



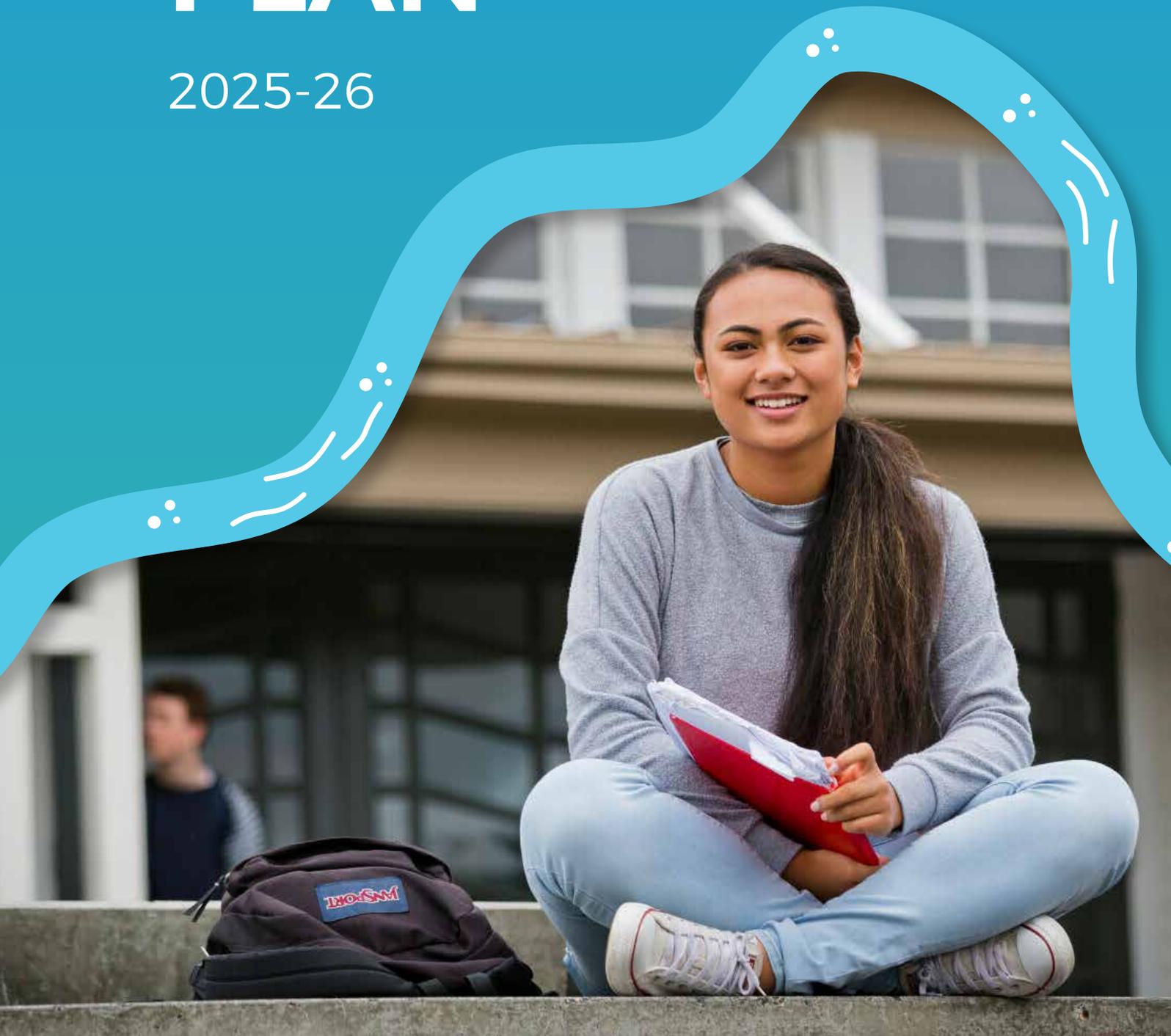
**Waikato
wellbeing
project**

Research . Knowledge . Storytelling

Hinonga
toiora o
Waikato

BUSINESS PLAN

2025-26





“ Basically, there are four things that matter to people: they have to have somewhere to live, they have to have food to eat, they have to have clothing to wear, and they have to have something to hope for.¹ ”

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¹The famous words that Norman Kirk did not say | The Spinoff

Introduction and Background

This business plan sets out the priorities for the Waikato Wellbeing Project (WWP) for the next 12 months (May 2025-April 2026). The plan reflects work by the WWP project team, Kaitiaki Advisory Board, conversations with funders, Manu Taki, project stakeholders and the results of the 2024 WWP Review.

The business plan builds on our core strategic direction (the “what”) and sets out how the project will continue to respond to this and apply its resources to create value (the “how”). Each initiative will be planned and implemented according to the agreed schedule, with regular updates to our co-funders and key stakeholders.

