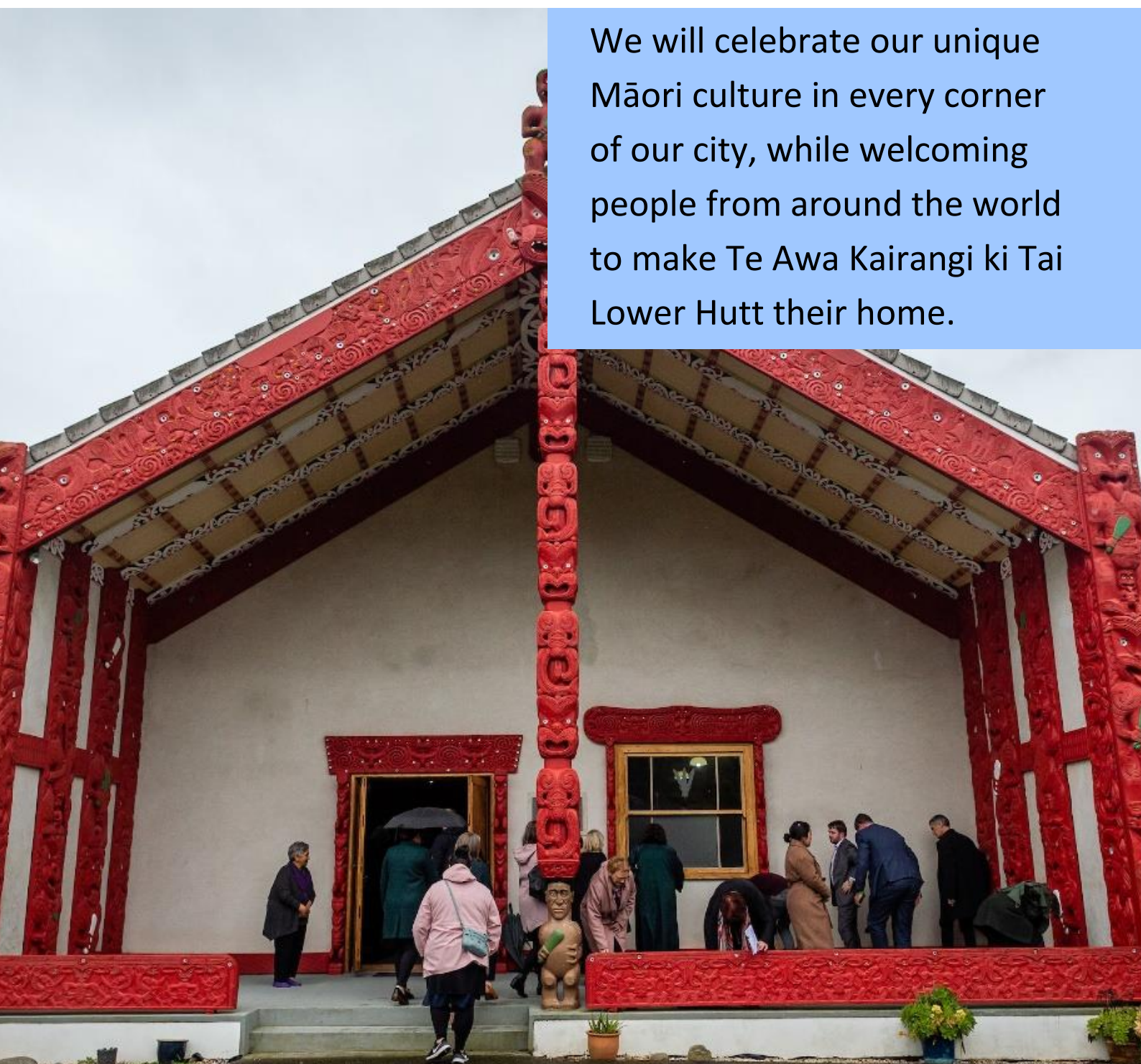


TREASURED HISTORY AND CULTURE

We will celebrate our unique Māori culture in every corner of our city, while welcoming people from around the world to make Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt their home.



IN 2055, TE AWA KAIRANGI KI TAI HONOURS ITS PAST AND CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Te Awa Kairangi – Hutt River, once flowed through a valley cloaked in dense kahikatea forest, winding its way into a vast estuary before reaching Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington Harbour. Over centuries, the area was home to different iwi, including Ngāti Māmoe, Ngāi Tara, Ngāti Ira, Rangitāne, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Rangatahi, Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Tama, and Te Āti Awa.

