

# The New Zealand Story

## Briefing for Incoming Ministers

27 November 2020

File Reference: MIN-2021-0165

Minister for Economic and Regional Development  
cc. Minister for Trade and Export Growth

# 1. Background to the New Zealand Story

The concept of a New Zealand Story emerged in 2012 to provide a broader shared narrative for New Zealand internationally. The intent was to build on the positive perceptions created through the tourism campaign of the last 20 years and introduce global audiences to other aspects of New Zealand’s unique proposition, culture, and capabilities. Until then, the Tourism proposition had strongly influenced New Zealand’s public persona internationally along with the perceptions of consumers offshore. A shift in the perception of New Zealand was required.

In 2012, Chief Executives from three government agencies, Tourism New Zealand (TNZ), New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) and Education New Zealand (ENZ) were charged with:

- developing a shared story of New Zealand relevant across many sectors.
- retaining the successful “100% Pure New Zealand” brand and enabling it to focus on the tourism attraction objective; and
- building a narrative that other government agencies and businesses could adopt

The New Zealand Story Group (NZ Story Group) was created and continues to be responsible for:

- positioning New Zealand globally to support diplomatic engagement and trade growth.
- delivering a marketing toolkit to assist businesses and government agencies to adapt and share the New Zealand Story; and
- ensuring alignment of compelling storytelling and brand articulation across government and industry.

NZ Story Group is a country reputation programme with practical application. It sits across various sectors as a central narrative to enable linkage across all activation, brands, and campaigns and core values to guide all decisions and actions.

Tourism	Education	Immigration	Investment	Business/Trade	Diplomacy
<p><b>Our New Zealand Story</b></p> <p>Central narrative: New Zealand is an ingenious creative nation, caring for people, place, and planet. Our values are: Kaitiakitanga, Integrity, Ingenuity.</p>					

NZ Story Group has a Private Sector Board (see Section 8) and is hosted within NZTE to minimise overhead costs and reporting requirements.

# 2. Perceptions of New Zealand

When the NZ Story Group was launched in late 2013, New Zealand was well known globally for natural beauty and welcoming people, however not much was widely known about its culture, exports, innovation in science and technology, or its creativity.

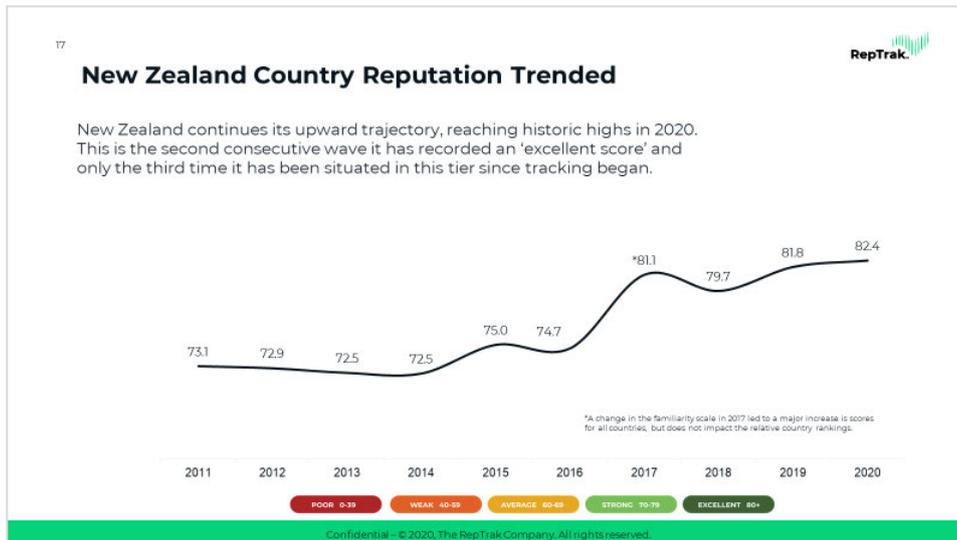
Perceptions of nations are largely driven by consumers’ sense of confidence and trust in the nation. In a world of Soft Power, reputation (made up of experiences, actions, communication, influences, and stereotypes) drives perceptions and value creation across a range of economic indicators, and impacts the manner in which a nation can influence global actions and outcomes for citizens.

