

2025 –2026 Annual Report

Welcome to the Manukau: Heart of the South (Manukau Business Association Incorporated) Annual Report for 2025–2026. This year has been a blend of business-as-usual delivery, ongoing development, refinement of our core activities, and several exciting new beginnings. Rather than opening with our major highlights, we have chosen to present our strategic priorities in alphabetical order, reflecting a more balanced and transparent overview of our work.



Advocacy

Each year we advocate to both central and local government, whether through the Local Board or various Council departments. Our submissions address issues that directly affect businesses, as well as changes that will impact customers and the wider community. These can include matters such as roading, parking, environmental considerations, and other areas that influence the business operating environment.

As Manukau is the second-largest CBD in Auckland, even without a significant night-time economy, part of our submission to the Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board's budget this year requested that they focus on laying the foundations for a vibrant, safe, and economically resilient metropolitan centre. This includes prioritising the planning, investment, and partnerships required to establish a night-time economy, strengthen Manukau's role as a regional destination, and support the rapid population growth expected across South Auckland.

The new Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board's 'Manukau Economic Development Plan' will feature the Manukau: Heart of the South logo and incorporates many of our long-term visions. As you will see later in this report, abandoned trolleys remain our largest and most persistent crime and community issue. With this in mind, Manukau: Heart of the South, together with MP Arena Williams, invited all retailers who offer trolleys for their customers to join us for a discussion on practical solutions.

After reviewing several options, the group agreed that the current Manukau: Heart of the South process remains the simplest and fastest method for returning trolleys to their rightful place. Our team reports the number and location of abandoned trolleys directly to the owners using a range of communication channels. Trolley owners aim to collect reported trolleys within 48 hours. If you notice abandoned trolleys around the area, please contact our office. Once notified, we will initiate the process and ensure the information is passed on promptly.

In June this year, Auckland Urban Development Office (AUDO – previously Eke Panuku) held an all-day department workshop. Part of the workshop was a panel discussion on the future of South Auckland focusing on Manukau. One of the questions put to our GMs as a panel member was about the fear a lot of businesses and business associations have around the development of Drury South.

Audreys response was.

"With approximately 30,000 people expected to move to Drury, we need to invest in Manukau and develop its night-time economy to draw them here. If Manukau is already the second largest CBD without a night-time market, imagine what it will become once we establish one."

She was also asked, “What her dream for Manukau was.”

“Manukau the destination in Auckland. To market Manukau nationally and internationally to visitors. We are an hour closer to the Airport, Rotorua, Hobbiton and other major attractions. We have great hotels, motels, and things to do. We could even arrange day trips into the Viaduct and Waterfront. A bold statement to make to an audience that has spent years and millions on the development of the Viaduct and Waterfront. This is the foundation of our 2027 – 2032 Strategic Plan.”

Our relationship with the Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board continues to strengthen. The annual local board lunch with the Manukau Board has become a highlight of the year, providing valuable time for shared discussion and alignment on priorities. Attending key local board events, including their inauguration, further deepens our communication channels and reinforces the constructive working relationship between our organisations.



Manukau: Heart of the South / Ōtara -Papatoetoe Board Lunch



Ōtara -Papatoetoe Local Board Inauguration



Economic Development

Marketview

Marketview looks at the card spend in the Manukau business district and compares it to the Auckland Region and National spend. It also breaks down the information into category spend and can tell us where our growth in spending comes from. For example, July 2025 – June 2026 shows that Manukau had a 27.6% spend increase from international visitors. We had a slightly larger increase in spend with a smaller increase in transactions. Here are the figures for you.

