

CLIMATE-READY CITY

Lower Hutt will reduce emissions to net zero and accelerate adaptation actions to keep people safe and minimise damage for current and future generations.



IN 2055, OUR CITY HAS REACHED NET ZERO EMISSIONS AND IS PREPARED FOR A CHANGING CLIMATE

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt is at the forefront of the climate crisis. As a coastal city built on a floodplain with a major faultline, our exposure to natural hazards is high — and climate change is intensifying these risks. The coastal land around Lower Hutt is also sinking, which is effectively doubling the rate of sea-level rise in parts of the city like Petone, Seaview and Lowry Bay.

While our city has long lived with the threat of flooding and earthquakes, climate change is bringing new challenges. The impacts of climate change touches all aspects of our lives - housing, infrastructure, insurance, transport, health, the economy, and our sense of security. Preparing for these changes, and reducing our contribution to them, is one of the defining challenges of the next 30 years.

Global warming is primarily driven by human activity — the release of greenhouse gases (GHG), into the atmosphere. The science is clear: we need to drastically cut emissions to limit warming.

Reducing these emissions requires bold action across the city — changing the way we move around, shifting to renewable energy, and reducing waste. As outlined in *Smart Infrastructure*, we are developing a connected transport network that makes it easy and safe to bike, walk, scooter, bus or train. We will

increase local solar and other renewable energy sources, and drive community and business opportunities that reduce emissions, avoid and minimise waste.

At the same time, we will accelerate adaptation efforts — including dynamic adaptive planning, restricting development in areas of high risk, and taking action to reduce the risk of flooding. We will work with communities to plan for hard decisions such as retreat over the long term. We will apply best practice stormwater management, using both nature-based and hard infrastructure solutions, and will strengthen community preparedness, so that we can all get through natural disasters and recover quickly.

This chapter highlights initiatives that will help realise our vision for Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt by 2055. It concludes with “What You Can Do,” providing 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
GROSS GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS	514,662 tCO ₂ e 2024	Net zero by 2050

BACKGROUND

If the world does not rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we will lock in a temperature rise of 1.5°C, and are likely to hit 2°C. Global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions continue to rise despite the Paris Agreement and national reduction pledges.

New Zealand has set a national target of net zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050, and a reduction in methane emissions of 24-47% by the same year. These targets also apply to Lower Hutt.

Lower Hutt greenhouse gas emissions

In 2021/22, gross emissions in Lower Hutt were 475,520 tCO₂e, with net emissions (after carbon sequestration - carbon stored in plants and forests) sitting at 409,435 tCO₂e. Total gross emissions increased to 514,662 tCO₂e in FY24.¹

The majority of these emissions come from transport – especially petrol and diesel vehicles on our roads. Stationary energy, including electricity and natural gas used in homes and businesses, is the second-largest contributor. Waste emissions, especially from landfill methane, are also significant.

Escalating climate impacts

We are already experiencing more frequent and more severe weather events. In May 2025, a storm caused widespread surface flooding on Petone Esplanade, slips in Ferry Road, and road closures into Eastbourne and Wainuiomata. These events will increasingly disrupt daily life, damage infrastructure, and place strain on emergency services.

Sea-level rise is a major long-term threat. Global sea levels have already risen by around 20cm since 1900, and the pace is accelerating.

In our city, land subsidence is compounding this rise – with Petone (Pito One), Seaview and Lowry Bay sinking by up to 3.8mm per year.

As water tables rise and storm surges intensify, critical infrastructure will be under

The Wellington Regional Climate Change Impact Assessment Report projects that 4,690 buildings in Lower Hutt (mainly in Petone) are at risk of being impacted by a major coastal flood event occurring at the end of the century (medium-emissions scenario with 0.9m sea level rise).

threat. Roads like Marine Drive and Port Road will become increasingly inundated, and the Waiwhetū aquifer – a vital source of drinking water for the Wellington region - will be at risk of saltwater intrusion. Flooding and groundwater also pose a growing risk to building foundations and pipes.

The risk of insurance retreat (where properties become too risky to insure) is already emerging in some areas. A Deep South Challenge study found that some Wellington properties could face partial insurance retreat by 2030, and full retreat by 2040.² These risks affect not only homes, but commercial and industrial land, particularly in Petone (Pito One) and Seaview.

The effects of climate change are not evenly distributed. Low-income communities, renters, elderly residents, and people with disabilities are likely to be disproportionately affected. Moerā, for example, is a low-socioeconomic suburb at significant risk of flooding. Inequities in housing, insurance, and mobility mean that some residents may face greater hardship and fewer options in the

¹ AECOM, Greater Wellington Region GHG Emissions Inventory 2024

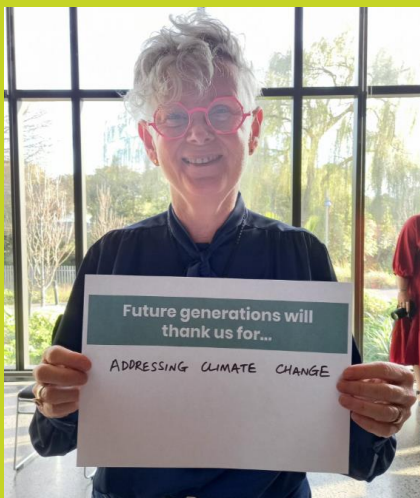
² [Deep South Challenge, Insurance Retreat](#)

face of climate shocks. It is critical that our response to climate change is equitable.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE LOWER HUTT COMMUNITY

There was hope for a future *“community that is conscious of climate change and what can be done to adapt and mitigate.”* Suggestions for how to reduce emissions included more local solar power production *“solar panels everywhere”* and more wind power. Many people supported cycleways and improving public transport. Others expressed hope for future *“closed loop waste management”*, effective recycling and composting.

Concerns were raised about the impacts of climate change, particularly sea level rise affecting areas like Petone and Eastbourne, as well as increased flooding, droughts, and water shortages. Building resilience was seen as essential. Proposed measures included adopting ‘sponge city’ designs to manage water, requiring land and risk assessments for developments, and increasing local food production and renewable energy generation to enhance community resilience.



FUTURE FOCUS

Lower Hutt is already taking steps to reduce emissions and planning and investing in resilience. We need to continue this momentum — and urgently accelerate it.

Reducing emissions will require bold action across the city – improving public and active transport options, shifting to renewable

energy, increasing resource recovery and reducing waste, and retrofitting buildings.

We must embed climate risk into infrastructure planning, building materials and design, land use regulation, and emergency preparedness. We will explore nature-based solutions to manage water, invest in community education, and ensure local emergency hubs are resourced and inclusive. And we must actively engage our communities in shaping our response.



Our climate-ready city goal supports SDGs for affordable and clean energy and responsible consumption and production. It also works towards inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities, and urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



INITIATIVE 24

INCREASE SOLAR GENERATION AND OTHER LOCAL RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

To meet the 2050 zero emissions goal, Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt needs to radically change the way we power our homes, buildings and transport system. This requires switching to electricity, and moving away from fossil fuels (eg. petrol, diesel and gas). With about 80-85% of our national grid powered by clean sources like hydro and wind, going electric can make a big impact on our city's greenhouse gas emissions. As Lower Hutt decarbonises and electrifies, demand for clean, reliable electricity will grow. Taking action now to electrify and increase solar generation will reduce emissions and lower long-term energy costs.

Increase electrification

Across our city, we will 'go electric' – switching to electricity for our cars, heating and businesses. Many of our residents still rely on fossil fuels like gas for cooking and heating our homes and businesses, and petrol for our cars. Switching to all-electric appliances and EV vehicles will cut emissions and help cut energy costs. HCC will continue to reduce emissions from energy used at facilities – mainly changing natural gas heating to lower carbon options, and aims to switch the vehicle fleet to 100% EVs by 2030 (70% as of December 2024). Our city is also investing in EV charging stations to support the growing demand for electric vehicles.

Install solar systems

Lower Hutt has the opportunity to lead in distributed solar energy—turning rooftops, public buildings and underutilised land into local energy generators. We will encourage the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV)

systems across businesses, schools, and homes. Building on examples such as solar in Maungaraki and Naenae schools. Solar projects may be explored for new Council builds and major upgrades.

To boost resilience, we will explore installation of solar and battery backups for critical facilities such as emergency hubs and marae to maintain power during extreme weather events.

Explore other sources of renewable energy

Other opportunities to be explored include wind, biomass, waste-to-energy projects, building on examples such as local business Hot Lime Labs prototype capture system, which converts wood waste biomass into clean CO₂ for commercial greenhouses.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Increase electrification	All, HCC
Encourage public and private uptake of solar.	All

INITIATIVE 25

DRIVE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES THAT REDUCE EMISSIONS AND MINIMISE WASTE

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt will support local businesses, organisations and communities to lead climate action—reducing emissions and waste while creating economic opportunity. We will support innovation, increase uptake of funding and resources, and showcase local success stories. Whether it's electrifying transport fleets, installing solar panels, or designing out waste—we will drive positive change across every part of our city.

Embed sustainable practices

Lower Hutt businesses and organisations will be supported to reduce emissions and adopt low-waste practices. More pathways will be added for reuse and recycling of construction and demolition materials to avoid disposal to landfill. We will encourage use of funding tools such as the Hutt City Council's Low Carbon Acceleration Fund.

Transition to the circular economy and reduce waste to landfill

Lower Hutt is already home to businesses like Pact Group (New Zealand's only PET recycling plant), Nature Pac (compostable packaging), and Macaulay Metals (scrap metal recovery) that support the diversion of resources from landfill. We will explore opportunities to strengthen materials recovery systems, and promote low-waste retail and design. We aim to support households to divert organic food and green organic materials from landfill through kerbside collection.

Grow low-carbon business opportunities

The transition to a low-carbon economy presents new opportunities. We will promote businesses that deliver products and services

which reduce emissions—such as solar installers, energy-efficient designers, clean tech startups, and providers of sustainable packaging and transport solutions. Notable examples in Lower Hutt include Noho, which creates furniture from recycled plastics, and Bspkl, a hydrogen startup pioneering clean energy manufacturing.

Showcase success and share learnings

We will highlight local businesses and organisations that are reducing emissions and waste—sharing their stories through case studies, events and awards. By showcasing what is possible, we aim to inspire others and strengthen our city's reputation as a leader in sustainability. We will also foster networks of like-minded organisations to share insights and collaborate on solutions.

Support community climate action

Community groups, schools, social enterprises and marae are key partners in our transition. From community composting to low-waste food systems, we will provide support and recognition for locally led initiatives. We will help scale community climate solutions and encourage new ideas through funding, partnerships and collaborative projects.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Support community and business climate initiatives and zero-waste programmes and share local success stories.	HCC
Support business and community transition to EVs, energy efficiency and sustainable practices.	HCC

INITIATIVE 26

ACCELERATE ADAPTATION ACTIONS TO PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS FROM THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

As climate impacts intensify—flooding, sea-level rise, and extreme weather—we must respond with urgency. By taking a proactive approach, we can avoid costly damage, protect lives and livelihoods, and maintain confidence in the future of our city.

Share climate knowledge and solutions

There will be a focus on producing hazard information that is easy to understand and focused on solutions. We will continue to use the latest science and climate projections to map flood zones, sea-level rise and vertical land movement. We will also work to fill critical data gaps, such as the timing of groundwater rise, and impact of saltwater intrusion. Latest information could be conveyed through an online adaptation portal, which may include interactive maps, detailed risk information, data on historical events, and adaptation options.

Accelerate adaptation planning

Lower Hutt may need to prepare a long-term adaptation plan that outlines pathways for managing climate risk across our city—focusing on areas most exposed to sea-level rise and flooding. This may use the Dynamic Adaptive Policy Pathways (DAPP) approach, to identify signals, triggers and actions to adapt over time – including scenario planning for unexpected acceleration of climate change impacts. It will prioritise areas such as Pito One (Petone), Seaview, Moerā, Lowry Bay and Alicetown, where land subsidence and rising seas are compounding risk.

Integrate risk into land use and development

We will ensure land use planning actively manages natural hazard risk. This includes implementing hazard overlays and development controls in our proposed District Plan, which guides where and how we build. In high-hazard areas, new dwellings may require resource consent, or be restricted altogether. Less sensitive activities—like garages or parking areas—may still be allowed. These provisions help avoid future damage and give residents greater certainty over time.

Invest in flood protection infrastructure

We will continue to deliver major flood protection upgrades, including raising stop banks and widening the river channel to accommodate more frequent and intense flooding. Targeted surveillance of ‘at risk’ locations and early warning systems would help residents assess risk and make decisions. We will also invest in complementary infrastructure across the city—such as stormwater upgrades, pump stations and overland flow path management.

Ensure equity and inclusion in adaptation

Some communities are more exposed and have fewer resources to adapt. We will ensure that adaptation planning takes account of equity—engaging with low-income households, older adults, and people with disabilities, who may face higher barriers to action.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Accelerate adaptation planning.	HCC, GWRC
Deliver flood risk reduction.	HCC, GWRC

INITIATIVE 27

DEVELOP NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS ACROSS THE CITY TO MANAGE EXCESS WATER

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt will work to reduce the risk and impacts of flooding by restoring natural systems that absorb, store and slow water across our city. By integrating nature-based solutions—such as wetlands, raingardens, swales and permeable surfaces—we can reduce flood damage, improve water quality, support biodiversity, and create attractive public spaces. Nature-based infrastructure works alongside engineered assets to improve urban resilience.

Evaluate nature based options

We will deliver robust, dynamic assessments of nature based options, and consider wider impacts (on the ecosystem, economy, society) to avoid risks of maladaptation and determine whether nature based solutions are the most appropriate option. There will be a focus on developing a regionally consistent approach to nature-based solutions.

Create multi-purpose flood storage

We will explore opportunities to integrate open spaces—such as parks, playing fields and golf courses—to store stormwater during extreme rain events. These spaces can be designed for dual use: dry and functional most of the time, and temporarily holding floodwaters when needed. Examples include Kaitaki Greenslade Reserve in Auckland, where a sports field was reshaped to hold the equivalent of six Olympic swimming pools of floodwater, and wetlands in Christchurch's Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor.

Expand urban green infrastructure

Urban surfaces like concrete and asphalt cause rainwater to run off rapidly—

contributing to flooding. By increasing permeable surfaces and installing green infrastructure like raingardens, swales and green roofs, we can reduce runoff and allow water to soak into the ground. We will support Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles in public and private developments.

Design infrastructure for climate adaptation

We will seek to incorporate nature-based approaches into major projects, including roading upgrades, community facility design, and stormwater infrastructure. This includes integrating urban green infrastructure into Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi. New subdivisions and infill developments will increasingly be required to manage their own stormwater on-site. We will also encourage developers to integrate features that help manage future flood risk.