Over the past seven years, NZ Story Group has collectively created an image of a more sophisticated, well-educated, creative, and ingenious country. NZ Story Group focuses on promoting New Zealand’s values with tangible examples and evidence to shift perceptions across a range of attributes and in particular seeks to build a broader narrative around societal, humanitarian, environmental, technological, scientific, and economic capabilities. The five themes of focus are:

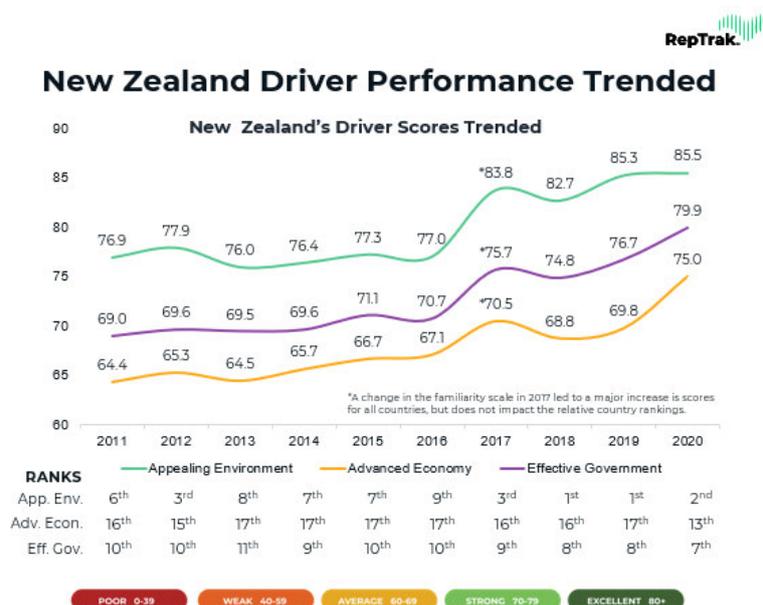
- |                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. People and Society             | 4. Business and Technology |
| 2. Sustainability and Environment | 5. Creativity and Arts     |
| 3. Culture and Heritage           |                            |

NZ Story Group has been tracking New Zealand's reputation through many reputable global brand surveys since their inception. Brand trackers regularly rank New Zealand in the top 15 nations in categories such as soft/smart power, social progress as well as transparency and ease of doing business.

New Zealand is now seen as one of the few countries that is 'values based' with a reputation that has improved year on year. New Zealand was named the most admired nation brand strategy in the Ipsos/City Nation Place Survey 2020, among a short list of five countries. The below graph from the RepTrak Country Brand Survey 2020 demonstrates that New Zealand's country reputation has climbed considerably from 2014 (the time NZ Story was activated).



There has recently been a strong lift in performance in 'effective government' and a significant shift in perceptions of New Zealand having an 'advanced economy'. Reptrak analysts indicate that approximately half of this lift in 'advanced economy' has come from a positive shift in 'effective government'. The New Zealand Government's action over the past two years, in the face of several crises, has shown the world that our values run deep throughout our national character. The remaining lift is attributed to the collective work of NZ Govt. agencies and businesses communicating New Zealand stories through their multiple channels (social media as well as diplomatic and business channels). Additionally, the chart below shows that New Zealand continues to score well on Appealing Environment. This reflects the continued role the New Zealand tourism brand (and paid campaign reach) plays in perceptions of New Zealand.



### 3. What NZ Story Group does

The NZ Story is a narrative built on international insights and underpinned by New Zealand’s values. It articulates who New Zealanders are and how they want to be perceived.

<b>NZ Story narrative</b> Ko tātou enei – it’s who we are: New Zealand is an ingenious creative nation, caring for people, place, and planet.		
The values that continue to surface from within New Zealand and continue to be rated as authentic and true by global consumers are:		
<b>Kaitiaki:</b> the care of people, place, and planet. This care extends to everything we do and everything we create. We are considered a progressive nation, yet we seek not to damage what is precious.	<b>Ingenuity:</b> with our spirit of exploration, adventure, and creativity, we turn ideas into reality and solve what others do not. Our fresh perspective to problem solving and making it happen is valued by others.	<b>Integrity:</b> we do what we say we will do and do the right thing, because it’s the right thing. This deeply engrained value delivers the trust behind our good reputation.