THE PLAN:

- Introduces the Waikato Wellbeing Project and our Theory of Change.
- Provides a brief environmental scan of the current context for wellbeing in the Waikato.
- Strategic priorities - actions which will create value for our stakeholders and partners.
- Organisational effectiveness priorities - actions to ensure that the WWP can function effectively and efficiently.
- Implementation - a framework for measuring and reporting on our progress, based on our Theory of Change.

Mō te WWP What is the WWP?

The Waikato Wellbeing Project (WWP) is a research, knowledge and storytelling project focused on environmental and social equity in the Waikato.

OUR VISION:
Our mokopuna are thriving.

OUR MISSION:
To hear our people and transcend their lives through positive impact.

Mō a mātou mahi What do we do?

Our work illuminates the deeper stories of our regional wellbeing challenges, to awhi the real-life initiatives, people and projects imagining, creating and leading positive alternatives to the status quo. The WWP is a suite of integrated focus areas and projects across the region, with the common theme of listening deeply and facilitating impact, through:

- **Research** on the region’s pressing social and environmental wellbeing challenges, their upstream causes and innovative ways ahead.
- **Wellbeing knowledge** which brings together existing and new data and information at a range of scales and locations.
- **Storytelling** - shining a light to support the invisible labour which leads to tangible grassroots change in our communities.
- **Advocacy and communications** - sharing the knowledge and insights we have gained and to encourage positive change.

The impacts we are aiming to achieve are:

- **Better informed** policy, funding and services in the Waikato.
- **Whānau voice** being heard - communities empowered and supported to make decisions about their future.
- **More effective support and resources** for communities and those working in the social, environmental and community sectors.
- **Collective wellbeing leadership** across all sectors of our communities.

Mō te āhua o a mātou mahi How do we work?

For us, it's all about listening to whānau voice and amplifying insights for impact. We are researchers and enablers - using innovative tools to facilitate dialogue, data and insight generation and storytelling that all help to enact positive change.

We bring diverse groups together to create connections and synergies, highlight what resources are already available to support groups or organisations undertaking the work, facilitate conversations across organisational areas.

We uncover the wisdom and knowledge that is already present in our whānau and communities, augmented with the additional insights we contribute. We work alongside community, philanthropic funding and for purpose organisations so they can create positive wellbeing impacts.

Mō a mātou hoa mahi Who do we work with?

We go where there is mana, mandate and tika. We seek out those with energy for change and an invitation for us to join the kōrero. We listen to understand the challenge or the opportunity, and partner to work alongside and support local leaders. We work with wellbeing leaders, groups and organisations to connect, access relevant data, develop vision and support leaders to work more collectively.

Mō mātou Who we are?

The WWP team is contractors, volunteer community allies, foundation sponsors and funders who work collectively to disrupt and influence the status quo. Our diversity is our strength. Each of us brings a different and complementary skill set and world view ensuring that different perspectives are contributed to our wellbeing challenges. The magic is the synergy we create - unique insights from multiple difference perspectives, looking beyond the obvious and listening for voices, data and stories otherwise unheard or ignored.

Mō te pūtea tautoko How are we funded?

The Waikato Wellbeing Project was initiated by the WEL Energy Trust and the Waikato Regional Council (WRC) in 2019. WEL and the WRC remain our most significant supporters today.

We also have co-funders and partners for our projects. Trust Waikato is the major funder of our wellbeing knowledge initiative Te Ara Poutama. Our Rangatahi Opportunity was co-funded by the Ministry of Education and the Glenis and John Gallagher Foundation. The MAS Foundation and GoEco are major funders and partners of our Kai Challenge.



Theory of Change

A Theory of Change describes the strategies, actions, conditions and resources that facilitate change and achieve outcomes. It explains how particular activities or actions will lead to particular outcomes. In a simple sense, it is an “if: then” explanation of what we do and how it works.

Our Theory of Change builds on the vision, mission, purpose and goals of the WWP and helps to identify what action we will take to contribute to these. It helps to clarify what value we will add, how we will work as well as framing our stakeholders’ expectation of our impact.

Our Theory of Change also provides the framework for how we measure our progress and value. Our measurement framework is set out in the implementation section of this plan.

Our Mission:

To hear our people and transcend their lives through positive impact

Here’s how we do it...

If, based on these values and principles

- Kaitiakitanga
- Kotahitanga
- Manaakitanga
- Equity
- Inclusiveness
- Sustainability
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi

We use these tools and resources

- Poutoko | Research
- Te Ara Poutama | Knowledge
- He Pakipūmeka | Storytelling
- Waha | Advocacy

To undertake these activities

- **Research** on the pressing wellbeing challenges for the region, their upstream causes and innovative ways ahead.
- **Wellbeing knowledge** which brings together existing and new information and knowledge at a range of scales and locations.
- **Storytelling** - through Lots of Little Fires, shining a light to support the invisible labour which leads to tangible grassroots change in our communities.
- **Advocacy and communications** - sharing the knowledge and insights we have gained and to encourage positive change.

