

Strategic direction
for the Waikato Regional Council
2010-2013



1 Introduction

This document (referred to as ‘the strategy’) sets the direction for the Waikato Regional Council over the current council term. Put simply, it sets out what we do, why we do it and the value we provide to our community. The strategy confirms that the Waikato Regional Council has a leadership role to play in helping to meet a vision of the Waikato competing globally, caring locally. The strategy articulates how we will direct our focus towards a greater involvement in regional leadership on economic and environmental issues. Regional leadership includes looking at issues from the region’s perspective and working with others to achieve a shared regional vision. Regional leadership does not always mean that the Waikato Regional Council should take the lead on an issue. Rather, it requires that the Waikato Regional Council works out what part it can play in addressing any particular economic and environmental issue to add value to the region.

The strategy reflects the Waikato community’s aspirations and identifies the Waikato Regional Council’s contribution to achieving these aspirations. As such, the strategy provides the context for the Long Term Plan (LTP) and guides our business. Through the LTP, all staff and the community should be able to see the link between the work staff do and the Waikato Regional Council’s mission. This link should be able to be tracked from project/workstream briefs, through key strategies and policy documents to the strategy. Refer Figure 1 overleaf for how it all fits together.

The strategy will guide council as it prioritises the work that the Waikato Regional Council does as well as providing direction on how this work is undertaken.

The Waikato Regional Council will ensure through the LTP that it has the capacity and capability to deliver its mission effectively. Achievement of these internal requirements will be measured by the key performance indicators of the chief executive.

The strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the Waikato Regional Council is still focused on the ‘right’ outcomes and can deliver on the goals set in the strategy.





Photo: Fonterra Group Co-operative Limited



2 The heart of it

Vision for the Waikato region

Competing globally, caring locally.

Mission

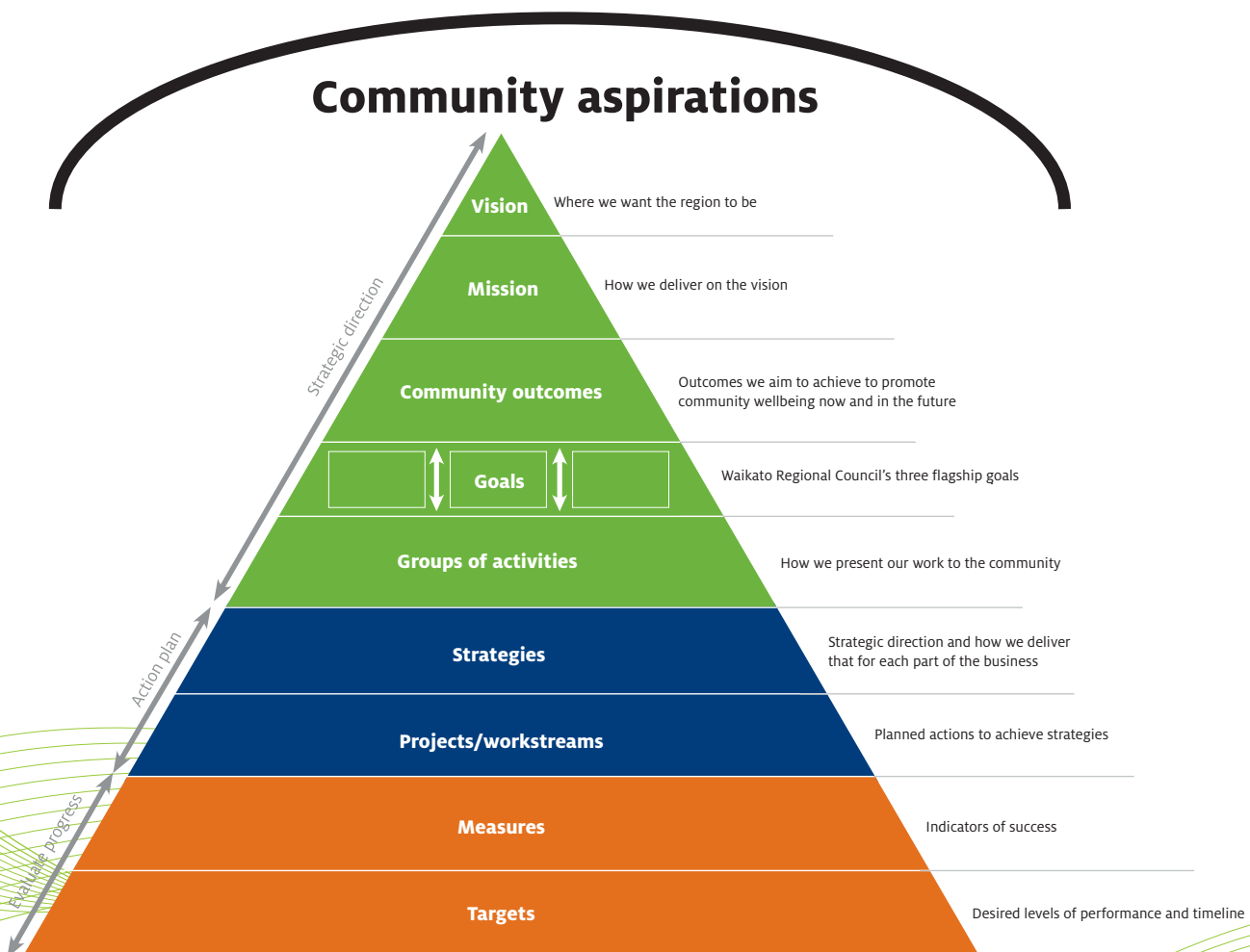
To provide regional leadership to balance economic and environmental outcomes to enable the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of current and future generations.