July 2025 – June 2026

MANUKAU

Spend \$1,053.9M +0.7%

Transactions 18.0M -1.6%

REGION

Auckland Region

Spend \$26,068.4M +0.4%

Transactions 536.0M -
1.9%

NATIONAL

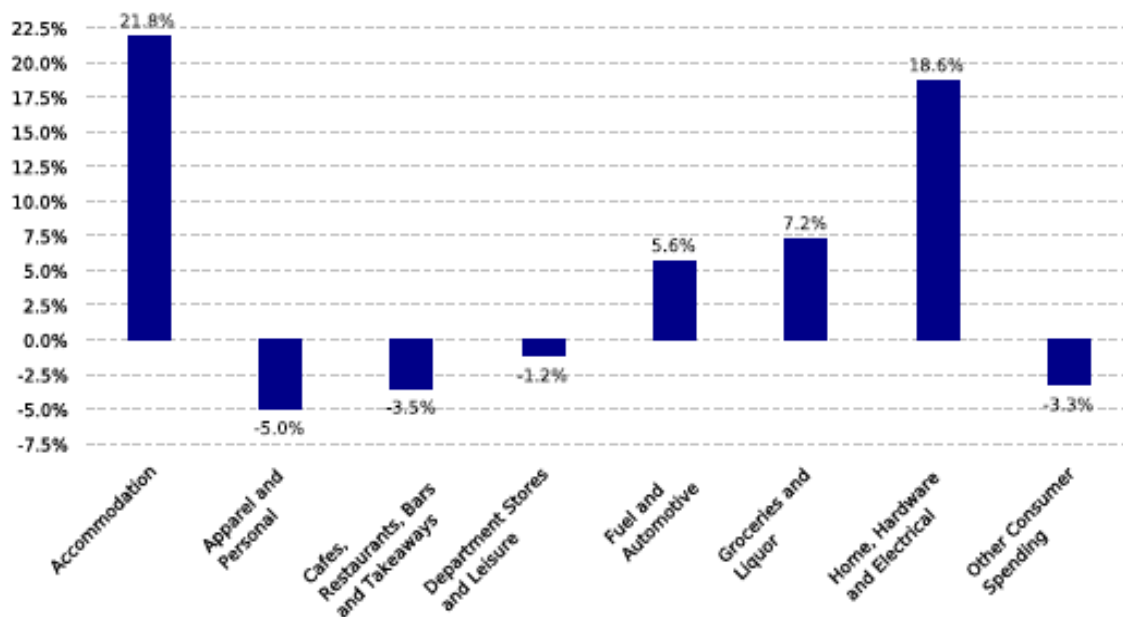
New Zealand

Spend \$78,596.2M

+0.6%

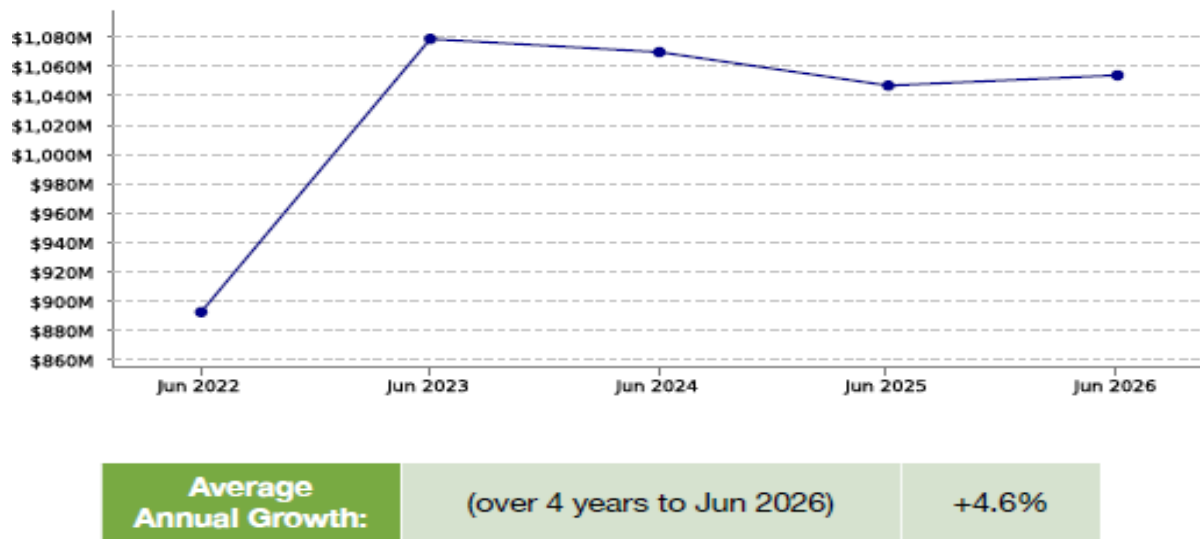
Transactions 1,607.1M -
1.7%

STORETYPE SPEND GROWTH



Highest Growth:	Accommodation	+21.8%
Lowest Growth:	Apparel and Personal	-5.0%

SPEND OVER LAST 5 YEARS. YE JUNE



Commercial Vacancies

As of July 1 2026, Manukau vacancy rates were:

Commercial: 3.6%.