Using the narrative, the NZ Story approach is to:

- a. Give New Zealand business owners storytelling tools, skills, and knowledge so they can share their own stories within a simple framework and/or with common values for greater impact; and
- b. Give government representatives tools to communicate a more consistent and compelling story about New Zealand to shift perceptions and open doors.

This work is achieved through several initiatives outlined below.

#### Global communications

Each week, NZ Story Group produces “Another Amazing New Zealand Story”. These are 60-90 second videos designed for social media channels. These stories support the five themes NZ Story Group promotes, that research has also shown influence consumer preference.

All stories can be viewed on the NZ Story Group website [www.nzstory.govt.nz](http://www.nzstory.govt.nz). Stories are shared through NZ Story Group’s social media and cross-posted to over 60 global partner accounts. Many New Zealand embassies, high commissions and government agencies share stories they know will resonate with their local audiences. With approximately 50-70 posts each month NZ Story Group achieves an average of 4.5 million impressions on social media monthly.

#### The FernMark Licence Programme

The FernMark is a trademark registered under New Zealand Way Limited. It has been operated by NZTE since 2002 and provides country of origin authentication for New Zealand export businesses. It is a proxy for safety, trust, and quality, which is increasingly sought by global consumers. A dashboard for the Fernmark has been included as Appendix 2.

The FernMark Licence Programme has a three-step application process comprising:

- pre-qualifying criteria (such as the applicant needing to be a GST-registered business) including a calculation of the applicant’s ‘New Zealandness’, determined by points allocated for percentage of New Zealand based employees, percentage of New Zealand ownership, percentage of board governance based in New Zealand; and
- confirmation the product is either grown, made or designed in New Zealand.

Once verified and audited by NZ Story Group, an invoice is issued, a licence number is allocated and the FernMark brand assets are released to the applicant. Applications cost between \$750 - \$5,000 depending on the company's annual revenue. A consumer or buyer can scan the FernMark logo or visit [newzealand.com](http://newzealand.com) to verify the product is authorised.

## **NZ Story Toolkit**

The NZ Story Toolkit (Toolkit) provides resources to help export businesses (including sectors such as education, tourism, immigration, investment, and trade), government agencies, and channel partners better leverage their connection to New Zealand. There are over 16,000 registered users of the Toolkit.

Toolkit content is research-based and aids in the positioning of New Zealand. Content includes imagery and video footage, infographics, 'Inside Story Films' and sector information, all of which is free for exporting businesses to use. Content is created to showcase New Zealand's unique story – what sets New Zealand apart, what New Zealand stands for and to offer.

## **Perception Research**

NZ Story Group has conducted its own perception research in several countries<sup>1</sup> to gain a deeper understanding of what global consumers and buyers believe New Zealand stands for and what they think New Zealand can credibly offer. Based on the insights from NZ Story Group's perception research, specific market toolkits have also been developed to enable a contextually appropriate and relevant delivery of our New Zealand stories into priority markets such as USA, China, Japan, UK, Germany, Australia, and Singapore.

## **Government Resource Centre**

NZ Story Group produces global campaigns for government agencies to use to further their public diplomacy and 'soft power' programmes internationally, and curates a Government Resources Toolkit that includes "Key Messages Documents" NZ Story Group supplies on key sectors. These documents are used to inform speeches and presentations by New Zealand government officials around the globe.

Examples of previous campaigns include:

- 'Proud Together' which ran in over 20 countries, enabling visible and consistent support of Pride festivals by the New Zealand government.
- Working with New Zealand Music to deliver a global #nzmusicmonth campaign showcasing New Zealand music.

These campaigns are held in the Government Resources Toolkit, enabling easy access to pre-prepared content for all government agency partners.

