

JOURNEY TO 30

TIMARU DISTRICT CRUISE STRATEGY

August 2025

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	page 3
STRATEGY ON A PAGE	page 4
1.0 CONTEXT	page 5
1.1 Macro Context	
1.2 Key Global Cruise Trends	
1.3 Timaru Tourism	
1.4 Timaru Cruise	
1.5 Challenges	
1.6 Opportunities	
1.7 Key Issues	
1.8 Problem to Solve	
2.0 FUTURE DIRECTION	page 10
2.1 Vision	
2.2 Goals	
2.3 Principles	
2.4 Target Segments	
2.5 Value Proposition	
3.0 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	page 15
4.0 IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP	page 17
5.0 ACTION PLAN	page 18
6.0 GOVERNANCE & MONITORING	page 21
Appendix	page 22

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the global cruise industry experiences post-COVID growth, New Zealand faces a downturn with 42% decline in port calls over two years. Against this backdrop, Timaru has emerged as the only New Zealand port with forecast growth, increasing from 0.4% to 2.1% of national port calls through PrimePort's proactive approach and Venture Timaru's destination coordination.

Timaru is uniquely positioned as the closest port to Aoraki Mt Cook and alpine lakes, offering authentic coastal character with access to spectacular scenery. Strong community support (90%+), impressive visitor ratings (8.6/10), and proven operational processes provide a foundation to leverage for future sustainable growth and positioning for national recovery. The region's emerging tourism sector and strategic location between Christchurch and Dunedin create significant potential for cruise tourism development.

By 2030, **our vision** is Timaru will be New Zealand's most welcoming cruise gateway, where walkable coastal character opens the door to spectacular alpine scenery, enabling unique experiences, economic value and community benefit. We aim to transform from an alternative port to an essential South Island destination.

Our 'Journey to 30' approach targets 25-30 annual ship calls by 2030 through balanced growth prioritising premium mid-size vessels and luxury/expedition ships, with selective testing of larger premium mid-size vessels. This approach balances port commercial objectives with destination capacity and community character.

To fulfil our vision and achieve our desired outcomes, we will focus on delivering **five interconnected priorities**:

1. Integrated Coordination & Governance - Integrated stakeholder leadership through formal structures
2. Visitor Experience Excellence - Memorable experiences maximising satisfaction and economic benefit
3. Stakeholder Education & Capability Building - Knowledge and capability to capture opportunities
4. Destination Positioning & Promotion - Profile as a distinctive gateway to diverse experiences
5. Communications & Engagement - Effective information flows maintaining community support

These priorities will be delivered through **three-phases over five years** balancing immediate seasonal needs with long-term capability building:

- Connect (year 1) - Establishing systems and strengthening integration
- Build (years 2 to 3) - Developing capability and enhancing presence
- Thrive (years 3 to 5) - Maximising value and scaling success

We will measure our progress toward sustainable cruise success through the following **goals as key outcomes**:

- Economic - Double cruise contribution from \$3.6m to \$7.2m annually
- Market Position - Achieve 3% share of national port calls
- Community - Maintain 90%+ support for cruise tourism
- Visitor Experience - Consistent passenger ratings of 9.0+
- Growth - Balanced ship portfolio supporting sustainable development

Success depends on strengthening the collaborative partnership between PrimePort and Venture Timaru, managing growth to preserve community support in Timaru across the wider region, and developing destination capability alongside port infrastructure while serving cruise lines as customers and passengers as destination visitors. Joint CEO sign-off demonstrates commitment to the integrated approach essential for long-term success.

This strategy positions Timaru to capture cruise growth opportunities while protecting the authentic character that makes it special for residents and visitors, creating an effective, balanced model for sustainable cruise tourism.

STRATEGY ON A PAGE

JOURNEY TO 30 | TIMARU DISTRICT CRUISE STRATEGY : 2025 to 2030

2030 VISION

Timaru is New Zealand's most welcoming cruise gateway, where walkable coastal character opens the door to spectacular alpine scenery, enabling unique experiences, economic value and community benefit.

VALUE PROPOSITION

Cruise Lines: Operational confidence combined with destination appeal that drives passenger satisfaction and return on investment.



Passengers: Authentic New Zealand character and unique alpine wonders with memorable experiences for everyone.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Integrated Coordination and Governance

We will establish and leverage formal structures to guide sustainable cruise growth and ensure integrated planning and execution.

2. Visitor Experience Excellence

We create memorable, authentic experiences from port to CBD & beyond maximising visitor satisfaction & economic benefit while maintaining the authentic character visitors value.

3. Stakeholder Education and Capability Building

We develop cruise tourism knowledge and capability across all stakeholders to maximise participation and value capture.

4. Destination Positioning and Promotion

We build Timaru's profile as a distinctive, must-visit South Island cruise destination, activating our compelling story as gateway to experiences unavailable from any other port.

5. Communications & Engagement

We ensure timely, relevant information flows between all stakeholders while maintaining community support and keeping visitor satisfaction top of mind.

GOALS

Balanced Growth

Welcoming 25 to 30 cruise ship calls annually



Distinctive Positioning

Establishing Timaru as a 'destination of choice' port



Community Support

maintaining 90% plus community support for cruise tourism



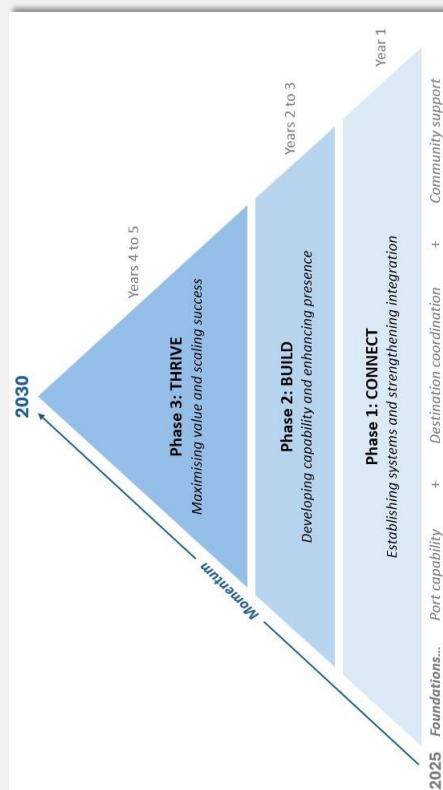
Visitor satisfaction

Earning passenger ratings
of 9.0 or above



Economic impact

g economic contribution
to \$7.2m annually



1.0 CONTEXT

1.1 Macro Cruise Context

The global cruise industry is experiencing significant growth post-COVID, but New Zealand faces a significant downturn with a 42% decrease in port calls over two years. Multiple challenges drive this decline: rising costs across government agencies, ports, and regional authorities; strict biofouling regulations; perception among cruise executives that New Zealand is unwelcoming; and future uncertainty in the coming 18-24 month booking window.