Industrial: 3.6%

Retail 1%.

This is great for Manukau when compared to Auckland City and City fringe areas averaging 14%-16% with retail at 13%.

Manukau Tertiary Hub

Including the three tertiary providers based within Westfield Manukau, Manukau is home to 18 tertiary education providers. In early 2025, Manukau: Heart of the South formally established the Manukau Tertiary Hub, bringing together institutions across the Manukau area.

The Hub creates a platform for collaboration, enabling providers to discuss shared issues, exchange ideas, and identify opportunities to work together. It strengthens sector alignment and supports a unified approach to tertiary education in Manukau.

Two of our long-term goals are central to this work:

- Developing Manukau as a recognised tertiary hub, ensuring students can study locally without needing to travel outside the area.
- Advocating for purpose-built student accommodation within the city centre to support growth, vibrancy, and accessibility for learners.

Manukau's growing tertiary ecosystem is further strengthened through our ongoing support for local providers. Throughout the year, we partnered with NZSE to facilitate work-experience training for their security students, ensuring they gain practical, real-world skills within the Manukau metropolitan area. We also participated in a range of student-focused events across multiple providers, showcasing the opportunities, pathways, and vibrancy that Manukau offers to learners. These initiatives reinforce Manukau's position as South Auckland's emerging Tertiary Hub, building strong connections between education, workforce development, and the city's long-term growth.



Marketing & Promotion

The Manukau: Heart of the South brand is now firmly established, with our team instantly recognisable across the district as the "Team in Pink." Our presence also continues to grow online, with Facebook followers steadily increasing and new channels launched this year on Instagram and TikTok to expand our reach and engagement.

In December, Manukau: Heart of the South installed Manukau's first-ever outdoor Christmas tree, a 6-metre structure topped with a 1.5-metre star. While smaller and significantly more cost-effective than the central city's tree, it became an immediate community magnet. Positioned in Manukau Square, the tree attracted families, community groups, and visitors who gathered, picnicked, and even BBQ's around it throughout the festive season.

We extend our thanks to the NZ Police for repositioning one of their cameras, enabling us to monitor the tree 24/7 from the office, and to Westfield Manukau for adjusting their own camera and increasing foot patrols to support safety in the area. Local businesses and the Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board also embraced the installation, incorporating the tree into their Christmas marketing campaigns.

The tree will return this December along with the highly anticipated 'Manukau's Great Carol-Off' Choir competition.



February 2026 delivered another milestone for Manukau with our inaugural *Manukau Community Day*. We partnered with the businesses from 33 Lambie Drive and used their front carpark on a Saturday. This proved a fantastic and very visible spot, being one of the entrances to the Manukau Supa Centa. The day attracted approximately 1,000 people, with 20 stalls and activities that created a vibrant, high-energy atmosphere. The presence of police cars, fire engines, and emergency vehicles added plenty of excitement and noise, and the event was made possible through strong collaboration with Manukau businesses, NZ Police, Fire and Emergency, and Auckland Emergency Management.

Key outcomes from the day included:

- 130 vehicles upgraded with anti-tampering licence plate screws.
- 27 car seats correctly reinstalled by Baby Bunting – a remarkable result given their usual average of one per day.
- 300 ice creams handed out.
- 250 coffees served.
- Live music from two 95bFM DJs.
- 3 fire engines in attendance.
- 7 police cars on site.
- 3 Auckland Emergency Management vehicles supporting the event.

The day showcased the strength of our partnerships, the enthusiasm of our community, and the growing momentum behind Manukau: Heart of the South's placemaking initiatives.



Networking and Events

Alongside our two major marketing events above, Manukau: Heart of the South delivered 40 internal events and promoted 21 external events, providing our members with over 60 opportunities to network and engage across the year. These activities were organised into eight distinct event categories, each designed to strengthen business-to-business connections, deepen community engagement, and enhance the overall vibrancy of the area.