Which will achieve these outputs

- **Deeper insight and awareness** of upstream causes and breakthrough opportunities for our wellbeing challenges.
- **Accessible and relevant wellbeing knowledge** which communities and decision-makers can use to achieve change.
- **Raised awareness** of the hidden realities and leaders embedded in our marginalised communities and environments.
- **Greater collaboration** about wellbeing in the Waikato and what/who makes a difference.

And facilitate these outcomes

- **Better informed** policy, funding and services in the Waikato.
- **Waikato peoples are empowered and supported** to make informed choices for their present and future wellbeing.
- **More effective support and resources** for communities and those working in the social, environmental and community sectors.
- **Collective wellbeing leadership** across all sectors of our communities.

...Contributing positively towards

Our Vision:

Our mokopuna are thriving



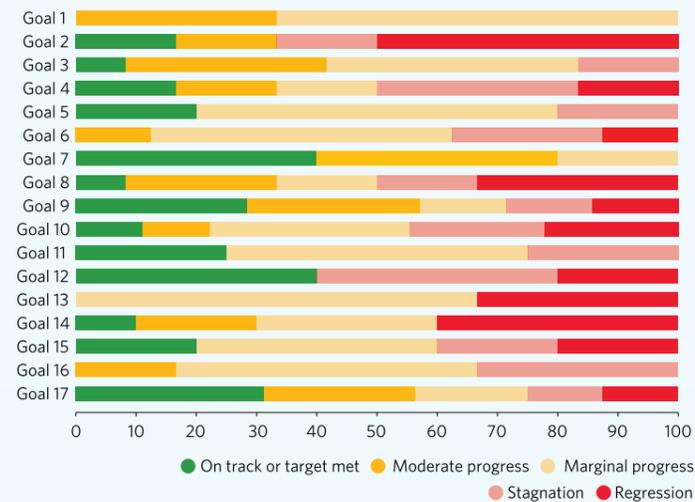
Waikato wellbeing project | Hinonga toiora o Waikato
Research . Knowledge . Storytelling

Environmental Scan

GLOBAL PROGRESS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS UNEVEN

It is now ten years since the world's nations signed up to implement the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development² and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The agenda and the goals within were focused on people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

Progress assessment for the 17 Goals based on assessed targets, by Goal (percentage)



The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024³ reveals that the world is off track to realize the 2030 Agenda. Only SDG 1 (Poverty Reduction) has shown moderate to marginal progress, but none of its metrics are fully on track. All other wellbeing areas have shown both positive progress and regression. SDG 13 (Climate Action) has shown no positive progress and only marginal progress or regression. The strongest progress appears to be in areas of affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), and partnership for the goals (SDG 17). For many of these indicators, according to Our World in Data⁴, there is no available information for New Zealand.

Post Covid-19- New Zealand's wellbeing has not improved significantly...

In New Zealand, The Salvation Army's 2025 State of the Nation Report⁵ made the following headline observations for New Zealand:

- **Unemployment** is rising, and as of December 2024 we have 400,000 people needing welfare support, the highest since the 1990s.
- **Food insecurity** amongst families with children has risen sharply, and half of all Pacific children go without food often or sometimes.
- While there has been a good increase in the number of **social housing** units available, that building programme is reducing, and rent for private rentals continues to be unaffordable for many on low incomes.
- Our **prison population** has grown, and remains high compared to other more economically developed countries (MEDC), and while crime overall has declined, violent crime is increasing.
- Māori continue to experience inequities in terms of life outcomes. More than one in four Māori whānau report that their family is doing badly or not well, higher than in 2018.
- Māori are also twice as likely to be the victim of a violent crime and continue to be over-represented in the prison population, with a 6.8 percent higher rate of imprisonment than non-Māori.

- Kai, kainga and whānau are getting more difficult for Māori. Where there are positive signs for Māori, this is often in association with Māori-led initiatives that focus on meeting Māori needs and improving equity of access to services and support.
- In areas such as reducing the need for children to be in care and improving educational outcomes, Māori-led initiatives show positive results. However, recent survey data shows that Māori are increasingly uncertain about their ability to express and uphold their identity as Māori—possibly in response to the public debates about Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the funding of Māori-specific services.

