



# COMMUNITY WAIKATO

*"Supporting strong communities"*

Hei tautoko kia tuu pakari ai ngaa haapori

20 April 2015

South Waikato District Council  
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Submission Due: Monday 20 April 2015, 4.00pm

## **Submission on the South Waikato District Council – Long Term Plan 2015-2025**

1. Community Waikato appreciates the opportunity to make a submission on the consultation document concerning the South Waikato District Council Long Term Plan 2015-2025.

### **Background about Community Waikato**

2. The core business of Community Waikato is supporting strong communities – we are a charitable trust providing capacity building, strengths-enhancing services for community organisations<sup>1</sup> throughout the Waikato region. We work to strengthen community organisations so that they can be effective and sustainable to maintain social wellbeing within their own communities. In turn, such wellbeing underpins and enhances the development and achievement of economic, cultural, environmental and social wellbeing of the community and its wider district.
3. Our services build and add to the knowledge and skills of personnel within community organisations to enhance local service provision and in turn, increase the region's social capital.
4. Community Waikato works one-to-one with community organisations to support their capacity and we provide training, support, and advice to organisations about: governance, management, planning (operational, strategic, financial and funding), financial systems, funding applications, accountability, legal structures, risk management, compliance and some employment matters. As well, we offer scholarships to support study towards higher qualifications or for training purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> "Community organisations" includes: charitable trusts, incorporated societies, not-for-profit organisations, marae and community centres.

5. We facilitate and/or support community networks to provide opportunities for sharing information, advice, ideas, support and experience and it encourages strong relationships amongst peers.
6. We support collaborative projects, many of which arise from the networks that identify a common issue and then they work together towards a viable solution. Such projects range from local to regional, through to nationally related matters, and they are intended to benefit people, and communities in the district, and/or at times, for the whole Waikato region.
7. Community Waikato provides vital information across the region's social services sector, which includes over 1500 organisations. As a Tindall Foundation regional funding manager, Community Waikato contributes to the economic wellbeing of community organisations and therefore of the district. We also gain helpful insights into the work and needs of organisations, which informs our overall knowledge and sector overview. So we are able to advocate for the sector.

### **Community Waikato in the South Waikato Region**

8. Community Waikato actively supports community organisations in the townships of South Waikato district. Our staff work one-to-one alongside community groups, and also provide workshops, to support and strengthen capacity in the areas of governance, operations, planning and financial management. Our most recent initiative in the district has involved partnering with Te Reo Irirangi o Raukawa (Raukawa FM) to present a radio show (*Te Reo Hapori – the Voice of the Community*) to spread the knowledge and messages of community development and community connection across the radio waves so that we can reach and inform the communities of South Waikato district. We were privileged by the attendance of Mayor Neil Sinclair, and Craig Hobbs, CEO at our show's launch in April 2015.
9. In collaboration with the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), we have a dedicated community advisor, Josiah Teokotai, based at Tokoroa. For the past two years, Josiah's work has positively impacted on the district's demographics of children, young people, families/whanau, heritage, Maori, Pacific Island, older people, social services, culture, sports and community. We are mindful that Josiah works alongside Council personnel (for example, for grant funding) and that he is a key contributor and collaborator in community development projects and initiatives, in Tokoroa, and the wider South Waikato district. As well, through networks and connections he's managed to attract funding grants and support to the district, which therefore helps support the local economy.
10. We acknowledge the great work that the Council provides for its district and we are keen to maintain our contribution there too. With the DIA Community Development Scheme coming to an end in January 2016, it would be a huge support to us, as well as to the community, if Council

could see its way to provide some financial support for a Community Waikato community advisor. A modest investment could potentially reciprocate the community development support we continue to provide.

**We submit as follows:**

*Comment on Long Term Plan (LTP) consultation document*

11. We note the Council is facing major issues of: *a declining population and fewer jobs; creating jobs and district promotion; land use, water quality and water allocation; and should Council be involved in the areas of economic and community development?*<sup>2</sup>
12. We emphasise the importance of investing in the work carried out by social sector organisations because their contribution to maintaining the social fabric and wellbeing of the wider population of the district is vital and significant.
13. We acknowledge the cultural diversity of populations that reside in the district, and highlight the necessity to ensure their contribution and voice is actively heard and incorporated in key decisions made – this is inclusive of mana whenua, tangata whenua, tangata tiriti, and Pacific Island communities. We are particularly mindful that the issues of depopulation and job creation are significant to these community populations too.
14. We encourage the Council to ensure its strategic development activities consider the cultural, environmental and social influences, values and needs of marae, whānau, hapū and iwi throughout its district. We support and encourage the Council to exercise its decision-making in a manner that is informed by marae communities, particularly when decisions impact on ‘key identity features’ such as wai, awa, maunga, whenua, waahi tapu and buildings (e.g., such buildings as wharenuī/whare tupuna; whare kai; whare iti etc) including access to and infrastructure of these places.
15. Engaging with mana whenua / tangata whenua regarding water allocation, land use and water quality issues is essential because the Waikato awa flows through their district/rohe and the holistic significance of the Waikato awa, and whenua in general, is of vital importance to them.
16. We are aware of the importance of ensuring investment occurs fairly throughout the district. Similarly, with regard to proposed rate charges and which projects such funds will be invested in, these need to be equitably considered.
17. We acknowledge the importance of promoting economic development and support the funding of information centres, Waikato River Trials, community events, trade training; as well as the Council maintaining financial support in community development, such as community events, grants, youth

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<sup>2</sup> South Waikato District Council, Draft Long Term Plan 2015-2025 Consultation Document, p9.

and capacity building. These are all essential for the wellbeing of a thriving community, and a flourishing district.

18. We encourage the Council to provide support to overcome ongoing costs and transport challenges faced by rural communities so that access is improved for them and so that basic health and social needs can be met, particularly for the aged and vulnerable.
19. We express concern for the rural townships that experience depopulation of its youth and/or working demographic due to low prospects for jobs or training.
20. We reiterate the importance of supporting and investing in social well-being opportunities across the Waikato. Mindful that the social services sector employs a sizeable population of residents, we submit that social wellbeing and strengthening community development is key to growth in the South Waikato district. Job maintenance and job creation in the social services sector is encouraged for the wider betterment of the district.

We thank you for this opportunity to submit, and welcome any opportunity to speak to our submission.



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