

SUPPORTED LEARNERS

We will ensure that
quality local education
is available to all.



IN 2055, EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO SUPPORTIVE LOCAL EDUCATION TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt has a long and proud history of education. For well over a century, schools such as Korokoro (1904), Wellesley College (1914), and Hutt Valley High School (1926) have been educating students. In 1982, the country's first Kōhanga Reo was opened in Pukeatua, Wainuiomata. Lower Hutt is also home to the Wellington Regional School of Construction (WelTec) – the largest trades training facility in New Zealand, which has a strong legacy of supporting Māori trades training.

Local education plays a vital role in preparing young people for the future – helping them develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need for life and work.

More people in our city are gaining higher qualifications, and fewer have no formal qualifications.

Our city also faces challenges, including a high rate of school suspensions and stand-downs, and persistent disparities in achievement for Māori and Pacific students. These issues highlight the need for inclusive and supportive education, where every learner can succeed.

Looking ahead, major trends will continue to shape education in our city. There are now fewer children aged 0-9 years than a decade

ago, while our student population is becoming more ethnically diverse. Rapid technological change is influencing both how teaching is delivered and the skills needed for future employment. With longer working lives and multiple careers, lifelong learning is becoming more important.

In response, we will position Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt as a learning destination, promoting our city's educational opportunities. This will also help to make the city an attractive destination for skilled workers and their families. We will work collaboratively to remove barriers to school attendance, foster inclusive learning environments, and support youth development initiatives that build skills, confidence and wellbeing. Strengthening connections between education and industry will also be a priority, to create career pathways and expand opportunities for real-world learning.

This chapter outlines key initiatives to help realise our vision for education in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt by 2055. It concludes with a "What You Can Do" section, offering practical ways you can support and contribute locally to building Tō Tātou Tāone 2055 – Our City 2055.

INDICATORS

WE WILL TRACK PROGRESS OF THE FOLLOWING INDICATORS:

INDICATOR	LATEST DATA	TARGET
NEET RATE (AGED 15-24 NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING)	10.8% 2025	5%
% OF STUDENTS WHO LEAVE SCHOOL WITH A NCEA QUALIFICATION (PARTICULARLY MĀORI AND PACIFIC STUDENTS)	85%	95%
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (STUDENTS ATTENDING MORE THAN 90%)	66% 2025	80% 2030

BACKGROUND

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt is home to a wide variety of educational organisations. Our city also has a passionate teaching workforce, with 4,660 filled jobs in education and training.¹

Early Childhood Services

There are 4,144 tamariki enrolled in Lower Hutt's 98 early childhood services. The majority of enrolments (58%) are at education and care services, followed by Free Kindergartens, then Playcentre, Kōhanga Reo and homebased services. Nearly 30% of tamariki Māori are enrolled in one of the city's 12 Kōhanga Reo.²

Schools/Kura

There are 16,820 students attending schools in our city.³ This includes:

- 32 State primary schools
- 8 State integrated primary schools
- 4 State secondary schools
- 3 State integrated secondary schools
- 2 State integrated composite schools

Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Ara Whānui is located in Alicetown, with a roll of 385.

Tertiary

Lower Hutt is also home to tertiary and vocational providers such as WelTec Whitireia, Open Polytechnic and Victoria University of Wellington's Paihau Robinson Research Institute. Te Wānanga o Aotearoa also has a campus here. Students are studying a wide range of subjects, from a Master of Engineering at Paihau-Robinson, to Innovation, Design and Technology at Whiteria and WelTec.

The broader context

Education in Lower Hutt is influenced by several trends shaping the future of learning. The city's population is becoming more diverse, with 27% of students identifying as Māori (more than double the proportion in Wellington City). Our city's growing diversity brings opportunities to celebrate multiple cultures while also ensuring equitable access to resources and support.

In some areas, school rolls will be impacted by declining fertility rates (and fewer children). While other areas have been identified for future residential growth, and school rolls are likely to grow. Significant growth is focused on the central and northern valley floor, including the central city, Woburn, Waterloo, Naenae (Te Ngaengae), Taitā and Avalon.

Across New Zealand, achievement in school education has declined. 15% of Lower Hutt students leave school with no NCEA qualification (which is similar to the national average), and 60% achieve NCEA level 3 or above (which is slightly higher than the national average of 56%). 40% of Māori students achieved NCEA level 3 in 2024.⁴ Attendance rates have also declined across the country, including in Lower Hutt.

Technology presents both opportunities and risks—providing access to global knowledge but also raising concerns around digital equity and safe online behaviour.

Lifelong learning is becoming essential as adults retrain for new careers or update skills to meet evolving business needs.