The report urges New Zealanders to consider:

- How do we better tackle **child poverty** in the short term, recognising that childhood experience is a determinant for later life, and so our children in poverty need help now?
- Given the trend in unemployment and the need for welfare, how do we best **work with those on benefits** in a way that is mana enhancing?
- How can the community, businesses and government work together to ensure we increase our stock of **affordable housing**?
- Can we commit to dealing with the **underlying causes of crime**, and to improving recidivism rates through the right support and interventions; and
- Can we **uphold Te Tiriti** in practical ways, through supporting Māori-led initiatives that work appropriately with Māori whānau and communities?

²Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

³The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2024.pdf

⁴SDG Tracker: Measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals - Our World in Data

⁵TSA_SOTN25_DownloadVersion.pdf

Mixed Wellbeing and Sustainability Results for the Waikato

In the Waikato, the Waikato Regional Council's Waikato Progress Indicators (WPI) report that since 2006/07 the most notable positive trends over this period are (in declining order) road safety, incomes, regional GDP growth, educational attainment, recycling, perceptions of safety, and life expectancy. The largest negative trends over this period are (in declining order) poorer perceptions of community engagement, more waste to landfill, higher water use, lower frequency of physical activity, less use of public transport, lower perceptions of cultural respect, and more residential expansion onto highly productive land.

Relative to the rest of New Zealand, the Waikato region has a high percentage of Te Reo Māori speakers, high frequency of physical activity, high levels of community pride and social connectedness, community engagement and slightly higher level of life satisfaction (overall quality of life). However, the region is behind the national average on a range of indicators, including road safety, crime, recycling, GDP per person and household incomes.

The Waikato Region is a Major Food Producer...

Research by Whirika⁶ to understand the Waikato Foodshed has shown that:

- An estimated **300,000 tonnes** of food per year is needed to feed the region's current population of **522,600 people**.
- The total area of the Waikato Region is 2.5 million hectares, with **1.4 million hectares** being food producing land (57% of overall land area).
- The region produces significant amounts of milk (**6.5 million tonnes** per year) and red meat (**200,000 tonnes** per year).
- Red meat production is 51% of the land use, with cattle for dairy milk production being 46%, all the other food types are under 1% of the food producing land area.
- Horticultural production is 0.4% of food producing land and produces approximately 200,000 tonnes of fruit, vegetable, nuts and legumes per year.
- Horticulture production, particularly root and above-ground vegetables, demonstrates some of the highest yields per hectare compared to other food categories.
- Chicken meat production has the highest output per hectare, surpassing all other food types.
- The mass balance between local food production and community needs reveals a surplus of dairy products, red meat, vegetables, and poultry (both meat and eggs), while most other food types show a deficit.
- Only 4% of the dairy products produced in the Waikato Region are needed to meet local demand, leaving a surplus of 1.6 million tonnes annually.
- Nationally, 95% of milk is exported, meaning the remaining dairy production in the Waikato closely aligns with local consumption needs.
- Just 7% of the region's red meat production would be needed to meet local demand, resulting in a surplus of 180,000 tonnes per year.

...But Many People in the Region are Going Without Adequate Food

Recent research by StrategEase to better understand the food system in the Waikato⁷ has shown:

- **High Food Costs:** Food prices in Waikato rose faster than inflation between 2018-2023 but have since stabilized, albeit at high levels relative to incomes.
- **Food Hardship Support:** Over 6,000 hardship grants were issued in 2024, averaging \$115 each.
- **Community Food Aid:** At least 10,000 food parcels helped 7,000 households in 2024, though the true scale is likely twice this.
- **At-Risk Households:** Those struggling most include unemployed two-parent families, single parents without work, and retirees relying solely on superannuation.
- **Food Insecurity Rates:**
 - 2018-2023: Material hardship declined slightly (10% → 9%), child food insecurity dropped (14% → 12%).
 - 2023: ~18,000 households (9%) faced food insecurity, affecting 15,000 children (12%).
- **Most Impacted Groups:**
 - Single parents with dependents (31%).
 - Households with children but without two parents (15%).
 - Single-person households under 65 (14%).
- **Housing Costs:** Rent for a 3-bedroom home averages \$600/week, while typical household incomes range from \$626 to \$1,239/week, straining budgets.

In summary, the research by StrategEase has concluded that:

- The food system has **major imbalances** and is dominated by large-scale production and processes and a corporate retail duopoly which contributes to New Zealand's relatively high cost of groceries.
- **Systemic change is unlikely** anytime soon. The prevailing political-economy is unlikely to tolerate systemic change in the foreseeable future – especially around land use rights and access to commons resource such as water.
- The **social licence** of the current food system offers a pivot to leverage social change. The spectacle of want amongst plenty challenges the food system's social licence. Food waste within processing and retail is a major embarrassment which corporates are attempting to address through measures such as food rescue.
- **Community based activism** is a feasible lever for this beneficial change. Current community activism especially around food banks but also community gardens and food sharing, illustrates need and concern and provides the generative space for further initiatives which work toward systemic change rather than legitimising the current system.