New Zealand Port Calls Source: NZCA

Cruise line deployment decisions revolve around maximising their return on investment (considering revenues, cost controls and risks) and maximising return on experience (guest satisfaction and repeat rates). They've demonstrated they will orient their business to where these criteria outcomes are favourable – and away from where they are not.

While headwinds for New Zealand have been substantial, positive factors show promise. Strong passenger demand for the destination continues, the industry has made significant sustainability improvements, and nationwide port engagement is increasing – evidenced by eight New Zealand port representatives attending Seatrade Cruise Global in 2025. Combined with new ministerial support, the government confirming Milford Sound remains open to cruise, and December 2024 research from MBIE affirming that cruise is good for New Zealand, there's acknowledged potential for recovery in two to three years if these headwinds are addressed.

1.2 Key Global Cruise Trends

Passenger demographics have shifted younger with 67% of cruisers now Gen-X or younger, and 36% under 40. These younger passengers prioritise authentic experiences, spending more on shore excursions that showcase unique cultural and natural attractions.

Sustainability has become a decisive factor, with 100% of major cruise lines now employing advanced environmental systems and 19 ships using LNG propulsion. The industry's commitment to net-zero emissions by 2050 means cruise lines increasingly seek destinations that align by demonstrating environmental responsibility and authentic cultural experiences.

Technology adoption is accelerating, with 56% of recent cruisers using AI tools for trip planning and widespread adoption of contactless services. This tech-savvy demographic research destinations thoroughly

and value unique, Instagram-worthy experiences that smaller ports may be able to provide more effectively than crowded major destinations.

Expedition and luxury cruising represent the fastest-growing segments, with expedition cruising forecasting 150% growth in global capacity from 2019-2029 and luxury cruise tripling in capacity since 2010 from 28 ships to 97 in 2024. These premium segments align well with smaller ports with capacity constraints and access to premium attractions.

1.3 Timaru Tourism

Timaru is an attractive coastal city of around 30,000 people, the nucleus of Timaru district (49,500 people) and the heart of the wider South Canterbury region including Waimate and Mackenzie districts (61,000 people).

While the city's economic engine is traditionally anchored in agriculture and production, tourism represents an emerging industry that has experienced recent growth (9.6% increase year-on-year) and contributes \$83m to the region's GDP of \$3.6bn. The growth is particularly notable in international tourism, which has grown 26% year-on-year to December 2024, driven by USA, Australia and UK markets – while domestic tourism remains flat. Tourism also delivers important amenities, vibrancy, and broader benefits to the community helping to introduce new people who may return to visit, work or invest.

Timaru isn't on the main tourism route through New Zealand, but, significantly for cruise, it holds a unique position halfway between Dunedin and Christchurch. This also makes it the closest city and port to the iconic scenery of Aoraki Mt Cook National Park and the alpine lakes region offering a base or gateway to access these distinctive New Zealand landscapes. It's also conveniently located to nearby Geraldine, Temuka, Peel Forest, Waitaki Geopark, Oamaru and the Moeraki Boulders – offering diverse experiences all within easy reach.

The city itself offers interesting Edwardian architecture, an attractive coastline featuring Caroline Bay, several walking and cycling trails, and a welcoming and relaxed New Zealand regional atmosphere which international visitors enjoy.

1.4 Timaru Cruise

While cruise ships have been visiting Timaru for some time, the scale has been limited. However, Timaru's cruise sector has grown significantly in recent years – from just 0.4% of national cruise port calls in 2019/20 season to 2.1% of port calls forecast for 2025/26. Notably it is the only New Zealand port with forecast growth in the national downturn.

Timaru Cruise Growth

SEASON	SHIPS	PASSENGERS	ECONOMIC IMPACT	CONTEXT
2019/20	4	2231	Not measured	0.4% of national calls
2022/23	12	13,364	\$2.8m	Post-COVID restart
2023/24	13	19,268	\$3.6m	National peak cruise season
2024/25	9	7,139	TBC	National downturn
2025/26	14	14,472 (forecast)	TBC	Only NZ port growing; 2.1% of national calls

This recent uplift in cruise growth can be connected to PrimePort's proactive approach to grow cruise visitation as part of a diversification strategy. Their \$100m infrastructure investment in port facilities, innovative operational solutions like reverse docking and simulation technology, and customer-focused initiatives including port-to-CBD shuttles and walk-on walk-off CBD access for passengers. This commitment extends to building strong relationships with cruise lines, agents and ground handlers, while exploring new opportunities from luxury vessel turnarounds to larger ship capabilities. They have earned industry recognition and were held

up as an exemplar at international cruise conference Seatrade Cruise Global 2025. There's a clear connection between PrimePort's efforts and Timaru's cruise visitation growth.

On the destination side, Venture Timaru has, over the long term, built solid foundations for cruise passenger visitor experience since taking the lead pre-COVID. They coordinate Lions Club volunteers as community navigators, manage the visitor hub coordinating visitor information and tour sales (especially on larger ship days), manage communications with and for all destination side stakeholders, run pre- and post-season briefings, champion product development, and integrate cruise tourism into wider tourism and destination management planning.

Underpinning these efforts, Timaru has relatively high community support for cruise tourism, with 90% plus positive sentiment and an appetite for growth from most of the community in recent cruise surveys. Cruise is still a relative novelty with minimal downsides for the community to date and growth in cruise tourism is seen as a positive development.

Reflecting port investment and developments, destination side actions and community support, visitors generally have excellent experience in Timaru, with recent Holland America and Seabourn cruise ratings averaging 8.6 (out of 10) – a strong result within the New Zealand regional range of 8.5 to 9.4. While this demonstrates Timaru is already performing well, striving to improve would further enhance competitive positioning and long-term appeal to cruise lines. Passenger ratings significantly influence cruise line decisions on future port calls as part of their focus on 'return on experience'.

There is a clear appetite in Timaru for cruise growth that is balanced, sustainable, and manageable – growth that protects the current social licence while delivering economic and community benefits, including the 'injection of energy' and international perspective cruise visitors bring. To realise the potential for growth in a meaningful way will require addressing key challenges and leveraging emerging opportunities.

1.5 Challenges

1. National cruise downturn:

- With forecasts trending down for the next two seasons the near term represents a challenging environment for growth ambitions.
- Like any New Zealand port, Timaru can only secure a share of total cruise ship visitation to New Zealand. However, positive action provides an advantage as there is room for ports that offer certainty, value and differentiation – which may also contribute to a positive national recovery.

2. Uncertain framework for growth:

- Despite shared desire for 'sustainable' or 'balanced' growth, there is no agreed definition of what this means in practice among key stakeholders including port calls, ship sizes, ship types, passenger numbers, frequency or community impact thresholds.
- The current skew toward smaller ships results in less presence in the CBD and fewer independent passengers, which limits economic benefits for local businesses. Achieving a clear growth ambition could create a 'critical mass' and consistent visitation, supporting new product development and encouraging business investment.