## **4. New Zealand's Brand in a COVID-19 world**

The emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 brought some urgency to the NZ Story Groups activity. As part of the Governments COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, NZTE received \$4 million per year for the next four years. The purpose of the funding is for NZ Story Group to strengthen the New Zealand Brand in priority markets by maintaining, promoting, and broadening New Zealand's nation brand appeal, particularly while the tourism sector is recovering. This investment supports several initiatives that will re-emphasise New Zealand's reputation for safety, trust, resilience, ingenuity, innovation, sustainability and high-value goods and services as outlined below:

---

<sup>1</sup> China, Vietnam, Australia, Japan. Germany, USA, UAE

### Project Kuaka / Brand NZ COVID-19 Recovery:

- NZ Story conducted Global Pulse Research in June to assess the impact of COVID-19 on perceptions of New Zealand and shared this widely to support COVID-19 Recovery responses.
- TNZ, NZ Story Group, NZTE, and Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) combined forces in May to develop a cross agency “Messages from NZ” campaign to keep New Zealand alive in the hearts and minds of global consumers.
- NZTE and MPI, NZ Story Group, collaborated to develop the “Made with Care” F&B sector story and campaign.
- NZ Story and NZ Tech collaborated to develop the “Ingenious Together” Innovation and Tech sector story and campaign.

The Brand NZ COVID-19 Recovery project is further detailed in Appendix 1 and key agencies will seek a separate meeting with you to brief you on the initiative and progress to date.

### Project Te Kōpū:

- NZ Story created regionally specific content and messages to target specific perception gaps and leverage positive reputational factors. These Kōpū (Morning/Guiding Star) provide offshore Government Representatives with a complete toolkit to support Digital Diplomacy activity.

## **5. Looking ahead for NZ Story**

In 2019 the Board conducted a strategic review of NZ Story to determine a direction for the next five years. The strategic review resulted in ‘Seven Big Shifts’:

1. From Niche and Organic efforts to **Volume, Reach and Scale** across all channels into international markets
2. From Ad Hoc to **In Partnership with Maori** to ensure the story is deeply connected with Maori values and narrative
3. From **Influencer to Leadership**: With a solid base and credibility established, there is room for the NZ Story Group to play a stronger and endorsed leadership role to guide direction and unification across major touch points.
4. From **“By Government for Business”** to **“In Partnership with Many”**: A shift is required from promoting New Zealand to the world, to creating a national sense of identity and connection to stimulate a nation of storytellers creating greater reach, authenticity, and longevity.
5. From **Loose & Divested to Tight & Consistent**: tighter alignment to a cohesive central narrative, shared values, and brand identity system to amplify and connect New Zealand’s global impact.

Implementation of these recommended shifts will be in two phases and is underway. This will be part of NZ Story’s ongoing reporting and engagement with you.

## **6. How NZ Story Group engages with you**

The Chair of the NZ Story Advisory Board reports directly to the Minister for Economic and Regional Development. To reduce duplication and improve efficiencies, the NZ Story Group is located within NZTE, as employees of NZTE.

As Minister with responsibility for NZ Story Group, the main accountabilities include:

- ensuring NZ Story Group has an effective Board in place.
- participating in setting NZ Story Group’s direction.
- monitoring and reviewing NZ Story Group’s operations and performance; and
- managing risks on behalf of the Crown.

The NZ Story Group currently provides the following reporting:

- regular updates in NZTE’s fortnightly reports; and
- quarterly progress reports.

The following regular interactions with the NZ Story Group also take place:

- Quarterly NZ Story Group Ministers meeting with Board Chair, Paul Brock, Director, Rebecca Smith, and NZTE CEO, Peter Crisp. These are currently held quarterly and include the Minister for Trade and Export Growth.
- Portfolio Ministers meetings – you may choose to invite the Director and/or Chair to brief Ministers from relevant portfolios on NZ Story Group progress and developments.