1. Traditional Breakfast Meetings:

We hosted three breakfast meetings this year, with our 60-Second Breakfast continuing to be our most popular format. At this high-energy session, members have just 60 seconds to pitch their business to the entire room creating a fast paced, engaging environment that consistently draws strong attendance and enthusiastic participation.



60 Second
Breakfast





AGM 2025



Minister Chris Penk



2. Business Development:

Our Lunch & Learn workshops continue to be consistently booked out. Held in our boardroom, these short lunchtime sessions offer an engaging blend of education and valuable networking opportunities. This year we delivered 10 Lunch & Learn sessions covering a wide range of topics from Legal Advice on Trusts and Managing Client Disputes, to understanding the advantages of working with the Commerce Commission, Auckland Business Chamber, and WorkSafe. Additional sessions explored working with AI, addressing employee absenteeism, the Salvation Army's *State of the Nation* report, and the benefits of entering the 2degrees Business Awards. Across the series we welcomed many familiar faces and were delighted to see a good number of new attendees joining us.



Trusts with Law & Associates



Commerce Commission



2degrees Auckland
Business Awards with
Wiri Business Association

3. After5 in Business

Our After5 events have evolved into a friendly “business-versus-business” showcase, with each hosting business aiming to outdo the one before. Manukau: Heart of the South provides the drinks and nibbles, while the host business supplies the venue and uses the opportunity to highlight their products, services, and behind-the-scenes operations.

This year we delivered 10 After5 events, seven hosted by Manukau businesses including Vaka 3D Printers, The Sebel Auckland Manukau Hotel, Manukau Autos, Auckland Unlimited (Lantern Festival), Business Like (NZ) Ltd, Te Ngahere, and Denham Bramwell Lawyers. These events offered members a diverse range of experiences and valuable insights into how different businesses operate. We hosted three After5 events of our own here in our Boardroom: a Turkish lamp-making workshop, which proved to be an excellent team-building activity with some formidable competition; our Christmas Drinks, always a popular way to close out the year; and a special celebration marking the Association’s 20th Anniversary.



Denham Bramwell Lawyers

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Te Ngahere



Vaka 3D printing



Business Like (NZ) Ltd



Christmas office drinks 2025



Celebrating 20 years

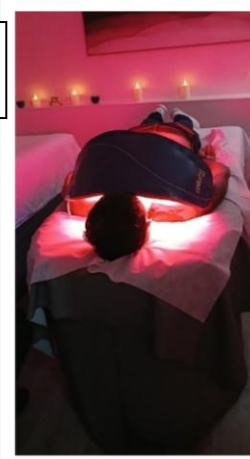


4. Women In Business:

Our Women in Business events (and yes, Gentleman, you are always welcome!) are never short of colour and energy. This year's two gatherings were no exception. We combined our first ladies' event with an After5 in Business to celebrate International Womens Day. Our women (and John) enjoyed being pampered at iGlow Spa, followed by our much-loved annual Pink Ribbon Morning Tea where the team from iGlow Spa joined us. We raised \$1,722 for the Breast Cancer Foundation, a fantastic result!



iGlow Spa –
International Womens



Manukau & iGlow Pink Ribbon
team



5. Community Events:

Our two regular community events deliver multiple benefits. They provide an opportunity for businesses and their staff to meet their neighbours, deepen local connections, and build stronger relationships with the wider community.

Coffee with a Cop:

In May this year we held our largest Coffee with a Cop event. These events typically range from 70 to 120 hot drinks, but the May event at MIT/Manukau Train Station reached a record 227. Across the five events delivered this year, we served a total of 461 hot drinks. The programme also gained wider visibility, with our General Manager interviewed for the Police Ride-A-Long vlog.



MIT/Manukau Train
Station



Te Ngahere



Columbus Coffee



KFC

Safer Plates:

Did you know that licence plate theft is still the number one vehicle crime in New Zealand! At a Safer Plates event our team, together with local Community Policing Team, change your easily removed licence plate screws for anti-tampering screws. As well as a great initiative to mitigate license plates theft, it's also a great way to find out whats happening in and around Manukau. This year, excluding the Manukau Community Safety day, we held four Safer Plates events and made 161 cars safer. A big thank you to our businesses that let us use their carpark.