⁶Foodshed Info - 12'3 - Whole Document LR.pdf

⁷ WWP Framing Food Insecurity Report.pdf

We're Building More Houses Than Ever...

In 2023, the WWP and the WHI updated the 2018 Waikato housing stock take. The report⁸ assesses the current housing stock in the Waikato (by TA) and future demands based on population projections. Key observations included:

- The Waikato region has ~216,000 homes, with ~194,000 available for use after excluding empty homes.
- Between 2018 and 2023, ~20,000 homes were built, slightly exceeding the projected demand of ~19,000.
- Despite record construction, the region faces a housing shortfall of ~8,000 homes, unevenly distributed.
- The social housing register grew from ~900 in 2018 to ~2,700 in 2023, while social housing increased from ~4,400 to ~5,000.
- Housing affordability remains a challenge, with prices rising ~45% over five years.
- By 2043, the region is projected to need ~62,000 additional homes, though demand may shift due to factors like migration.

The key recommendation from the report was that while a record level of housing was achieved during the period, affordability remains a key issue. Addressing the three 'big rocks' of land, policy and funding needs to have a deliberate emphasis on the provision of affordable housing.

Further information on the Waikato housing system can be found at the WHI data lake⁹. In addition to the above data, some key statistics captured in the data lake includes:

- Median house price in the region in December 2024 was \$725,000, about the same as it was in May 2021, prior to the Covid-induced price spike.
- 590 homes were built in December 2024, down from 744 in May 2021.
- In the 2018 census, over 16,000 people were in crowded housing, in Hamilton alone.
- Regional median rent in late 2024 for the region was \$560 across more than 39,000 active bonds.
- According to census 2018, more than 139,000 people live in more than 32,000 damp and/or mouldy dwellings.

Our Lots of Little Fires project has captured insights into different aspects of the Waikato housing system, especially for those who are often housing insecure and homeless.

...But Affordability is not Improving

Data from Ministry of Housing and Urban Development¹⁰ shows that from 2012 to 2017, in terms of relative change, the Waikato had better mortgage affordability than both Auckland and the rest of New Zealand. Mortgage affordability in Waikato has improved slightly since 2023 relative to median household income growth, however, it is now worse than in Auckland and the rest of New Zealand.

Saving for a house deposit has also become easier in Waikato since December 2021, but it is 40% harder than it was in 2003 and is still harder than in Auckland or the rest of New Zealand due to lower incomes relative to house prices. Like mortgage affordability, deposit affordability was better in Waikato between 2012 and 2017. House prices have risen more sharply in the Waikato than in the rest of New Zealand and have not moderated as much since 2022. House prices are now 267% higher than they were in 2003. Inflation in that time has been 71%¹¹.

Waikato's rental market has become less affordable since 2016 and has consistently been less affordable than Auckland or the rest of New Zealand since 2003. Rent increases have been higher in Waikato compared to both.

Affordability varies across Waikato districts. South Waikato, Otorohanga, Matamata-Piako, and Hauraki are significantly less affordable, with steeper rent increases since 2016. South Waikato has seen the greatest decline in affordability. In contrast, Hamilton City remains closer to the national average, possibly due to rental supply constraints and population growth.

There's Work Needed to Improve Gender Equality

In 2024, the WWP in partnership with YWCA Hamilton, WEL Energy Trust and Trust Waikato developed a Community Wellbeing Baseline for Young Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People in the Waikato¹². Key findings of the research included:

- Young Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People of the Waikato reported lower wellbeing compared to the national average.
- Sleep, safe and stable environments and holistic wellness identified as top priority needs.
- Respondents scored highest in feelings of self-acceptance of sex/gender identity.
- Those aged 16-24 generally scored lower than those aged 25-35, with unique areas of focus around health services and access to transport.
- Sex/Gender Diverse responses were generally lowest out of subgroups, indicating that focused support is required.

Research undertaken in 2023 by Rainbow Hub Waikato¹³ found that existing older person's strategies do not adequately include Takatāpui¹⁴ and Rainbow older people, or the historical and contemporary discrimination which they have experienced. This means specific needs will fail to be met. Inclusion in older person's strategies must be guided by Takatāpui and Rainbow elders and needs identified in this research.

Mistreatment continues today for Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, and it's more common for bisexual, disabled and Māori, Pasifika and ethnic elders and especially trans and non-binary elders. Half of trans and non-binary elders (49%) said they had been verbally or physically abused on the street or in a public place in the last two years. Mistreatment and fear of mistreatment leads to Takatāpui and Rainbow elders avoiding all kinds of social situations. One in five elders (22%) avoid social support groups for older people.

