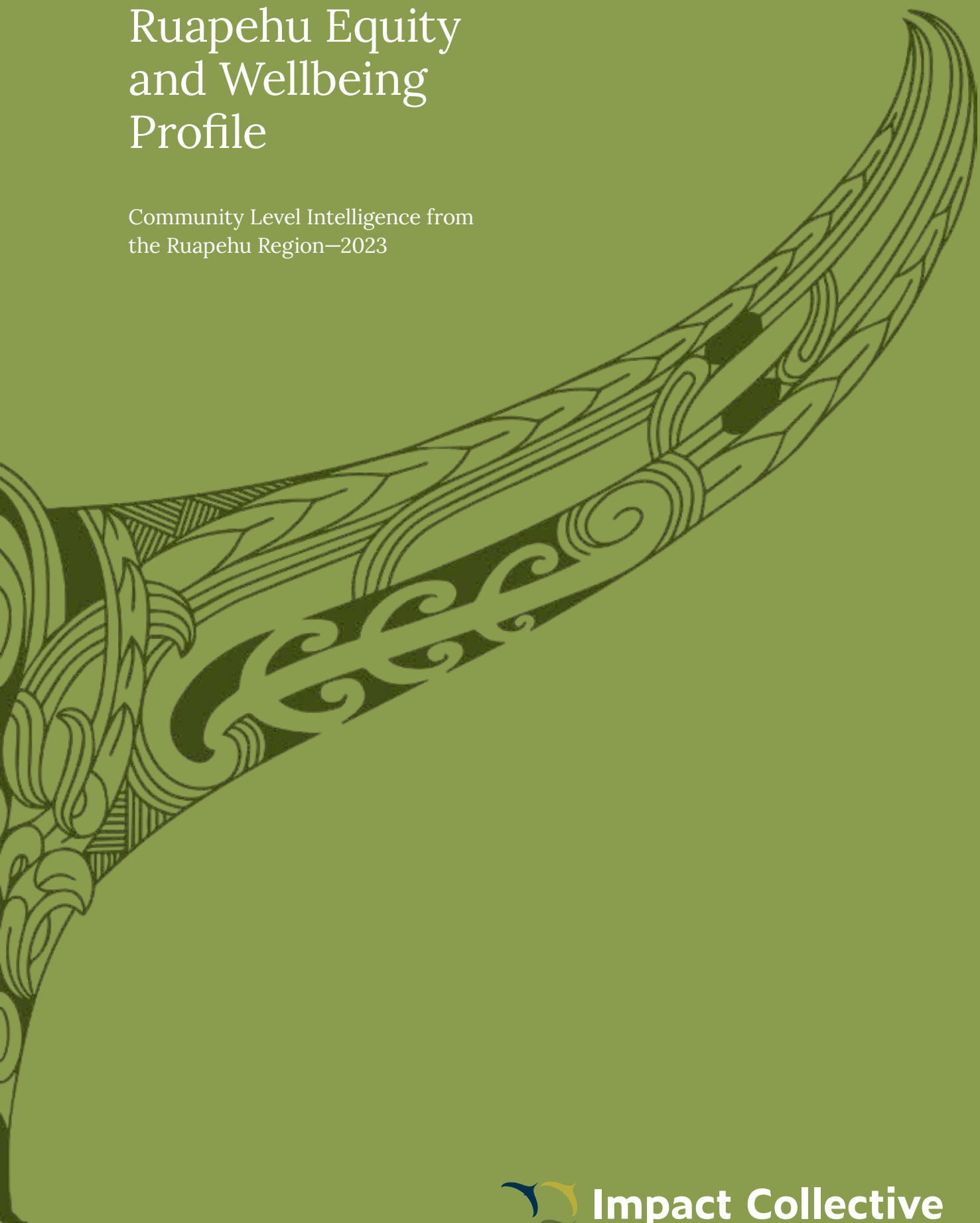


Ruapehu Equity and Wellbeing Profile

Community Level Intelligence from
the Ruapehu Region—2023



Impact Collective

Rangitikei, Ruapehu, South Taranaki and Whanganui

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Whakataukī

Me mahi tahi tātou
mō te oranga o te
katoa.

We should work together for the wellbeing
of everyone.

This Whakatauki acknowledges the team and community effort that it has taken to bring the data and people insights together in this Ruapehu Equity and Wellbeing Profile - its success has come from the contribution of many.

Our Manutaki



This design is based around the manutaki, the lead bird that guides the flock in a triangle formation during migration, the manutaki is supported and protected by rest of the flock.

This represents working together in unison for a common purpose.

Above the manu is the design known as manaia which can be used as a human form side profile of a face this represents unity of two people coming together, this forms koruru/wheku a face, this represents being transparent.

The design above the manaia/koruru is a design known as paakura it symbolises the rae of spiritual essence or spiritual belief it also represents the footprint of pukeko and is about being cautious knowing your surroundings, your environment before making decisions.

On the side of the bird's wings are two more manaia in a bird form this relates to interconnectedness our relationship with each other.

Next to this is a design known as whakarare this represents change and a new direction.

The harakeke/weave is about intergenerational relationships, it also symbolises binding of the kōrero or kaupapa.

At the bottom of the wing is a design known as pikopiko/koru this represents new beginnings and also represents nga tangata people/community.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi—Our Commitments

The Impact Collective is committed to being responsive to Māori as tangata whenua and recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi as Aotearoa New Zealand's founding document. The principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, as articulated by the Waitangi Tribunal and the New Zealand Courts provides a framework for how we are to fulfil our obligations under Te Tiriti on a daily basis. More recently, as outlined by the Ministry of Health, in 2019, the Hauora Report articulated five principles for primary care that are applicable to not only the wider health care system, but also to any person, organisation or Crown Agency working with Māori in our communities.

These principles are articulated as:

- **Tino rangatiratanga:** The guarantee of tino rangatiratanga, which provides for Māori self-determination and mana motuhake in the design, delivery, and monitoring of community services.
- **Equity:** The principle of equity, which requires the Crown to commit to achieving equitable outcomes for Māori. This is achieved through breaking down barriers and enabling equity of access to ensure equality of outcomes.
- **Active protection:** The principle of active protection, which requires the Crown to act, to the fullest extent practicable, to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori. This includes ensuring that it, its agents, and its Treaty partner, are well informed on the extent and nature of both Māori wellbeing outcomes and efforts to achieve Māori wellbeing equity.

- **Options:** The principle of options, which requires the Crown to provide for and properly resource kaupapa Māori services. Furthermore, the Crown is obliged to ensure that all services are provided in a culturally appropriate way that recognises and supports the expression of Te Ao Māori models of service delivery.
- **Partnership:** The principle of partnership, which requires the Crown and Māori to work in partnership in the governance, design, delivery, and monitoring of community services. This includes enabling Māori to express Tino Rangatiratanga over participation in governance, design, delivery, and monitoring of community services.

For the members of the Impact Collective, it is important that we enable the principles to guide our mahi. The purpose of the current mahi is to provide community level insights and intelligence to enable communities to partner on the development of services to create positive impacts for the people throughout the community. These services should focus on addressing equity of access to services in a manner that is consistent with tino rangatiratanga, active protection in the co-design, provide options to ensure culturally appropriate services and developed through a solutions focused, community-led partnership approach.

Acknowledgements

There are a number of individuals, organisations and partners that have informed and supported the mahi involved to create the first Ruapehu Equity and Wellbeing Profile. They are acknowledged below.

The Ruapehu Community; The organisations and individuals we have spoken to.

Over the last 4 months, we have been incredibly fortunate to have had such superb support and engagement from over 60 individuals, representing over 18 organisations within the community. Without them, we would not have the community voice, nor would our insights reflect the real, everyday experiences, of those who make up the Ruapehu community. We have been so fortunate to have them join us on this journey, and look forward to continuing to build and extend these relationships into the future.

Below are the organisations we have had the privilege of engaging with:

Workshops:

- Civil Defence
- Department of Conservation
- Ministry of Social Development
- Ohura Community Group
- Peak Chartered Accountants
- Raetihi Charitable Trust
- Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust
- Rotary Taumarunui
- Rural Support Trust
- Ruapehu District Council
- Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust
- Te Awanui-a-Rua Charitable Trust
- Volcano Vibe

Good Mahi Stories & Podcasts:

- Central King Country R.E.A.P
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand
- Kea Centre, Taumarunui High School
- Ohura A&P Show
- Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust
- Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust
- Women's Refuge

The Waikato Wellbeing Project, Ruapehu Whānau Transformation Project and TCLT.

The principle of working alongside the community to capture the lived experiences (the stories), and bringing this together with data (the stats) to generate community-led insights, is not a new concept. The Waikato Wellbeing Project, Ruapehu Whānau Transformation Project and TCLT are all great initiatives that have leveraged a similar model successfully within their respective communities, and have been great inspiration for the mahi now being undertaken by the Impact Collective.

Our Data Partner, DOT Loves Data.

Our data partner, DOT Loves Data, has an incredibly talented team of data scientists and data engineers that specialise in building simple, smart and beautiful data visualisation tools. They have been instrumental in the creation of our Equity and Wellbeing Data Dashboard, allowing us to have a single source of truth to gather data insights for our communities across our frameworks.

They have also played an integral role supporting and advising our team as we have endeavored to bring together the data insights with the stories we have captured from the community.

The Impact Collective Charitable Trust.

The Impact Collective established the Impact Collective (2020) Charitable Trust in November 2022. We would like to thank those that stood up as trustees, and those who continue to support the mahi through leadership, advice and significant funding contributions. The Impact Collective maintains its charitable kaupapa by continuing to provide these essential community level intelligence reports, free of charge, to the communities that have allowed us to share the taonga of their stories.



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Definitions and Acronyms

1080 – The brand name given to the synthetic form of sodium fluoroacetate, is used in New Zealand in efforts to control populations of possums, rats, stoat and rabbits, which are invasive species in the New Zealand environment.

AirBnB – An American San Francisco-based company operating an online marketplace for short- and long-term homestays and experiences.

Catch-22 – A dilemma or difficult circumstance from which there is no escape because of mutually conflicting or dependent conditions.

COVID-19 – An acute disease in humans caused by a coronavirus, which is characterised mainly by fever and cough and is capable of progressing to pneumonia, respiratory and renal failure, blood coagulation abnormalities, and death, esp. in the elderly and people with underlying health conditions. Also: the coronavirus that causes this disease.

CRG – Community Reference Group - A group formed to support the Ruapehu Whānau Transformation Project.

CV – Curriculum Vitae.

DHB – District Health Board.

DOC – Department of Conservation.

ECE – Early Childhood Education.

E-learning – Learning conducted via electronic media, especially on the internet.

Equity – In Aotearoa New Zealand, people have differences in economic, social and environmental outcomes that are not only avoidable but unfair and unjust. Equity recognises different people with different levels of advantage require different approaches and resources to get equitable economic, social or environmental outcomes.

Hapū – Sub-tribe.

Honesty Box – A method of charging for a service or a product, which relies upon each visitor paying at a box using the honour system.

IRD – Inland Revenue Department.

Iwi – Tribe.

Kaumatuā – Elders in Māori society.

Kaupapa Māori – Synonymously linked to Mātauranga Māori and underpinned by: Te Tiriti o Waitangi; self-determination; cultural validity; culturally preferred teaching; socioeconomic mediation of Māori disadvantage; whānau connections; collective aspirations; and respectful relationships underpinned by equality and reciprocity.

Kōhanga Reo – Māori language preschool.

LSF – Living Standards Framework.

Mahi – To work, do, perform, make, accomplish.

Mana motuhake – Self-determination, autonomy.

Mana whenua – Customary authority exercised by an Iwi or hapū in an identified area.

Manu Taki – Manu means bird. Taki means to entice, to lead, to bring along. Here the term Manu Taki is used as the general term for leadership. We are using the term Manu Taki to refer to our leaders who have stepped up to take a leadership role in catalysing the Impact Collective – Rangitīkei, Ruapehu, South Taranaki and Whanganui into action. It symbolises leadership, uplift and succession. Our Manu Taki are not alone if we share the load, together we will go further. This further applies to our movement, where the combined efforts of many are needed to achieve our targets.

Marae – Are symbols of tribal identity that are considered to be tūrangawaewae – a standing place, a place of belonging. Most marae include a meeting house (wharenuī) and a dining hall (wharekai). These are used for important events like funerals, tribal celebrations and educational workshops.

Mātauranga Māori – Māori knowledge systems: reflecting indigenous ways of thinking, relating, and discovering; links indigenous peoples with their environments and is often inspired by environmental encounters; and is conveyed within the distinctiveness of indigenous languages and cultural practices.

Mahi – Work.

MBIE – Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

MSD – Ministry of Social Development.

Ngāti Rangī – Ngā Waihua o Paerangi Trust.

NCEA – National Certificate of Educational Achievement.

NGO – Non Government Organisation.

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Pākehā – English, foreign, European, exotic - introduced from or originating in a foreign country.

RAL – Ruapehu Alpine Lifts.

Rangatahi – Younger generation, youth.

Rohe – Territory or boundaries of Iwi. In this instance it refers to the communities, whānau and individuals within Rangitīkei, Ruapehu, South Taranaki and Whanganui areas.

RWT – Ruapehu Whānau Transformation.

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals - Part of the United Nations 2030 Global Agenda.

SME – Small and medium-sized enterprises.

SpaceX – An American spacecraft manufacturer, launcher, and satellite communications company headquartered in California. SpaceX is planning to provide 100 percent mobile coverage across New Zealand.

StarLink – A satellite constellation system that aims to deliver global internet coverage. StarLink is run through SpaceX.

Studylink – A part of the Ministry of Social Development. StudyLink provides financial support to students, and connects them with the information they need to make informed financial and study decisions.

Tangata Whenua – In relation to a particular area, means the Iwi or hapū, that holds mana whenua over that area.

Te Ao Māori – Māori world view.

Te Reo/Te Reo Māori – Māori language.

Tikanga Māori – Protocols and customs. Approaches and protocols embedded in Māori customary values and practices.

Tikanga – The correct way to do things.

TSI – The programme formally known as The Southern Initiative.

Tūrangawaewae – Domicile, standing, place where one has the right to stand - place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship and whakapapa.

VIN – Violence Intervention Network.

Whakamā – To be ashamed, shy, bashful, embarrassed.

Whānau – Family, extended family.

WINZ – Work and Income New Zealand.

A message from the Ruapehu...

Live, Work, Play Ruapehu.

Welcome to the first Ruapehu Equity and Wellbeing Profile, an synergistic extension to our Living Ruapehu Portal Pūwhenua ki Ruapehu programme, and a first in our rohe where the team at the Impact Collective are able to present this level of community level feedback through the collection of data and lived experience narratives.

Since the release of the first Impact Collective Equity and Wellbeing Profile, the Impact Collective team have been working on engaging with organisations and providers who work within the community engagement field. The team have been committed to developing an environment through thought leadership and delivery of the Equity and Wellbeing Profiles, that encourages community engagement, authentic consultation and mana enhancing co-design. Throughout this engagement we have continued to engage with our All of Government partners and ensured that this style of community empowerment and engagement becomes part of the toolbox of how we enact government priorities into the future.

The Ruapehu District is currently undergoing a period of change, through the closure of the Chateau Tongariro, the uncertainty around the Ruapehu Alpine Lifts future, the systematic land purchasing of local farms for Carbon Farming and the changes to the Three Water reforms. Within local councils, this provides an opportunity to realign our purpose around the four wellbeings; social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing. As a result, we are implementing systems to enable the focus on co-governance, co-design and community engagement to move beyond words to lived experiences of the communities of whom we serve. The Impact Collective is affording an opportunity for the community to engage in how these services can be shaped into the future by utilising community stories into future decision making.

We would like to acknowledge the massive effort that the Impact Collective team has done in increasing community engagement through the community 'Good Mahi' stories, the development of the dashboard, completion of the community insights sessions and the completion of the Equity and Wellbeing Profile reports. These insights will be able to be used across the region, to support creating positive impacts in our communities into the future – you should all be proud of your efforts.

To our local agencies who have continued to support the Impact Collective - and to the strength that we have gained as a collective, thank you for being part of the journey. Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini – our strength is not as an individual, but as a collective.

Finally, to you, the reader. Please take the time to absorb the material in this report, and we look forward to seeing what Aotearoa New Zealand leading projects come from these insights.

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Weston Kirton

Mayor of the Ruapehu District

Clive Manley

Chief Executive

Ruapehu District Council

“These insights will be able to be used across the region, to support creating positive impacts in our communities into the future.

Weston Kirton and Clive Manley
Ruapehu

A message from our data partner...



The Impact Collective’s work is becoming the benchmark for community insight gathering in New Zealand. This initiative is a ground-breaking effort to improve equity and wellbeing for communities across the Central North Island of New Zealand. The Ruapehu District is unique in New Zealand. The District’s geography is dispersed across a large area, and each community from Waiouru to Ohakune to Raetihi to National Park and Taumarunui is distinct in its character, geography, employment, housing and visitor demand.

The in-depth data gathering and analysis by the Impact Collective complements work undertaken by the Ruapehu District Council for its liveability study. The extensive community interviews conducted by the Impact Collective team provide considerable insight into the district, which will help inform future initiatives, decision-making, and the delivery of services aimed at making the Ruapehu District an even better place to live.

The report is underpinned by current, local data and the analysis of Ruapehu’s social, cultural, environmental, and economic performance in line with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and New Zealand’s Living Standards Framework.

This is an outstanding piece of research that will benefit the Ruapehu District and its people significantly for many years to come.

Cheers,

Justin Lester
Government Director
DOT Loves Data

“I know it will benefit Ruapehu and its people significantly for many years to come.

Justin Lester
Government Director
DOT Loves Data

The Impact Collective Team



Tēnā koutou katoa
Ko Kōtirana te whakapaparanga mai engari
Ko Ahuriri te whenua tupu
Ko Ahuriri te kāinga
Kei Te Awahou au e noho ana
Ko Steve Carey tōku ingoa
Tēnā tatou katoa

Steve Carey
Government Director

A compelling sense of commitment to the community, to inspire, to acknowledge, to enable has driven the Impact Collective to support the removal of organisational and territorial boundaries to ensure positive impact for change is made possible. Bringing extensive experience in community engagement, authentic co-design principles has enabled the Impact Collective to deliver the presentation of data and people insights in a way that is mana enhancing for the people throughout the rohe.

Having worked in both public and private sector, I understand the importance to enabling those with lived experience and those who reside in the community to have a voice and be supported to remove the power imbalance in decision making. Only then can we enable communities to thrive.



Ko Ruahine te Pai Maunga
Ko Rangitīkei te Awa
Ko Tākitimu te Waka
Ko Ngāti Hauti tōku iwi
No Whanganui ahau
Ko Caleb Kingi tōku ingoa

Caleb Kingi
Creative Director

I'm a cinematographer based in Whanganui. My craft has allowed me to travel over Aotearoa and the world shooting for a range of govt organisations, SME's, NGO's, brands and individuals.

I have a passion for telling stories that bring positive change to people, communities and organisations. I love the place I call home, it's my place of belonging and I feel privileged being connected to the whenua and the people.



Tēnā koutou katoa
Ko Kōtirana te whakapaparanga mai engari
Ko Whanganui te whenua tupu
Kei Whanganui au e noho ana
Ko Danielle Horrocks tōku ingoa
Tēnā tatou katoa

Danielle Horrocks
Strategic Impact Director

A super passionate researcher, designer and life long learner.

I am an experienced human-centred strategist, designer and change agent with a wealth of experience working as a consultant across multiple agencies as well as working in-house within large organisations. I have a strong passion for emphasising with and understanding people, their needs, what drives them, and how this then plays out in their everyday experiences. By putting people and their needs at the heart of everything I do I am able to deliver valuable and actionable insights, strategies and outcomes that create meaningful, positive and lasting change.



Ko Whakarara te maunga
Ko Wainui te moana
Ko Mataatua te waka
Ko Ngāpuhi tōku iwi
No Aotearoa ahau
Ko Briar Goldie tōku ingoa

Briar Goldie
Senior Systems Strategist

I'm a researcher, strategist and innately curious thinker, who combines several years of industry experience with wellbeing training to explore, connect, and create new possibilities that drive positive change. Over the years, my vision has remained the same; to create a world that fosters equity and connection, where individuals can thrive as whole beings, regardless of their background.

By empathising deeply, working collaboratively, and caring wholeheartedly, my mahi (work) strives to connect with experiences, uncover hidden strengths, and empower people to be the leaders of their own change. Through shared vision and collective action, I believe we can achieve positive change that reaches far beyond individual wellbeing to the wellbeing of our community.

The Impact Collective Team



Ko Ruapehu te Maunga
Ko Whanganui te Awa
Ko Aotea te Waka
Ko Te Āti Haunui a Pāpārangi rāua ko Ngā
Rauru Kiitahi ōku iwi
Ko Putiki rāua ko Pākaraka ngā marae
No Whanganui ahau
Ko Dayna Stevenson tōku ingoa

Dayna Stevenson Intern Systems Strategist

I recently graduated from the University of Otago, where I earned my Bachelors degree in Science, majoring in Psychology. I proactively sought practical experience beyond my academic studies, as a research assistant and during two research internships. These research opportunities focussed on promoting positive Māori health outcomes in both qualitative and quantitative environments.

My experiences have solidified my passion for contributing to a team that places a high value on promoting equity and wellbeing outcomes using a mana-enhancing approach. This is particularly important to me when it comes to collaborating with communities that have played a significant role in shaping who I am today. I am grateful to be working alongside a like-minded team so early in my career, and take great pride in the transformative work we do at the Impact Collective.



Tēnā koutou katoa
Ko Kōtirana te whakapaparanga mai
Ko Tāmaki Makaurau te whenua tupu
Kei Ōwhango au e noho ana
Ko Neesha Bremner tōku ingoa
Tēnā tātou katoa

Neesha Bremner Systems Strategist

Evidence driven and solutions focused journalist, researcher, engagement and communications specialist.

As an experienced communications and research practitioner working across business, media, government and non-government agencies, in Aotearoa and overseas, I am dedicated to embedding an evidence-based approach to everything I do.

With over 15 years working in journalism, I meet people where they are to ensure the lived experience and story is captured and understood.

From this framework bespoke solutions that are community sourced are just a conversation away.



Ko Ruapehu te Maunga
Ko Whanganui te Awa
Ko Ngati Tumatauenga tōku iwi
Ko Morris tōku whānau
No Whanganui ahau
Ko Rhonda Morris tōku ingoa

Rhonda Morris Business Support Lead

With a strong background in government policy, public engagement and strategy I have had the chance to see how critical it is to have people-led change.

I am excited to be a part of the Impact Collective Team and continue to build on the people, whanau and community lead for positive change.



Tēnā koutou katoa
Ko Aerana te whakapaparanga mai engari
Ko Te Papaioea te kāinga
Kei Te Papaioea au e noho ana
Ko Josh Ace tōku ingoa
Tēnā tatou katoa

Josh Ace Senior Designer

I am an experienced graphic designer based in Palmerston North with 10 years in the industry. I enjoy the challenge of telling stories visually and have been lucky enough to have undertaken a wide scope of work with various companies throughout Aotearoa.

All of the skills learnt from those endeavours will serve me well in the exciting future opportunities and mahi with the Impact Collective Team.



Our Kaupapa

For our people, our whenua and our communities.

Working together to gather data and people insights across our region to inform and support the best actions to improve equity and wellbeing for all of our people.

Our Principles

Unite together

Breaking down silos and developing genuine and enduring relationships between communities and organisations.

Listen together

Listening and emphasising to ensure everybody within our communities have an opportunity to share their knowledge and lived experiences.

Act together

Working collaboratively to uncover and take action on collective insights, knowledge and experiences.

Our Promises

- 1 **We strive to create equity and wellbeing for all** - Through breaking down traditional organisational and territorial boundaries and focusing on our communities holistically, the Impact Collective strives to enrich foundational data with people's lived experiences in order to support the co-design of pathways and initiatives across our region that will create positive and enduring impact for all.

We seek to shift from viewing our communities solely in terms of health, wealth, access, or vulnerability, to viewing it in terms of the whole person and their whānau – a mana-enhancing approach.

- 2 **We serve our people, our whenua and our communities** - We are for all individuals, communities and organisations, should they be tangata whenua, tūrangawaewae to the region, or align to the purpose of the Impact Collective.
- 3 **We utilise a collective response** - In response to the goals and aspirations of our communities, the Impact Collective will seek not only the data, but also the real-life stories and lived experiences that sit behind it. The data is just our starting point – the stories will provide us with a wealth of insight and the 'why'.

Together, these provide the foundation for us to craft truly collective insights representative of what matters most to our communities.

Our Communities

To the right (page 25) are the regional and lwi boundaries the Impact Collective strives to serve.

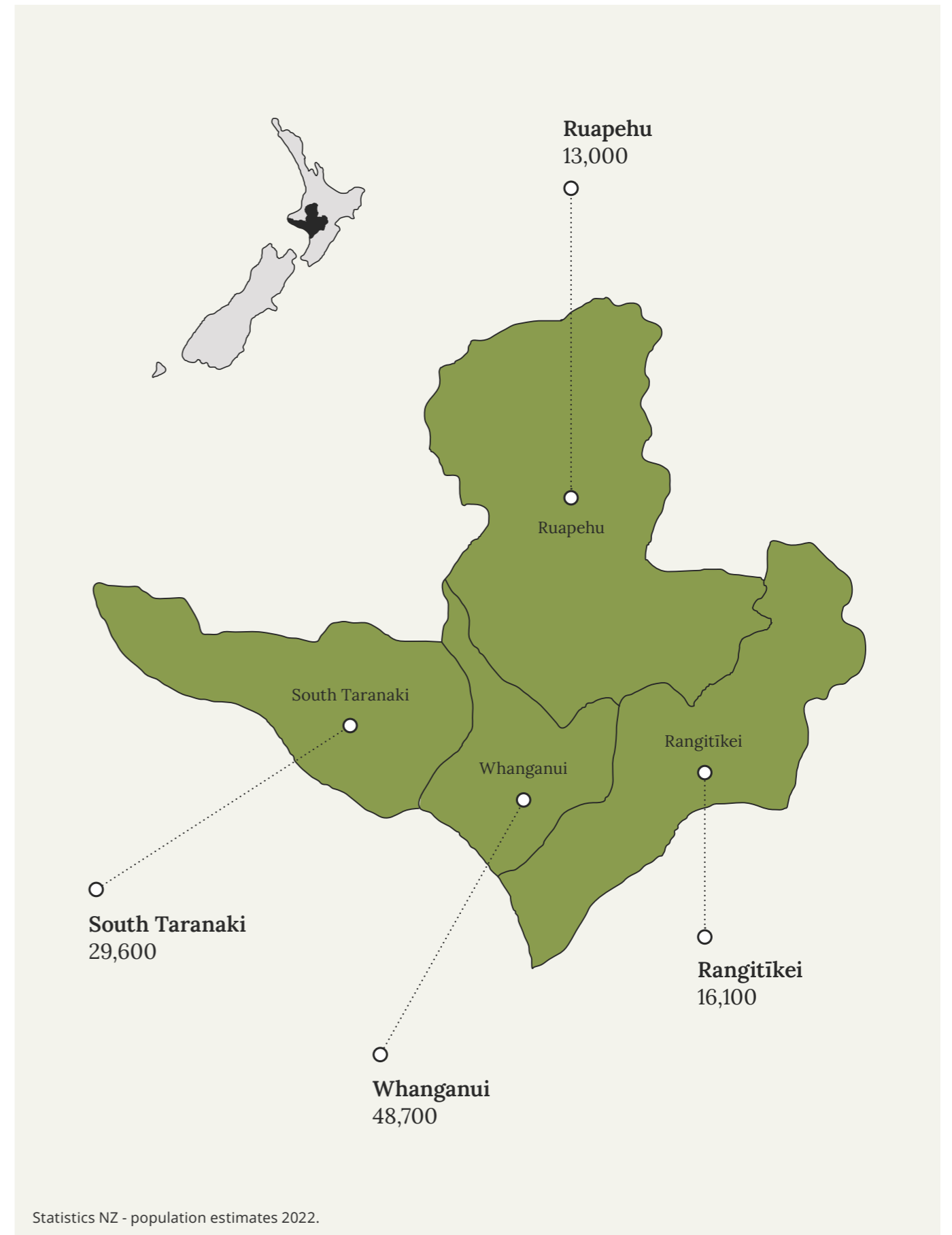


Figure 1 – Snapshot of the Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu and South Taranaki region.

Executive Summary

The Impact Collective began its journey of providing a level of community intelligence that is a 'first of its kind' in its scale and complexity in Aotearoa New Zealand with the release of both the Whanganui and Rangitīkei Equity and Wellbeing Profiles 2022. Since these profiles have been released, the team moved across into the Ruapehu District to complete their Equity and Wellbeing Profile and enable community service providers, organisations, Iwi and central and local government agencies to be better informed, aligned and united over community priorities, and enable them to identify the areas where they can collectively create positive impact in the diverse Ruapehu communities.

The only way to build this profile was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the different Ruapehu communities, and the people who live here through their eyes and their own unique everyday experiences. We chose to leverage both existing data insights that others have already collected on the communities, as well gathering our own lived experience or people insights through speaking directly to members of the communities – in their communities.

In collaboration with our data partners DOT Loves Data, we successfully developed and built our Equity and Wellbeing Dashboard which brings together data insights from over 150 data indicators covering the breadth of areas of equity and wellbeing across our framework. At the same time as we analysed the dashboard data, our team of strategists simultaneously ran workshops and interviews with community groups and organisations, to treasure their taonga of history and stories - to gather their lived experience narratives. The Ruapehu community is similar in its complexities to the Rangitīkei, with the various urban and rural settings having an impact on the lives of those who reside within the rohe.

Following an extensive process of synthesis and thematic analysis to bring existing data insights together with fresh narratives from the Ruapehu communities, the team are able to present 57 themes that are related to a person's journey through their life, from infancy to elderly. Furthermore, a series of systemic barriers have been articulated which outline some of the issues that we face in engaging with our communities and outlines the way to move forward in a manner that is connected to and focused on the needs of the Ruapehu communities.

Across the Ruapehu rohe, areas of strength were characterised as being within the following areas of the United Nations 17 SDGS in order of significance; Sustainable Cities & Communities, Good Health & Wellbeing, Quality Education, Decent Work & Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure, Life on Land, No Poverty, and Reduced Inequalities.

Most often, areas where barriers were identified were often found in the same areas as the community strengths, however, this is not the case with all the themes. The following areas have been identified as the most prevalent barriers in the Ruapehu communities; Sustainable Cities & Communities, Good Health & Wellbeing, Industry, Decent Work & Economic Growth, Innovation & Infrastructure, Reduced Inequalities, No Poverty, Quality Education, Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions and Life on Land.

The final section within this profile, the summary of findings, gives you, the reader, the ability to pick up the strengths, barriers and opportunities in an easily digested format. It is designed to allow you to use the pages as a guide to design and develop services and traction plans. We hope you find these useful as you co-design services across the wider Ruapehu communities.

Our hope is that the intelligence provided in this report achieves a number of outcomes. These include being representative of the voice of the Ruapehu communities, aligning the lived experiences with the data insights to tell the full story, capturing and highlighting the complexity of the wider system and showing that you cannot address a single need in isolation. Throughout this, the team have captured and showcased some of the incredible individuals, groups and organisations doing good mahi in the Ruapehu communities.

