



2026/27 Work Programme Quarterly Reporting

Quarter 1: 1 July to 30 September 2026

1 OVERVIEW

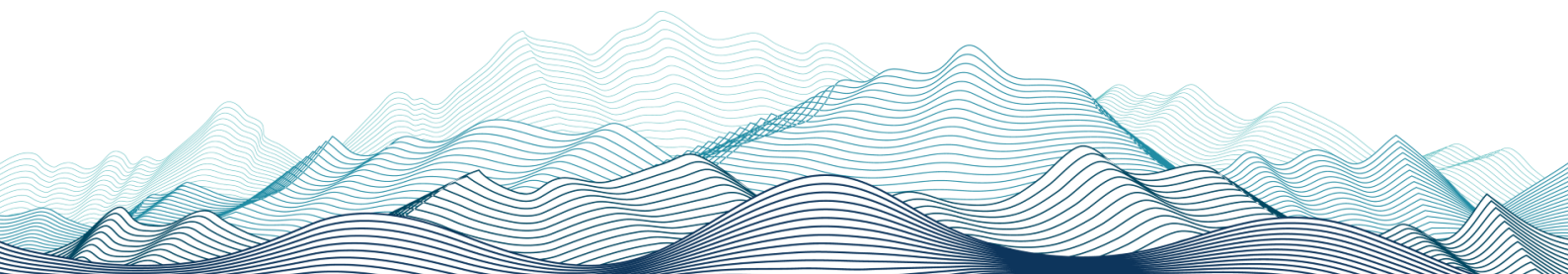
Across the food and fibre sector, businesses moved from identifying capability needs to helping shape practical support programmes, while priority land optimisation opportunities in kiwifruit and strong wool have progressed into their next phase of development. Strong demand for the On the Front Foot workforce capability pilot event has also demonstrated a clear appetite for leadership and people capability development within the sector.

Our skills & workforce initiatives are strengthening connections between employers, educators and our young people. Through Skills for work activities such as Quickfire Connections, workplace visits and the Wairarapa Whanaungatanga Careers Expo, students are gaining greater visibility of local pathway opportunities while employers are building stronger connections with their future workforce. Digital Fluency has established an important baseline for future programme development, and planning is underway for the 2027 Work Ready Passport pilot.

Water resilience activity focused on maintaining strategic momentum and regional readiness while national and local government settings continue to evolve. Water resilience remains a visible and active consideration within regional growth and planning discussions, helping ensure Wairarapa is well-positioned to respond to future funding, infrastructure and investment opportunities.

Key achievements this quarter

1. **On the Front Foot demonstrated strong sector demand:** The workforce capability pilot attracted 110 registrations, with 36% of participants expressing interest in continuing into a longer-term development programme. This is currently under development.
2. **Kiwifruit and Strong Wool opportunities progressed:** Initial assessments have been completed, and both opportunities are advancing to Stage 2.
3. **Skills for Work pathways are delivering results:** A workplace visit facilitated through Quickfire Connections led to a student expressing interest in future employment with Kiwi Lumber, demonstrating how employer engagement activities can create tangible workforce pathways.
4. **Digital Fluency establishes a baseline for future workforce capability:** Digital fluency assessments completed with 95 Year 9 and 10 students have established a clear baseline of current capability and identified priority areas for future development. Learning programmes are being developed to meet the needs identified.
5. **Water resilience remains visible in regional planning:** Water resilience considerations continue to be reflected across regional planning and growth discussions, helping maintain momentum on one of the region's most important long-term economic enablers.



2 IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

On the Front Foot: Building stronger teams across our primary sector

Primary sector businesses consistently identify people capability as one of the biggest challenges to future productivity and growth. While technical skills remain important, business owners and managers are increasingly seeking support to build strong teams, develop future leaders, improve communication and create workplaces that attract and retain employees.

To explore this need further, WEDS partnered with Beef + Lamb New Zealand and DairyNZ to deliver On the Front Foot, a pilot workforce capability event for Wairarapa primary sector businesses.

The event attracted strong interest from across the region, with 110 registrations received from farmers, growers and rural business leaders. Feedback showed the session was highly valued, with participants reporting:

Measure	Score (/5)
Good use of time	4.62
Knowledge gained	4.54
Intention to apply learning	4.47
Confidence to take the next steps	4.27

The strongest indication of impact came after the event. Thirty-six percent of participants expressed interest in continuing into a longer-term people capability programme, while nine dairy farmers have already enrolled in the Dairy Training Limited Leadership Programme. Together, these outcomes demonstrate a willingness to invest further time and effort into strengthening their businesses and teams.

Participant feedback highlighted strong demand for leadership development, communication and feedback skills, team culture, succession planning and practical people-management tools. These themes closely align with capability needs identified through the Capability Boost programme, providing confidence that support is being directed towards areas of greatest need.

Insights from the event are now informing the design of a six-part people capability programme that will be delivered by industry with support from WEDS. Participants will undertake practical workplace actions between sessions, helping translate learning into real changes within their businesses.

The response to On the Front Foot demonstrates clear demand for workforce and leadership capability development across Wairarapa's food and fibre sector. More importantly, it shows businesses are willing to move beyond awareness and commit to improving how they lead, manage and develop their people. By supporting primary sector businesses to strengthen their people capability, the programme aims to contribute to improved productivity, stronger workplace cultures and a more resilient food and fibre sector over time.



Quickfire Connections: From conversations to job opportunities

The workplace visit at Kiwi Lumber was an outcome of the Quickfire Connections: Trades Edition event held at Kuranui College as part of WEDS' Skills for Work initiative. Trent Lett from Kiwi Lumber enjoyed connecting with students at the event and engaged with WEDS around workplace visits to give students the opportunity to see the industry firsthand.

Twenty students from Mākoura College visited Kiwi Lumber, where they toured the site and saw the sawmill in operation. The visit gave students a practical understanding of the different roles available, potential career pathways, and the opportunities to build long-term careers within the business.

The visit led to a standout outcome, with one student returning to Kiwi Lumber at the end of the school day with their CV and a letter expressing interest in any employment opportunities that may become available in 2027. Having progressed from an initial conversation at Quickfire Connections to visiting the workplace, the student had developed a genuine interest in working for Kiwi Lumber.

