



Kia ora!

Welcome to our first pānui of 2021.

After a year of significant challenges we have had a great summer here in the Eastern Bay, with many positive sentiments coming along with the many visitors. New Zealand has really taken to visiting the regions and we are fortunate to have received many manuhiri that have witnessed our piece of paradise for themselves. They have often seen for themselves that opportunities for them to come back and potentially even return home.

With total EBOP annual consumer spending in 2020 being up over last year, despite the negative lock down period, we have proven to be remarkably resilient. We remain in a strong position compared with many regions in New Zealand. We know it won't all be smooth sailing and there continues to be significant pressure on the regions housing stocks, workforce, and digital connectivity.

Our focus for the past months has been to build and strengthen strong local and national relationships to benefit a wide range of programs such as those outlined below. In this panui we will reflect on some of our achievements in the Eastern Bay of Plenty while giving you a brief update into some of our other activities.

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Whakatane Mill

On 23rd February 2021, Swiss owners, SIG announced the possible closure of the Whakatane Mill proving a significant blow to our local economy.

For all the latest news and Toi EDAs role of support please see our new website page:

www.toi-eda.co.nz/whakatane-mill



Annual Report

With our Annual Report being released late 2020, we mark the importance of providing for the Bay of Plenty.



“It is likely that when history allows us to reflect on the past year we will see it as a challenging one – but one where we proudly began delivering on our promise to create a better future for the next generation.” John Galbraith, Chair Toi EDA.

“The coming year is one where the growth and recovery of our region will create pressure on many areas in our community. We are looking forward to the challenges that this brings and to working with all our partners across the Eastern Bay to deliver the outcomes that our region deserves. The investments being made are once in a life time opportunities and we will ensure that they deliver the maximum benefits for the future generations.” General Managers, Ian Morton and Karl Gradon.

View the full document on our website – [click here](#).

Sector / Aquaculture

Over the last 12 months significant funding has been secured through the Provincial Growth Fund and private investment for our expanding Aquaculture sector in the Eastern BOP.

A mussel spat farm is being developed in Te Kaha through Te Whanau-a-Apanui and Aotearoa Mussel Limited. This development includes a research and development component to create a commercial spat farm to support the expanding mussel industry in New Zealand.

Based on research studies there is an opportunity to develop up to 20,000 hectares of sea space, this would make this marine farm one of the largest in the world. In Ōpōtiki work has already started on the 24/7 Ōpōtiki Harbour, this harbour is a key enabler to support development of this marine farm.

Work has also stated on a mussel processing factory in Ōpōtiki, this will take the mussels delivered through the harbour and process them here in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, creasing hundreds of jobs for local people. This development is being delivered by Whakatōhea Mussels Operating Limited, and the plant is planned to be up and running by mid-2021.

Delivery / Confidence

The Eastern Bay of Plenty is brimming with confidence at the moment, despite the uncertainty that COVID-19 brings.

With retail shop occupancy in all main towns running at high levels, strong housing demand and consumer spending remaining at record levels, the region is, in general, well placed for further development.

New businesses are emerging in the once challenged hospitality sector and the service sector in general is reporting strong demand. The success of the EBOP-wide “Discover Our Local” campaign, supported by Toi EDA in conjunction with multiple parties across the region, has made locals and visitors alike realise the value of choosing wisely where money is spent. Supporting local businesses has been something that our community has embraced, and we are fortunate to have such strong buy-in to our local economy.

Opportunities / Infometrics

Confidence in the NZ economy remains high, and the Eastern Bay of Plenty is a standout performer in consumer spending over last year.

As a result of significant investments by the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) in catalytic capital projects, alongside local government, iwi and businesses, as well as significant campaigns such as the Discover Our Local and domestic tourism advertising promotions, 2020 has seen a net increase in consumer spend, despite lockdown and a reduction in international visitors.

While uncertainty remains about when the borders will reopen, New Zealanders have come in droves to visit our region and have fallen in love with what we have to offer in terms of beaches, food, shopping, walking tracks, cycle trails and amazing recreational fishing. So much so, Ōhope Beach was even voted the number one beach in New Zealand this year. This has resulted in an increase in demand for housing and while employment numbers are not as strong as last year, there continues to be a net increase in population as more people move towards the regions.

Our Infometrics data shows Ōpōtiki is the strongest performing district in the EBOP, with an increase in electronic consumer spending in 2020. Remarkably, due to the high reliance on the horticultural sector and other essential services, the Ōpōtiki District barely had a drop in spending during the lockdown period earlier in the year.



2021 continues to have a positive outlook, with continued strength especially in the sectors of aquaculture, horticulture, domestic tourism, boat building, construction and freight and logistics. Employment increases from schemes such as Jobs for Nature and PGF supported construction projects will continue to soften the impact of COVID-19 redundancies and Toi EDA is expecting the subregions economy to strongly recover over the next 2-3 years. This will fuel increased demand for housing and put pressure on other public infrastructure, which Toi EDA will be communicating actively to central and local government stakeholders to ensure a speedy resolution.