Ultimately, we wish to highlight and present the biggest strengths and opportunities of the communities and act as the springboard to inspire collective action to either enhance existing strengths or overcome existing barriers.

Finally, from the Impact Collective team, we want to acknowledge and thank the members of the Ruapehu communities that shared the taonga of their stories, so that we can prepare this profile of intelligence and insights. It has been a truly humbling experience and one that we will cherish into the future.

Whaowhia te kete mātauranga.
Fill your basket of knowledge.

Overview and Context



What has come before this work?

Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua:
‘I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past.’

A focus on wellbeing for the community is not a new idea. Traditionally in research, wellbeing is often used synonymously with ‘Health’, however, these concepts are not the same. Wellbeing goes much wider than health, it represents the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of an individual, a whānau, and our communities. By using wellbeing in this manner, we incorrectly assume that the wider social determinants of health are solely a ‘health problem’ – the literal ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. However, people are intrinsically complex beings, individually made up of physical, mental, spiritual and relational (family/ Whānau or friends) wellbeing’s – more commonly identified in Sir Mason Durie’s Te Whare Tapa Whā model. These individual wellbeing’s are further impacted by their direct environment, such as housing, water and air quality, safety, employment, education, access to services, and connection to the whenua.

Global Context

With the shift in viewing wellbeing in a manner consistent with a person’s life journey, their connection to their environment and their place in society, there have been a number of global frameworks and programmes of work established that place the person inside their communities at the heart of their development. Internationally, examples such as the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Urban Agenda, Public Health Scotland (Health Inequalities project), the OECD Better Life Index, the Environmental Performance Index and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are forging the new wave of community-led development projects.

The Impact Collective investigated the global frameworks to ascertain the natural alignment to our kaupapa. As we shift the balance of existing Aotearoa New Zealand frameworks toward including a person’s environment and their relationship to it, the United Nations 17 SDGs with its focus on economic, environmental, equality of access, and the wellbeing of communities and people, provided a natural link to the globally leading framework. It was important to ensure that like our kaupapa, the framework presented a holistic picture of the human experience.

The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 (including New Zealand), provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, for now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership^[1].

The United Nations outlined in 2015 that the “aim of the goals and targets was to stimulate action over the next fifteen years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet”^[2]:

- **People:** We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.
- **Planet:** We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.
- **Prosperity:** We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

- **Peace:** We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.
- **Partnership:** We are determined to mobilise the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalised Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focussed in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

The sitting United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, outlined that the current COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the failures and inequities in our society that the UN 17SDGs are seeking to address.

“Leveraging this moment of crisis, when usual policies and social norms have been disrupted, bold steps can steer the world back on track towards the Sustainable Development Goals. This is the time for change, for a profound systemic shift to a more sustainable economy that works for both people and the planet”^[3]. - António Guterres



Figure 2 – The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

National Context

As Aotearoa New Zealand begins to shift its focus from health to wellbeing, a number of National and Regional programmes of work have been developed to support the future wellbeing of all New Zealanders. Through these, the New Zealand government created the Treasury's Living Standards Framework to ensure that services of national significance were aligned to improve the overall wellbeing of the people of Aotearoa New Zealand. As a result, large regional programmes such as The Southern Initiative and the Waikato Wellbeing Project which support the championing of community-led development towards positive outcomes, have been established. These programmes challenge the status quo of traditional organisational silos and through working in a manner consistent with a Te Ao Māori worldview, ensure that a person's wellbeing is characterised through their connection to their environment, their whānau, their communities and their sense of purpose.

With the introduction of the Whānau Ora framework in 2010, the link between national alignment and local (whānau centric) models of care was established. The goals within this provide a culturally-based approach to wellbeing that focuses on whānau, considering not only the individual, but the whānau as a whole. In 2014, the approach evolved with the establishment of three whānau Ora Commissioning Agencies that would invest directly into their communities. Whilst this is a national programme of work, it is delivered differently to each individual and their whānau to enable their aspirations to be realised – as a result, the Impact Collective have selected the goals to represent the heart of our framework, ensuring that people and their whānau are at the centre of what we do.

NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Treasury's Living Standards Framework

Treasury's Living Standards Framework (LSF) was developed in Aotearoa New Zealand to enable Treasury to lead policy and funding decisions, capturing many of the wider things that impact on individuals, whānau and community wellbeing. The new Living Standards Framework which was introduced in October 2021, has three levels to it – Our individual and Collective Wellbeing, Our Institutions and Governance and The Wealth of Aotearoa New Zealand (please see Figure 3). The updated LSF further sought to better reflect children's wellbeing and culture.

Treasury defines these levels as^[4]:

- **Our Individual and Collective Wellbeing:** Level One of the framework captures those resources and aspects of our lives that have been identified by research or public engagement as being important for our wellbeing as individuals, families, whānau and communities.
- **Our Institutions and Governance:** Level Two is a new level in the LSF. It captures the role that our political, economic, social and cultural institutions play in facilitating the wellbeing of individuals and collectives, as well as safeguarding and building our national wealth. This level captures the role that, for example, schools have in the wellbeing of children, or marae have in the wellbeing of tangata whenua, or the fisheries regulatory system has in sustaining Aotearoa's fisheries for the benefit of all.
- **The Wealth of Aotearoa New Zealand:** Level Three of the framework captures how wealthy we are as a country, including aspects of wealth not fully captured in the system of national accounts, such as human capability and the natural environment.

The Impact Collective are representing the 'Wealth of Aotearoa New Zealand' in our framework, with the four categories of natural environment, financial and physical capital, social cohesion and human capability demonstrated. The other two levels of 'Our Institutions and Governance' and 'Our Individual and Collective Wellbeing' are reflected in the data we have collated for our Equity and Wellbeing Dashboard and depth of community insights which have been collected.

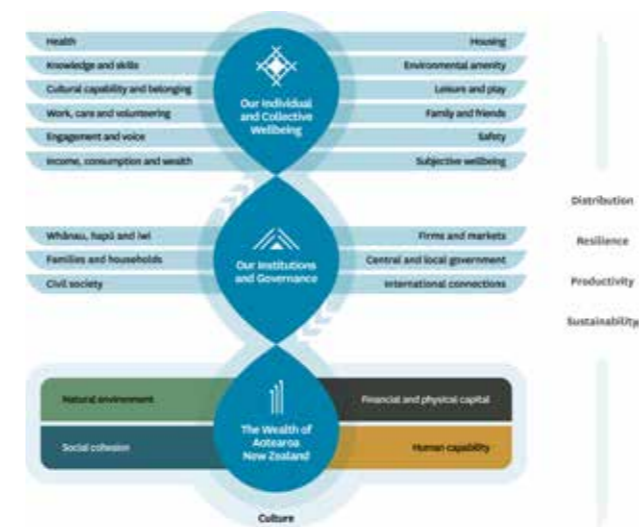


Figure 3 – Treasury Living Standards Framework (Updated October 2021).

Whānau Ora – Putting whānau in control of their aspirations.

Whānau Ora is a key cross-government work programme jointly implemented by the Ministry of Health, Te Puni Kōkiri and the Ministry of Social Development. It is an approach that places families and whānau at the centre of service delivery, and requires the integration of health, education and social services to improve outcomes and results for New Zealand families/whānau^[5].

The Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency defines whānau Ora as:

“Whānau Ora is a culturally-based, and whānau-centred approach to wellbeing focused on whānau (family group) as a whole, as the decision-makers who determine their goals and aspirations. Building on the strengths and capabilities of whānau and wrapping the necessary services and support around them to get better outcomes and create positive changes. In areas such as health, education, housing, employment, improved standards of living and cultural identity. Whānau are supported to fully realise the confidence, mana and the belief in self, family and community. - whānauora.nz^[6]”

Through this definition, we recognise that the wellbeing of whānau is not expressed solely in terms of economic development, but rather sets about outlining the supporting structures and systems that contribute to our lives being ‘better’ and more purposeful. Traditionally, this ‘betterment of life’ has been measured through metrics such as the Better Life Index, and although as a whole, New Zealand performs well, the markers of wellbeing are reduced for Māori by comparison. As a result, Whānau Ora is measured against outcome domains^[7]; whānau are self-managing & empowered leaders, whānau are leading healthy lifestyles, whānau are participating fully in society, whānau and families are confidently participating in Te Ao Māori, whānau and families are confidently participating in Te Ao Māori, whānau are cohesive, resilient and nurturing, and whānau and families are responsible stewards of their living and natural environments.

This direct to whānau commissioning occurs through three commissioning agencies, who partner with local organisations, providers and navigators to deliver a coordinated service based around the needs and aspirations of whānau at a grassroots level^[7]. These agencies are:

- Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency works with whānau and families in the North Island.
- Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu works with whānau and families in the South Island.
- Pasifika Futures is dedicated to working with Pacific Island families across the country.

TSI

Established by the Auckland Council, TSI is a place-based innovation hub focused on local and system-level transformation to improve social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing for current and future generations of south and west Aucklanders^[8]. This is demonstrated in TSI's four workstreams:

“New Zealand, like Australia, and many other countries, recognises that place-based approaches can play a critical role in addressing a range of inequalities, including persistent disadvantage. This has led to an increased focus on place-based initiatives around the world for the delivery of welfare programs and community service interventions. What makes TSI different to these approaches is that place is seen through a lens of social innovation and aspiration rather than through a deficit lens. This means that place becomes a space where people can co-create and experience positive futures for themselves and their whānau. TSI demonstrates how place-based approaches can generate real changes for people, while also providing evidence for how systems can more effectively work across diversity. - Review of TSI 2020^[8].

The Impact Collective believe that local people hold the solutions to developing localised services to support and enhance their strengths or address community opportunities. TSI, alongside the likes of Manaaki Tairāwhiti, Ruapehu Whānau Transformation, TCLT and the Waikato Wellbeing Project, were the pioneers in advancing the place-based revolution in empowering communities at the centre of their mahi.

The Waikato Wellbeing Project

The Waikato Wellbeing Project (WWP) is a regional initiative set up to achieve a more environmentally sustainable, prosperous and inclusive Waikato region by 2030. Mātauranga and Te Ao Māori (Māori world view) principles are embedded Waikato Wellbeing Project^[9]. The updated business plan for 2022-23 for the WWP is presented in Figure 4^[10] and visually demonstrates their commitment to the pou of Te Ao Māori and the UN 17SDGs and is connected by their values of Kaitiakitanga, kotahitanga and Manaakitanga. The Waikato Wellbeing Project is a community-led initiative to develop a defined set of wellbeing targets for the Waikato, based on the SDGs. Currently, the team are progressing work in ten of the SDGs and are seeking community engagement around the remaining seven SDGs.

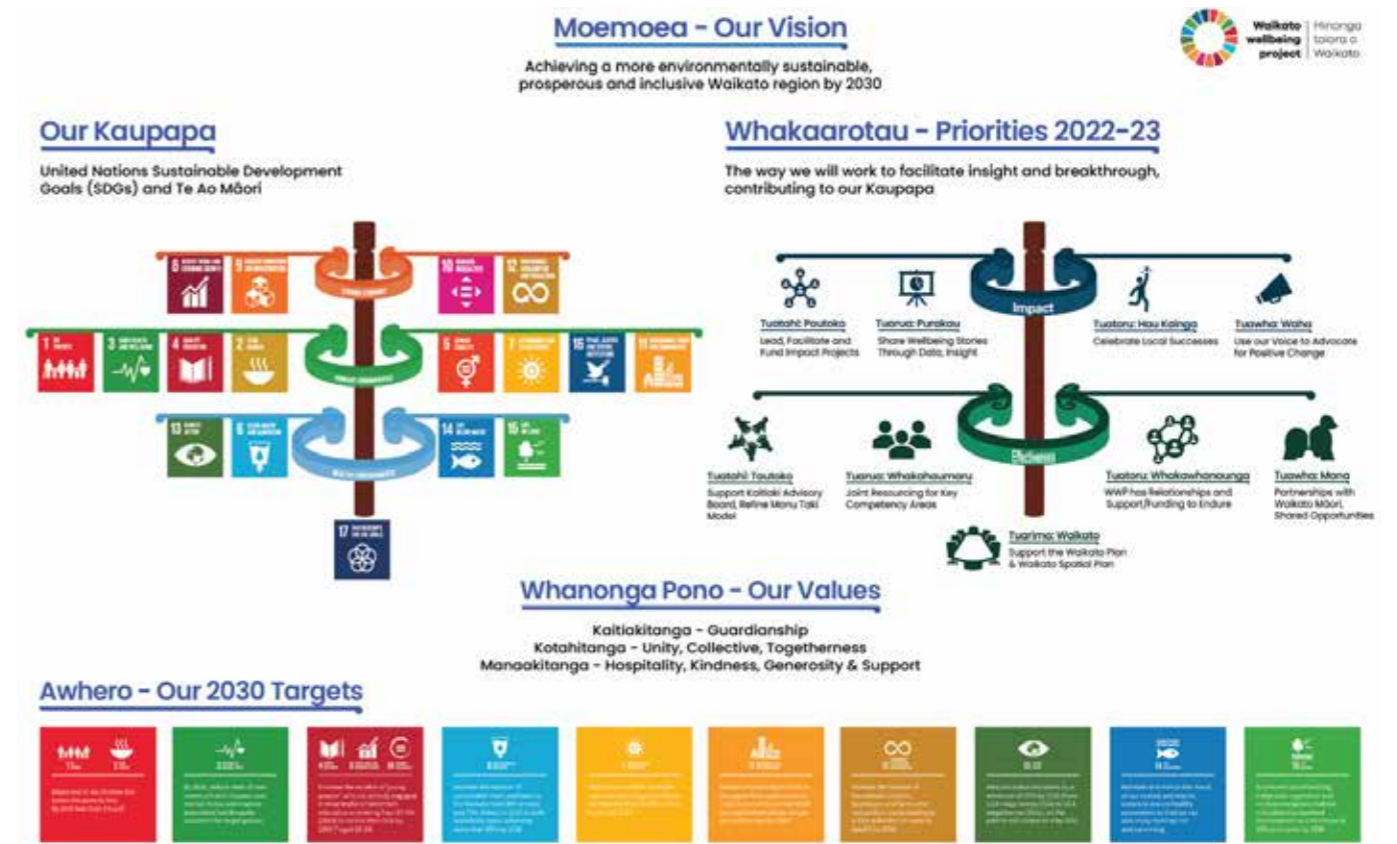


Figure 4 - Waikato Wellbeing Project 2022-2023 Business Plan.

Local Context

Whilst across the country, other regions have developed programmes of work aligned to the United Nations 17SDGs (WWP) or are seeking to address social and economic issues (TSI), closer to home, community led programmes such as the Ruapehu whānau Transformation Programme and TCLT have sought to change not only the way we operate programmes, but also the fundamental way that we engage with and gain insights from our communities.

For the Impact Collective, these programmes of work had a profound impact on the way we sought to undertake our mahi. Inspired by the alignment of the 'stats and stories' approach from the Ruapehu whānau Transformation programme, and the community led development approach taken by TCLT, we have ensured that our communities have an opportunity to provide the community narratives context to the data that is collected on them, to enable the insights and intelligence gathered to inspire communities to develop services and programmes of work to create positive impact for them and their whānau.

The Ruapehu Whānau Transformation Plan

The Ruapehu Whānau Transformation Plan launched in 2013, containing a number of solutions for how the community could collectively enable positive transformation for all families in the communities of Raetihi, Ohakune and Waiouru. They encouraged members of the community to unite to collectively create and implement the first Ruapehu Whānau Transformation Plan (RWT)^[11].

They achieved this by bringing together a steering group called the Community Reference Group (CRG)^[12] which sought to enable the various groups and individuals from across the Ruapehu to be represented at the table.

“The CRG was established in 2012 and it was their stories that primarily informed the first plan for collective, inclusive impact.”
- ruapehuwhanautransformation.com^[12]

The solutions in this first plan sat across five focus areas; Education, Employment, Housing, Health & Social. By 2017, they had collectively delivered 20 of the 23 proposed solutions which lead to the launch of a second 'Ruapehu Whānau Transformation Plan 2020' in 2018. For this second plan, the CRG asked to increase the scope in order to be informed by a wider range of local stories. This led to the process being opened to their near 4000 population to contribute, by which they had huge success with this broader participation and sharing of stories.

TCLT

Selected as one of the five founding programmes under the Department of Internal Affairs Community Led Development programmes, TCLD Trust and TCLT Operation's Team provides a 'boots on the ground' movement in community-led initiatives. With an initial programme of work that focused on the northern villages of the Whanganui River Road (Hiruhārama, Matahwi, Rānana and Pipiriki), the team sought to work with their communities to achieve their vision of "Flourishing Communities of People" and purpose of "Our Journey, Our Projects, Our Way". - tclid.co.nz.

Across the past five years that they have been operating, the team has worked with the local residents of these villages. Last year, they expanded to include the remaining villages (Koriniti, Ātene, Parikino and Pungarehu) and successfully delivered a number of programmes and projects of importance and relevance to each of them. The team are now successfully into their sixth year, post the Community Led Development Programme phase, with a shift in focus to 'in community' access to services within the Hauora space.

Given the remoteness of the villages, setting up resiliency programmes and projects has been a core deliverable which included installing emergency generators, radios, defibrillators and offering home-based education workshops such as rongoā and cooking. There is a drive from the team to ensure that the communities they continue to serve are in the best place for enhanced health, wellbeing and wellness into the future.

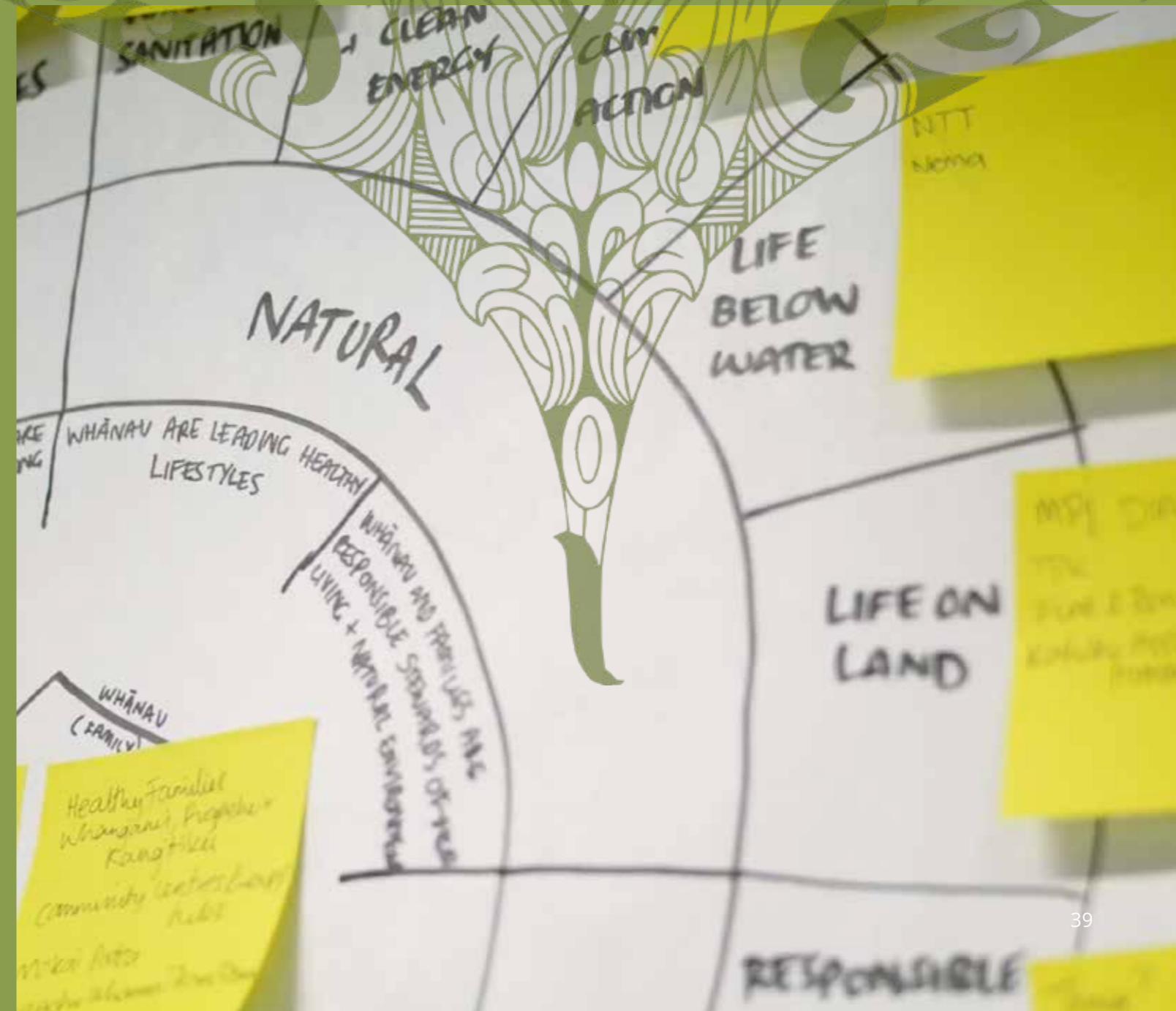
TCLD Trust and TCLT remain mindful and grateful to all its funders, contributors and supporters as positive change continues alongside our awa whānau.

“Mā te mahitahi ka ora te katoa”.



Figure 5 – River Valley Community Hub - Rānana

Our Framework



Our Equity and Wellbeing Framework



Figure 6 – Impact Collective Equity and Wellbeing Framework.

Think global, align national, act local.

In order to identify opportunities and measure outcomes within our communities, we have developed a three-tier framework encompassing global, national and local equity and wellbeing frameworks.

Together these provide us with over 150 individual indicators which we are able to measure equity and wellbeing – acting as a benchmarking tool to begin to explore data insights within our region and identify priority areas that we will seek to understand in much more detail.

The purpose of this combination of global, national and local frameworks is to ensure that we encompass all elements of equity and wellbeing. Whilst the goals of each can be individually interpreted, each goal has a relationship to all other elements - as such, we have designed the framework to represent the most logical alignments.

Whānau Ora Goals

Whānau Ora is an innovative approach to improving whānau wellbeing that puts whānau at the centre of decision making. The Whānau Ora approach focuses on the whānau as a whole and addresses individual needs within the context of the whānau. Whilst this is a National Framework, the focus on individuals and whānau as its core tenant has inspired the Impact Collective to place these goals at the heart of our framework.

Whānau are supported to identify the aspirations they have to improve their lives and build their capacity to achieve their goals. Iwi and the Crown have agreed to a shared Whānau Ora Outcomes Framework to guide their work to improve outcomes for whānau.

The Outcomes Framework confirms that Whānau Ora is achieved when whānau are self-managing, living healthy lifestyles, participating fully in society, confidently participating in Te Ao Māori, economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation, cohesive, resilient and nurturing and responsible stewards of their natural and living environments.

Treasury Living Standards

The Living Standards Framework (LSF) represents a perspective on what matters for New Zealanders' wellbeing, now and into the future. It is a flexible framework that prompts our thinking about policy impacts across the different dimensions of wellbeing, as well as the long-term and distributional issues and implications.

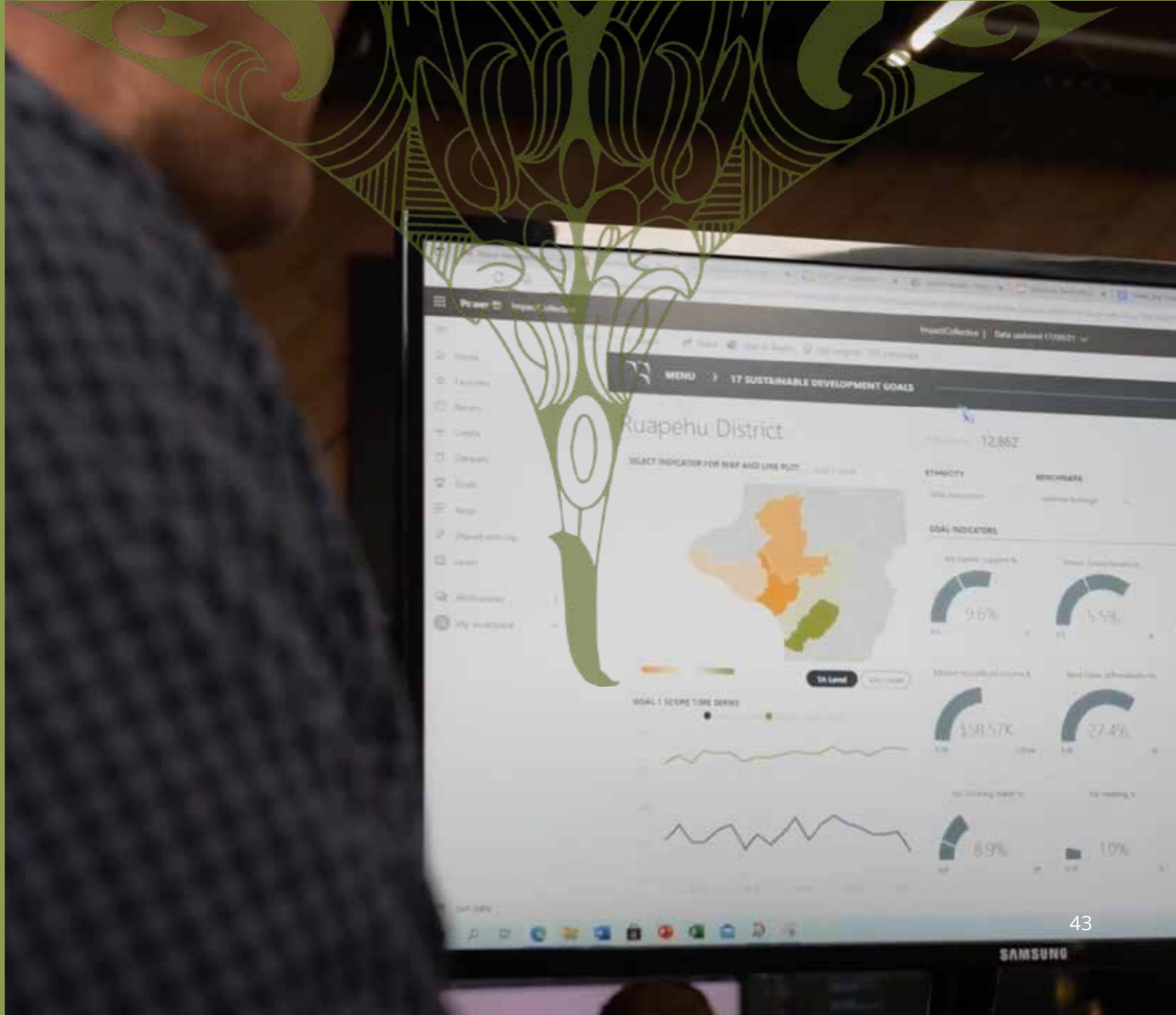
Updated in October 2021, the LSF consists of three levels - Wealth of Aotearoa New Zealand, Our Institutions and Governance and Our Individual and Collective Wellbeing. Level One, Our Individual and Collective Wellbeing, includes 12 domains that have been shown to be important for the wellbeing of both individuals and collectives, such as families, whānau and communities of place, identity and interest. Level Two, Our Institutions and Governance, refers to formal rules, informal norms, and the formal and informal organisations those rules and norms are embedded within. Institutions are often nested in complex relationships. Level Three, outlines the four categories of Wealth of Aotearoa New Zealand; natural environment, financial and physical capital, social cohesion and human capability. These categories recognise that wealth generation in Aotearoa New Zealand is not limited to the historical categorisation of 'GDP', but rather the wider determinants of wealth creation - including our people and our environment.

United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling environmental and climate concerns and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

Our Methods



A Dual-phased Approach



Phase One

In Phase One, we present our collective insights as ‘Equity and Wellbeing Profiles’. These represent the collective strengths and opportunities of each unique community that makes up the broader Ruapehu region. Phase one encompasses steps 1-3 of our process.

This report is the third in a series of Equity and Wellbeing Profiles to be delivered, focusing specifically on the Ruapehu community. Following this report, Phase One will be concluded in the South Taranaki community, developing an Equity and Wellbeing Profile for the region. Phase Two of the Impact Collective process will follow after Phase One is completed.

Phase Two

In Phase Two, we seek to support the communities to provide an impact assessment following the release of the Equity and Wellbeing Profiles and support the facilitation of co-design of services to build on the strengths or address opportunities within their community. Phase Two encompasses steps 4-5 of our process.

Through the presentation of the community level intelligence and insights in the Equity and Wellbeing Profiles, community organisations, Iwi and Crown Agencies will be able to identify areas for service development to support their communities in creating positive impact. The Impact Collective can support the bringing together of members of the community to co-design these services if no existing service providers are established within the community.

The Impact Collective, through undertaking an Impact Assessment Report post the release of the Equity and Wellbeing Profiles, will be able to demonstrate the potential impact that initiatives have had on addressing the strengths and opportunities presented in the Equity and Wellbeing Profile. We understand that these initiatives can take time to demonstrate impact for the community, however through a maturity-based system, we will be able to engage with the new initiatives and support them with confirmation of impact through our community level intelligence collation of the data and people insights.

The aim of the work of the Impact Collective is to continue on an ongoing basis into the future following a continuous cycle of these two phases and their respective steps for the regions that we serve.

Phase One—Delivery of the Equity and Wellbeing Profiles

This report marks the completion of Phase One for the Ruapehu community only.

This phase includes the first three steps of our process.

- 1 Seek the data
- 2 Understand through stories
- 3 Identify insights and priorities

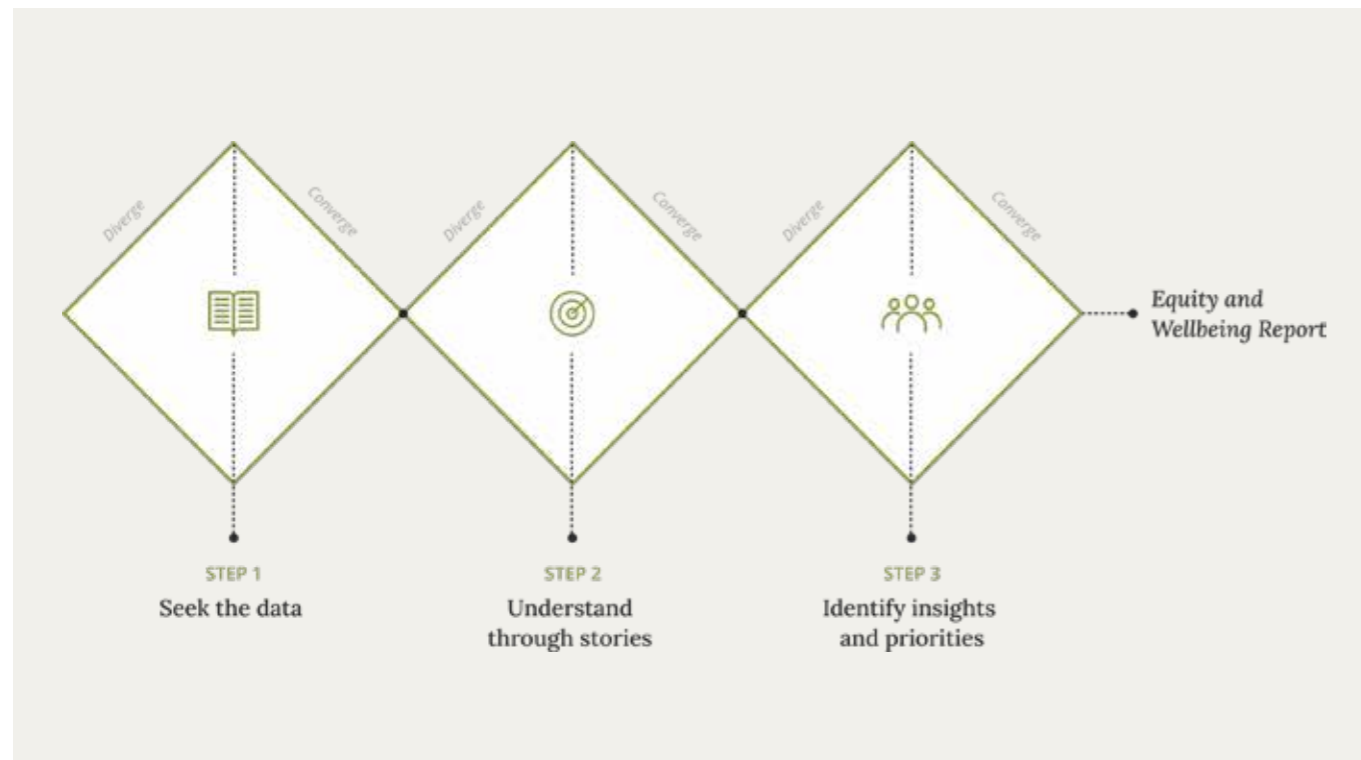


Figure 7 – Phase one of our process.