Flagship goals

- The values of land and water resources are sustained across the Waikato region.
- The people of the region collaborate to achieve a shared vision of the Waikato competing globally, caring locally.
- The Waikato Regional Council meets its legislative co-governance requirements by working together in good faith and a spirit of co-operation.

Principles

The Waikato Regional Council will provide services in a trusted and prudent way.



3 Vision

Competing globally, caring locally

The future of the Waikato region is increasingly dependent on our ability to respond to the major trend of the world becoming more and more socially and economically connected. The social and cultural wellbeing of local communities is inextricably linked to the regional and national economy which, in turn, is linked to the global economy. This vision recognises the importance of these connections. In particular, being able to take advantage of global opportunities requires strong local communities with healthy environments.

The Waikato is already strong and an important contributor to the wellbeing of New Zealand, but there are opportunities for the community's and country's wellbeing to grow. The region is home to significant environmental resources and a source of prosperity through export earnings. The Waikato is also a centre of culture and heritage and a community where all members are valued.

The Waikato region needs to focus on those opportunities that match its strengths, such as supplying the rapidly increasing global demand for food. However, because of our distance from markets and small size, this means focusing on exporting premium quality products (including tourism).

Critical success factors to achieve this vision are a high quality environment, innovation (including skilled labour), efficient supply chains (including transport systems and compliance) and collaborative leadership. The Waikato Regional Council looks forward to playing its part to help achieve this vision.



4 Mission

To provide regional leadership to balance economic and environmental outcomes to enable the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of current and future generations.



The vision for the region cannot be achieved by the Waikato Regional Council on its own. The Waikato Regional Council's mission sets out how it will best add value to the community's and New Zealand's wellbeing.

The mission recognises the Waikato Regional Council's geographic reach, its intergenerational focus and expertise and legislative mandate and responsibilities across the four wellbeings. Providing regional leadership means the Waikato Regional Council will take a proactive approach to identifying and addressing regional economic and environmental issues, but does not assume the Waikato Regional Council should always take the lead.

The mission recognises the linkages between the wellbeings of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) – particularly those between the economy and environment – and the need to ensure actions today still enable social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing to flourish for future generations. The mission recognises that the Waikato Regional Council has particular expertise and statutory roles in a number of areas and that it can therefore add value to the community in ways other organisations cannot. Some of the things the Waikato Regional Council is currently committed to doing to achieve this mission are:

- providing opportunities for people to use natural and physical resources while managing the effects of activities on the environment
- having a leading role in enhancing biodiversity and biosecurity
- facilitating regional development
- planning strategically for an integrated safe and sustainable transport system
- ensuring delivery of quality public transport services for regional communities
- maintaining infrastructure like flood management
- ensuring navigation safety on harbours and lakes
- managing impacts of natural hazards
- helping to plan and respond to civil defence emergencies
- supporting strategic thinking for our region's future.

The strategy signals that the Waikato Regional Council will not be continuing with business as usual. The strategy requires a more proactive approach by the Waikato Regional Council to ensure that its work does balance economic and environmental outcomes for the region. The strategy also signals the Waikato Regional Council's desire to work with others to deal with regional issues, getting involved where it is the best agency to do so.