Declining numbers of EBOP people gaining Class 1 Driver Licences

Research shows that around 80% of jobs in Aotearoa require a Class 1 Driver Licence. In EBOP our percentage is likely higher, with many primary industry and manufacturing jobs. Then consider the scarcity of public transport. Now lay that against our recently published report which shows the number of people getting licences is declining. It's a concerning trend, given our growing population and workforce, and we're keen to keep an eye on it.

Toi EDA's been advocating for and supporting locally-led Class 1 Driver Licencing initiatives for the last four years, alongside organisations like Eastbay REAP and the Road Safety Committee. We are also a member of the [Driving Change Network](#).

We're keen to see some strategic improvements:

- Co-ordinated information about all government funded Class 1 Driver Licencing, place by place – we suspect there are much smarter ways for government to manage, allocate and account for the currently disconnected investments being made – with much more impact.
- Urgent trial initiatives to enable people to sit licences close to their homes – e.g. in Ōpōtiki and Kawerau.
- Commitment by government to mainstream the availability of Class 1 Driver Licencing tuition in all schools and kura.

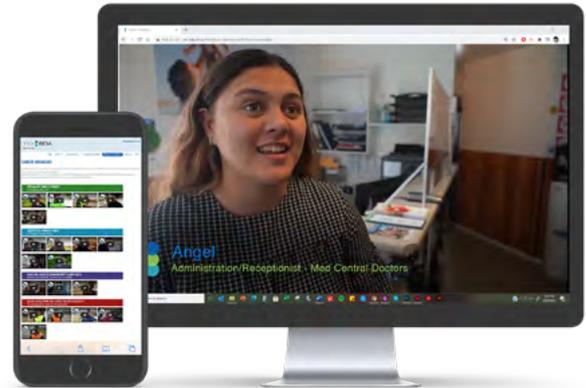
Toi EDA grows our EBOP Careers Showcase

Rangatahi feedback told us that second to learning “hands on” about careers and jobs, they like learning online.

So we worked with Eastern Bay businesses to identify and film local young people in diverse careers and jobs. Our Careers Showcase has been widely used both here, and nationally. This year we’ve added 12 new videos to our library – capturing inspiring rangatahi and young Eastern Bay people doing jobs they love. They, and the previous 12 are organised by vocational pathway.

For example, if you’re interested in Construction and Infrastructure (booming right now in our rōhe!) take a look at Dylan, a 26-year-old running his own construction business in Ōpōtiki, and employing other young people. Or Jordan who’s an Engineering Cadet at Whakatāne District Council.

Or take a look at Taz who’s passionate about creative industries, and works for Radio Bay of Plenty as Production Engineer, or Angel who’s working in Health Administration at Med Central Doctors, and sees it as a great pathway into all sorts of career opportunities.



See the whole set [HERE](#)

The videos illustrate the diversity of jobs and careers available right here **on our doorstep!**

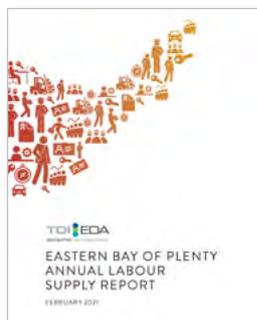
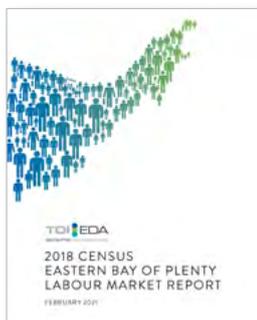
Data / Stats – “Are we making progress?”

For communities like ours that have borne the brunt of decades of structural unemployment, workforce development is a vital strand to rebuild equitable wellbeing.

Since 2016, Toi EDA has been active in partnership with others to grow more pathways into good Eastern Bay of Plenty jobs. We’ve also co-ordinated information on labour market related trends, to help inform community level and EBOP planning, and track collective progress.

Recently we’ve published two reports.

- [Eastern Bay of Plenty Annual Labour Supply Report - February 2021](#)
- [2018 Census Eastern Bay of Plenty Labour Market Report](#)



One draws together community and Eastern Bay Census 2018 labour market related statistics and trends.

The other takes an annual view, drawing on multiple data sources available around June 30, to provide a year on year snapshot of our labour market where possible.

We already know that due in particular to COVID-19 impacts, some more positive trends have slowed or reversed.

A further set of data we monitor more frequently is our EBOP Job Seeker, Work Ready statistics, provided by MSD. These show that across EBOP, at the end of 2020 there were nearly 1,000 more people registered on this benefit than at 12 months before.

