

# SECTION 1: Introduction | Whakataki

# Overview | Kōrero whakataki

We love where we live in the mighty Waikato and we believe that together we can make it even better.

Our long term plan sets out how we're going to do this over the next 10 years. It includes the tangible outcomes we want to deliver, the money we're going to spend to deliver them, and the impact this will have on rates.

Known as the LTP for short, this document is reviewed every three years, guided by our 10-year strategy and the feedback we receive through public consultation. It sets our direction for the decade ahead, enabling us to meet our legislative obligations as a council.

Our region faces some big challenges, so deciding where to focus our efforts is always a major consideration. Influences that have guided this process include changing community needs and expectations, central government legislation and the fast pace of technological change, as well as the direction set by our past investments.

With the full economic impact of COVID-19 not yet known, we plan to continue steering a steady ship. This means our 2021-2031 LTP reflects strategic adjustments rather than big ticket items and has been designed to address pressing demands while maintaining a resilient financial position.

A big priority in the first three years of this LTP will be preserving and improving fresh water – a policy area that is receiving a big push from central government. We need to address the requirements set out in the National Policy Statement (NPS) for Essential Freshwater and we're excited about building on past successes to meet the growing expectations of iwi and our wider communities in this area.

This is a massive body of work and, of the total 7.7 per cent increase in rates revenue this LTP will introduce in year one, we're estimating that 2.2 per cent will be allocated to this priority alone. It has meant striking the right balance between fresh water and the other important areas our communities told us they wanted us to focus on.

While we were able to follow the community consensus on seven out of eight consultation topics, we opted to stick to our preferred proposal on biodiversity. Recognising the immediate priority that we need to give to our response to freshwater management, we'll be starting work on the significant biodiversity changes we want to make in year two instead of year one. This decision will also give us more time to understand the responsibilities imposed by central government's new National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity so that we can maximise the efficiency of our programme.

More than 80 per cent of submissions we received were on our rail proposal. The majority were keen to see improvements to extend the new Waikato to Auckland passenger rail service brought forward. Driven by this strong mandate, we decided to approve a 12-month trial for an interpeak service starting no earlier than December 2021 and an extension of Saturday Te Huia services to The Strand in Auckland's CBD.

To find out more about all of the council's decisions on the eight topics, please see the key decisions section.

Looking forward, the council will be keeping an eye on the National Policy Statement on Urban Development. This NPS requires the preparation of a future development strategy for high-growth areas. We plan to give effect to this by reviewing our existing Future Proof Strategy with our partners. A plan change to update the Waikato Regional Policy Statement will also be needed. We expect to notify this in early 2022.

We will be keeping a watching brief, too, on central government's Future for Local Government review. We have assumed that the council's existing role and functions will continue for the life of this long term plan, noting that any proposed changes may impact the next LTP.

Our residents spoke and we listened, using their feedback and our 10-year strategy to develop a plan that we believe strikes the right balance for the Waikato region as we work together for a **healthy environment, strong economy and vibrant communities**.

# About our council and region | Mō te kaunihera me te rohe

## About Waikato Regional Council

Established in 1989, Waikato Regional Council is responsible for a wide range of activities focused on strengthening regional performance and prosperity. These activities also make a significant contribution to New Zealand's overall wellbeing.

Our role includes:

- **governance and management of natural resources** – land, air, fresh water and coastal marine areas – on which our primary sector and export economy is based
- **strategic planning at the regional scale**, delivered through statutory instruments such as the *Regional Policy Statement*, the *Regional Land Transport Plan*, the *Regional Pest Management Plan*, *Waikato Regional Plan*, *Waikato Regional Coastal Plan*, and non-statutory instruments such as regional economic development strategies
- **provision of regional-scale infrastructure**, such as flood protection assets that protect billions of dollars worth of urban areas, roading infrastructure and productive farmland
- **transport planning and provision** to keep our region moving economically and socially
- **regional-scale response** to, and assessment of, natural hazards, including floods, earthquakes and tsunami, to protect communities and assets.

- **biosecurity and biodiversity activities** to safeguard a sustainable economy with a strong productive and export-earning capacity and to support indigenous biodiversity for its natural amenities and intrinsic value to our communities
- **obtaining, storing and evaluating information** so we know how well the region is doing environmentally and economically
- **managing catchments** in a holistic way.