Support communities to take action

We will work with schools, residents, and local organisations to promote nature-based stormwater management. This will show how small-scale changes—like planting native vegetation, or unblocking overland flow paths—can make a big difference. Initiatives like “Adopt a Drain” will help build community ownership of local drainage systems.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Identify and prioritise sites for green infrastructure and flood storage.	HCC, GWRC
Support community-led projects and education on stormwater management.	Wellington Water, HCC, GWRC, Mana Whenua

INITIATIVE 28

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS PREPAREDNESS FOR NATURAL DISASTERS

We will ensure all communities, organisations and businesses are ready to respond to natural disasters and recover quickly. As a city exposed to multiple natural hazards—being prepared is essential.

Foster a culture of preparedness

We will raise awareness and encourage action across schools, businesses, marae, and households—so that everyone understands their risks and knows how to prepare. We will support the development of emergency response plans, household kits, evacuation routes and localised response networks. Public campaigns will highlight simple, high-impact actions—like storing water, learning first aid, and checking insurance coverage.

Recognise and strengthen Māori-led response

Mana whenua and local marae are important partners in building community resilience and emergency response, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic when Kōkiri Marae provided thousands of food parcels. We will integrate Māori-led responses into citywide emergency management, and work with marae to ensure they are equipped as emergency hubs.

Equip and connect emergency hubs

It is vital that Lower Hutt's emergency hubs—such as marae, schools, and community centres—are resourced and connected. These locations can act as lifelines during emergencies, providing shelter, communication, power and first response. We will work to improve hub resiliency with backup power, emergency kits,

communications equipment and clear signage.

Strengthen local volunteers

Community response is often the first and most effective form of help in a disaster. We will expand Lower Hutt's trained volunteer base, ensuring it reflects the diversity of our communities. We will work to grow the number of trained members in the NZ Response Team, and explore partnerships with groups like LANDSAR and Taskforce Kiwi.

Promote business continuity planning

We will promote continuity planning to ensure that businesses can continue operating and supporting their communities after a shock event. Special attention will be paid to lifeline utilities, food suppliers, health providers, and other essential services that support citywide resilience.

Make preparedness accessible and inclusive

We will ensure our approach to preparedness is inclusive—taking into account the needs of people with disabilities, those with limited English, older adults, and low-income households. We will translate resources, and use visual and digital tools (such as mobile apps, VR simulations, and community games).

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Deliver citywide awareness campaigns for households and workplaces.	HCC
Support and equip local emergency hubs with power, kits and comms and expand trained volunteer networks.	HCC, Marae

INITIATIVE 24: INCREASE SOLAR GENERATION AND OTHER LOCAL RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES		
STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Increase electrification.	All, HCC	
Support public and private uptake of solar.	All	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
% of total city electricity use from local renewables		Annual increase

INITIATIVE 25: DRIVE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES THAT REDUCE EMISSIONS AND MINIMISE WASTE		
STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Support community and business climate initiatives and zero-waste programmes and share local success stories.	HCC	
Support business and community transition to EVs, energy efficiency and sustainable practices.	HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
% of vehicles that are electric.		Annual increase

INITIATIVE 26: ACCELERATE ADAPTATION EFFORTS TO PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS FROM THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE		
STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Accelerate adaptation planning for high-risk areas.	HCC, GWRC	
Deliver flood risk reduction.	GWRC, HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Number of buildings protected by major flood infrastructure upgrades.	~3,000 homes, 600 businesses	Delivered by 2030

INITIATIVE 27: DEVELOP NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS ACROSS THE CITY TO MANAGE EXCESS STORM WATER		
STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Evaluate nature-based options, then develop flood storage and green infrastructure.	HCC, GWRC	
Support community-led projects and education on stormwater management.	Wellington Water, HCC, GWRC, Mana Whenua	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Number of new green infrastructure installations per year Or Area of public land with nature-based stormwater treatment		

INITIATIVE 28: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS PREPAREDNESS FOR NATURAL DISASTERS		
STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Deliver citywide awareness campaigns for households and workplaces.	HCC	
Support and equip local emergency hubs with power, kits and comms and expand trained volunteer networks.	HCC, Marae	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Number of trained NZRT volunteers based in Lower Hutt.	25 (2024)	50+ by 2028

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1

USE LESS ENERGY OR MAKE YOUR OWN. Improve insulation, electrify your home. If you're able, install solar panels.

2

SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS. Look for businesses that are reducing waste, using renewable energy, or taking action to reduce emissions.

3

ADOPT A DRAIN. Help reduce flood risk by keeping nearby stormwater drains free of leaves and rubbish.

4

GET READY TO GET THROUGH. Create a household or workplace emergency plan, store water, have a grab-and-go bag. Encourage your whānau to prepare too.

CONNECTED NEIGHBOURHOODS

We will provide access to warm, affordable homes in welcoming neighbourhoods.



IN 2055, RESIDENTS ENJOY WARM, AFFORDABLE HOMES IN CONNECTED NEIGHBOURHOODS.

Our people are the heart of our city, and neighbourhoods are the foundation of community life. From Pito One (Petone) and Wainuiomata to Taitā and Stokes Valley, each suburb has its own story, history and character.

Our vision for 2055 is that residents live in safe, welcoming neighbourhoods that foster stability, connection and a strong sense of community.

Our city is changing and faces challenges. As our population ages, more seniors are living alone. Young people are spending more time on screens and less time socialising. While housing construction has surged ahead in recent years, Lower Hutt is still rated ‘severely unaffordable.’ Too many households live in damp, cold, overcrowded homes.

We hope for a future where everyone has access to a wide choice of warm, dry and affordable homes. To achieve this, we will work to increase the supply of affordable housing and improve housing quality and warmth.

Relationships underpin resilient, supportive, collaborative and happy communities. We will foster opportunities for people of all ages and

cultures to connect, including through sport, recreation, arts and cultural activities.

We will also work to ensure that people have all they need to thrive within their own neighbourhood, including access to quality green spaces, public transport, shops and schools.

This chapter outlines key initiatives to help realise our vision for connected neighbourhoods 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
SENSE OF COMMUNITY EXPERIENCED	43% Quality of Life Survey, 2024	INCREASE
RENT AFFORDABILITY (average weekly rent as % of household income)	20.8% Infometrics, March 2025	DECREASE
CRIME RATE (criminal proceedings per 10,000 residents)	206 Per 10,000 residents (Year to March 2025)	DECREASE

BACKGROUND

Our city has a wide variety of places which bring our communities together.

Marae

The eight marae within our city are the heart of our Māori community. Marae such as Waiwhetū have their own kōhanga reo, ancestral urupā, medical and cultural centres, sports association and radio station.

Community-owned assets

Across the city, there are many community-owned assets, such as Te Umiumiga a Tokelau Hutt Valley (Tokelau community centre) and St David's Multicultural Church, which were funded and built by the Pacific community or congregation.

Council facilities

Our city includes a wide range of Council buildings and spaces for communities. Lower Hutt's libraries and hubs welcomed over 2 million visitors last year, and hosted thousands of activities including creative workshops, digital literacy programmes and cultural events.

Reserves and natural environment

Lower Hutt contains 2,781 hectares of reserves, including parks, walkways, coastal edge and river margins. Our city's walking/biking trails are enjoyed by tens of thousands of people. Some trails connect with the wider region, such as the Remutaka Cycle Trail, which starts and finishes here.

Sports grounds and facilities

Lower Hutt is recognised for its quality sports grounds and facilities, including four golf clubs plus a driving range, Fraser Park and Hutt Indoor Sports. Many of our schools also have excellent grounds and sports facilities. These

venues play an important role in both recreational and competitive sports.

Arts

Our city is home to both amateur and renowned painters, carvers, writers, musicians, dancers, actors and other creators of visual and performing arts. Places like the Dowse Art Museum, Hutt Art Society, Lower Hutt Events Centre, and the Hutt Repertory Theatre, provide venues to experience arts in our city.

Religious worship

Communities also come together for religious worship, with churches, Buddhist temples and an Islamic Centre located here. Our people affiliate with Christianity (34%), Hinduism (5%), Buddhism (1%), Islam (1%) and Māori religions, beliefs and philosophies (1%).

The broader context

Our city's population is projected to reach around 149,000 by 2053. As our city grows, we need to ensure that we're planning for more people – with suitable houses, infrastructure (like pipes and roads), public transport connections, amenities, and green spaces.

To accommodate a growing population, housing construction has surged ahead across the city. Beginning in the late 2010s, Lower Hutt implemented widespread zoning changes to enable medium- and high-density housing (apartments and townhouses) in existing residential areas. Over the ten years prior to the medium density housing change, Lower Hutt accounted for only 13% of new dwelling consents across the Wellington region. Since upzoning became operational,

the city has accounted for 36% of region-wide consents.¹

Lower Hutt has attracted new residents through comparatively more affordable housing costs than Wellington city. However, average weekly rent has increased 25% in five years. Affordable housing typically requires costs below a third of average household income. In Lower Hutt, housing is rated at 5.5, which is ‘severely unaffordable’.² The number of households seeking social housing has grown steadily, which indicates that an increasing number of households cannot afford market rents.

FUTURE FOCUS

We will increase the supply of affordable housing and improve housing quality and warmth. We will foster opportunities for people to connect, including through sport, recreation, arts, as well as events. Together, we will also partner for safer streets and attractive suburbs, with everyday services within easy reach.

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

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE LOWER HUTT COMMUNITY

People expressed pride in their city. There is a strong desire for neighbourhoods where cultural diversity is celebrated, and residents—regardless of age, background, or ability—feel valued and connected. Concerns were raised about social divides, homelessness, isolation, and rising housing costs. Suggestions included intergenerational living, youth-friendly spaces, and accessible environments for older adults. Safe outdoor areas, mental health support, and vibrant public spaces were seen as essential to helping residents thrive locally, alongside access to green spaces, transport, digital infrastructure, and educational opportunities.



Our goal to achieve flourishing neighbourhoods supports SDGs to end poverty, ensure healthy lives and promote well-being, and reduce inequalities.



¹ Matthew Maltman and Ryan Greenaway-McGrevy, “Going it alone: The impact of upzoning on housing construction in Lower Hutt, in *Journal of Housing Economics*, March 2025

² Infometrics, 2024 (Census 2023).

INITIATIVE: 1

BRING PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND CULTURES TOGETHER TO CONNECT AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Strong neighbourhoods are built on trust, connection, and shared experiences. When people come together – whether at a local festival, community garden or library – they build networks that support belonging, resilience and wellbeing. We will create spaces and opportunities for all ages, cultures, and communities to connect.

Grow events in the city

Events bring people together, celebrate who we are, and reflect the diversity and creativity of our community. They also bring wider benefits – supporting local businesses, attracting visitors, and boosting our city's profile. We will collaboratively develop a calendar of events for our city and commit to funding regular priority events, such as Matariki Puanga. Grass-roots activities will be supported through toolkits and guidance, marketing, and opportunities for funding.

Activate local spaces

Public spaces – streets, libraries, parks and community hubs – will be activated with arts, markets, play and pop-up events that encourage people to meet and interact. Activation in the city centre will be a priority, building on events such as *Sounds by the Awa* outdoor concert. We will make use of our city's excellent outdoor and green spaces, including relocating Riverbank Market to Dowse Square and the surrounding Civic Precinct from 2026.



Increase utilisation of community facilities

Community facilities provide a vital role in bringing people together. We will increase utilisation of public spaces such as community hubs, that can be used for cultural events, workshops and other activities. We will make these facilities accessible to people with disabilities, and affordable for wide community use.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Grow events in the city.	HCC
Increase utilisation of community facilities.	HCC

INITIATIVE 2:

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE PARTICIPATION IN SPORT, RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Participation in sport, recreation, arts and culture brings people together, strengthens identity, and contributes to physical and mental wellbeing. Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt has produced outstanding sportspeople and artists, and offers excellent facilities. We will ensure that people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can take part in activities.

Create positive experiences for participants

By making activities inclusive and accessible, we will enable more people to participate. This includes ensuring that facilities like pools, arts venues and community hubs are welcoming, safe and affordable. We will encourage a participant-centred approach, which takes diverse needs into account. For example, ethnic community suggestions for women-only swimming times at pools, and Pacific community ideas for hosting traditional games and festivals such as the Samoa mo Samoa Rugby League Festival.

Optimise sports facilities and events

We will make the most of our city's excellent sports facilities – such as Fraser Park, Hutt Indoor Sports, and Te Ngaengae Pool and Fitness Centre, and opportunities to connect with wider Hutt Valley facilities such as the New Zealand Campus of Innovation and Sport in Upper Hutt. We will grow the number and scale of local sports tournaments, following examples like the NZ Junior Girls Rugby Festival, which brought 65 teams to Fraser Park from across Aotearoa in 2025. These events lift the visibility of our city as a sports destination.

Support art, culture and creative expression

Lower Hutt has an active arts scene - from the Dowse Art Museum to grassroots community theatre, music and dance. We will support opportunities for people to engage in arts and cultural activities, including exhibitions, performances and community-led creative initiatives. Arts and culture are central to celebrating our diversity and identity, and we will support events that tell our stories (see *Treasured History and Culture*).

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Create positive experiences for participants.	All
Optimise sports facilities and events.	

INITIATIVE 3:

ENSURE EVERY SUBURB IN LOWER HUTT IS AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE, WITH EASY ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL AMENITIES AND SERVICES

Every suburb should be a place where residents feel proud to live, with safe streets, green spaces, and everyday services within easy reach. Attractive and well-serviced neighbourhoods help strengthen community identity, reduce travel costs, and ensures that everyone has the same opportunities to enjoy quality local amenities.

Partner for safer streets

Police, Council, iwi, schools, community organisations and residents all have a role in creating environments where people feel secure. From improving lighting and pedestrian crossings, to supporting neighbourhood groups and youth engagement programmes, these partnerships help build trust. Police will continue to work closely with local communities to prevent crime, and help create an environment where people can move safely around their suburbs.

Improve access to essential services

We will ensure that residents can reach schools, health services, shops and public transport easily. Investment will focus on better local public transport connections and safe walking and cycling routes (see *Smart Infrastructure*).

Enhance parks and outdoor spaces

Well-designed outdoor spaces encourage people to be active, social and connected. We will continue to upgrade neighbourhood parks, play areas and open spaces to make them more inclusive and enjoyable for families, young people, older residents and

people with disabilities (see *Healthy Communities* and *Restored Taiao*).

Support vibrant local centres

From Petone (Pito One) and Wainuiomata to Taitā and Stokes Valley, each suburban centre has its own history, character and mix of amenities. We will prioritise projects that make these centres more inviting – by improving streetscapes and reflecting its unique character.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Partner for safer streets.	Police, HCC, Schools
Support vibrant local centres.	HCC, Community

INITIATIVE 4:

ADVANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF WARM, AFFORDABLE HOMES.

Having a warm and affordable home is fundamental to wellbeing. Yet high housing costs are putting pressure on families and locking many out of home ownership. By investing in quality housing development and renewal, we will ensure that all residents have access to warm, dry and affordable housing.

Increase affordable housing supply

Kāinga Ora, Urban Plus, iwi and the private sector will be encouraged to deliver new affordable homes in areas planned for future residential growth (central and northern valley floor). Higher density housing near transport hubs, town centres and employment centres will reduce commuting and make use of existing infrastructure. Renewal of older social housing stock will also provide more modern, energy-efficient homes.