The outcome was particularly meaningful for Trent Lett (Sawmill Manager), who was pleased to see the connection develop into a tangible expression of interest in future employment.

This story highlights the value of the activities under Skills for Work working together: from Quickfire Connections for that initial "speed meet" conversation and direct insight into the role and industry, to workplace visits that show the career pathway in action and what working there looks like, to finally taking the next step after the barriers to proactively thinking about their future after school have been broken down, and coming back to give an expression of interest for post-studies employment.

For Kiwi Lumber, the visit also demonstrated the value of building relationships with students early, creating opportunities to connect with potential future employees. The business was extremely positive about the outcome and expressed a strong interest in continuing to be involved in school events and workplace visits.

This is what "Skills for Work" and the WEDS workforce strategy are set up to achieve: grow capability, improve pathways, and future-proof the region's talent pipeline. Let's keep going!



Wairarapa Whanaungatanga Career Expo: Opening doors to future opportunities

The Wairarapa Whanaungatanga Career Expo 2026 was supported by WEDS as part of its Skills for Work initiative, creating an opportunity for rangatahi from across the region to explore career options and connect with local employers, tertiary providers and community organisations. With students making decisions about their next steps, the expo provided a space to discover different industries, ask questions and learn about opportunities available within and beyond Wairarapa.

Across two days, 1,600 students from 10 schools attended the expo, engaging with over 30 exhibitors each day. Hands-on activities, demonstrations and conversations helped bring different career pathways to life, while creating a connection between students, businesses and education providers. The event also welcomed students from Tararua, extending the reach of the expo beyond the Wairarapa region.

Feedback from students showed that the expo made a real difference, with 78% learning about career options they had not previously considered and 93% feeling more or somewhat more confident about their future pathways. Students have also followed up with exhibitors about further study and potential employment opportunities. Feedback from exhibitors was equally encouraging, with 100% of respondents indicating they were likely or very likely to participate again.

There is strong interest from schools in seeing the event continue, creating an opportunity to build on this year's success through a biannual expo.

The expo demonstrated the value of giving rangatahi direct access to employers, training providers and a broad range of career possibilities in one place. For some students, it introduced options they had never considered; for others, it helped build confidence in the direction they may want to take. It also strengthened relationships across schools, industry and the wider community, creating a strong foundation for future collaboration.



Wairarapa Midweek
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Students test-drive their future careers

More than 1600 secondary students from across Wairarapa and Tararua descended on Wairarapa College last month to explore what their futures might hold at the Wairarapa Whanaungatanga Careers Expo. The two-day Wairarapa Whanaungatanga Careers Expo brought together 32 providers, including employers, training organisations and tertiary institutions, to help young people discover potential career pathways. At the heart of the expo, supported by the Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy, was whanaungatanga (forming relationships) with students actively engaging, asking questions and building connections for their futures. Wairarapa College careers adviser Anja Lister said the feedback from students, schools, whānau and vendors had been "overwhelmingly positive". "The event demonstrated what can happen when education, industry, community organisations, and local agencies work together for a common purpose," she said. "It was humbling to see so many people and organisations investing their time and energy into supporting our young people, and they went above and beyond to make the expo fun and interactive."

Attention, Wairarapa schools, colleges, kura and early childhood centres: have you got a photo of a school activity, trip, or event you're proud of? We'd love to feature it in our Lesson In Awesome segment. Send your photos to midweek@wairarapa.govt.nz, and show off the amazing things happening in your classrooms, fields, and playgrounds.

3 FOOD & FIBRE (PRIMARY SECTOR) INITIATIVES UPDATE

Strategic outcome: A productive, resilient and future-ready food and fibre sector.

Initiative summaries

Capability Boost

Following completion of the Discovery Phase, all nine participating businesses were re-engaged to assess their interest in continuing with the programme, identify priority support needs and understand likely time commitments.

The Discovery Phase findings have also been shared with sector support organisations to help align future support and investment around the priorities identified by participating businesses.

Planning has commenced for the next phase of delivery, with people capability emerging as the strongest and most consistent area of demand.

What's changing through our efforts?

- Discovery Phase insights are helping align support and investment around the capability needs identified by participating businesses.
- The participating businesses represent approximately 7,200ha of productive land, providing some confidence that the identified capability gaps are reflective of the sector.
- People capability has emerged as the highest priority area for future investment and intervention.
- Industry organisations are working more collaboratively to coordinate support and reduce duplication of effort.
- The programme is creating a pathway for businesses to adopt practical improvements that strengthen productivity, resilience and long-term performance.

Future Options

The kiwifruit and strong wool workstreams have completed Stage 1 assessments and have both been recommended to progress to Stage 2.

The olives and seeds and grains opportunities remain part of the Future Options programme and will be progressed as resourcing becomes available.

What's changing through our efforts?

- The strong wool workstream represents approximately 9 farms and 284-289 tonnes of current greasy wool production, providing a meaningful platform from which to explore future value-add opportunities and strengthen grower returns.
- The kiwifruit workstream has engaged key industry organisations including Zespri, NZ Kiwifruit Growers Inc, Fruition and established packhouses to assess the potential for a Wairarapa kiwifruit industry. Engagement has confirmed industry interest in the opportunity and is helping shape a pathway to market should the workstream prove viable.
- Industry participants and partners are helping shape future pathways for growth and optimisation.

- Confidence is increasing around the potential of the selected opportunities to support future sector growth and diversification.
- The programme is building momentum behind new products, markets and value-add opportunities across the region.

Shared Narrative

The project has entered its establishment phase, with a delivery approach developed to strengthen communications and encourage broad participation across the sector and wider community.

The main regional engagement programme has been scheduled for February 2027 to enable more effective stakeholder engagement and alignment with other regional engagement activities.

Work this quarter focused on development of a communications plan, project landing page, key messaging framework and stakeholder engagement approach.

What's changing through our efforts?

- Stakeholders will develop a more consistent understanding of the project's purpose and intended outcomes.
- Existing regional research and engagement insights are being brought together to create a stronger evidence base for future community conversations.
- The project is laying the foundations for a stronger regional identity that can enhance visibility, strengthen connections and support future investment attraction.

Workforce Capability

The On the Front Foot pilot event was delivered in partnership with Beef + Lamb New Zealand and DairyNZ, focusing on leadership, team performance and workforce capability within primary sector businesses.

