

Horowhenua COMMUNITY WELLBEING STRATEGY

Horowhenua District Council Vision Statement:

“To make Horowhenua the best rural lifestyle district in New Zealand.”

Horowhenua District Council Community Wellbeing Vision:

“Horowhenua is New Zealand’s leading region caring for the wellbeing of our people.”

Within Community Wellbeing at the Horowhenua District Council are many functions and focuses. These include Youth, Older People, Education, Disability, Transport and Health. Historically, Local Government has taken a tokenistic, tick-box mentality when approaching community engagement, one that is output driven, not outcome driven.

In Horowhenua, we now pride ourselves on having a strong Community Wellbeing focus within Council and the wider community, and consistently work collaboratively with different community groups to ensure the best outcomes for our people. With this in mind, it was timely to update the terminology associated with planning documents. Previously Horowhenua District Council has held Policies and Strategy for the above areas, which have not created a platform of action.

For this documentation revision, Council Officers have created an overarching Community Wellbeing Strategy, beneath which fit various Action Plans. This change in terminology is important when reflecting the usability and flexible nature of the respective documents. Another noticeable change within the Action Plans is the reduced size. This is to ensure the documents are user friendly and easily understood by all those interested in them.

Goals

This strategy has four overarching goals that influence each of the underlying Action Plans. These goals have been created by the community, for the community, and are the base values which Council's Community Wellbeing services work within.

- 1. A Proud Community – where everyone feels valued and respected**
- 2. A Connected Community – where everyone can access the facilities, services and activities they need to experience positive wellbeing**
- 3. A Safer Community – dedicated to injury prevention and safety promotion**
- 4. A Healthy Community – where everyone is ready to learn, with positive values and attitudes**

Background

Horowhenua is a special part of New Zealand. Just over an hour from Wellington and half that time to Palmerston North, but the feel of another world. From the calm quiet of bushwalks and gardens, history and culture to the exhilaration of rivers and the sea, the region offers something for everyone.

Horowhenua is a unique district, rich in natural beauty with its mountains, rivers, lakes and beaches. Rich in spirit also, the Horowhenua District is home to people from very multicultural backgrounds. 2006 Census results indicate the level of multiculturalism in the Horowhenua, with 74% of residents European, 20.9% Māori, 3.5% Pacific Island and 2.65% Asian. 74.4% of people in Horowhenua District belong to the European ethnic group; this is compared with 67.6% for New Zealand as a whole. Likewise 21.0% of people in Horowhenua District belong to the Māori ethnic group are compared to 14.6 percent for all of New Zealand. As at 2009

Horowhenua's population sat at 30,600. 14% are aged 15 – 29 years of age (20% nationally), and 26% are aged 60 and over (17% nationally).

People are the heart of the community, many of whom work tirelessly as volunteers to meet its needs and aspirations. Stretching from Himatangi in the north to just north of the Otaki River in the south, the region is bordered by the Tararua Ranges to the east and the Tasman Sea to the west. There are a number of small towns including Foxton, Shannon and Tokomaru; several tiny beach communities; and the main centre of Levin situated on the junction of State Highways One and 57. The region has a population of over 30,000, many of whom choose to live here for the lifestyle alternative to urban living. The mild climate and rich soils make market gardening, horticulture and farming the mainstays of the economy.

Like all communities, Horowhenua has some alarming statistics rating Horowhenua as an area with high social deprivation and low socio-economic status. The Horowhenua Community Report 2009 gave us some indication as to where we sit within the wider national framework.

- The District experiences a higher level of socio-economic deprivation than the country as a whole, with residents having a median personal income of \$18,500 versus \$24,400 nationally.
- 38% of the District's population live in areas assessed as being among the 20% most deprived in the country.
- From 1998 to 2009, 12% of live births were to teenage mothers in comparison to the national average of 7% nationally. Latest statistics have seen this percentage rise to 15%.
- 37% of residents live in New Zealand's most deprived areas (Deciles 9 and 10).
- Social isolation - 29% of households are single-person; this is in comparison to the national average of 23%.
- Only 48% of households have internet access in the Horowhenua, this again compares with a national average of 60.5%.

- Unemployment has increased significantly from 5.7% to 9% in 2010.
- National statistics indicate that up to 600 Horowhenua Residents may be suffering from Elder abuse and neglect.
- From 2004 – 2008 Horowhenua District had significantly less school leavers enrolling in tertiary study than the national average. Latest statistics show 42% of school leavers District-wide enrolling in tertiary study compared to the national average of 53%.
- The national average of one parent families with children sits at 17% while 20% of families in the Horowhenua are one parent families.
- Domestic Violence statistics are very high - Horowhenua District Police attend 1 domestic incident annually for every 27 people. If we take into account that domestic violence involves at least 1 person – 1 in 13.5 people are affected.

Like all communities, Horowhenua has many positive aspects, including a vibrant, resilient and proud community, and some negative considerations also.

Community Wellbeing Strategic Framework

Beneath the Community Wellbeing Vision fits nine different areas of focus, which all work together to achieve a holistically well community. For Horowhenua, the four main areas of current focus are Youth, Positive Ageing, Education and Disability, all of which have respective action plans detailing the vision, goals and actions for each area.



In Horowhenua, a subcommittee of Council (the Community Wellbeing Executive) governs Community Wellbeing. Sitting on this Executive is the current Mayor, Deputy Mayor, three Councillors, Community Representatives (Education, Youth, Older People and Disability), and representatives from Central Government Agencies (including the Ministries of Social Development, Health, Education and Police) and Iwi representatives.

This Committee also currently acts as the Governance Group for the Youth Social Sector

Trial occurring in the Horowhenua. The Trial works alongside other Strategies and Action Plans within Council, and has the goals to:

- 1. Increase Youth Participation in Education, Training and Employment**
- 2. Decrease Youth Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs**
- 3. Decrease Youth Offending**
- 4. Decrease Youth Truancy**

At the time that this Strategy was adopted by Council, the Social Sector Trial was due to continue until June 2014.

As well as the Executive Committee, Council Officers also facilitate four Community Wellbeing Forums per annum. These are public meetings and are focused on a variety of timely and relevant topics, such as GP attraction and retention, Urban Planning, Transport and Grants and Funding.

Beneath these forums are various network groups, which give Council Officers mandate and two-way communication pathways into the respective grassroots areas of our community.

Community Wellbeing Structure

Horowhenua District Council

Community Wellbeing Executive

Community Forums

Youth Council

Older Persons Network

Disability Leadership Team

Youth Network

Social Sector Trial

Education Horowhenua

Community Consultation

For any Strategy or Action Plan to bring beneficial and meaningful outcomes to a community, it is essential that the vision, goals and aims of such a document are community driven and owned. With this in mind, when drafting the revised Community Action Plans, Council Officers worked hard to ensure meaningful and outcome-driven consultation occurred within Horowhenua.

Ongoing Timeframes

This Strategy has a three-year life span, and will be reviewed when this time is complete. Over this time period, different initiatives and projects will be implemented that relate to Community Wellbeing or one of the Action Plans. Council Officers will report to the Community Wellbeing Executive on the progress made, as well as keeping the wider community updated on growth within the Horowhenua community.

For more information please call Council Ph. 06 366 0999, email enquiries@horowhenua.govt.nz or go to our website www.horowhenua.govt.nz