Support Māori and Pacific housing aspirations

We will support iwi and Pacific-led housing initiatives, including enabling multi-generational living. This will build on initiatives such as Takai Here Tāngata, an innovative partnership between Kahungunu Whānau Services, Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa, Hutt City Council and Urban Plus. In 2022, the partnership delivered 19 new, fully furnished homes at Te Ara o Takapū, Taitā.

Improve housing quality and warmth

Quality housing must be warm, dry, and energy efficient. We will encourage upgrades to insulation, heating, and ventilation – especially in older homes. Programmes that support retrofitting, solar installation and sustainable design will help reduce energy bills and improve health outcomes for residents.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Increase affordable housing supply, including for Māori and Pacific communities.	HCC, Urban Plus, Developers, Iwi
Improve housing quality and warmth, - supporting retrofits and upgrades.	

"This is significant for our people and we want to do more."

Chair of Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa,
Kura Moeahu.

INITIATIVE 1: BRING PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND CULTURES TOGETHER TO CONNECT AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Grow events in the city.	HCC	
Increase utilisation of community facilities.	HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Sense of Community experienced	43% Quality of Life, 2024	Increase

INITIATIVE 2: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE PARTICIPATION IN SPORT, RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Create positive experiences for participants.	All	
Optimise sports facilities and events.		
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

INITIATIVE 3: ENSURE EVERY SUBURB IS AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE, WITH EASY ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL AMENITIES AND SERVICES

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Partner for safer streets.	Police, HCC, Schools	
Support vibrant local centres.	HCC, Community	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Crime rate (criminal proceedings per 10,000 residents)	206 Per 10,000 residents (Year to March 2025)	Decrease

INITIATIVE 4: ADVANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF WARM, AFFORDABLE HOMES

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Increase affordable housing supply, including for Māori and Pacific communities.	HCC, Urban Plus, Developers, Iwi	Ongoing
Improve housing quality and warmth, - supporting retrofits and upgrades.	HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Rent affordability (average weekly rent as % of household income)	20.8% Infometrics, March 2025	Decrease

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1

ORGANISE A NEIGHBOURHOOD GATHERING. Bring neighbours together for a street BBQ or shared kai.

2

CREATE A WARMER, DRYER HOME. Stop draughts, close curtains in the evening, insulate, and air your home regularly.


3

VOLUNTEER YOUR SKILLS. Coach a sports team or help organise a community event.

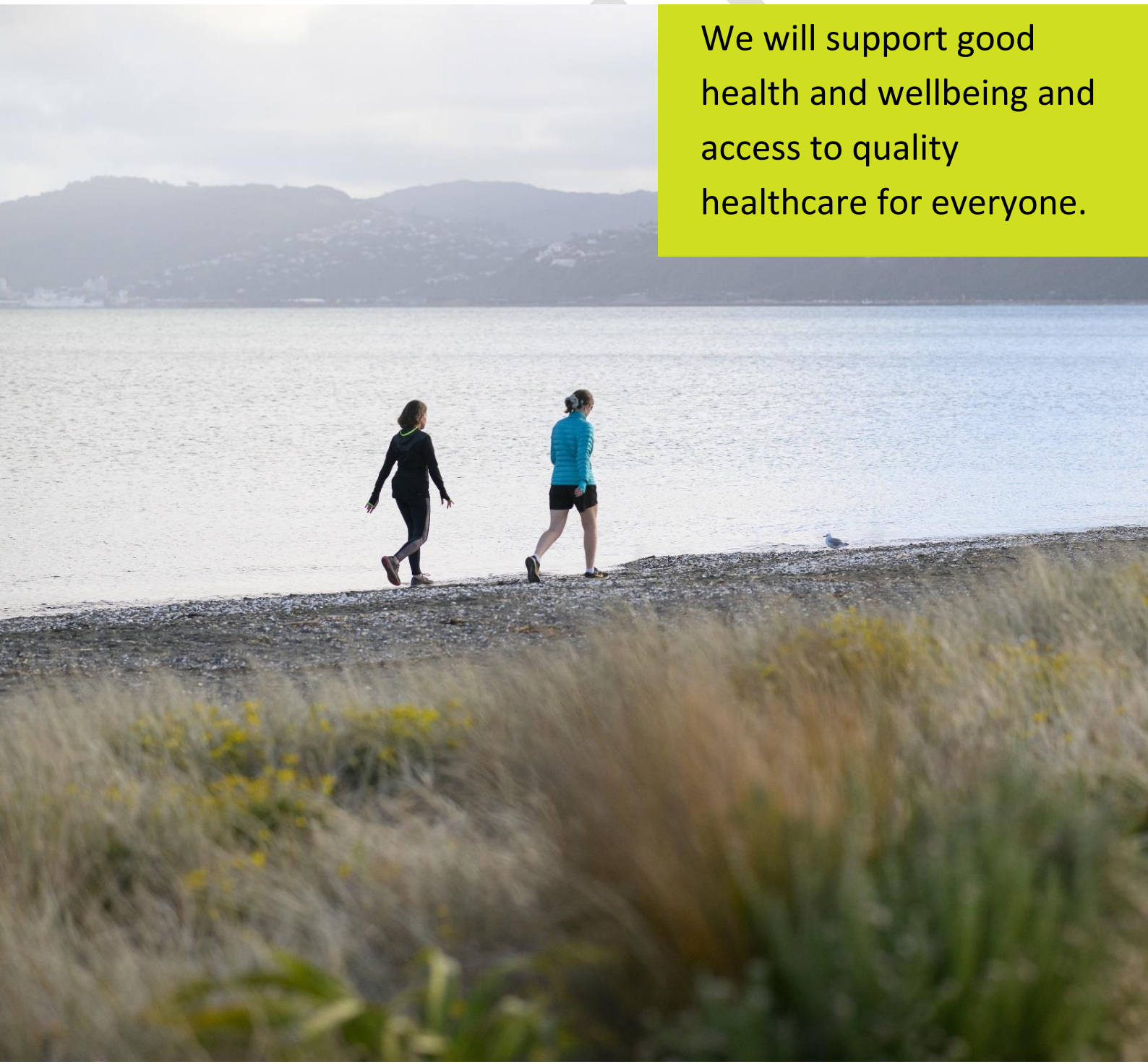
4

CHECK ON OLDER NEIGHBOURS. A simple visit, or offering to help with groceries can make a big difference.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



We will support good health and wellbeing and access to quality healthcare for everyone.



IN 2055, PEOPLE ENJOY GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt has 6,700 dedicated people working in health care and social assistance. Our city is home to Hutt Hospital, GP practices, pharmacies, kaupapa Māori providers, laboratory and community organisations.

Good health and wellbeing is shaped not only by the healthcare system, but by the places we live, the connections we share, the food we eat, and the opportunities we have to be active, safe and supported.

Our community can make a difference – as demonstrated by Wainuiomata youth who led a ban on smoking in cars, and Kōkiri Marae foodbank which fed thousands through the COVID-19 lockdowns.

While many whānau in our city enjoy good health, inequities remain—particularly for Māori, Pacific peoples, people with a disability, and those living in high-deprivation areas. Barriers such as cost, housing insecurity, and limited availability of some services means that not everyone can get the care, nutrition and support they need.

At the same time, we are seeing new opportunities through digital health tools, integrated community hubs, and prevention-focused services that bring care closer to where people live.

Building healthy communities requires action in multiple areas. It means designing neighbourhoods that encourage activity, ensuring good kai is affordable and accessible, providing wrap-around support for families facing complex challenges, and attracting skilled clinicians to our region who can enable the delivery of high-quality care.

We will ensure that everyone is supported to meet holistic wellbeing (hauora), with health providers resourced to meet hauora needs.

This chapter outlines key initiatives to help realise our vision for health and wellbeing 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
% OF PEOPLE ENROLLED WITH A GP		95%
% OF CHILDREN FULLY IMMUNISED AT 2 YEARS	82.3%	95%
PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN LOWER HUTT	4,659	<1,000

BACKGROUND

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt has a wide range of community and hospital services, including Hutt Hospital, which provides care to communities across Lower Hutt and the wider region. We also have 20 GP practices, pharmacies, kaupapa Māori providers, laboratory and community organisations. Specialist services in the community include district nursing, rehabilitation services, social work, alcohol and drug services and home support services.

State of health and wellbeing

The Māori health model, Te Whare Tapa Whā, considers holistic wellbeing, including taha tinana (physical wellbeing), taha hinengaro (mental wellbeing), taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing) and taha whānau (social wellbeing), with the foundation - the whenua and all that it hosts (environmental wellbeing).

The majority of people in our city consider they are in good physical health (68%) and in good mental health (66%).¹

Our city falls below some national health targets: only 82.3% of children in the Hutt are fully immunised at two years, including only 66% of Pacific children (target: 95%).²

Obesity is a growing concern, with 73% of Hutt Valley adults overweight or obese, compared to 66% nationally.³ Local rates of cancer are also high – 683 in Hutt Valley, compared to 546- national average (people with new cancer registrations per 100,000 people (2022)).⁴

There has been a strong focus on Smokefree Hutt Valley, and the proportion of regular smokers in Lower Hutt dropped from 23% in 2006 to 8.2% in 2023.⁵ However, the rates of vaping are increasing across the country and our city – particularly among young people. 19% of Hutt Valley residents smoke and/or use e-cigarettes/vapes/daily (2024).⁶

The broader context

The population of Lower Hutt is both growing and ageing. The number of people aged 70 years or older is expected to nearly double over the next 30 years, while our city's population is projected to grow by around 37,000 by 2053. Our healthcare system will need to address the needs of more people and larger numbers of elderly.

Our city includes areas of high deprivation – Taitā, Moerā and Te Ngaengae (Naenae), where residents are more likely to face challenges such as lower incomes, overcrowded housing, food insecurity and inadequate heating. Due to factors like limited access to healthcare, poor nutrition, and higher levels of stress and anxiety, people living in high deprivation areas also experience higher rates of chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and respiratory conditions.

Across New Zealand, there has been a recent marked increase in homelessness, which is driven by systemic housing shortages and costs, tightening eligibility for emergency housing, rising cost of living, and gaps in mental health and addiction services. In 2023, 4,650 people experienced homelessness in Lower Hutt. 7.1% of households experience household crowding.⁷

¹ Quality of Life Survey

² Health New Zealand, Q3 2024/25

³ NZ Health Survey, 2017-2020

⁴ Ministry of Health, 2025

⁵ Census 2023

⁶ Ministry of Health, 2025

⁷ Census, 2023

Our healthcare system is under pressure, grappling with GP and midwife shortages, stretched hospitals, and increasing demand for mental health and social support. In 2024, 73% of general practices in Hutt Valley had 'Closed Books', creating a barrier to accessing health care.⁸ The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is still being felt, particularly on delayed surgeries. Preparing for future pandemics and the effects of climate change are critical future health challenges.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE LOWER HUTT COMMUNITY

While people appreciate existing health services and the hospital, there were concerns about *"health services becoming too stretched"*, including GP and midwife shortages, with calls for affordable, high-quality medical and dental care, *"Access to affordable, timely and top notch healthcare system."* There was also an emphasis on culturally appropriate services and preparedness for future health crises. Mental health was a significant concern, with hopes for better support systems to address rising issues. Additionally, food security was highlighted, with worries about *"more whānau going hungry"* and aspirations for accessible, healthy kai for all.



This strategy focuses on supporting health and holistic wellbeing. We will design a city that makes it easier to be well—with walkable streets, access to nutritious food choices, and green spaces. We will also provide wrap-around support for whānau facing complex challenges.

Our city will actively seek investment in infrastructure and services to develop Lower Hutt as a centre of healthcare excellence, and work to attract skilled clinicians who can deliver high-quality care.

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



Our goal to achieve Healthy Communities supports SDGs to achieve food security and improved nutrition, ensure healthy lives and promote well-being, and reduce inequality.

FUTURE FOCUS

⁸ "An update on Closed Books in general practice in Aotearoa New Zealand" in *Journal of Primary Health Care*, January 2025

INITIATIVE 9

SUPPORT PEOPLE TO LOOK AFTER THEIR HOLISTIC WELLBEING, TO STAY HEALTHIER FOR LONGER

We will support people to take charge of their wellbeing—physically, mentally, spiritually and socially—so they can live longer, healthier lives. Good health is shaped not just by clinical care, but also by housing, income, food, connection to others and the environment. We will support holistic and preventative approaches that strengthen resilience, reduce chronic disease, and improve health equity—including kaupapa Māori services, and culturally safe care for Pacific and ethnic communities.

Promote community-led health and wellbeing

We will ensure care is available where and when people need it—starting with those who face the greatest barriers. We will support tools that make it easier to engage with wellbeing, such as the Te Ara Pae Ora app, which helps individuals and whānau take control of their own wellbeing journey. Efforts will focus on prevention and early support, rather than treatment alone. For example, accessible mental health programmes, early parenting support, and services for older adults to stay active and socially connected.

Expand community-based hubs

We support the development of community hubs that bring together physical health, mental wellbeing, social support and prevention under one roof. Recent examples include a new community wellness centre which will provide a broad range of support to people with mental health challenges, and a new Hutt Valley Health Hub, which houses a large GP practice, pharmacy, specialist

“We need to normalise having open conversations about mental health, what it is, and how we can deal with it together.” City Summit Participant, 2024

consulting rooms and outpatient dialysis clinic – all in one community hub.

Kaupapa Māori services

Kaupapa Māori services will continue to play a vital role in providing holistic support for our city’s growing Māori population. This includes Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa and Te Āti Awa Hauora Services, including marae-hosted clinics, Waiwhetū Hauora Medical Centre, and Kōkiri Marae Keriana Olsen Trust, which offers whānau-centred services.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Promote community-led health and wellbeing	Health New Zealand, Te Awakairangi Health Network
Expand community-based hubs, including kaupapa Māori hauora services.	Health New Zealand, Mana Whenua

INITIATIVE 10

DEVELOP LOWER HUTT AS A CENTRE OF HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE, ATTRACTING CLINICIANS TO LIVE AND PRACTICE HERE

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt will position itself as a leading place to live, work and innovate in the health sector. We face growing demand for services, an ageing population, and ongoing shortages of GPs, nurses, midwives and other health professionals. At the same time, clinicians are looking for a city that offers a good quality of life, professional development, and opportunities to work in forward-looking care systems.

Seek investment in city healthcare

Planned and recent investments in healthcare infrastructure and services will enhance Lower Hutt's capacity to provide high quality care and trial system innovations. This includes the Nurses in Pharmacies initiative, regional rollout of the secure electronic health record system, HealthOne, and exploring telehealth solutions. Construction is underway on the new Sir Mark Dunajtschik Mental Health Centre - a \$38 million government investment and \$50 million philanthropic donation, providing 34 adult acute inpatient beds. Plans are also underway for an expanded Lower Hutt After-Hours Medical Centre, which will significantly increase access to urgent daytime care.