## Council committees

The people of the Waikato region are represented by 14 elected council members. These representatives work in committees and make decisions and/or recommendations on a variety of matters, which are then reported to or decided on by the full council once a month. Two Māori seats and 12 general seats make up the council, and it has a chair and deputy chair who are appointed by the council when they take office every three years. The triennium for our current council started in October 2019.

For more information on the council, local representatives, the committee structure or how we work, visit [waikatoregion.govt.nz/committees-and-councillors](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/committees-and-councillors).



## Waikato



**Pamela Storey**  
Strategy and Policy  
Committee Chair



**Fred Lichtwark**

## Thames-Coromandel



**Denis Tegg**

## Ngā Hau e Whā



**Tipa Mahuta**

## Hamilton



**Jennifer Nickel**  
Climate Action  
Committee Chair



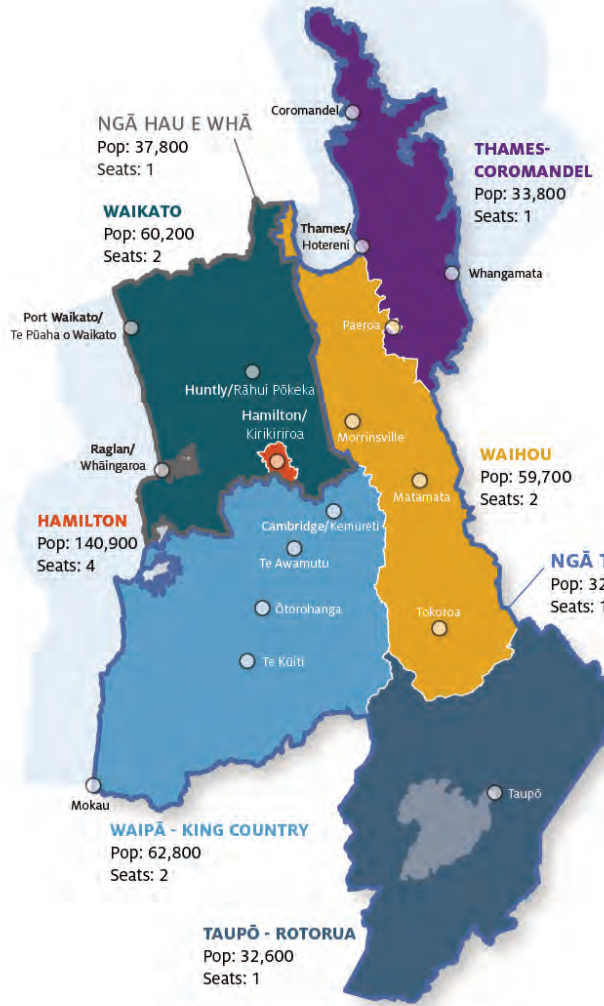
**Barry Quayle**  
Finance and Services  
Committee Chair  
Risk and Assurance  
Committee Chair



**Russ Rimmington**  
**Chairperson**  
Healthy Rivers: Wai Ora  
Committee Chair  
CE Employment and  
Remuneration Committee Chair  
Waikato Plan Leadership  
Committee Chair



**Angela Strange**  
Regional Connections  
Committee Chair



## Waipā-King Country



**Stu Kneebone**  
Integrated Catchment  
Committee Co-Chair



**Andrew MacPherson**

## Taupō-Rotorua



**Kathy White**  
Environmental Performance  
Committee Chair

## Ngā Tai Ki Uta



**Kataraina Hodge**  
Deputy Chairperson

## Waihou



**Stu Husband**  
Integrated Catchment  
Committee Co-Chair



**Hugh Vercoe**  
Regional Transport  
Committee  
Waikato Civil Defence and  
Emergency Management  
Joint Committee

For contact details please see our website: [waikatoregion.govt.nz/committees-and-councillors](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/committees-and-councillors)



## Your region

The Waikato region is our home – it's where we live, work and play – and it's also important to New Zealand.

Covering over 35,000km<sup>2</sup> – approximately 25,000km<sup>2</sup> (2.5 million ha) of land and 10,000km<sup>2</sup> of coastal marine area – we're the fourth largest region in New Zealand.