Nearly 200 years ago, on 22 January 1840, Te Wharepouri Te Kakapi o Te Rangi and Hōniana Te Puni Kōkopu welcomed the settler ship, *the Aurora*, to Pito One (Petone). This became the New Zealand Company’s first settlement in Aotearoa New Zealand. Later that year, Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) was signed, marking a significant moment in our shared history.

Much has changed since then – where there was once a forest and market gardens, now sits a bustling city. Our city’s population has grown to over 113,000 residents, with Māori, European, Pasifika, Asian, African and people from around the world now calling Lower Hutt home.

By understanding our past, we can better appreciate Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt as it is today – deepening our connection and

pride in this place. As we look to the future, our mokopuna will have the opportunity to express their cultures freely and authentically.

We will share the unique story of Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt - ensuring that our tamariki, community members, and visitors understand the deep cultural and historical significance of this land and its people.

Our rich Māori heritage will be celebrated through public art, bilingual signage and the telling of pūrākau (histories), bringing mana whenua narratives to life. Alongside this, we will showcase the city’s growing diversity – affirming our identity as a welcoming and culturally vibrant city where everyone feels valued and connected.

This chapter outlines key initiatives to help realise our vision for honouring and celebrating the history and culture of 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

LOWER HUTT CITY WILL TRACK PROGRESS OF THE FOLLOWING INDICATORS:

INDICATOR	LATEST DATA	TARGET
PERCEPTIONS OF RACISM/DISCRIMINATION IN THE CITY	49% (Quality of Life Survey, 2024)	10% (By 2055)
PERCEIVED ACCEPTANCE OF IDENTITY IN CITY	68% (Quality of Life Survey, 2024)	90% (By 2045)
% OF POPULATION WHO SPEAK TE REO MĀORI	5.1% (2024 Census)	20% (By 2055)

BACKGROUND

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt holds a significant place in Māori historical narrative. According to mana whenua, when the taniwha Ngake broke free from the ancient lake that once covered Wellington Harbour, the tremendous force of Ngake's tail tore through the earth, carving out a great channel that became Te Awa Kairangi – Hutt River. Later, after a fierce battle with a giant wheke (octopus), the great navigator Kupe named the two islands in the harbour after his daughters - Mātiu (Somes Island) and Mākaro (Ward Island).

Over centuries, Māori lived in the densely forested valley, mainly settling along the estuary and coastline. Most of the pā and kāinga up the valley were located close to Te Awa Kairangi – Hutt River or along its main tributaries.

In 1840, our city had the distinction of becoming the first planned settlement of the New Zealand Company, when the ship *Aurora* landed in Pito One (Petone). This marked the founding of the settlement, Britannia that would later grow into Wellington. Although the original plan for 'Port Nicholson' was never realised (due to flooding), the arrival at Lower Hutt remains a foundational moment in New Zealand's colonial history.

On the eve of his death in 1842, respected Te Āti Awa rangatira Te Wharepōuri Te Kakapi o Te Rangi issued his ōhākī (final instructions) to his people **"I muri nei kia pai ki aku taonga Māori, taonga Pākehā, kia tae ake te haruru o tō reo ki ahau i Te Rēinga"** (*After I have gone be good to my Māori people and my European people, let the thunder of your voice reach me in the Spirit Land*). Translated by the late Rīpeka Wharawhara Love in 1953, these words provide a framework for the enhancement of our takiwā (district) in

partnership with one another, urging us to uphold our intergenerational responsibility through sustainable practices that care for both people and the environment — tūpuna driven, mokopuna focused decision-making.

Our early settler history is still visible and celebrated in Pito One, which was established as a hub for industry within the region following the opening of the 1874 rail line to Wellington. It was here that new settler Samuel Parnell founded the '8 hour working day', celebrated first in 1890 as 'Labour Day'. Lower Hutt became a city in 1941, however much of the land was still in bush, farms or market gardens in the early 1940s.

This changed in the 1950's during the forced migration of Māori from rural areas (mainly East Coast) to the city for the purpose of increasing workforce in local factories. New suburbs, including Te Ngaengae (Naenae) and Taitā were developed, with the construction of thousands of new state houses. Our city continued to grow in size and diversity.