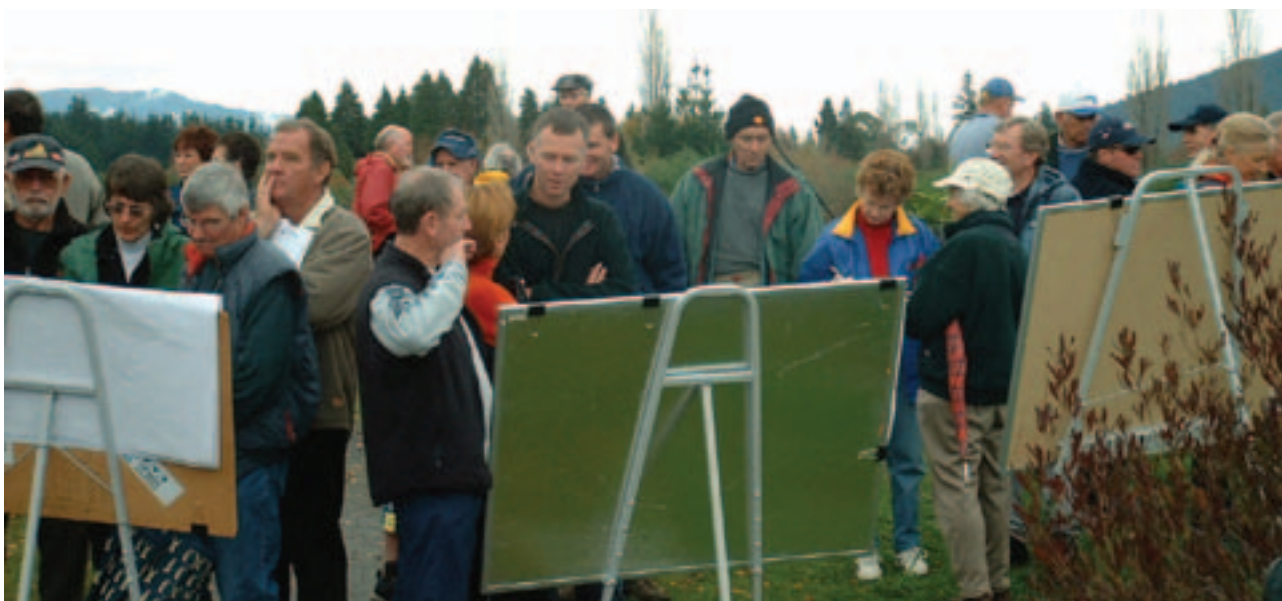
5 Principles of good governance

The Waikato Regional Council will provide services in a trusted and prudent way.

Underpinning the Waikato Regional Council's vision, mission and flagship goals are the principles of good governance. These are derived from section 14 of the LGA. Under this provision local authorities are required to act in accordance with various principles, including:

- conducting business in an open, transparent, and democratically accountable manner, and give effect to its desired outcomes in an efficient and effective manner
- making itself aware of, and have regard to, the views of all its communities
- in decision making, taking account of the diversity of the community, the interest of current and future communities, and likely impacts on the four wellbeings
- providing opportunities for Māori to contribute to decision making processes
- cooperating with other local authorities
- conducting commercial transactions with sound business practice.

In addition, the Waikato Regional Council acknowledges the importance of having a constructive relationship with central government. This is important so the council understands how it can contribute to achieving the government's policy agenda as well as making sure that the region's issues are understood by central government.





6 Community outcomes and groups of activities

6.1 Community outcomes

Community outcomes are defined in the LGA as “the outcomes council aims to achieve in order to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of our region in the present and for the future”.

The Waikato Regional Council’s current set of regional outcomes was approved by council in March 2011 and will be consulted on as part of the 2012-22 Long Term Plan. These outcomes are a subset of a broader set of community aspirations identified through a comprehensive multi-agency community visioning process branded Choosing Futures Waikato. The subset are the things the community has told us are important to their wellbeing and which council directly contributes to.

The outcome statements are grouped by council’s expression of the four wellbeings.

Community partnerships

- A. Our region is renowned for linking environmental awareness with community action.
- B. Heritage sites and landscapes of significance to whanau, hapū and iwi are preserved and valued.
- C. All our people and communities can participate in decision making.
- D. Iwi, hapū and Māori work together with central government, local government and community organisations in mutually beneficial partnerships.