⁸Stocktake_FINAL

⁹Housing Data Lake | Waikato Housing Initiative

¹⁰Compare Regions - Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga - Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

¹¹Inflation calculator - Reserve Bank of New Zealand - Te Pūtea Matua

¹²YWCA Wellbeing Baseline Report 2024

¹³Elder Voices - Rainbow Hub Waikato

¹⁴Takatāpui is a traditional Māori term meaning 'intimate companion of the same sex. (Takatāpui | A Resource Hub)

a. Our Strategic Priorities

KO O MAATAU KAUPAPA MATUA MO TE 2025-26

Priorities for 2025-26

Wellbeing |Hauora covers a wide range of issues and topics which are all interrelated. In the context of the WWP, 'wellbeing' is about the ability of individuals and communities to live the lives they value - now and in the future¹⁵. There are no wrong doors when looking to advance wellbeing, and each perspective has legitimate advocates and champions.

¹⁵Karacaoglu, G. Love you: Public Policy for Intergenerational Wellbeing

While the UN describes the 17 goals as being integrated and indivisible, it identifies eradicating poverty "in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty... the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development."

At the front of this plan, we have quoted former Prime Minister Norman Kirk, whose words capture the essence of wellbeing for us. To have meaningful impact, WWP will focus on fewer project areas (especially in Poutoko | Major Projects) and aim to have greater impact...

- Not duplicate and will partner with others to fill agreed gaps and/or opportunities.
- Not compete for funding in a way which takes resources away from front-line delivery.
- Focus on upstream issues which have the greatest positive leverage across multiple wellbeings; and
- Work within our mandate and/or partner with those who are mandated.

Bringing it Together

Our priority work areas for the next 12 months are listed below. These priorities have been organised by our strategic framework and our toolkit, reflecting current and proposed commitments. We have identified the critical few initiatives we are able to undertake in 2025-26 within current budget, however co-funding will be sought to support and where relevant enhance our current scope of work'. The work plan recognises that knowledge is most valuable when it connects with lived experience and informs practical action. Our approach will continue to be collaborative, culturally responsive, and focused on informing positive change.

- **Poverty and Food Insecurity (SDG 1/2)** - through the **Waikato Kai Challenge**, working in partnership with GoEco, MAS Foundation, iwi, local government and community organisations, to uncover

the deeper causes of food insecurity, amplifying the work of those who are changing the status quo and advocate for wider systemic change. Understanding food security and kai motuhake through a combination of in-depth quantitative and empathy-based research, advocacy and support of change makers.

- **Housing (SDG 11)** - continuing to partner with the **Waikato Housing Initiative** with a specific focus on affordable housing, housing insecurity/homelessness and the opportunities for new models and approaches across the housing spectrum, such as advancing opportunities for ethical landlords to support people who are housing insecure.
- **Rangatahi wellbeing (SDGs 4/8/10)** - continuing to work with and celebrate people and organisations who are uplifting and supporting rangatahi wellbeing, identifying the changes and actions which will make a positive difference in the lives of rangatahi. This includes advocacy to fund facilities and people resources which will improve the wellbeing of rangatahi and their whānau.
- **Gender Equality and Equity (SDG 5)** - working with YWCA and all other wellbeing leaders to build on the research undertaken in 2024/25, continue to support work to increase equity and equality across all genders in the Waikato region.
- **Understanding Community Wellbeing** - through **Te Ara Poutama**, working with Te Tara o Te Whai, Thames Coromandel, Hauraki and Matamata-Piako District Councils to use the results of the Hauraki Opportunity to guide policy, strategic priorities and resource allocation. Communicating and sharing insights on the state of the Waikato region, both in relation to distinct wellbeing domains, and localities (districts and communities).

In all the above cases, we will use our integrated toolkit of research, storytelling | Lots of Little Fires, advocacy and communications to further advance our goals.

B. Organisational Effectiveness Priorities

In 2024 the WWP commissioned Versus Research to undertake an independent review of the WWP, in response to the request for a robust review of future funding models and project deliverables. The review was not a first principles or best practice review of the WWP, leaving these matters for the next steps of the project to consider.

Thirty-six people/organisations participated in the review, including funders, capital beneficiaries, the WWP governance members, and stakeholders. The headline conclusions of the review include:

- The WWP has achieved solid results, with the strongest results derived from the storytelling function. The review summarises performance against our key strategic areas in the following illustration.
- When the deliverables are considered together, the WWP has generated several benefits for the region, particularly to the community sector. The WWP has been easy for the community to access and the work has started to build cross-sector relationships. Importantly, this project provides independent research that will grow as the WWP matures and embeds itself in a wider range of topics.
- To truly leverage the insights it develops, the WWP needs to find avenues to **scale its work upwards** to affect policy and structural change and determine how it can further its work to **scale deeply**, supporting community initiatives. Additionally, the WWP will need to develop a broader funding base and use a combination of funding sources to deliver its work in the future.