The programme attracted 110 registrations and received exceptionally strong participant feedback. Thirty-six participants expressed interest in continuing into a longer-term capability programme.

Insights gathered from participants have directly informed the design of a six-workshop programme that will be delivered over the coming months. In addition, nine dairy farmers who attended the event have enrolled in the Dairy Training Limited Leadership Programme with a local newly certified tutor to lead the programme.

What's changing through our efforts?

- Strong participation and follow-on interest demonstrate a clear demand for workforce and leadership capability development across the sector.
- Businesses are moving beyond awareness and committing to practical action to strengthen leadership and team performance.
- Participants reported increased confidence and intention to apply new skills within their businesses.

- Leadership, communication, succession planning and team culture have emerged as common capability priorities across participating businesses.
- Industry partners are collaborating to deliver capability-building support that is directly aligned with sector needs.

Why this matters?

Food and fibre remains one of Wairarapa's most important economic sectors. Improving business capability, strengthening workforce resilience and supporting diversification opportunities are critical to maintaining the sector's long-term productivity and competitiveness.

The initiatives underway are helping businesses identify and address capability gaps, encouraging greater collaboration across the sector and advancing opportunities that have the potential to create new value, attract investment and strengthen resilience. Together, these initiatives are laying the foundations for a more innovative, productive and future-focused food and fibre sector.

Looking ahead

The key priorities for the next quarter are:

- Finalise and launch the next phase of Capability Boost support.
- Advance Stage 2 work on the Kiwifruit and Strong Wool Future Options projects.
- Continue to support development of the Shared Narrative project ahead of community engagement activities in February 2027.
- Commence delivery of the six-part On the Front Foot workforce capability programme in partnership with industry organisations.

4 SKILLS & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES UPDATE

Strategic outcome: A skilled, connected and future-ready workforce.

Initiative summaries

Skills for work

During Q1, connections between local schools, students and employers were strengthened through Quick Fire Connections – trade edition event, four workplace visits and the two-day Wairarapa Whanaungatanga Careers Expo. Development of the Work Ready Passport/programme also progressed, with a phased approach agreed for the 2027 pilot. Work is underway to bring together relevant community organisations, education providers and workforce networks to support delivery.

Positive feedback from the stakeholders working with WEDS through the Skills for Work initiative reinforces its growing recognition across the region and is ensuring we are creating long term stakeholders and employer buy-in through ongoing participation, engagement and collaboration that are delivering tangible outcomes.

What's changing through our efforts?

- 1732 students are gained direct connection to local employers, industries and potential career pathways.
- 56 employer connections made through Quick Fire Connections - trades edition and the Wairarapa Whanaungatanga career expo resulted in further engagement, including interest in work experience with some employers that attended, workplace visits and 1 expression of interest in employment for 2027 at Kiwi Lumber.
- Under Skills for Work, schools, businesses and community organisations are coming together more regularly through the events and activities in the initiative. This co-ordinated approach is aligning resources more effectively and delivering stronger pathway exposure and employer engagement for students.
- The Work Ready Passport/Programme is progressing and will develop practical, work-ready skills for students that take part in Phase 1 beginning in 2027.

Digital Fluency

During Q1, Waitech completed digital fluency baseline testing with 95 Year 9 and 10 students, establishing a baseline for understanding capability across seven digital fluency areas. Communication (51%), Technology Basics (47%), Collaboration (46%) and Digital Citizenship (45%) were the stronger-performing areas. Content Creation (32%), Information Management (35%) and Safety and Security (37%). All areas have been highlighted as needing further development. Planning is continuing for a targeted digital fluency curriculum with the Mākoura IT teacher and Waitech Trust.

Work also progressed on an MOU with Mākoura College to bring school and community laptops under the college's insurance arrangements, helping reduce ongoing insurance costs for the Trust. This will also allow wider rollout for the school and laptop community programme.

What's changing through our efforts?

- Baseline testing has established a clearer understanding of students' current digital capabilities and areas requiring further development.
- The results are providing an evidence base to guide curriculum development and help measure progress over time.
- Curriculum planning is creating an opportunity to better align students' digital skills with future education, employment and business needs in the Wairarapa.
- The community laptop programme is reducing barriers to accessing digital technology across the community.

Waihost

Delivery of the WaiHost workshop series was delayed during Q1 following internal changes at Business Wairarapa and reduced staff capacity. The programme has been rescheduled across the 2026/27 financial year, with a contract extension being drafted to support delivery.

WEDS, Business Wairarapa and Destination Wairarapa worked together to sharpen the focus the programme. Business Wairarapa surveyed its members to better understand current business needs, with feedback to inform the content of the remaining workshops.

The first workshop, *Saying the Hard Thing*, is scheduled for 11 November 2026 and will focus on supporting new and emerging managers to confidently navigate difficult workplace conversations.

What's changing through our efforts?

- The programme is being refined to ensure future workshops reflect current business needs and priorities.
- Collaboration between WEDS, Business Wairarapa and Destination Wairarapa will align delivery with the needs of the hospitality and tourism sectors.
- Business feedback is informing workshop planning, creating an opportunity for more relevant and practical support.
- The upcoming workshops will support managers to strengthen communication, leadership and customer service capability within their businesses.
- WaiHost is positioned to resume delivery across 2026/27, continuing its focus on improving customer service and strengthening visitor experiences across the region.

Why this matters?

Developing workforce capability, improving digital fluency and strengthening customer service all contribute to a more skilled, connected and productive regional economy.

Skills for Work is helping young people better understand local career opportunities and build connections with employers, while the Work Ready Passport aims to strengthen the skills and confidence needed to enter the workforce. Digital Fluency is addressing the growing importance of technology access and capability for future learning and employment. WaiHost complements this work by supporting businesses to build management and customer service capability. Together, these initiatives are helping connect people, education providers, community organisations and businesses around practical opportunities to strengthen workforce participation, capability and long-term regional resilience.