Environmental quality

- A. The iconic landscapes and natural features of our environment define and sustain us. We respect and celebrate them as taonga.
- B. Our natural environment is protected and respected. Its ecological balance is restored, its air, soil and water quality is improved and its native biodiversity is enhanced.
- C. We are aware of what we need to do to look after our environment.
- D. Our coastal and waterway environments are restored and preserved, and access to them is maintained.
- E. Our region’s waterways have consistently high water quality.
- F. Waste reduction, recycling, energy conservation and energy efficiency are promoted and are part of how we all live.
- G. We use land management practices that protect and sustain our soil and land.

Regional economy

- A. We take a practical and coordinated approach to planning and providing services, which works effectively across boundaries and sectors and respond to our communities’ needs.
- B. We encourage planning and practices that protect and sustain our productive resources.
- C. Our region has a reputation for entrepreneurship, innovation, research and education, attracting investment and people to work, study and visit.

Safe and resilient communities

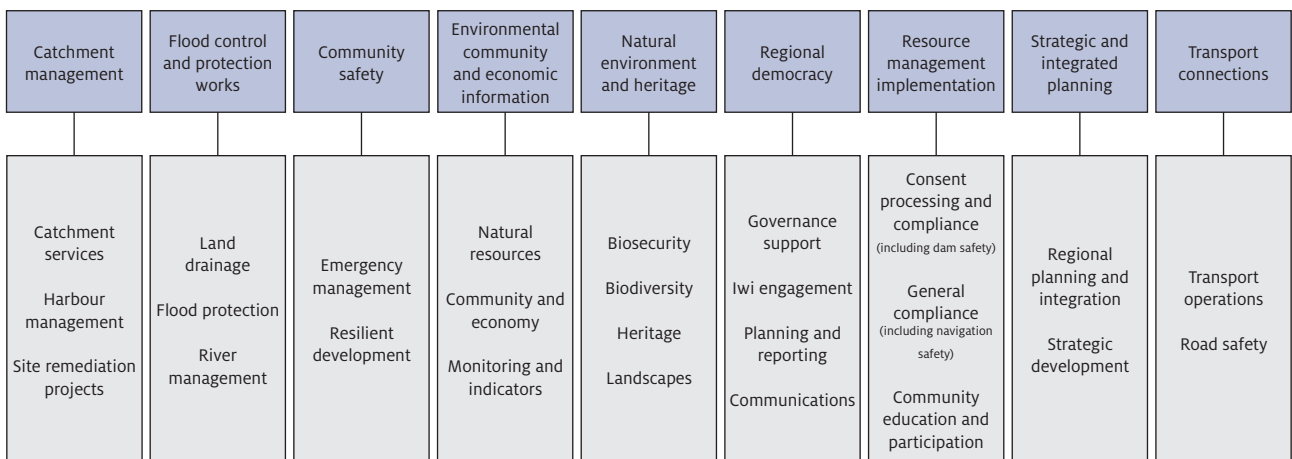
- A. Our historic places are retained and cared for.
- B. Our economy is built on primary industries and we encourage planning and practices that protect and sustain our productive resources.
- C. We have reliable, efficient and well planned infrastructure and services.

For more information please refer to the 2012–2022 Long Term Plan.

6.2 Groups of activities

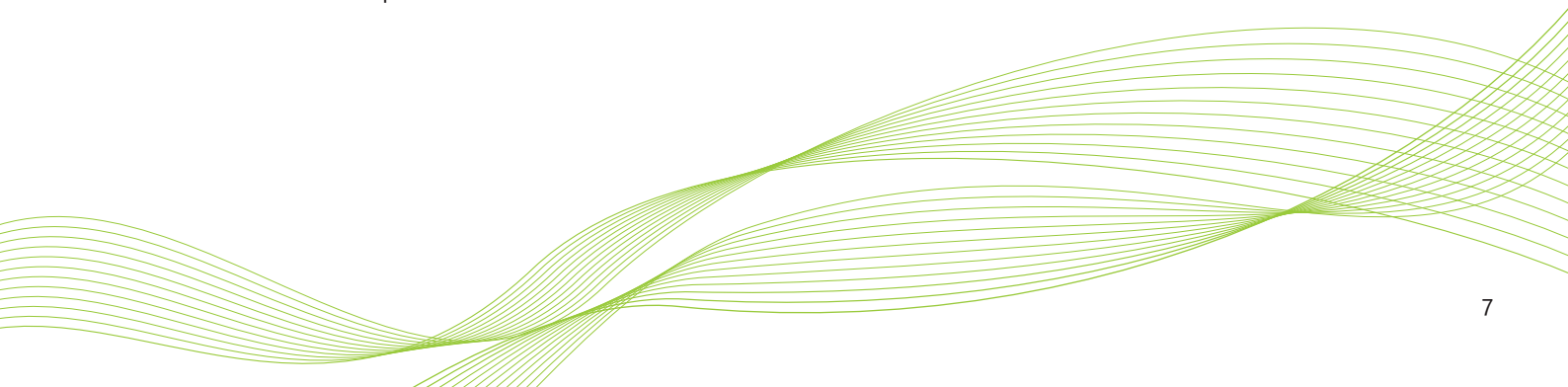
For the purpose of transparent external reporting via the LTP, Annual Plan and Annual Report councils are required to organise their work into groups of activities (GOA).