Step 1—Seek the data.

This step involves collating and analysing the data insights through the lenses of our frameworks.

Core to this is our industry-leading Equity and Wellbeing Dashboard which pulls data from over 100 data sources to measure how communities within our region are tracking against our Equity and Wellbeing Framework - these include over 150 individual indicators that we are able to measure against.

This provides us with a tool to explore data insights in as close to real time as possible with members of our community and identify areas we need to understand in much more detail through their lived experience narratives.

Tasks included in this step:

- Collate, analyse and cleanse the data
- Identify areas of interest to explore in the community workshops

Our Equity and Wellbeing Dashboard

This dashboard has been developed with our data partners DOT Loves Data, who have an incredibly talented team of data scientists and data engineers that specialise in building simple, smart and beautiful data visualisation tools.

The dashboard itself is a New Zealand leading dashboard that we believe will be incredibly valuable in terms of firstly; getting an as close to real-time and collective data representation of the equity and wellbeing across our communities, and secondly; unlocking the potential to be able to track and measure the impact of certain initiatives within our communities across the systems they exist within.

It brings together cross-sector statistics to understand the components and dynamics of community wellbeing from multiple perspectives. While it provides a means to measure progress towards wellbeing objectives, this data is most valuable when contextualised alongside community stories and experiences. This dashboard is innovative in measuring wellbeing at the sub-national and community level, but also highlights current data gaps for understanding wellbeing for Māori.

Wellbeing frameworks

This dashboard is organised around our three different wellbeing frameworks: the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), treasury's Living Standards Framework (LSF) four Wealth of Aotearoa New Zealand categories, and Whānau Ora Goals. The indicators in this dashboard represent the concepts in these frameworks, but they are not exact replications. This is because some frameworks are continuously evolving while others measure indicators only at national levels.

Each framework has identified different concepts of wellbeing and equity, referred to as goals in the SDG and Whānau Ora frameworks and the Wealth of Aotearoa New Zealand categories in the Living Standards framework. Individual indicators are grouped together and summarised into goal and category scores to measure progress within each framework.

Data sources

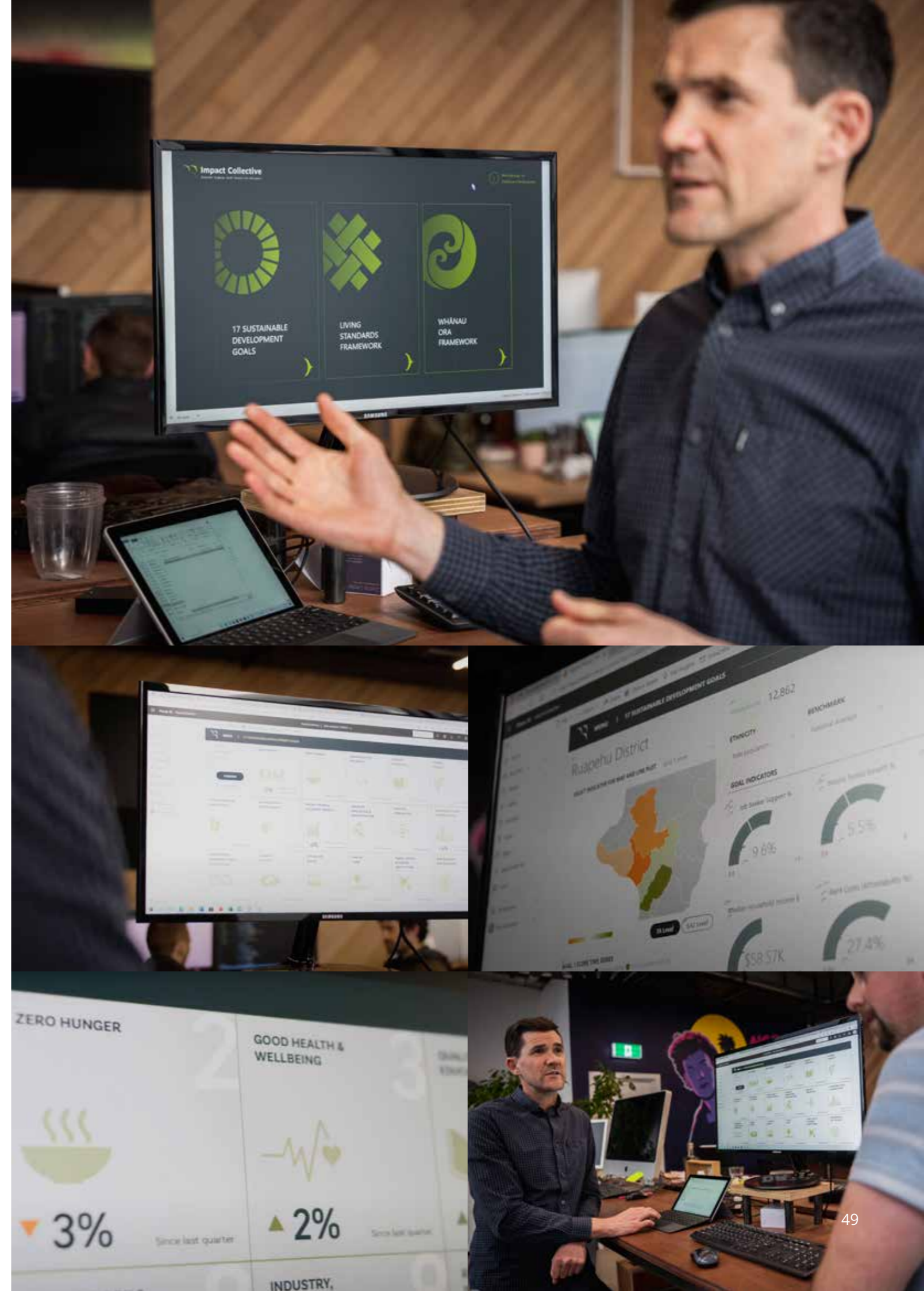
This dashboard pulls from many validated national and regional data sources in order to ensure good coverage across all of the frameworks and indicators. It was important that the Impact Collective presented data from these validated sources to ensure that when working with our communities and agencies that the data presented was reflective of the information held by the government. This will better enable the data to be used by the communities when they are developing community led services. The primary data sources are listed below:

- NZ Census of Populations and Dwellings (Statistics NZ)
- Ministry of Social Development
- Tenancy Services
- Homes.co.nz
- ACC
- Statistics NZ
- Statistics NZ - Child poverty data
- Statistics NZ - New Zealand business demography statistics
- Eftpos NZ
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
- NZ Police
- DOT Loves Data
- Dynamic Deprivation Index: DOT Loves Data product
- Bizmomento - DOT Loves Data product
- Waka Kotahi
- NZ Transport Agency
- NZ Transport Agency Motor Vehicle Register
- Education Counts
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Health - Health survey
- Water New Zealand - National Performance Review
- Open Street Maps
- Electricity Authority
- HealthSpace
- Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu
- Infometrics
- Chorus
- Tūao Aotearoa
- LAWA

Data gaps and limitations

Throughout the process of data collation, it has become evident that across Aotearoa New Zealand, there are areas where data collation is lacking or non-existent, the data is only provided at a national level or the time intervals between data updates is slow. This was particularly apparent in the SDG areas of Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land and Partnership for the Goals. The significance of this cannot be understated as it means there is a fundamental lack of quantitative data available to support the ability for communities to address issues that may be impacting on them. Government agencies that are involved in these areas must support more regionalised and timely access to data to enable communities to design services to ensure positive impact into the future.

It was also further identified that whilst ethnicity data is beginning to be collected more often, there is still a significant gap in what is being measured and how that impacts Māori communities and Māori service development. Throughout this profile, we have ensured that the narratives of Māori participants are portrayed in as authentic as the way they were gifted to us, and that where possible, Māori data is presented.



Step 2—Understand through stories.

We have the data, so it is now all about understanding the 'why'.

This step is where we want to gather as many stories as we can by engaging with individuals, groups and organisations in the community to ensure the insights are understood through a lived experience lens. This ensures our insights remain true and representative of the community and that we are not making assumptions.

We cannot understate how important this step is – without it, assumptions are made, and the wrong barriers may be solved in isolation of the people that matter.

Tasks included in this step:

- Workshops with community organisations across the community
- In-depth 'good mahi' interviews, stories and podcasts with inspiring individuals, groups or organisations across our community

Ruapehu Equity and Wellbeing Workshops

The purpose of these workshops is to gather the stories and lived experiences of the Ruapehu community from those who are actively working in, and are members of, the community.

The key objectives of these workshops:

- To understand their kaupapa (purpose) and why they exist
- To understand the needs in the Ruapehu community they are aiming to address
- To identify who they are working with to address these needs across the community
- To look beyond their day-to-day mahi and identify broader strengths and opportunities of the Ruapehu community
- To present the data insights of their community and identify any relationships or differences between these and their lived experiences.

Over the course of our research, we ran workshops with over 30 individuals from the Ruapehu community, representing 13 organisations. Below is a list of the wonderful organisations we have been so fortunate to have engaged with.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Civil Defence, Department of Conservation, Ministry of Social Development, Ohura Community Group, Peak Chartered Accountants, Raetihi Charitable Trust, Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust, Rotary Taumarunui, Rural Support Trust, Ruapehu District Council, Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust, Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust, Volcano Vibe.

'Good Mahi' 1:1 Stories & Podcasts

In parallel to running the workshops, we also identified and reached out to capture the good mahi stories of individuals, groups or organisations that were mentioned through our workshops as doing great work for the community. This gave us the opportunity to talk one on one with many of these local community heroes, and delve much deeper into some of the needs in the community they are aiming to address.

Over the course of our research, we identified and captured good mahi stories from a further seven groups or organizations in the Ruapehu community, speaking to an additional 30 individuals involved in each organization. Below is a list of the wonderful groups or organisations we have been so fortunate to have shared their stories with us. Their inspirational stories are all available on our website in the 'Our Work' section, please take a look when you have the time.

STORY AND PODCAST PARTICIPANTS

Central King Country R.E.A.P, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, Kea Centre, Taumarunui High School, Ohura A&P Show, Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust, Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust, Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust, Women's Refuge.

Lived experience/qualitative data gaps and limitations

While we strive to capture a diverse range of lived experiences to represent the strengths and opportunities of each region, we still face numerous challenges and gaps when gathering qualitative data. National events, such as cyclone Gabrielle and global crises, such as COVID-19, combined with the limited resources many organisations and groups face, can disrupt our ability to reach and engage with as many individuals and communities as desired. Despite these obstacles, we continue our commitment to capture and gather the lived experience from diverse sources and incorporate their voices and perspectives into our findings to ensure they accurately represent each region.



Step 3—Identify insights and priorities.

This step involves bringing together all of the stories we have captured through the research, with the statistics, to determine what matters the most to our community. This provides us with the foundation for the Ruapehu Equity and Wellbeing Profile (this document) which aims to represent the collective strengths and opportunities of the Ruapehu community.

Tasks included in this step:

- Synthesis of the stories
- Thematic analysis and insights generation
- Validation and refinement of initial themes and insights
- Identification of the systemic relationships across our frameworks
- Report generation
- Presentations of our findings

Synthesis of the stories

To ensure all of the valuable stories and lived experiences discussed in the workshops and good mahi stories are captured authentically, and as they are told, our Systems Strategists go to great lengths to listen back through each and every recording. Leveraging a voice transcriber app, they ensure everything is captured correctly and grouped on individual summary sheets as anonymised verbatim statements.



Figure 8 – Example of a workshop summary sheet.

Thematic analysis and insights generation

Once all of the workshop and good mahi story summary sheets are complete, our Systems Strategists begin to group, cluster and theme all of the captured stories and insights. In doing so, they start to consider the upstream and downstream impacts of each insight, as well as the links and relationships they may have to one another. This starts to form the basis of the complex system that underpins the strengths, barriers and opportunities present in the Ruapehu community.

This initial clustering goes through a number of iterations, to boil the findings down to an initial group of themes, which can then be taken back out to members of the community to be validated.



Figure 9 – Example of initial clustering.

Validation and refinement of initial themes and insights

This involves re-engaging with the organisations and individuals that were spoken to in the initial workshops, to ensure the themes and findings are reflective of what we heard, and their experience as members of the Ruapehu community.

The feedback and additional stories from these validation sessions are captured, and our Systems Strategists build this into a final iteration and refinement of the themes. This is also where the themes are grouped into relevant life stages and categories, to ensure they represent the stories from the community, and link back to our frameworks. This is also where the most up to date, and relevant statistics from our Equity and Wellbeing Data Dashboard are built into the theming process.

The unique strengths, barriers, opportunities and good mahi stories in the community are also captured for each unique theme, to ensure they are reflective of the reported lived experiences.



Figure 10 – Example of a validation sheet.



Figure 11 – Complete view of the comprehensive insights map.



Figure 12 – Close up of the comprehensive insights map.

Identification of the systemic relationships across our frameworks

The final challenge for our Systems Strategists, is to find a way to pull the complexity of what we have heard, including all of the themes and insights, together on one page. This is no easy challenge, and requires extensive systemic analysis and thought into the upstream and downstream impacts of each and every theme, but it ensures the Ruapehu Equity and Wellbeing Profile can be captured as a single system - albeit a very complex system.

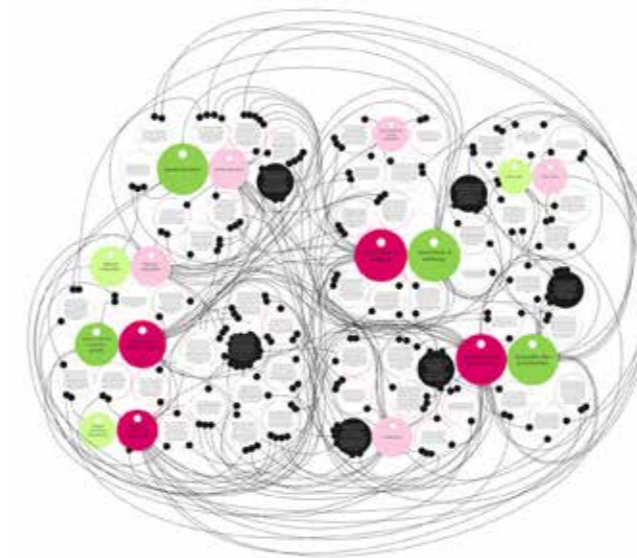


Figure 13 – Iteration of work in progress systems map.



Figure 14 – Work in progress refinement of barriers.

Report generation—pulling it all together

There are a number of outcomes we hope that this report is able to achieve.

- To be representative of the voice of the Ruapehu community
- To tell the full story, aligning the lived experiences with the data of the Ruapehu community
- To capture and highlight the complexity of the system, and show that you cannot address a single need in isolation, but as the result of the work of many.
- To showcase some of the incredible individuals, groups and organisations doing good mahi in the Ruapehu community
- To highlight and present the biggest strengths and opportunities of the Ruapehu region and act as the springboard to inspire collective action to either enhance existing strengths, or overcome existing barriers, in the Ruapehu community.

Presentations of our findings

The team is happy to present and talk you through our findings in person or online if this is beneficial. Please reach out to us directly to arrange a session to do so.

Phase Two—Supporting Collective Action

This phase will commence upon the completion of the Equity and Wellbeing Profiles.

This phase includes the last two steps of our process.

- 1 Supporting pathways
- 2 Evaluating impact

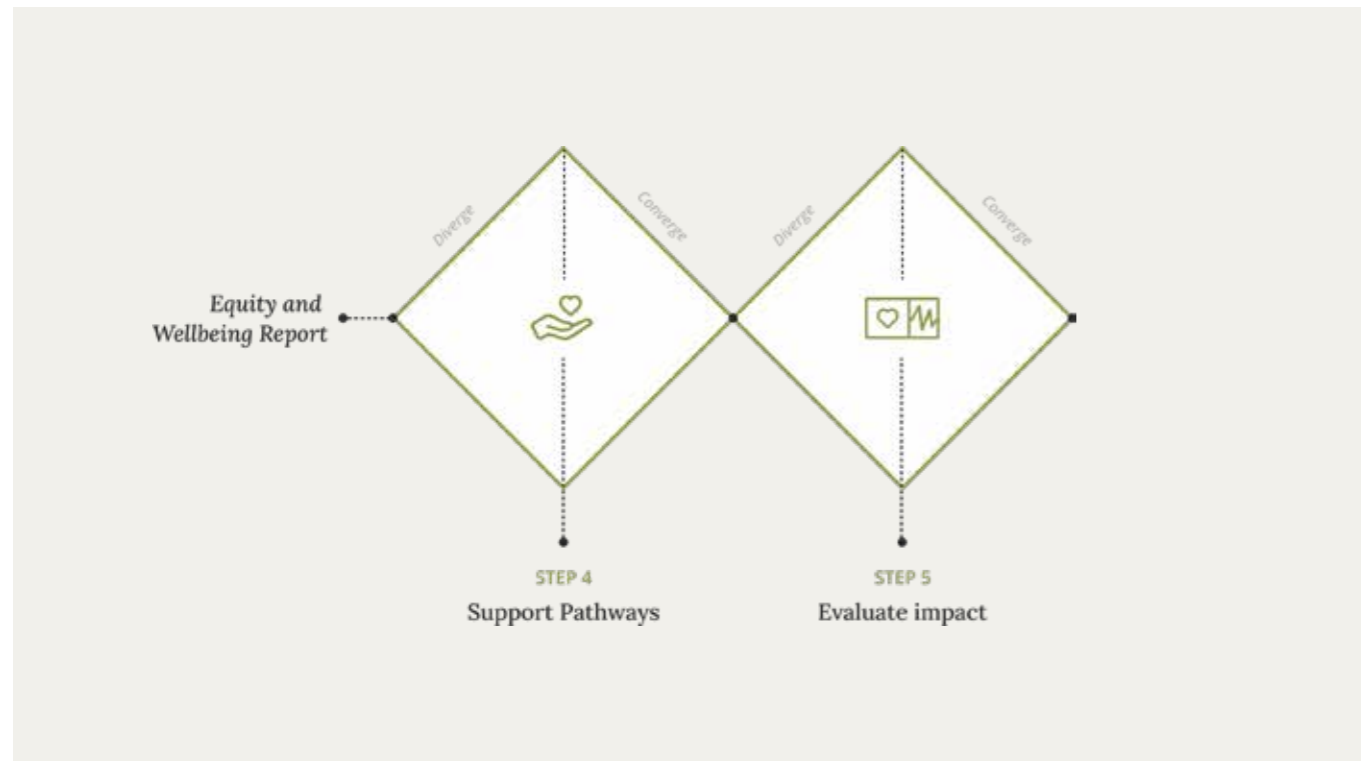


Figure 15 – Phase two of our process.

Step 4—Support pathways.

This step marks the transition from generating the collective insights to enabling the communities to take action.

Here it is all about supporting communities and organisations within our community to collectively co-design pathways and/or initiatives that will have positive and enduring impact. These will be aimed at enhancing the collective strengths and addressing the collective opportunities generated by this Ruapehu Equity and Wellbeing Profile.

The Impact Collective supports the community through the presentation of the intelligence to enable these services to be developed. Many communities will have existing service providers who can take this intelligence and utilise it to develop services for positive impact. However, for communities that do not have existing service providers, the Impact Collective can support the bringing together of members of the community to enable them to co-design these services.

Tasks to support in this step:

- Presentation of the regional Equity and Wellbeing Profiles.
- Potential pathway and initiative validation against the identified opportunity areas of the regional profile in relation to what impact they may have.
- Connecting communities and services together to co-design services to create positive impact, if requested.

Step 5—Evaluate impact.

This step is all about measuring impact at a community level. Often this is where many initiatives are unsuccessful in future funding opportunities due to being unable to measure or quantify the impact they are having.

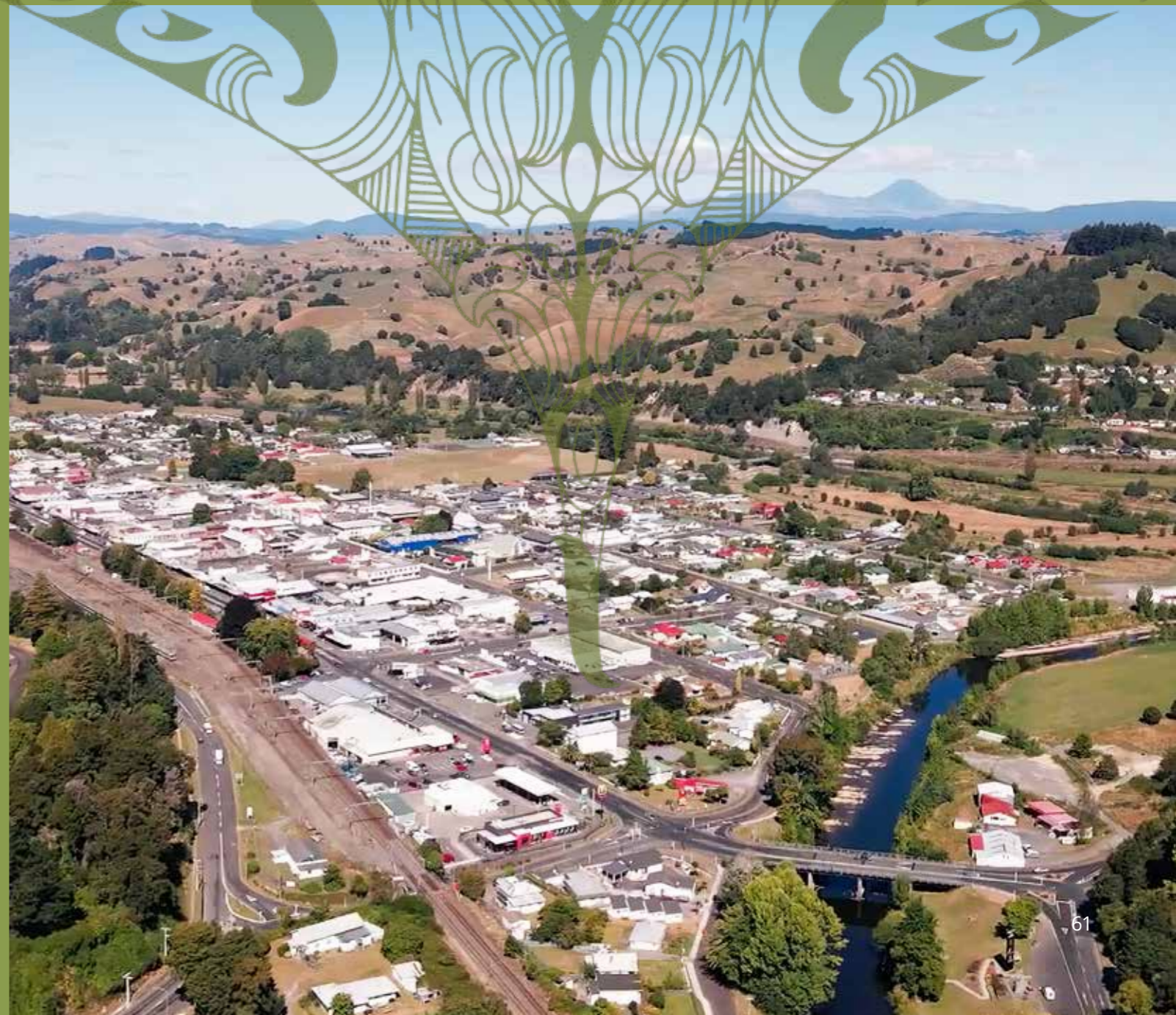
Here we aim to support in evaluating the impact of implemented initiatives by comparing the data and people insights from where they were, to where they are at a future point in time. This will also highlight any new or emerging strengths and opportunities across the community.

Impacts of the initiatives developed and implemented will also be measured against our framework and the broader system they exist within through the community narratives. This will enable adjustments to programmes if required or creation of new services.

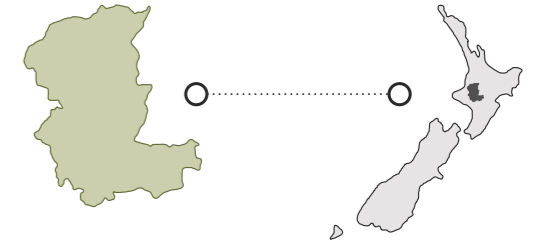
Tasks included in this step:

- Gathering fresh data insights from our dashboard.
- Gathering fresh community narratives via workshops and interviews.
- Presenting the regional Impact Assessment Reports.

The Ruapehu Community at a Glance

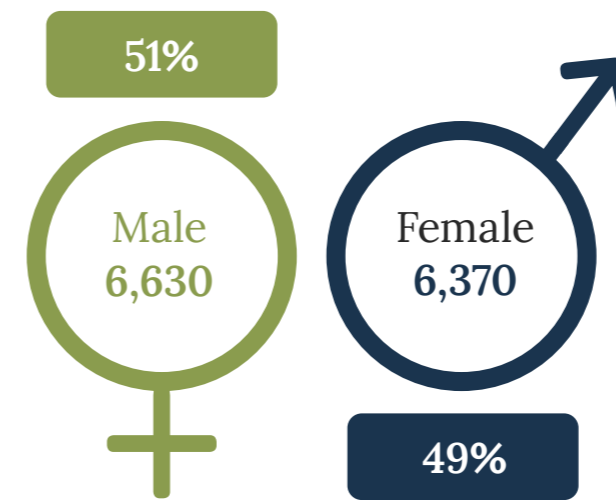


Ruapehu Region

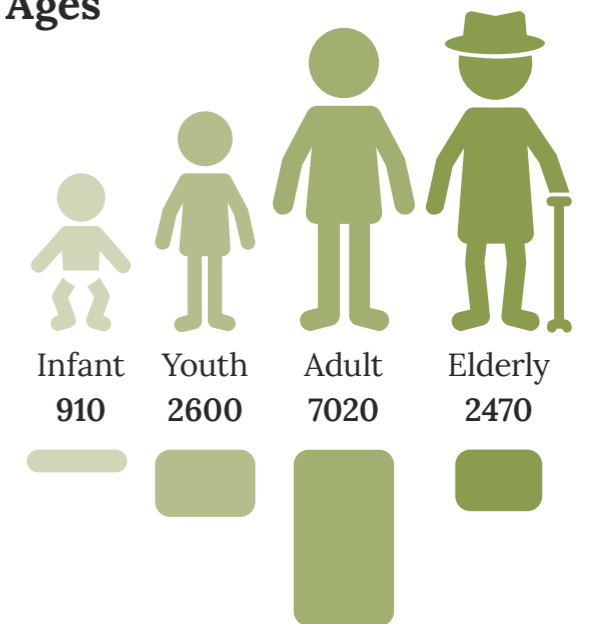


Total Population: 13,000

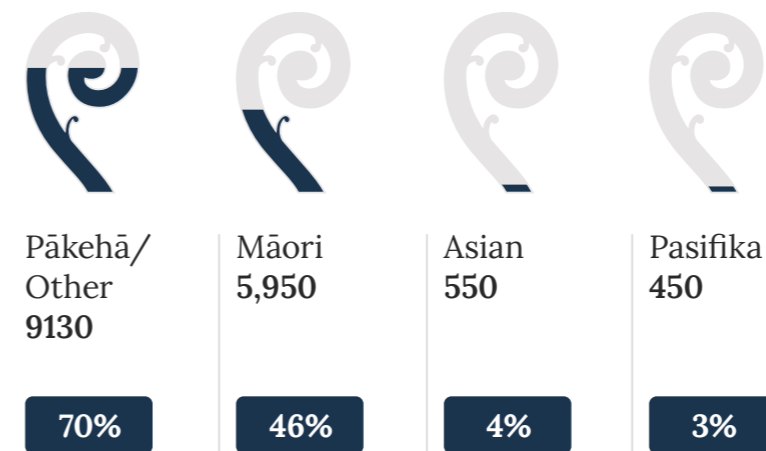
Gender



Ages



Ethnicity



Note - percentage total over 100% due to people being able to identify as multiple ethnicities

Figure 16 - Snapshot of the Ruapehu region.