Looking ahead

The key priorities for the next quarter are:

- Plan and schedule dates with businesses for additional workplace visits by end of Q2 for delivery in Q3 & Q4
- Hold a workshop with relevant stakeholder to confirm activities under the “Work ready for youth” side of the Skills for work initiative.
- Progress planning and schedule tentative dates and businesses for the 2027 Quick Fire Connections events.
- Finalise Work Ready Passport workshop content and confirm delivery arrangements with participating schools for the 2027 pilot.
- Support Waitech Trust to develop a targeted Digital Fluency curriculum informed by baseline findings and business needs.
- Finalise Waitech Trust's 2027 work programme and launch the community laptop loan programme.
- Restart WaiHost delivery and use business feedback to shape the remaining workshops across 2026/27.

5 WATER RESILIENCE INITIATIVES UPDATE

Strategic outcome: A water-secure, resilient and future-ready Wairarapa.

Initiative summaries

Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy

WEDS continued to advocate for water resilience as a key enabler of economic development, sector growth, environmental sustainability and regional resilience.

Water resilience remained a feature of regional planning, infrastructure and growth discussions, helping ensure the long-term importance of water continues to be recognised across decision-making processes.

What's changing through our efforts?

- Water resilience continues to be recognised as a key regional economic development priority, land use optimisation and future investment opportunities.
- Regional growth and spatial planning discussions are increasingly recognising the importance of water security, water efficiency and supporting infrastructure.
- Relationships and alignment across councils, iwi, industry and other stakeholders continue to support future collaboration and investment readiness.
- Greater visibility is being created around practical water resilience solutions and future infrastructure opportunities.

Education & Networking Series

Work has commenced with the Wairarapa Water Users Society to plan and scope the fourth Water Resilience Education and Networking Series.

While delivery is scheduled for later in the financial year, planning is focused on ensuring the programme reflects current challenges, emerging opportunities and areas of interest across the water user community.

What's changing through our efforts?

- Water users are helping shape programme content and priorities to ensure relevance and practical value.
- Offerings are being designed around current and emerging challenges and opportunities facing water users based on sensible solutions.

Why this matters?

Water resilience underpins many of Wairarapa's future economic development opportunities. Reliable access to water supports productive land use, enables diversification into higher-value activities, strengthens resilience to climate and environmental pressures, and provides a foundation for future investment and growth.

By maintaining visibility, strengthening regional alignment and supporting ongoing engagement, WEDS is helping ensure the region remains ready to respond when future funding, infrastructure and policy opportunities emerge.

Looking ahead

During Quarter 2 we will:

- Lead the delivery of the Waingawa Process Water site visit for Greater Wellington Regional Council elected members.
- Support the Wairarapa Water Users Society to finalise planning for the Wairarapa Water Summer Series in preparation for delivery later in the financial year.

6 STRATEGIC PROJECTS UPDATE

Strategic outcome: A region that is investment-ready and positioned for future growth.

The Strategic Portfolio project was developed to identify and prioritise a small number of transformational growth missions capable of delivering long-term economic growth for Wairarapa. The intended outcome was to create an evidence-based strategic growth mission portfolio that could support future advocacy, funding applications and investment conversations with central government, public and private investors and strategic partners.

During the quarter, the procurement process was completed, with a preferred supplier identified following a competitive Request for Quote process. The Steering Group subsequently considered the proposed scope, budget, timing and relationship with wider discussions on amalgamation and the proposed review of how economic development is delivered in the region.

Following discussion, the Steering Group agreed that while the work remains important, the project should be placed on hold until there is greater clarity regarding the future direction of economic development delivery and the ongoing amalgamation proposals currently underway.

The budget allocated to the initiative has been retained, enabling the project to be revisited later this financial year.

What's changing through our efforts?

- Regional partners have reaffirmed the importance of identifying and prioritising transformational growth opportunities across Wairarapa.
- There is increasing recognition of the value of a robust evidence base to support future investment, advocacy and regional priority discussions.

Why this matters?

Wairarapa has a strong strategic evidence base across economic development, infrastructure, tourism, water resilience, workforce development and sector growth. This project aims to translate the collection, work with sector and develop a small number of transformational growth missions to collaboratively progress and grow our region together.

While the project is currently on hold, the need for a clear, evidence-based portfolio remains relevant and may become increasingly important as conversations about amalgamation, future economic development priorities and delivery model progresses.

Looking ahead

During Quarter 2 we will:

- Maintain readiness to recommence the project if there is support from regional partners.
- Monitor the ongoing review of economic development delivery and any implications for project scope and timing.

7 BUDGET UPDATE

Overview

The total WEDS budget for the 2026/27 financial year is \$597,221, comprising \$382,221 for Work Programme delivery and operations, and a further \$215,000 provided by WellingtonNZ for people resources supporting the PMO.

The majority of the operational budget has been allocated to Food & Fibre sector development (\$237,221), which remains the primary focus for the year. This includes business capability development, progressing priority land optimisation and value-add opportunities, developing a shared regional narrative, and strengthening workforce capability within the primary sector.

A further \$60,000 has been allocated to Skills & Workforce Development, supporting initiatives that strengthen workforce capability and improve pathways between education and employment.

The budget allocated to Water Resilience remains comparatively modest (\$5,000), reflecting the focus on maintaining strategic relationships and supporting targeted opportunities following higher levels of investment in previous years.

The remaining operational budget has been allocated to programme operations and PMO overheads (\$35,000), and the Strategic Investment Portfolio (\$45,000), which aims to identify and prioritise opportunities for long-term economic growth and investment.

The budget is fully allocated, including \$167,221 carried forward from 2025/26 to support existing commitments and agreed Work Programme initiatives.

Q1 Expenditure

At the end of the first quarter, total recorded expenditure for WEDS was \$108,640, representing approximately 18% of the annual budget.

Of this, \$48,842 relates to Work Programme delivery and operational costs, representing approximately 13% of the annual operational budget. Expenditure has been concentrated in Food & Fibre (\$32,473), particularly Future Options feasibility work and workforce capability development (On the Front Foot).

Expenditure is expected to increase over the coming quarters as approved initiatives progress, including further feasibility work on kiwifruit and strong wool, business and workforce capability programmes, and ongoing Skills & Workforce Development initiatives.

People resources expenditure for the quarter was \$59,798, supporting programme management and delivery across the Work Programme.

Overall, recorded expenditure remains within the annual budget, with resources allocated to support delivery of the agreed 2026/27 Work Programme.