We sit at the heart of the upper North Island, an area important to the national economy because of its scale and contribution to New Zealand's international connections.

The mainland area stretches from the Bombay Hills and Port Waikato in the north, south to Mokau on the west coast, and across to the Coromandel Peninsula and Kaimai Range in the east. In the south, the region extends to the slopes of Mt Ruapehu.

The region is made up of distinct landforms, generally found within four areas: the Taupō volcanic zone, Waikato lowland and Hauraki Plains, western and central hill country and the eastern ranges. The Waikato region contains seven local authority districts and parts of three other districts which cross regional boundaries, as well as one city council.

We are a prime location, sharing boundaries with Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Manawatū-Whanganui and Taranaki.

## Your environment

The Waikato region has a diverse landscape, including wetlands, mountain ranges, rivers, geothermal resources and coastal areas.

The region includes:

- the Waikato River — at 425km it's the longest in New Zealand
- Lake Taupō, the largest lake in Australasia at 623km<sup>2</sup>
- internationally significant wetlands, such as Whangamarino
- over 1200km of coastline
- a total of 70 per cent of New Zealand's geothermal resources
- extensive native and exotic forests
- Tongariro National Park.

The region has more than 100 lakes, including Lake Taupō, more than 20 rivers, including the Waikato, Waipā, Piako, Waihou and Mokau, and about 1420 streams.

The Waikato region has 1200km of diverse coastline, ranging from the white sands of the eastern Coromandel to the rugged west coast (Port Waikato to Mokau), with its distinctive black sands and windswept shoreline. The marine

area is from high tide and extends 22km offshore, covering more than one million hectares (10,239km<sup>2</sup>) and approximately 30 per cent of the region. Overall, 35.6 per cent of our harbours and open coast are in public ownership and 9 per cent of the coastline is used for roads.

Within our coastal marine area is:

- Cathedral Cove Marine Reserve
- Hauraki Gulf Marine Park
- 431,278ha of marine mammal sanctuaries.

There are also areas of significant conservation value, such as Whaingaroa (Raglan) Harbour, and other forms of 'protection' which include areas designated as local fishing grounds under the Māori Fisheries Act 1989, as well as submarine cable and pipeline zones.

Offshore islands within the regional council boundary include Cuvier Island, the Mercury Islands, Alderman Islands and Slipper Island on the east coast, and Gannet Island on the west coast.

## Your people

With 496,700 <sup>(1)</sup> people, the Waikato region has the fourth largest population in New Zealand (after the Auckland, Canterbury and Wellington regions). The region's population increased by an estimated 2.3 per cent since 2019 <sup>(2)</sup>. The majority of this growth was in and around Hamilton and northern Waikato.

The region is relatively youthful, with a median resident age of 37.4 <sup>(3)</sup>.

Approximately 131,400 Māori usually live in the Waikato, the second highest Māori population of the 16 regions in New Zealand <sup>(4)</sup>. There are multiple groupings of iwi within our region and the council works in partnership with six that have or are about to receive Treaty settlement co-governance and co-management related responsibilities: Tūwharetoa, Raukawa, Te Arawa, Maniapoto, Waikato-Tainui and Hauraki.

The median weekly household income in the Waikato grew from \$1675 in 2018 to \$1712 in 2020. Household income was fourth highest of the 12 regions identified in New Zealand <sup>(5)</sup>.

1 Statistics NZ - Sub-national population estimates by age and sex, at 30 June 2020 [accessed 11 February 2021]

2 Statistics NZ - Sub-national population estimates by age and sex, at 30 June 2020 [accessed 11 February 2021]

3 Statistics NZ - Sub-national population estimates 2020 [accessed 11 February 2021]

4 Statistics NZ - Estimated Maori descent resident population, at 30 June 2018 [accessed 11 February 2021]

5 Statistics New Zealand - NZ.Stat. Household income by region, household type, and source of household income. [accessed 11 February 2021]

## Your economy

The Waikato region has a medium-sized economy, contributing approximately 8.5 per cent (or \$25.8 million) to New Zealand's gross domestic product <sup>(6)</sup>.