Support training, development and career pathways

Education providers, Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora, and community health organisations will work collaboratively to increase access to local training, internships and mentoring—especially for Māori, Pacific and people with a disability who are under-represented in the health workforce. We will

also encourage young people in Lower Hutt to pursue careers in health and provide career development pathways so that talent stays here. This includes supporting initiatives such as Whiteria's Bachelor of Nursing Māori.

Build a place clinicians want to live

We will continue investing in housing, transport, schools, green spaces and amenities that make Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt an attractive place for health professionals and their whānau to call home, and will promote our city to clinicians. We will also celebrate the contribution of our local health workforce, fostering a local culture that values clinicians, caregivers and community health workers as essential to the city's future.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Invest in city healthcare infrastructure and services.	Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora
Support training, development and career pathways.	Health New Zealand



INITIATIVE 11

PROVIDE WRAP-AROUND SUPPORT FOR LOWER HUTT’S MOST VULNERABLE FAMILIES

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt will ensure that families facing the greatest challenges have access to joined-up, compassionate and effective support. Issues like poverty, homelessness, family harm, mental distress and truancy often occur together. These issues cannot be solved in isolation. We will strengthen wrap-around approaches that bring together housing, health, education, social services, police, mana whenua, and community networks to meet people where they are and help them move forward.

Address interlinked challenges through joined-up services

We will support collaborative models that connect whānau with the support they need—such as health care, income advice, housing navigation, and parenting support. This includes Education, community providers, police, MSD, Kainga ora, Oranga Tamariki and Public Health coming together to address barriers to supporting school aged tamariki engage in education across Lower Hutt.

Provide free health and wellbeing services

We will ensure that everyone can access health and wellbeing support, particularly Māori, Pasifika and low income residents. This includes through local initiatives like Karanga Manaaki, which provides essential free, nurse-led care for non-enrolled people, and Te Awakairangi Health Network, which offers free health wellbeing services to people enrolled in a practice. We will work collaboratively to increase GP enrolment, including exploring opportunities to reach unenrolled people through clinics in some Council facilities. We

will also focus on ensuring that immunisation coverage protects everyone.

Establish community health network

The two largest Primary Health Organisations (PHO) in the Wellington region, Te Awakairangi Health Network and Tū Ora Compass Health are joining forces to strengthen and standardise primary care delivery to almost 450,000 people living in the Hutt Valley and greater Wellington region. Known as Tū Ora, the new PHO will support the development a community health network – a collaboration of cross-sector partners and health providers with a shared focus on achieving equitable health outcomes.

Work collaboratively to prevent homelessness and support housing stability

HCC, mana whenua, central government agencies, housing providers, and social services organisations will continue to work in partnership to support access to emergency and transitional housing, advocate to increase housing supply, and support efforts to prevent eviction, overcrowding and rough sleeping. In 2024-25 Tākiri Mai te Ata, Tuatahi Centre, and Community Law – collectively supported over 400 whānau across the City. They will continue to focus on sustaining and securing tenancies to prevent homelessness.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Address interlinked challenges through joined-up services, including establishing a community health network.	Health NZ, Te Awakairangi Health Network
Work collaboratively to prevent homelessness and support housing stability.	HCC, mana whenua

INITIATIVE 12

MAKE IT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO ACCESS NUTRITIOUS FOOD CHOICES AND DESIGN OUR CITY FOR HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIFESTYLES.

Food plays a central role in our lives – it brings family together and is one of the key ways we celebrate cultural traditions. But many people are struggling to access affordable, nutritious kai. We want to make good food accessible to all. That means making it easy for our tamariki, whānau and hāpori to grow, prepare and share healthy kai—while designing neighbourhoods that support activity and wellbeing every day.

Increase access to affordable, nutritious food

We will support initiatives that improve food security, reduce food waste and promote community-based food systems. This includes food banks, mara kai community gardens, fruit trees in public spaces, and healthy food policies in schools and public facilities. Local projects like Healthy Families planned ‘Cull to Plate’, can help provide equitable access to fresh, affordable and culturally relevant kai.

Design our city for movement and wellbeing

People are more likely to be active when the built environment supports it. We will continue to invest in walkable neighbourhoods, safe cycling networks, and easy access to parks, playgrounds and green spaces. Streetscapes, transport planning and urban design all play a role in shaping a city that supports wellbeing through everyday movement, which will be reflected in our revitalised city centre.

Make the healthy choice the easy choice

We will champion a city environment that make it easier to choose health—whether it’s the availability of water fountains in public spaces (such as water at the Dowse Square taps from the Waiwhetū aquifer) access to

shade and seating in parks, or healthy food options at public events and facilities. We will also promote local wellbeing campaigns, and education and community events that encourage healthy habits.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Increase access to affordable, nutritious food.	HCC/Healthy Families
Design our city for movement and wellbeing, including in revitalised city centre.	HCC

INITIATIVE 9: SUPPORT PEOPLE TO LOOK AFTER THEIR HOLISTIC WELLBEING, TO STAY HEALTHIER FOR LONGER

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Promote community-led health and wellbeing	Health New Zealand, Te Awakairangi Health Network	
Expand community based hubs, including kaupapa Māori hauora services.	Health New Zealand, Mana Whenua	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Positive rating of own physical health and wellbeing .	68% (Quality of Life 2024)	

INITIATIVE 10: DEVELOP LOWER HUTT AS A CENTRE OF HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE, ATTRACTING CLINICIANS TO LIVE AND PRACTICE HERE.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Invest in city healthcare infrastructure and services, including Sir Mark Dunajtschik Mental Health Centre.	Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora	Underway
Support training, development and career pathways.	Health New Zealand	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
% of people enrolled with a GP		95%

INITIATIVE 11: PROVIDE WRAP AROUND SUPPORT FOR LOWER HUTT'S MOST VULNERABLE FAMILIES

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Address interlinked challenges through joined-up services, including establishing a community health network.	Health NZ, Te Awakairangi Health Network	Ongoing
Work collaboratively to prevent homelessness and support housing stability.	HCC, Mana Whenua	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
People experiencing homelessness in Lower Hutt	4,650 2023	<1,000

INITIATIVE 12: MAKE IT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO ACCESS NUTRITIOUS FOOD CHOICES AND DESIGN OUR CITY FOR HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Increase access to affordable, nutritious food.	HCC/Healthy Families	
Design our city for movement and wellbeing, including in revitalised city centre.	HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
People who have been physically active on at least 5 days in the past week	32% (2024 Quality of Life)	

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1

GROW AND COOK GOOD KAI. Pass knowledge through the generations about growing and cooking good food, with plenty of fruit and vegetables.

2

HAVE OPEN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH. Normalise talking about mental health, what it is and how to work through issues together.


3

BE ACTIVE EVERYDAY. Walk, bike or scooter to school or work, stroll along the Hutt River Trail, or explore one of our city's amazing nature walks.

4

KEEP UP WITH IMMUNISATIONS. Make sure tamariki are up to date with their immunisations to protect them and whānau from diseases.

RESTORED TAIAO - NATURE



Guided by mana whenua,
we will uphold the mauri of
Te Taiao, ensuring healthy
waterways and biodiversity
for future generations.

IN 2055, LOWER HUTT IS A CITY CONNECTED TO NATURE | HONONGA

Te mauri o te whenua – we protect and enhance our whenua, moana and awa for generations to come. (A guiding principle of Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika).

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt has a stunning natural environment and plays a vital role in preserving Aotearoa’s native biodiversity. Although a city, nearly two-thirds of Lower Hutt’s land is rural. Indigenous vegetation covers 65.7% of the land, spanning 24,700 hectares – providing critical habitats for native plants and animals.

Our coastline features protected natural areas such as Turakirae Head and Mātiu / Somes Island—a scientific reserve and regional taonga (treasure) situated in Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington harbour). Te Awa Kairangi / Hutt River, the Waiwhetū Aquifer, and the Te Awamutu, Wainuiomata and Ōrongorongo Rivers are vital freshwater sources.

Our country’s incredible variety of native plants and animals make us unique globally, but that biodiversity is under threat. Across Aotearoa New Zealand, and here in Lower Hutt, lowland forests have been cleared, wetlands drained, and native species lost to urban development, agriculture, logging and pollution.

Challenges such as a growing population, climate change and the spread of pest species

continue to threaten our natural environment. This is not just a crisis for nature—it is a crisis for us. The wellbeing of people is tied to the health of our environment.

Our goal is to restore Te Taiao – nature, by actively protecting native ecosystems and controlling invasive plant and animal species. We are committed to improving the water quality of our moana (coastal waters), awa (rivers) and streams.

Mana whenua deep historical and ongoing connections to this land, and their vital role as kaitiaki (guardians) will be respected and upheld. We will also connect people to the natural beauty of Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt. These efforts will ensure lasting benefits for generations to come.

This chapter highlights initiatives that will help realise our vision for Te Taiao (nature) in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt by 2055. It concludes with “What You Can Do,” providing 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
SAFE SWIMMING SITES (% of summer sites that are safe for swimming)	84% 2024	All Hutt rivers are safe to swim in 2055

BACKGROUND

While most people live in the urban area of the city, a large proportion of Lower Hutt is rural, including areas of high ecological value. Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt contains rivers, streams, small lakes, aquifers, a coastline, estuary, old forests, and regenerating bush.

Old-growth forests in places like Wainuiomata and Hutt Water Collection Areas serve as strongholds for native birds, insects, and plants. Along our coast, there is both dense urban development and protected natural areas like Turakirae Head.

Rivers - Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt, Wainuiomata and Ōrongorongo connect to streams such as Awamutu, Waiwhetū, Stokes Valley and Black Creek. Our city's groundwater zone extends southwards from Taita Gorge to the entrance of Wellington Harbour and is made up of the Taita, Waiwhetū and Moerā aquifers.

The developed part of our city includes 2,780 hectares of public open space, and vast regional parks like Belmont, East Harbour, and Remutaka. This includes 'green spaces', sports and recreation grounds, neighbourhood playgrounds, walkways, parks, cycleways, trails and tracks, bush, hills, the coastal edge, streams and rivers.

Mana whenua as kaitiaki

The Māori worldview is explained in *Te Mahere Wai o Te Kāhui Taiao* as based on relationships with the taiao “...our mountains, rivers and tributaries are our ancestors.” The role of Mana Whenua “...is to protect and respect them as taonga (treasure) through the provision of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) to ensure their survival.”¹

Te Awa Kairangi is an awa tupua—a treasured ancestral river. The Waiwhetū Stream, Te

Awamutu Stream and estuary were once vital sources of mahinga kai and supported customary practices like rongoā Māori (traditional healing).

Mana whenua have strong connections to land which are now in regional parks and city reserves. For example, Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika a Maui and Ngāti Toa Rangatira have interests in Belmont Regional Park.

Importance of nature

Lower Hutt's natural environment provides multiple benefits, for biodiversity, customary practices, health and wellbeing, business and industry, and carbon sequestration.

Our city's groundwater sustains freshwater ecosystems in riverine and wetland habitats. It also provides domestic, municipal, industrial and irrigation water supplies. The Waiwhetū Aquifer provides around 40% of Wellington's municipal supply.

Spending time in nature supports holistic wellbeing, encompassing physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Engaging with nature has been linked to reduced stress, enhanced mood, and greater creativity.

Carbon sequestration (carbon stored in plants and forests) helps to reduce our city's emissions.

The broader context

Lower Hutt's unique biodiversity, home to an incredible variety of native plants and animal species, is under threat. The Wellington region has one of the highest degrees of historic wetland loss in the country. Invasive weeds and pest animals can cause significant damage, contributing to forest collapse, soil erosion and flood risk and transforming our natural

¹ [Greater Wellington — Te Mahere Wai o Te Kāhui Taiao](#)

landscapes. Urbanisation, pollution and waste are also degrading our natural environment.

The region's water supply comes from local rivers, but more water is currently being taken than river ecosystems can sustain. Waiwhetū Stream ranks in the worst 25% of New Zealand's waterways for E.coli, phosphorus, and ammoniacal nitrogen. It flows through the Seaview Gracefield industrial area and receives treated effluent from Seaview Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Climate change poses a significant threat to our environment. By 2050, Lower Hutt's average temperatures may rise by 0.8–1.3°C, altering growing seasons and species habitats. Increased warmth is already causing toxic algae blooms in the Hutt River. Rising sea levels and coastal flooding will impact

wetlands and bird habitats, while salinity intrusion threatens the Waiwhetū aquifer and coastal rivers. Nature-based solutions can also lessen the impacts of climate change (see *Climate-Ready City*).

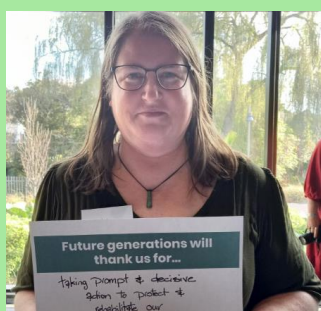
FUTURE FOCUS

There is already positive action happening across the city by mana whenua, community groups, environmental organisations, and government agencies. Initiatives like Mouri Tupu – Planting for the Future and local Enviroschools and community groups such as Friends of Petone Beach, and Predator Free Hutt Valley support pest control, rubbish collection, and restoration planting.

This strategy will both support ongoing mahi, and establish new actions, with a focus on protecting native ecosystems, including waterways, and controlling invasive plant and animal species. We will uphold the vital role of mana whenua as kaitiaki (guardians) and connect people to the natural environment. In the following pages, you will see the initiatives that will help us to realise our goals.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE LOWER HUTT COMMUNITY

Many people expressed appreciation for past environmental efforts, such as *"looking after our whenua"* and the legacy of planted street trees. The community values local rivers and freshwater sources like Te Awa Kairangi and the 'Dowse' artesian water, though concerns were raised about future pollution and scarcity. People hoped for *"an awa I can swim in with mokopuna"* and a shift away from using waterways for waste. There was strong support for restoring native biodiversity and bringing wildlife back— *"Kākā, bring back parrots to the Hutt."* Alongside protecting green spaces and improving recycling, many emphasized the importance of a deep *"connection to the land and natural environment"* and a future where *"environmental sustainability is incorporated into everything."*



Our goal to achieve Restored Taiao - Nature supports SDGs related to sustainable management of water, marine and coastal ecosystems and forests, and halting biodiversity loss.



INITIATIVE 20

PRESERVE AND RESTORE NATIVE ECOSYSTEMS, CONTROLLING PEST PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Bringing back the bush, wetlands and other habitats for native birds, insects and other species supports indigenous biodiversity, and strengthens the resilience of natural ecosystems. We will control invasive weeds and work towards a predator-free Lower Hutt.

Restoration and revegetation

We will focus on restoration of regional parks as a long-term priority, to bring back forest and shrub lands, rare and threatened ecosystems. Restoration will include phasing out stock grazing which has been used historically as a land management tool in Belmont, East Harbour Ōrua-pouanui/Baring Head parks.

There will also be a focus on revegetation, including planting native trees and plants to enhance biodiversity in city reserves and regional parks. Belmont regional park is a priority - in 2025, GWRC is planting over 150,000 native plants, shrubs and grasses on previously grazed areas in regional parks, with the largest area of planting in Belmont.