Budget and Q1 Expenditure

Priority Focus Area	Initiative	Budget	Action	Q1 Exp
Food & Fibre (Primary Sector)	Increase productivity and resilience in food & fibre by equipping businesses with knowledge, skills, and support.	\$237,221	Capability Boost - Supporting a cohort of businesses to develop.	\$300
	Strengthen resilience and growth by progressing priority value-add opportunities .		Future Options - Progress identified options (kiwifruit, wool, olives, seeds/grains)	\$20,025
	Develop a shared narrative for Wairarapa's food & fibre sector that enhances visibility and positioning.		Shared Narrative - Storytelling, showcasing local strengths.	\$5,000 ¹
	Strengthen workforce capability and resilience in the food & fibre sector by supporting industry-led training.		Workforce Capability - Leadership, communication and team performance.	\$7,148
Skills & Workforce Development	Improve workforce outcomes by ensuring secondary school students are work-ready and workplaces are youth-ready .	\$60,000	Skills for Work - Programme focused on secondary school students' transition.	\$1,863
	Strengthen workforce capability with a particular focus on supporting SMEs and visitor-facing sectors.		Work Ready for Youth - Employer capability to attract young workers.	\$-
	Build digital capability by improving digital fluency among students, schools, businesses, and communities.		WaiHost - Workshops on customer experience, management, and training.	\$10,000 ¹
			Digital Fluency - Assessment and learning programme for secondary school students.	\$-
Water Resilience	Maintain regional visibility and strategic alignment of the Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy . Support opportunities that strengthen water resilience as an enabler of economic growth and sector development.	\$5,000	Engagement and alignment - Support regional visibility and maintain alignment.	\$-
			Enablement - Advocate for and support opportunities for water resilience.	\$-
	Support water users to improve efficiency, resilience, and collaboration through education and networking .		Education and networking - Wairarapa Water Users Society series of events.	\$-
Operations	Strategic Investment Portfolio	\$45,000	Identify key growth missions to drive long-term economic outcomes and investment.	\$-
		\$25,000	Work Programme operations	\$3,492
	WEDS and Skill Wairarapa	\$10,000	WNZ PMO overheads	\$1,014
		\$215,000	WNZ People Resources	\$59,798
		\$597,221	TOTAL WEDS EXPENDITURE	\$108,640

Note: 1) Accrued expenditure

APPENDIX 1: INITIATIVE REFERENCE GUIDE (please note, this table is a A3 page)

This table provides the background to each initiative included in the 2026/27 Work Programme.

Action	Strategic priority	Why are WEDS doing this?	Current phase	Key partners	WEDS role	What does success look like?	Initiative started	Expected completion	Status
Capability Boost	Food & Fibre	Improve productivity and resilience by helping food and fibre businesses identify opportunities for improvement and access targeted support.	Discovery completed, transitioning into implementation	Local primary sector businesses, industry bodies & sector support organisations.	Project management, coordination & facilitation	Businesses implement practical improvements that strengthen performance, productivity, resilience and long-term sustainability.	January 2025	July 2027 (first cohort)	On track
Future Options	Food & Fibre	Explore opportunities to optimise land use and create new sources of regional economic growth.	Scoping of viable pathways was completed in March 2025.	Leftfield Innovation, industry groups, local farming businesses.	Project management, lead of Stage 2, stakeholder engagement	A viable pathway for industry development is identified and progressed towards implementation.	Kiwifruit project, June 2026. Strong Wool, June 2026	2030 to establish viable commercial industry.	On track
			Kiwifruit and Strong Wool – Stage 2 of 5 Other options on hold until resourcing allows.	Leftfield Innovation, industry, local sheep farming businesses.	Project management, assist with stakeholder engagement	Commercial opportunities are identified and progressed towards implementation or investment.		March 2027	On track
Shared Narrative	Food & Fibre	Strengthen the visibility, identity and positioning of Wairarapa's food and fibre sector.	Stage 1 (of 3) – Community Engagement & Insights	Destination Wairarapa, TRC Tourism, sectors and community	Project management support and stakeholder engagement.	The sector has a stronger shared identity and is better positioned to attract talent, investment and opportunities.	June 2026	Stage 1 – June 2027 Stage 2 – March 2028 Stage 3 – April 2028	On track
Workforce capability (primary sector)	Food & Fibre	Strengthen leadership, communication and people-management capability across the food and fibre sector.	Long-term programme development ready for launch in Q2 (tentative).	Beef + Lamb NZ, Dairy NZ, No. 8 People Limited, industry participants.	Part of project management and delivery team.	Businesses report improved leadership capability, stronger workplace cultures and greater confidence managing and developing staff.	July 2026	June/July 2027	On track
WaiHost	Skills & Workforce	Strengthen customer service, supervision and leadership capability within local businesses.	Scoping delivery for 3 rd edition of the programme, launch in Q2.	Business Wairarapa, Nevis Training, participating businesses	Part of project scoping team, stakeholder engagement	Participating businesses report improved customer experiences and stronger staff capability.	June 2023	April 2027	Delayed delivery
Digital Fluency	Skills & Workforce	Build the digital skills needed for future education, employment and participation in a modern workforce.	Baseline testing, learning modules for pilot student cohort	Waitech Trust, local secondary schools.	Part of delivery team	Our people demonstrate improved digital capability in areas aligned to workforce and education needs.	December 2023	December 2027	On track
Skills for Work	Skills & Workforce	Rangatahi pathways: Help rangatahi understand local education, training and employment pathways so they can make informed decisions about their future while also being equipped with the key skills for enter the workforce successfully.	Currently in delivery. Passport to be rolled out in phased approach.	REAP House, UCOL, secondary schools	Leading delivery	More rangatahi successfully transition into local employment, further education or training opportunities.	January 2026	June 2030	On track
		Employer engagement: Support employers to attract, develop and retain local talent by strengthening connections with rangatahi and education providers.	Planning, ready to commence in Q3	TBC	Leading delivery	Employers report stronger connections with young people and greater ability to recruit, develop and retain future employees.	January 2026	June 2030	On track