3. Mechanisms for collaboration:

- While both PrimePort and Venture Timaru are doing excellent work in their domains, there is some disconnect between port side and destination side operations, creating information gaps and potential for missed opportunities for tourism operators, retailers and hospitality.
- Strong ship-day operations collaboration provides a solid foundation; unlocking growth, however, requires full port to destination alignment – both strategic and operational – supported by shared knowledge, capability, and communication.

4. Capacity limitations:

- With relatively few commissionable tourism products in the region, there's potential for more cruise-relevant offerings – independent tours and shore excursions – that meet diverse passenger needs (e.g., budget, time, distance) and showcase Timaru's authentic character. However, without a critical mass of ships and passengers, new cruise products are hard to sustain; building on existing businesses is more feasible.
- In addition, there are emerging pressure points around amenities such as public toilets, Caroline Bay Piazza lift reliability, bus transport capacity and cruise related wayfinding which may affect visitor experience and community support; pressure will intensify with growth.

5. Business readiness variability:

- There is a contrast between engaged, knowledgeable businesses close to the passenger journey and others that have less profile and close on cruise days or have opened before but with limited rewards.
- This reflects inconsistent understanding of how to leverage value from cruise visitation, particularly that different ships bring different opportunities for different businesses.

6. Getting Timaru on the map:

- Not being on the international tourism route means Timaru suffers from low awareness – not just of why visitors should come, but also of what there is to see and do. Despite this, visitors are often pleasantly surprised by their experience and frequently express a desire to return.
- Providing compelling reasons for cruise lines and their passengers to want to visit the destination can only enhance its demand and growth potential.

1.6 Opportunities

1. Foundations for success:

- PrimePort's infrastructure investments and 'can do' reputation combined with Venture Timaru's destination coordination capabilities provides a strong basis for growth.
- 90% plus support and a welcoming community that embraces cruise is key to supporting growth and this social licence needs protecting through careful growth management.

2. Geographical advantage:

- Timaru's location in between Christchurch and Dunedin makes it a viable option for inclusion on multiple cruise ship itineraries as an authentic, accessible alternative to other ports.
- Being the closest port to Aoraki Mt Cook/alpine lakes (1.5 hours) with '180-degree spread' of experiences from ocean to alps is a unique selling proposition not yet fully activated.

3. Attractive welcoming town and surrounds:

- With distinctive character, welcoming people and much to see and do nearby Timaru has more to offer visitors than is immediately apparent.
- Timaru can provide a strong hub and gateway for visitors looking to explore the wider region, including both Timaru district and beyond to South Canterbury.

4. Regional partnership potential:

- Surrounding districts may benefit by supporting Timaru as a gateway for cruise passengers to access a diverse portfolio of experiences across districts – helping attract more cruise lines. Requires a 'spirit of partnership' approach seeking input and guidance from other districts.
- Mutually beneficial outcomes will distribute value more widely across the region while strengthening Timaru's proposition as a memorable cruise destination, irrespective of where passengers travel within the area.

5. Quality visitor experience:

- The walk on, walk off experience for passengers from port to nearby CBD is rare in New Zealand, highly valued by cruise lines for cost reduction, and passengers for choice and flexibility.

- Port-to-CBD shuttles, reliable transport, and a diverse range of quality experiences – from local markets and shopping to the world’s largest collection of Māori rock art, nearby Geraldine museums, and alpine excursions – create an attractive offering for passengers and crew.

6. Positive momentum:

- Timaru’s proactive approach has built awareness, interest and acknowledgment from cruise lines and wider industry stakeholders providing a growth momentum to capitalise on.
- Growing port calls in a downturn market indicates Timaru is fulfilling unmet demand providing a strong position for growth when national cruise visitation lifts downstream.

The overarching theme is that Timaru has many of the pieces for success but needs better integration and intentional development to realise potential while protecting what makes it special.

1.7 Key Issues

A. Strategic coordination must evolve to realise growth and value

While operational coordination works well with proven results, achieving full growth benefit requires deeper integration across the regional cruise ecosystem. Success depends on PrimePort and Venture Timaru developing a stronger partnership in both planning and execution, supported by stakeholder engagement that ensures consistent communication, role clarity, and aligned decision-making. Formal coordination structures will be essential to capture full value from growth, enable a balance of stakeholders to contribute and benefit effectively, and improve visitor experiences.

B. Growth framework requires definition before growth accelerates

There is a window of opportunity to define and align on what ‘balanced growth’ means including agreed parameters for growth targets, ship mix, passenger numbers, and other key monitors and measures. Without them Timaru risks unbalanced growth that could do long term damage to reputation, community support or visitor experience.

C. Destination readiness must align to port capability

While there are strong foundations on both sides there is a risk that growth outpaces or is limited by product development, capacity, operational integration and business engagement. Focus is needed on expanding tour capacity, developing high quality products for different passenger segments, upgrading amenities, continually improving passenger flows, and helping businesses understand how to capture value from different ship types. The next 12-24 months are critical to establish systems, products, and partnerships that will determine Timaru's cruise future when national cruise recovery comes.

D. Timaru's compelling story needs activation in the market

Despite unique advantages such as closest port to the alpine region, authentic city experience, operational excellence, welcoming people and diverse experiences nearby, Timaru’s market presence is still emerging. The compelling story of Timaru as a hub with spokes to alpine lakes, Aoraki Mt Cook, and diverse experiences isn't yet fully developed. Strategic positioning and awareness building with both cruise lines and passengers is essential to drive long term demand and help to differentiate from competing ports, with support of neighbouring South Canterbury districts.

E. Visitor experience must excel on multiple levels

Success depends on delivering memorable passenger experiences while maintaining Timaru's competitive appeal to cruise lines. This dual focus should ideally enhance New Zealand's overall cruise reputation.

1.8 Problem to Solve

How can we sustainably and collaboratively grow cruise tourism – building on existing momentum – to deliver long-term economic, social, and reputation benefits for Timaru, create unique, memorable visitor experiences, and inspire ongoing community support despite national challenges and local constraints?

2.0 FUTURE DIRECTION

2.1 Our Vision (2030)

Timaru has become the authentic heart of cruise in the South Island – a place where passengers step off their ship and within minutes find themselves immersed in genuine New Zealand life. Our streets are alive with cafes and shops whose owners understand cruise visitors, while our distinctive welcome ensures everyone knows they've arrived somewhere special – with mountains and more beckoning on the horizon.

We've earned our reputation as the gateway to experiences unavailable from any other port. Tour operators proudly showcase our spread of adventures – from exploring Timaru's heritage streets to discovering Geraldine's artisan treasures, from morning tea with high country farmers to admiring Aoraki Mt Cook's towering peak. Each experience feels tailored to match different ships and their passengers, whether 200 luxury passengers seeking exclusive encounters or 2000 visitors spreading across the district.