The Waikato Regional Council has nine GOAs with a number of activities sitting under each GOA. These are:



In the LTP, council must show how its groups of activities contribute to its community outcomes. This strategic linkage provides the rationale for service delivery.

For more information please refer to the 2012–2022 LTP.



7 Flagship goals

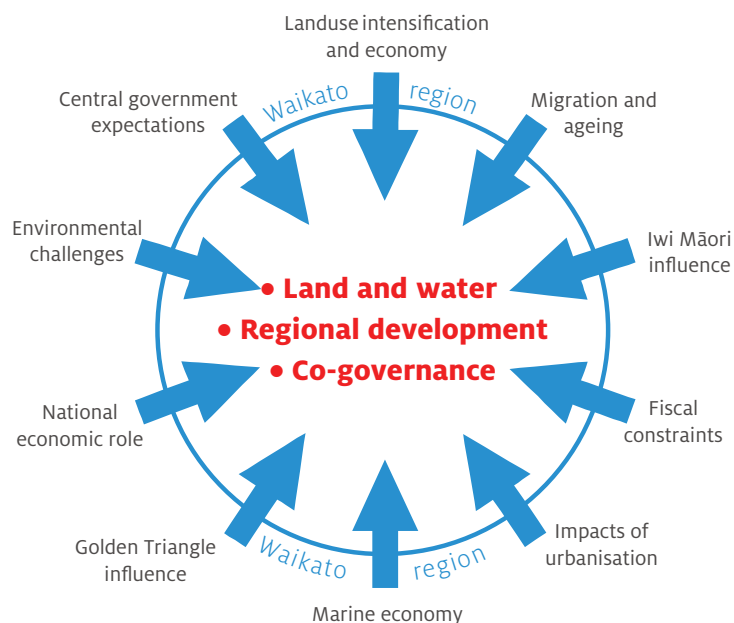


Figure 2: Flagship goals and drivers for change.

The council has identified three flagship goals for the current council term to focus attention on and/or change its approach to these areas of its business, so as to deliver desired outcomes. These three flagship goals are by no means standalone and should be read and understood as a group. The goals are connected and cut across all four wellbeings, GOAs in the LTP and functional groups within the Waikato Regional Council.

Not all of the Waikato Regional Council's business is covered expressly by a flagship goal. This does not mean these other parts of the business are not important. They are still essential to the future of the region and are addressed in a number of strategies, projects and workstreams and by staff providing critical corporate support to the business. Delivering on all this work via the LTP will help the Waikato Regional Council meet its mission.

Focusing efforts on the three flagship goals is a proactive way for the Waikato Regional Council to address drivers for change that are impacting the Waikato region. These drivers, set out in Figure 2 above, are a mixture of global, national and drivers particular to the region.

Flagship goals relate to:

- sustaining land and water values
- facilitating regional development
- meeting co-governance requirements.

7.1 Sustain land and water values

Goal: The values of land and water resources are sustained across the Waikato region.

To achieve this goal we will

- Ensure sound governance and management arrangements are in place between the Waikato Regional Council, iwi and the Waikato River Authority to make decisions on the values of land and water resources.
- Implement the Regional Policy Statement.
- Set environmental limits and targets for water quality through the Regional Plan review in a way that encourages innovation and provides certainty to resource users.
- Determine pathways to achieve water quality targets and protect values of the land resource, including the roles of different agencies.
- Manage rivers and catchments within a framework that recognises:
 - community and cultural needs and aspirations
 - natural risks
 - economic and environmental sustainability.

This goal will be measured by making sure

- Resource users know the prescribed environmental limits and act within them.
- The process for achieving the limits is understood and supported by the community.
- Integrated catchment management services are managed to the performance standards agreed with communities and as set out in zone plans.
- Positive environmental change to the values of land and water resources is achieved over time.