Charting the Next Stages of the WWP

The review provides an assessment of our achievements, strengths and opportunities for further improvement. The review notes community prosperity is a collective responsibility requiring a high degree of coordination and cooperation across agencies and leadership organisations.

The review concludes that the project is doing good work, and ongoing refinement can achieve even more. The strong endorsement of Lots of Little Fires and our advocacy efforts highlights the effectiveness of us “scaling deep” by working closely with communities. Our role as a bridge between lived experiences and decision-making ensures that community leaders and changemakers—who often feel unrecognised and under-resourced—receive the support they need.

To successfully scale upwards we will ramp up our connections with government, iwi, community organisations, tertiary institutions, philanthropies, funders, and advocacy groups. By sharing the insights and knowledge gained through our work, we can shape policy, strategy, services, and funding decisions at both regional and national levels.



C. Implementation

Our measurement and performance framework for 2025-26 is illustrated in the table below. Our programme of action makes a positive contribution towards our vision and the region's ten wellbeing targets and goals. Led by the WWP and our partners, these were developed and agreed in 2020, based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are shown by the coloured boxes on the right-hand side of the table. The arrows illustrate how the WWP makes a contribution towards these, along with many other people, iwi and agencies in the Waikato and Aotearoa New Zealand. The achievement of these is not the responsibility of any one person or entity, and can only be achieved through collective effort by everybody. To learn more about these targets and goals, please go to: www.waikatowellbeingproject.co.nz/detailed-targets

Progress against these actions and metrics will be reported to the Transition Leadership Group regularly, and to the Waikato Regional Council and WEL Energy Trust every 6 months. A summary report of overall progress for 2025 will be completed by 31 March 2026

This Business Plan will be kept continually updated through the year. Any substantial changes will be discussed with the Transition Leadership Group, Waikato Regional Council and WEL Energy Trust.

Resources	2025/26 Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Poutoko Research	<p>Waikato Kai Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lived Experience research, with a focus on kai opportunities in the Maniapoto and Raukawa rohe. Highlight successful kai Motuhake initiatives, identify systemic gaps, and set the foundation for long-term solutions. <p>Stakeholder & Systems Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate regular hui with key organisations, including iwi/hapū, councils, food networks, and community groups. Strengthen partnerships with existing food security initiatives to align efforts. Engage policymakers to advocate systemic changes in food policy and funding. Integrate findings from food security research into discussions to inform collaborative action. <p>Policy & Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and present policy recommendations based on local food security data and insights. Advocate for sustainable funding models and legislative support for food security initiatives. 	<p>Insights & Awareness</p> <p>Waikato Kai Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final ThinkPlace Lived Experience report and infographic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maniapoto by August 2025 Raukawa by December 2025 Progress reports to MAS Foundation Stakeholder Engagement Reports & Action Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation of collaboration efforts and strategic plans. Policy Briefs & Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-based proposals to inform government and funders. Consolidated Research Report – An integrated summary of key research findings with recommendations for systemic change. <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Webinar with ThinkPlace on the Lived Experience report. Kai Challenge receives 300 views per quarter. Maintain average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%). 	<p>Better informed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post project evidence and feedback from Waikato kai organisations and stakeholders that the kai challenge has positively impacted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Funding and Services Stronger Regional Collaboration – Improved coordination and partnerships among food security stakeholders. Increased Policy Support – Enhanced local and national policies prioritising food resilience. Empowered Communities – Greater knowledge, resources, and capability to implement local solutions. Integrated Strategic Direction – A clear pathway towards a potential Waikato Food Strategy informed by research and collaboration. Data-Driven Decision-Making – Improved access to real-time insights on food security challenges and solutions. 	
Te Ara Poutama Knowledge	<p>1. Waikato Housing Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, in partnership with the Waikato Housing Initiative, a research primer on interventions needed to achieve housing affordability in the Waikato region by 31 August 2025. Share the primer with all stakeholders in the region and seek feedback on the most effective options to pursue across the housing continuum. Use the primer to contribute towards an updated Waikato Housing Strategy, Regional Spatial Plan and City/Regional Deals. <p>2. State of the Region Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and publish a report summarising wellbeing and sustainable development progress in the Waikato region by 31 July 2025. Contribute as requested towards the WRC strategic priorities PESTLE analysis, Regional Spatial Plan and City/Regional Deals. <p>3. Wellbeing Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce regular quarterly topical and place-specific updates on key wellbeing issues. Integrate and align with other wellbeing data agencies such as WRC, MSD, Social Investment Agency via knowledge partnership agreements. 	<p>Accessible and Relevant Knowledge</p> <p>Waikato Housing Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A first draft primer document on improved housing affordability in the Waikato region by June 2025. At least one public webinar to share the results of research into housing affordability. Presentation of the results of the primer to WHI and stakeholders mid-2025. <p>State of the Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waikato State of the Region Report completed and published by 31st July 2025. <p>Wellbeing Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 1 place based or topical update per month. Quarterly district dashboards updated and published quarterly on Te Ara Poutama website. <p>Hauraki Wellbeing Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final report presented to all key Hauraki stakeholders by 30 June 2025. Agreement with Te Tara o te Whai and other partners on next steps. Agreement on data sovereignty and management. 	<p>Waikato people are empowered and supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from Waikato wellbeing organisations and leaders that Te Ara Poutama has empowered them to make informed choices and decisions. Improved understanding of well-being needs, endorsed by regional stakeholders. Evidence-based decision-making informed by existing data and regional trends. Increased regional understanding and coordination related to wellbeing data and insights. More informed policy development. Increased regional resilience and adaptability. 	