Action	Strategic priority	Why are WEDS doing this?	Current phase	Key partners	WEDS role	What does success look like?	Initiative started	Expected completion	Status
Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy	Water resilience	Maintain regional alignment and visibility around water resilience as a critical enabler of economic growth and community wellbeing. Showcase practical examples of water resilience solutions and the role it can play in supporting future growth.	Advocacy & strategic alignment	GWRC, Wairarapa District Councils, Iwi, Central Govt	Advocacy	Water resilience remains an active consideration in regional planning, investment and development decisions. Decisionmakers have a stronger understanding of water resilience opportunities and their contribution to regional development.	June 2021	Ongoing	On track
Wairarapa Water Summer Series	Water resilience	Help water users improve knowledge, collaboration and preparedness for future water challenges and opportunities.	Planning & stakeholder engagement	Wairarapa Water Users' Society Incorp, participating businesses	Assisting with project scoping	Water users report greater awareness, stronger networks and increased adoption of resilient water practices.	December 2023	March/April 2027	On track
Strategic Portfolio	Regional Economic Development	Identify and prioritise a small number of growth missions capable of unlocking long-term economic growth and attracting future investment to Wairarapa.	Delivery – on hold.	Wairarapa District Councils, Iwi, regional partners and sectors	Project management and overseeing delivery.	Wairarapa has a clear, evidence-based “strategic growth mission portfolio” that supports advocacy, investment attraction and decision-making by identifying priority opportunities and the conditions needed for success.	March 2025	Under review	On hold

APPENDIX 2: WORK PROGRAMME KPI REGISTER (please note, this table is a A3 page)

Initiative	Long-term Outcome(s)	Status / Timing	Baseline (July 2026)	FY26/27 KPIs	Q1 Update	Evaluation / Success Measures
Capability Boost Increase productivity and resilience in Wairarapa's food & fibre sector by equipping businesses with the knowledge, skills, and support needed to drive efficiency, innovation, and sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses adopt improved practices that enhance operational efficiency and profitability. Increased collaboration and knowledge-sharing across the sector. Demonstrated improvements in resilience (e.g. cost management, diversification, risk planning). Strengthened reputation of the sector as innovative and future-focused 	Q1 continue working with 2025/26 pilot cohort; Q3 establish second cohort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2025/26 pilot cohort Discovery Phase completed with 9 businesses. Individual capability plans developed for short- and long-term actions. Cohort-wide priority capability themes identified. Delivery model tested for refinement in future cohorts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver second phase with at least 6 businesses from the 2025/26 pilot cohort. Engage approximately 8-10 businesses for a second cohort in Q3. Achieve strong business participation throughout the programme Capture capability improvements and future investment needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 9 businesses have indicated an interest to continue participating with key priority on people capability development. People capability programme in development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of businesses participating and completing the programme (80% for each phase). Participant satisfaction Evidence of businesses implementing actions identified through the programme Follow-up survey demonstrating increased confidence and capability Recommendations prepared on future programme delivery
Future Options Strengthen the resilience and growth potential of Wairarapa's food & fibre sector by progressing priority value-add opportunities and enabling pathways to market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viable value-add opportunities are advanced toward implementation. Increased sector confidence to explore new products and markets. Strengthened connections between producers, processors, and markets. Attraction of investment and partnerships aligned to priority opportunities. 	Delivery throughout all four quarters, with different workstreams progressing at different rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four priority opportunities identified through the Future Options Review and preliminary work undertaken to map pathways to implementation. Procurement underway or completed for kiwifruit feasibility and strong wool. 	Kiwifruit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support delivery of feasibility work Engage growers and industry partners Identify investment pathway and next steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 1 (of 5) completed. Industry partners engaged and positive. Approval to proceed to Stage 2. 	Kiwifruit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility work completed Industry engagement achieved Clear recommendations for future investment
				Strong wool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete procurement Identify value-chain and commercial opportunities Build industry collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement completed. Stage 1 (of 5) completed. Industry and growers engaged. Approval to proceed to Stage 2. 	Strong wool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility work completed Industry engagement Next stage investment pathway identified
				Olives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete scoping work Determine commercial viability of local groves Identify future investment opportunities 	On hold until resourcing allows.	Olives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping completed Recommendations endorsed Future work identified
				Seeds & Grains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope opportunities Engage industry stakeholders Determine future programme of work 	On hold until resourcing allows.	Seeds & Grains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder engagement completed Recommendation for future investment
Shared Narrative Develop a strong, shared narrative for Wairarapa's food & fibre sector that enhances visibility, strengthens connections, and supports market positioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased recognition of Wairarapa's food & fibre strengths locally and nationally. Improved engagement with buyers, investors, and stakeholders. Greater sense of identity and connection across the sector. Enhanced ability to attract talent, investment, and opportunities 	Q1 planning with delivery partners, Q1-3 delivery, Q4 completion of Stage 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project scope agreed Funding allocated Procurement completed and early project kick-off completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete engagement with target stakeholders. Develop an Insights overview to inform Stage 2. Identify and work toward securing funding for Stage 2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement completed and project in delivery. Planning underway for community engagement in Q3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community and stakeholder engagement rates and satisfaction. Insights gathered into a report to inform Stage 2. Funding identified to progress Stage 2.