## 7. Funding

NZ Story Group is jointly funded through NZTE by the Crown and six government agencies (MFAT, TNZ, NZTE, MPI, Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK), and ENZ) reflecting the commitment to shared storytelling across Government. The funding contribution from each agency is outlined below:

Tier 1: MFAT, TNZ, NZTE: \$500k per annum  
 Tier 2: MPI, TPK: \$383k per annum  
 Tier 3: ENZ: \$283k per annum

NZ Story Group also receives revenue from the Crown of \$900,000 per annum. As noted in Section 4, in 2020/21 NZTE received \$4 million per year for the next four years for NZ Story Group to strengthen the New Zealand Brand in priority markets, as part of the Governments COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. Of this \$4 million per annum:

- \$3 million was made available for 2020/21 as contribution to the F&B Campaign (part of the ‘Project Kuaka / Brand NZ COVID-19 Recovery campaign for 2020/21).
- \$1 million was allocated to the Ingenuity Campaign (also part of the Project Kuaka /Brand NZ COVID-19 Recovery campaign for 2020/21)

The spend of the \$4 million for 2021/22 is still to be determined and will be finalised following an assessment of the effectiveness of the current campaigns.

**Table One: NZ Story Government Funding**

Funding for NZ Story (\$000s)	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Agency funding	1,500	2,298	3,298	2,949	2,649	2,599	2,549	2,549
Crown funding	2,000	0	0	900	900	900	900	4,900 <sup>2</sup>
Total funding	3,500	2,298	3,298	3,849	3,549	3,499	3,449	7,449

<sup>2</sup>Of the \$4 million increase, \$3 million was transferred to NZTE – as noted in section 7.

## 8. NZ Story Group Governance

The current Board comprises of:

Name	Joined	Ends	Status	Notes
Paul Brock, Chair of NZ Story	Oct 2018	Sep 2021	s9(2)(g)(i)	[Redacted]
Dame Julie Christie	Oct 2013	Oct 2018	s9(2)(g)(i)	[Redacted]
Steve Smith	Oct 2013	Nov 2019	s9(2)(g)(i)	[Redacted]
Vacant			s9(2)(g)(i)	
Pete Chrisp, NZTE	2013	N/A	s9(2)(g)(i)	
Grant MacPherson, ENZ	2013	N/A	s9(2)(g)(i)	
Stephen England-Hall, TNZ	2017	N/A	s9(2)(g)(i)	
Chris Seed, MFAT	2019	N/A	s9(2)(g)(i)	[Redacted]
Ray Smith, MPI	2018	N/A	s9(2)(g)(i)	[Redacted]
Dave Samuels, TPK	2013	N/A	s9(2)(g)(i)	[Redacted]

s9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]

## Appendix 1: Brand NZ COVID-19 Recovery Campaign

---

The Brand NZ Campaign was launched earlier this year to leverage the positive global sentiment being felt towards New Zealand and raise the international profile of the New Zealand brand in key markets, in a time when international travel is restricted. s9(2)(f)(iv)

Predecessor Ministers agreed that TNZ, NZTE, MPI, and NZ Story Group would collaborate to deliver a joined-up brand campaign to keep the New Zealand brand alive internationally. s9(2)(f)(iv)

The Campaign is multi-layered and delivered in phases, with the brand level led by Tourism NZ and sector initiatives across Food & Beverage (led by NZTE, with MPI) and Ingenuity (led by NZ Story). s9(2)(f)(iv)

The three campaigns are outlined below.

### 1. Messages from New Zealand Campaign

Messages from New Zealand was launched by TNZ in July 2020 and features a series of video messages (promoted via paid social channels) from notable and every day New Zealanders, sharing what they love most about New Zealand. s9(2)(g)(i)

The campaign comprises several variations to suit each market and a range of messages to extend the campaign across six months. To date, global channel sentiment has remained on target at a consistent at 86 to 90%. Post campaign research is due later this year.

### 2. Made with Care Campaign

Consumers are looking for safe, nutritious, premium quality, ethical and tasty food and beverages. As a net exporter of food for more than 40 million people, New Zealand is well placed to meet these needs. The Made with Care campaign, launched in October 2020, aims to build a foundation of value and preference for New Zealand brands that businesses can leverage through their own sales and marketing efforts. The campaign's hero video, featuring individuals from New Zealand's food and beverage industry, highlights what is unique about the way we create and provide food and beverage products for global consumers.

The campaign has been activated internationally and over the next 6 - 8 months there will be several specific marketing, promotion, and retail initiatives in key priority markets that businesses can participate in to directly drive sales.