Resources	2025/26 Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Te Ara Poutama Knowledge	<p>4. Hauraki Wellbeing Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of the final report for the Hauraki Opportunity by 30 May 2025. <p>5. Simplify the Te Ara Poutama Webpage</p> <p>Redesign the current Te Ara Poutama web page so that it is easier for people to navigate and extract knowledge from.</p>	<p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An updated and redesigned Te Ara Poutama web page live by 30 September 2025. At least 4 wellbeing knowledge webinars held by 1 December 2024. Progress reports to Trust Waikato as per the accountability agreement. Te Ara Poutama website page to receive over 150 views per quarter. Maintain an average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%). 		           
He Pakipūmeka Lots of Little Fires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research, film, produce and release 8 new stories between May 25 and May 26 (season 3). Secure between 33-50% co-funding for LOLF by end of May 26 to transition into new state. Complete funding strategy and future state of LOLF work in relation to WWP's final year. Maintain and continue to build deep relationships across sectors to access new stories, opportunities to support and levers of influence to pull. Build YouTube subscriber base to over 1000. Engagement and workshop LOLF with 5 educational organisations and business CSR. 	<p>Raised awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An average of 15,000 YouTube views per story released. Creation of Lots of Little Fires website content to receive over 500 views per quarter. Maintain average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%). Build social media following to over 1000. Tangible funding, connections and advocacy for story recipients to further their kaupapa. Inspire and influence societal change and support for stories released. 	<p>More effective support and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of NZ on Air relationship and Waikato Screen to extend financial support and share of content. At least 5 evidenced examples of changes and impacts facilitated through Lots of Little Fires seasons 2 and 3 by 1 March 2026. Work experience opportunities for social innovators through storytelling. 	
Waha Advocacy and Comms	<p>Scaling up our Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with the WWP review, significantly increase the "scaling up" of the WWP's insights through greater advocacy and partnerships with organisations mandated to deliver community wellbeing and prosperity. Scale up advocacy for systems change initiatives in key areas of kai food security, housing affordability and homelessness, rangatahi wellbeing and gender equality. WWP newsletter - 5 yearly. Submissions lodged - at least 10 yearly, including at least 3 joint submissions on a local, national or international scale which align with our priority areas. 	<p>Greater collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 20 joint initiatives between the WWP and other for purpose organisations by 1 March 2026. Contribution to the 2025 SDG Alliance Peoples' Report. Submissions published on WWP Website to receive 100 views per quarter. Maintain average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%). Broker opportunities with Social Investment Agency, local authorities, iwi and community funders for a Waikato specific approach to social investment and wellbeing knowledge. 	<p>Collective wellbeing leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence and feedback from community, for purpose and political leaders in the region and New Zealand that the WWP has positively contributed to greater collective wellbeing leadership. 	
Organisational Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability reports and presentations to WEL Energy Trust and WRC May and September 2025 Annual presentations to Waikato Mayoral Forum and WRC as requested New Transition Leadership Group established by 30 June 2025 Terms of Reference for WWP review next stages agreed by 31 July 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual expenditures per program initiatives to date. WWP Business Plan published on WWP website by 1 May 2025. WWP managed and delivered within Business Plan budget. Overall project co-funding (cash and in-kind) of at least \$3.0m by June 2025. Preferred option for the new operating and funding model agreed by 1 December 2025. Maintain Newsletter Open Rate of 40%+ (Target 50%+). Maintain Newsletter CTR Rate of 7%+ (Target 8%+). Maintain Website traffic of 2,000+ visitors per quarter. Maintain average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future of WWP agreed and supported across the Waikato wellbeing community. WWP funding base deepened and broadened significantly. WWP better enabled to meet its wellbeing targets and goals. 	



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