Lower Hutt today

The history and legends of mana whenua are based on lands they have occupied over generations and will continue to occupy. Their historical and territorial rights over the land are represented by five iwi entities and two marae:

- Wellington Tenth Trust
- Palmerston North Māori Reserve Trust
- Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa ki Te Upoko o Te Ika a Māui Incorporated
- Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika Trust
- Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Incorporated
- Te Tatau o Te Pō Marae
- Arohanui ki te Tangata (Waiwhetū) Marae

Our city's population has grown to over 115,500 people and is becoming more ethnically diverse. In 2013, 71% of Lower

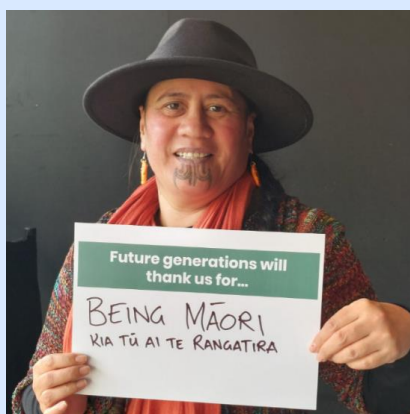
Hutt's population identified as Pākehā/European, and a decade later, the majority ethnic group had dropped to 64% in 2023. One in five people in Lower Hutt (21,000) identify as Māori.

Our Pacific population started settling in Lower Hutt in the 1960s and is well established - totalling just over 13,000 residents in 2023. After Auckland and Porirua, Lower Hutt contains the largest Pacific population in New Zealand, with 16 Pacific

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE LOWER HUTT COMMUNITY

Many people expressed pride in past efforts to establish local marae, and Māori education and services, such as the Waiwhetū Marae, the first Kōhanga Reo in Wainuiomata, and the kura kaupapa movement. Suggestions for improvement included increasing te reo Māori usage, restoring original Māori names, and renaming the city "Big sign saying 'Welcome to Te Awa Kairangi'". There was also support for celebrating Lower Hutt's Māori heritage through public artwork and pūrākau. Many called for a Tiriti-based approach, advocating for Māori voices to be valued, support for Māori wards, and stronger co-governance.

There was a strong desire for cultural diversity to be celebrated. "I want to see a city that reflects the vibrant and diverse makeup of the people who live here." There were calls for a 'mega-cultural hub' and a 'Pacific hub'.



ethnicities living in Lower Hutt, - the majority Samoan (64%), followed by Cook Island Māori, Tongan and Tokelauan.

Lower Hutt's Asian population is the fastest growing ethnic group, and has nearly doubled in ten years, to around 20,000 residents in 2023. Asia was by far the top birthplace for people in Lower Hutt born overseas. The Middle Eastern/Latin American/African population has doubled over the past decade, to around 2,200 residents in 2023.¹

The broader context

2040 will mark 200 years since the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi), which was signed by mana whenua of Te Whanganui-a-Tara (34 rangatira) on 29 April 1840. There were very different perspectives on the first 100 years:

"...one hundred years of progress in this wonderful Dominion...the history of those hundred years is amazing, and one which has never been outshone in any other country." William Polson, MP for Stratford, 1938

"I do not know of any year the Māori people have approached with so much misgiving as this Centennial Year...In retrospect what does the Māori see? Lands gone, the power of chiefs humbled in the dust, Māori culture scattered and broken." Sir Āpirana Ngata, MP for Eastern Māori, 1940.

Māori culture revitalisation has been a significant movement in Aotearoa New Zealand since the mid-20th century, responding to the rapid decline of te reo Māori and traditional practices due to colonisation and pressure for assimilation. From the 1970s onwards, a growing Māori renaissance saw efforts to revive language, arts, and customs.

Key milestones for our city include the establishment of the country's first kōhanga

¹ Figures from Census 2023

reo (Pukeatua Kōhanga Reo) in Wainuiomata in 1982, our city's first kura kaupapa Māori (Māori language school) at Kokiri Marae in 1995, and the recognition of te reo Māori as an official language in 1987, reflecting a commitment to preserving and strengthening Māori identity.

FUTURE FOCUS

This strategy focuses on promoting our unique Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt story – sharing our local historical narratives in schools and throughout the city, so that we know our history and all value the city we call home.

We will honour our Māori heritage through public art, bilingual signage and pūrākau (histories). Lifting knowledge of te reo Māori will contribute to the national goal of Te Taura Whiri i te reo Māori – Māori Language Commission of 1 million speakers by 2040. This will pave a strong bicultural path for our mokopuna and share our unique cultural legacy with international visitors.

We will also showcase Lower Hutt's rich diversity – celebrating the many cultures that make our city vibrant.