The Ruapehu Equity and Wellbeing Profile



The Ruapehu Communities Systems Map

KEY

- 1 Associated themes
- + Positive impact
- Negative impact
- 0 Neutral impact
- Associated Sustainability Goals
- Direction and connection

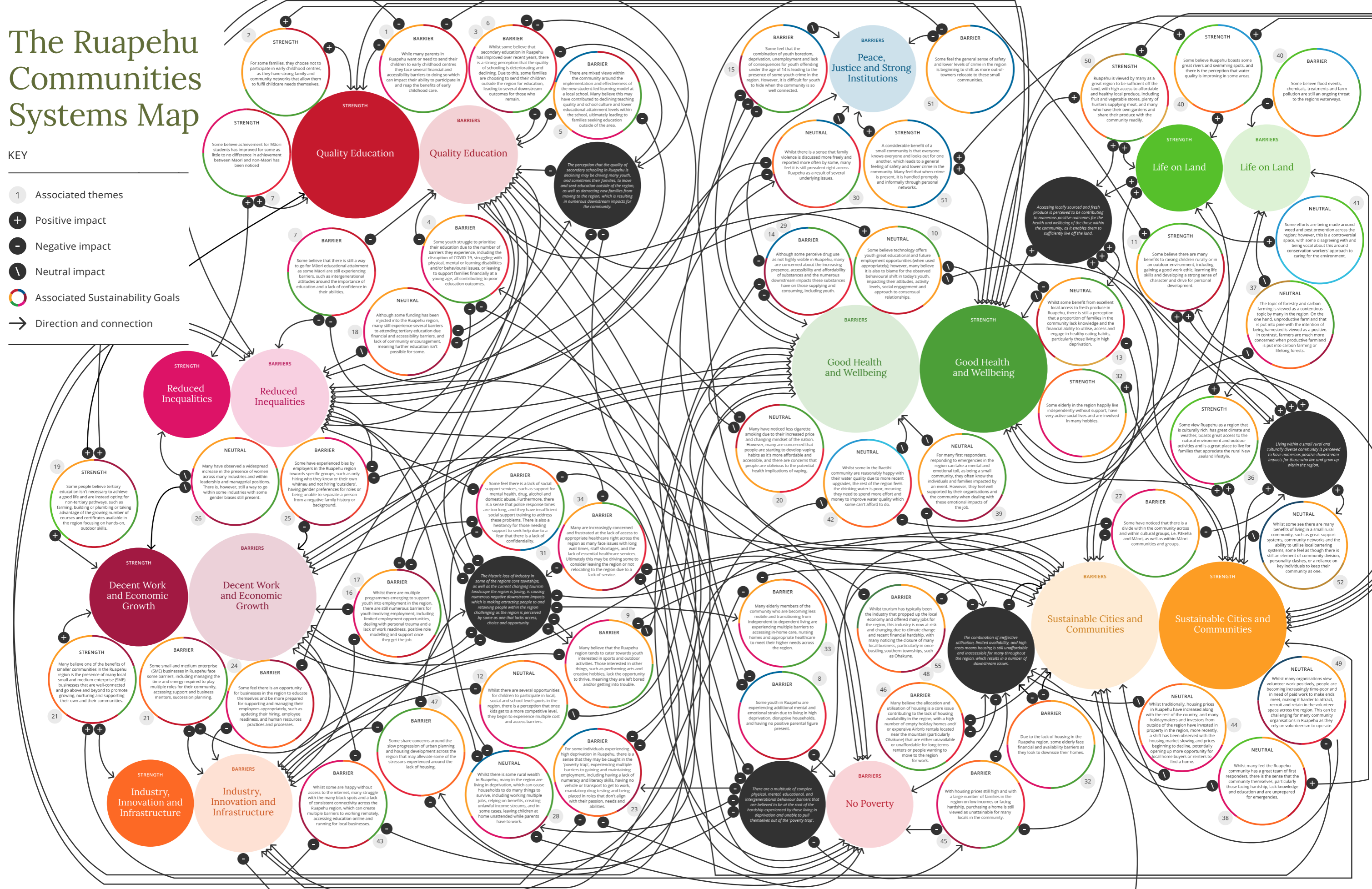


Figure 17 - The Ruapehu Communities Systems Map.

How to read the insights

Themes

The system map on the previous page (see figure 17), aims to capture the complexity of everything we have heard on one page, including all of the themes. To make things a little easier to follow, each theme has a number, and you will see these numbers featured in the map, representing where they sit in the system and what they may or may not be related to.

In this section of the Equity and Wellbeing Profile, we delve much deeper into each unique theme that has been uncovered through engaging with members of the Ruapehu community.

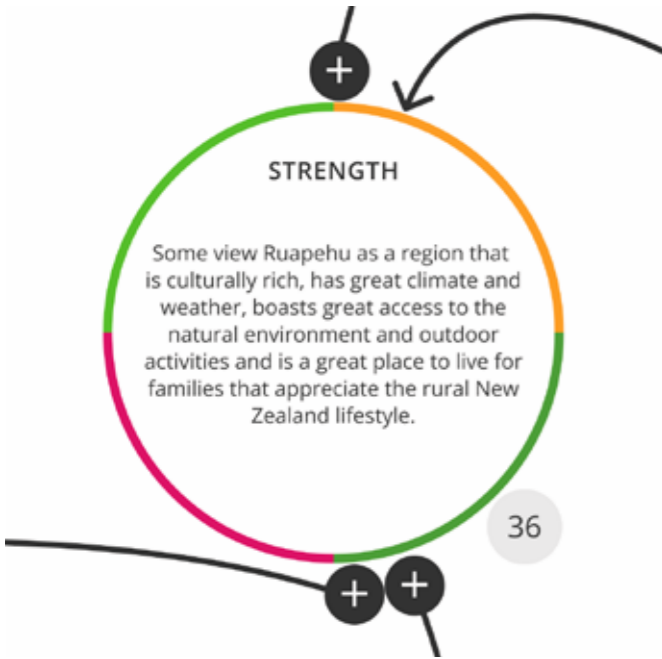


Figure 18 – Close up of theme numbers attached to Systems Map.

Life Stages

In order to ensure our themes are as relatable as possible, we have aligned them to the various life stages of the array of individuals in the Ruapehu community. This is broken down into infant, youth, adult, elderly and all.

Additionally, we have captured some enablers and barriers within the system that are impacting the ability for organisations to work with and effectively meet the needs of the Ruapehu community across these various life stages.

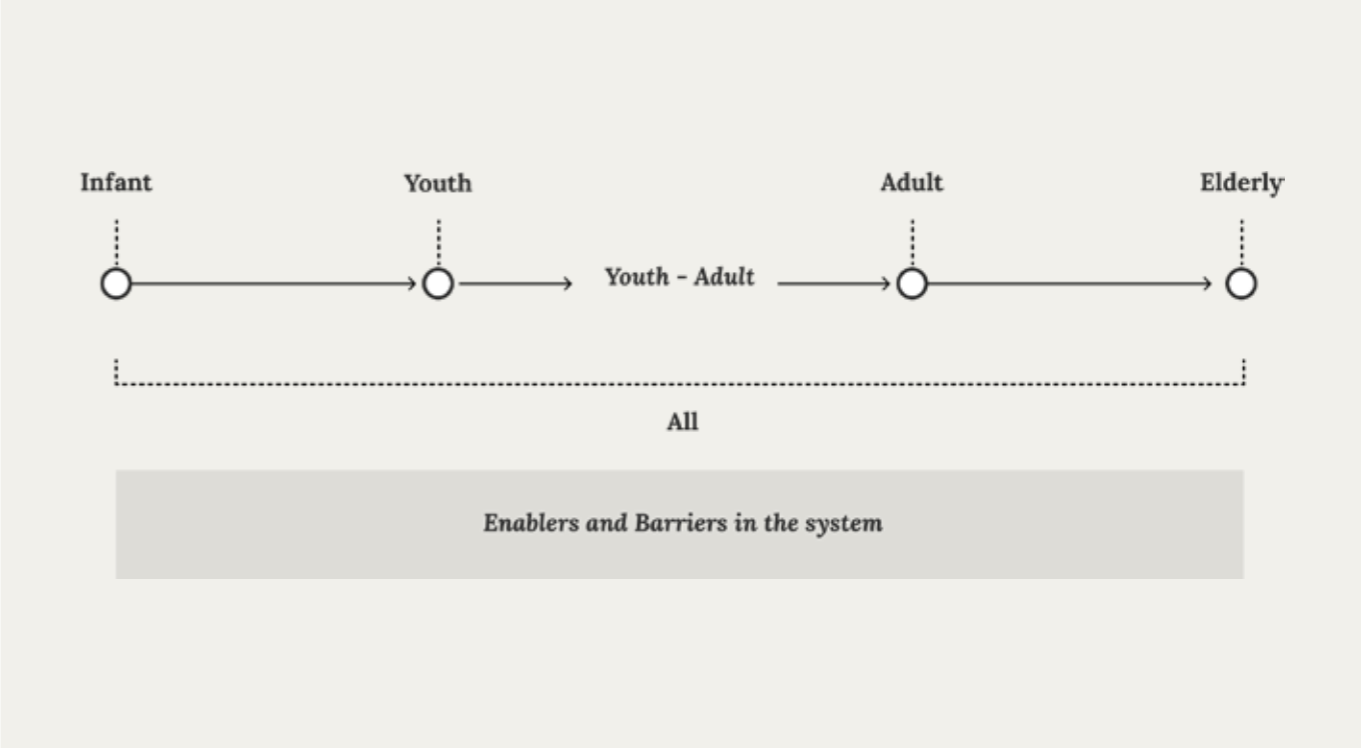


Figure 19 – Life stages.

Framework Tags

We have also aligned and tagged each theme to our frameworks, which include the combination of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals, Treasury Living Standards and Whānau Ora Goals. You will find these tags on the top right corner of each page. They are coded as below:

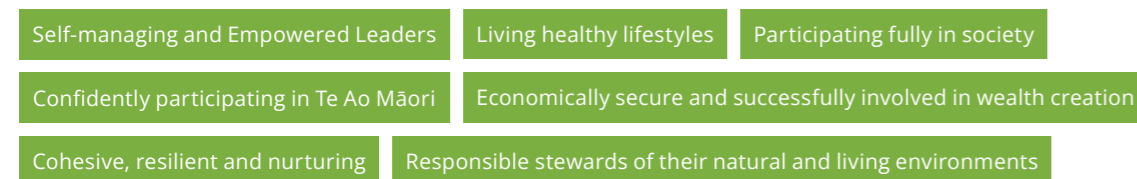
Sustainable Development Goals tags:



Treasury Living Standards tags:



Whanau Ora Goals tags:



Statistics

In order to capture both sides of the story, we have built into each theme, any relevant statistics drawn from our Equity and Wellbeing Dashboard. This is to ensure each theme tells not only the people's story, but the data story too.

If you have less time...

If you are short of time, there will be a summary page that captures all of the themes in a life stage at the beginning of each life stage section. This will give you a great overview of the range of themes that were captured.

Alternatively, the last section of this report 'Summary of Findings', beginning on page 303, aims to summarise all of the themes and insights captured in this report, into an easily digestible, and actionable format.

If you have more time...

If you have more time, there is a wealth of information on each individual theme. This includes the relevant stories that were captured from our community that speak to the strengths, barriers, opportunities and any good mahi stories in the community for each, as well as any relevant statistics.

We hope you find these insights both interesting, and inspiring. **Enjoy!**

Infant

This life stage encompasses all infants and toddlers that fall within the ages of 0 to 5 years old.

Quality Education

Theme 1—Whilst many parents in Ruapehu want or need to send their children to early childhood centres, there are several barriers to accessing them, such as limited and full centres, affordability, lack of transport and the lack of flexibility to allow for outside of 9-5 work hours, all impacting their ability to participate and reap the benefits of engaging in early childhood care.

Theme 2—For some families, they choose not to participate in early childhood centres, as they have strong family and community networks that allow them to fulfil childcare needs themselves.

Whilst many parents in Ruapehu want or need to send their children to early childhood centres, there are several barriers to accessing them, such as limited and full centres, affordability, lack of transport and the lack of flexibility to allow for outside of 9–5 work hours, all impacting their ability to participate and reap the benefits of engaging in early childhood care.

Strengths

- Some local early childhood centres are seen to be affordable for families within the Ruapehu region.
- Some parents believe a benefit of putting their children in early childhood education is that it can give them a break.
- Some have observed that there are many Māori-run early childhood education centres in the region.
- Some are aware of some parent-led early childhood education centres in Ruapehu that aren't full, have capacity, and are a more affordable option for many families within the region.
- Some believe attending parent-led early childhood education centres is as much for mums as it is for children as it helps them gain confidence and build connections, especially first-time mothers and those who are more transient or lack family support.

“It's hard to know why people don't come. I know why people do come, people come because our playgroup is more about the mums than it is about the kids. Yes, we run activities for the kids, and yes, we're supportive of the kids. But, it's really an opportunity for mums to get together, talk to each other, share experiences and gain confidence in being a mother for the first time.”

“We only cost \$2 a session, so money isn't stopping people coming to Playcentre. And we'll take children from zero [to] six years old.”

“I think parents in general are quite keen on getting their kids into daycare because it gives them time off. Those little playgroup sessions seemed to attract the ones that had moved in for work and didn't have those family connections.”

Barriers

- For some families, high travel times and large distances to early childhood education centres can be a barrier to attending, especially when centres don't provide their own transport options.
- Many believe there are not enough early childhood education providers in the region, with the ones that do exist having extensive waitlists and wait times. This is a huge barrier to many in the region who want to access and participate in early childhood education.
- For some who cannot participate in early childhood education and therefore have nowhere to put their children, they resort to leaning on family networks to care for their children, or, if they don't have this, they need to sacrifice their work to stay home and look after them. This is particularly hard to navigate for working mums in the region.
- Due to some early childhood centres having very limited openings, many parents need to be flexible around what openings are available and are willing to take what they can get, often having to compromise on their ideal days for child care, i.e. a parent may only want childcare for Tuesdays and Thursdays; however, centres want them to commit to four to five days a week.

Framework Tags



- There are low to no options for early childhood education for parents who work outside of the typical 9 to 5 work hours, which, coupled with the pressures of being charged late fees if they cannot pick up their children on time, means these working parents are forced to come up with their own ways to access (or not access) childcare.
- For those children who are fortunate to access early childhood care, there is a high risk of catching daycare bugs, which can mean that when their child does get sick, parents are required to keep their kids home and either rely on family networks or take time off work to care for their sick child.

“We don't have a lot of early childhood education providers. There's only two in Taumarunui from six months onwards. My kids go to kindergarten, but I couldn't even look at going back to work until my youngest turned two, the waiting lists are so long.”

“The wait lists are huge, not all centres have transport available either.”

“I drive her to kindy two days a week in Taumarunui. That's the closest professional outfit that will watch my child and that's an hour's drive, morning and night.”

“There aren't many ECE providers and the waitlists are long for the few that do exist.”

“I booked my son (now two years old) into the kindy when he was born, he's still on the waitlist.”

“So out here, if you've got one child, you can't work because you can't put them anywhere. You can't take them anywhere. And we've got families with six, seven, eight children and let alone just one.”

“Early childhood participation is good, everyone wants to get into the early education but they can't because every [centre] is full. So, there's waiting lists, like huge waiting lists to get in.”

“If you are determined to only need childcare for less than five days a week, you will find it hard to get early childhood education.”

“The other thing is that there will be a lot of informal care of children because in most cases, you only get the subsidy for early childhood education when the child turns three. So there will be a lot of parents who go out to work and maybe one in five of those mums looks after the kids while the other four are at work.”

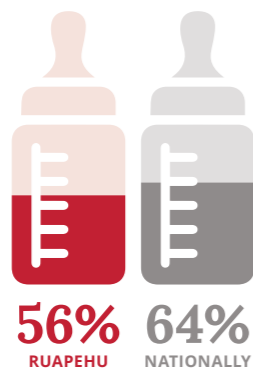
“I don't have any personal knowledge of that other than knowing that it does happen. And I guess I'm an example of that. I'm not working so that I can look after my granddaughter.”

“The waitlists are a massive issue and the other issue is before-school care and before early childhood care. We have, like, shearing communities that get up at four o'clock and go do their thing. You can't put a child and early childhood education at that age, so you've got to have a family who can come in and stay.”

“In Taumarunui it's hard if you have to take your child to a daycare every day. If the kid gets sick, you're not supposed to take them back, so what do you do with your kid? There's not many other places you can take [them]. There's not many grannies around who can take them through the day.”

“If you have got sickness in your household, you know, health affects your ability to enrol in early childhood and if you're wanting to, for some people, protect your children from sicknesses, then they won't necessarily put the children into care.”

56% OF RUAPEHU'S POPULATION AGED ZERO TO FOUR YEARS OLD ARE ENROLLED IN LICENSED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMMES, COMPARED WITH 64% NATIONALLY.



Education Counts, ECE Participation Rates (Impact Collective Dashboard).

Opportunities

- Exploring more flexible options that provide care for children before and after the usual 9am to 5pm working hours.
- Getting children and parents involved in creative programmes and workshops such as arts and crafts.

“So then they’re understaffed, and if they’re understaffed, that means I’ve got to reduce numbers. That’s why I was saying we still need more programmes and after school care as well as during school care.

“We kind of want to do something with early childhood here... where they can get together to do art and crafts... I might be able to get funding for it as well, so that’d be awesome.

“So I think parents and families are to come up with [their] own resourceful ways to be resilient around this stuff.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Parent-led childcare, such as Playcentre and other smaller community-based groups, are present in National Park and Ohakune.
- There are many Kōhanga Reo to support Māori whānau in the region.
- Plunket have recently expanded and are doing some great things in the Ruapehu community, including having an onsite education person to look after and teach the children while the mother can up-skill themselves.

“We ran a playgroup with Raetihi and Ohakune [and] most people that had a lot of family support would go to the kōhanga or have their own family support, so it seemed to draw in those people that were a bit more transient and didn’t have that family support. They were more likely to come to our sessions, because they needed to get out of their house and they didn’t have those connections in town.

“In National Park, there is a Playcentre where you give them the key and it is all run by parents.

“Now it is just community-based, where a few parents there [at Playcentre], who are homeschooling their kids anyway, say “hey we are using the facility come and drop your kids off if you want”. They have maybe three or four parents that help out there.

“They do have a couple of parent led playgroups as well, there’s one in Ohakune and there is one in Raetihi and they’ve always been quite well supported.

“I know that Plunket has expanded, they are doing some real good things here, which I think is good mahi in our community.
“Across the road from me... there is a big house and Plunket now has it and they’ve got young mothers in there that are trying to [find] a way to get [out] with their young child. They teach the kids while the mother can expand and jump on one of our programmes to empower herself.

For some families, they choose not to participate in early childhood centres, as they have strong family and community networks that allow them to fulfil childcare needs themselves.

IN 2022, 92% OF ALL RUAPEHU CHILDREN HAD PARTICIPATED IN SOME FORM OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION BY THE AGE OF FIVE, COMPARED TO 96% NATIONALLY.

Education Counts, ECE Participation Rates (Impact Collective Dashboard).

Strengths

- Some families in the region have wide and deep family and community networks, meaning they don't require early childhood education centres. This is particularly common for Māori, who tend to have large whānau networks.
- Some parents have the ability to stay home and want to, and choose to, care for their own.

“Why aren't other mothers coming? Maybe that's because they've got that support in their family network, because there are very strong family networks here. That's one thing about this area that is possibly unlike a lot of other areas, is that the family networks are wide and deep.

- “A lot of our very remote communities, e.g. Pipiriki, are stay at home whānau. They don't send their children to school because dad's out on the farm and mum's at home with the kids.*
- “I'm in two minds about this one, there is definitely evidence to show that early childhood education is good. But on the other side, staying at home with mum or dad is really good as well. So, I think there's a lot of people in our community that are maybe tending that way as well.*
- “Again, if you were at home and you have the ability to care for your own, some people say, well, why wouldn't you, you know?*
- “I think that is general for high population Māori areas. So, Raetihi is over 60% Māori population, with large whānau networks.*
- “In my experience in working at the kura in Raetihi. I worked in the administration and there was always a long list within the school [of] family members we could contact if a child was sick. There was always a huge network and process, we could always make sure there was someone available, and there always was someone available. So yeah, very strong community networks in place.*

Framework Tags

Quality Education Good Health & Wellbeing Sustainable Cities & Communities

Human Capability Social Cohesion

Self-managing and empowered leaders Leading healthy lifestyles Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Barriers

- Some who are more transient and have moved to the region for permanent or seasonal work, they lack strong family and community networks and struggle not having these around to rely on. Instead, they have to pay for and utilise services such as babysitters.

“On the other hand, in Ohakune, especially in the winter, there's people that have moved to the community for work or seasonal work, and so on. They're a bit more transient as they don't have a lot of community networks, and they very much struggle, they don't have the whānau around them to rely on. Or even to get babysitters to go out, you know, for their own well-being, to get a little break.

Opportunities

- Better promoting the strength of family and community networks in the region - 'families looking after family'.

“I do wonder if it is a way of marketing the district, that close community. I mean families looking after a family is a really big thing here.

This life stage encompasses all children and teenagers that fall within the ages of 5 to 18 years old.

Quality Education

Theme 3—There is the perception that the quality of secondary schooling is deteriorating within the region, which may be one of the reasons that families, who can afford to, are choosing to send their children to education outside the region. This has a number of downstream impacts for those who remain in the area, such as less opportunity, staff attraction and retention issues and poorer educational outcomes.

Theme 4—Some youth struggle to prioritise their education due to the number of barriers they experience, including the disruption of COVID-19, struggling with physical, mental or learning disabilities and/or behavioural issues, or leaving to support families financially at a young age, all contributing to poor education outcomes.

Theme 5—There are mixed views within the community around the implementation and effectiveness of the new student-led learning model at a local secondary school. Many believe this may have contributed to declining teaching quality and school culture and lower educational attainment levels within the school, ultimately leading to families seeking education outside of the area.

Theme 6—Some have the view that another local secondary school has improved over recent years, especially in relation to diversifying its subjects available and culture. Others, however, share some concerns that this may be on the decline again, along with the school rolls.

Theme 7—Some believe achievement for Māori students has improved for some; however, there is also a perception that there is a way to go as some Māori are still experiencing barriers, such as intergenerational attitudes around the importance of education and a lack of confidence in their abilities.

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Theme 9—Many believe that the region tends to cater towards youth interested in sports and outdoor activities. In contrast, those interested in other things, such as performing arts and creative hobbies, lack the opportunity to thrive, meaning they are left bored and/or getting into trouble.

Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure

Theme 12—Whilst there are several opportunities for children to participate in local, social and school-level sports in the region, there is a perception that once kids get to a more competitive level, they begin to experience multiple cost and access barriers.

Good Health & Wellbeing

Theme 8—Some youth in the region are experiencing additional mental and emotional strain due to living in high deprivation, disruptive households, and having no positive parental figure present.

Theme 10—Some believe technology offers youth great educational and future employment opportunities (when used appropriately); however, many believe it is also to blame for the observed behavioural shift in today's youth, impacting their attitudes, activity levels, social engagement and approach to consensual relationships.

Theme 11—Some believe there are many benefits to raising children rurally or in an outdoor environment, including gaining a good work ethic, learning life skills and developing a strong sense of character and drive for personal development.

Theme 13—Whilst some benefit from excellent local access to fresh produce in the region, there is still a perception that a proportion of families in the community lack knowledge and the financial ability to utilise, access and engage in healthy eating habits, particularly those living in high deprivation.

Theme 14—Some have concerns that the increasing presence, accessibility and affordability of substances, e.g. marijuana, methamphetamine and vaping, is trickling down to youth in the region, with some observing an increase in these substances 'walking through school gates'.

Peace Justice & Strong Institutions

Theme 15—Some feel that the combination of youth boredom, deprivation, unemployment and lack of consequences for youth offending under the age of 14 is leading to the presence of some youth crime in the region. However, it is difficult for youth to hide when the community is so well connected.

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Theme 16—Whilst there are multiple programmes emerging to support youth into employment in the region, some believe there are still numerous barriers for youth involving employment, including limited employment opportunities in the region, dealing with personal trauma, lack of work readiness, and a lack of support once they get the job.

Theme 17—For some, their families play a significant role in relation to youth unemployment through modelling a lifestyle of intergenerational reliance on the benefit or requiring youth to stay home and support their family rather than work.

There is the perception that the quality of secondary schooling is deteriorating within the region, which may be one of the reasons that families, who can afford to, are choosing to send their children to education outside the region. This has a number of downstream impacts for those who remain in the area, such as less opportunity, staff attraction and retention issues and poorer educational outcomes.

Strengths

Whilst the following have been identified as a strength, they have also been identified as a barrier:

- Some youth, regardless of whether they are currently living inside or outside of the region, are wanting to live in and stay connected to their community; however, the region lacks opportunity for them to do so.
- Some have noticed that historically, many of those seeking education outside the region often come from rural farming families or backgrounds.

“The message that we’ve been getting, or since I’ve been living here, is that people want to return home. It’s a historical thing, it’s a farming, a rural thing that they’ve gone to private schooling outside of the area.”

Barriers

- Some believe that some high schools within the region do not have the best reputation and are decreasing in enrolment numbers, meaning that many families are choosing to send their youth to schools with better reputations outside the region.
- Some have observed that youth who demonstrate natural leadership abilities at a young age, such as those who serve as captains of their sports teams, are often the same youth pursuing education outside the region. Some believe this means the region is left with youth who may need additional support and resources to thrive.
- Some believe that as students progress through their schooling (from primary to secondary school), the quality of education in the region declines, meaning that youth may decide to seek secondary school education elsewhere due to limited opportunities in the region.
- There is a belief that some youth in the region lack enthusiasm towards education, which is creating a barrier for students, as it is becoming increasingly difficult to motivate them.
- Some believe the quality of teachers, particularly at the high school level, is limited and declining within Ruapehu. Some believe this results from struggling to recruit qualified and specialised teachers to the region.

Framework Tags



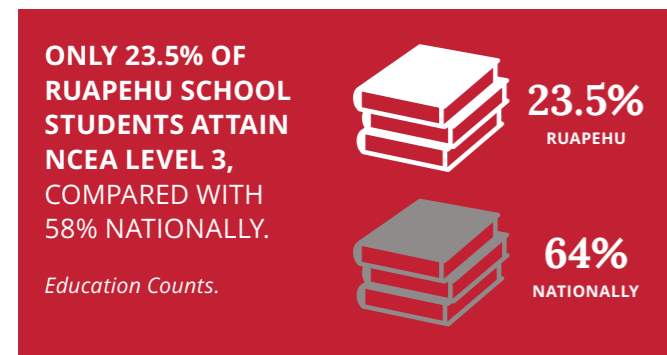
- Although some families are able to (and do) send their youth to schools outside of the region, doing so is not possible for many lower-income or high-deprivation families due to financial constraints.
- Some believe that being born, raised and educated in the region no longer offers the same opportunities it once did, as the quality of schooling has declined and high schools no longer offer a strong family educational space.

“It falls away when children are sent away for education. You identify leaders in children pretty quickly, which means usually those that learn leadership at a young age are the captains of their sport, and are the same demographic of children that have been sent away at the moment. We’re not retaining those children.”

- “So many people leave town, either the whole family relocates or they are sending kids off to boarding school. We’re losing the better quality kids all the time.”*
- “So I think once kids get older, the quality of schooling [that is] provided declines. So, a lot of people are sending the kids off to get secondary education elsewhere. I get it.”*
- “We aren’t getting a real sort of enthusiasm from youth straight out of school or even still in school, really.”*

- “At high school level it gets tricky with quality teachers. We do have that in our district, but they’re limited.”*
- “Yeah, if you’ve got the money you send your kids elsewhere to school, and that’s just a fact of life.”*
- “It worries me but we’re not in a position to want to send our kids away for education because we choose not to afford it. And it’s not affordability just with money, it’s the affordability of time. Having to drop them off, having to pick them up, we don’t have that time to do that, we aren’t able to commit to doing that, so we can’t afford it.”*

“For a number of their families, that’s just simply not affordable and not an option. So they don’t have a choice of moving them out of the system, they are stuck in that system.”



TEACHER TURNOVER IN RUAPEHU SCHOOLS IS 24%, COMPARED WITH 13% NATIONALLY.



% of teachers who left teaching, transferred schools or commenced day relief, Impact Collective Dashboard, Education Counts.

Opportunities

- Finding ways to motivate youth that pursue secondary education outside of the region to return home.
- With the rise of remote work and learning, there is an opportunity for schools within the region to focus on digital and E-learning.

“The opportunities that exist, exporting our young people out of the district for education in the hope that they return, should be a nice goal.

“COVID-19 taught us that we can do things in a way that we’ve never done before. I think we need to focus on that.

“Our schooling system, what we need to be able to provide the levels of care, education, digital learning eLearning is massive.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - providing funding for those actively seeking education; they support students by applying for grants and scholarships, allowing them to go to education providers outside of the region. Additionally, they help students get resources that will benefit their learning (i.e. laptops, phones, Wi-Fi access).

“We’ve got about 45 kids in boarding schools throughout New Zealand. We get them out of our community because our high school is not up to the level of standard.

“We sat around the campfire with a few of the locals, who found that we needed to have a different structure that could accommodate whānau in need of education, instead of traveling out of our community...so I pretty much reached out to my family to create a charitable trust. It’s very fun. No Iwi, no government, just a whānau trust.

“Those parents have come to us for help, and we’ve got those grants for them.

“[We] communicate with the parents. If they need scholarships or grants or iwi support or resources, we’re there to help them out.

Theme 4

Some youth struggle to prioritise their education due to the number of barriers they experience, including the disruption of COVID-19, struggling with physical, mental or learning disabilities and/or behavioural issues, or leaving to support families financially at a young age, all contributing to poor education outcomes.

Strengths

- Some have observed a large amount of funding coming into the region over the last three to four years and believe that the majority of that funding has gone towards a few education and employment programmes.

“There’s been a significant amount of funding come into play here over the last three, four years, upwards of 2.3 million around education and employment programmes.”

Barriers

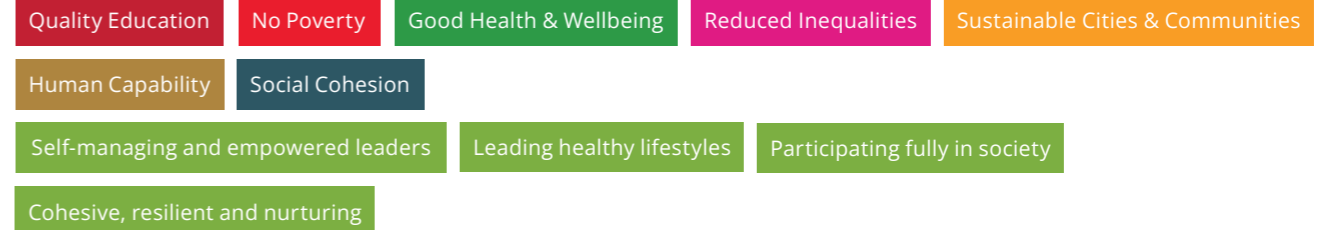
- Some have observed that youth are less engaged in the classroom setting and are coming out of school with a lack of education, credits and qualifications, especially since the COVID-19 lockdown.
- Some believe that the way in which some youth in the region are raised can act as a hindrance to their progress at school, particularly their work ethic, willingness to follow instructions, and their level of educational competence and literacy.
- Some parents may struggle to support their children with education because they lack the skills and knowledge themselves. Consequently, some children may not receive adequate support at home, which some believe can hinder their academic progress.
- Many people in the region believe that the schools in Ruapehu lack the time, resources and capacity to cater to the individual needs of students, i.e. those struggling with a learning disability, which ultimately impacts their schooling success.

- Some believe that some youth in the region may struggle with, and are behind in, numeracy and literacy skills from a young age, which can impact their ability to achieve their required NCEA credits in these subjects during their secondary school years.
- Some students are required to leave school early to support their families financially, meaning they cannot stay in school, prioritise their education or achieve academic qualifications, including obtaining credits for levels two and/or three.
- With limited options and opportunities available for youth within the local education system, some are experiencing poor education outcomes from a young age (e.g. primary school), which is impacting their self-esteem and self-worth, as some youth are leaving school without the qualifications and confidence needed to pursue tertiary pathways.
- Some have observed high absenteeism in some of the region’s schools and believe that some youth are absent due to facing several compounding problems and issues at home within their family.

“What the principal from Taumarunui was saying is that the kids are leaving early because they are kind of almost expected to go out and find a job to support their families instead of going to that higher level of education.”

“There’s so much funding and money that goes into truancy, but that’s when they’re not actually at school so we want to work with the ones that are there.”

Framework Tags



“I’ll give you an example. I was at a meeting last week at King Country R.E.A.P. They have a contract with the Ministry of Education to look at the absentee list. The month of March the list was 49. So we had the names of 49 kids in all of their caregivers and families. When you look at that list of compounding problems, they can literally track the family issues impacting on attendance at the high school. So then that becomes a much bigger issue.”

