



# COMMUNITY WAIKATO

*"Supporting strong communities"*

Hei tautoko kia tuu pakari ai ngaa haapori

09 April 2015

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Submission Due: 09 April 2015, 4.00pm

## **Submission on the Thames-Coromandel District Council – Long Term Plan 2015-2025**

1. Community Waikato appreciates this opportunity to make a submission on the Thames-Coromandel District Council Long Term Plan 2015-2025 (consultation document).

### **Background about Community Waikato**

2. The core business of Community Waikato is about supporting strong communities – it is a capacity building, strengths-enhancing charitable trust for community organisations<sup>1</sup> throughout the Waikato region. Our work involves supporting and strengthening 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, environmental, cultural and social wellbeing.
3. Our services build and add to the knowledge and skills of personnel within community organisations so that local service provision is enhanced and social capital to the region is increased. 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 employment matters. We also 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.

4. We facilitate and/or support community networks as they provide necessary opportunities for information sharing, sharing ideas and experience, forming relationships, seeking advice, and support amongst peers. 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.
5. Community Waikato provides vital information across the region's social services sector, which includes over 500 organisations. As well, being a Tindall Foundation regional fund manager we gain invaluable insights into the work and needs of organisations, which informs our overall knowledge and sector overview.

### **Community Waikato in the Thames-Coromandel district**

6. Community Waikato maintains an active, ongoing presence in the Thames-Coromandel District to support community organisations. An example of who we work with includes youth, older people, health and disability, Maori, social services, education, budgeting, information service and community centres, transport and environment, to name a few. Also, the financial contribution we've received, to date over the past few years from Thames-Coromandel District Council significantly assists us to travel and deliver training, workshops, and one-on-one support in the district.

### **We submit as follows:**

#### *Comment on Long Term Plan (LTP) financial strategy and position*

7. We note the Council's indicates that the Long Term Plan describes its "*financial strategy and financial position for the next 10 years*"<sup>2</sup> and that "*a long term plan [is developed] every three years to adapt to significant changes in [the Council's] circumstances which can come from [the Council's] own updated information, changes in external factors and in response to community needs.*"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Thames-Coromandel District Council: Long Term Plan, Consultation Document, p5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

8. We further note the Council's intention of "*careful and prudent*"<sup>4</sup> decision-making concerning finances and the "*single largest financial issue*" its facing of needing "*to transfer a significant amount of debt, incurred to build the eastern seaboard wastewater plants completed in 2009, from potential future development to rates*".<sup>5</sup>
9. We contend that a long-term social wellbeing focus for communities is also vital to ensure there is no dire, or reverse effect on the district. We further emphasise the importance of investing in social sector organisations as they contribute significantly to maintaining the social fabric and wellbeing of the Thames-Coromandel population of 27,500.<sup>6</sup>

*Comment on LTP Essential Services and Local Services<sup>7</sup>*

10. We note the separation of "*Essential Services*" and "*Local Services*" which is intended to enable local community boards to have "*more discretion about the provision of these services*". We further acknowledge the LTP shows that there are "*different priorities for each community*".
11. In a broader context, we are aware of the importance of ensuring investment occurs equitably throughout the district and without an unnecessary bias to the needs or benefits of townships, 'big or small', or 'wealthy or modest financially'. We further acknowledge the invaluable contribution that information centres / the 'go-to i-sites' provide to locals and visitors alike. We contend such venues contributes both financially (as a tourists/visitors point) and socially for valuing local knowledge and identity about respective towns and community board areas. Similarly, community centres are vital 'go-to' sites for providing a host of information to address local health and social service needs, and local support in general.
12. We further encourage the Council to reflect on the overarching benefits of supporting community organisations that provide social and leisure services within each of its wards, and the district overall.

*Comment about Thames-Coromandel District Council<sup>8</sup>*

13. Community Waikato acknowledges and supports the Council's vision statement, with particular regard to its willingness to "*earn respect, both as a good community citizen and through [their]*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p8.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics New Zealand (October 2014), 'Subnational Population Estimates: at 30 June 2014' (provisional).

<sup>7</sup> Supra, note 2, quotes in this section are from pages 6-7.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, quotes in this section are from page 45.

support of community organisations, economic development and the protection of the environment".<sup>9</sup>

14. We further acknowledge and support the Council's ten values, particularly that of:
- "Displaying empathy and compassion",
  - "Integrity, transparency and accountability in all [their] actions";
  - "Working with and having meaningful and on-going consultation with all of [their] communities";
  - "Creating strong partnerships with [their] district's Iwi"; and
  - "Being a highly effective and fast moving organisation".
15. As well, we acknowledge and support the Council's three Outcomes as it aims to achieve:
- A prosperous district
  - A liveable district
  - A clean and green district.
16. We reiterate the importance of supporting and investing in social well-being across the entire population of Thames-Coromandel, including the vulnerable, and for organisations that support and uplift the wellbeing of its communities.
17. Mindful that the social services sector employs a sizeable population of residents, we submit that social wellbeing and community development is of equal importance and needs to feature, and to occur, alongside economic development and employment initiatives, for the Thames-Coromandel district.

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

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p45.