

# Westpac Stadium – the first 15 years

Economic impact and community contribution  
Key findings

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## Background

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## Westpac Stadium – the first 15 years

The Westpac Stadium (“the Stadium”) was initially born out of the desire to ensure the continuation of NPC, Super 12 and test match rugby in Wellington. Opened in January 2000 the Stadium was designed as a multi-purpose stadium and events venue. In the 15 years since the Stadium opened:

- Almost 7.8 million visits have been made by people attending events at the Stadium.
- NPC/ITM Cup, Super Rugby and test match rugby matches have continued to be played at the Stadium.
- The number and range of events at the Stadium have increased. Attendance at non-rugby events (e.g. football, AFL, home and garden and food shows) has increased from 35 percent between 2000 and 2004 to 42 percent between 2010 and 2014.
- The Stadium has played a key role in New Zealand and the Wellington region being able to attract large international tournaments and key events that may not have otherwise come to New Zealand such as the 2011 Rugby World Cup. The Stadium also played a key role in New Zealand securing the upcoming 2015 Cricket and Under 20 FIFA (football) world cups.

Looking ahead, the Wellington Regional Stadium Trust has a strong events schedule for the next couple of years. This is supported by the ‘Master Plan’ strategy, developed by the Wellington Regional Stadium Trust to help ensure the Stadium maintains a premier events schedule.

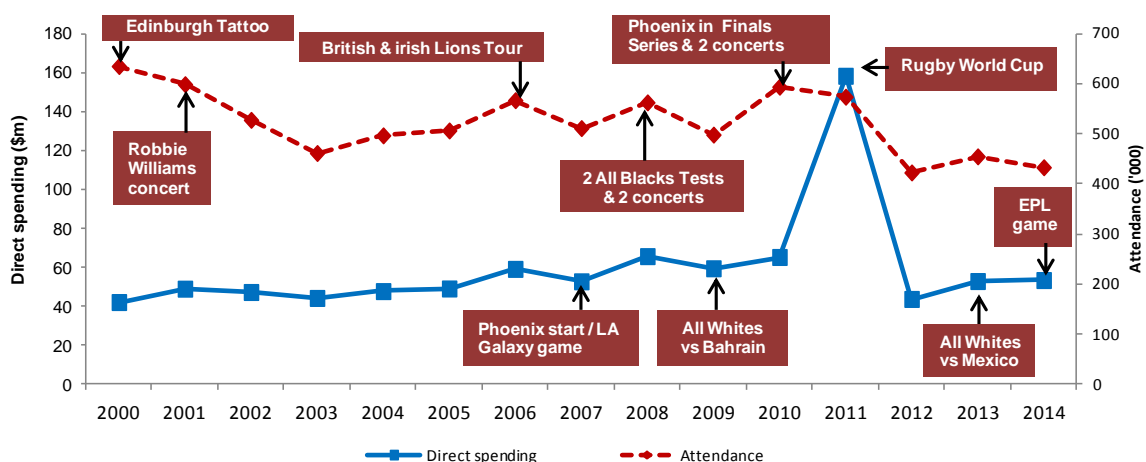
### Economic Impact

A number of economic benefits to the Wellington region have been generated from the Stadium since it opened in 2000. These impacts can be grouped into categories – the economic impact from out of region visitors and the economic impact to and from Wellington region residents.

#### Economic impact from out of region visitors

Almost 7.8 million visits have been made by people attending events at the Stadium in the last 15 years.<sup>1</sup> Of these visits, around 1.8 million have been from people outside the Wellington region and spent an additional \$885 million in the region’s economy.

#### Attendance and Direct Spending, 2000 to 2014



<sup>1</sup> Attendance data after 27 June 2014 are based on forecasts provided by the Wellington Regional Stadium Trust.

Over the past 15 years, the Stadium has generated an additional \$52 million in GDP to the Wellington region economy each year and resulted in 821 permanent full-time jobs. These benefits have grown over time and have consistently been well above the original forecasts developed in 1996 before the Stadium was built.

### *Annual benefits generated by the Stadium, 1996 Forecast and 2000 to 2014*

Annual forecast and actual economic benefits	1996 Forecast	2000 to 2004		2005 to 2009		2010 to 2014		2000 to 2014	
		Value	% diff	Value	% diff	Value	% diff	Value	% diff
Direct spending (2013\$m)	\$21.7	\$46.0	131	\$57.2	187	\$74.7	275	\$59.3	198
Total GDP (2013\$m)	\$16.7	\$39.5	157	\$49.9	224	\$65.2	323	\$51.5	234
Employment (FTEs)	270	631	134	793	194	1,040	285	821	204

Source: BERL

The increase in the economic impact during the 2010 to 2014 period relative to the 2005 to 2009 is mostly due to the 2011 Rugby World Cup, where the Stadium hosted eight matches. In the three years since the Rugby World Cup, attendance and direct out of region spending generated by the Stadium has fallen considerably with the Stadium hosting fewer 'large' events compared to the 2006 to 2011 period.

Attendance and direct spending generated by visitors to the region are expected to increase over the next five year period with the Stadium scheduled to host a number of large events. In 2015 the Stadium is to host four 2015 Cricket World Cup matches and nine Under 20 FIFA World Cup matches. The Stadium is also expected to host some of the larger rugby matches when the British and Irish Lions team tour New Zealand in 2017.

The Stadium's Master Plan, started in 2012, is likely to help the Stadium maintain a premier events schedule over the coming years. The Master Plan outlines a series of first non-business and usual capital expenditure on Stadium facilities since it was opened in 2000 and aims to further enhance the overall experience and to maintain its position as one of New Zealand's preeminent stadiums. A number of elements of the plan have been already completed including new changing rooms and media rooms as well as substantial upgrade to the Members' lounge on Level 3. In total, \$8 million in capital was invested in the Stadium between the 2012 and 2014 financial years. While the economic impact of this capital expenditure is not quantified in this report it is likely to have flow on economic benefits to the region.

### *Economic impact to and from Wellington region residents*

Funding to the Stadium was made available on the basis that it would generate economic and community benefits for the Wellington region. While conventional economic impact assessments do not capture the community benefits from the Stadium to Wellington region residents, these benefits can be observed in a variety of ways.

The Stadium continues to contribute to the general liveability of the Wellington region through the provision of a world-class facility for local, national and international events. This helps Wellington to attract workers and new businesses. The Stadium is currently the second largest events venue in New Zealand, and the Stadium's facilities also help New Zealand and the region attract large scale events, such as World Cups, that would have otherwise been held elsewhere. These events not only result in increased direct spending from out of region visitors, but also promote the region to a global audience.

As the Stadium matures the types of events held at the Stadium have become more diverse. The Stadium has seen a balancing out of rugby and non rugby attendance in recent years. A number of these non-rugby events had not been held in the Wellington region prior to the Stadium being built. This has resulted in residents being exposed to a greater number of sporting and cultural activities.

The Stadium also provides a number of benefits to communities in the Wellington region. A number of subsidised community events are held at the Stadium each year. The Stadium also supports community groups to raise money by enabling collections at many events and by contracting community groups to undertake pre-and-post event activities such as cleaning the Stadium after events.

Beyond its use as an events facility, the Stadium is also a function venue. On average, an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 people attend conferences and functions held at the Stadium each year.