¹ Infometrics, March 2024

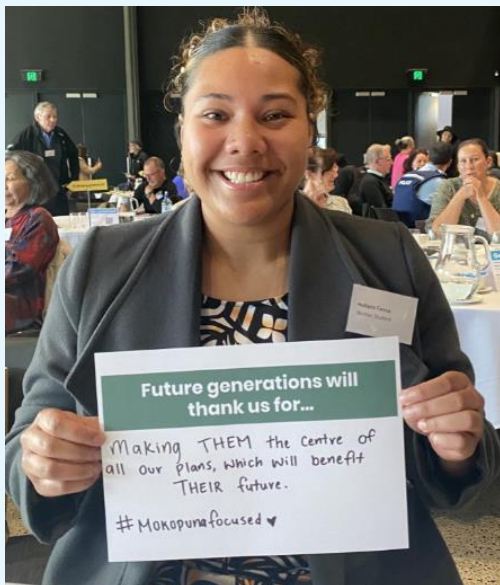
² Education Counts, 2023 (from total tamariki Māori enrolled in early childhood services).

³ Education Counts, 2025

⁴ Education Counts, 2024

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE LOWER HUTT COMMUNITY

People valued the quality of education options in Lower Hutt, including Te Kōhanga Reo, playcentre and Aoga Amata, schools and tertiary education institutions such as Whitireia and WelTec. There were concerns about future higher dropout rates and negative attitudes to school, and the need for stable, less stressful education. There was a hope for “culturally inclusive educational institutions”, particularly for children and families of former refugees and migrants. People commented on the value of Te Kōhanga Reo and kura kaupapa and wanted to see: “...*tamariki leaving kura kaupapa and have job opportunities that value the learnings and teachings they have received.*” There was support for strengthening the connection between higher education and local job opportunities: “*Improved local tertiary options to match the regional infrastructure strategies.*”



FUTURE FOCUS

Over the next 30 years, we will promote Lower Hutt as a city with outstanding learning opportunities. We will work collaboratively to address barriers to school attendance, strengthen connections between education providers and businesses, and support youth development initiatives that build skills,

confidence and wellbeing in young people. By fostering strong partnerships across schools, communities, businesses, and government, we will position our city as a place where learning is celebrated, supported, and accessible to everyone.

In the following pages, you will see the initiatives that will help us realise our goals.



Our goal to achieve Supported Learners supports SDGs to achieve quality education, reduce inequalities, end poverty, and provide strong institutions.



INITIATIVE 13

POSITION LOWER HUTT AS A HUB FOR OUTSTANDING LEARNING AND TEACHING

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt offers a wide variety of quality learning opportunities – we want our city to be known as a great place to learn – from early childhood, through school/kura, higher education, and community education.

Promote Lower Hutt as a learning city

We will actively promote our city as a place where people of all ages and cultures can access quality education, gain new skills, and be supported in their learning journey. This includes celebrating local success stories, showcasing innovative teaching and training programmes, and highlighting opportunities through community events, digital platforms, and partnerships with schools, tertiary providers, businesses, and cultural organisations.

Plan for future Māori education needs

We will support opportunities for tamariki and rangatahi to attend Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori. This includes planning Māori education services to meet future demand.

Across our city, we will integrate Māori culture into everyday learning, incorporating te reo Māori, local historical narratives (see Treasured History and Culture) and cultural activities such as kapa haka and waiata.

Strengthen teaching excellence

Lower Hutt's educators bring a wealth of expertise and creativity to their classrooms. By creating networks and professional learning, we can share best practice, and innovative teaching approaches. Partnerships

with mana whenua, community organisations, and industry will also enrich learning, ensuring that excellence in teaching reflects both the unique identity of our city and the skills our learners need for the future.

Extend life-long learning opportunities

We will explore opportunities to open up school facilities after hours as welcoming spaces for adult education, and encourage programmes that offer practical life skills—such as financial literacy and digital capability, which provide opportunities for personal development and career progression.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Promote Lower Hutt as a learning city.	Learning Institutes, HCC,
Strengthen teaching excellence.	Schools, Ministry of Education, Mana Whenua

INITIATIVE 14

WORK WITH WHĀNAU, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE EVERY YOUNG PERSON THRIVES IN THEIR LEARNING JOURNEY.

Every young person in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt deserves the chance to participate fully in education and have the opportunity to reach their potential. For some ākonga (learners), complex challenges—such as poverty, mental distress, or chronic absenteeism—make engagement in school difficult. Addressing these barriers requires coordinated action from across our community.

Create positive and inclusive learning environments

Ensuring every student feels respected and supported is essential for learning success. This means embedding inclusive and culturally safe practices that celebrate the diversity of our community. This could include creating safe spaces where Māori, Pacific, neurodiverse, LGBTQIA+ and other students can connect, celebrating cultural events like Matariki, Samoan Language Week or Diwali as part of the learning programme, student cultural leadership groups or culturally relevant artwork that reflect the identities of the school community.

Partner to remove barriers to attendance

Education, community providers, Police, the Ministry of Social Development, Kāinga Ora, Oranga Tamariki and Public Health services are coming together to address barriers to school attendance, supporting school aged tamariki to engage in education across Lower Hutt.