Behind the scenes, Timaru operates as one. Port and destination teams work hand-in-glove, businesses know which ships bring which opportunities, and neighbouring towns and districts actively support our gateway role for mutual benefit. Through measured growth of two to four ships annually, we've progressed to between 25 and 30 ship visits each season, enough to sustain diverse, high-quality products and engaged businesses while preserving the intimate, welcoming character that makes Timaru special.

Our success reflects in our outcomes: \$7.2 million economic contribution, 90% community support, and cruise lines choosing Timaru not just for operational excellence but because passengers consistently rate us among New Zealand's best ports. We've transformed from an alternative port to an essential destination. We are the South Island's 'yes' port that delivers operational certainty, passenger delight, and authentic New Zealand experiences from coast to alps.

Vision summary

Timaru is New Zealand's most welcoming cruise gateway, where walkable coastal character opens the door to spectacular alpine scenery, enabling unique experiences, economic value and community benefit.

2.2 Goals

The following five goals will be a measure of our progress toward sustainable cruise success, balancing growth ambitions with destination readiness and community benefit.

By 2030 we aim to achieve:

Goal 1: Balanced Growth Welcoming 25 to 30 cruise ship calls annually

Characterised as our 'Journey to 30' approach, we will aim to build to this level ideally through steady growth of two to four ship calls per year, maintaining a balanced mix of premium mid-size ships and luxury & expedition vessels that match our infrastructure and community capacity.

Goal 2: Distinctive Positioning Establishing Timaru as a 'destination of choice' port

We will be recognised by cruise lines as essential to South Island itineraries, known for our unique coast to alpine access, operational excellence, welcoming spirit and consistent delivery of memorable passenger experiences that drive demand. This goal will be evidenced by increasing our share of national port calls to 3%.

Goal 3: Community Support Maintaining 90% plus community support for cruise tourism

We will preserve our strong social licence through transparent communication, managed growth, distributed benefits, and ensuring cruise enhances rather than overwhelms our community character.

Goal 4: Visitor satisfaction Earning passenger ratings of 9.0 or above

We will enable exceptional experiences from port to city to the wider region, with passengers consistently rating Timaru among New Zealand's top cruise destinations for authentic encounters and seamless service.

Goal 5: Economic impact Doubling economic contribution to \$7.2m annually

We will grow cruise tourism economic contribution from \$3.6m to \$7.2m through increased visitation, higher passenger spend, new product development, and broader business participation, ensuring benefits flow across the district.

2.3 Principles

As we work toward our vision and achieving our goals, these principles will guide not only what we do, but how we do it. They reflect a shared commitment to collaboration, mutual respect, and working as one for the greater good of Timaru and the wider region.

Positive Outlook:

- We approach cruise opportunities with a 'can-do' attitude.
- We proactively seek solutions, unlock potential, and focus on what's possible.

Powerful Partnerships:

- We operate as one integrated cruise team.
- We align port, destination, region, cruise lines, port agent, ground handlers, operators, and neighbouring districts and towns to deliver seamless, shared success.

Progressive Mindset:

- We embrace a mindset of continual improvement learning as we go.
- We test and learn, adapt, and build confidently on what's working.

Passenger Focus:

- We prioritise the visitor experience in every decision.
- We aim for memorable, meaningful experiences that elevate Timaru's reputation and keep us top-of-mind.

2.4 Target Segments

Cruise line itinerary planners and their port agents hold significant influence over where ships call once in New Zealand, effectively determining which regional destinations passengers can access through the port bookings they make. However, through our actions the port and destination can influence these decisions in a bid to attract ships and passengers that are a fit for port facilities and destination capacity.

Matching the right ships and passengers to the right ports of call is a process shaped by a combination of logistical, experiential, and commercial factors. Cruise lines evaluate a port's geographic location within the broader New Zealand itinerary, the appeal and diversity of the destination experience, and the quality of coordination between port and destination stakeholders. Strong relationships with cruise lines and port agents also play a critical role in securing calls. Just as important are the port's infrastructure and turnaround efficiency, operational costs, and the potential for revenue generation through shore excursions. Passenger satisfaction and ratings also influence repeat calls. To attract the right ships it is essential to deliver both memorable experiences and seamless operations that meet the expectations of both cruise lines and passengers while matching community needs and capacity.

Different ships have different passenger types with different types of tickets, experiences and propensity to spend.

			
EXPEDITION/ LUXURY	LUXURY	PREMIUM MID SIZE	MAINSTREAM LARGE
~100 to ~300 passengers	~300 to ~1000 passengers	~1000 to ~3000 passengers	~3000 to ~5000 passengers
 Adventure-oriented luxury travellers, seeking authentic nature and culture	Affluent, discerning <u>travellers</u> seeking refined experiences.	Well-travelled, destination-focused, organized activities and independent exploration.	More diverse demographics, tend to lower budgets, families & multi-generational.
 Premium all-inclusive (specialty excursions, expert guides)	All-inclusive or semi-inclusive premium packages	Somewhat semi-inclusive (low to med, excursions included)	Base fare usually with minimal inclusions, what's on board
 Wildlife viewing, hiking, zodiac excursions, cultural immersion; spend on unique experiences; sustainability and conservation	Private tours, wine/gourmet experiences, cultural highlights; high spend per person; preference for exclusive access	Cultural experiences, scenic tours, active options like hiking or kayaking.	Iconic attractions, city highlights, self-guided, shopping, adventure, price-sensitive, shorter tours

To date Timaru's visitation skews towards ships with 1000 passengers or less in the expedition/luxury and luxury categories (circa 60%) with the remainder made up of premium mid-size ships primarily 2000 passengers or less (circa 40%).

Timaru Port Calls Forecast 2025/26

VESSEL SIZE (PASSENGERS)	VESSEL TYPE	PORT CALLS	% PORT CALLS
~100 to ~300	Expedition/ Luxury	3	21%
~300 to ~ 1000	Luxury	5	36%
~1000 to ~2500	Premium Mid-size	6	43%

PrimePort has capability and harbour master approval for berthing cruise ships up to 330m and is experimenting with one or two bookings of ships up to 2700 passengers. There is a general recognition that expedition, luxury and premium mid-size ships less than 3000 passengers are an appropriate fit for Timaru from multiple perspectives – port facilities, shore excursion capacity and community benefit. At the same time there is a desire for a balance of ship sizes that deliver consistency of visitation, a critical mass of passengers, and benefits spread as broadly as possible.

Target segment focus

Our target segment prioritisation balances stakeholder perspectives while enabling iterative refinement as port and destination capabilities evolve. Our intent is to reverse the current skew with more emphasis on premium mid-size vessels and provide a framework that can be adjusted based on experience, capacity development, and market response, while enabling additional reasons to visit where possible e.g., turnarounds, overnights.