Initiative	Long-term Outcome(s)	Status / Timing	Baseline (July 2026)	FY26/27 KPIs	Q1 Update	Evaluation / Success Measures
Workforce capability (primary sector) Strengthen workforce capability and resilience in the food & fibre sector by supporting industry-led training aligned with the Wairarapa Skills & Workforce Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved alignment between industry needs and training provision. Increased access to practical, relevant training opportunities for the sector. Enhanced workforce capability to support productivity, sustainability, and innovation. Evidence of sector demand to inform future workforce development initiatives. 	Delivery from Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication, leadership and teamwork identified as a shared workforce capability need. Inspiration / kick-off event held to engage industry with expressions of interest for further learning gathered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver at least one regional workforce capability programme. Improve leadership, communication and teamwork capability. Identify future workforce development opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial event delivered with more than 110 registrations. 36 businesses indicating interest to participate in long-term programme. Long-term programme being scoped for delivery in from Q2 (tentative). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participating businesses (at least 10) Number of workshops/programmes/events delivered (TBD) Participant satisfaction Evidence of changes implemented. Recommendations for future workforce capability initiatives.
Skills for Work Improve workforce outcomes by ensuring secondary school students are work-ready , and workplaces are youth-ready , while strengthening awareness and understanding of local education, training and employment pathways in Wairarapa. This initiative focuses on supporting rangatahi to successfully transition from school into further education, training, and meaningful local employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary school students are better equipped with practical, industry-relevant work-ready skills. Employers are better able to recruit, develop and retain young workers. Increased engagement between secondary school students and local employers. Improved understanding of local education, training, and employment pathways. Improved alignment between education and industry needs. Increased participation and equitable access for Māori, Pasifika, and all young people. More coordinated and visible workforce development activity across Wairarapa. 	Delivery throughout all four quarters, with different workstreams progressing at different rates.	As this is a new initiative, the agreed actions delivered during the forthcoming financial year will establish the baseline for future measurement and reporting. Current agreed actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplace Visits Quick Fire Connections Wairarapa Work Ready Passport (working title) Wairarapa Whanaungatanga Careers Expo Additional initiatives to be confirmed (TBC)	Workplace Visits – Deliver four workplace visits annually (approx one per quarter) and report on student participation, industry involvement, and key outcomes.	Delivered four W/P visits this quarter so have achieved annual target. The extra visits were a natural evolution from the QFC event. Capacity to deliver more Workplace visits in Q3 & Q4.	Feedback and evaluation forms will be completed by participating career teachers and host businesses to assess the value of the visits, identify outcomes, and inform future improvements.
				Quick Fire Connections – Deliver three events annually and report on participation, employer engagement, and participant feedback.	One QFC event delivered this quarter. Have participation, employer engagement and participant feedback available.	Feedback forms will be completed by participating students and businesses. The feedback will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of each event and inform planning and improvements for future events.
				Wairarapa Work Ready Passport (working title) – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a draft programme framework by 30 September 2026. Confirm pilot school participation for the 2027 pilot programme. Finalise the programme and prepare for rollout with pilot schools by end of Term 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved draft timeline target, refined programme roll out in a phased approach. Phase 1 foundational workshops. Achieved Wairarapa College and Ponatahi Christian Schools confirmed pilot schools. On track 	An evaluation report will be completed at the conclusion of the 2027 pilot programme. Individual workshops, events, and activities will also include evaluation measures such as participation, engagement, and feedback from students, schools, and delivery partners to inform ongoing programme development.
				Wairarapa Whanaungatanga Careers Expo – Report will be provided on conclusion of the event. This will include key outcomes, including student attendance and participation, participating organisations and schools. Additional actions – Performance measures to be developed as further actions are confirmed.	Achieved and delivered on the 18 th and 19 th of August. Impact reporting was provided post event detailed information around key outcomes.	Stakeholder feedback and post-event evaluation will be used to assess the impact, capture participation outcomes, & identify opportunities for future collaboration and continuous improvement.

Initiative	Long-term Outcome(s)	Status / Timing	Baseline (July 2026)	FY26/27 KPIs	Q1 Update	Evaluation / Success Measures
Waihost Strengthen workforce capability across Wairarapa through accessible, cross-sector training that improves customer service, supervision, leadership, and workplace culture , with a particular focus on supporting SMEs and visitor-facing sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved customer service, supervision, and leadership capability across Wairarapa businesses. Increased workforce resilience, retention, and readiness to meet changing customer and business needs. Strengthened business capability, performance, and workplace culture, particularly within tourism, hospitality, and other customer-facing sectors. Greater access to practical, affordable workforce development opportunities for SMEs across multiple sectors. 	Q1-Q2 in line with current contract requirements.	The baseline has been established from the previous contracts held for Waihost. As workplace needs diversify we reflect business needs within new contacts, which inform workshop content and design.	Waihost workshop measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of a minimum of four WaiHost workshops Participant feedback: In-workshop surveys to assess skill development and training effectiveness. Attendance rates: Full enrolment of 80 participants across four workshops. Employer engagement: Increased participation from SMEs across multiple sectors. • Workforce impact: Improved retention and upskilling, measured through follow-up engagement with businesses and trainees. 	No progress. No workshops delivered in Q1. Planned delivery in Q2 and contract extension being drafted due to reduced capacity at BW.	Evaluation will be informed through quarterly progress reports to WEDS, regular programme updates, and a completion report at the end of the contract. The PMO will maintain regular engagement with Business Wairarapa to monitor progress and support delivery. Workshop facilitators and participants will complete feedback and evaluation forms, with findings used to inform continuous improvement and reported through the quarterly reporting process.
Digital Fluency Build digital capability across Wairarapa by improving digital fluency among students, schools, businesses, and communities, supporting the development of a future-ready workforce and more resilient local enterprises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased workforce readiness for technology-enabled jobs, education, and business environments. Improved access to digital learning opportunities, particularly for rural and underserved communities. Stronger local business capability to adopt digital tools, improve productivity, and adapt to future change 	Delivery throughout all four quarters, with different workstreams progressing at different rates.	As this is a new initiative, there is no established baseline. The pilot Digital Fluency Baseline Assessment and Learning Programme with the cohort at Makoura College will establish the baseline, informing future performance measures and wider programme implementation.	One pilot cohort at Makoura College completes the assessment and feedback cycle by the end of Term 2, 2026 . A 2027 implementation plan is agreed with other Wairarapa schools by the end of Term 3, 2027 . A partnership is formalised , with at least one Wairarapa initiative delivered to support access to digital technology and learning. Two workshops are delivered with schools and/or businesses to build digital capability.	Achieved Implementation plan is in progress and has been delayed due to implications of future curriculum changes. Mākoura College is developing curriculum and test before wider rollout. Waitech Trust are developing their own Community laptop programme which has taken this KPIs place due to prioritisation and securement of laptop donation. Not achieved in Q1 but will be part of 2027 plan.	Evaluation will be informed through regular reporting, including progress updates and a completion report at the conclusion of the programme. The PMO works closely with WaiTech Trust throughout delivery, providing programme support, facilitating connections and opportunities where appropriate, and assisting with programme coordination to help ensure successful implementation.