Waikato is an agricultural powerhouse and a key contributor to New Zealand's dairy industry, as well as enjoying scale and breadth in manufacturing and services.

The region is New Zealand's most important mineral producing area. Coal, aggregates, iron and limestone are extracted, along with gold and silver.

It is also a major producer of energy, with about one-third of New Zealand's installed generation capacity. We have one large thermal, nine geothermal and more than 10 hydro power stations, along with a number of co-generation plants.

The Māori asset base in the Waikato has been estimated to be worth around \$6.2 billion in 2014, representing 15 per cent of total Māori assets in New Zealand. Agriculture, forestry and fishing (28 per cent), property and business services (23 per cent) and manufacturing (15 per cent) make significant contributions to the overall Māori asset base in the region. It has been estimated that Māori businesses generate \$1.4 billion annually for the regional economy <sup>(7)</sup>.

Waikato is at the heart of the 'golden triangle' connecting Hamilton, Auckland and Tauranga, making it a convenient access point for freight and logistics. It also enjoys a significant array of educational opportunities from early childhood centres to institutes of technology and a highly-rated university.

Waikato is home to popular and award-winning visitor destinations such as Hobbiton, the Waitomo Caves, Hamilton Gardens, the Coromandel Peninsula, Raglan and Lake Taupō.



6 Statistics NZ Regional gross domestic product: Year ended March 2019 [accessed 11 February 2021]

7 Te Puni Kōkiri, Maori Economy in the Waikato Region published 2014 [accessed 11 February 2021]

# Our 10-year strategy | Tā mātou rautaki tekau-tau

Our 10-year strategy sets out why we are here, what we stand for, our values, the commitment we make to every individual and organisation who uses our services, and the principles that guide the way we work.

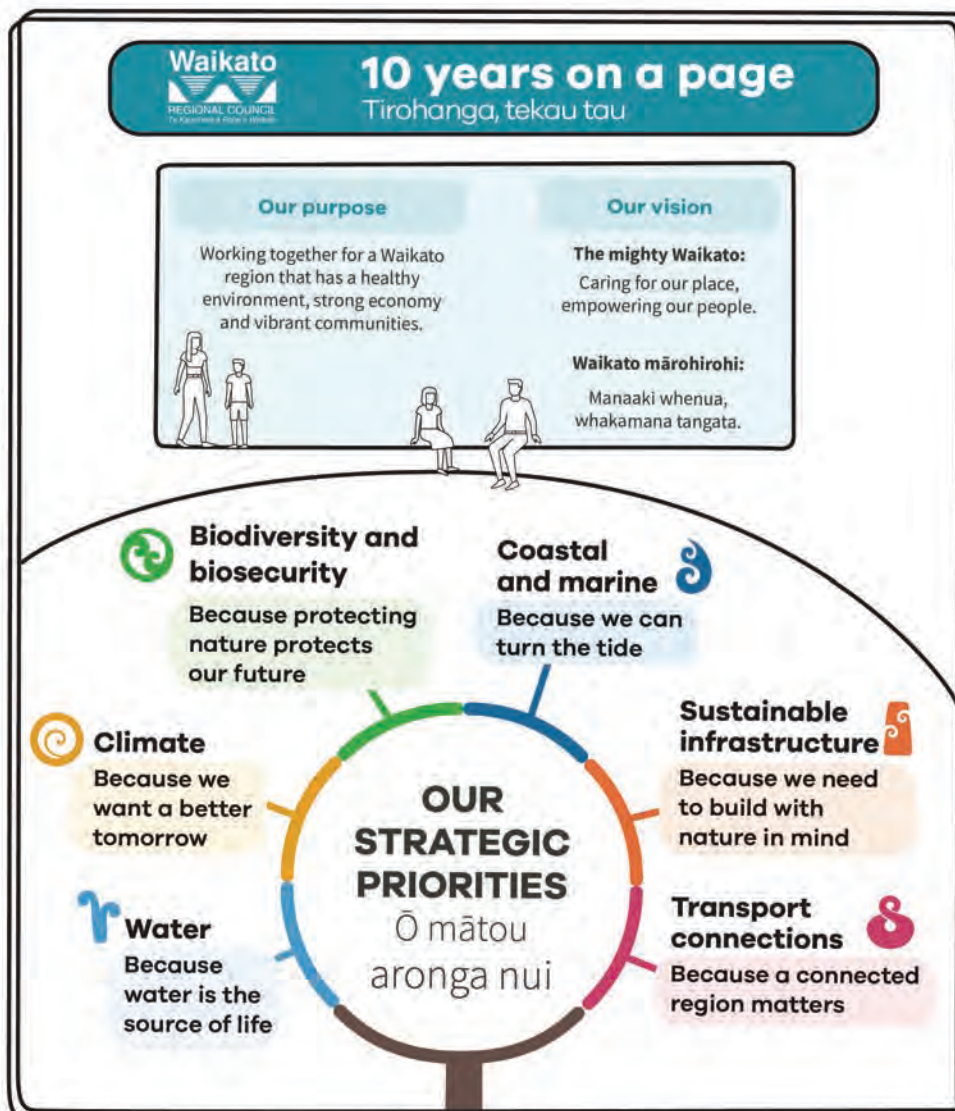
It identifies six strategic priorities that will collectively help us build a more resilient Waikato – a region that is prepared and well positioned to respond to new challenges and tough times.