PRIMARY: Core Focus *Building a consistent, balanced foundation*

- **Premium mid-size vessels (1000 to 2000 passengers)** Balance of pre-booked shore excursions and independent exploration, providing substantial passenger volume for broader economic distribution while maintaining manageable scale.
- **Luxury and expedition/luxury vessels (100 to 1000 passengers)** High-yield passengers seeking authentic, exclusive experiences; excellent fit for Timaru's unique character and existing capacity

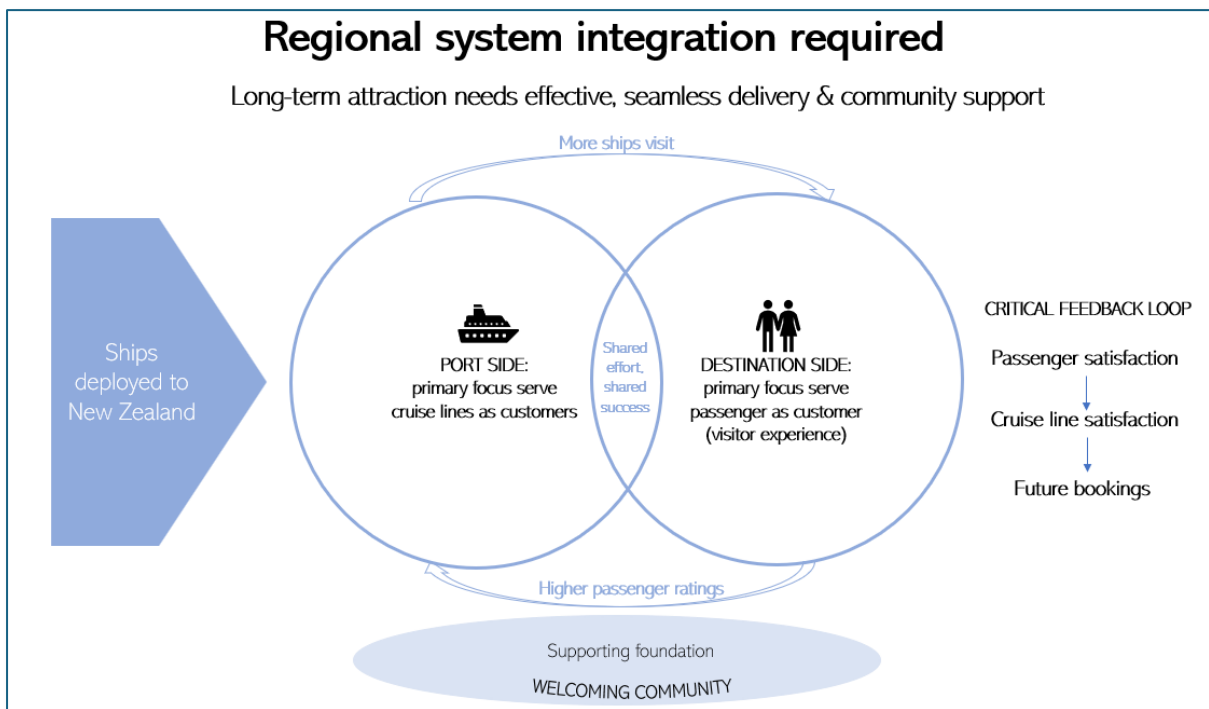
SECONDARY: Growth Testing *Selective expansion based on capability*

- **Larger premium mid-size vessels (2000 to 2900 passengers):** Test and learn approach to assess infrastructure and destination readiness, with potential to increase proportion as capabilities develop.

A higher proportion of premium mid-size vessels while continuing to attract expedition/luxury and luxury vessels strikes a balance between the critical mass needed for distribution of benefits, sustainable growth and protecting Timaru's destination character. This target mix reflects market opportunity while addressing both the volume required for viable product development and the uniqueness that can differentiate Timaru in the New Zealand cruise market. Annual reviews will monitor the approach and ensure the balance of ship visits remains aligned with evolving market conditions and destination capacity.

2.5 Value Proposition

The value proposition considers both cruise lines as primary customers and passengers as destination visitors. Delivering value to these two critical audiences requires a combination of effort and integration between port side activity and destination side activity, including a welcoming community.



Timaru will offer a distinctive combination of benefits that make it a logical choice for cruise lines and a memorable destination for passengers:

Value Proposition for Cruise Lines: *Operational confidence combined with destination appeal that drives passenger satisfaction and return on investment.*

Delivered through...

- **Operational certainty:** 'Can do' port with proven reliability, innovative solutions, and safe, efficient passenger movement
- **Commercial advantage:** Competitive pricing enhanced by passenger walk-on walk-off option, turnaround capability for smaller vessels, and willingness to explore new possibilities
- **Passenger delight:** Consistently high satisfaction ratings that drive repeat bookings and positive brand association

- **Differentiated positioning:** Only port delivering authentic character and stunning alpine scenery, with much diversity in between satisfying multiple passenger demographics in one stop

Value Proposition for Passengers: *Authentic New Zealand character and unique alpine wonders with memorable experiences for everyone.*

Delivered through...

- **Authentic encounters:** Genuine New Zealand life meeting locals, exploring a character city with Edwardian architecture, and experiencing Kiwi hospitality
- **Coast to alps:** From Caroline Bay to Aoraki Mt Cook and alpine lakes within 90 minutes
- **Seamless exploration:** Walk to town in 10 minutes or take port-to-CBD shuttles; friendly volunteers guide your journey; easy orientation
- **Tailored adventures:** Something for every interest and budget from self-guided heritage walks to high country hospitality, from world class museums to scenic flights over stunning alpine scenery.

3.0 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To fulfil our vision and achieve our goals, we will focus on five interconnected priorities:

1. Integrated Coordination and Governance

We will establish and leverage formal structures to guide sustainable cruise growth and ensure integrated planning and execution. Coordinated leadership enables all stakeholders to work as one team, aligning individual efforts to a common vision amplifying the results of actions that drive long-term success.

Key initiatives:

- Cruise Steering Group for strategic direction and Operations Team for continuous improvement
- Timaru Cruise Playbook documenting who does what, when and how
- Dedicated cruise performance dashboard and coordination resource
- Regional partnerships with other South Canterbury districts

Success looks like:

- ✓ Clarity and collaboration on direction and action
- ✓ Clear stakeholder roles and aligned decision-making
- ✓ Coordination and integration that achieves balanced growth

2. Visitor Experience Excellence

We will create memorable, authentic experiences from port to CBD and beyond that maximise visitor satisfaction and economic benefit while maintaining the authentic character visitors value. Exceptional visitor experiences generate positive ratings that attract more cruise lines and create lasting ambassadors for Timaru.