### 3. Ingenious Together Campaign

Ingenuity is a core kiwi value, and the world is very open to hearing about New Zealand's ingenious way of thinking, how we problem solve, innovate, and create, across a range of different industry sectors. This campaign seeks to portray New Zealand as a creative nation with smart ingenious people who push the boundaries, solve problems, and come up with new technology solutions.

This campaign will launch later in 2020, with a hero film for each of the five priority markets along with social media content, background stories, infographics, all contained within the Business Toolkit for NZ firms to use.



# FERNMARK LICENCE PROGRAMME DASHBOARD: OCTOBER 2020

## New Licensees

 317 licensees (total)

New Licensees onboarded in this month:

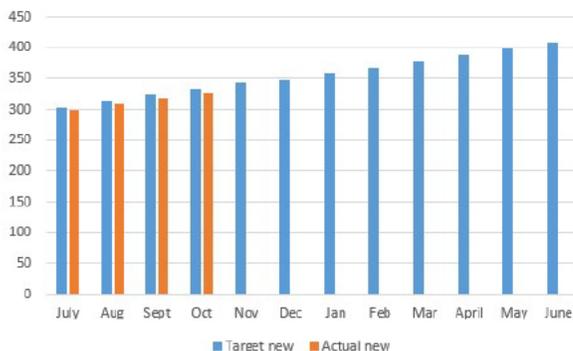
- s9(2)(b)(ii)

## Testimonials

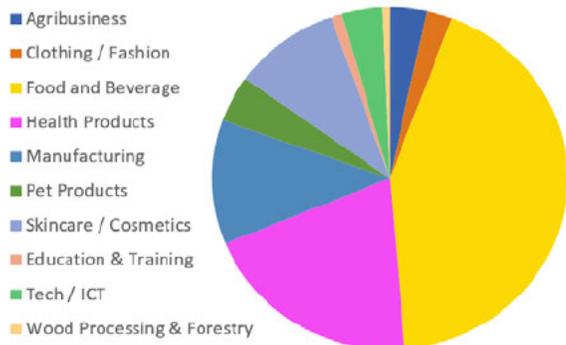
"I received the welcome packet and framed certificate. Beautiful! Thank you."

s9(2)(a)  
s9(2)(b)(ii)

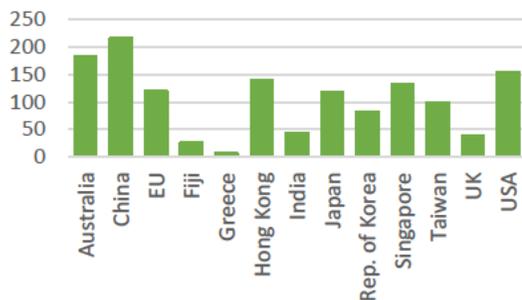
## Acquisition Growth (monthly)



## What are they exporting?



## Licensee top export markets



## The Financials

### Cumulative Cost vs. Income



## CORSEARCH • IP Protection

Corsearch monitors over 1000 online ecommerce sites in China and flag any listing carrying the FernMark

Market Places	Analysed	Reported	Removed
For October	2,132	0	0
For 12 months	30,242	0	23

## Social media engagement #FernMark

Licensee	Impressions	
	Twitter	LinkedIn
s9(2)(b)(ii)	541	1127
s9(2)(b)(ii)	600	601
s9(2)(b)(ii)	641	924
s9(2)(b)(ii)	778	959

## FernMark Verification

### QR code scans October

565 QR scans globally

#### Top 4 countries:

- China
- New Zealand
- Singapore
- USA

#### Top 4 Licensees:

- s9(2)(b)(ii)
- s9(2)(b)(ii)
- s9(2)(b)(ii)
- s9(2)(b)(ii)

### Website hits October

#### Top 10 companies

#### Product verification:

- s9(2)(b)(ii)



## Trademark Matters

**Singapore Registration (Finalised)** – Our application to expand our trademark coverage to include additional key classes of goods has now been registered.

s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(j)

s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(j)

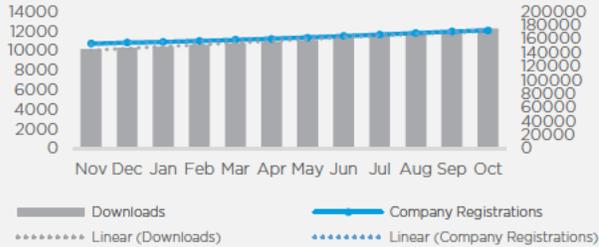
s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(j)

s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(j)