Support community initiatives

We will support restoration initiatives that are already underway by mana whenua and community groups across the city, such as Friends of Te Mome Stream, and Forest & Bird - which is working towards creating eco-corridors across Hutt Valley. These projects bring the community together and play a vital role in restoring Lower Hutt's natural environment.

Strengthen predator-free

We will strengthen the network of predator-free and pest-free organisations in Lower Hutt, including Predator-Free Hutt Valley, HCC and

GWRC, to maximise their collective effort in eradicating rats, possums and mustelids. We will continue to protect predator-free areas like Mātīu-Somes Island. GWRC will also look at extending its Regional Predator Control Programme to Lower Hutt from 2030.

Explore wildlife sanctuary in Wainuiomata

GWRC will explore a proposal to establish a wildlife sanctuary in the Wainuiomata catchment. The Puketahā proposal includes the construction of a 28.8km predator proof fence around 3,313 hectares. A key benefit would be the 'Halo effect' – migration of species which occurs from the predator-free zone (the 'nursery'), into surrounding habitat (the 'halo').

Controlling pest plants and animals

While taking an ambitious approach to eradicate pests like feral deer, goats and pigs, and control pest plants like old man's beard, our efforts will be targeted. Our initial priority is to control pest plants and animals in areas of high ecological value, which includes Key Native Ecosystems (KNE) and Significant Natural Areas (SNA). Reducing pest plants and animals in these areas supports natural regeneration. We will utilise new technology and approaches to maximise our impact (such as AI trail cameras, and deer exclusion fencing).

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Undertake restoration and revegetation of city reserves and regional parks, including Belmont Park and Hutt River corridor.	GWRC and HCC
Actively control pest plants and animals, strengthening predator free network and exploring proposed wildlife sanctuary.	GWRC and HCC

INITIATIVE 21

IMPROVE THE WATER QUALITY OF MOANA (SEA), AWA (RIVERS) AND STREAMS

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt contains rivers, streams, small lakes, aquifers, wetlands, a coastline and estuary. As our population grows and we experience drier and hotter summers, there will be increasing pressure on freshwater bodies. We will take action to regenerate waterways, reduce water extraction, improve water infrastructure, and restore the mauri (life force) of the waters of Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt.

Support implementation of Whaitua programme

We are committed to supporting the implementation of the values of Te Mana o te Wai, a Māori concept that highlights the essential role of water and its wellbeing, acknowledging that safeguarding freshwater is vital to the health of both the environment and the community. This will be implemented through *Te Mahere Wai o Te Kāhui Taiao*, a Mana Whenua Whaitua implementation programme for Te Whanganui-a-Tara. This plan provides a framework for restoring the mana and mauri of our freshwater bodies, guided by mātauranga Māori and the principles of Te Mana o te Wai. It emphasises the importance of mahinga kai (food gathering) as a measure of water health.

Regenerate waterways

We will prioritise regeneration of our waterways, planting native plants and trees to help restore their health and biodiversity. Focusing on restoring stream headwaters, such as those in Belmont Regional Park, will deliver significant downstream benefits – improving water quality throughout large catchments,

residential areas, local streams, and ultimately, the harbour.

Reduce water extraction

Currently, more water is taken from Lower Hutt rivers than their ecosystems can sustainably support. Te Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua Committee has recommended progressively increasing minimum required river flows. GWRC's Natural Resources Plan will make it more challenging to obtain consent for extracting water at current levels. Wellington Water advises changing water-use practices, including more efficient water use and reducing water loss. Introducing water meters could help encourage lower consumption, while exploring water recycling may provide a valuable longer-term solution.

Improve Three Waters Infrastructure

When making decisions about maintaining and upgrading three waters infrastructure, it is essential to consider the impact on water bodies. Accelerating the upgrade and renewal of wastewater pipes will help reduce leaks and prevent pollutants from entering waterways. (See *Smart Infrastructure*). Nature-based solutions will further enhance water quality (see *Climate-Ready City*).

Educate our community

We need to widely share knowledge about restoring mana to our freshwater bodies. Educational campaigns could encourage efficient water use and raise community awareness about how we can collectively prevent contaminants from entering the stormwater network.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Guided by mana whenua, regenerate Lower Hutt waterways.	GWRC, HCC, Mana Whenua
Change the way we use water by reducing extraction, improving three waters infrastructure and educating our community.	GWRC and HCC

INITIATIVE 22

UPHOLD THE KAITIAKI (GUARDIAN) ROLE OF MANA WHENUA IN PROTECTING THE MAURI (LIFE FORCE) OF TE TAI AO.

Mana whenua have rich and significant historical and present-day connections to Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt: “...our mountains, rivers and tributaries are our ancestors” – and their important role as kaitiaki will be upheld. This includes ensuring that mana whenua have a meaningful role in local decisions affecting te Taiao and supporting restoration efforts.

Support restoration efforts

The ongoing restoration of native vegetation and improvements in freshwater quality are vital to sustaining habitats for mahinga kai and customary practices such as rongoā Māori (traditional healing). We will support mana whenua efforts in ecosystem restoration. Prioritising the restoration of Waiwhetū stream will remain a key focus, alongside enhancing the indigenous biodiversity throughout the river corridor as part of Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi. This will include providing resources to facilitate mana whenua collaboration and liaison with Council and community restoration groups.

Enable freshwater management decisions

Te Mahere Wai o Te Kāhui Taiao advocates for collaborative governance, ensuring that mana whenua have a meaningful role in freshwater management decisions across the region. A key goal is that *Mana Whenua are the lead agency and regulator for protection and restoration of wai ora in 20 to 50 years' time*. By supporting the implementation of the Whaitua programme, we will provide for mana whenua to have a key role in freshwater management decisions.

Kaitiaki role in regional parks and city reserves

We will enable mana whenua to exercise their kaitiaki role over land that is in regional parks and city reserves. Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika a Maui have interests in Belmont, East Harbour and Wainuiomata regional parks. It is important to note that while Taranaki Whānui have “interests” in these regional parks, their role as kaitiaki over the district extends far beyond map boundaries of regional parks.

Explore co-management opportunities

CASE STUDY FOR CONSIDERATION

Waikato River Authority is a unique co-governance entity restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River. It operates under a co-chair model, with one Iwi and one Crown co-chair working in partnership.

We will uphold current co-management arrangements and explore future opportunities. Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust and GWRC jointly manage the Parangārahu Lakes Area through a Rōpū Tiaki, guardianship group set up in 2012. Future work of the Rōpū Tiaki includes management of Gollan's Valley, a 1366-hectare block of land connecting the Northern Forest to Parangārahu Lakes.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Support mana whenua restoration efforts, including Waiwhetū stream and the river corridor.	Mana Whenua, GWRC, HCC
Enable meaningful role in decisions, including regional parks, city reserves, freshwater management, and explore co-management opportunities.	Mana Whenua, GWRC, HCC

INITIATIVE 23

CONNECT PEOPLE TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

“Elevating the wellness of our whenua leads to the elevated wellness of the people”.
Participant, Lower Hutt City Summit, 2024

Whether walking to Percy Waterfall, biking along the Hutt River trail or sitting on Petone beach, connecting people to nature is important for holistic wellbeing, which in turn encourages people to care for the environment. We will aim for residents to live within a short walk to a reserve and better connect green spaces. There will be stronger promotion of Lower Hutt’s stunning natural environment, and new opportunities for our community to connect with nature.

Maintain and establish city reserves

HCC manages 191 tracks and trails within the urban and natural areas of the city. It aims for a reserve within an easy walking distance from most houses in a suburb, particularly in areas zoned for more intensive housing and mixed use (an easy walking distance is 400 metres or 8.5 minute walk). We will work to enhance accessibility for all ages, such as installing railings and benches for senior members of the community.

Over time, we will look to connect reserves, so that people can effectively remain in nature as they move between green spaces, such as biking along a tree-lined path.

Develop new opportunities to connect with nature

We will promote our city’s ecological treasures, as a key attraction to living here and visiting Lower Hutt. Several exciting new opportunities will be explored, including a Wildlife sanctuary in Wainuiomata.

GWRC is aiming to achieve ‘International Dark Sky Park’ accreditation for Wainuiomata Regional Park. If successful, it would be the closest Dark Sky Place to any city in the world. This project would include the development of a Dark Sky Museum, educational opportunities and storytelling experiences.

A new cycling route is proposed to connect the Hutt Valley with Porirua through Belmont Regional Park. There will also be future opportunities in the recently acquired Gollans Valley, which effectively links two parts of East Harbour Regional Park.

Enhance learning

We will enhance learning about te Taiao, so that our tamariki grow their understanding of our local environment, and what it means to care for nature. This includes supporting initiatives such as Lower Hutt EnviroSchools or other kaitiaki programmes in schools.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Maintain and establish city reserves within a short walk to most houses and connect reserves.	HCC
Develop new opportunities to connect with nature such as “Dark Sky” Wainuiomata, Gollans Valley and Belmont cycling route.	GWRC

INITIATIVE 20: PRESERVE AND RESTORE NATIVE ECOSYSTEMS, CONTROLLING PEST PLANTS AND ANIMALS

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Undertake restoration and revegetation of city reserves and regional parks, including Belmont Park and Hutt River corridor.	GWRC and HCC	Ongoing
Actively control pest plants and animals, including strengthening predator free network and exploring proposed wildlife sanctuary.	GWRC and HCC	Ongoing/Proposal
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

INITIATIVE 21: IMPROVE THE WATER QUALITY OF MOANA (SEA), AWA (RIVERS) AND STREAMS

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Guided by mana whenua, regenerate waterways.	GWRC, HCC, Mana Whenua	
Change the way we use water by reducing extraction, improving three waters infrastructure and educating our community.	GWRC and HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

INITIATIVE 22: UPHOLD THE KAITIAKI (GUARDIAN) ROLE OF MANA WHENUA IN PROTECTING THE MAURI (LIFE FORCE) OF TE TAIAO (NATURE)

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Support mana whenua restoration efforts, including Waiwhetū stream and the river corridor - Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi.	Mana Whenua, GWRC, HCC	
Enable a meaningful role in decisions, including regional parks, city reserves, freshwater management, and explore co-management opportunities.	Mana Whenua, GWRC, HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

INITIATIVE 23: CONNECT PEOPLE TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Maintain and establish city reserves within a short walk to most houses and connect reserves.	HCC	Ongoing
Develop new opportunities to connect with nature such as "Dark Sky" Wainuiomata, Gollans Valley and Belmont cycling route.	GWRC	Proposal
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1

EXPLORE NATURE. Walk along the Hutt River trail, picnic on an Eastbourne beach, or go tramping in the Ōrongorongo valley.

2

REDUCE WATER USE. Take a shorter shower, fix leaks, and turn off the tap while brushing your teeth.

3

VOLUNTEER. Get involved with local trapping, planting or park restoration projects, like Friends of Petone Beach.

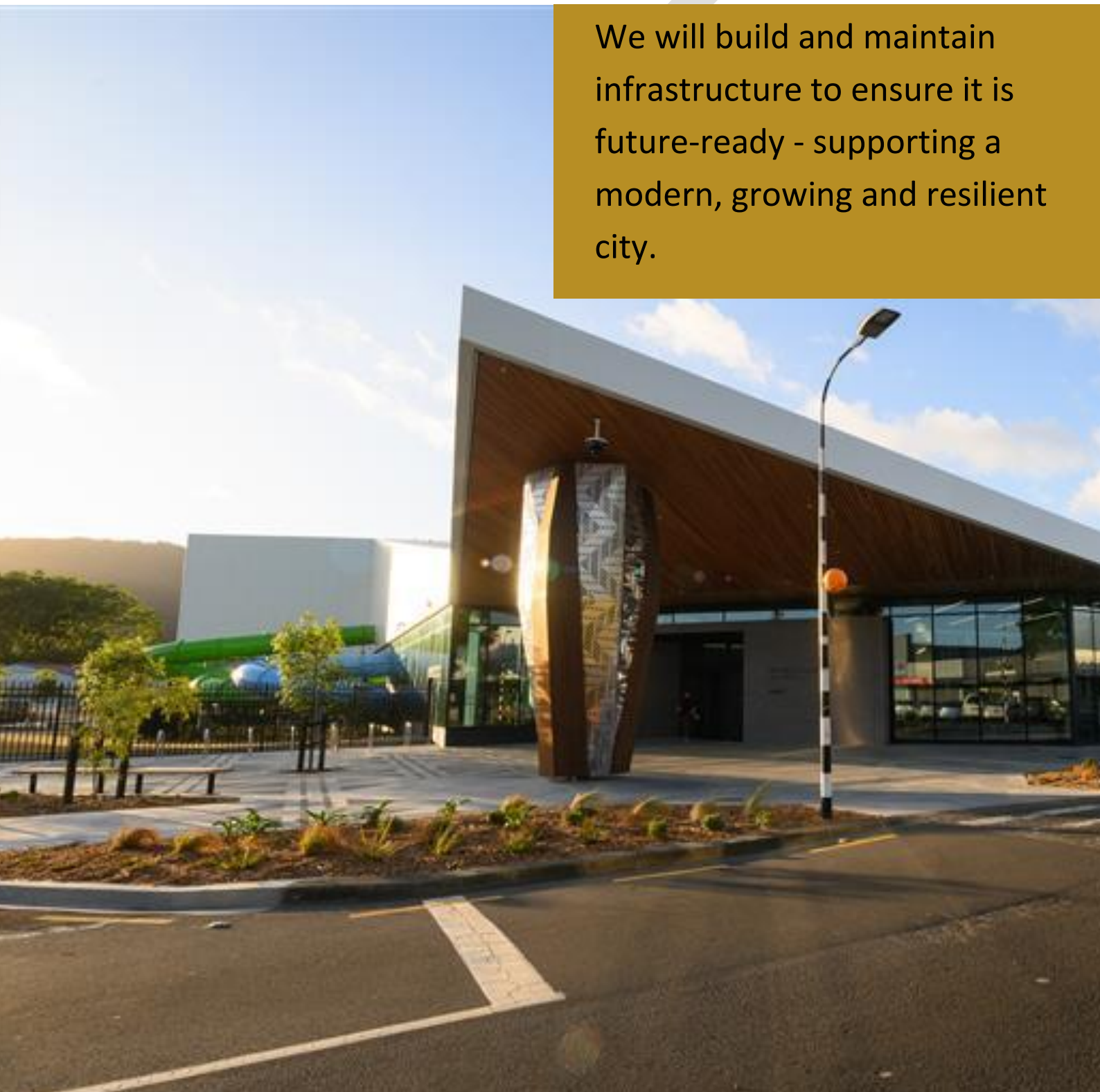
4

PLANT A NATIVE TREE. Trees provide shade, absorb carbon, improve biodiversity and enhance the beauty of our city.

For more information on how you can take action, visit: www.huttcity.govt.nz/environment-and-sustainability or www.gw.govt.nz/parks

SMART INFRASTRUCTURE

We will build and maintain infrastructure to ensure it is future-ready - supporting a modern, growing and resilient city.