Initiative	Long-term Outcome(s)	Status / Timing	Baseline (July 2026)	FY26/27 KPIs	Q1 Update	Evaluation / Success Measures
Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy Maintain regional visibility and strategic alignment of the Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy as a long-term economic development priority for Wairarapa while national and local government reform settings continue to evolve. Support opportunities that strengthen water resilience as an enabler of economic growth, land-use diversification, sector development, and future investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water resilience remains recognised across the region as a critical enabler of long-term economic, environmental, and community outcomes. Strong regional relationships and collaboration are maintained across councils, iwi, industry, regulators, and community stakeholders. Wairarapa remains well positioned to respond to future funding, infrastructure, and policy opportunities as enabling settings become clearer. Regional understanding of emerging water resilience challenges, opportunities, and innovation pathways continues to strengthen. The region continues to support resilient water-reliant sectors and future economic growth opportunities. 	Monitoring and strategic coordination throughout all four quarters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WWRS Work Plan completed Key economic evidence base established. Wider sustainable implementation awaiting direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain regional visibility of the WWRS and Work Plan. Continue collaboration with key partners. Identify opportunities to leverage existing work. Position the programme to respond when implementation opportunities arise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion/consideration through regional growth and spatial planning discussions. Planning visit with GWRC elected members to see water resilience solutions in action during Q2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water resilience remains an active regional priority. Continued stakeholder engagement. Funding and partnership opportunities identified where appropriate.
Wairarapa Water Summer Series Support water users to improve efficiency, resilience, and collaboration through targeted education and networking initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased adoption of water-efficient practices, with water users demonstrating improved awareness and uptake of approaches that enhance efficiency and resilience. Stronger connections across the water user community, enabling knowledge-sharing and collaboration between farmers, industry, iwi, and stakeholders. Improved understanding of water challenges and opportunities, including efficiency, storage, and environmental considerations. Enhanced sector readiness for change, with water users better prepared to respond to regulatory, environmental, and climate-related pressures. Validated demand for ongoing capability-building initiatives to inform future delivery and potential scaling. 	Planning (Q1-2) Delivery (Q2-3) Evaluation (Q3-4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three successful Summer Series delivered. Strong regional profile established. Existing audience and delivery model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver fourth series. Maintain and grow regional engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning underway for delivery in Q2-3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events delivered (three) Participation (80%) of registrations. Diversity of participants Participant feedback Evidence of participants applying knowledge and practices on-site. Continued collaboration between stakeholders.

APPENDIX 3: OPPORTUNITY & RISK REGISTER (please note, this table is a A3 page)

ID	TYPE	OPPORTUNITY / RISK	STATUS	TREND	POTENTIAL IMPACT / BENEFIT	CURRENT CONTROLS / NEXT STEPS	OWNER
O1	Opportunity	High-value food & fibre growth.		↗	Increased productivity, diversification, value-add production and innovation across the primary sector.	Capability Boost, Future Options and Workforce Capability initiatives support this.	PMO
O2	Opportunity	Land use diversification.		↗	Emerging opportunities such as kiwifruit, strong wool innovation and other future options may improve resilience and economic returns.	Stage 2 assessment of kiwifruit and strong wool as the priority workstreams.	PMO
O3	Opportunity	Future-ready workforce.		↗	Stronger alignment between education, industry and workforce needs can improve talent attraction, retention and productivity.	Skills for Work, workforce capability initiatives and working in partnership with regional organisations.	PMO
O4	Opportunity	Digital capability and technology adoption.		↗	Improved digital capability across businesses, schools and communities can lift productivity and support future workforce needs.	Digital Fluency Programme and ongoing sector engagement.	Waitech Trust / PMO
O5	Opportunity	Strong regional identity and storytelling.		↗	A shared regional narrative can strengthen investment attraction, workforce attraction, visitor appeal and community pride.	Shared Narrative project with Destination Wairarapa.	Destination Wairarapa / PMO
O6	Opportunity	Strong regional collaboration and collective leadership.		↗	Strong alignment between councils, iwi, industry, education providers and regional partners can improve the region's ability to secure investment, advocate for regional priorities, and deliver collective economic development outcomes.	Ongoing council engagement, REDP alignment, strengthened iwi engagement, and active collaboration across regional partners.	SG
O7	Opportunity	Water resilience as an economic enabler.		→	Future investment in water resilience may unlock productivity gains, support business confidence and enable economic growth.	Maintain readiness and support strategic discussions and opportunities as they emerge.	SG
O8	Opportunity	Strengthened iwi partnership and participation.		↗	Greater integration of iwi aspirations, mātauranga Māori and economic development priorities into regional activity, leading to stronger outcomes, better community alignment and enhanced regional partnerships.	Continue engagement with Rangitāne and Ngāti Kahungunu to identify opportunities for greater participation in programme governance and delivery.	SG / PMO
R1	Risk	Demonstrating economic impact.		↗	Inability to demonstrate the value and outcomes generated through WEDS may reduce stakeholder confidence and future investment support.	Development of Programme Measurement Framework and strengthened outcome reporting.	PMO
R2	Risk	Programme sustainability beyond 30 June 2027.		↘	Current delivery arrangements are due to be reviewed through the upcoming LTP cycle. A change or reduction of ongoing support or funding could disrupt delivery and momentum.	Early engagement with councils and continued evidence gathering on programme outcomes.	Councils
R3	Risk	Delivery capacity and partner reliance.		→	WEDS operates with a small PMO and collaborates with regional partners to deliver initiatives. Delays or competing priorities may slow progress.	Prioritisation of work programme and use of delivery partners.	PMO
R4	Risk	Stakeholder engagement.		↗	Reduced engagement from public with initiatives with reduced meaningful impact. Over-reliance on PMO-led delivery.	Active and meaningful stakeholder engagement and partnership development.	PMO / SG
R5	Risk	External economic, environmental and policy environment.		→	Economic conditions, climate variability, significant weather events, regulatory change, local government reform and national political priorities may impact business confidence, investment decisions and programme outcomes.	Ongoing monitoring and alignment with regional priorities including REDP.	SG
R6	Risk	Water remains a constraint enabling regional growth.		→	Constraints relating to water availability, infrastructure, storage and regulatory settings may limit economic growth, diversification and investment opportunities.	Continued advocacy, stakeholder engagement and support for regional water resilience initiatives.	SG

STATUS KEY

STATUS	DESCRIPTION
	Active opportunity progressing well.
	Monitoring / future opportunity potential.
	Medium risk requiring active management.
	Elevated risk requiring attention.
	Critical risk requiring immediate intervention.

TREND KEY

TREND	DESCRIPTION
↗	Improving or becoming more favourable.
→	Stable.
↘	Deteriorating or becoming less favourable.