Discussion

The Waikato Regional Council is the agency mandated to ensure the effects of activities on the environment are managed within acceptable limits under the Resource Management Act and other pieces of legislation. Undertaking this role is important as we rely on natural and physical resources for our social, cultural and economic wellbeing, as will future generations.

The use of our natural and physical resources is causing declining quality and quantity or availability in many ways. The Waikato Regional Council is working hard to address this decline. Many of these concerns are being addressed by work that is already underway, such as the provision of air quality incentives, Variation 6 to the Waikato Regional Plan, growth projects and an aquaculture strategy.

This goal relates to sustaining the values of land and water because this is perhaps the most complex matter identified as being of particular concern. During the council's term, these action areas are deliberately designed to focus attention on intensive pastoral agriculture and arable farming. These activities are the current priority as they have the potential to cause significant adverse effects if they are not managed in an integrated way.

In order to successfully achieve its goal, the Waikato Regional Council will need to work closely with other agencies that have similar desires, such as the Waikato River Authority.

7.2 Facilitate regional development

Goal: The people of the region collaborate to achieve a shared vision of the Waikato competing globally, caring locally.

To achieve this goal we will

- Facilitate the development of a vision for the region with territorial authorities, iwi and key stakeholders.
- Facilitate the development of a sustainable development strategy, including a regional spatial plan, to support the vision for the region.
- Facilitate collaborative management of regional issues with territorial authorities, neighbouring regional councils, central government, iwi and key stakeholders to support the development of the Waikato region. Opportunities for collaboration may include:
 - shared services opportunities
 - possible local government restructuring
 - development of an economic development strategy
 - development and protection of key regional infrastructure, such as high speed broadband
 - sharing joint information
 - alignment of direction within the 'Golden Triangle'¹
 - speaking with a united voice on regional issues to central government
 - development of a Genuine Progress Index² for the region to measure success.
- Deliver on key the Waikato Regional Council initiatives that contribute to an agreed vision for the region, such as a regulatory framework for aquaculture and the Regional Walking and Cycling Strategy for the Waikato region.

This goal will be measured by making sure

- Strategic regional partnerships are developed and maintained.
- A vision for the region is developed with territorial authorities, iwi and key stakeholders.
- A sustainable development strategy is developed.
- Key issues are addressed from a regional perspective.



¹ The 'Golden Triangle' is made up of the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Auckland regions. It is home to over 48 per cent of New Zealand's population (as at Census 2006), contributes almost 50 per cent of New Zealand's GDP (as at 2003) and includes a number of key freight routes.

² Genuine Progress Index (GPI) is an index to measure the economic growth of a country. The GPI nets the positive and negative results of economic growth to examine whether or not it has benefited people overall. The GPI is therefore a measure of wellbeing, sustainability and quality of life (refer www.gpiatlantic.org for more information).



Discussion

This goal signals a more active regional development role for the Waikato Regional Council to achieve the community's four wellbeings. This involves looking at issues from a regional perspective and having a greater focus on facilitating social and economic outcomes in particular. The goal acknowledges the importance of the Waikato region meeting New Zealand's desired outcomes and the potential to offer even more than its current 9.1 per cent of New Zealand's GDP and \$3.7 billion of exports per annum.

To be successful, the Waikato Regional Council will facilitate a process with others that:

- charts the best course for the region
- has a look at options for achieving the vision
- collaboratively prioritises actions for the Waikato Regional Council and others to address regional issues.

It should be noted that the Waikato Regional Council is proposing a role for the council that complements and builds on the work we and others already do – it's about fully utilising our joint skills and knowledge, adding value and working cooperatively. Regional development does not mean that the Waikato Regional Council is seeking to take over other organisations' functions, nor that the Waikato Regional Council considers it is always the best organisation to lead a piece of work.

7.3 Meet co-governance requirements

Goal: The Waikato Regional Council meets its legislative co-governance requirements by working together in good faith and a spirit of co-operation.

To achieve this goal we will

- Ensure iwi representation and active engagement in appropriate council decision making processes.
- Acknowledge and respect iwi values in council decision making processes.
- Implement Treaty of Waitangi settlement legislation.
- Support current negotiations and acknowledge outstanding treaty claims.
- Ensure a culture in the Waikato Regional Council of awareness and understanding of Māori values.