IN 2055, LOWER HUTT'S INFRASTRUCTURE IS EFFECTIVE, RELIABLE AND RESILIENT

Our city infrastructure plays a vital role in the future of Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt. Transport networks move people and goods, pipes carry water, and transmission lines provide power to our homes and businesses. Flood protection protects our city, schools provide a place to educate our ākonga (students), and hospitals are where we care for people who are unwell.

As our city's population grows, we need to both build and maintain infrastructure. However, we face significant challenges, including rising costs, ageing water infrastructure and a rising risk of extreme weather events, amplifying existing flood risks in low-lying built areas. We need to minimise the impact on the environment, decarbonise the economy and keep costs affordable for households.

To sustain high quality infrastructure, we need to make smart, durable investment decisions, utilise technology, and deliver strong asset management, to maintain as well as build infrastructure.

As Lower Hutt's population grows, we must ensure our infrastructure is future-ready, and resilient for generations to come. We will

develop water and waste systems that are clean, efficient and cost-effective.

We will also increase shared and public transport services and connections, and develop a connected transport network that makes it easy and safe to bike, walk, or scooter.

Major future projects include Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi (RiverLink) – a \$1.5b infrastructure investment in the city centre, transport improvements such as Tupua Horo Nuku shared path, modernising water infrastructure and upgrading Seaview Wastewater Treatment Plant.

This chapter outlines key initiatives to help realise our vision for future infrastructure 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

LOWER HUTT CITY WILL TRACK PROGRESS OF THE FOLLOWING INDICATORS:

INDICATOR	LATEST DATA	TARGET
ANNUAL NUMBER OF PIPES RENEWED	14.5km 2022-2023	30km

BACKGROUND

Infrastructure is critical to our city, including:

- Schools, hospitals, social services and emergency services
- Utilities – electricity, and telecommunications
- Transport network of rail corridors, state highways, city streets and roads, shared paths and cycle ways, public transport
- Community facilities such as libraries, halls, hubs, swimming pools and playgrounds
- Water supply, wastewater (sewage treatment), stormwater
- Flood protection, coastal management and emergency management
- Landfill facilities, waste management and resource recovery.

Our city currently provides essential infrastructure that supports the wider region:

- A significant proportion of Wellington region's freshwater supplies (around 40% from Waiwhetū aquifer)
- Seaview Wastewater Treatment Plant which serves residents in Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt
- Seaview Wharf and pipeline which are vital to the fuel supply for Wellington and the lower North Island
- Silverstream Landfill (owned and operated by HCC), which services Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt
- Hutt Hospital which provides secondary level care to communities in Lower Hutt and the wider region
- State Highway 2 and rail network which run through the city, connecting Upper Hutt and the Wairarapa to Wellington.

The broader context

Like cities across Aotearoa New Zealand, Lower Hutt faces a complex infrastructure landscape.

Persistent underinvestment in infrastructure has become a major challenge for our city, and we are experiencing asset failure. Over 40% of water (throughout the wider region) is estimated as being lost to leaks.

The cost to build and maintain infrastructure is rising - and funding the infrastructure gap is a long-term challenge for our economy and productivity. Wellington Water estimates \$1 billion each year is needed for the next 10 years to fix the region's water system.

At the same time, our networks are increasingly exposed to natural hazards, including earthquakes, flooding, landslides and rising groundwater. Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and damaging, while cybersecurity risks pose new threats to digital infrastructure and critical services. Most of our city's existing stormwater infrastructure was originally designed to accommodate a five-year "average recurrence interval" rainfall event. It can be overloaded in more severe rainfall.

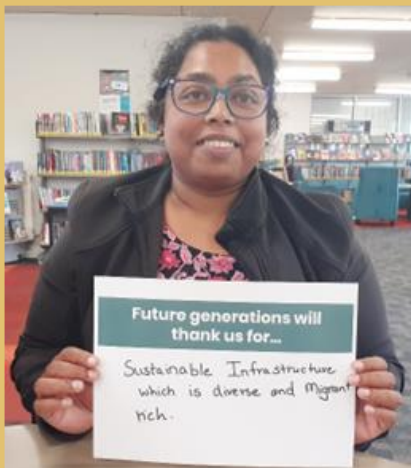
Population growth adds further urgency. Over the next 30 years, Lower Hutt will need to accommodate tens of thousands of new residents—requiring more housing, cleaner energy, and expanded services for a population that is both growing and ageing.

In recent years, Lower Hutt has made considerable progress, investing in stormwater upgrades, Hutt River flood protection, and active transport connections. But there is still significant renewal and investment required. An average of four kms of water pipes used to be replaced annually – which increased to 14.5km in 2022-23, but we

need to renew 30kms a year to address the backlog.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE LOWER HUTT COMMUNITY

Many residents expressed gratitude for Lower Hutt's existing infrastructure such as The Dowse, swimming pools, schools, and public transport, while also voicing concern over ageing water systems and insufficient long-term planning. Some worried the infrastructure would "not support possible population growth," though others remained hopeful that "we'll have a functioning water supply (with fewer leaks)" and swimmable waterways. Active and public transport were recurring themes, with praise for the developing cycleways and calls to "Make this city more walkable!" and for a city that "prioritises people – not cars!!!" While traffic congestion and accessibility were concerns, many envisioned a more connected, inclusive, and sustainable transport future.



FUTURE FOCUS

We need to make infrastructure future-fit. That means prioritising renewal investment in existing assets as well as building new infrastructure, exploring innovative funding and financing mechanisms, and planning longer-term for a growing population and changing climate.

Emerging technologies—like smart water meters, real-time traffic management, and renewable energy systems, provide

opportunities to reduce emissions, and use resources more efficiently.

We will focus on clean, efficient and cost-effective water and waste systems, increasing shared and public transport, and making it easy and safe to get around the city on bike, foot or scooter.

There will be significant future investment in infrastructure. At \$1.5 billion, Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi will be Wellington region's largest infrastructure investment since Transmission Gully. Other key projects include:

- Water Infrastructure (\$1.6bn in HCC's 2024 Long Term Plan)
- Te Ara Tupua shared path (\$400 m)
- Waterloo Integrated Transport Hub

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



Our goal to achieve Smart Infrastructure supports SDS for clean water and sanitation, sustainable cities and communities, industry, innovation and infrastructure, and climate action.



INITIATIVE: 29

DEVELOP WATER AND WASTE SYSTEMS THAT ARE CLEAN, EFFICIENT AND COST-EFFECTIVE

As climate change, population growth and ageing infrastructure place increasing pressure on water and waste systems, we must invest in modern, efficient solutions that deliver better outcomes for people and the environment. This includes upgrading pipes and plants, reducing leakage and supporting reuse and recycling.

Modernise water infrastructure

Much of our water network is nearing the end of its useful life. To support smart investments in water infrastructure and more efficient and reliable services, a new water services entity will be established which is jointly owned by Wellington's metropolitan councils. We will continue to support the rollout of smart water meters, identify and fix leaks, and promote water conservation to reduce the impact on freshwater sources. This could include safer use of 'recycled' water. There will also be investment in water storage, including the Eastern Hills reservoir.

Maintain and upgrade ageing infrastructure

There will be ongoing renewal and replacement of water infrastructure, using asset condition data, digital modelling and climate risk assessments to prioritise upgrades. Over the next 30 years, we will have removed the backlog of renewals. Key future infrastructure decisions include the long-term viability of Seaview Wastewater Treatment Plant at its current location and Seaview wastewater outfall pipe renewal.

Build a low-waste city

Silverstream Landfill is likely to be at or near capacity by 2055. There is an urgent need to

keep resources in our city in use for as long as possible, and to recover materials as much as possible. We will strengthen our waste and resource recovery systems and pathways for reuse to reduce what we send to landfill and make better use of materials. This includes improving kerbside recycling, implementing food and green organic waste collection, a step change in commercial resource recovery opportunities (including for construction and demolition waste), and supporting infrastructure for reuse, repair and recycling. We will promote local initiatives, such as resource recovery hubs, repair cafes, and materials reprocessing. In developing new infrastructure, we will work to reduce both construction waste and carbon emissions.

Ensure affordability and long-term sustainability

Water and waste systems must be financially sustainable. We will plan investments through a long-term lens—balancing upfront costs with future benefits, while ensuring affordability for residents and ratepayers. We will advocate for fair and transparent funding arrangements, and ensure that Lower Hutt retains influence over how services are delivered in our communities.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Maintain and upgrade ageing infrastructure, including modernising water infrastructure.	New water services entity, HCC
Build a low-waste city.	HCC

INITIATIVE: 30

BUILD AND MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS GROWTH AND RESILIENCE

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt will invest in infrastructure that supports a growing population while building resilience to natural hazards. We will focus on targeted investment, coordinated planning and long-term thinking—ensuring that the infrastructure we build today is safe, efficient and resilient for generations to come.

Plan for compact urban growth

With our population projected to grow by up to 40,000 people over the next 30 years, we will focus growth in areas that are more resilient, with strong transport links — especially on the central and northern valley floor, including the central city, Woburn, Waterloo, Naenae, (Te Ngaengae) Taitā, and Avalon. We will work to ensure that three waters, transport, energy and digital infrastructure can support higher-density housing in these areas. A long-term approach is essential to address the shortage of commercial and industrial land.

Invest in regional transport connections

Lower Hutt's economy depends on strong regional transport connections. Potential future investments include:

- Hutt Valley Line upgrades, including Waterloo Station
- Melling Line extension to Manor Park
- Melling Interchange
- Cross-Valley Connections
- Grenada–Petone Link Road
- Upgrades to State Highways 2 and 58.

Prioritise maintenance and renewals

We will take a strategic approach by factoring in the full costs of assets—from design and construction through to operation, maintenance and renewal. This would include maintaining detailed asset registers and using data-driven asset management plans to guide maintenance and replacement. By ring-fencing funding for renewals and prioritising proactive over reactive maintenance, we can reduce failures, extend the lifespan of infrastructure, and improve service levels.

Build resilience into infrastructure

Planning must consider the need to rapidly reduce emissions and long-term impacts of climate change, aligning land use and infrastructure decisions to maximise resilience and minimise future disruption - Ministry for the Environment recommends using the 'high-emissions scenario' out to 2130 for major infrastructure projects. We will build resilience by combining traditional defences like stopbanks and seawalls—with smart technologies, local knowledge and nature-based solutions (see *Climate-Ready City*).

Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi includes raising and upgrading stopbanks and widening the river channel to increase protection from large flood events (1 in 440-year event). Tools such as flood intelligence systems and crisis mapping will improve public warning systems and emergency response. We will also invest in infrastructure that can withstand shocks, such as seismic-resistant materials in pipe networks.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Plan for compact urban growth.	GWRC, HCC, Waka Kotahi
Build resilience into infrastructure, including Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi flood protection.	GWRC, HCC

INITIATIVE: 31

DEVELOP A CONNECTED TRANSPORT NETWORK THAT MAKES IT EASY AND SAFE TO BIKE, WALK OR SCOOTER.

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt will develop a connected transport network that makes it easier for everyone to move around the city by walking, cycling and scootering. This will reduce congestion, support healthy, active lifestyles, and help meet our city's emissions reduction targets.

Improve walking and cycling routes across the city

We will deliver a connected cycleway and footpath network. Priority will be given to high-use routes, schools and town centres, as well as gaps in the existing network that make active travel unsafe or unappealing. A new City Link bridge for pedestrians and cyclists will be built to link the city centre to a relocated Melling train station. We will extend and connect key corridors, including completing the link between the Hutt River Trail and the regional shared path networks—Te Ara Tupua (Ngā Ūranga ki Pito-One) and Tupua Horo Nuku (Eastern Bays Shared Path). These high-quality walking and cycling routes will support commuting, recreation and tourism, and better connect Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt with the wider region.

Design for safety and accessibility

We will prioritise safety improvements including upgrading crossings, improving lighting and visibility, installing protected cycle lanes and separating paths from traffic where possible. Routes will be designed to ensure accessibility to people of all ages and abilities—including children, older adults, and those using mobility devices.

Plan for future growth and connections

We will ensure new developments are walkable, bike-friendly and well integrated with wider connections to public transport. All new housing areas, particularly in high-density zones, will be supported by high-quality infrastructure for walking and cycling. We will also future-proof our network to support new forms of micromobility, such as e-scooters and e-bikes, by ensuring paths are wide and safe.

Foster a culture of active travel

Infrastructure is only part of the solution. We will also support initiatives that encourage people to walk, bike or scooter more often. This includes working with schools to deliver safe routes and travel plans, supporting cycle confidence programmes, and promoting active transport through community events.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Improve walking and cycling routes.	HCC, GWRC, Waka Kotahi
Plan for future growth and walking/cycling connections in new developments.	HCC, GWRC, Waka Kotahi

INITIATIVE: 32

INCREASE SHARED AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES AND CONNECTIONS

As our city grows, we will make it easier for people to move around the city and across the region by bus, train or ferry. This will reduce congestion and transport emissions, and improve mobility across the city. Our focus is to extend services, enable easy transfers between different forms of transport, and make shared and public transport more attractive, comfortable and convenient.

Improve public transport routes

There will be targeted public transport investment in high-growth areas of the city. We will prioritise routes and interchanges that connect residential areas with essential destinations—such as Hutt Hospital, retail and employment centres. There will also be a focus on improving local bus services for Wainuiomata, Stokes Valley, Waiwhetū and Western Hills.

Deliver a more connected city

We will explore a fully accessible corridor, including Waterloo Station, Seaview Marina, key villages, marae and kura, schools, supermarkets, Queensgate, Hutt Hospital, Jackson Street and Eastbourne. There will also be planning for a city circular service focused on better linking the CBD, Hutt Hospital and Waterloo Station. Improved transport connections between Naenae (Te Ngaengae) and Taitā to essential retail and Hutt Hospital will also be investigated.

Strengthen regional rail services

We will support delivery of the Lower North Island Rail Integrated Mobility programme to improve rail capacity, reliability and frequency

on the Hutt and Wairarapa lines. Improving access to stations, replacing ageing rolling stock, and coordinating schedules with local buses will make rail a more viable choice for many more people.

Future investment includes a relocated Melling Station linking with the CBD via a new bridge, and Waterloo Transit-Oriented Development. This project would redevelop Waterloo as an integrated transport hub for the Hutt Valley, incorporating a bus interchange and train station. It would link with Lower Hutt CBD and connections to and from Wellington Central, Upper Hutt and the Wairarapa.

Make journeys easier, quicker and affordable

We will introduce integrated ticketing and fare capping, and maintain concessions and off-peak discounts, to make using public transport more affordable and seamless. We will also work to improve bus stop infrastructure—seating, shelters, lighting and digital displays.