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



INITIATIVE 17

PROMOTE OUR UNIQUE TE AWA KAIRANGI KI TAI LOWER HUTT STORY

Tū tama roto, Tū tama waho

To know ourselves, is to know others

By growing our awareness of where we live, we will strengthen our sense of place and value the city we call home. From Māori historical narratives, to early settler history, Pacific migration in the 1960s, and more recent history, we will share the stories of the people, places and events that shaped our city.

Support local cultural and historical narratives in schools

By teaching local history in schools, we pass knowledge to young people, who can in turn gift stories to future generations. Te Āti Awa will continue to support schools in their Te Ao Māori journey and local historical narratives. This cultural education kaupapa includes 'Kura Taiao' supporting tamariki to learn about Māori cultural concepts, 'Kura Ahurea' working with teachers on professional learning and 'Kura Hautū' cultural support for kura leaders.

Create historical signage and interpretation panels

We will explore innovative new approaches to sharing cultural and historical stories, particularly in key locations, such as Te Awa Kairangi Hutt River and the Pito One (Petone) foreshore. Innovative approaches will be explored, such as interpretation panels that celebrate the significance of these sites to mana whenua and the wider community. QR codes and VR (virtual reality) technologies could also enhance the visitor experience. Trails linking significant places could also be

explored. GWRC is placing informative panels detailing local history in regional parks.

Promote guided walks and tours

Guided tours provide a unique visitor experience to promote our local story. Te Wharewaka o Pōneke currently offer Wellington-based walking and waka tours which share stories of Te Whanganui-ā-Tara (Wellington). Future plans include a harbour tour from an electric ferry and a bus tour, providing a wider range of local sites of significance.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Support local cultural and historical narratives in schools - including 'Te Kāhui Kura.'	Te Āti Awa
Tell the stories of key locations, using innovative approaches such as interpretation panels and VR.	Mana Whenua, HCC, GWRC

INITIATIVE 18

CELEBRATE OUR MĀORI HERITAGE THROUGH PUBLIC ART, BILINGUAL SIGNAGE, AND PŪRĀKAU (HISTORIES)

We will celebrate our Māori heritage throughout the city - enhancing cultural visibility and promoting language revitalisation to strengthen Māori identity and cultivate an authentic sense of place.

Increase use of te reo Māori: signage and names

Across the city, we will focus on increasing the use of te reo Māori. Bilingual signage is one way we can achieve this. GWRC will ensure that all regional parks have an official Te reo Māori name and that key signage is upgraded to bilingual standards. We will also promote greater use of our city's Māori name 'Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai', with community suggestions for this name to feature on a 'gateway' sign welcoming people to our city.

Encouraging the use of te reo Māori names for organisations and businesses will also help revitalise the language – following examples such as 'Te Awakairangi Health Network'.

Place name corrections are also an important focus for the future. In 2024, Wellington Tenth's Trust and Palmerston North Māori Reserve Trust proposed to correct the spelling of Petone to Pito One. Other priority place name corrections include Epuni (Te Puni) and Naenae (Te Ngaengae).

Incorporate Māori art and design in public spaces

We will prioritise incorporating Māori art and pūrākau (histories) into public spaces. This includes in schools, such as the carved archway on Hotuwaipara marae at Hutt Valley High School, and facilities such as Te Ngaengae pool with its pou whenua at the

entrance honouring the legendary tupua that formed the Te Awamutu and Waiwhetū river.

Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi – RiverLink and city centre revitalisation will incorporate Māori art and design, with mana whenua working in partnership with HCC, GWRC and Waka Kotahi on this transformational project.

"We must also ensure the vibrancy of te reo Māori and our culture is not just preserved but thrives. Our future lies in cultural revitalisation. We must see our culture in every corner of our city – through public art, bilingual signage, and community engagement - everything."

Kara Puketapu-Dentice, Chief Executive of Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika, Guest Speaker, Lower Hutt City Summit, September 2024

Grow Māori cultural events

We will identify and support opportunities to grow and develop events that reflect Māori culture, including Te Rā o te Raukura and Puanga mā Matariki. These support Māori customary practices and harvesting traditions and provide educational opportunities to engage the community and deepen understanding of Māori culture.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Regional Parks have Te reo Māori name and updating key signage to be bi-lingual.	GWRC, Mana Whenua
Incorporate Māori art and design in public places.	Mana Whenua, HCC, GWRC

INITIATIVE 19

SHOWCASE LOWER HUTT'S DIVERSITY, AS A WELCOMING, CULTURALLY VIBRANT CITY

As Lower Hutt's population becomes increasingly diverse, it is vital that we celebrate the many cultures that contribute to our city's vibrancy. People from varied countries and cultural backgrounds bring invaluable cultural, social and economic benefits to both the city and wider region. Ensuring that everyone feels welcomed, included, and valued is essential to fostering a strong and united community.