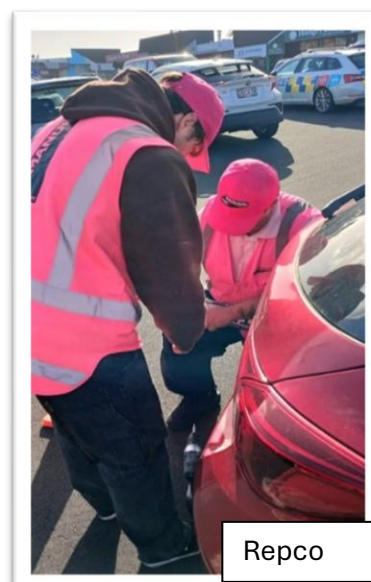


Manukau Supa Centa

Repc



Te Ngahere



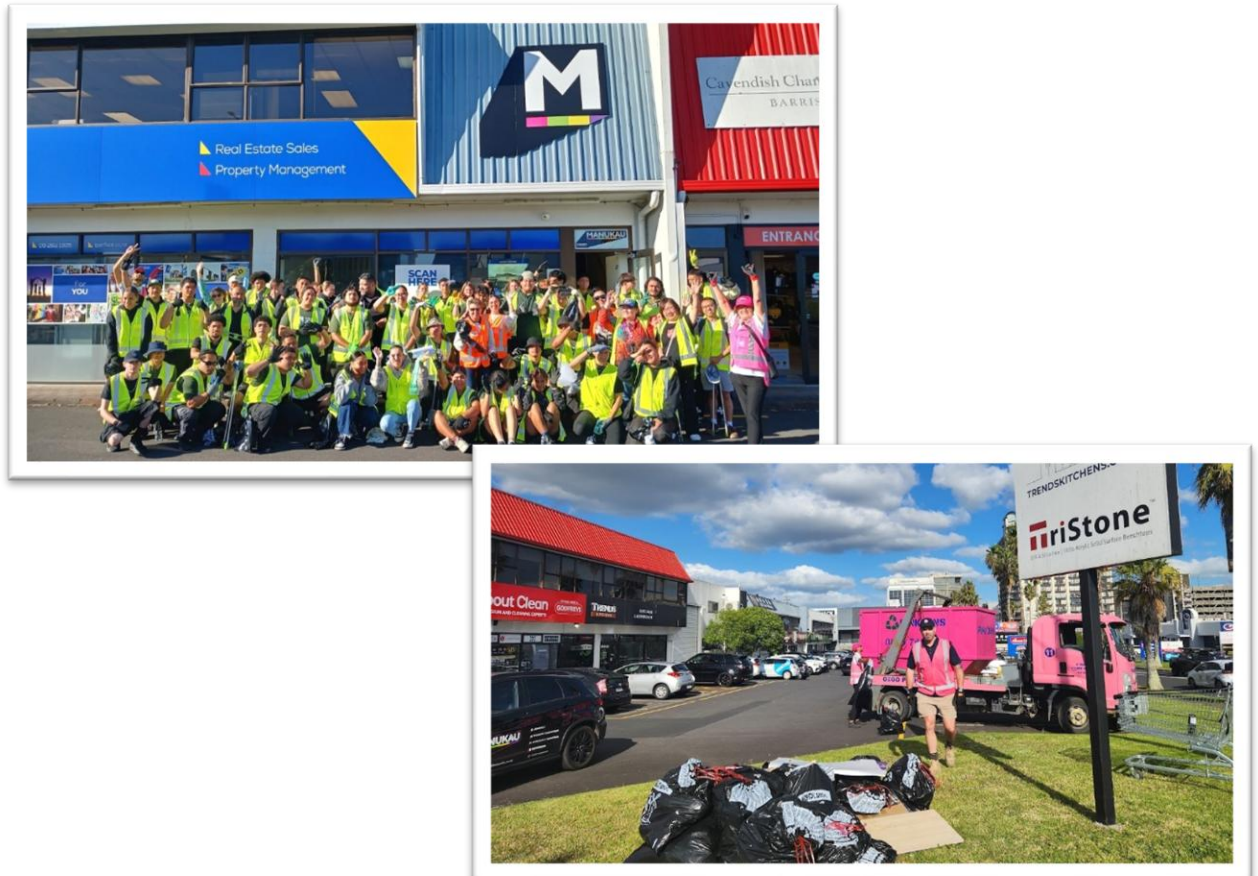
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6. Sustainability

Our two sustainability events have become annual events.