This goal will be measured by making sure

- Processes are in place which provide opportunities for iwi to contribute to the decision making processes of the Waikato Regional Council in line with co-governance requirements of treaty settlement legislation.
- Settlement legislation is implemented in line with statutory timeframes.
- A proactive approach is taken to addressing iwi concerns identified in outstanding treaty claims.
- Council and staff are encouraged to build appropriate Māori related knowledge and understanding.
- Partnerships are in place between the Waikato Regional Council and iwi.





Discussion

Iwi throughout the Waikato region have expressed a desire to work in various forms of partnership with the Waikato Regional Council. Some of these aspirations are being embedded via Treaty of Waitangi settlements whilst others are expressed by memoranda of understanding and other formal and informal relationships.

The new co-governance framework for the Waikato River, in particular, represents a new era in Treaty of Waitangi settlements and iwi engagement as a whole. Five river iwi are involved – Waikato-Tainui, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Raukawa, Te Arawa and Ngāti Maniapoto. Co-governance aspects of the settlements that involve the Waikato Regional Council include:

- individual joint management agreements between each river iwi and their local authorities, including the Waikato Regional Council
- integrated management plans
- recognition of customary activities and
- co-management agreements for managed lands and sites of significance (Waikato-Tainui specific).

Negotiations are underway to settle treaty claims between the Crown and the Hauraki Collective. The collective is seeking to negotiate redress over natural resources, including the Waihou and Piako catchments. The Framework Agreement, signed on 1 October 2010, states that the Crown and the collective will explore, in consultation with local authorities, the collective's aspirations and possible arrangements for increased involvement in the governance or management of the catchments of these rivers.

A number of other treaty claims are also under negotiation or remain outstanding. It is not yet known what role co-governance may play in any future settlements.

The challenge for the Waikato Regional Council is to participate constructively in treaty negotiations and to embed the resulting legislative requirements into day-to-day business processes. For the Waikato River settlements, these processes include revising policies and plans to align with Vision and Strategy reviews, engaging with the Waikato River Authority as an additional statutory body charged with restoring and protecting the Waikato River, and establishing joint committees with river iwi partners.

8 Review of goals and strategy

The strategy, with its long term focus, is susceptible to changing circumstances. It is therefore important that the strategy is able to adapt when there are major global changes or significant changes to the regional situation. In these circumstances, the strategy needs to be kept current and relevant.

The Waikato Regional Council will measure achievement of the three flagship goals on an annual basis to ensure the Waikato Regional Council is still focused on the 'right' issues and can deliver on the goals. A review of the whole strategy will be undertaken every three years, in line with each council term, to determine how effective the region has been in achieving its vision.

Indicators to measure achievement of the vision and the flagship goals are set out in the Appendix. These indicators draw on existing data sets that support Choosing Futures Waikato and MARCO (Monitoring and Reporting Community Outcomes), as well as monitoring currently being undertaken by the Waikato Regional Council. It should be noted that indicators to measure achievement of the regional development goal will need to be developed further over time.

Appendix – Outcomes indicators

Please note that the indicators for the strategy are based on existing information, mainly using indicators developed by the following programmes. There is considerable overlap, in that the same information/indicator is used by both programmes.

- 1) MARCO (Monitoring and Reporting Community Outcomes), a collaborative initiative with all district councils in the Waikato region, Hamilton city, selected central government departments and other agencies focusing on the regional community outcomes.
- 2) Waikato Regional Council environmental indicators. These were originally developed as part of the State of the Environment Report 1998, and are continuously updated and modified.

MARCO indicators – www.choosingfutures.co.nz/MARCO-indicators

Waikato Regional Council indicators – www.waikato.govt.nz/indicators

There are some deficiencies and gaps in the availability of outcomes indicator information to effectively track and report on progress in certain areas, for example:

- economic development, innovation and entrepreneurship
- labour market, skills and talent, productivity, migrants
- investment, savings and debts
- ecosystem services, especially their monetary values
- inequality, social capital and cohesion
- civil defence and emergency response, flood management, navigation safety
- co-management, cultural health indicators.

Waikato Regional Council will consider how best to fill these gaps over time.

Considerable international effort (OECD, UN, Worldbank and so on) is currently going into the development of a more balanced assessment and measurement of 'progress of society', complementing economic growth measures such as GDP with indices of wellbeing, such as GPI (Genuine Progress Index). Waikato Regional Council is at the forefront of this work, exploring options for a more balanced regional assessment of wellbeing and progress. This includes filling some of the gaps listed above and working towards a GPI.