Toi EDA is committed to ongoing collective effort with Iwi, industries, community and government to help bring that number down, and get the trend going back in the right direction.

Short Courses / Traffic Management

Te Ara Huringa ō Pupuwharau (Driver Operator Training Centre) has been working with our providers on ways to make it easier to get a truck licence or an endorsement for forklift or wheels / tracks / rollers.

We have also fielded a few queries about Traffic Management training, and it has been noted that not everyone can take the time out to get to our training centre in Kawerau. With all these things in mind, we have modified our approach to training and can now offer most of these courses in other towns across the Eastern Bay of Plenty and are happy to bring the course to your workplace.

We have a class 2 truck course scheduled for March 15th at the training centre in Kawerau. The cost is \$1,188.18 inclusive of GST. Students will need to hold their class 2 learner licence before the start of the course. We are currently negotiating dates for a course in April.



We are also taking expressions of interest for a one-day traffic management course in April / May and happy to deliver this across the region where there is demand.

For more information on courses, schedules or locations, contact Andrew Watson on andrew@toi-eda.co.nz or 021 970 767.

Building developments

Toi EDA has now hosted two regional hui to find practical ways to address the worsening housing crisis.

As a result of COVID-19 many people have returned home and soaring demand for rentals and home ownerships has pushed prices up significantly. By bringing together leaders in the sector from central and local government, social service providers, iwi and hapū, businesses, developers, and community groups a collective strategy has been agreed focusing on four key areas. Firstly, the immediate need for more homes to be built in our region to resolve the current crisis needs to have developers that can build affordable homes in the right locations. Toi EDA is helping to attract such developers. Secondly, Toi EDA will work with local and central government to develop a long term regional view of the supply and demand for homes, so robust planning decisions can be made that will allow for successfully planned housing developments. Thirdly, our current housing stocks are of poor quality and not up to the Healthy Homes standards. Toi EDA will continue to work with community groups and funders to ensure that improvements are made to the homes that need it the most. Lastly, Toi EDA will work with funders to create



novel financing mechanisms that allow for Māori land to be developed, without putting at risk the long term ownership of the whenua.

Toi EDA recognises that the ability to direct lead these strategies is a challenge, so our objective is to ensure all relevant parties are connected and aligned so we can best leverage the limited resources we have across the region. Toi EDA continues to lobby for central government support to assist in resolving the housing crisis.

In the news

In case you missed it, here are some of the big stories about economic development in the Eastern Bay recently:

TOI EDA WEBSITE:

- [Toi EDA Annual Report](#)
- [Whakatāne Mill](#)

What's next?

Over the next two months Toi EDA are focussed on:

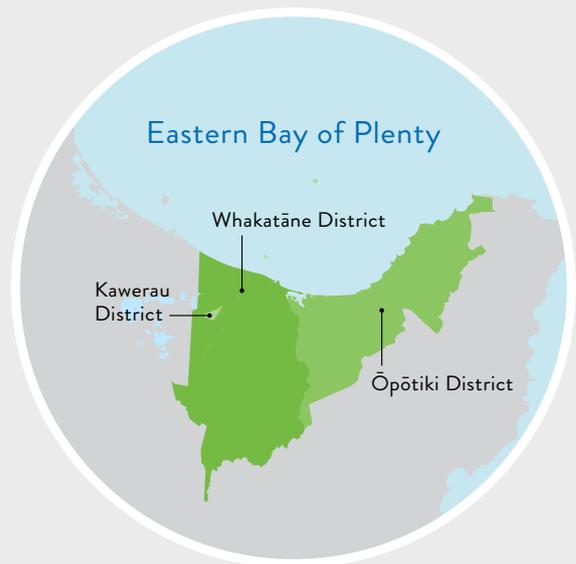
- Digital Connectivity
- Housing
- Workforce – Advisory Group and RSLG Intent
- Te Ara Huringa o Pupuwharau (Driver Operator Training Centre)
- Toi EDA Website Promotion

A bit about us

Toi EDA is the Economic Development Agency for the Eastern Bay of Plenty, which includes Ōpōtiki, Whakatāne and Kawerau Districts. We are committed to sustainable and inclusive growth across our region, "Creating Thriving Communities".

We are working to build strong partnerships with Iwi, Councils, industry and the Crown. Our work is to bring together the right business and the right resources to ensure successful projects that benefit Eastern Bay communities.

Toi EDA's role is to provide a backbone to collective visions and plans, and that can include mapping out the various government funding streams and ensuring we don't lose sight of our long term goals or lose momentum through the process.



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Toi EDA would like to acknowledge the **Todd Foundation**, **Ministry of Business and Innovation (MBIE)**, **Bay of Plenty Education Trust** and **Bay of Plenty Regional Council** for their continued support of funding.

THANKS TO OUR CORE FUNDING PARTNERS



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