“It’s the education all the way through. They have to actually see that if they attend school, and they start to get some sort of attainment level, that there’s gonna be something for them when they come out. What’s the incentive for them to do well in school if they don’t think they’re going to be able to have a job when they come out anyway?”

“Then they fail, and then straight away, they get that fail on top of their booklets, then they want to go and wreck something.”

“I think that fits the stats, they’re coming out of schools at a lower level without the qualifications. It’s all the same thing.”

“They don’t really want to engage very well in that setting. It’s tough.”

“What I am noticing is to get an NCEA qualification is you need the 10 numeracy, 10 literacy credits. A lot of the young people that I’m seeing, they’ve got plenty of credits, like they have credits coming out of their eyeballs, but they don’t have the basics, so they can’t actually pass NCEA.”

“Like I said, the opportunities have been curtailed during COVID-19. So, it’s sort of the kids who have become less engaged.”

“The upbringing will hold them back; their attitude to work, their attitude to taking instruction, and then you get into competence and literacy.”

“It is not just the high school, it’s education in general. It is the parents just as much as the teachers. Because a lot of our parents, they’re already struggling with school. So if they’re really struggling, they don’t want to show their kids that they’re not that good at it.”

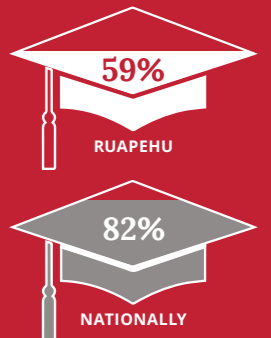
“It seems to me that when they leave high school and they have little or no qualification, their self esteem was probably already low. For some of them to consider that they might actually be able to achieve at a tertiary level, they probably don’t even think about it, they probably don’t even consider it.”

THE STAND-DOWN RATE OF SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RUAPEHU IS 38%, COMPARED TO 27% NATIONALLY.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Education Counts.

59% OF RUAPEHU SCHOOL STUDENTS STAY AT SCHOOL UNTIL 17 YEARS OF AGE, COMPARED WITH 82% NATIONALLY.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Education Counts.

Opportunities

- Creating ways for the many elders in the region that have lots of knowledge and wisdom to pass this down to youth.
- There needs to be a community led conversation around how the community views education and what the needs are of the community as a whole.

“I show the little kids how it goes down and they can carry on with it and show the people that grew up here. It feels good to share what we learnt from our elders.

“But at the time, there was a focus on two things. One was the playground. So one was making sure that our youth had something to do instead of causing trouble and the second one was economic development.

“This conversation around educational attainment needs to be a community conversation... It’s an uncomfortable conversation that does need to be had. But it needs to be a community led conversation around how the community views education and what the needs are of the community as a whole.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - offering educational support to students and their family and go to the extent of sitting down as a family to work through workbooks and assessments. They have also recently bought in a counsellor to help better support their youth.
- Taumarunui Youth & Community Trust - directs its funding towards sports and activities to keep youth in school. Activities include material arts, outdoor programmes, fishing, farming and music programmes.
- House of Science - working with students of all levels to deliver science to schools across the region as a long-term solution to bridge gaps that may be present.
- Central King Country (CKC) R.E.A.P. and the Ministry of Education - collaborating with Taumarunui High School students to assist youth who have disengaged from the education system.
- Raetihi Primary School - offer dedicated units for disabled students to utilise.
- Taumarunui High School - provide support for students with disabilities through the Kea Centre unit, empowering them to pursue their aspirations and enabling them to accomplish their goals in both academic and community settings.

“There was actually a primary school that was going to be shut down, they only had 10 students, and I said let us work together and see if we can rebuild the school.

“We put in some funding to use sport and activity as the vehicle to try and keep them in school. We’re trying to put a programme in place to utilise martial arts, the outdoors, taking them fishing or up the farm, and music.

“When it comes to the bookwork and assessment side of things, we all sit down as a family in the classroom and we go over it and discuss it.

“They have all their kids at the school which we run, so while our adults are in the back classroom, all the kids are all in the front classroom... and they’re all at the same school working together.

“The high school here actually has a unit dedicated for disabled students. I don’t really know the ins and outs of that. But, you know, that’s good.

“Raetihi Primary has one too, but always goes unnoticed.

Kea Centre - Taumarunui High School

“My role is to support students with disabilities to live their best life, and facilitating them into experiences and opportunities within the school and the community

“We [the Kea Centre] are here to support them, really. Whatever they want to achieve in life, we will try and achieve it for them...so we’re here to support them, get them to where they want to go [and] what they want to do. We get them to achieve it.

“We have core learning with the numeracy and the literacy... Numeracy is mostly money, maths, and functional teaching, things that they will need to know in the community, [like] we practise filling out forms. We focus on the big picture learning which the whole school has now adopted.

“Big picture learning is teaching all the things that someone would need to live an independent and full life and be able to care for themselves and be fulfilled.

“The school has, as the years have gone by, really set [itself] up to accommodate the needs of our students...and there’s been a lot of changes. This little group was considered part of the school, but we really weren’t there. It seemed like our activities were completely separate from the school. But then we got a new principal, and he has encouraged us along with teachers to join in and find where our students can blend in and work in with the rest of the school on different activities.

“There’s really no separation, when we’re all together doing an activity, like a Spirit Day or a sports day. There we integrate fully with the rest of the school, on those types of occasions.

“In the Kea Centre, we are like a family. We work together. We spend so much time with the students and ourselves that we know each other so well. We know when a student needs a little extra push or when to be sensitive and don’t push that at the moment.

“They built a bond here... [and] I think that those bonds will never be broken. That friendship and that bond has been built between the teacher, [the] team and the students, and I don’t think that will ever go away. It shows them that they have a place in the community.

“Human connection is the most important thing. It’s up to us teachers to teach the things that machines can’t teach...I don’t think that technology will ever replace that human connection, because the community has shown that to us.

“The biggest thing that the community can do [is] reach out and connect. The connections and the bonds between people in the community and these students is critical.

“If this unit and the high school here wasn’t here, they would just be in the mainstream [system]. They probably wouldn’t have the same support as what they get from the care advisory...to be honest, I don’t know where they would be if it wasn’t for the advisory here in the high school. I’m not too sure where the support would come from.



Theme 5

There are mixed views within the community around the implementation and effectiveness of the new student-led learning model at a local secondary school. Many believe this may have contributed to declining teaching quality and school culture and lower educational attainment levels within the school, ultimately leading to families seeking education outside of the area.

Strengths

- For highly self-motivated children with high parental support, the student-led learning model at a local secondary school is working well for them.
- Some believe that a local secondary schools' efforts to be more open to and inclusive of the community and their voices is beginning to have a positive effect.

“I went to the Taumarunui High School prize giving the other day and I was really impressed. It seems to me that the school in the past has been a little bit defensive, isolated from the community, but that's changing, they are really starting to open up.”

“Kids that do well are really well supported by their parents and family.”

“My girl took out the year nine academic award. But I am on her all the time. I am on the school all the time. So, if you don't have parents like that, supporting the young people, of course you're not going to have the results you want.”

“These kids are prepared for that because they're chucked in at year 11 into the deep end, but with support. So by the time they get to leave at the end of year 13 they're prepared for the deep end without support.”

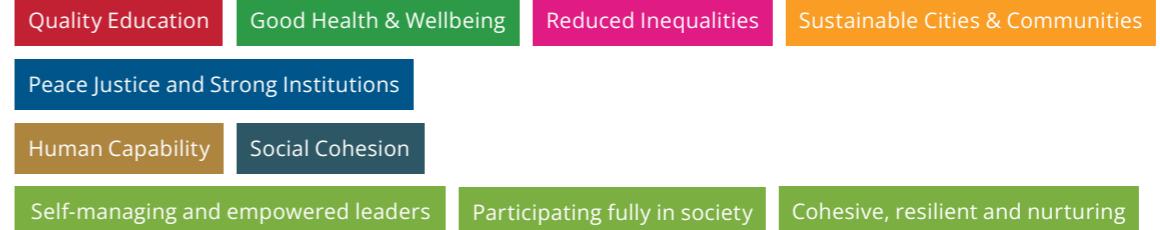
“If you talk to people that have their children there, most of them love it. Most of them think it's really good that it works for their child.”

“There are kids that do learn well this way [new student-led learning model] and I suppose if anyone's got the motivation to do it, then they'll do it. But, if they haven't, then they will switch off.”

Barriers

- Many believe the new student-led learning model at a local secondary school has faced challenges in its effectiveness and popularity within the community, with many concerned that this model is not well suited to the learner and is causing some youth to disengage from school. Many believe that only highly self-motivated students and those with strong parental support can succeed with this learning model, which is the minority of students at the school.
- Some feel as though they were not consulted or taken on the journey of introducing the new student-led learning model, which led to poor implementation as many students and parents were not prepared or ready for it.
- Some have struggled to engage with a local secondary school and feel as though they can be insular and not progressive with their relationships.
- There is a belief that certain staff members lack the necessary qualifications, knowledge, and interest in their students' learning. Additionally, they aren't always motivated or proactive enough to adequately prepare for teaching them.
- Some have observed that a bullying culture is on the rise at a local secondary school that influences academic achievement due to the significant time, energy and resources needed to be devoted to crowd control instead of teaching.
- Some believe that a significant number of students are withdrawing or absent from a local secondary school and that the declining roll of this school is further disadvantages remaining students and reducing their opportunities.

Framework Tags



- In some instances, the poor reputation of a local secondary school are driving primary schools and other associations to actively fundraise for students to attend boarding schools outside of the region to gain better quality education.
- Some are aware of the recent decision to drop Rugby as a sport offered to those students attending a local secondary school and share concerns that this will have negative impacts on the school's already declining reputation in the community.

“My personal view is that it's not necessarily the model that they chose to implement being wrong. It's the way they went about it, they didn't take the community along on the journey.”

“They'll become even more disadvantaged [because] there are less opportunities for them. The inequities get even more ingrained for our rural communities as a result of what's happening.”

“It's hard to be the only school in the country that is using this system.”

“That's an issue that, again, [is] one of those things where, if it doesn't suit your child, and they're not doing well and that system, then the only option you've got is to send them out of town to either board with family and attended different school or to become a boarder at a school.”

“Everyone's been given workbooks to work from and do their own research instead of somebody being one on one and the school teaching it, like what they get at boarding schools.”

“His mum wants him to stay in school but he hates it, he just doesn't connect with the model that the school is running on.”

“I think you'll see that in the Taumarunui area there are a number of kids who go to boarding schools. Some of those kids were always going to go to boarding school, and some of those kids are going to boarding school because of not understanding Taumarunui High School's way of teaching.”

“A lot of time and a lot of energy can be spent on crowd control, rather than on academic achievement.”

“They'll become even more disadvantaged [because] there are less opportunities for them. The inequities get even more ingrained for our rural communities as a result of what's happening.”

“We've got a perfect storm of non-achievement in the school.”

“I think it is like a catch-22, I could put all the blame on the school, like, I think that would be an easy out. But actually, this is a community problem because, like I said, the high school is receiving their students already at year nine who are way below where they should be. So, they have to deal with that.”

“I was certainly critical of the high school because I didn't understand their learning methods and I was critical of the high school because they made no effort to explain their learning methods.”

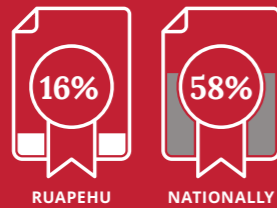
“I've emailed the Ministry of Education this week on the reemerging perceptions of Taumarunui high school: the perception, the absenteeism, the mental health deterioration, the stress and anxiety that students face, the dropping of the sport curriculum, rugby, that is impacting the impression of the school.”

“We were losing staff, and we couldn’t attract people to work here because of the quality of the education particularly in North Ruapehu. When you drop an activity like rugby, when we’re trying really hard to promote sport [and] recreation as a community activity to engage with youth... and the school doesn’t put it back on. It’s a bad look.

“In my opinion, the high school is very defensive. It’s quite insular. It’s really difficult to engage, I’ve got to engage myself. So, I’ve been trying to do that [in] various ways. But they’re just not progressive with their relationships.

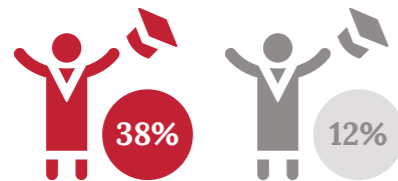
16% OF TAUMARUNUI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTAIN NCEA LEVEL 3, COMPARED WITH 58% NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Community Compass and Education Counts.



38% OF TAUMARUNUI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LEAVE SCHOOL WITHOUT ANY NCEA QUALIFICATION, COMPARED WITH 12% NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Community Compass and Education Counts.



Opportunities

- Some local community groups want to see what they can do to help decrease the number of truant students at a local secondary school in the region.
- Ensuring parents stay connected with their children and teachers so students have the best opportunity to succeed at a local secondary school.
- Bettering the relationship between a local secondary school in the region and the community to improve engagement and drive better outcomes for all.

“Hopefully in the new year, there will be some opportunity for us to identify how we could help the high school with some of their issues. And of course, the biggest issue they’ve got is the same as the national issue - truancy.

“Trying to stay connected with the teachers. It’s about being connected. The kids have a bit of education about it here, they know about it.

“So the relationship with the school needs some work again, and I know our mayor is interested in that but this has gone past the Councils’ job. The community needs to fix it too.

“[The] principal, if his biggest difficulty is absenteeism and he has a budget for truancy officers and it is well and truly blown, maybe we can help there? Maybe we can help by doing some primary truancy services? It depends on what the members of the club are prepared to do. But obviously, it’s not a good sign for the future of society.

“I convinced a friend to keep her child here because she was getting real anxiety about sending your child away to boarding school... but you have to stay connected and onto them and build a good connection with their teacher so that if that’s not working for your child, you can follow up to make sure their learning pathway is happening. Because, I see some teachers have more vested interest in their students and then there’s some that are just there to collect their pay.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Taumarunui High School - offering a trade school that is seen to be having a positive influence on youth who participate.
- Taumarunui High School - provide support for students with disabilities through the Kea Centre unit, empowering them to pursue their aspirations and enabling them to accomplish their goals in both academic and community settings.
- Rotary Taumarunui - actively looking for opportunities to help Taumarunui High School with barriers they are experiencing, such as truancy.
- The Assistant Vice Principal of Taumarunui High School - achieved a lot for the community and was great for the school. He was commended for his unique way of teaching and ability to connect with students, but he has since left the school.
- Ruapehu District Council - have worked hard to support and embrace Taumarunui High School.

“They’re able to stay and afford it, and that’s been in the last couple of years that they’ve sort of done that trade school and that is actually creating quite a wonderful wave.

“They’re starting their apprenticeships, for building plumbing, electrics, cooking, hospitality, and that means that they’re staying because they’ve already got an apprenticeship with a local builder.

“The Assistant Vice Principal here tried to do a lot for the community and he was great for the school.

“I just thought “wow, your mind thinks so differently and you’ve just got such a good method of achieving what you want”. Such a unique way of connecting with these students.

“The high school here actually has a unit dedicated for disabled students. I don’t really know the ins and outs of that. But, you know, that’s good.

Theme 6

Some have the view that another local secondary school has improved over recent years, especially in relation to diversifying its subjects available and culture. Others, however, share some concerns that this may be on the decline again, along with the school rolls.

Strengths

- Some have heard some positive feedback about a local secondary school and its efforts to find different ways to offer more subjects to its students, and are in support of keeping their children local and sending them to the school.

“For the college, there’s a lot of good feedback coming back that they are finding different ways to offer more subjects.”

“I’m at the age we were sort of talking about whether our child is gonna go to boarding school or to go to local college and there does seem to be a lot of support, especially in Ohakune about keeping our kids there.”

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

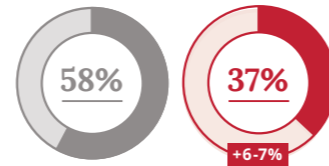
- Some have observed that the quality of schooling at a local secondary school had improved a couple of years ago; however, some feel it may be declining again, and the declining school rolls reflect this. Others are unsure.

“We will have a grandson who’s four and he’ll be going to primary school next year. And, you know, my son says, ‘well, you know, once he gets to middle school, to secondary school, you know, he’s not going to Ruapehu High’ and that’s, you know, it has a poor reputation.”

“The quality of the schools. For example, Ruapehu College used to run with a roll of 420 odd kids. Man, I think it’s scratching 200 kids now, if that. So less than half of it, and that’s part of it.”

37% OF RUAPEHU COLLEGE SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTAIN NCEA LEVEL 3, COMPARED WITH 58% NATIONALLY. THIS IS AN INCREASE OF 6-7% ON PREVIOUS YEARS.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Community Compass and Education Counts.



14% OF RUAPEHU COLLEGE SCHOOL STUDENTS LEAVE SCHOOL WITHOUT ANY NCEA QUALIFICATION, COMPARED WITH 12% NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Community Compass and Education Counts.

Framework Tags

Quality Education

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Human Capability

Social Cohesion

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Opportunities

- Increasing the number of international students who are returning to and attending local secondary schools to help expand the school culture.

“I would probably like to see a little bit more of the international flavour coming in. So looking at getting international students in to help with their expanding on the culture within the school.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- A class at Ruapehu College where students are able to come together and connect with different teachers around the area.

“I’ve got this class and they all sit in the class together but they might be connecting to other teachers around the area, it’s called the rockets or something like that.”

Theme 7

Some believe achievement for Māori students has improved for some; however, there is also a perception that there is a way to go as some Māori are still experiencing barriers, such as intergenerational attitudes around the importance of education and a lack of confidence in their abilities.

Strengths

- Some have noticed that at the primary school level, there is little to no difference in achievement between Māori and non-Māori.
- Some have observed that there is less disapproval towards children having friends from different backgrounds in today's community, which is indicative of a welcoming environment where kids are free to form friendships based on their own preferences. This is a notable and positive shift from the attitudes of the previous generation, where such friendships were not always accepted.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

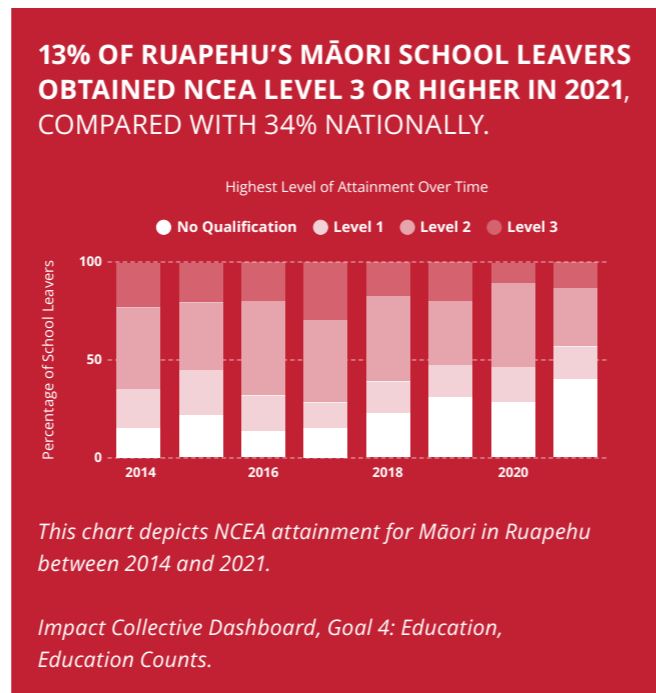
- Some have observed that Māori students are excelling more in Taumarunui than in other areas of the country; however, some wonder whether this is simply due to the higher Māori population in the region.

“I don't think the kids see a difference. In lots of ways. The adults are all segregated and isolated, the kids aren't. They're all integrated. They don't differentiate between them.”

“When we're talking primary school, we had no difference in achievement between Māori and non Māori, they all did really well.”

“When we see the awards evenings, there's just as many Māori as Pākehā, it's good.”

“So there's not any kind of disapproval towards that happening now. So the kids are free to be friends with whoever they want, whereas maybe our parents' generation, unfortunately, were a little bit more judgmental.”



Barriers

- Whilst the region offers several full immersion kaupapa Māori schools at the primary school level, some have concerns about the transition to English-speaking secondary schools in the region, with some students experiencing literacy barriers due to Te Reo being their first language.
- Some believe there are low academic expectations for Māori, which is impacting their mindset and self-esteem, and discouraging some of them from engaging in school.
- Some believe that it can be difficult for some Māori who are achieving academically to see their friends being left behind.
- Some Māori students are experiencing barriers to academic success that occur outside of the classroom environment, including a lack of qualifications or motivation, being stuck in 'survival mode' at home, or dealing with trauma from their past.

Framework Tags



“If you are one of the people that is succeeding against all odds, how does that make you feel watching the rest of your friends fall away? It can't feel good, can it? It's not a 'woohoo, I made it', it's a feeling of sad for everybody.”

“100%, if I grew up being told 'you're pretty smart for a Māori', how many of the kids have been told that throughout our country?”

“The mindset is prevalent throughout their entire life. The entire school system. Being told that, that's pretty hard. That's a pretty hard barrier to get past.”

“I'll give you an example at the high school. My daughter pointed out that her class is mostly Māori, she's Māori, and they have the poorest internet service in the whole school. The class that has the best access in her year, has the majority of white students. The fact that she pointed that out to me was a big concern to me.”

“Just to reinforce that, Kōkōri have taken on quite a few students and school leavers and most of them, I'd say about 80% to 90% of them, were told that they're too dumb, and that is what led them to disengage from school and not return.”

“These are 15 year olds, 16 year olds, being told that from a teacher, that you are too dumb, what a way to ruin someone's self-esteem.”

“A lot of our Māori they are not qualified or they've got no interest and are just in survival mode or need benefits or they're traumatised from their own past.”

“I think it [ESL or English as a second language] is part of the motivation as well because once you have a bit of one on one in trying to help them out, you can see that they can do whatever they want, I suppose. Families play a big role too.”

Opportunities

- The historical need to improve educational and employment outcomes for Māori is essential as this often underpins a number of negative downstream effects.

“I oversee an education and employment portfolio. So, the data that we got in the livability study, etc, highlights clearly a historical need for improvement in educational outcomes and employment outcomes for Māori.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Te Wānanga o Aotearoa - offering night classes and national certificates in Māori education, creating more forms of educational qualifications for those in the community.
- Strong Māori and Iwi programmes - available for those thinking about considering higher education, including access to grants and scholarships depending on which Iwi an individual affiliates to.

“We have challenges in the educational scene. But we also have some real positives. So we've got Te Wānanga o Aotearoa back in Taumarunui. So they're offering several courses, one of them being Te Reo Māori. You can get your national certificate in Te Reo Māori and do night classes, which is a huge thing.”

Theme 8

Some youth in the region are experiencing additional mental and emotional strain due to living in high deprivation, disruptive households, and having no positive parental figure present.

Barriers

- Some believe troubled youth are acting the way they are due to having parents at home who are stressed, financially strained and/or struggling with drugs and alcohol.
- Some have observed that some youth lack positive role models to look up to as leaders in their everyday lives, and consequently, it's becoming more difficult to motivate youth, especially when they return back to a disruptive household, ultimately impeding their general progress.
- Some youth experiencing trauma at home are causing havoc in the classroom, making it difficult to engage them in the learning process, creating a challenging learning environment for teachers and students. Some have also observed an increase in bullying and fights amongst some of these individuals.
- Some teachers often hear about what is happening in their students' homes but feel they aren't able to intervene.
- Some have observed that there are a number of unsupervised youth in the region due to parents being incarcerated, deceased, or absent, and in some cases, contacting their parents can cause more harm than good, leading to further trauma and family disrepair.
- Some have noticed that the high consumer market mindset in youth, and the need to have the latest and greatest things, can affect the self-worth of youth living in deprived conditions.

“Unfortunately we have got this high consumer market mindset...and kids being kids, they make these comparisons. And so by making those comparisons to others, ‘man, I don’t have that I wish I had that’. It leads them into a downward spiral quite often, and if they’re sitting in that dark space, they’re not gonna think about school. They’re gonna be thinking about employment.

“You can see why some of the children are reacting the way they are. It is due to parents being under stress. They are financially strained. They struggle with drugs and alcohol.

“It’s the kids living in poverty without shoes or [the kids that] can’t go to school because they can’t afford a jacket so the kids home school.

“How does a school teacher see that their kid is potentially being damaged by seeing violence at home or a kid that has always got a \$20 note when it comes to lunches, but has never gotten the money for paying other things that the school might have? Now, they’re learning bad financial habits to learn how to put their hand out instead of their hand up.

“If they went to Oranga Tamariki with some suspicion, then they’d have to be right or they’d be discredited. It’s almost like a complaint. Yet they can’t do anything about themselves.

“What I’ve identified, more so as a parent, but also within my role in the community, is these troubled youth at school, a lot of them are attending school, but they’re just causing havoc in school. They’re the naughty kids who have been ostracised and pushed away and it’s easier for these schools to make them late.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

No Poverty

Quality Education

Reduced Inequalities

Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

Human Capability

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“I just wanted to mention that with the trade school when we were doing Studylink applications we noticed, not just in this region, but also outside and other regions, but there’s a vast, very high percentage of young people not living with parents, not living with family members or even sometimes a significant other.

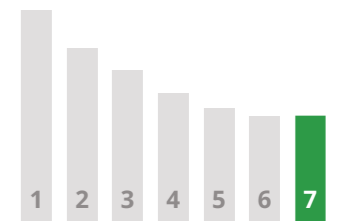
“And sometimes it would, you know, contacting their parents... would actually cause quite a lot more trauma and disrepair in the family than any good.

“For example, if they have substance abuse, we’ve got an outfit that’s next door to us. We have to prove that you’re in the top 6% of danger and high substance abuse in order to get that assistance, which once again leads to us having to be creative to help get those people the support they need.

OUT OF 68 TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES, **RUAPEHU HAS THE 7TH HIGHEST LEVEL OF DEPRIVATION IN NEW ZEALAND** WITH THE DISTRICT HAVING AN OVERALL DEPRIVATION LEVEL OF 9 IN DECEMBER, 2022.

Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu, 2023.

7TH HIGHEST DEPRIVATION LEVEL



Opportunities

- Some feel that getting the whole family involved in supporting and addressing youth suffering from trauma can be beneficial and, in many cases, lead to better outcomes.
- Ensuring local organisations can provide more support to youth facing trauma in the region by doing more in-depth research to gain the necessary and relevant expertise and knowledge that is needed.
- Instilling self-confidence in young people has the potential to create numerous opportunities for them.
- Some believe mental health needs significant restructuring around youth in general.

“It’s a new idea where because of increased mental health issues and stuff, of course, one part of it is therapy, being able to talk to a medical profession and being able to work through those possible medications. So that helps you survive, but getting into something creative helps you thrive.”

- “Mental health needs a major restructure around kids in general.”*
- “It’s hard to engage a young one or a learner when they’re just not functioning, you know, you need the skills around to support them.”*
- “We went to meetings outside of the Taumarunui education meetings with the Count Me In Scheme, and we asked those questions at those conferences... because we felt it [unsupervised youth] was a really high number and we got a yes from everyone but I don’t believe any research has even been really done around it.”*
- “Where young people are confident in that we see their contributions. That would be amazing.”*
- “I think too if you’ve got the family engaged, you get a better result because they want the best for them as well.”*
- “They just don’t know sometimes how to get out, so once you get them going and then start ironing out some of those problems, piece of cake.”*
- “That is the advantage of people like school teachers. They, especially primary school teachers, they hear conversations, kids talk to them. But the thresholds for sharing that information is very hard.”*

Good Mahi in the Community

- Family Start flagship programme - providing a holistic view and wrap-around services to help families deal with multigenerational social issues.
- Taumarunui Youth & Community Trust - providing a boxing academy initiative for all ages (including youth dealing with trauma) and has received lots of positive feedback from the community, which is reinforced by the considerable influx of new people wanting to join the academy.
- Raetihi Boys Camp by Raetihi Community Charitable Trust - facilitating a young men’s programme targeting year eight boys from Raetihi Primary School and their dads, where they spent three days at a camp surrounded by positive male role models. They work with parents, Iwi and other positive male role models, and the programme has been immensely successful.

“That’s part of the parental figure or positive role model that has been an issue. All the dads now understand what some of those issues are. So, side by side, you’ve got the youth that are understanding how to be good, positive, contributing community members. And to look at the future pathways and kind of figure that out.”

- “Family Start has been working very strongly here and it’s been a thing, one of the flagship programmes that’s come out of that area. They have a very holistic view of the family unit, wrap around services to deal with multigenerational social issues.”*
- “They’re dealing with young children, but they’re also recognizing, is there a mental health issue? Is there a health or a drug issue? And actually trying to connect these families with all the support they need to try and deal with the root problem.”*
- “The HIP program, with GPs, has been implemented, and I’m sure that has helped. But we will always struggle to have adequate services in small towns.”*
- “We run a Boxing Academy. My husband runs it and that’s all run off volunteers. We’ve got about seven volunteer coaches and we run programmes for five to eights, nine to 14, seniors and competitive.”*
- “We have actually just run a programme so our RCCT (Ruapehu Community Charitable Trust) has just run a young men’s programme.”*
- “They worked with Iwi. They worked with the parents, they worked with other positive male role models and it’s been a huge success so far. It only ran probably about three weeks to a month ago. So we’re still tracking that.”*

Many believe that the region tends to cater towards youth interested in sports and outdoor activities. In contrast, those interested in other things, such as performing arts and creative hobbies, lack the opportunity to thrive, meaning they are left bored and/or getting into trouble.

Strengths

- Many have recognised that there are numerous recreational activities in the region, many of which are free of charge, such as walking tracks, swimming pools, playgrounds, and tennis courts. The abundance of recreational activities may explain why some don't see many youth loitering in the region.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some have mentioned that the region has had a very well-rounded performing arts sector in previous years, particularly in Raetihi; however, COVID-19 hindered this, and the sector has not yet bounced back.

“People always say that [kids are bored] because there’s no shopping mall, Timezone or mini putt. But there’s so much to do in the district and a lot is free. Whether you take those opportunities up or not is a different story.

“I don’t see youth hanging around down the main street doing nothing. There’s no youth congregating and doing dreadful things. We don’t have that issue, especially not anywhere near what I’ve heard other councils have.

“Recreation facilities are not too bad and of course the natural environment there is heaps to do.

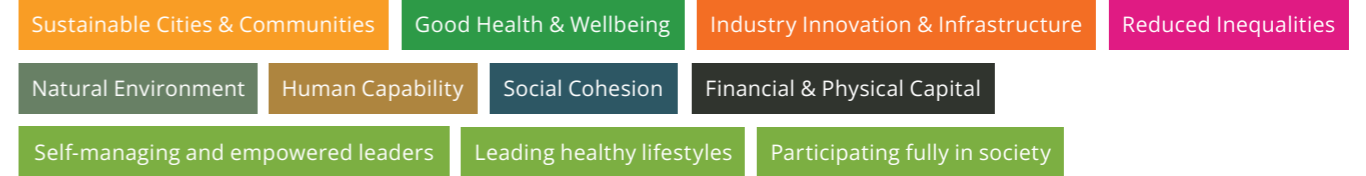
“We’ve had a really, really well rounded performing arts sector in the last few years. We did have an amateur theatre. Also at the college, we’ve got a very good performing arts tutor who’s very committed... But during COVID-19 that all just went out the window.