Bus priority actions will be implemented to make journeys quicker and on-time. There may also be appropriate opportunities in the future to introduce congestion charging and T3 lanes to encourage car sharing and peak spreading.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Improve public transport routes, including for Wainuiomata, Stokes Valley, Waiwhetū and Western Hills.	GWRC
Progress work on Melling Station and the Waterloo Transit Orientated Development.	GWRC

INITIATIVE 29: DEVELOP WATER AND, WASTE SYSTEMS THAT ARE CLEAN, EFFICIENT AND COST-EFFECTIVE

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Maintain and upgrade ageing infrastructure, including modernising water infrastructure.	New water services entity, HCC	
Build a circular and low-waste city.	HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Household resources/waste is returned, reused, recycled or composted	26%	85-90%

INITIATIVE 30: BUILD AND MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS GROWTH AND RESILIENCE

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Plan for compact urban growth.	GWRC, HCC, Waka Kotahi	
Build resilience into infrastructure, including Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi flood protection.	GWRC, HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Households and businesses that are protected from a 1 in 440 year flood event.		3,000 homes, 600 businesses

INITIATIVE 31: DEVELOP A CONNECTED TRANSPORT NETWORK THAT MAKES IT EASY AND SAFE TO BIKE, WALK, OR SCOOTER

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Improve walking and cycling routes.	HCC, GWRC, Waka Kotahi	
Plan for future growth and walking/cycling connections in new developments.	HCC, GWRC, Waka Kotahi	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Proportion of Lower Hutt residents that travel to work by biking, walking or jogging.	Bike: 1.3% Walk/jog: 3.1% 2023 (census)	

INITIATIVE 32: INCREASE SHARED AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES AND CONNECTIONS

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Improve public transport routes, including for Wainuiomata, Stokes Valley, Waiwhetū and Western Hills.	GWRC	
Progress work on Melling Station and the Waterloo Transit Orientated Development.	GWRC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
% of people within 5 minutes' walk of a local stop or station	85% 2024	90% by 2053

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1

COMMUTE BY BUS, TRAIN OR FERRY.

Leave the car at home, and take public transport to work.

2

CONSERVE WATER. Reduce shower times, turn off the tap while brushing your teeth, capture rainwater for watering your garden.

3

WALK, BIKE, OR SCOOTER. Walk, bike, push the pram, or travel by mobility scooter to the shops, work, or school.

4

AVOID, REDUCE, REUSE, AND RECYCLE. Reuse and repair belongings, donate reusable items, look for products that use less packaging, and use our city's recycling service.

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

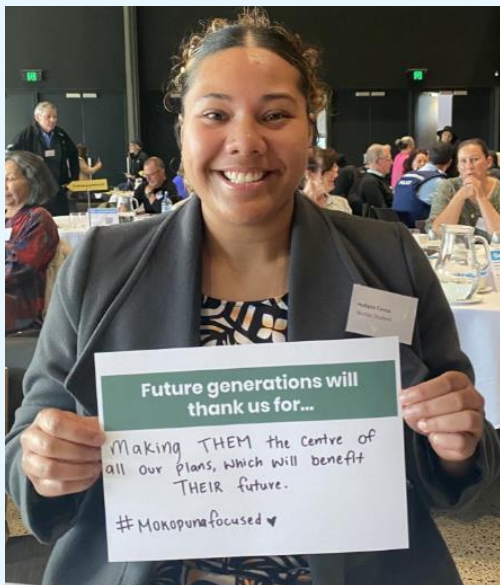
² Education Counts, 2023 (from total tamariki Māori enrolled in early childhood services).

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

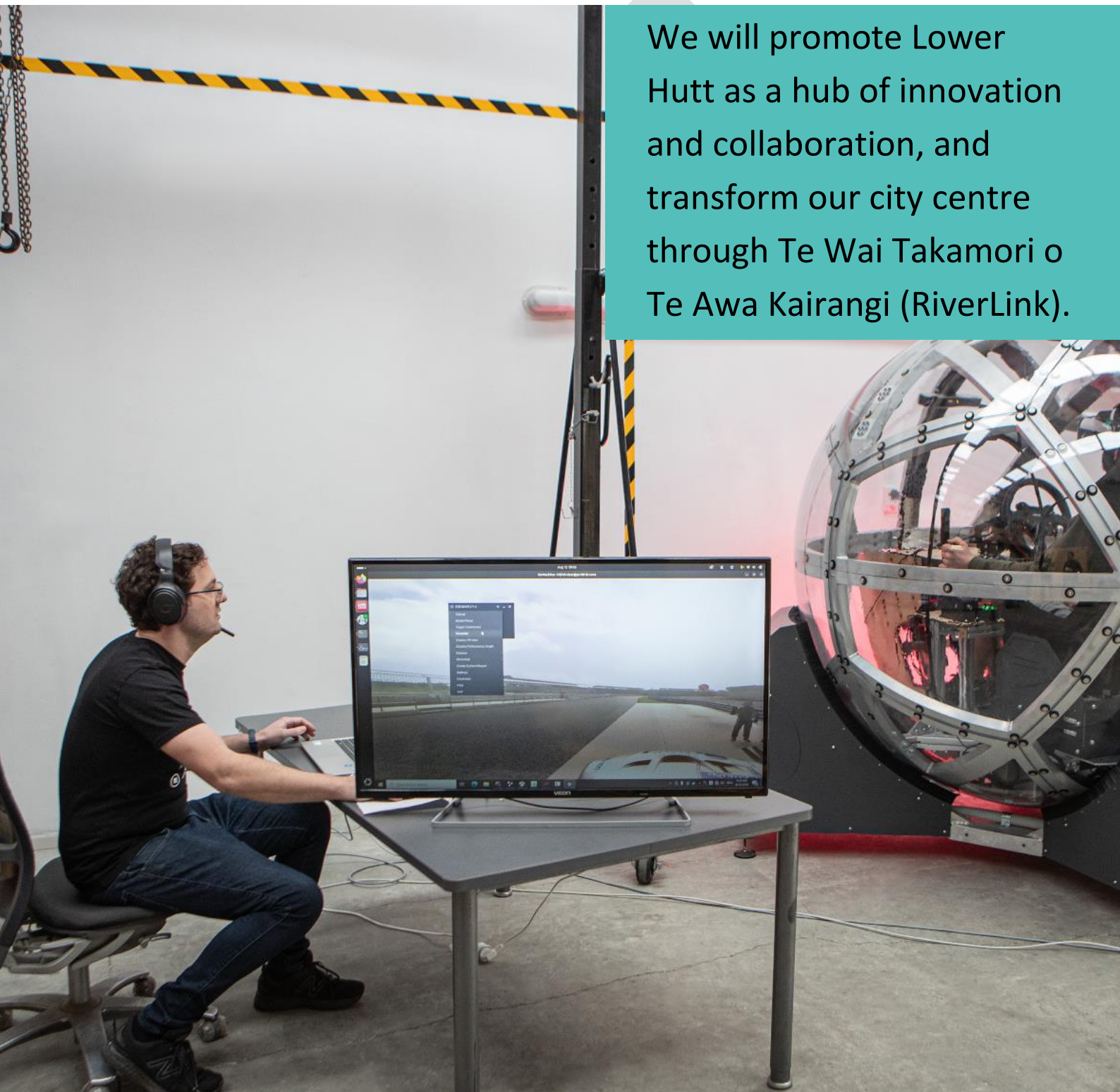
OFFER AN INTERNSHIP. Businesses can provide hands-on training, mentorship and real-world experience to rangatahi.

4

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

THRIVING BUSINESSES

We will promote Lower Hutt as a hub of innovation and collaboration, and transform our city centre through Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi (RiverLink).



IN 2055, OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS DRIVING PROSPERITY FOR ALL

Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt is the second-largest economy and employment hub in the Wellington region. Our city contains over 11,000 businesses, with an economy of \$7.5 billion in GDP in 2024.

Lower Hutt is brimming with innovation and creativity, experienced professionals and ambitious newcomers, and has a strong base of world-leading businesses. It is situated next to the capital city, regional port and airport. With its strong manufacturing heritage, Lower Hutt is one of Wellington region’s main industrial hubs. Additionally, our city is home to some of New Zealand’s most significant science and research organisations. The construction of new housing and infrastructure projects are also driving economic growth.

Lower Hutt has the capability and capacity to achieve more – we plan to grow GDP by 35% over the next 10 years, delivering business and community prosperity. Businesses across every sector contribute to our collective success. However, there are three high performing sectors which offer the greatest potential for overall employment, highly skilled jobs, productivity gains and contribution to GDP.

Our city’s top industries by GDP are professional, scientific and technical services,

followed by manufacturing. Construction provides the most jobs. These are also the sectors of focus for the future:

- Manufacturing
- Construction & Infrastructure
- Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

Long-term business priorities include delivering Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi (formerly RiverLink) and creating a thriving Lower Hutt CBD-river district.

We will build Lower Hutt’s reputation as a centre of innovation, proudly celebrating our creative business successes.

By creating an environment that promotes connection and collaboration between businesses, government and industry, we will super-charge growth.

There will also be a focus on developing local talent and attracting skilled migrants, to grow career opportunities and support business needs.

This chapter outlines key initiatives to help realise our vision for business and economic growth 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
GDP	\$7.47b (2024 Infometrics)	+ 35% by 2035
PRODUCTIVITY		+ 18% BY 2035
HIGHLY SKILLED JOBS	20,976 (38.5%) (2023 Infometrics)	+ 16% by 2035

BACKGROUND

With its strong base of world-leading businesses, Lower Hutt has great potential for the future. There is significant infrastructure investment planned over the next decade including Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi, Wellington Water and Hutt Valley transport, which will provide jobs, transform the city centre, and provide business and investment opportunities.

Employers in Lower Hutt provide 52,500 jobs across a diverse range of sectors, including retail, education and manufacturing, as well as emerging industries such as game design, research and deep tech.

The construction industry is the city's largest employer, followed by health care and social assistance sectors. Lower Hutt's top industries by GDP are professional, scientific and technical services, followed closely by manufacturing. Nearly 40% of jobs in Lower Hutt are classified as highly skilled, with an increasing proportion of residents holding tertiary qualifications.

Professional, scientific and technical services

Lower Hutt is home to several key science and research organisations, including GNS Science, Callaghan Innovation, and Victoria University's Ferrier Research Institute and Paihau-Robinson Research Institute. The Gracefield Innovation Quarter provides facilities and expertise to set up high-tech businesses, such as Hot Lime Labs and Bspkl - which have spun out of Callaghan Innovation and GNS Science. There is potential for more start-up businesses to grow towards their commercialisation stage in partnership with science and research organisations and universities. There are also a growing number of lawyers, accountants and other professional services in Lower Hutt.

Manufacturing

Lower Hutt has a long history of manufacturing, and this sector contributed 9.4% of GDP in 2023 (\$713m). Manufacturers include Fraser Engineering, Metco Engineering, Times-7, Formway and Displayways. There are strong opportunities in advanced manufacturing, and harnessing Industry 4.0 technologies (digital transformation) to overcome geographical limitations, enhance competitiveness and reduce carbon emissions.

Construction and industry

Over 7,000 people in Lower Hutt are employed in construction, which accounted for \$599m in 2023, nearly 8% of Lower Hutt's total GDP. Lower Hutt is also home to New Zealand's largest trades training facility, Wellington Regional School of Construction (WelTec).

The broader context

"We have a convergence of education, research, innovation, manufacturing and collaboration that establishes the region as the centre for high value manufacturing, technology and science for Aotearoa."

Patrick McKibbin, CE, Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce.

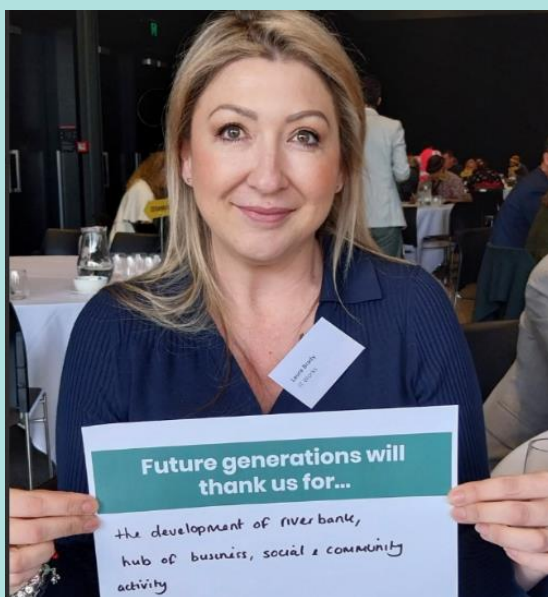
Our city has weathered a difficult economic period following the COVID-19 pandemic, but growth is projected to pick up slowly. The OECD short-term forecasts for the global economy indicates "cautious optimism," with confidence improving post-covid.

However, recent job losses throughout the public sector in Wellington, high inflation, high interest rates, increased insurance, rates and rental costs are having an impact on Lower Hutt's economy and businesses.

Our country and city have an ageing population, which will affect the future workforce. In 1960 New Zealand had seven workers for every retiree; by 2075 that ratio will be 2:1. Educating and training our younger, growing Māori and Pacific population will be important. International migration will be a critical contributor to population growth. Technological advancements, developing a low-emissions economy, and responding to the impacts of climate change are critical issues now, and into the future.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE LOWER HUTT COMMUNITY

People saw great potential in innovation & technology, with suggestions of transforming Lower Hutt into 'Technology Valley,' establishing a deep tech hub on the back of CRIs/Gracefield, advanced manufacturing, and a research centre of excellence. There was hope that in the future *"we are known for our city's innovation,"* and a *"connected community of entrepreneurs that turn opportunities into jobs."* People were positive about Te Wai Tamamori o Te Awa Kairangi and hoped for a more vibrant, well-designed CBD, which becomes a 'destination location'. Challenges facing businesses included a lack of suitable commercial space, and lack of amenity in places like Gracefield, workforce shortages and difficulty attracting skilled talent. There were concerns about the future of High Street and potential closure of small businesses if they were not supported locally. The community were keen to grow local employment opportunities, particularly for young people, with calls for a 'living wage' city, and more highly paid jobs.



The wider region faces an industrial land shortage over the next 30 years. Seaview and Petone (Pito One), in particular, have significant resilience, planning, and affordability challenges due to sea level rise and natural disaster risks. A Regional Industrial Land Study aims to identify suitable locations to meet future demand.



Our goal to achieve Thriving Businesses aligns with SDGs to provide decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, and responsible consumption and production. It also helps to reduce inequalities and eliminate poverty.



FUTURE FOCUS

This strategy focuses on sectors which have experienced historical growth, and hold the greatest potential for the future:

- Manufacturing
- Construction & Infrastructure
- Professional, Scientific & Technical Services.

We will also work to increase highly skilled jobs. These strategic priorities align with Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce's ten-year roadmap '35 by 35'.

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

INITIATIVE 5

DELIVER THE FULL POTENTIAL OF TE WAI TAKAMORI O TE AWA KAIRANGI

Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi will be a transformational project for Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt. We need to make the most of this opportunity and create a thriving Lower Hutt CBD-river district that attracts visitors and becomes a desirable destination for businesses, workers and residents.

Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi is a partnership between iwi – Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika and Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Greater Wellington, Hutt City Council and NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi.