Manukau Street Clean

After an incredible amount of rain and two postponements, it was a case of third time lucky. 65 volunteers from local businesses, tertiary students, and the wider community came together and collected 300 kilograms of rubbish from the streets of Manukau. Craig from Pink Bins generously collected and disposed of all the rubbish bags, saving the association a significant amount of time and money.



E-Waste Collection

Manukau: Heart of the South was pleased to partner again with the Beautification Trust and The Warehouse to deliver a successful community e-waste recovery initiative in The Warehouse Manukau carpark. The event attracted strong public participation, with 1,014kg of electronic waste dropped off by local residents and businesses.

All collected e-waste was transferred to Echo Tech, where it was responsibly processed, dismantled, and recycled in accordance with best-practice environmental standards. This collaboration demonstrates the value of local partnerships in reducing landfill waste, promoting sustainable behaviour, and supporting Manukau's long-term vision as a cleaner, greener, future-focused city centre.

7. Other Activities

These activities are organised and promoted by the Association, with a deliberate focus on wider reach to include local businesses, their staff, and the broader community. Initiatives have included coordinating a certified first aid course and arranging locations for both the Pink Campervan and the Melanoma Campervan to set up and provide vital health information to the community.

8. External Events

External events are those we support, promote to our members, and share with the wider Manukau community. A key example is the Lantern Festival, which brings an estimated 160,000 visitors into the area. Across the four nights, our team played an active role in directing attendees and maintaining security throughout the business district, ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for both visitors and local businesses.