On the ground, it's about ensuring we work towards our outcomes of a healthy environment, strong economy and vibrant communities. The outcomes are connected, so success in one area cannot be at the expense of another,

with progress against our priorities also reflecting progress towards these outcomes. We're looking to make decisions that provide multiple benefits for the community, now and into the future.

We know we can't deliver on everything in our strategy, nor achieve the best for our region, on our own. That's why we've committed to working in partnership with iwi, businesses, industry groups, central and local government, tertiary education and research providers, economic development agencies and you – the people of the Waikato.

To see the full 10-year strategy visit [waikatoregion.govt.nz/wrc-strategy](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/wrc-strategy).



# Community outcomes | Ngā hua hapori

Community outcomes are the outcomes we aim to achieve in order to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the region, both now and for generations to come. The council's three long-term outcomes are included in our purpose: working together for a Waikato region that has a **healthy environment, strong economy and vibrant communities**. In the *Groups of activities* section we outline the outcomes that each of our activities primarily contribute to.

During 2019, we signed up to the Waikato Wellbeing Project. This project is a community-led initiative to develop a defined set of wellbeing targets for the Waikato, based on

the United National Sustainable Development Goals. The Waikato wellbeing targets were developed in collaboration with the community and ownership of the targets sits with the community as a whole.

We will use the Waikato wellbeing targets as a framework to measure our progress towards our community outcomes.

The table below outlines the sustainable development goal and Waikato wellbeing targets which relate to each of our three high level outcomes. It also identifies how we, as an organisation, contribute to the wellbeing targets. Through our annual report each year, we will report on the activities we have undertaken to help progress community wellbeing.

Community outcome	Sustainable development goal	Waikato wellbeing target	Our contribution
Healthy environment	<b>6. Clean water and sanitation</b>  Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.	Increase the number of swimmable rivers and lakes in the Waikato from 30 per cent (rivers) and 73 per cent (lakes) in 2019 to both waterbody types achieving more than 80 per cent in 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Waterways plan change</li> <li>• Monitoring of rivers and lakes</li> <li>• Catchment planning activities</li> <li>• River management and stability works.</li> </ul>
	<b>13. Climate action</b>  Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.	Reduce carbon emissions by a minimum of 25 per cent by 2030 (from 13.8 mega tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e to 10.3 mega tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e) on the path to net zero carbon by 2050.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve a 70 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide by 2030 and to net zero by 2050</li> <li>• Climate Action Committee</li> <li>• <i>Climate Action Roadmap</i></li> <li>• Waikato Plan:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Climate workstream</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>14. Life below water</b>  Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.	Maintain or enhance the mauri of our coastal and marine waters to ensure healthy ecosystems so that we can also enjoy mahinga kai and swimming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catchment planning and management</li> <li>• Healthy Environments</li> <li>• Monitoring of coastal waters</li> <li>• Coastcare</li> </ul>
	<b>15. Life on land</b>  Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss.	Prevent the loss of existing indigenous vegetation and increase indigenous habitat in biodiversity depleted environments to a minimum of 10 per cent of land cover in 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing support, funding and advice to environmental groups, iwi, and members of the public</li> <li>• Ecosystem restoration and collaboration with other government organisations and stakeholders to protect vulnerable ecosystems</li> <li>• Pest management</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> </ul>