Key initiatives:

- Enhanced visitor journey including elevated passenger welcome, improved wayfinding and visitor hub improvements
- Critical infrastructure fixes (Bay Hill/Piazza lift, public toilets) and larger-ship passenger flow protocols
- Expanded short tour options and product development for different passenger segments
- Practical solutions prioritising crew welfare and passenger convenience

Success looks like:

- ✓ Passenger ratings growing to 9.0
- ✓ Smooth visitor flows with strong community engagement
- ✓ Increasingly diverse product portfolio serving all ship and passenger types

3. Stakeholder Education and Capability Building

We will develop cruise tourism knowledge and capability across all stakeholders to maximise participation and value capture. When businesses and operators understand cruise operations and passenger types, and ground handlers understand the destination they can confidently capitalise on opportunities and deliver experiences that delight visitors and enhance Timaru's reputation.

Key initiatives:

- Cruise education programme and pre-season briefings on specific ships and opportunities
- Cruise-ready business programmes with practical toolkits and mentoring
- Enhanced ground handlers/ tourism operator relationships for better product development

- Familiarisation trips for ground handlers

Success looks like:

- ✓ Business confidence and participation in cruise opportunities
- ✓ Higher passenger spend across more businesses
- ✓ Experiences and tours authentically representing the best of the region

4. Destination Positioning and Promotion

We will build Timaru's profile as a distinctive, must-visit South Island cruise destination, activating our compelling story as gateway to experiences unavailable from any other port. Strong market presence positions Timaru as an essential rather than alternative port, driving cruise line demand and passenger anticipation.

Key initiatives:

- Strengthened cruise line relationships through Seatrade Cruise Global and direct engagement
- Aligned 'gateway to diverse experiences' positioning and key messaging
- Multi-channel destination content development (digital/video/print)
- Systematically build stakeholder awareness and understanding

Success looks like:

- ✓ Recognition as an essential South Island port
- ✓ Increased passenger pre-arrival awareness and anticipation
- ✓ Strong cruise line desire for Timaru inclusion on itineraries

5. Communications & Engagement

We will ensure timely, relevant information flows between all stakeholders while maintaining community support and keeping visitor satisfaction top of mind. Effective communication creates informed, engaged stakeholders who can maximise opportunities while preserving the community support essential for sustainable growth.

Key initiatives:

- Community engagement programmes and regular sentiment monitoring
- Dedicated cruise communications channels and ship-specific information sharing
- Integration with existing business networks (CBD group, Chamber of Commerce)
- Crew-specific communication addressing their unique needs

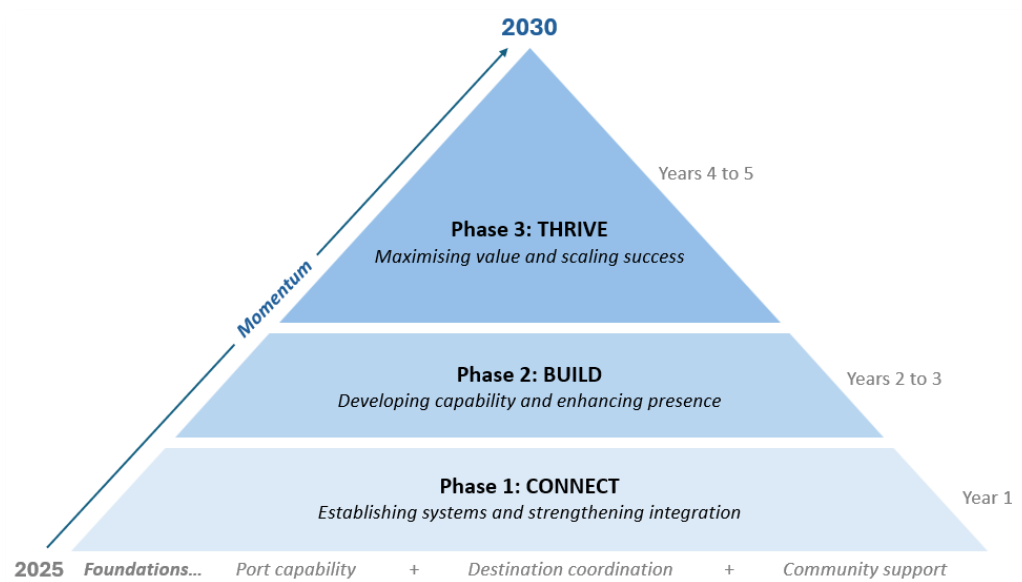
Success looks like:

- ✓ Maintained 90%+ community support
- ✓ Well-informed stakeholders embracing and maximising opportunities
- ✓ Operational excellence and welcoming community through coordinated information flows

These five priorities are mutually reinforcing, with coordination and governance providing the foundation for integrated delivery of visitor experience, stakeholder capability, market positioning and community engagement.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

Implementation over a five-year horizon follows three phases that build on the strong foundations and continuing momentum already established by PrimePort and Venture Timaru. This approach embeds the coordination structures and integrated systems needed to strengthen what's working while positioning Timaru to capture maximum value from both current opportunities and future national recovery. This phasing recognises that all priorities need immediate action while timelines may need to flex to adapt to market conditions, opportunity and readiness.



Phase 1: CONNECT (Year 1) *Establishing systems and strengthening integration*

- Harness existing strengths from PrimePort and Venture Timaru to drive continued momentum
- Ignite action across all five priorities to drive integration and sustained progression
- Embed the coordination structures and systems as a connected platform to build from
- Learn through the 2025/26 season and adjust using post-season analysis.

Key outcome: A reinforced, stakeholder-aligned approach with strong fundamentals to enable balanced future growth

Phase 2: BUILD (Years 2-3) *Developing capability and enhancing presence*

- Drive aligned planning and delivery across stakeholders
- Apply learnings and make improvements leveraging essential structures
- Build product capacity, business capability, and regional partnerships
- Strengthen market presence and positioning while national market is constrained.

Key outcome: Capture increasing share of national market while building capability for national recovery.

Phase 3: THRIVE (Years 4-5) *Maximising value and scaling success*

- Fine-tune the integrated system through innovation and iteration with refinements based on market conditions, performance and stakeholder feedback
- Leverage efforts from first two phases and capitalise on national upswing from strongest possible position
- Focus on continued steady growth and value optimisation across all stakeholder groups.

Key outcome: Grow from alternative port to essential destination achieving 'Journey to 30' goals and realising our vision through continuous improvement.

5.0 ACTION PLAN

This 12-month action plan is intended to generate immediate momentum for the 2025–2030 strategy by advancing near-term actions across each strategic priority. It will be actively reviewed and monitored by the Cruise Steering Group, with updates and improvements made as needed. This plan also sets the foundation for future annual action plans to follow.

Note: The first ship of 2025/26 is scheduled to arrive on **28th November 2025**, and the last on **12th March 2026**.