Grow events that celebrate cultural diversity

We will support and promote events that celebrate our cultural diversity. These include Hutt Fest which brings together primary, intermediate and secondary schools to celebrate Pasifika heritage through song and dance; MultiFest, Lower Hutt's annual celebration of its ethnic diversity; Hutt Valley Diwali; the Orange Bike Ride Avalon during Dutch Week; and Refugee Day, organised by Lower Hutt-based Changemakers. Affordable venues for large community gatherings are a key consideration (see *Connected Neighbourhoods*).

We could also explore hosting regional events, such as the Samoa mo Samoa Rugby League Festival, Filimalae Kirikiti Tournament, or hosting international gatherings, such as the Tokelau Easter Festival or Te Maeva Nui Festival. Many Pacific communities in Lower Hutt are significant relative to their total global population – including Tokelauan, Cook Island Māori, and Niuean.

Support food, produce and night markets

Cultural food, produce and night markets also provide opportunities for communities to

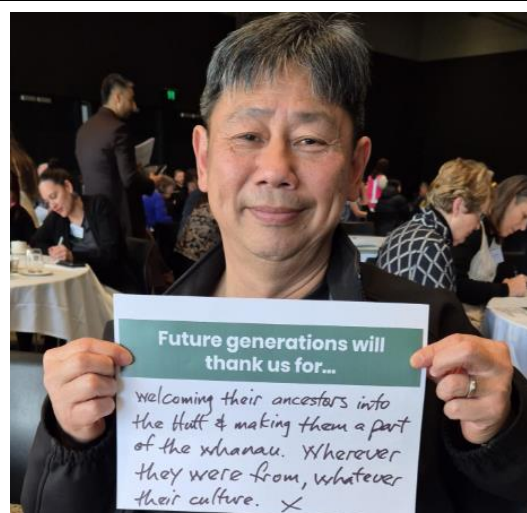
connect, experience different cultures and global cuisine. The continuation of Riverbank Weekend Market is a priority - it features fresh produce and food trucks selling cuisine from around the world, with live music and cultural performances. Other market opportunities will be explored including occasional markets like the Afrika Bazaar.

Share stories of our diverse communities

The Petone Museum, Dowse Art Gallery, community hubs and libraries play a vital role in sharing our history. There were also community requests for a cultural hub, which could be explored in the future.

These places could be used to elevate the visibility of various communities by highlighting the Pacific contributions to our city over many decades, as well as the more recent stories of former refugees who now call this place home. By raising awareness of these histories, legacy leaders, and success stories, we build pride within local communities and foster a greater appreciation for our city's diverse population.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Support and promote events and markets that celebrate cultural diversity.	HCC
Share stories of our diverse communities.	HCC



INITIATIVE 17: PROMOTE OUR UNIQUE TE AWA KAIRANGI KI TAI STORY

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Support local cultural and historical narratives in schools - including 'Te Kāhui Kura.'	Te Āti Awa	Ongoing
Tell the stories of key locations, using innovative approaches such as interpretation panels and VR.	Mana Whenua, HCC, GWRC	Proposed
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

INITIATIVE 18: CELEBRATE OUR MĀORI HERITAGE THROUGH PUBLIC ART, BILINGUAL SIGNAGE AND PŪRAKAU (HISTORIES)

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Regional Parks have Te reo Māori name and updating key signage to be bi-lingual.	GWRC, Mana Whenua	Planned
Incorporate Māori art and design in public places.	Mana Whenua, HCC, GWRC	Proposed
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

INITIATIVE 19: SHOWCASE LOWER HUTT'S DIVERSITY, AS A WELCOMING, CULTURALLY VIBRANT CITY

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Support and promote events and markets that celebrate cultural diversity.	HCC	
Share stories of our diverse communities.	HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1

LEARN ABOUT OUR CITY'S HISTORY.

Ask tamariki about the cultural and historical narratives they learn at school.

2

USE LOCAL MĀORI NAMES. Find out the original te reo Māori spelling and pronunciation of your street or suburb.

3

FIND WAYS TO CELEBRATE AND PROMOTE YOUR OWN CULTURE AND HERITAGE. Bring communities together and promote cultural diversity in the Hutt.

4

ATTEND CULTURAL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS. Join Matariki or Diwali celebrations, attend HuttFest or the Afrika Bizarre.