Strategy section	Theme	Sub-theme	Indicator	MARCO	Waikato Regional Council	Comment
Vision	High quality environment	Air quality	Levels of air pollutants	✓	✓	
		Coast and marine	Coastal biology		✓	
			Extent of coastal habitats		✓	
			Protected coastal areas		✓	
			Estuarine water quality		✓	
			Pollutants in sediments		✓	
			Coastal water quality for recreation	✓		Work discontinued by Waikato Regional Council
		Geothermal	Geysers and sinter springs		✓	
		Groundwater	Levels of groundwater contaminants		✓	
		Lakes	Lake ecology (Lake Taupo)	✓	✓	

Strategy section	Theme	Sub-theme	Indicator	MARCO	Waikato Regional Council	Comment
			Lake recreation (Lake Taupo)	✓	✓	
			Nutrient enrichment (shallow lakes)	✓	✓	
			Distribution of large plants		✓	Not yet available (2012)
		Rivers and streams	River biology		✓	
			River water quality for ecology	✓	✓	
			River water quality for recreation	✓	✓	
			Sediment in rivers and streams		✓	Not yet available (2014)
		Wetlands	Extent of wetlands		✓	
			Protected wetland areas		✓	Not yet available (2012)
		Land and soil	Extent of native vegetation	✓	✓	
			Forest fragmentation		✓	
			Protected native vegetation areas	✓	✓	Not yet available (2012)
			Soil quality		✓	
	Innovation	R & D	Research funding	✓		Partial – university only
			Educational attainment of adult population	✓		
			Value added by innovative industries (% of GDP)			?
			Investment in R&D			?
		Employment	Employment numbers in innovative industries			?
	Efficient supply chains	Transport	Road traffic crashes, fatalities and injury rates	✓		
			Proximity to work, study and recreation	✓		
		Energy efficiency	Energy use relative to economic growth		✓	
			Greenhouse gas emissions	✓		
	Regional leadership		Confidence in council's decision making	✓		
			Confidence in council's approach to planning and providing services	✓		
Strategy section	Theme	Sub-theme	Indicator	MARCO	Waikato Regional Council	Comment

	People's views		Environmental attitudes (to environmental regulations)	✓	✓	
			Environmental concerns		✓	
			Satisfaction with environment		✓	
	Wellbeing	Quality of life	Overall perception of quality of life	✓		
			Perceptions of safety	✓		
			Perception of sense of pride in area	✓		
			Participation in sport and active leisure	✓		
			Participation in social networks and groups	✓		
			Participation in arts and cultural activities	✓		
			Median weekly income	✓		
			Unemployment rate	✓		
			Social deprivation index	✓		
	Sustainability		Genuine progress indicator (GPI)	✓	✓	Under development
			Ecological footprint	✓	✓	
Sustain land and water values	Land	Land and soil	All indicators as above for land and soil PLUS:	✓	✓	
			Land use	✓	✓	
			Stock density	✓	✓	
			Stock access to streams		✓	Not yet available (late 2011)
			Stream bank vegetation		✓	Not yet available (late 2011)
			Land use suitability		✓	Not yet available (2015)
			Fertiliser use on farms		✓	
			Soil loss by erosion		✓	Not yet available (2015)
			Landcare groups		✓	
			Rural subdivision	✓	✓	
	Water	Inland water	All indicators as above for groundwater, lakes, rivers and streams, wetlands PLUS:			
			Groundwater availability	✓	✓	
			Surface water availability	✓	✓	Not yet available (2015)
			Drinking water quality	✓		
		Coast and marine	All indicators as above for coast and marine	✓	✓	

Strategy section	Theme	Sub-theme	Indicator	MARCO	Waikato Regional Council	Comment
Facilitate regional development	Demographics		Population growth		✓	
			Population structure		✓	
	Economy		Regional GDP	✓		
			Regional GDP contributed by tourism	✓		
			Regional GDP contributed by primary industries	✓		
			Employment by sectors	✓	✓	
			Number of businesses (and employees by industry)	✓		
			Work opportunities matching skills	✓		
			Building consents (residential/non-residential)	✓		
			Total energy consumption	✓		
			Personal environmental actions		✓	
	Education		Educational attainment of adult population	✓		
	Democracy		Voter turnout	✓		
			Satisfaction with council's provision of opportunities for community involvement in decisions	✓		
	Sustainability		Genuine progress indicator (GPI)	✓	✓	Under development
			Ecological footprint	✓	✓	
Co-governance			Ongoing positive assessments provided to the Crown by the Waikato River Authority regarding council performance, as required by treaty settlement legislation			



Waikato



REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato