)(a) To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons

Section 7(2)(b)(ii) To protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

Section 7(2)(c) Protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information:

- i. Would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied; or
 - ii. Would be likely otherwise to damage the public interest.
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Section 7(2)(f) Maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through:

- i. The free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to members of officers or employees of any local authority, or any persons to whom Section 2(5) applies, in the course of their duty; or
 - ii. The protection of such members, officers, employees and persons from improper pressure or harassment.
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Section 7(2)(g) Maintain legal professional privilege.

Section 7(2)(h) Enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.

Section 7(2)(i) Enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)

Section 7(2)(j) Prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage.

That the following people be permitted to remain at this meeting after the public has been excluded:

- i. Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, General Manager Economic Development, Board Secretary, General Manager – Hapori, Commercial Manager and Cultural Advisors because of their knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation the matters being discussed because of their role and work performed.

The public excluded minutes follow and are not publicly available. There being no further business the public meeting closed at 10:15am.

CHAIR
DAVID BATTIN