



COMMUNITY WAIKATO

"Supporting strong communities"

Hei tautoko kia tuu pakari ai ngaa haapori

14 April 2015

Waikato Regional Council
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Submission Due: 14 April 2015, 4.00pm

Submission on the Waikato Regional Council – Long Term Plan 2015-2025

1. Community Waikato appreciates the opportunity to make a submission on the consultation document concerning the Waikato Regional 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 organisations¹ 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 environmental, cultural, economic and social wellbeing of the community and its wider district and region.
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.
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.

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

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, 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 Waikato Region

8. Community Waikato maintains an active presence supporting community organisations throughout the districts of the Waikato Region, including: Waikato, Hauraki; Thames-Coromandel; Waipa; Matamata-Piako; Waitomo; South Waikato; Otorohanga and Taupo (to Taumarunui) and Hamilton City Council.
9. Key demographics impacted by the work we do includes children, young people, families/whanau, health and welfare, disabilities, heritage, community houses/centres, Maori, Pacific Island, Ethnic communities, men's groups, women's groups, older people, social services, education, sports, culture, the environment and transport.

We submit as follows:

Comment on Long Term Plan (LTP) consultation document

10. We note the Council has highlighted five priority areas and we acknowledge their importance, namely: regional development; land and water; community partnerships; iwi Māori co-governance; and coastal and marine.
11. We are encouraged to see community partnerships acknowledged as a priority area and the awareness that the region's communities comprise about 40% of volunteer work contribution.
12. We have purposely emphasised in submissions to various District Councils on their draft Long Term Plans, and likewise to you, that a long-term social wellbeing focus for communities is vital to ensure there is no dire or adverse effect on the wellbeing of the region's communities generally. We further emphasise the importance of investing in the work carried out by social sector organisations as they contribute significantly to maintaining the social fabric and wellbeing of the wider population of the Waikato region.

13. We note the prioritised recognition of 'changing community values and expectations' in terms of job and business opportunities, alongside other key matters. Again, we reiterate the importance of supporting and investing in social well-being opportunities across the Waikato, including the vulnerable and such organisations that support and uplift the wellbeing of its communities. Mindful that the social services sector employs a sizeable population of residents, we submit that social wellbeing and community development are of key importance and need to feature, in terms of community related opportunities for job creation in the Waikato.
14. We note the Council's intent to prioritise its ongoing working relationships with iwi Māori, in light of their increasing political and economic influence. We encourage the Council to ensure its strategic activities appropriately accommodates the cultural, environmental and social influences, values and needs of marae, whānau, hapū and iwi. We note this, being mindful of the approximately 200 marae communities throughout the region, and how Council decisions and activities impact on such communities and identity features such as buildings, places, whenua, moana, awa and maunga.
15. 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 ought to be equitably considered over the next three to five years. Of key social concern is the impact of rate charges, and living cost challenges faced by the ageing and vulnerable populations of our region. We highlight this for the Council to consider in its decision-making.
16. There is also the concern for rural townships that are experiencing ongoing depopulation of its youth demographic due to low prospects for jobs or training. We encourage the Council to maintain a focus and considered investment that can address 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.

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



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