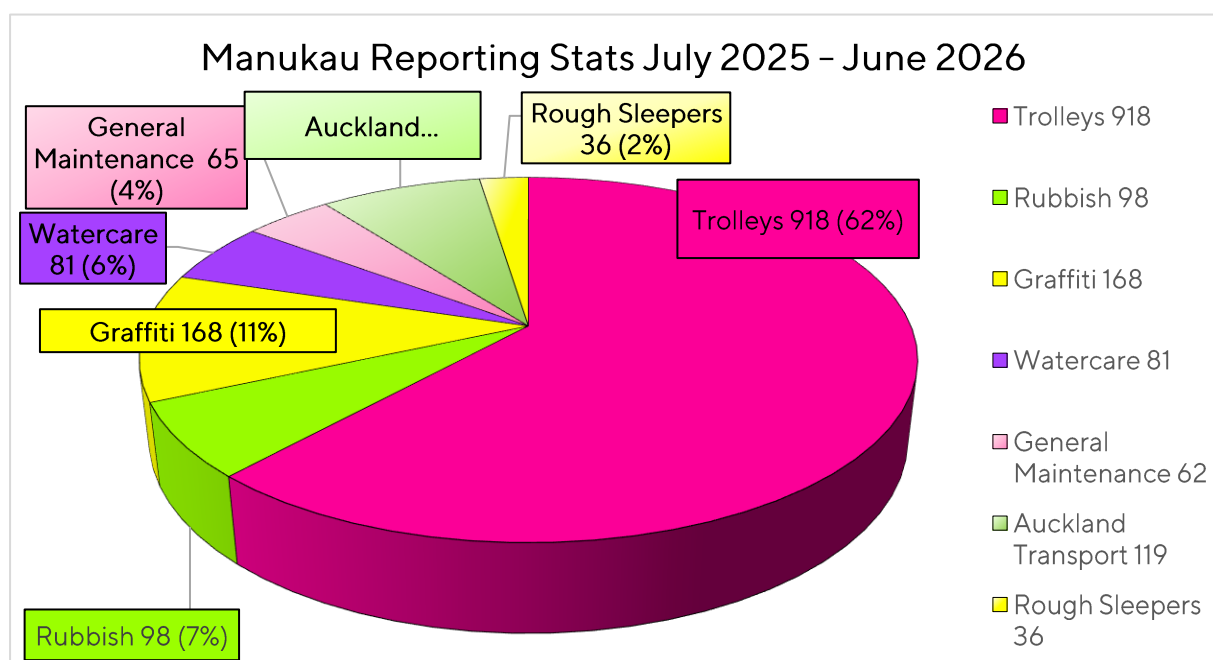
Safer Manukau

Last year, we shifted from the term Crime Prevention to Safer Manukau, recognising that “crime prevention” can create the false impression that crime is widespread in Manukau. This is simply not the case. Police statistics show that reported crime continues on a downward trend, now even lower than last year’s already low numbers.

We support community safety indirectly through our CCTV network and our strong working relationships with both policing teams responsible for the Manukau area: the Manurewa Policing Team, which covers the area south of the white line on Cavendish Drive, and the Papatoetoe Policing Team, operating from the Ōtāhuhu station north of the white line.

Our greatest asset is our Community Liaison Officers (CLOs). Their role is to visit businesses, engage with people who work, study, or visit the area, and ensure Manukau remains clean, welcoming, and well cared for. Over the past year, our CLOs have logged 1,485 issues with Council, Auckland Transport, Watercare, the Beautification Trust, property owners, and other agencies.

Despite strong collaboration with local retailers who provide trolleys for customers, abandoned trolleys remain a significant challenge, as reflected in the chart below. Our goal is to ensure all abandoned trolleys are returned to their proper locations, and all graffiti and dumped rubbish is removed within 48 hours of being reported.



Message from Audrey Williams, General Manager

As we begin this new year, I want to extend my sincere thanks to all our members. To everyone who has reached out with questions, CCTV footage requests, and general enquiries; to those who have hosted, presented at, or attended one or more of our many events; and to the businesses and property owners who have generously allowed us to take over their car parks – you are the people who make every day different for me and my team. Your engagement is what keeps Manukau moving forward.

There are also some groups who deserve a special mention and an even bigger thank you.

To all our members, stakeholders, and community contributors who gave their time and insights into the 2027–2032 Strategic Plan – your input has shaped the first stepping stone for Manukau’s next thirty years. This plan marks the beginning of a much longer journey, and your voices have ensured it starts on solid ground.

To our Board members who generously give their time, energy, and expertise to guide and support me so we can achieve the best outcomes for Manukau’s businesses – thank you. I would also like to acknowledge those Board members who will be standing down at the AGM:

- **Kim Green – Wiri Licensing Trust**

Kim has served on the Board for the past two years, bringing a valuable depth of understanding of the hospitality industry. She has an outstanding ability to take a vague concept and expand it into something meaningful and actionable.

- **Dave Midgen – Property Owner**

Although Dave has sold his property, he has expressed interest in remaining involved as an appointed member. Dave is a strategic thinker who is never afraid to share his knowledge, and his contributions have been consistently insightful.

- **Rachel Darlington – Business Like (NZ) Ltd**

Rachel has served on the Board for 13 years, joining at the 2013 AGM. She has held the role of Treasurer, and her financial expertise has been an incredible support, especially during AGM season.

- **Aaron Jones – BNZ**

Even after BNZ left the association area, Aaron continued to serve as an appointed Board member, giving an extraordinary 15 years to the association, many of them as Chair. His commitment and leadership have been invaluable.

And now, my team

This April marked Janene’s 10th anniversary with the association. Although her role has evolved over the years, as our Comms and Events Manager she remains my right arm and my sounding board. Her ability to adapt, anticipate, and deliver often with very little notice is extraordinary.

To Janene, Charlotte and to our CLOs: your unwavering commitment to making Manukau better shines through in everything we accomplish together. No matter what crazy idea I come up with, your response of “*sure, why not?*” is immeasurable. You bring energy, resilience, and heart to every project, every event, and every challenge.

Thank you, team, for your support. You make the work we do not only possible, but meaningful.

Thank you all for a great 2025–2026 year. The 2026–2027 year has already begun strongly, and I am excited to see what we will have achieved together by June 2027. With your continued support, engagement, and commitment, I know we will deliver another year of meaningful progress for Manukau.