Community outcome	Sustainable development goal	Waikato wellbeing target	Our contribution
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy and regulatory work</li> <li>• Pathways to the Sea</li> </ul>
<b>Strong economy</b>	<b>1. No poverty</b>	About one in six children live below the poverty line. By 2030, less than 1 per cent will.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waikato Plan:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Regional housing initiative workstream</li> <li>◦ Education and employment workstream</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Te Waka – supporting shovel ready (job creation), supporting central government funding coming into the region, providing business mentoring services</li> </ul>
	<b>2. Zero hunger</b>	About one in six children live below the poverty line. By 2030, less than 1 per cent will.	As above
	<b>4. Quality education</b>	Reduce the number of young people (15-24) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) from 12.6 per cent in 2019 to less than 5 per cent in 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education programme – we take on interns and summer students</li> <li>• Waikato Plan:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Education and employment workstream</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Te Waka – supporting shovel ready (job creation)</li> </ul>
	<b>8. Decent work and economic growth</b>  Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.	Reduce the number of young people (15-24) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) from 12.6 per cent in 2019 to less than 5 per cent in 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transport makes getting to places of work or training more accessible for youth.</li> <li>• Student work programme – we take on interns in summer</li> <li>• Funding for university scholarships</li> <li>• Waikato Plan:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Education and employment workstream</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure</b>  Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.	No target – target being developed ETA mid- 2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future Proof</li> <li>• Waikato Plan:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Regional housing initiative workstream</li> <li>◦ Quality housing programme</li> </ul> </li> <li>• UNISA – work programmes on transport, waste, ports of Auckland, Tourism</li> <li>• Restoration project</li> <li>• Resilient development work</li> </ul>

Community outcome	Sustainable development goal	Waikato wellbeing target	Our contribution
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable infrastructure strategy</li> <li>• Flood protection, land drainage, river management                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Pathways to the Sea</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>10. Reduced inequalities</b> Reduce inequality within and among countries.	Reduce the number of young people (15-24) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) from 12.6 per cent in 2019 to less than 5 per cent in 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transport makes getting to places of work or training more accessible for youth</li> <li>• Waikato Plan</li> </ul>
	<b>12. Responsible consumption and production</b> Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.	Increase the number of households, schools, businesses and farms who reduce their waste leading to a 50 per cent reduction in waste to landfill by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with stakeholders to promote waste prevention</li> <li>• Enviroschools</li> <li>• UNISA – waste workstream looking at circular economy</li> <li>• WRC waste strategic plan</li> </ul>
<b>Vibrant communities</b>	<b>3. Good health and wellbeing</b>	By 2030, reduce rates of non-communicable diseases and mental health issues, and improve associated health equity outcomes for target groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waikato Plan:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Housing workstream (healthy housing)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>5. Gender equality</b>	No target – target being developed, ETA mid-2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waikato Plan – connected communities</li> <li>• Waikato Regional Council's organisational culture – more female leaders</li> </ul>
	<b>7. Affordable and clean energy</b>	Reduce the number of people experiencing energy hardship in the Waikato, from 18,000 in 2019 to zero by 2030.	WRC education programmes for clean heat.  <i>We acknowledge that our approach may have some inadvertent consequences, like the provision of free firewood temporarily delaying the transition to more efficient alternatives like heat pumps. However, on balance, we see this as a necessary interim step towards an equitable low-carbon future that ensures low-income households are not left behind.</i>
	<b>11. Sustainable cities and communities</b> Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.	Reduce the housing shortfall in the region, from approximately 7500 in November 2019 to a point where all people are well housed by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretariat for the Waikato Plan Housing Initiative</li> <li>• UNISA</li> <li>• Waikato-Hamilton-Waipā Metro Spatial Plan</li> <li>• Hamilton to Auckland Corridor Plan (Future Proof)</li> </ul>