Face the awa (river)

This project will reconnect our city with a taonga and one of Lower Hutt's greatest assets - Te Awa Kairangi - Hutt River. Our future city will have excellent riverside amenity, with buildings and a promenade overlooking a green river corridor – Riverside Park. Other opportunities include celebrating our Māori heritage and stories of Te Awa Kairangi, enhancing the indigenous biodiversity of the river corridor with native plantings, and recreational opportunities, including connecting the Hutt River Trail to the regional cycling and walking network - Te Ara Tupua and Tupua Horo Nuku (See *Treasured History and Culture*).

Revitalise the city centre

Our central city is a priority area for future growth in housing and business development. There will be a programme of physical enhancements and activation aimed at creating a vibrant, mixed-use environment that combines hospitality, inner city living, and commercial office spaces. This area represents prime real estate for new retail spaces, apartments and offices, making

collaboration with developers, investors and businesses essential.

Initial priorities include integrating with the new stopbank to create a promenade and mixed-use development, and key development sites along Te Awa Kairangi Hutt River. There will also be street upgrades, including a pedestrian friendly corridor from the new CityLink bridge to Queensgate, The Dowse and civic precinct. The design of our central city will be important, celebrating our Māori heritage and unique Te Awa Kairangi story, supporting active lifestyles, connecting people to the natural environment, and reflecting a diverse, modern city.

Improve connections to the CBD

This project will improve access to the city centre by foot, bike, train, bus and car. In the future, visitors will be able to travel by train from Wellington to a new Melling station, then wander across a pedestrian bridge into the city centre, reducing a current 20-minute walk to around 5 minutes. Walking, cycling and accessibility paths will also enhance connections through the CBD and to adjoining neighbourhoods. A new State Highway 2 Melling interchange and new Melling Bridge will provide the main way into the city for vehicles, with additional improvements to local road connections (See *Smart Infrastructure*).

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Improve connections to the CBD including relocating Melling station, a new pedestrian bridge connecting the station and city centre, and a new Melling interchange.	NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, GWRC
Programme of physical enhancement and activation to revitalise the city centre including riverside park, urban design and street improvements.	HCC, Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika, Ngāti Toa Rangatira

INITIATIVE 6

PROMOTE LOWER HUTT AS A HUB OF INNOVATION

Lower Hutt is home to world-leading manufacturing, research, science and technology industries - developing innovative products and services. We will build our reputation as a thriving ecosystem for innovation, celebrating our creative business successes with Aotearoa and the world.

Harness Industry 4.0 technologies

Lower Hutt has a strong manufacturing history and is one of the main industrial hubs in Wellington region. We will promote investment in Industry 4.0 technologies, such as automation, robotics, artificial intelligence and digitalisation to optimise manufacturing processes, improve productivity and enhance competitiveness in the global market. By enabling training programmes and incentives, the Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce will help businesses adopt and implement these technologies.

Stimulate STEM commercialisation

There will be a focus on supporting new businesses starting out into transforming ideas, knowledge and inventions into the commercialisation stage. The Chamber of Commerce will advocate for and support establishing a science, technology, engineering and high-value manufacturing (STEM) commercialisation innovation space, with an on-site workshop for prototyping and product creation.

Celebrate and showcase success stories

We will highlight and celebrate local innovative businesses – sharing success stories, including Māori businesses and young entrepreneurs. This could include case studies, testimonials and promotional

materials showcasing unique products and technologies developed in Lower Hutt. We will celebrate business success through the Wellington Regional Business Excellence Awards and encourage innovative businesses to enter local and national awards.

Research and development

The Chamber of Commerce will advocate for collaborative research and development projects between businesses, government and education-based research organisations. This could involve joint grant applications and collaborative research agreements to address industry challenges, develop innovative solutions and drive technological advancements. It will also support events and initiatives where businesses can learn about the latest research developments and explore potential collaboration.

Innovation activities

To foster creativity, problem-solving, and cross-sector collaboration, we will support innovation challenges and hackathons. These events will connect businesses, start-ups, researchers, entrepreneurs, and students to address industry challenges, explore new opportunities, and develop innovative solutions and products.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Build a thriving ecosystem for innovation by supporting Industry 4.0 technologies, STEM commercialisation and innovation activities.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce
Celebrate and showcase local success stories to build Lower Hutt's reputation for innovation.	HVCC, HCC

INITIATIVE 7

NURTURE COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

We will create a fertile environment that promotes connection and collaboration between businesses, government and industry to super-charge growth.

Industry-specific forums and networking events

The Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce will establish industry-specific forums and run an ongoing programme of events for the key sectors of focus:

- Manufacturing.
- Professional, Scientific & Technical Services.
- Construction & Infrastructure.

Forums and events provide an opportunity to share insights, exchange ideas, address common challenges and identify opportunities for joint projects or initiatives. Events may include site visits, speakers and discussions, and small round tables. We will encourage local business leaders to participate - bringing their expertise and guidance to actively support the growth of their sector in the Hutt Valley.

Cross-sector partnerships

The Chamber of Commerce will also play a key role in connecting individual businesses to foster collaboration and will run ongoing cross-sector networking events.

Business incubator and accelerator

To support early-stage startups and expediate the growth of existing startups, we will advocate for the establishment of a business incubator and/or accelerator space in the Hutt Valley focused on the three key sectors. This would include appropriate workspace,

facilities and equipment to support startups into viable businesses.

Mana whenua and Pacific partnerships

We will work to strengthen partnerships between Lower Hutt's business community and mana whenua, and businesses and the Pacific community. By engaging earlier in planning, we can leverage each other's strengths, resources and expertise to achieve common objectives and drive positive outcomes for the city.

Business, government and industry events

Regular events and discussions will be held to enable local businesses to engage with elected officials, councillors and policy makers on issues of mutual interest. These forums encourage open dialogue, relationship building and collaborative problem-solving - fostering constructive relationships between the business community and decision-makers.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Encourage collaboration in key sectors through establishing industry-specific forums and networking events, and advocating establishment of incubator/accelerator space.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce
Strengthen partnerships between businesses, mana whenua and Pacific community, and hold events between business, government and industry.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce

INITIATIVE 8

INCREASE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION, GROWING SKILLS AND TALENT

As there is a strong correlation between the skill level of a city's workforce and prosperity, we will seek to equip our workforce with higher skill levels and attract new skilled workers to our city. A skilled talent pool will also attract and retain businesses. In 2023, 20,976 (38.5%) of Lower Hutt jobs were highly skilled. This strategy aims to increase highly skilled jobs by 16.5% by 2035.ⁱ

Build awareness of Lower Hutt as a great place to live, work and grow

We will support initiatives that build awareness of Lower Hutt as a great place to live, work and grow skills. Delivering this strategy's key initiatives will strengthen our reputation as a centre of innovation and vibrant city of diverse cultures, where everyone is warmly welcomed. We will highlight job opportunities, career prospects, and the many benefits of living and working in Lower Hutt.

Attract skilled migrants

There will be a collaborative effort between the Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce, government agencies, industry associations and migration support organisations to attract skilled talent and migrants to Lower Hutt.

Develop specialised talent

We will develop initiatives to attract, retain and develop talent in specialised fields, such as engineering and advanced manufacturing. This includes partnerships between the Chamber of Commerce and educational institutions to promote specialised training programmes, apprenticeships and internships. The Chamber of Commerce will also support further development of:

- Hutt Valley Manufacturing Academy
- Hutt Valley Infrastructure Academy
- Support establishment of a Hutt Valley Water Academy
- Scope and implement a Hutt Valley Science Academy.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Attract new talent and skilled migrants, including initiatives that promote Lower Hutt as 'a great place to live, work and grow'.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce
Develop local talent in priority specialised fields, such as engineering and advanced manufacturing.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce

INITIATIVE 5: DELIVER THE FULL POTENTIAL OF TE WAI TAKAMORI O TE AWA KAIRANGI (RIVERLINK)		
STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Improve connections to the CBD including relocating Melling station, a new pedestrian bridge connecting the station and city centre, and a new Melling interchange.	NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, GWRC	
Programme of physical enhancement and activation to revitalise the city centre including riverside park, urban design and street improvements.	HCC, Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika, Ngāti Toa Rangatira	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

INITIATIVE 6: PROMOTE LOWER HUTT AS A HUB OF INNOVATION		
STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Build a thriving ecosystem for innovation by supporting Industry 4.0 technologies, STEM commercialisation and innovation activities.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce	
Celebrate and showcase local success stories to build Lower Hutt's reputation for innovation.	HVCC, HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

INITIATIVE 7: NURTURE COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS		
STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Encourage collaboration in key sectors through establishing industry-specific forums and networking events, and advocating establishment of incubator/accelerator space.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce	
Strengthen partnerships between businesses, mana whenua and Pacific community, and hold events between business, government and industry.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

INITIATIVE 8: INCREASE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION, GROWING SKILLS AND TALENT		
STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Attract new talent and skilled migrants, including initiatives that promote Lower Hutt as 'a great place to live, work and grow'.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce	
Develop local talent in priority specialised fields, such as engineering and advanced manufacturing.	Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Number of highly skilled jobs		+18% 2035

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1

HIGHLIGHT SUCCESS STORIES.

Celebrate your business successes to showcase innovative work happening in Lower Hutt.

2

ATTEND NETWORKING EVENTS. Share insights, exchange ideas and seek out opportunities for joint initiatives.

3

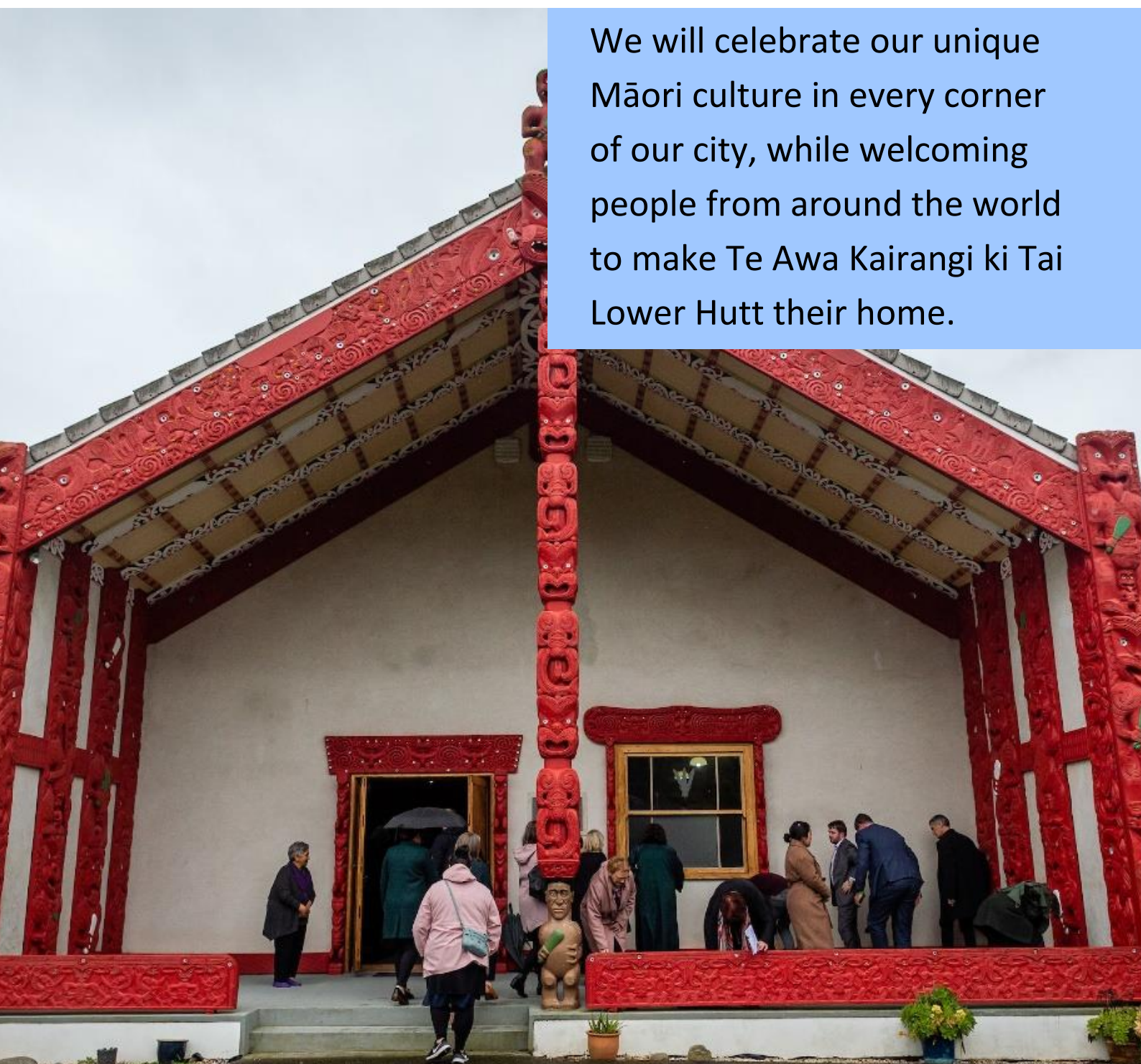
TRAIN YOUNG TALENT. Offer training, internships and apprenticeships to develop talent.

4

PROMOTE LOWER HUTT AS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND GROW. Highlight job opportunities and benefits of living and working here to attract skilled talent and migrants.

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

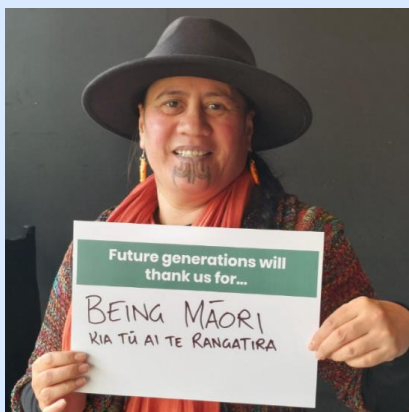
Hutt's population identified as Pākehā/European, and a decade later, the majority ethnic group had dropped to 64% in 2023. One in five people in Lower Hutt (21,000) identify as Māori.

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

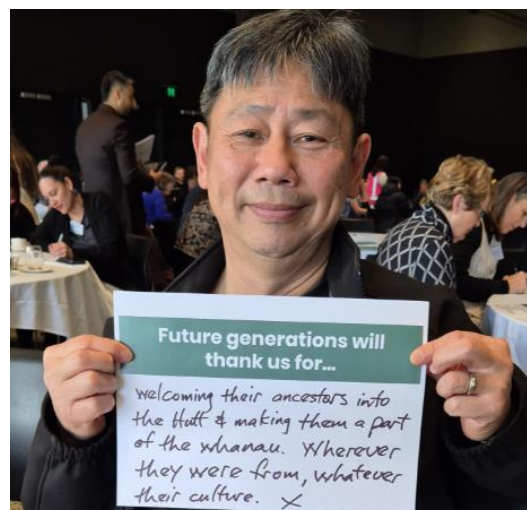
connect, experience different cultures and global cuisine. The continuation of Riverbank Weekend Market is a priority - it features fresh produce and food trucks selling cuisine from around the world, with live music and cultural performances. Other market opportunities will be explored including occasional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