Message from Stephen Grey, Chair of the Board

This last year has been a year of significant activity with the reach to our community ramped up with a range of events and business development activities. All this has only been possible with the dedication of Audrey, Janene and the team.

I am personally impressed at the noticeable lift in public profile for Manukau: Heart of the South in our patch. This hasn't happened by chance but is the result of several initiatives supported by the board and expertly delivered by the team.

When I look back and compare where the Association is today compared to a couple of years ago, the change has been significant.

Today Manukau: Heart of the South has professional premises with a great public profile on the busiest street in town. These premises have opened up the opportunity to have events in house as well as being available for our members to host their own event. They present a welcoming and professional location.

Our Community Liaison Officers are an enthusiastic team who have made their presence felt on the streets brightly dressed in corporate pink. I can't thank these guys enough who go beyond "the call of duty" to support the Board and Audrey tirelessly with our busy schedule of events as well as spending time on the streets helping out the public, increasing the profile of Manukau: Heart of the South as a friendly and safe place to visit and enjoy, as well as do business. They logged 1500 issues which were successfully attended to by local authority and business organisations.

The tasks set by Audrey in hosting a range of events which have reach to members as well as the visiting public has been extensive. These range from Breakfast meetings which offer the opportunity to hear topical speakers but to also promote local businesses, Business Development Events through "Lunch & Learn's" to Business After 5", which included topical speakers and more opportunity to promote local businesses, and Women in Business.

Reaching the community through 4 "Safer Plates" events where 161 cars were fitted with tamper safe fastenings,

"Coffee with a Cop" events which gave the community a chance to have a chat with our local police over a coffee helping Manukau to become a safer place to visit.

Manukau: Heart of the South also did it's bit for the environment with a "Street Clean" event which saw 65 volunteers collect 300 kilograms of rubbish. We also hosted an "ewaste" collection event where over a tonne of electronic waste was collected for recycling.

This year the Lantern Festival was held with 160,000 visitors over 4 nights. Our team provided a friendly face in assisting the visiting public with directions to parking and the event.

This activity has paid dividends for our business community where the last 12 months to June, have resulted in a 0.7% increase in spend which is above the regional average and in an economic climate which has been difficult.

Our vacancy rates are significantly lower than the region with only 3.6% industrial and commercial vacancy and retail at 1% as compared to the Auckland Region at 13%.

LOOKING AHEAD:

The future for Manukau: Heart of the South is bright is looking bright, we have weathered the economic storm with growth and as the economic climate eases Manukau: Heart of the South is in a good position to capitalise on the momentum.

At the same time as developing strategies to maximise the economic benefit for our members the team and board have worked on building for the future.

A key industry which is very active in Manukau is the tertiary education sector. There are 18 providers working within Manukau offering a extensive range of further education opportunities. This sector has the potential to grow and Business Manukau has worked actively in this sector over the last 2 years to assist with regional promotion and collaboration between the providers. It is the goal of the board to market Manukau as a premium location to come to for personal educational growth. The Education Hub has now worked together in having campus open days as well as developing initiatives which will attract students to the district.

There are two key initiatives currently being worked on.

1. Student Accommodation. At present students requiring accommodation only have Home Stays as an option. We are currently working on encouraging a developer to construct purpose built student accommodation which will benefit our students with conveniently located accommodation in a student oriented environment but will also ensure they are safe and well cared for.
2. Nightlife. One of the attractions for students to a location is a vibrant night life. This also benefits our wider community with a range of food and entertainment offerings. The board is also working on plans to attract businesses offering these services to Manukau.

I would like to thank the board for their enthusiastic support for Manukau: Heart of the South and the expertise they bring to the table. It has been a pleasure working with this team. I wish Kim, Aaron, Dave and Rachel who are retiring from the board well and thank them for their generosity and experience they bring to the board.

Audrey, backed up by Janene and the team have put in a super human effort this last year with a relentless calendar of activities and community engagement. Without such a dedicated team the results would have been different.

Auckland Council have also provided a number of in house experts to assist the board in working on various initiatives over the year. The Christmas Tree is a good example where space was provided and assistance, making the Christmas Tree the success it was.