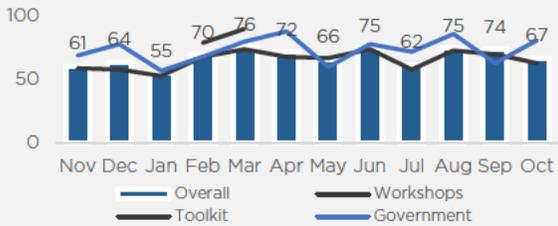
## BUSINESS & GOVT. AWARENESS/USE

**16,814** Reg. Users  
**175,644** Downloads  
**12,116** Reg. Coys

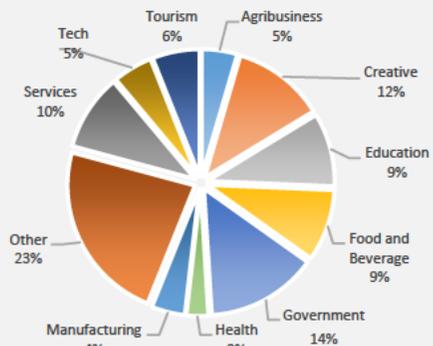
Monthly Registered Companies & Downloads 2020/21



Net Promoter Score FY 2020/21  
FYTD NPS = +69 (n =465)



## SECTORS USING THE TOOLKIT



## TOP CONTENT



## STORIES LAUNCHED THIS MONTH

The Flat White	Middle East Inside Stories
Fred Hollows	The Pie
<b>Total video views</b>	<b>531.9K</b>
<b>178</b> New Reg. Users This Month	<b>1,123</b> Event Audience YTD

## TOOLKIT

"I recommend it everywhere I facilitate (Government, & Industry Asia capability uplift programs) - i think the essence of soft power is beautifully demonstrated here."

*Donna Webster – Asialink Business*

"An excellent campaign that helps us to differentiate NZ products from anywhere else. Also speaks to authenticity, integrity and credibility."

*Belinda Jackson – Lawson's Dry Hills Wines Ltd*

## BUSINESS & CONSUMER DISTRIBUTION

**19.9K**  
Social Media  
Followers  
**+2%**

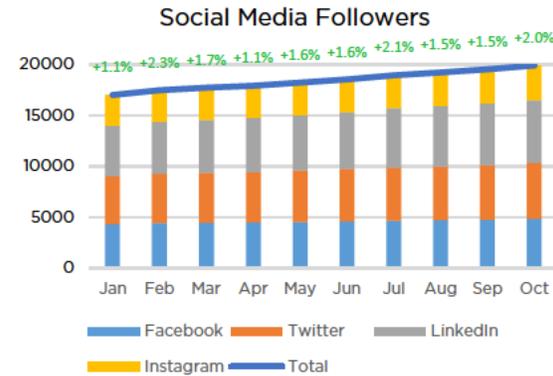
**52.8K**  
Social Media  
Engagements  
**+95%**

**1.1M**  
Monthly  
Impressions

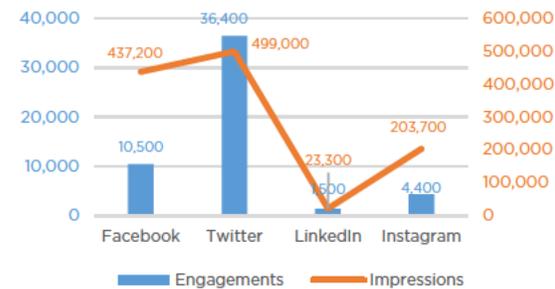
**4.5%**  
Engagement Rate  
**+1.1**

**68**  
Number of posts

**8,816**  
Website Visitors  
(unique visitors)



## Monthly Engagements & Impressions



## FERNMARK ACQUISITION (MONTHLY)

**317** Licensees



## NEW LICENSEES FOR OCTOBER

- s9(2)(b)(ii)

## CUMULATIVE COST VS. INCOME