1. Integrated Coordination and Governance

ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TIMING	BUDGET
Establish a Cruise Steering Group (PrimePort, Venture Timaru, possibly Council) to guide direction and decision making; agree terms of reference; establish meeting protocols e.g., strategy review, post season evaluation	Venture Timaru & PrimePort (Cruise Steering Group)	Operations Team	August 2025	n/a
Create an integrated Operations Team focused on ship-day cross-functional coordination, integration and continuous improvement processes for ship visits; agree terms of reference, establish meeting protocols e.g., pre and post ship visits/ weekly/ monthly	Venture Timaru & PrimePort	Ground handlers, Transport (esp. Ritchies), Community navigators, Tourism operators, Visitor Centre, Business representatives	September 2025	n/a
Develop a Timaru Cruise Playbook as a 'how to' manual/ operational guide for all stakeholders involved in cruise operations to ensure nothing falls through the cracks	Venture Timaru	PrimePort, Visitor Centre, Transport operators, Tourism operators, Ground handlers, Community navigators	Ready by November 2025	Low (<\$5K)
Assess need for dedicated cruise coordinator as growth occurs, beginning with destination-side focus and including funding options	Cruise Steering Group	Venture Timaru & PrimePort	November 2025/ as required	Medium (\$5K-\$25K)
Develop a cruise performance dashboard to track key performance indicators (port calls, passenger numbers, visitor satisfaction, economic impact, community sentiment). Use for strategy progress reviews & stakeholder engagement.	Venture Timaru	PrimePort, Ground handlers, NZCA	April 2026	Low (<\$5K)
Initiate partnership discussions across the South Canterbury region with Waimate and Mackenzie districts for collaborative cruise positioning, operations, passenger/community communications & future promotion	Venture Timaru	Neighbouring RTO's	October/ November 2025	TBC

Budget estimates are indicative only and subject to detailed scoping

Future actions to consider:

- Annual review and refinement of governance based on performance
- Expansion of regional partnerships to explore collaborative marketing initiatives
- Development of cruise specific funding mechanisms/ business case for further developments

2. Visitor Experience Excellence

ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TIMING	BUDGET
Repair Bay Hill/Piazza lift and upgrade public toilet facilities at key visitor locations	Timaru District Council	Venture Timaru	Aug-Nov 2025	High (\$25K+)
Conduct comprehensive visitor journey review from ship to destination to identify visitor experience enhancement opportunities, emphasising key passenger moments e.g., Welcome, departure	Venture Timaru/Primeport	PrimePort, Community Navigators, Ground handlers, Transport operators, Tourism operators, Visitor Centre	Aug-Nov 2025	Low (<\$5K)
Review wayfinding and maps showing distances, highlights and practical information for self-guided exploration to stimulate dispersal and spending	Venture Timaru	PrimePort, Council, Visitor Centre	Oct-Nov 2025	Medium (\$5K-\$25K)
Review the market/hub experience and visitor centre integration to identify improvements for passenger flow and experience (incl. independent operators)	Venture Timaru	Visitor Centre, Market, Te Ana, independent tour operators	Sept-Oct 2025	Low (<\$5K)
Create plans and procedures for seamless visitor experiences when larger ships arrive (2000+ passengers)	Operations Team	Ground handlers, Community Navigators	Sept-Oct 2025	Low (<\$5K)
Source and analyse passenger satisfaction ratings from all cruise lines visiting Timaru via ground handlers and NZCA	Venture Timaru	Ground handlers, NZCA	Apr 2026	Low (<\$5K)
Explore development of expanded short tour options and product development for different passenger segments	Venture Timaru	Ground handlers, Tourism operators (incl. independents)	April-July 2026	Low (<\$5K)
Explore and test transport and other solutions prioritising crew welfare and passenger convenience for practical needs	PrimePort	Venture Timaru, Ritchies Transport	Oct 2025-Jan 2026	Low (<\$5K)

Budget estimates are indicative only and subject to detailed scoping

Future actions to consider:

- Develop tailored experiences for different ship types and passenger demographics
- Expand product portfolio based on passenger feedback and market demand

3. Stakeholder Education and Capability Building

ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TIMING	BUDGET
Develop a comprehensive cruise education programme incl. annual briefings, ongoing knowledge building, and pre-arrival communications on ship types, passenger preferences and business opportunities	Venture Timaru/PrimePort (or Cruise coordinator)	NZCA, Steering Group, Ground handlers, Port agent	September-October (ongoing season)	Low (<\$5K)
Build ground handler/tourism operator relationships to develop more authentic regional products, supported by familiarisation trips	Venture Timaru	Ground handlers, Tourism operators	May-August 2026 and ongoing	Medium (\$5K-\$25K)
Develop cruise-ready business programme with practical toolkit, mentoring and ship-day resources.	Venture Timaru	CBD, Chamber of Commerce	September-November 2025	Medium (\$5K-\$25K)

Budget estimates are indicative only and subject to detailed scoping.

Future actions to consider:

- Explore further development of business mentoring programmes based on first-year learnings
- Develop advanced product development workshops for specific cruise segments
- Create cruise tourism certification programme for local businesses

4. Destination Positioning and Promotion

ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TIMING	BUDGET
Develop and align on 'gateway to diverse experiences' positioning & key messaging for consistent use across all stakeholders	Steering Group	Region partners (towns, districts), Ground handlers	August 2025	n/a
Participate in Seatrade Cruise Global 2026 to strengthen cruise line relationships	PrimePort	NZCA, Venture Timaru	April 13-16 2026	High (\$25K+)
Build destination understanding and awareness with cruise lines: - cruise line executives e.g., famils - key ship personnel (captains, cruise directors) during port visits e.g., lunch hosting	PrimePort & Venture Timaru	Port agent, Ground handlers	December 2025 - March 2026 (annual)	Medium (\$5K-\$25K) Low (<\$5K)
Develop high-quality destination content including digital, video and print materials for multi-channel distribution; consider targeted content for USA/Australia	Venture Timaru	PrimePort, External agency	October - December 2026	High (\$25K+)
Leverage all available channels to get destination information onboard ships; work with ground handlers & cruise lines	Venture Timaru	Ground handlers, PrimePort, NZCA	December 2025 - March 2026 (annual)	Low (<\$5K)
Develop social media programme to grow passenger sharing of Timaru experiences and build destination awareness	Venture Timaru	Local businesses, Tourism operators	October - December 2026	Low (<\$5K)
Ensure NZCA has strong regional knowledge for key industry engagements and facilitation of opportunities	Venture Timaru	NZCA	September – October 2025	Low (<\$5K)

Budget estimates are indicative only and subject to detailed scoping.