Build trust and connection

Strong, trusted relationships between schools, whānau and support agencies are essential for student success. Engagement works best when it is accessible, respectful and culturally responsive. Developing sustained partnerships with local marae, Pacific churches and community groups can engage wider community support for young people.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Create positive and inclusive learning environments.	Ministry of Education, Schools
Partner to remove barriers to attendance.	Ministry of Education (Police, MSD, others)

INITIATIVE 15

STRENGTHEN AND SUSTAIN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES THAT CREATE POSITIVE WELLBEING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt is home to Naenae Boxing Academy, Ignite Sport, Oho Ake, Tihei Rangatahi, Vibe and many other leading youth initiatives. By investing in youth-led and youth-focused initiatives, we create opportunities for young people to grow their skills, confidence, and overall wellbeing. These programmes also help build resilient youth who are ready to embrace life's challenges.

Promote youth initiatives

Targeted promotion of youth development initiatives, peer mentorship programmes, and support groups will help ensure rangatahi know where they can connect with others, find guidance, and participate in activities that build their wellbeing and resilience. This may include sports, music, theatre, dance or visual arts programmes for youth. By promoting youth-led performances, art exhibitions and community murals, we can showcase young talent.

Inspire youth voice and leadership

Lower Hutt's young people have valuable perspectives to share. We will explore new ways for our rangatahi to influence decisions that affect their lives—ensuring youth voices are heard across civic, cultural, and environmental initiatives, such as a Youth Council.

Connect through the environment

We will encourage programmes where rangatahi take part in tree-planting, river clean-ups, community gardens, or environmental restoration. These activities

build teamwork and practice kaitiakitanga – caring for Te Taiao (nature).

Grow skills for the future

Innovative programmes like Tūhura Tech—which runs free after-school technology education sessions—demonstrate how new learning opportunities can open doors for the next generation. We will encourage and support initiatives that provide rangatahi with skills to prepare them for the future.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Increase and promote youth initiatives.	Youth organisations, Schools
Inspire youth voice and leadership.	HCC, Schools

INITIATIVE 16

FOSTER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SCHOOLS, TERTIARY AND VOCATIONAL PROVIDERS, AND LOCAL BUSINESSES TO STRENGTHEN CAREER PATHWAYS

By bringing education providers and businesses closer together, young people will be exposed to new opportunities, skills and experiences – creating stronger pathways from learning into meaningful employment.

Strengthen pathways into growth industries

Our city has emerging opportunities in manufacturing, professional, scientific and technical services and construction and infrastructure. There is also a need to increase our city's health workforce. We will develop initiatives to support growth industries, including establishing industry/education partnership groups, and exploring the establishment of a Hutt Valley Manufacturing Academy, Infrastructure Academy, Water Academy and Science Academy.

There will be a focus on expanding scholarships, internships, sponsorships and grants - particularly for Māori, Pacific peoples, and women, (following examples like Whitireia and WelTec's Māori and Pasifika Trades Training scholarship). This will help more rangatahi access education and training in these growth sectors.

Connect learning with real-world opportunities

We will strengthen work-based learning programmes, such as trade academies, internships, apprenticeships and co-op placements. These offer immersive experiences where businesses provide hands-on training and mentorship, and rangatahi gain practical skills and exposure to different career options.

Aligning education with future needs

It is essential to prepare learners with skills that will be needed in the coming decades. This will include Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce working alongside local education providers such as Victoria University and Te Pūkenga / Weltec Whiteria & UCOL to support curriculum and course planning.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Strengthen pathways into growth industries.	HV Chamber of Commerce, Schools
Connect learning with real-world opportunities.	HV Chamber of Commerce, Schools

INITIATIVE 13: POSITION LOWER HUTT AS A HUB FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Promote Lower Hutt as a learning city.	Learning institutes, HCC	
Strengthen teaching excellence.	Schools, Ministry of Education, Mana Whenua	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
% of students who leave school with a NCEA qualification (particularly Māori and Pacific students)	85%	95%

INITIATIVE 14: WORK WITH WHĀNAU, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE EVERY YOUNG PERSON IS THRIVING IN THEIR LEARNING JOURNEY

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Create positive and inclusive learning environments.	Ministry of Education, Schools	
Partner to remove barriers to attendance.	Ministry of Education (Police, MSD, others)	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
NEET rate (aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training)	10.8% 2025	5%

INITIATIVE 15: STRENGTHEN AND SUSTAIN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES THAT CREATE POSITIVE WELLBEING IN OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Increase and promote youth initiatives.	Youth organisations, Schools	
Inspire youth voice and leadership.	HCC, Schools	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

INITIATIVE 16: FOSTER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY TO STRENGTHEN CAREER PATHWAYS

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Strengthen pathways into growth industries.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce, Schools	
Connect learning with real-world opportunities.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce, Schools	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1

JOIN A GROUP FOR RANGATAHI.

Check out Vibe, Oho Ake, Ignite Sport or one of our city's other fantastic organisations for youth.

2

ATTEND SCHOOL EVENTS. Celebrate student achievements and create connections between the school and wider community.

3

OFFER AN INTERNSHIP. Businesses can provide hands-on training, mentorship and real-world experience to rangatahi.

4

KEEP LEARNING. Learn new skills, build confidence, and meet others at an adult education class.