Barriers

- Some believe there are limited options for those not interested in sports or outdoor activities, with creative youth experiencing limited options for activities in the region and at their schools.
- Many believe the lack of entertainment options in the region leads to many youths in the community feeling bored, which has worsened since COVID-19. Additionally, the limited available activities often come with a cost, further limiting the opportunities for some youth to engage in these activities.
- For those parents who do have the opportunity to involve their children in numerous activities and events happening in town, this may not always be feasible due to the amount and cost of travel required to enable their child to attend these events.

“I think that earlier slide said, you know, Ruapehu is a good place to live. You know, good outdoors. That’s access. That’s money. If you want to go skiing, that’s transport. If you want to go out and walk in the bush, that’s money. If you want to go fishing or hunting, that’s money.

Framework Tags



- “Youths find it hard to do anything wherever they might be. Especially if they’re not into sport.*
- “I think that would be fair enough. There probably aren’t as many opportunities for those who are creative compared to those who enjoy the outdoors.*
- “Also about children, before COVID-19 happened. There were icons, which are, kind of, scouts for boys, there was the theatre, doing children only plays, there was martial arts, there was a youth group. But there’s nothing at the moment. Yeah, not one thing for kids to do in the evenings. Apart from sports.*
- “One of the things you see in there is a number of young people that are just wandering around the town, wondering what to do themselves.*
- “You know, there’s so many activities happening in town. You know, every night of the week, there is something but parents can’t always go 45 minutes one way to get their children into town to an event. It’s just not doable.*
- “I mean there’s heaps of outdoors stuff if you want to go fishing or if you want to go tramping or cycling. Nothing for those who aren’t interested in that. There, right, it can be a bit isolating as a youth.*

Opportunities

- Developing a space where people can explore creative outlets would encourage those who are not interested in sports and the outdoors to participate in something that they may enjoy. This could look like a Ruapehu-wide arts sector.
- Reinstating the region’s Youth Council to provide youth with the opportunity to get involved in helping their community. Additionally, this would help ensure that youth have things to do in their space to keep them busy.
- Employing an Event Coordinator at Council or a central person that focuses on delivering activities within and for the community (including youth).
- Developing Raetihi’s existing arts community to create an art centre for Ruapehu and provide more opportunities for youth outside of sports and outdoor activities.

“I think if you profile people you will see the things that people get out of sports, if you’re a creative person, you get that out of art. So it’s a real oversight not to have any kind of emphasis on it.

“So we want to have, you know, a place where the kids can come and drop in, in the evening and hang out with their friends and have use of the resources and create what they want to create and somebody who’s going to facilitate.

“Absolutely, the region does tend to cater for the sports and outdoor activities more than others. We are trying to counteract that and Raetihi is becoming the art centre of Ruapehu.

“You’ve got to have stuff in the community thriving for the community to be able to experience it and realise either ‘oh, we’re missing out, let’s be part of it’ or ‘what are they doing that we could even build on and make stronger?’

“We need more youth-led systems in place where they can actually go and do stuff.

“This is an area that Council can get involved in, you know, they can promote these things. That’s one way the Council could help just ensure that public facilities are available so these things can happen. Otherwise where are they going to do it? The corner of the street?

“We often talk in the community about how it’d be really good for the Council to have, kind of, an event coordinator because obviously events that you hold in a small town are a real boost to the local economy.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Volcano Vibe - hosting community art classes and is setting up a studio to run more workshops. Volcano Vibe has been seen to be successful by many local Raetihi community members.
- The Youth Council - a group of youth that provided input into and recommended insights on issues relevant to their age group within the Ruapehu region. Many saw the Youth Council as a positive part of the youth community; however, this group is no longer active.
- Raetihi Community Charitable Trust - working with the local Iwi, Uenuku, to create a Taonga workshop and gallery space where they can run art workshops out of.

“There used to be a youth council that was promoted in 2014 to 2015, there was actually funding for those types of things. There was a really good programme that they had around these types of things like volunteerism [and the] promotion of young people’s ideas.

“We also have Volcano Vibe that has set up a community by Studio and workshop space. So we’ve got plans with Uenuku, the local Iwi, to create a Taonga workshop and gallery space so we’ll run workshops out of here.

“Here if you want something to happen, you’ve got to do it yourself for your kids. You’ve got to volunteer. You’ve got to give your time up. There is no way you can just go pay your money to somebody... it makes it a much bigger commitment for everybody to actually provide things.

Workshop participant

Some believe technology offers youth great educational and future employment opportunities (when used appropriately); however, many believe it is also to blame for the observed behavioural shift in today's youth, impacting their attitudes, activity levels, social engagement and approach to consensual relationships.

Strengths

- Some people have observed that youth who do not have regular access to technology or the internet possess the ability to deal with confrontation, have face-to-face conversations and have general know-how to figure things out much more effectively.
- Some believe that technology can be great for youth when used appropriately and put towards education and learning purposes. Some also feel it can offer many viable career pathways for youth, i.e. professional gaming.

“[Those without technology/internet] know how to deal with confrontation face to face. They know how to have a conversation face to face. They know how to figure things out.

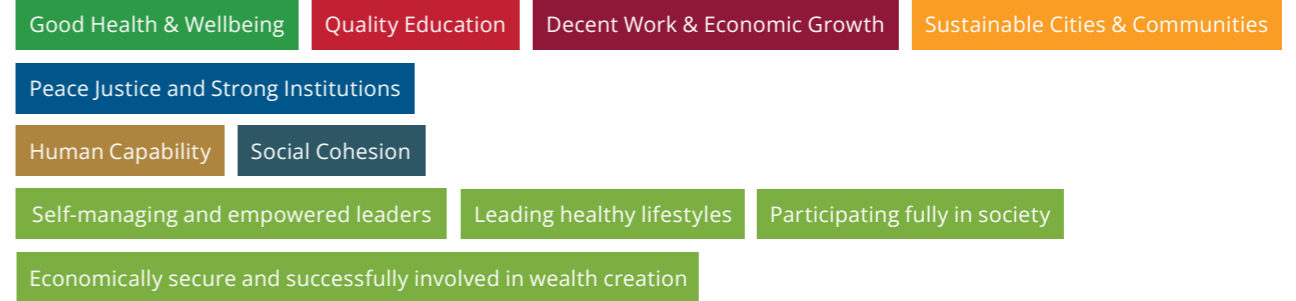
“We created professional gaming teams with the youth and some of the kaumatua were unhappy with me. But professional gamers as a valid employment pathway, it's a valid career option.

“If you're good at it, which some of these kids are after spending that much time on these games, they're good at them. It could be a career. But it's about their education.

Barriers

- Some have noticed that technology's role in many youth's lives is impacting their levels of motivation in life, and motivation to work, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdowns.
- Many have noticed that the activity levels in youth have dramatically decreased in recent years and that technology may be influencing youth to be inactive, which is quickly becoming a nationwide issue.
- Some are concerned that many youth may struggle to communicate their thoughts and feelings and deal with in-person interactions due to the increased use of technology, which was worsened by the COVID-19 lockdowns. As a result, anxiety levels in youth have heightened, particularly regarding these in-person interactions.
- Some have observed feelings of isolation and anxiety in their children due to the region's lack of internet and cellphone coverage, with some families struggling to cope or know what to do to reconnect them.
- Some parents in the community feel as though they do not know what to do with their children without technology, creating a significant dependence on devices and access to the internet.

Framework Tags



- Some people have noticed that technology has distorted the concept of consensual relationships in the minds of youth, leading to downstream impacts such as consent and abuse issues. The increased access and consumption of online pornography is seen to be a core contributor to these issues.

“I think that's a recurring theme everywhere at the moment, the amount of porn that kids are watching and not being educated about consent, and really getting a skewed idea of what a relationship is - and it's getting worse.

“After COVID-19 it took a while for people to get back into it. I think that was because of the device world. That's having a huge impact on motivation, devices.

“That is the challenge that I feel we are up against. Technology is creating an inactive nation.

“We can see that in the number of kids that qualify for different activities. We'll take them away to Waikato to compete if they qualify, but the number of them that are up to the standard of being competitive are probably the ones with their parents on their case. As opposed to across the board, some kids just used to be very good. But now they've just let go because of devices, technology and gained a lot of weight

“If they have the device connected at home they don't have to be minding their children or giving their children the attention because they are in their room all day on their device. So, you've got no way of engaging and interacting.

“It's definitely the isolation. This area doesn't have a lot of cell phone coverage. So, there's no contact, and they became very isolated, and families just couldn't cope.

“When we do these courses, we travel to a place where there's no cell coverage. We do have the Wi-Fi but they only get the password if they're good. You can just see the world gets turned upside down.

“My daughter had quite a few issues with, especially boys not knowing about consent and abuse.

“Landslip cut one fibre cord into town, it actually made the news because parents didn't know what to do with their kids.

Opportunities

- Better education and direction around technology and how to use it in a healthy and constructive way (as opposed to parents just using it to keep their children entertained).

“You’ve got to see whether education is not directing them properly in terms of technology and how to use it. Or parents are just using screens as, you know, a way to entertain. I know some people believe that.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - removing technology in some of their programmes and re-grounding and connecting youth with their marae and the environment to rebuild that sense of belonging.
- Taumarunui Kokiri Trust - has a good programme running with the kids.
- Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust - Doing amazing stuff with youth by providing many sports opportunities and programmes to get them active (and away from screens).
- Raetihi Community Charitable Trust - created professional gaming teams with youth and developed a contract that they and their parents had to sign around maintaining a work-life balance, i.e. spending a certain amount of time outdoors, spending a certain amount of time practising, completing certain chores and going to bed at appropriate times, etc.

“A lot of people don’t know where they belong and that’s a missing link with who they are as a person. They don’t know where they belong.”

“With all of our programmes we take them back to the marae. We take them through being grounded, who they are, their belonging and understanding their anger so that they can be more grounded.”

“Teaching them patience, around their physical health and wellbeing. We take them tramping, swimming, and we walk around local sites so that they can connect. Or I’ll find out what their whakapapa is and take them to those locations.”

“Taumarunui Kokiri Trust has a good programme running with the kids.”

“Amy [Taumarunui Youth Community Trust] does some amazing stuff to get them [youth] going.”

“In the gaming teams, we had a contract that they had to sign, the parents had to sign it too. It was about work life balance, right. So they had to do a certain amount of time outdoors, they had to have a certain amount of time practicing. They had to go to bed at certain times, they had to do certain chores. So there was a contract in place.”

Theme 11

Some believe there are many benefits to raising children rurally or in an outdoor environment, including gaining a good work ethic, learning life skills and developing a strong sense of character and drive for personal development.

Strengths

- Some have noticed that youth brought up on a farm gain a work ethic that enables them to be better prepared for and deal with life.
- Some believe growing up in a rural environment provides unique opportunities, such as hunting, canoeing, and exploring the outdoors, that are not available in the city, making it an ideal place to raise children who enjoy nature.

“That work ethic they get on the farms really benefits their ability to just, you know, deal with life.

“Family keeps you here. We raised five children here. There are opportunities here that you don’t get in the city or the city lifestyle. My kids can just take their canoe across the paddock, go hunting, explore the outdoors, there’s a lot of opportunities you don’t get in the city.

“They grow up on the farm, you know, they learn so many life skills, just through that.

“Rural kids with a rural upbringing are very active, very aware. You have all these different attributes across the board, because you’re doing all these things that build qualities, character and personal development.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - providing great programmes that are aligned to leveraging rural skills and lifestyles.

“Te Awanui a Rua is great in that space in terms of the programmes that they run. I’m doing one this weekend, actually with some young wāhine and we are going hunting.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Quality Education

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Life on Land

Natural Environment

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Participating fully in society

Whilst there are several opportunities for children to participate in local, social and school-level sports in the region, there is a perception that once kids get to a more competitive level, they begin to experience multiple cost and access barriers.

Strengths

- Many in the region recognise the immense sporting culture within New Zealand and acknowledge how participating in sports greatly benefits youths' physical, mental and social health. Additionally, many youths in Ruapehu are seen to excel at their chosen sports.
- Some believe that youth have every opportunity to access school sports affordably within the region, with northern Ruapehu areas recognised as having excellent access to school recreational facilities. Additionally, there are seen to be many community groups and schools within this space helping youth access these facilities.
- Some believe that having sports available to children allows them to develop leadership qualities and essential life skills that prepare them for adulthood. Through sports, they can develop friendships and connect with their community, which can help build their character in multiple aspects of their lives.

“I think it's part of New Zealand culture, but there seems to be this sort of understanding that sports are hugely important, right from when kids are little, you know, you've got to get your kids into sport. You've got to spend your weekends doing that. Because it's really good for their mental health. It's really good for their fitness. It's really good for their social interaction, you know.

“Skiing is the other one, it's a huge thing, so all the schools will have Ski Club, and they all go skiing or snowboarding or whatever. We've got some amazing Olympic hopefuls in terms of snowboarding right here and rightly so.

“There are a lot of really excellent sporting groups in Taumarunui and there's a lot of really good sports places just down the road which is fantastic...but if you don't do it in your township the kids won't have access unless the school covers it.

Barriers

- Many have noticed that travelling to participate in sports can be challenging for youth (and their parents), and may prompt some to seek education opportunities outside the region. In addition, sports that are not school-based are often harder to access and require significant travel.
- Some believe that the competition level of sports within the region is limited, and once someone desires to compete or join a competitive team, they begin to encounter barriers across both mainstream and more niche sports.
- While parental support is crucial, some parents are disengaged and may be unwilling to support their youth in sports or unwilling to lend a hand.
- On the other hand, some have observed that some parents also become very invested in their children's sports games and may display intense emotions, including frustration or anger, during events.
- Some believe teachers receive minimal physical education training during their time at teachers' college, even though they are expected to incorporate it into their daily sessions at school. Consequently, some teachers may lack the required attitude or passion for the sports profession that they once had, leading to a suboptimal coaching experience for their students.

Framework Tags



- Some feel that participating in sports and recreational activities can become costly due to the expenses associated with accessing the necessary facilities and equipment, which can be especially difficult for families experiencing deprivation.
- Some see a lack of sports clubs and outside-of-school sports opportunities in the region, especially in Taumarunui, with some commenting that many paddocks and fields aren't utilised.
- Some have recognised that there are activities and events for youth to participate in; however, the people organising these activities are often under-utilised in their space.

“I did try and help out when I first moved here and I could feel her pain straight away, it's just parents don't want to do anything, it's 'oh cool, there's a dumping spot for these kids for a couple of hours...' and you've got about three or four people trying to look after all of these kids and they are not getting the quality training or whatever you need.

“If you're playing football or rugby or netball, and you're wanting to do an event, even squash, you've got a lot of travel involved. There'll be the people who can afford it or run drivers but they get burnt out because it's the same people doing it all the time.

“If you want to go and be competitive, representative type stuff, obviously you have to be able to travel outside of the district to be able to do it.

“It is an awesome place to raise children, but for my kids who play soccer, I have to drive them to Taihape during the week and it's all parent-led. We don't have anyone in the region supporting that particular sport.

“The moment you actually want to compete or be in a competitive team. That's where they're the barriers.

“We've got some very competitive parents. We're quite strict with schools with it. We'll take the point off the team that they [the parents] are supporting because of how irate they can become.

“We have to be able to provide transport there, get equipment, and if deprivation levels are so high they might not be able to afford it. It may be cheaper to sit the kids in front of the TV with a bag of chips.

“A lot of it is, especially up here in the North... there are no clubs. Like, yep, there are plenty of paddocks and fields around the place but I never see them being used.

“When you go to teachers college, you only do one little part of a module on physical activity. An extremely tiny part of that is physical activity. Yet the expectation is to incorporate that into the daily sessions at school.

“For a lot of teachers, it's an attitude as well. They'd rather just have their kids run around school rather than set up a game that incorporates elements of learning. I just don't know if the passion is there like it was going back probably eight years.

Opportunities

- Providing more affordable sporting activities for youth would alleviate some financial stress on families.
- Better utilising existing people within the region that work in this space would create significant opportunities for youth to further access more sports and recreational events.

“It’s trying to keep things affordable and offer activities that address the needs of our community.

“A lot of our activities, especially for the kids, [are] around that \$2 to \$3 charge because we don’t want cost to be a burden and an excuse for people not to participate.

“The effects of having sports available to children is the leadership qualities and attributes. There are all these attributes, you build life skills, friends and it very much builds you as a character into the person you become as an adult, not only in sport but also the connectedness that you have to the community.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Amy Perez (from Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust) - has been recognised as co-ordinating many successful sporting events and initiatives for youth in the region, including creating boxing clubs, running the iSport initiative, and facilitating community support.
- Community fundraising for local youth to train overseas, i.e. Tui Wikihia (a professional snowboarder the community fundraises for annually).

“There are plenty of areas to do it but, from what I have seen, there is only one person up here, Amy Perez, she tries to coordinate everything herself. She does have a group of people that help her out but it must be full on for her to try and run all of these events for the kids and everything.

“Amy, she is like superhuman, if she was in a big centre man, she does so much here, but is still under-utilised.

“Fundraising for local youth to train competitively overseas.

“I know I’ve been involved with Tui Wikohika and he is a professional snowboarder. He’s still a young fella. He’s probably about 18 now mind you, and the community fundraises every year for him to do his competitive training.

“Well, look, this fella is probably immediately going to be the top snowboarder in the country. He needs to train overseas.

“The high school is kind of stuck between a rock and a hard place and that you have children from harder backgrounds, where it can be a struggle at times even getting to school, playing sports doesn’t become a focus anymore. It’s just another thing that adds burden to the family.

Workshop participant

Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust

“The establishment of the trust came about by being part of multiple [sport] community groups, and lacking volunteers, really. Another thing was the lack of money available. We were all wanting to try and look for funding and apply for funding, but didn’t have the legal identity to be able to do that. [So] we pitched the idea to be able to try and create a one stop shop, like a hub, to be able to have all of these groups come under [one] hub.”

“With that, we were able to apply for communal funding across the board for all of these groups. We went from originally seven groups when we [first] established, to now it’s 24 activities and groups that are under the trust.”

“We support them [the groups that come under the trust] with the administrative side of things like resourcing and applying for funding.”

“We offer 11 different inter-school sports, as well as offering twilight sports which we are able to run at a very low cost.”

“We’ve got the boxing club out here at the moment, the sad part about it this year is we’re having to turn kids and families away because we’re at capacity...some of them, have got their coaching license, which they would have never been able to achieve if the Boxing Academy wasn’t here.”

“So the dream would be to have a bigger facility, we’re starting to outgrow a lot of what we’ve got and where we are, which is a great thing, because it’s obviously well supported by our community.”

“We work with our community. We also have our local high school, and our kura, where we utilize iSport students, which is an internship [we run] and get them to come and be part of the sports. They volunteer every Friday, we train them up to be able to be officials at the events. The best part about it is that they are giving back.”

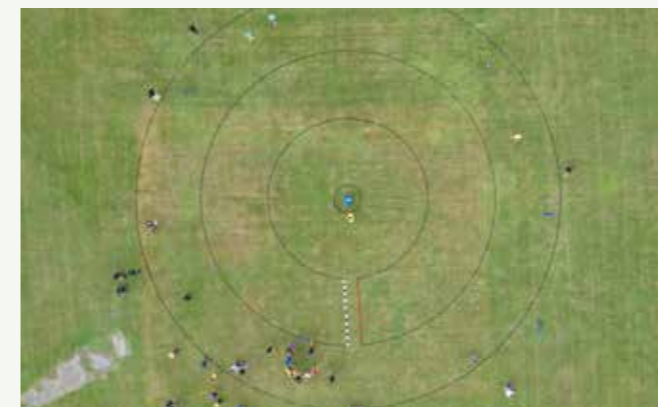
“Over the last couple of days, I was out helping run the high school athletics, yesterday, I was at one of the primary schools swimming events, and today, we’re running a Ki o Rahi, which we are introducing to our community...we are responsive to our community’s needs, people were requesting for Ki o Rahi, so we thought well, let’s set it up and get it running.”

“We have around about 24,000 hours of voluntary time given to the trust. It’s probably even more than that, because when we go away for boxing, you don’t really add in all the hours you’re away on the road... we are trying to give people opportunities and trying to upskill our volunteers.”

“It’s really working with our volunteer base and our community, we’ve got a lot of givers, people just want to see people active, they want to see opportunities here.”

“It’s a way of trying to channel our kids and using sport as a vehicle to try and keep our kids on track and have opportunities and know that they don’t have to move out of town. But really, to have those opportunities.”

“We’re already isolated in regards to having some opportunities available. So setting up at the trust was able to have opportunities that were a bit more affordable for our community.”



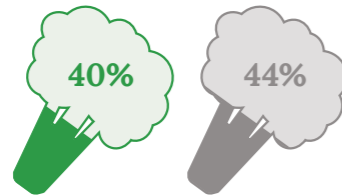
Whilst some benefit from excellent local access to fresh produce in the region, there is still a perception that a proportion of families in the community lack knowledge and the financial ability to utilise, access and engage in healthy eating habits, particularly those living in high deprivation.

17% OF RUAPEHU CHILDREN AGED 2-14 ARE DEEMED OBESE, COMPARED WITH 16% NATIONALLY.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 2: End Hunger, Ministry of Health Survey.

40% OF HOUSEHOLDS REPORT A HEALTHY LEVEL OF VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION IN RUAPEHU, COMPARED TO 44% NATIONALLY.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 2: End Hunger, Ministry of Health Survey.

Strengths

- Some people in the region have observed that there is not much obesity present in youth, with many looking a healthy weight.
- Some have observed a high fruit and vegetable intake for many youths in the region and attribute some of this to easy access to vegetable gardens, free fruit supplied at schools, and lack of takeaway/ fast food places in the region.
- Some have acknowledged that some early childhood centres also provide plenty of fruit and vegetables, with the view that this proves beneficial as it fosters the development of healthy eating habits in children from an early age, which will hopefully continue into adulthood.

“There’s lots of gardens here, and they get free apples at the schools, and a lot of people grow their own vegetables.

“And the lack of fast food joints here as well, you have got a Maccas in Taumarunui and that is about it.

“Where my son attended, which is just an early childhood centre, they do massive fruit and vegetable platters for the kids as part of the lunches and the sandwiches and [the] food that they generally give to them is generally jam-packed full of vegetables and lots of healthy options. So starting from a young age, [it’s] getting them used to it.

“I’m involved with a lot of children in a lot of different areas outside of work and I don’t think I could name five off the top of my head that would be considered obese.

“I don’t think the community would consider this [obesity] to be an issue.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing | No Poverty | Zero Hunger | Quality Education | Sustainable Cities & Communities

Human Capability | Financial & Physical Capital

Self-managing and empowered leaders | Leading healthy lifestyles | Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Barriers

- Some have observed that for some youth who have gained weight in the region, it is not a result of a lack of physical activity, but rather, it is due to unhealthy dietary choices.
- Some have noticed that takeaway food, or unhealthy food, tends to be more affordable than healthy food, which may contribute to unhealthy eating habits and high takeaway intake for low-income and high-deprivation families.
- Some have noticed that some parents lack nutritional awareness when shopping for groceries, which can influence their children’s eating habits. Some feel this is seen particularly with Māori families.
- Some believe some families may use food as a reward system because they feel deprived in other aspects of their lives. They may not have access to other rewards or outlets, making food the most accessible and convenient option for them.
- Some have noticed that working parents may find themselves too exhausted after a long day at work and lacking the energy to prepare a home-cooked meal; instead, they opt for ‘convenience foods’ as a quick solution.
- Some believe the lack of access to transport limits some families’ options when accessing the healthy food available across the region.

- Some have experienced that while school-provided lunches are advantageous for families, some households may struggle to provide meals during school holidays as they find it challenging to readjust their budgets to accommodate the additional expenses. As a result, these families may experience financial strain during such periods, making it difficult to ensure adequate nutrition for their children.
- Some believe that the Body Mass Index (BMI) is not an entirely reliable body composition measurement tool to use to measure obesity in youth and that it does not consider individual differences in bone density and body builds across cultures.

“I think there’s a reward system as well because they’re deprived in other areas of their life. The only way to reward ourselves for some people is through food.

“Obesity is consistent with deprivation, soft drinks and takeaways, they are good foods that are cheap.

“It’s specifically the crappy food, even at the supermarket it is cheaper. So, of course our tamariki are going to be tracking above in obesity statistics.

“I work with young parents and we track their shopping habits, more for budgeting purposes rather than health purposes. But yeah, I think there’s a lot of lack of education around nutrition. Yes, they eat lots of vegetables, but at the same time they’re eating a lot of rubbish as well. I can see that in their grocery bills.

“A lot of parents that are just too tired after work, they’ve been up since four and they’ve gotten home and say ‘oh crap, I gotta cook dinner, stuff it, I’ll just go buy something’.

“And it leads back to that instant gratification of the high consumer mindset, like if it’s there, it’s easy to grab, go for it.

“I know exactly why that is as well, so, we have got a Four Square, so if you don’t have a car, you’re ending up with not the healthiest of foods.

“What really grinds my gears around those lunches in schools. Great. But how many families would have struggled over this Christmas break to make sure they had enough food in their house to feed them for what they would have been fed in school?

“During school they are saving \$80 a week, not buying lunches for their kids. But, then when it comes to the holidays, how do they re-budget and afford buying the right type of food for their kids so that they can eat during the holiday period.

“BMI index isn’t a good measure anymore because it doesn’t take into account bone density does it?

“What’s healthy? You know... we had a nutritionist when we were in the army and she told us we were all obese and she even said that Richie McCaw was obese as well. So, she got the sack pretty quick.

Opportunities

- Ensuring parents are leading by example in maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle to inspire and motivate youth to adopt similar habits.
- Raising awareness and educating people, particularly Māori families, about nutrition and how to fuel their bodies healthily.
- Planting more fruit trees around the streets in local communities (and working with Council to determine how to make this happen).

“I’ve got to lead by example, I’ve always lived by that. I’ve got to stay fit and healthy to also keep up with my own kids.

“It is just a thing that we need to educate our people on more.

“We did actually approach the council to see if they would allow us to plant fruit trees around the streets and they said ‘no’, we were going to pay for that but apparently it’s a wasp issue.

Good Mahi in the Community

- HelloFresh - an alternative to the supermarket for purchasing and making dinner. Some have reported that they save a substantial amount of money using HelloFresh and now only visit the supermarket to buy the essentials.
- Community gardens and the Thursday vegetable markets in Taumarunui - access to gardens and vegetable markets has proven advantageous for the community. By utilising these facilities, community members are able to save a significant amount of their budget.

- Māra Kai - offering a programme that rewards individuals with a meat pack in exchange for a certain number of hours of volunteering. This programme incentivises community engagement; however, some wonder if many within the community don’t know about them.
- Taumarunui Community Kokiri Trust - running programmes that work with youth to educate them about nutrition. These programmes equip youth with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their diet and health.
- Kim Young & Sons vegetable stall and honesty boxes - providing the community with access to an affordable source of vegetables.
- Ruapehu College - collaborated with a local trust to offer a Kai to Table programme, which involved taking a group of students on a hunting trip and attending wananga together. Unfortunately, funding was not available to continue the program last year.
- Ngāti Rangī kai in a crockpot - facilitated educational workshops that fostered a safe and supportive environment for whānau to share their experiences; whilst also enjoying kai together.

“Nah, we’re going to get the freshest of the fresh because you got to the Young’s Honesty Box. It’s been picked that morning from the field. That’s the freshest, that’s awesome.

“I shop for lollies and snacks for the kids. I don’t actually buy food from New World. We do HelloFresh which has been a lifesaver for us. They post it to the door.

“Posted to your door for \$80 and that’s five meals for four people for the whole week. Whereas my New World bill for snacks for the kids lunch boxes is \$200.

“We’ve got community gardens and we have the veggie market every Thursday. It’s a lot cheaper than New World. I go there.

“Our māra kai... they have a scheme where you donate so many hours to the māra and you are rewarded with a meat pack, you know, so that’s encouraging, aye.

“You can go out there [Young’s Honesty Box] with \$20 and feed a house full for a couple of weeks.

“I know that Kokiri trust has got a programme working with rangitahi.

“The high school ran a Kai to Table programme. It was done in partnership with a trust for free. They took a group of kids out hunting. They all went together to these wānanga. So, that’s one aspect of strengths of the district being used in the educational space. But again, the disappointment was that they weren’t able to get funding to enable that to happen last year.

“Ngāti Rangī was trying to put on crock pot sessions. So basically you would go and learn how to cook and you’d be given the crock pot as a result of attending the workshop.

Some have concerns that the increasing presence, accessibility and affordability of substances, e.g. marijuana, methamphetamine and vaping, is trickling down to youth in the region, with some observing an increase in these substances ‘walking through school gates’.

ONLY 6.6% OF DRUG RELATED CRIME IN THE CENTRAL POLICE DISTRICT BETWEEN 2013 TO JUNE 2021, WAS COMMITTED BY YOUTH.

The Policing of Drugs in New Zealand, Police NZ, 2022.



Strengths

- Some youth in the region have received some education about identifying substances and are becoming more aware of the dangers.
- “The kids have a bit of education about it here, they know about it.
- “It’s really hard to do things here without people finding out... so that is a good thing [about] a smaller community.

Barriers

- Some have noticed that the rise of methamphetamine use in the region over the past five years is gradually making its way into the hands of youth. Some also believe there may be an association between this behaviour and an intergenerational history of drug use in the family.
- Some people believe that a lack of purpose and opportunity after leaving school may be contributing to youth engaging in drug use.
- There has been a notable and concerning increase in vaping in the region, particularly among youth.
- Some have noticed increased drug activity on school grounds, which has been an ongoing issue for several years.
- Some express concerns that marijuana use amongst youth could be a gateway drug to even more dangerous A-Class drugs like methamphetamine, if it hasn’t already.
- Some are noticing that MDMA is increasingly becoming part of the party culture in the region, with some youth using it to stay awake and drink at house parties. There are concerns about the ease of accessibility and affordability of the drug.

“We’ve got some 14 year olds in this town, walking around vaping, which is just as detrimental to your health as smoking.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing No Poverty Quality Education Decent Work & Economic Growth

Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

- “I think it’s meth, that has increased in the community, that has increased in the last five years and is gradually grabbing our young people. Which is incredibly sad and damaging for our community.
- “These kids are leaving school with nothing to do and they’re sitting around and the drugs are there and available.
- “I vape. I used to smoke. Still just as bad for me. But the reason why they got into vaping is because it’s more affordable. It’s cheaper to go get a \$10 vape device with two pods for \$10 that will last you a week as opposed to the \$60 for a pouch of tobacco or the \$40 for a pack of 25 cigarettes.
- “They will do anything to get out of school or we have noticed, just recently, a lot of drugs walking into the school, and it has been for years.
- “It is a hard one, we know that weed is a gateway drug and I think if you’re vulnerable and young, you know, that could segway into meth. I think that’s the danger of marijuana.
- “Probably meth and MDMA amongst the adult population and weed with everybody, including the kids.
- “Like, it’s hectic. It’s hectic that a small sleepy town like Taumarunui, we have got people doing MDMA and cocaine, just so they can carry on partying in a shed.
- “It’s probably the same reason why a lot of them are jumping onto meth, because it keeps them awake.