Community outcome	Sustainable development goal	Waikato wellbeing target	Our contribution
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing input into district planning to promote compact urban form and intensification</li> <li>• Ongoing input into district planning to discourage development in areas hazard risk areas</li> </ul>
	<b>16. Peace, justice and strong institutions</b>	No target – target being developed, ETA mid-2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waikato Plan</li> <li>• Democracy team work on council and committee agendas, and LGOIMA</li> </ul>
	<b>17. Partnerships for the goals</b>	No target developed. This is about partnerships to create a more sustainable, prosperous and inclusive Waikato region by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iwi Māori partnerships</li> <li>• Empowering our communities</li> <li>• Waikato Plan and Waikato Regional Council as the temporary backbone structure for the Waikato wellbeing project</li> <li>• UNISA</li> <li>• Future Proof</li> </ul>

# Facilitating Māori participation | Te whakaāheitia o Ngāi Māori

The Local Government Act 2002 requires local authorities to consider how they can foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to their decision-making processes. Our approach is captured largely by our co-governance and co-management agreements as well as the work of our internal Tai-ranga-whenua team.

Waikato Regional Council has a number of co-governance and co-management agreements with iwi regarding their participation in natural resource management decision making as a result of Treaty of Waitangi settlements with the Crown. The co-management arrangements include joint management agreements between iwi and the regional council on the way we will work together. There are also iwi management plans — documents developed by iwi to address resource management activity of significance within their respective rohe (regions). The plans can contain information relating to specific cultural values, historical accounts, descriptions of areas of interest (hapū/iwi boundaries), and consultation and engagement protocols for resource consents and plan changes.

The council also has a total of six co-governance forums and committees that help to ensure the co-governance agreements are well implemented. As part of these agreements, the council:

- supports existing Waikato River settlement legislation requirements associated with joint management agreement commitments
- employs iwi interns to undertake river and catchment restoration related work within their rohe
- develops joint strategic work programmes
- works on designing a training programme to enable effective iwi representation on our catchment subcommittees.

The council will continue to work with our iwi partners to implement Treaty settlements, including the implementation of joint management agreements, advancing the *Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River*, and supporting our Māori councillors.

In 2017, Waikato Regional Council contributed to a framework, developed by Local Government New Zealand, that set out the specific commitments or obligations arising from each Treaty settlement arrangements. The resulting report made the case for a greater financial contribution to local government for the implementation of Treaty of Waitangi settlement arrangements. To support Māori capacity, one of the report's six recommendations advocated for the Crown to provide financial assistance to iwi for capacity and capability building. This assistance would be

to ensure iwi could participate and contribute equally in co-governance and co-management arrangements, and to assist in reducing local government costs.

Similarly, the Productivity Commission recommends a comprehensive and independent in-depth analysis of the costs associated with implementing Treaty settlement arrangements – both to councils and to iwi. Such analysis could inform an update of government policy on Crown contributions to support the implementation of Treaty settlements. Positive progress is being made in regard to the Crown's recognition of the role councils play in implementing effective Treaty settlement outcomes on their behalf.

Our council acknowledges that meaningful collaboration produces a broader range of benefits than are currently being achieved through Treaty settlement implementation. Treaty settlement costs often overlap with our other legislative requirements, under the Resource Management Act for example. In these instances, it is difficult to quantify and precisely define what is a Treaty legislation obligation versus what is an existing legislated responsibility.

Tuitui Iwi ā-Rohe – Regional Iwi Partnerships was established in 2019 and includes representatives from seven iwi authorities. The purpose of the new committee is for iwi to provide strategic guidance on significant regional issues such as the implementation of the council's 10-year strategy and climate change roadmap.

Our Tai-ranga-whenua team aims to build capability and confidence within the council to effectively partner with iwi Māori. By strengthening these relationships, we increase the ability of iwi Māori to meaningfully participate in mutually beneficial collaborative initiatives. This activity enables more effective and efficient decisions and creates more robust and lasting solutions to enhance the wellbeing of Māori and the wider community.

We will also continue to foster Māori capacity by:

- maintaining two Māori constituencies and Māori representation on our catchment advisory subcommittees
- working with mātauranga Māori experts to incorporate aspects of this world view into our processes and practices
- implementing strategies, frameworks and education programmes designed to increase staff and councillor capability to effectively engage with Māori
- providing pre and post Treaty settlement advice to council and government agencies.