5. Communications and Engagement

ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TIMING	BUDGET
Create dedicated cruise communications channel/platform leveraging existing Venture Timaru channels	Venture Timaru	PrimePort, Cruise Steering Group	September 2025	Low (<\$5K)
Develop communications calendar with pre-season, pre-ship, and post-season touchpoints for all stakeholders	Venture Timaru	Operations Team	September 2025	Low (<\$5K)
Establish real-time information sharing systems for ship-day coordination including schedules, passenger demographics and operational updates	Operations Team	PrimePort, Ground handlers	September 2025	n/a
Integrate cruise communications into existing business networks including CBD Group and Chamber of Commerce	Venture Timaru	CBD Group, Chamber of Commerce	October – April 2025 (ongoing)	n/a
Launch community engagement programme about cruise activities, benefits and management to help maintain social licence; leverage existing and cruise specific channels	Venture Timaru	PrimePort, Council	October 2025	Low (<\$5K)
Continue regular community sentiment monitoring with transparent reporting on cruise tourism support levels	Venture Timaru	Cruise Steering Group	March 2026 (annual)	Medium (\$5K-\$25K)
Develop and implement a 'Crew Welcome and Engagement Programme' to inform and support cruise ship crew e.g., information, welcome, practical needs (wifi, currency, pharmacies, cafes, supermarket, transport) activities	Venture Timaru & PrimePort	Ground handlers, Transport operators, businesses, tour operators, port agents, cruise lines	October 2025	Low (<\$5K)

Budget estimates are indicative only and subject to detailed scoping.

6.0 GOVERNANCE & MONITORING

6.1 Governance Structure

- This strategy will be formally signed off by the CEOs of PrimePort and Venture Timaru, demonstrating joint commitment to collaborative implementation.
- The Cruise Steering Group will provide strategic oversight and accountability for delivery, with quarterly meetings to review progress, address challenges, and make key decisions.
- The Operations Team will focus on integration, coordinating day-to-day implementation across stakeholders and reporting regularly to the Steering Group on progress and operational matters.

6.2 Performance Monitoring

Progress will be tracked against our five goals through key performance indicators. Progress will be monitored by the Cruise Strategy Group and reviewed as part of an annual strategy review:

GOAL	MEASURE	2030 TARGET	SOURCE
1. Balanced Growth	Annual ship calls	25 to 30	PrimePort
	Balance of ships <i>Premium mid-size to luxury/ expedition ratio</i>	Measure and monitor ratio annually relative to other measures	PrimePort
	Average annual growth rate	2 to 4 per annum	PrimePort
2. Distinctive Positioning	Share of national port calls	3%	NZCA schedule
	Repeat bookings	Target TBC	PrimePort
3. Community Support	Community supporting cruise	90%	Venture Timaru annual survey
4. Visitor Satisfaction	Passenger satisfaction ratings	9.0	Cruise lines/ groundhandlers
5. Economic Impact	Economic contribution	\$7.2m	NZCA/ CLIA report
	Business participation	Target TBC	TBC
	Passenger spend per visit	Target TBC	TBC

6.3 Risk Management

This assessment provides an informed estimate of current risks. While unforeseen risks may emerge over the next five years, with effective mitigation the strategy presents a low to medium risk profile.

Key Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation	Residual
Alignment between PrimePort and Venture Timaru remains limited	Medium-high	Low	Joint governance structures, regular communication protocols, shared performance targets	Low
National cruise recovery delayed or doesn't occur	High	Medium	Focus on competitive positioning, can do approach, innovations, flexible growth targets, support for NZCA	Medium
Community objects to growth once implications apparent	Medium-high	Low-medium	Proactive engagement, transparent communication, managed growth approach	Low
Local businesses don't engage and embrace cruise opportunities	Medium	Medium	Education programmes, business toolkits, mentoring support	Low
Inadequate resources to deliver planned actions	Medium	Medium	Phased implementation, shared responsibility, funding strategy development, partnership leverage	Low-medium
Product development fails to keep pace with growth	Medium	Medium	Early and consistent capacity building, operator support programmes, cruise line and ground handler engagement	Low

Appendix 1

Cruise data Analysis

Cruise port calls (actual and modelling)				
	Year	National calls	Timaru calls	% of national port calls
Actuals	2019 to 2020	1108	4	0.4%
	2022 to 2023	933	12	1.3%
	2023 to 2024	1117	13	1.2%
	2024 to 2025	909	9	1.0%
	2025 to 2026	662	14	2.1%
Forecast	2026 to 2027	n/a	16	n/a
	2027 to 2028	n/a	19	n/a
	2028 to 2029	n/a	23	n/a
	2029 to 2030 low	850 est.	25	target 3%
	2029 to 2030 high	1000 est.	30	target 3%

Assumes moderate national recovery by 2030

Cruise passengers (actual and modelling)				
	Year	National passengers	Timaru total passengers	% of national passengers
Actuals	2019 to 2020	283000	2231	0.8%
	2022 to 2023	251000	13364	5.3%
	2023 to 2024	360000	19268	5.4%
	2024 to 2025	290000	7139	2.5%
	2025 to 2026	215000	14472	6.7%
Forecast	2026 to 2027	n/a	17600	n/a
	2027 to 2028	n/a	21850	n/a
	2028 to 2029	n/a	27600	n/a
	2029 to 2030 low	n/a	31250	n/a
	2029 to 2030 high	n/a	37500	n/a

Timaru total passengers forecast = port calls x average passengers per ship

Cruise passengers average (actual and modelling)		
	Year	Timaru average passengers per ship
Actuals	2019 to 2020	558
	2022 to 2023	1114
	2023 to 2024	1482
	2024 to 2025	793
	2025 to 2026	1034
Forecast	2026 to 2027	1100
	2027 to 2028	1150
	2028 to 2029	1200
	2029 to 2030 low	1250
	2029 to 2030 high	1250

Assumes average passenger growth per annum of 50 passengers

Average per passenger economic impact scenario modelling					
Scenario	Per pax economic value				
	23/24	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30
High (5%)	\$ 186.00	\$ 195.30	\$ 205.07	\$ 215.32	\$ 226.08
Moderate (3% - circa inflation rate)	\$ 186.00	\$ 191.58	\$ 197.33	\$ 203.25	\$ 209.34
Low (no change)	\$ 186.00	\$ 186.00	\$ 186.00	\$ 186.00	\$ 186.00
Actuals Forecast					

Based on NZCA/CLIA 23/24 Value of Cruise Tourism Report

Total economic value by average per pax scenario			
Season	High	Moderate	Low
2026 to 2027	\$ 3,437,280	\$ 3,371,808	\$ 3,273,600
2027 to 2028	\$ 4,480,670	\$ 4,311,604	\$ 4,064,100
2028 to 2029	\$ 5,942,784	\$ 5,609,623	\$ 5,133,600
2029 to 2030	\$ 7,065,130	\$ 6,542,020	\$ 5,812,500
2029 to 2030	\$ 8,478,156	\$ 7,850,424	\$ 6,975,000
(approx. mid point \$7.2m)			

Values based on per passenger economic value x average passengers per ship