Opportunities

- Enabling youth to run workshops that aim to educate and build knowledge around identifying drugs, drug use, and its associated risks.
- “In the Taumarunui, and in the Ruapehu region, I had some rangatahi come to me, and they were wanting to set up a programme or workshop to try and find ways to facilitate more in high schools around P and that, and tell them what to do with it and how to identify those sort of drugs, especially when you are going clubbing, and you’re going out to concerts and all that.
- “That is a total missing link within our region, is around access and knowledge around those drugs, and what to look for.
- “If you see someone brewing it, or someone is doing it you know, you need to identify it.

Some feel that the combination of youth boredom, deprivation, unemployment and lack of consequences for youth offending under the age of 14 is leading to the presence of some youth crime in the region. However, it is difficult for youth to hide when the community is so well connected.

Strengths

- Some have observed that the police effectively engage with youth, particularly those over 14, by providing them with educational-focused consequences if or when they make poor decisions.
- Some perceive the small communities within Ruapehu as tightly-knit, making it easy to identify youth who engage in offending behaviours.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some feel that in small communities, police may exercise greater flexibility when punishing youth, which gives them an opportunity to sort out their behaviour promptly. However, this leniency can also be taken advantage of by some youth.

*“In terms of youth crime, and some of the big areas that we’re seeing like the ram-raids and stuff, there is nowhere really to hide in Taumarunui.
“If you are down a road and you are causing some problems, you ain’t got anywhere to hide, and everyone’s watching, it’s a wide street and if you’re identifiable, you know, they will find you. Like I said, people will dob you in.”*

Framework Tags

Barriers

- Some believe living in deprivation can also expose youth to violence and crime, normalising these behaviours and making them more likely to engage in similar activities.
- Some believe that the lack of activities and entertainment options for youth in some of the regions’ townships can lead to boredom, which may motivate some youth to engage in offending (i.e. vandalism, ram raids) as a means of occupying their time.
- Some believe there is a link between the lack of meaningful employment and youth offending due to various factors, including financial instability, unemployment frustration, low self-esteem, and a lack of purpose or direction.
- Some have observed that youth may be taking advantage of the fact that the police have limited ability to punish those under the age of 14, with some repeat offenders in the community within this age bracket.
- Some have observed an increase in ram raids occurring in some of the region’s townships, with some linking these to a certain group and/or gang-related pressure, boredom, alcohol and drugs.

“[There are] a number of things, one, deprivation, two, boredom, and boredom is a big one.”

*“[There are] young people hanging around looking for something to do.
“There’s heaps, we have got kids running down the river stealing people’s stuff from over the banks and they are being peer pressured either by an elder, or someone that has just come out of jail and they are corrupting stuff.
“They’re using the kids because you can’t arrest the kids can aye. It is that peer pressure thing aye.
“These kids are smart, they know that the police can’t do anything about it.
“We put in a new park, we put on these amazing basketball hoops, right? And they had these pads all around them and stuff for safety and so forth. The following day after they were installed, someone had gone down with a knife and cut all those pads up the park was for them. Are they stupid?
“We just had a ram raid last week, four stolen and heaps of rangatahi arrested. There’s a group out there that’s connecting all these ram raids in each community and they’ll do it at the same time. So, we’ve been observing that in the small communities.
“You’ve got to ask yourself, why are you doing it? But it’s groups, it’s gangs or gang pressure. They are bored or it’s drugs, alcohol. It’s not having a family, they haven’t got a family environment.
“My brother got bored, so he went out and robbed a dairy. He had money, he could have just bought it, but he went and robbed it anyway, because he was bored.”*

Good Mahi in the Community

- Raetihi Charitable Trust - launched a pilot project to address youth offending by helping youth and their families reconnect and better cope with their challenges. By focusing on one family at a time, the project aims to create a ripple effect that will encourage other families to do the same.
- Raetihi Charitable Trust - organising a youth camp for primary school children with the help of positive role models, including sportspeople, to turn attendees into contributing members of society. The camp will be held in a remote area within the region, where youth will learn skills like hunting and gathering and be matched with a mentor to monitor their progress.
- Raetihi Community Charitable Trust - resurfaced the basketball court and is putting on basketball programmes to provide youth in Raetihi with something to do.
- Blue Light by the Police and a local charitable trust - empowering youth through various programmes, including youth mentoring programmes, educational camps, driver licensing programmes, marae-based holiday programmes, truancy programmes, after-school and weekend programmes, drug and alcohol courses, behaviour reward programmes and outdoor activities and training, i.e. canoeing, boating, tramping and rock climbing. Proactive community members are working with Blue Light to bring programmes to the Ruapehu region. They have two primary goals: reducing the probability of young people becoming offenders or victims of crime, and promoting better relationships between law enforcement, youths, their parents, and the community.

“It really is about working with local men who become role models. It’s about bringing in outsiders who they respect, [it] could be top sportsmen that they look up to, to bring them in to form these young men into contributing members of society.”

“We have tried really hard, we’ve resurfaced the basketball court and we’re putting on basketball programmes, so that kids have something to do.”

“So what we have done is we have put them into a ski lodge in the middle of nowhere. We’ve done that so that they don’t take off. They can’t cause any trouble. It’s in the middle of nowhere. They can do a bit of hunting and gathering, they can do a little bit of everything.”

“The NZ Police Blue Light, we have been trying to land that for the last two years because there is nothing here.”

“Tūrangi and other small towns around the North Island actually do some really good stuff with their Blue Light funding, some real good stuff.”

“And we have been trying to grab that, so we are just waiting for the police to tap back into me, but hopefully if we do get it we will be able to supply and help towards the sport and recreational activities.”

“We have a real problem with youth crime... so if we can help reconnect families to cope better, even one at a time, because there is a ripple effect. When one family goes through something then there is going to be that ripple effect.

Workshop participant

Whilst there are multiple programmes emerging to support youth into employment in the region, some believe there are still numerous barriers for youth involving employment, including limited employment opportunities in the region, dealing with personal trauma, lack of work readiness, and a lack of support once they get the job.

Barriers

- Some have observed a large amount of funding coming into the region over the last three to four years and believe that most of that funding has gone towards some education and employment programmes. Some, however, are concerned that too much of this funding has gone toward the same type of programmes, meaning duplication is occurring, there are not enough people to fulfil their programmes and funding may not be utilised most effectively.
- Some are concerned there may be less support and education to employment programmes available in southern Ruapehu compared to northern Ruapehu.
- Some believe that due to the lack of jobs and career paths for youth in Ruapehu, youth will seek employment outside the region when they complete their schooling, contributing to the perception within the community that ‘the best and brightest leave’.
- Some youth experience challenges when it comes to employment, such as lacking the necessary skills, confidence, or motivation, and may prioritise earning money over gaining knowledge. These challenges can result in some local employers hesitating to hire youth due to the perceived risk, especially those who have had bad experiences in the past.

- Some youth perceive seasonal work as temporary and may not provide enough job security, meaning they must find multiple jobs to get by. This can be challenging for those lacking skills, experience, or qualifications.
- Some have observed that traumatic experiences, such as those related to family, overall health, or financial circumstances, can impose stressors on youth’s ability to find and maintain employment.
- Some have observed that there is not enough support available for youth once they gain employment to ensure they are successful.
- With little to no public transport available and barriers to getting their license, i.e. numeracy and literacy, accessing employment within the region is challenging for some youth as they struggle to get to and from work.

“What would keep them here? There aren’t the jobs here to keep the best and brightest.

- “There are no jobs for the young. That’s easy. There’s nothing for them.*
- “The opportunities, the caliber of some of those youth and their actual preparedness for work...then the desire of employers to take the risk on them because there’s a lack of confidence.*
- “We’d employed a couple of youth and that was a huge mistake. We like to employ settled people who will turn up for work because they want to work, they also want social interaction as well.*

Framework Tags

Decent Work & Economic Growth Good Health & Wellbeing Quality Education Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Human Capability Financial & Physical Capital

Self-managing and empowered leaders Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

“Three things because here if you want to live here you have three opportunities because if you get sick of one, you gotta find another one. So again, that’s the seasonal change that they’ve got to adapt to.

“Some family traumas, some issues around the quality of life, maybe quality of well-being, economic pot, economic situations [affects employment].

“No help for Southern Ruapehu...the reason why I say that is I’ve actually just met with the Ruapehu District Council on this specifically because CKC R.E.A.P has been offered that contract they’re only running Taskforce for Jobs, in Taumarunui. So [it’s] Southern Ruapehu who are not getting any help whatsoever.

10% 

10% OF RUAPEHU YOUTH AGED 18-24 YEARS OF AGE ARE ON THE JOB SEEKER SUPPORT BENEFIT, COMPARED WITH 7% NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Ministry of Social Development.

Opportunities

- Creating more enjoyable, unique programmes that look at youth development as a whole, not merely concerning employment.
- Ensuring employers provide transport for work and training to create opportunities for youth seeking employment and youth currently employed.
- Educating youth about the required skillset and qualifications needed for careers so that they are better prepared for the workforce.
- Leveraging trade academies and secondary school resources to create employment opportunities for youth within the region.

“I was on the national coordinators meeting yesterday for the Taskforce for Jobs from every other district council. Yeah, and I left the meeting early. And I actually mentioned that the mental health issues, and I really feel like that if we keep doing youth programmes, that are always focused on employment, are just becoming so bloody boring.

“My comment was that we need programmes that are fun and joyful. Actually, what we have to look at is youth development beyond jobs, not just for jobs.

“So then it’s about us trying to find other employers that have transport available.

“Why are they not up-skilling our high school kids that want to go into that space. You know, if you want to come into the policy and development team, this is what you’d need to consider at school.

“I wanted them [youth] to be connected with the town revitalisation, in terms of the trade academies that are operating out of both of the high schools, for the infrastructure and assets that we’re building. So that they would be contributing to the beautification of the town directly through the contract of town revitalisation. But it needs to have the appetite from the community, to develop the skills at a local level.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - focuses on education within a kaupapa Māori framework. They have designed kaitiaki programmes, e.g. hunting and gathering, based on the idea of re-indigenising survival techniques.
- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - providing tutors that accompany students to their place of employment, remain available for up to six months, and offer further up-skilling opportunities as needed. The organisation is dedicated to helping individuals achieve their career goals and aspirations.
- Central King Country R.E.A.P and Maniapoto Training Agency - providing the Safe to Go driving programme, a free programme available to anyone, which enables youth with vital driving skills to feel confident on the road (and get to work).

- Ruapehu District Council - provided internships to students from Taumarunui High School and implemented a cadet programme within the Council, which offers opportunities for local employment.
- Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (Ruapehu District Council) - a programme aimed at facilitating the professional development of youth who are unemployed and unenrolled in education to assist them in securing employment.
- New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) - providing many well-paying uniformed and un-uniformed employment opportunities for youth leaving school.
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) - recruiting youth in the region and offering them employment on their team.
- Local stores like New World and Petrol Stations employ youth in the region.

“With us, we are right in there, we get right into the nitty-gritty, my team, even my tutors will follow the students right into their employment place and stick with them for six months, to see if they need anything else to up-skill themselves while they’re at their job and what we can link them into or get them more training.

“So I am working with Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust, which is in Taumarunui, and I get all of her funding because they do some amazing, amazing stuff, and it is all kaupapa Māori based.

“They tend to design their own informal education, so they have got the kaitiaki programmes, which is hunting and gathering programs. So, this is what I mean by kaupapa Māori, it’s the whole idea of re-indigenising survival techniques.

“So when the rangatahi go through these programs... not only do they learn to hunt and gather kai for their own whānau, they get their gun license, they do all sorts of things so that they can then go and do pest control contracts.

“A really cool programme that we offer at CKC R.E.A.P. It’s a free programme available to anyone.

“They’re only here long enough to get [their] restricted. It’s quite good, because that might be the first achievement that they’ve ever done as the learner license.

“We’re trying to get Cadets back into Council. I started in Ruapehu district as a cadet and I literally worked my way up to a managerial position. But that’s disappeared over time. I’d like to see that reintroduced and our local level procurement more visible.

“Council got the contract with the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, which is a youth development programme to support rangatahi, not in education into employment.

“With my army background, sometimes I try to say ‘hey, this is where you could go’... and also tell them that actually they pay pretty good too but then that is moving people out of our region to somewhere else.

“I think even for people who don’t have a direct career pathway into the organisation, [FENZ] can give people a sense of community and it’s an opportunity to learn new skills, gain confidence, especially for young people.

“Major employers for youth, for example, New world, petrol stations...employers that actually have roadways for those school leavers.

Central King Country R.E.A.P

“Central King Country R.E.A.P is part of R.E.A.P Aotearoa, so we are one of thirteen R.E.A.P’s across the rohe who provide education services to the community. That might be through different learning avenues, how we deliver them, how they’re received, but mostly mātauranga; how it is provided to the community and how we can best cater for our whānau in our communities.

“[Central King Country R.E.A.P] has played a huge role in our community for many years. They are an organisation that knows their community and all the services, which has been a tremendous help to the community in knowing what is available to people, when they want to enquire about something.”

“With supporting rangatahi, we have a programme called Mayors Taskforce for Jobs. [So for] anyone in search of employment, we make sure that they’re work ready and any training that’s required of them to transition into mahi a little bit easier, we can provide that.

“I’d like to say there is tonnes and tonnes of opportunity, and there is, but we have to work with our young people.

“You can get a job and can get into employment, but actually the support you need behind you, and the things you might need in order to get and keep those jobs, are the people that surround you that care.

“We provide a space where you can come to kōrero, it’s a safe space, and we are there to listen and provide those things you need. If you need someone to listen, we are there.

“[Central King Country R.E.A.P] provides the tools for our whānau to cope in moving forward, that’s the beauty about this kaupapa.

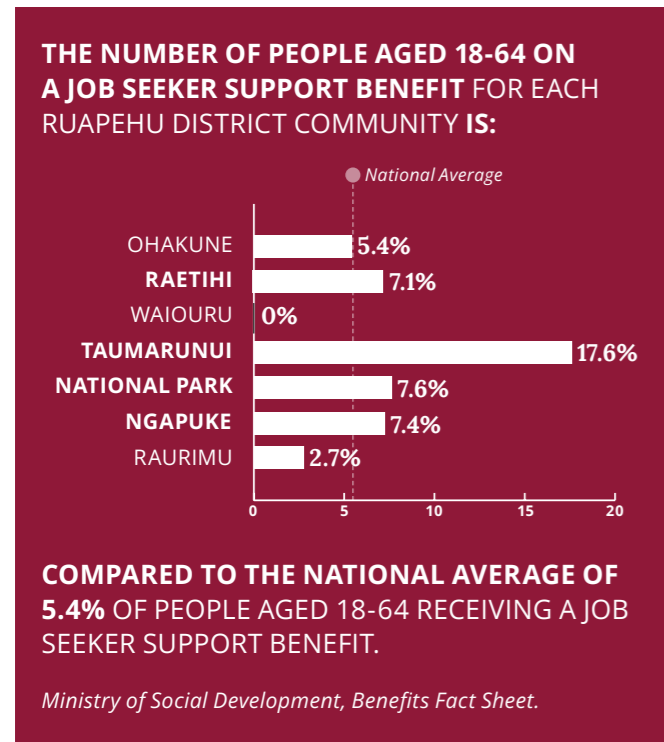
“I used to see a lot of our young ones over at the courthouse. But now that we [Maniapoto Training Agency] are working with R.E.A.P, we don’t have that anymore. A lot of the learners now go on towards a full license...it’s quite good, because that might be the first achievement that they’ve ever done...that’s the advantage of working with R.E.A.P, because they understand our type of learner, they don’t move back from them, they just continue to support them.

“The Safe to Go driving programme is a free programme available to anyone, our priority is our rangatahi who are going for their restricted drivers licence, just so they have that kind of security, or the ID licence for mahi, but they are also getting on-road skills that they require to be a safe drivers on the road.

“It’s the coolest thing in the world... when you see that [rangatahi gaining their drivers licence]. Once they get there, they get a sound sense of empowerment, and then they start moving forward.



For some, their families play a significant role in relation to youth unemployment through modelling a lifestyle of intergenerational reliance on the benefit or requiring youth to stay home and support their family rather than work.



Barriers

- Some believe the lack of youth employment opportunities in the region means, for some youth, it is easier and more convenient to stay at home and rely on government benefits than relocating and finding a job outside of the region. In addition, the lack of wrap-around support services available for youth who gain employment may also be a disincentive to finding work, as they don't want to lose the support they receive by coming off the benefit.
- Some believe that youth unemployment is an intergenerational issue, where young people see their role models living off government benefits, leading them to question why they cannot do the same. Some feel this may also impede their employment progress, work attitudes, and ability to take instructions in a workplace.
- Some youth may not have the numeracy and literacy skills required for some jobs within the region due to their upbringing not being focused on or prioritising education (and gaining these essential skills).

“It’s tough if you go out... let’s say you’re 17. You’ve left school. You want a job. You’ve asked a few times. Nothing happens. You can stay at home and go on the unemployment benefit, life is sweet. Or you can go to Hamilton, pay a bond to get into a flat and then start looking for work. That’s a big challenge for young people. So it’s easy to stay at home.”

Framework Tags

Decent Work & Economic Growth No Poverty Good Health & Wellbeing Quality Education Reduced Inequalities

Human Capability Social Cohesion Financial & Physical Capital

Self-managing and empowered leaders Participating fully in society Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

“The problem that we have is that MSD has a lot of wrap-around services, right? So if you’re on the benefit, and you can’t pay your power bill, they help you, but you can’t get better if you’re in paid employment, your employer doesn’t pay your power bill.”

“Those are some of those issues where they don’t have wrap-around support. If you’re on minimum wage you may still come up against things like not being able to pay your power bills, and so forth, and they don’t get support. So they go back on the benefit.”

“I can definitely agree to that. I used to fall on the wayside when it comes to employment. I mean, I grew up in a family where most of them were on the benefit outside of Taumarunui where they just said ‘oh, don’t worry about getting a job, just jump on the benefit, Auntie Cindy got you’, and stuff like that.”

“And that mindset sticks with you as a young, impressionable teenager or young adult. It’s hard to break from that.”

“The upbringing will hold them back; their attitude to work, their attitude to taking instruction, and then you get into competence and literacy.”

Opportunities

- Working with and linking young people to job opportunities and employment is necessary to help our youth take advantage of the available opportunities in the region.

“We have to work with our young people, and anyone actually who’s looking to capture an opportunity to make that happen.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Raetihi Community Charitable Trust & Uenuku - engaging in discussions around lifting deprivation in the Raetihi community.
- Maniapoto Training Agency - supporting their young Māori students to try and break down intergenerational barriers.

“Maniapoto Training Agency does some good mahi. They do a lot of work with their young Māori students to try and break down those intergenerational barriers and stuff. They do some really good work in that space.”

Youth – Adult

This life stage encompasses all teenagers and young adults between the ages of 16 to 25 years old, who are transitioning out of school into further education or employment.

Quality Education

Theme 18—Although some funding has been injected into the region, many youth and adults still experience several barriers to attending tertiary education due to the lack of financial backing, school and community encouragement, and access to local institutes within the region, meaning further education isn't possible for some.

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Theme 19—Some people, especially those with strong rural connections, believe tertiary education isn't necessary to achieve a good life and are instead opting for non-tertiary pathways, such as farming, building or plumbing or taking advantage of the growing number of courses and certificates available in the region focusing on hands-on, outdoor skills.

Although some funding has been injected into the region, many youth and adults still experience several barriers to attending tertiary education due to the lack of financial backing, school and community encouragement, and access to local institutes within the region, meaning further education isn't possible for some.

Strengths

- Some have the experience that if someone has the means to pursue tertiary education, they will make it happen. In some instances, individuals in the region have utilised available funding options to enrol in tertiary education institutions.
- Some believe that for those who can access them, international exchange programmes offer many benefits for students as they facilitate the exchange of cultures and enable those who participate to experience the differences between their own region and other parts of the world. They also believe that through international travel, students learn that their perspective is not universal and that they must cultivate traits such as openness, flexibility, tolerance, and cooperation, which is seen as a great benefit to some.

“What an international exchange does, is it exchanges experiences and cultures. So people get to see that this part of the world is different to their part of the world.

“Once you've traveled a little bit internationally, you realise that your paradigm is not the world's paradigm and you just have to be open and flexible and tolerant and cooperative.

“It's those that can afford to, go [to tertiary providers]. There's no reason to stop them. There isn't any help.

Barriers

- Some in the region experience financial barriers which hinder them from pursuing higher education, especially families with middle incomes who are not eligible for student allowances through StudyLink.
- Many youths are becoming increasingly conscious of the costs associated with tertiary education. Instead, they choose to work, only pursuing higher education when they are confident it aligns with their goals.
- Accessibility issues hinder many in the region from pursuing tertiary education. These obstacles may take various forms, such as difficulties with distance learning and a lack of central locations for extramural learning.
- Some have observed that tertiary education isn't perceived well in the community and is not encouraged at secondary schools, creating another barrier for individuals not to pursue higher education.
- Some feel that another downside of students seeking tertiary education outside the region is that they often do not return.

Framework Tags



“For families on middle income, it's a massive financial burden because they can't get the student allowance.

“I still study through Massey with the old distance courses and all that and maybe the cost of it sometimes, averages about \$1000 a paper, sort of thing. I'm lucky that I have had employment that has contributed to that, but if people are earning \$42k a year, \$1000 isn't going to be possible for further education.

“They'd rather go out to work and are much more conscious of the debt, much more conscious of the debt and the cost of living that they're going to be facing if they do go.

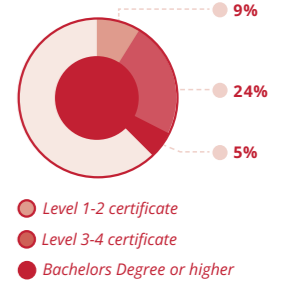
“100%, access is a major one, knowing how to navigate that area, knowing how to even apply for Studylink, if they're even eligible for it.

“It's not an encouraged thing, that you have to go to University in Taumarunui, because a lot of them probably aren't getting great marks to get the right NCEA requirements.

“If they want tertiary or further education, they're leaving town. Very rarely will they come back.

“We have been battling this for a wee while, and that is because we just don't have the access to it, tertiary education.

9% OF RUAPEHU SCHOOL LEAVERS COMPLETE A LEVEL 1-2 CERTIFICATE, 24% COMPLETE A LEVEL 3-4 CERTIFICATE AND ONLY 5% COMPLETE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Community Compass and Education Counts.

62% OF RUAPEHU SCHOOL LEAVERS ARE NOT ENROLLED IN TERTIARY EDUCATION, COMPARED WITH 35% NATIONALLY.

Ministry of Education.

THERE ARE NO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WITHIN RUAPEHU. THE NEAREST VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CENTRE IS IN WHANGANUI WHICH IS AN AVERAGE DRIVE OF 1 HOUR AND 20 MINUTES AWAY FROM THE CLOSEST RUAPEHU TOWNSHIP, RAETIHI.

Ministry of Education.

Opportunities

- Providing regular transport for community members to commute to tertiary education, to alleviate some stressors that potential students face.
- Providing more opportunities for extramural study so students can remain in the region.
- Helping individuals interested in further education access financial support, such as StudyLink.
- Providing more guidance for students considering higher education, including suggesting relevant subjects for study and advising on the steps required to prepare for University education or on-the-job training.

“Our closest tertiary provider would be Te Awamutu or Taupo, which is an hour and a half, so yeah, I think if there was more access to regular transport, that might make a difference.

“So all of my degrees are extramural and I did them at home and I got my student allowance at home but no one in my community helped me learn how to do that.

“Why can't the local council be able to have some input into these kids, help guide them if they want to study or if they want to do business management papers, then these are the topics you need to take at school or this is what you'll need to do if you were to go to university, or on the job training.

“We could send a student overseas, when Rotary started the International Student Exchange, it was the first one in the world...in the last couple of years, we've been unfortunate, so many of the young people who we've nominated have been accepted and then withdrawn at the last minute for a number of reasons.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Rotary Taumarunui - offering youth the opportunity to participate in international exchanges; however, with less excitement and more withdrawals recently, they want to find ways to get youth more excited about this again and educate them on the numerous benefits of overseas exchanges.
- Rotary Taumarunui - offering leadership courses for those ages 16 to 26 years old and the ability to participate in additional week-long courses catered to their interests.
- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - providing childcare support facilities to help care for children while parents are studying and/or training. They also have their own van driver that provides transport to and from their courses for students and school for children.

“Most of them are young parents, and we get a lot of them, and we let them come to course with their babies. Otherwise we help get them into kōhanga or a pre-school.

“We have even got our own van driver that will come round and pick your kids up so that you can get to course, and drop them off to school if need be, and she's awesome!

“So plenty of people will come to Taumarunui High School or will leave on overseas exchanges funded through Rotary but it's not as popular doing a Rotary International Exchange as it used to be.

Some people, especially those with strong rural connections, believe tertiary education isn't necessary to achieve a good life and are instead opting for non-tertiary pathways, such as farming, building or plumbing or taking advantage of the growing number of courses and certificates available in the region focusing on hands-on, outdoor skills.

IN 2021 ACROSS AOTEAROA, THERE WERE 78,480 ACTIVE APPRENTICESHIPS, WHERE 215 OF THESE WERE IN THE RUAPEHU (0.3% OF TOTAL APPRENTICESHIPS).



Ministry of Education, 2021 in Figure.nz.

Strengths

- Some people in the region, especially those that live rurally, believe one can lead a valuable and worthy life without seeking tertiary education, with many deciding to go into trades or farming, instead of pursuing tertiary education.
- Some believe there is a significant advantage of outdoors and hands-on learning opportunities for many youth and adult learners in the region, as it is better suited to their outdoors lifestyle, skills and scenarios they are faced with in everyday life, which they can leverage and turn into employment.
- For those who are hands-on learners, some have found benefit in learning collectively as a family and supporting one another for the more challenging, more academic-focused skills required to complete certificates and qualifications.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some have observed that many families within the region do not support or encourage tertiary education, which is particularly evident in Māori families. For example, if no one in your family has attended university for several generations, it can create a sense of hesitancy and reluctance to pursue higher education.

“People feel that you can lead a valuable and worthy life without having to get tertiary education.

“I think there’s actually quite a strong rural connection. That doesn’t necessarily prioritise tertiary education.

“A lot of our young people go into the trades, farming, building, plumbing rather than go onto that tertiary level.

Framework Tags



Barriers

- With so many non-tertiary pathways available within the region, and promoted through the regions’ schools, some have concerns around the lack of youth going on to tertiary pathways, and whether these are still being encouraged equally, or as much as they should be.
- Some believe there are not as many rural and outdoors-based programmes and tickets available to those in the region’s southern townships that target local employment opportunities.

“On the other hand, there were not a lot of students that were transitioning into tertiary education from Ruapehu, it was more like, good workforce sort of connections, and things like that, but I think people were a bit concerned about the lack of people going on to tertiary.

“I noticed over there [Ohakune, Raetihi] they don’t have much training or opportunities for education if they are wanting to go into employment. They have Te Pai Tata, but the programmes they run over there are more for technology. There is nothing in there that is rural.

“There is nothing like what we’re delivering over here [Taumarunui] that actually puts them into regional employment, where you will get a job.

Opportunities

- Allowing more people to get the required licences and tickets for their line of work to ensure Health and Safety regulations are met.
- Providing more rural and outdoors-based programmes and tickets for those in the region’s southern townships that target local employment opportunities.

“That’s so right [some with strong rural connections believe higher education isn’t necessary...], but I’m really pushing get licensed, get those tickets because under the new Health and Safety procedures your bosses are liable and you won’t get the job.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - provides hands-on certificates and courses for learners of any age in hunting, fishing, helicopters, jet boating on the river, jet-skiing, fencing, forestry, horticulture, agriculture, pest control, licensing on quads, forklifts, class five training, dangerous goods, etc. Anything to do with the land they offer.
- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust and Ātīhau Iwi farms - have a training campus that runs agriculture internships for dairy, sheep and beef, which aim to ensure people are guaranteed employment at the end of their internship. They are also opening similar training opportunities for the southern townships, i.e. Raetihi and Ohakune.
- Uenuku - has some exciting things in the pipeline in the training and education space.
- Civil Defence - provides a Pathways to Employment programme focused on leadership for youth. This programme allows them to gain essential credits, and those who attend find it worthwhile.
- Trades School (located at Taumarunui High School) - a training academy offered at school focusing on hair dressing, farming, etc.
- Wakahoki Rangatahi Project (supported by Ngāti Rangī) - provided a dedicated programme designed to engage rangatahi in meaningful activities.

“No, Te Awanui a Rua is probably the only one doing it [hands on courses for learners] at this stage.

“We work on the Ātīhau Iwi farms, we’ve got a training campus over there and we run agriculture and internships for dairy, sheep and beef.

“Watch this space though. Uenuku are going through the settlement process at the moment and they will have education stuff within that.

“Pathways to employment and leadership stuff which helps them get credits through us. We go to Iwi as well and they are always keen to put their kids in it.

“So the trades training academy and all the work that they did featured in the regional workforce development plan that was put out last year and Taumarunui High School is on the cover. It’s focusing on hair dressing and farming, things like that.

“So with the input for education or non-tertiary pathways, there is a small programme that Ngāti Rangī have supported. The Wakahoki Rangatahi project in Raetihi, for just working with youth and getting them into activities.

“I think when we were there, if you weren’t taking those classes, you were never encouraged to go into a trade. It seems like it’s very siloed now, like it’s siloing them into the working class. That’s what it feels like.

Workshop participant

Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust

“We sat around the campfire with a few of the locals, who found that we needed to have a different structure that could accommodate whānau in need of education, instead of traveling out of our community. So I pretty much reached out to my family to create a charitable trust. It’s very fun, no Iwi, no government, just a whānau trust.”

“We were gifted the name by our three Iwi coming together... we were given the first name of the Whanganui River, which at that stage was in treaty settlement.”

“We had a goal that we wanted to get a rundown school that was closed down through MOE, and then we [were] granted a school. That was actually a primary school that was going to be shut down, they only had 10 students, and I said, ‘let us work together and see if we can rebuild the school’.”

“We’ve got adult classrooms up there [at the school], that are all equipped with technology that’s been donated, as we’ve been sponsored.”

“Our adult learners, they are in courses. So we do forestry, horticulture, agriculture, pest control, licensing on quads, forklifts, we do class five training, dangerous goods... anything to do with the land, we do.”

“When it comes to the bookwork and assessment side of things, we all sit down as a family in the classroom and we go over it and discuss it....And they have got all their kids at the school which we run, so while our adults are in the back classroom, all the kids are all in the front classroom... and they’re all at the same school working together.”

“I want everybody outside with dirty hands, because that is how we learn.”

“So we have got 10 students we put into University this year, and they’re all doing law, Māori, marketing and technology, music and teaching.”

“We have got three houses up in Waikato University... If they want to stay longer than three years, we put them into an actual house, then they learn how to flat, build their life skills, and get a job.”

“We also support them [our students] with laptops, phones, communication, Wi-Fi, anything like that, so that they can do online study at home.”

“We’ve got about 45 boarding kids in boarding schools throughout New Zealand. We get them out of our community because our high school is not up to the level of standard.”

“So what I’ve done is basically my very first students, I’ve trained them up to be instructors. Now I contract them in, I’ve set them up with a business structure. So they’ve all got their own businesses now.”

“I’ve got a counsellor on board with us because there is no counselling service in Taumarunui so we grabbed it...I have [also] got Māra Kai Institute with me, so they are sending counselling down to us, because my students need counselling, they need support.”



This life stage encompasses all young, middle-aged and older adults that fall within the ages of 18 to 65 years old.

Good Health & Wellbeing

Theme 20—Many have noticed less cigarette smoking due to their increased price and changing mindset of the nation. However, many are concerned that people are starting to develop vaping habits as it's more affordable and accessible, and there are concerns that people are oblivious to the potential health implications of vaping.

Theme 29—Whilst some view drug use as not highly visible in the region, many are aware of the presence of marijuana and the increasing presence of predominantly methamphetamine, as well as cocaine and MDMA, across the region. There are growing concerns about the numerous downstream impacts of those supplying and consuming these drugs, including youth.

Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

Theme 30—Whilst there is a sense that family violence is discussed more freely and reported more often by some, many feel it is still prevalent right across the region as a result of underlying issues including poverty, hardship, drug and alcohol abuse, personal and family stressors, lack of employment, lack of access to spaces to unwind or dependencies where victims of violence are unable to leave abusive environments.

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Theme 21—Many believe one of the benefits of smaller communities in the region is the presence of many local small and medium enterprise (SME) businesses that are well-connected and go above and beyond to promote growing, nurturing and supporting their own and their communities.

However, there are some barriers SMEs in smaller communities face, including the extra time and energy it takes to play multiple roles for their communities, access support and business mentors and succession planning.

Theme 24—Some feel there is an opportunity for businesses in the region to educate themselves and be more prepared for supporting and managing their employees appropriately, such as updating their hiring, employee readiness, and human resources (HR) practices and processes.

Reduced Inequalities

Theme 25—Some have experienced bias by employers in the region towards specific groups, such as only hiring who they know or their own whānau and not hiring 'outsiders', having gender preferences for roles or being unable to separate a person from a negative family history or background.

Industry, Innovation, & Infrastructure

Theme 22—There is a general sense across the community that the loss of industry within the region is having many downstream impacts on the community. Many feel this is making attracting new industry and skilled employees to the region harder as many now view the region as one that lacks opportunity, meaningful career pathways, essential services, quality schooling and infrastructure required to work and live effectively in the region.

Theme 31—Some feel there is a lack of social support services right across the region, such as support for mental health, drug, alcohol and domestic abuse. Furthermore, there is a sense that police response times are too long, and that they have insufficient social support training to address these problems. There is also a hesitancy for those needing support to seek help from some services due to a fear that there is a lack of confidentiality or that services could come from people that know their family.

Gender Equality

Theme 26—Many have observed a widespread increase in the presence of women across many industries and within leadership and managerial positions. There is, however, still a way to go within some industries with some gender biases still present.

No Poverty

Theme 23—For some individuals experiencing high deprivation in the region, there is a sense that they may be caught in the cycle of poverty, also known as the 'poverty trap', experiencing multiple barriers to gaining and maintaining employment, including having a lack of numeracy and literacy skills, having no vehicle or transport to get to work, mandatory drug testing and being placed in roles that don't align with their passion, needs and abilities.

Theme 28—Whilst there is some rural wealth in the community, many in the region are living in deprivation, which can cause households to do many things to survive, including working multiple jobs, relying on benefits, creating unlawful income streams, and in some cases, leaving children at home unattended while parents have to work. This is seen to be particularly evident in Taumarunui and Raetihi.

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Theme 27—Some have noticed that there is a divide within the community across and within cultural groups, i.e. Pākehā and Māori, as well as within Māori communities and groups.

Many have noticed less cigarette smoking due to their increased price and changing mindset of the nation. However, many are concerned that people are starting to develop vaping habits as it's more affordable and accessible, and there are concerns that people are oblivious to the potential health implications of vaping.

Strengths

- Many have observed a decrease in the number of people smoking cigarettes in the Ruapehu region and attribute this to a combination of the price increase, increased messaging and awareness around the negative health impacts of smoking, a general shift in mindset and more negative stigma toward smoking across the country.
- Some have also noticed a decrease in vaping within certain community groups.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some believe the price increase of cigarettes has had a higher impact on and made smoking an unaffordable habit for many low-income and/or highly deprived families. On the other hand, some also believe too many of these highly deprived families are smoking, leading to several downstream impacts due to the little money they do have, being prioritised toward smoking rather than essential living costs.

- “You don't see many people now on the old durries, no.
- “There's quite a negative stigma within New Zealand about people who still smoke. People always apologise, and it's a different mindset compared to visitors from overseas.
- “I see a lot of people stopping vaping, even with my own students I don't see a lot of them smoking or vaping anymore.
- “That'll have to do with the price. We have a high level of unemployment so they are living on the benefit and they won't be able to afford smokes.
- “That's just the level of deprivation, the affordability and that just doesn't work does it?

Barriers

- Some have observed that there are still a number of young Māori women smoking in the community, and wonder if this is due to the concept of whakamā ('the unwillingness of Māori people to stand out') as giving up smoking is viewed by some as 'standing out'.
- Many have concerns that due to the price increase of cigarettes, many people (including youth) are now turning to vaping as it is much more affordable and accessible. Many are also concerned that they are doing so, unaware of the negative implications on their health.

“Whakamā, the unwillingness of the Māori people to stand out, why do kids walk around with their heads down, because they don't want to stand out. Why the kids don't excel at something is because they don't want to stand down. Why do young married women smoke because everybody else is, they don't want to stand out.

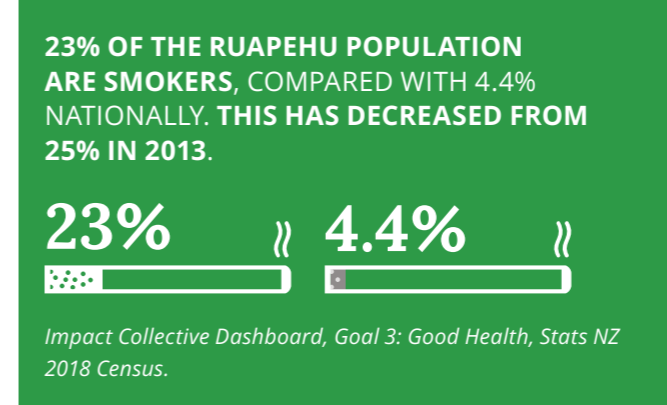
- “Unfortunately I think this is cultural, middle-aged and young Māori women disproportionately smoke... they just accept they are not setting a good example for their kids, but they can't stop.
- “What defines smoking because if it's talking about smoking tobacco, sure, but if it's vaping, no, because it's all the ones that have stopped smoking tobacco have generally jumped on to the vape.
- “I vape. I used to smoke. It's still just as bad for me. But the reason why they got into vaping is because it's more affordable. It's cheaper to go get a \$10 vape device with two pods for \$10. That will last you a week as opposed to the \$60 for a pouch of tobacco or the \$40 for a pack of 25 cigarettes.

Framework Tags

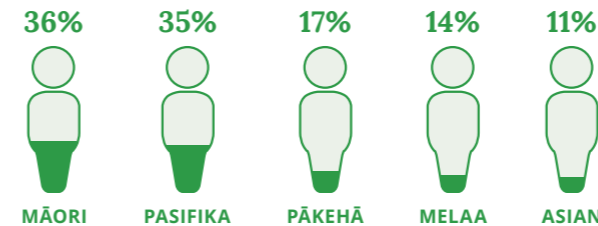
Good Health & Wellbeing | No Poverty | Quality Education | Sustainable Cities & Communities

Human Capability | Social Cohesion

Self-managing and empowered leaders | Leading healthy lifestyles



36% OF MĀORI IN RUAPEHU IDENTIFY AS SMOKERS, 17% OF PĀKEHĀ, 35% OF PASIFIKA, 11% OF ASIANS AND 14% OF MIDDLE EASTERN, LATIN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 3: Good Health, Stats NZ 2018 Census.

8.3% OF ADULTS ARE NOW VAPING DAILY, INCREASING FROM 6.2% IN THE PAST YEAR.

2021/22: New Zealand Health Survey.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Te Puni Kōkiri - provides incentivised schemes that support people to give up smoking.
- Ruapehu District Council - have received a green light to implement a smoke-free and vape-free policy in the region which entails putting signs up and hoping that using some social pressure will result in less visibility and prevalence of smoking and vaping for the region's children.

- “Yay for Kōkiri schemes! They incentivised giving it up.
- “You could put that up here the Ruapehu District Council down as good mahi in the community because we've just got a green light from our council to implement smoke free and vape free policy in the district. So it's a work in progress but the council has given us their full support.
- “Basically, it's not a policy that's going to be enforceable in the sense of being regulated, but it'll just be a matter of putting signs up and hoping that a bit of social pressure might result in the visibility of smoking and vaping being less prevalent for our children.

Many believe one of the benefits of smaller communities in the region is the presence of many local small and medium enterprise (SME) businesses that are well-connected and go above and beyond to promote growing, nurturing and supporting their own and their communities.

However, there are some barriers SMEs in smaller communities face, including the extra time and energy it takes to play multiple roles for their communities, access support and business mentors and succession planning.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY 1,351 REGISTERED BUSINESSES IN RUAPEHU. 182 ARE IN THE FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE SERVICES, 163 ARE IN RENTAL HIRING AND REAL ESTATE, 140 ARE IN THE ACCOMMODATION SECTOR, 126 IN THE PROFESSIONAL SECTOR, 123 IN AGRICULTURE AND 121 IN CONSTRUCTION.

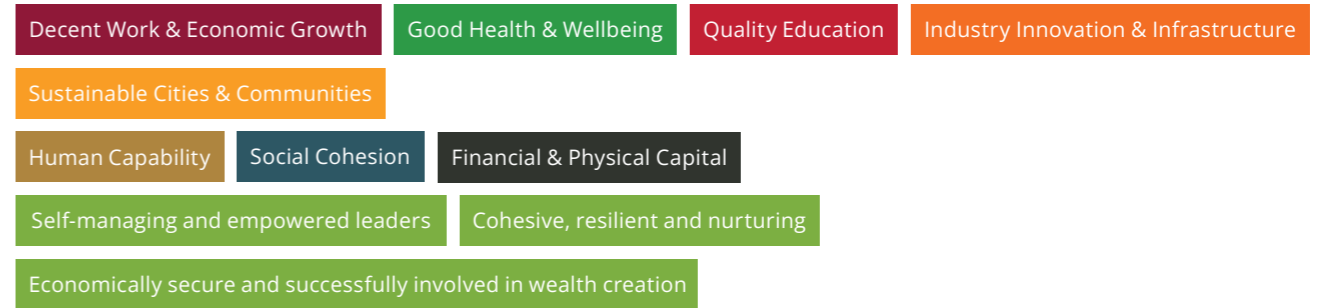


Dot Loves Data, Companies Office Register.

Strengths

- Many local small businesses find it highly important to maintain good outcomes for their customers and clients that are a part of their community, as ensuring these clients have positive outcomes helps businesses maintain a strong reputation in the region.
- Some have observed and experienced local small businesses often going above and beyond for their clients in times of struggle, helping them to figure out what they want to do with their lives.
- Some feel that an advantage of small communities is having strong and more accessible networks, making it easier to connect people and resources and point people in the right direction when needed.
- Some have experienced that working as a team in a small community creates an incredibly close-knit atmosphere. Some commented that they ‘were welcomed with open arms’ and exchanged smiles and laughter. Some feel this is a defining characteristic of small businesses in small communities, where everyone is interconnected and supportive of one another.
- Some feel that there aren’t as many significant businesses or chains i.e. Kmart, dominating the market in small communities, allowing small businesses the chance to thrive and grow.

Framework Tags



- Some believe employees can gain broader skills that extend beyond their professional responsibilities by working for SME businesses in the region. These skills include dealing with conflict, overcoming adversity and appreciating life, all of which are passed down and applicable to their daily lives.

“We have the opportunity for small businesses to really blossom, because we don’t have the big players... because there is no market here for big players like Kmart, you go to whatever is locally provided. That’s a big opportunity for small local businesses.

“Always trying to make sure that you are actually doing the right thing by people and respecting who they are from whatever walk of life they are.

“It’s a small community and you always have to be aware of that. Your reputation is part of you.

“All organisations, actually the people, and all business, these things are actually facilitating what people want to do with their lives.

“In a smaller community because we’re sitting in the community, sometimes it’s easier for us to pick up the phone and help create that.

“Again it’s that facilitation and redirection. Sometimes it’s where we’re actually able to actually add value.”

Barriers

- Some SME employees experience the need to play multiple roles for their customers and clients, particularly to fill the healthcare gaps within the region. For some who are willing, this can take a lot of time and energy, whilst others feel uncomfortable going above and beyond to support in that space.
- Some find that they frequently encounter the same individuals who require repeated assistance and feel that without support from local small businesses and their employees, there is no one else available to offer them help.
- Some small business owners find succession planning difficult and struggle to have confidence in the next generation of business owners. They want to be able to exit the business and leave it in the hands of great people with the same ethos and drive to look after the business; however, they struggle to find these individuals due to a lack of skills and talent in the region.
- Although some see numerous programmes and resources available for small businesses, some feel there is a shortage of business mentors and administrators in the region.
- Some are concerned that the increase in minimum wage could result in smaller businesses having to let go of some staff as they may not have the means to afford the higher salaries.

“If we don’t support them, there is nobody here to support them.

“Now the sad thing is, of course, that the people you see doing all of these things are usually the same people over and over again.

“Be able to exit the business and leave it in the hands of some really great people that have the same ethos and drive to look after the business, that is dependent on our community having the education and health system that people feel confident in.

“I’m wondering when the minimum wage goes up, these smaller owned businesses who don’t make much are going to have to lose staff because they don’t have the means to pay the increase in minimum wage. So they are going to have to lose staff, but that’s then a whole wage lost.

“We are very short on people with administrative skills, you know, in other areas, you might have a virtual administrator that does a lot of money for multiple organisations. That’s not something that exists here.

Opportunities

- Having more business mentors and administrators to support SMEs within the region to enable them to thrive.
- Providing more support for small businesses and individuals delivered by professionals, such as training opportunities for small businesses and individual guidance for improving employment skills such as CV writing, literacy, and numeracy, to more effectively cater to the needs of community members in the region.
- Better utilising organisations that prioritise employment relations, health and safety, and strengthening relationships such as the Employers and Manufacturers Association (EMA) to alleviate some of the stressors felt by small businesses in the region that need extra support.

“More support for small businesses, more support for CV creation, even because that’s a barrier when people don’t know how to create a CV properly or will have that assistance there, readily at hand.

“We are best to bring professionals in who want people trained the way that they would train them internally in the business specifically, to pathway them into those opportunities that are local.

“I’m not saying go out and punish those who have bad practices. I’m saying we need to embrace those businesses that aren’t doing well. That’s why I have a membership with the EMA because they specialise in Employment Relations, health and safety and bettering those relationships.

“The reality is, whether it’s Māori or non-Māori, Ruapehu is a place where you get employment by who you know not what you know. Often it’s shoulder tapping, or by families. Rather than actually seeing that as a negative, I think that it needs to be embraced and fostered because it is the way it is.

Good Mahi in the Community

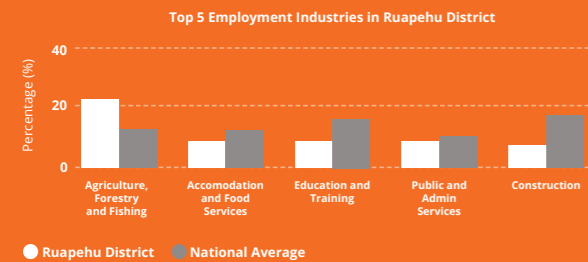
- Ruapehu District Council - seeking to partner with and support small local businesses rather than larger, non-local organisations.
- Generate - providing aid for individuals interested in establishing their own business, with grants made available to successful applicants.

“Council is very neutral in terms of like we don’t just go out to the big guys. We’re locally procured. So we look to the small business startups, who they are, what they can do and what they can offer Council. It’s not like in the city where you go to Fulton Hogan or the big players because we want to produce locally. We will work more closely with small business startups

“Generate offers assistance for people who want to create their own business. People are given grants up to \$5,000.

There is a general sense across the community that the loss of industry within the region is having many downstream impacts on the community. Many feel this is making attracting new industry and skilled employees to the region harder as many now view the region as one that lacks opportunity, meaningful career pathways, essential services, quality schooling and infrastructure required to work and live effectively in the region.

23% OF RUAPEHU JOBS ARE IN THE AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING SECTORS, FOLLOWED BY 10% IN ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES, 9% IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING, 9% IN PUBLIC AND ADMIN SERVICES AND 8% IN CONSTRUCTION. ALL BUT AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING SECTORS, SIT BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.



Dot Loves Data Community Compass, New Zealand Companies Office Register.

32 RUAPEHU BUSINESSES WERE REGISTERED IN THE 6 MONTHS FROM AUGUST 2022 TO JANUARY 2023. IN COMPARISON, THERE WERE 108 REGISTRATIONS IN WHANGANUI DISTRICT OVER THE SAME PERIOD.

Dot Loves Data Community Compass, New Zealand Companies Office Register.

Barriers

- Many have the perception that due to the loss of several significant big employers, there are little to no career paths for those with skills in the region, some having the view that ‘you have to leave town if you want to have a career’.
- Many believe that regionalisation, the shift in the economy and loss of many key industries and services in townships across the region due to its location, is contributing to the challenges many employers are facing when attracting skilled staff and/or new people to the region to work remotely - ‘people don’t want to live where there are no (or a lack of) services’.
- Many businesses who require skilled staff are now feeling additional pressures to pay and incentivise staff to fill roles and compete with city wages and lifestyle, many of which they lose anyway as they aren’t enjoying the work environment and additional pressures due to the limited number of skilled staff in the region.
- Many also perceive that you earn a lot less working in Ruapehu than you do in equivalent jobs in the cities, with many left with the choice of moving to the region to gain the lifestyle but taking a pay cut versus moving or remaining elsewhere to earn more.
- Some have observed a significant number of businesses closing down across the region and believe this results from the loss of industry and its many downstream impacts.

Framework Tags

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure Decent Work & Economic Growth Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Human Capability Financial & Physical Capital

Self-managing and empowered leaders Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

“How are we going to get the engineers and the managers to town if we don’t have healthcare? If we don’t have schools or housing, housing is a massive issue.

“I joked with my partner saying, crikey, we do now live in the Rust Belt of New Zealand. The rust belt like the USA, you know it was part of the country was pretty good, but then they made a big motorway that bypassed everyone. And then those towns sort of people just picked up and left.

“So you know, we’ve got businesses that are just closing the door and walking away or they’re going to go into receivership or the selling, meanwhile, they’ve closed the doors and are not operating. So it’s an abysmal state for businesses right now.

“We had one of the best operating freezing works here, it had over 400, 500 people employed, plus attachments to that, and being one of the most successful ones. We ain’t got closed down because we were successful, we got closed down because we were in the wrong place.

“There’s definitely been big moments of catalyst and change through the years, take the regionalisation of key services, for example. If you take professional jobs out of rural areas, the professional people leave, and then straight away your scales of economy shift.

“For Ruapehu that is a big risk, the continuation of removing, centralising or regionalising professional roles.

“But it’s very much understood that you have to leave town if you want to have a career.

“We are talking about the effect of the community and the pressures of people there, but then it gets dragged to Council and the pressures put on council staff who are under resourced as well and with you know, with people power and all that so I understand why it is a revolving door at Council and there’s people leaving, you can only take so much aye.

“I’ve had to really justify us coming here in the first place. Because everyone had a better life before.

“There’s no jobs basically. So I left. I grew up around here and I left high school, and there wasn’t a career path in Taurarunui to support anything.

“Our employment here is very seasonal, so again you have got to make sure you have got two jobs in place and you have got money coming in or you’ve got a partner that knows how to rock and roll. Otherwise, the benefit

“You’ve got to either accept that you’re gonna make just over minimum wage, unless you want to start your own business or you have to work three jobs..

10% OF THE WORKING AGE POPULATION IN RUAPEHU IS ON A JOB SEEKER SUPPORT BENEFIT, COMPARED WITH 5.4% NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Ministry of Social Development.



Opportunities

- Offering more unique industries and jobs that align with what the region has to offer to create more employment opportunities locally.
- There are many potential benefits of manufacturing companies moving to the region; however, the region needs to discover ways to build their confidence in order for them to trust that they will find the staff they need.
- Leveraging the tech world and using the power of the internet to bring more remote jobs to the region, i.e. remote government departments.
- Increasing innovation and outside-the-box thinking, looking further afield and leveraging creativity and flexibility to attract skilled people to the region.
- Utilising and beautifying existing infrastructures that have potential, i.e. better utilisation and reactivation of the existing railway link infrastructure in the region.
- Providing more networking events for businesses and professionals, i.e. after 5pm business events.
- Looking at Ruapehu as a fly-in-fly-out area for specialty skill sets, i.e. fly-in-fly-out for education; if you can't attract high-level science teachers, the Ministry could provide fly-in-fly-out teachers to fulfil those qualifications and stimulate the community that is in the region.

"We need industry here. Our people need work. Some industries where our people can build necessary skills, provide meaningful employment that brings money into our local economy."

- "Government throwing money in terms of getting some of those manufacturing into the area and providing incentives into that area would help."*
- "You could at least go and get your university degree in like social media marketing or you know something else and come home and work."*
- "That model could be done here. And you could put government departments that work remotely. And that would make a difference."*
- "Attracting professionals here means that here, we've had to be more creative and flexible and our working environments."*
- "God we could end up with, you know, artists and musicians and creatives that have the time to spend to actually do stuff, you know."*
- "We're on the railway link, if we were to put something like Sleepyhead beds, they are going to employ over 3000 people. You can imagine if something like that was right on our network, they could utilise that same infrastructure."*
- "Our hospital got regionalised many years ago and so it actually has a surgical wing on it that's not used anymore. I think central government needs to relook at the way that they're currently doing nursing and doctor qualifications and using old infrastructure, such as our hospital wing."*
- "We need more after 5 o'clock business events, we need more opportunities for trade groups and industry groups to actually spend time together and lead."*
- "I think that is an opportunity around looking at Ruapehu as a fly-in-fly-out area for specialty skill sets. Fly-in-fly-out out for education if you can't attract high level science teachers the Ministry can provide fly-in-fly-out teachers to fulfil those qualifications."*

Good Mahi in the Community

- King Country Pet Food - a new pet food treats factory set up south of Taumarunui with massive potential for the region. They predict that it could employ a permanent workforce of 60 to 80 people once they get their shifts up and running.
- Civil Defence - running a pre-ski season event where all the agencies get together and look at whether there might be shortages in skilled staff so they can train them up quickly.
- New World - is perceived as a highly sought-after employer in the region as they are known for having high-level training support for staff and demonstrating genuine employee care.
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) - is recognised for their ability to share knowledge and create positive experiences for its staff, even for individuals without a clear career path within the organisation. Through fostering a sense of community, they provide workers with opportunities to learn new skills and develop confidence, particularly for adults entering the workforce for the first time.

- "The Pet Food factory is great and projections show they are going to hire people, but I don't know when, we need more of that. When we had Affco it was great. Even when we had a bigger hospital system that provided and attracted a lot of services."*
- "New World is highly sought after as an employer at the moment because he's training his staff well and people are feeling treasured and cared for"*
- "There are actually some people who really want to learn more so people who just really like learning when you're a firefighter, there's always more courses that you have to do this weekly training, and"*

- lots of different cool bits of equipment and vehicles and things to learn, so quite a variation there.*
- "I think even for people who don't have a direct career pathway into the organisation, it can give people a sense of community and it's an opportunity to learn new skills, gain confidence, especially for young people."*
- "Every winter we hold a pre ski season type event where all of the agencies get together and look at whether there might be shortages in skilled staff so we can train them pretty quick so everyone knows what they are doing on the mountain."*

For some individuals experiencing high deprivation in the region, there is a sense that they may be caught in the cycle of poverty, also known as the ‘poverty trap’, experiencing multiple barriers to gaining and maintaining employment, including having a lack of numeracy and literacy skills, having no vehicle or transport to get to work, mandatory drug testing and being placed in roles that don’t align with their passion, needs and abilities.

Strengths

- Some are aware that significant funding has been placed into the region for employment (and education).

Whilst the following have been identified as a strength, they have also been identified as a barrier:

- Some are finding success in linking people to employment opportunities outside of the region in efforts to pick them up and get them into meaningful career paths. The downside of this is that these people need to relocate and leave the region.
- Some believe that gaining meaningful employment is more of a sacrificial period, with the view that it might not have any more monetary value than being on the benefit; however, you will gain personal development.

“You’ve gotta take the leap if you want to change your life. You can’t look at it like monetary value all the time. I chose the option that wouldn’t have the most monetary value, I chose the option that was going to add to the person I would become, skills, attributes and experiences I could learn along the way.”

“There’s been a significant amount of funding come into play here over the last three, four years, upwards of 2.3 million around education and employment programmes.”

“Sometimes it means linking people to opportunities outside of our region, especially when it’s the right job for the person because being in a small rural community, people tend to get their blinkers on especially young people and they think there’s nothing here for them.”

“I could have stayed working in hospitality with the support I got from the government, working for families, and I was no better off than starting a government job. You have to make that choice. Do you want to stay in that position and be who you are or do you want to take the leap and make a sacrifice knowing you’re not going to gain any monetary value but you’re going to gain personal development.”

Framework Tags



Barriers

- Many believe that whilst there are jobs available in the region, they aren’t necessarily the jobs or industries people want or consider meaningful, leading to unemployment being a stubborn challenge for the region.
- Many believe that whilst there are many services and providers helping people into employment in the region, there is the sense that some people are placed into roles that aren’t best suited to them and that there is a lack of follow-through support once these individuals gain employment.
- Basic numeracy and literacy skills, and qualifications are barriers to employment for some in the region, particularly those who dropped out of school early.
- Given that the use of drugs is on the rise in the region, for those engaging in recreational drug use, this can be an additional barrier to gaining or maintaining employment due to mandatory drug testing for many jobs across the region.
- With the rising fuel costs, the lack of public transport and many lacking cars or drivers licences in the region, transport is a significant barrier to accessing employment for some in the region, especially for those facing financial hardship.

- Some believe there is more to lose coming off the benefit than gain, as incomes from benefits can outweigh full-time employment. Wrap-around support systems are also no longer available to people once they are employed, meaning reliance on the benefit system continues for some as it can offer a better quality of life.
- Some feel that the way the Ministry of Social Development’s (MSD) training fund operates, only funding training and certifications through MSD contracted providers, can act as a significant barrier and can knock the confidence of some who want to go to other small groups or organisations to get the same ticket, but can’t, meaning they just choose to stay on the benefit.

“The other one is transport issues, we don’t have public transport. So if you don’t have a car or you don’t have a way to get around, you can’t get to work.”

“So a client on the benefit can only go to a certain provider that MSD funds, or MSD contracts in. When there are so many small groups out there or people out there that people want to go to, to get the same ticket but they, MSD, won’t pay for it because they are not the provider that is contracted under them. That’s messy, that’s ugly and it totally knocks the confidence down from a lot of them.”

“But if people really want to look into it for jobs, they are out there, but then it’s, ‘I’m not really interested in this industry so why bother’ sort of thing.”

“Some other groups are doing some good stuff and supporting jobs, people to get jobs. But then they’re stuck with strict criteria within their own employment contracts, which they can’t take anything any further.”

“So more on the business of making sure that they get them into the job they want, as opposed to just shoving them into a job which is something I noticed, years and years ago, when I was 18, that they will shove you into a job [they] didn’t want.”

“I think you see it [literacy and numeracy barriers] more and more towards the seniors age group, less so with younger people these days.”

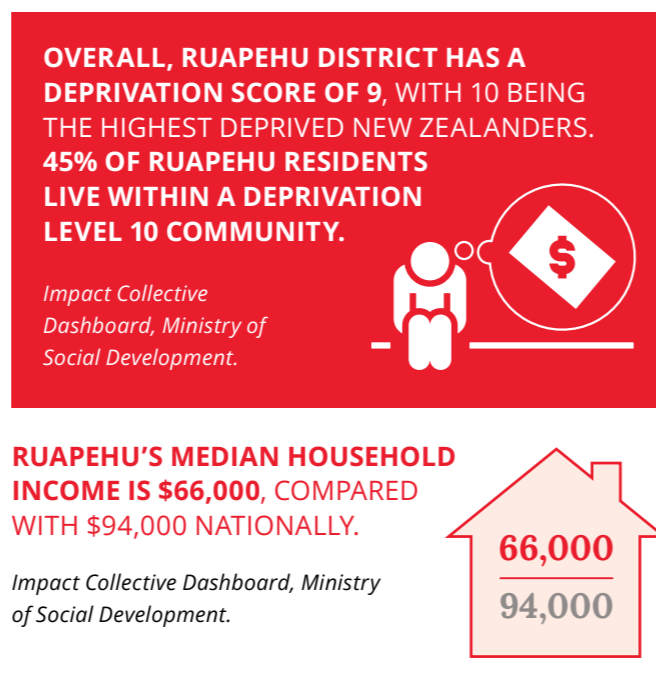
“There are plenty of jobs, but many of them, out at the Mill and so forth, all require drug testing, and they are not passing drug testing. That’s one of the reasons why unemployment is so high, because they can’t get a job where there’s drug testing.”

“Quite a lot of people are in this poverty trap in Ruapehu.”

“[We need to] help people to just get around. Because transport is limited. That’s a major barrier for us.”

“Also we know, and MSD also knows this... when you are on a benefit you have a number of support systems wrapped around you, including if you can’t pay your power you can get the interest free loans or extra support from WINZ.”

“When you are employed, you don’t have those support services wrapped around you so actually people stay on the benefit because of those support systems.”



Opportunities

- Addressing poverty and deprivation needs is considered an advantageous first step to help people gain employment, i.e. car repair assistance and housing.
- Ensuring the job is aligned with what the individual wants to do and providing them with better wrap-around support services - because ‘it’s not as simple as putting people into a job and away they go’.
- Providing those with numeracy and literacy barriers with extra ‘hands-on’ support, ‘just being there’ can be all they need.
- More transport services, in general, are needed across the region to give people better and more affordable access to employment.
- Shifting the focus of community development to supporting families for the first 1000 days of a child’s life in an attempt to break the cycle.

“For a number of our clients, you know, people are facing poverty, or deprivation, or some form of it, in any given capacity. I think, first and foremost, it’s really important to address those sorts of needs first.”

“We need some wrap-around services, because you can’t just put someone in a job and then away they go. Because we all know it doesn’t work like that.”

“We live in a world now, where I think it’s important for us to focus on the needs of people was also, you know, having a conversation around, what does employment look like for me? How will it work? And, you know, has this been something that I’ve always wanted to pursue as a career?”

“Around the literacy and numeracy, some of our mahi feels a little bit like hand holding. But what we want is to empower people, not enable people to continue on a lifestyle that doesn’t suit them.”

“So literacy and numeracy has come up quite a bit, not just through our providers, but sometimes it’s just nerves with sitting a license, you know, sometimes it’s just they need someone to sit next to them in case they need someone to read to them. And then sometimes they’ll come out and they’ll be like, you know what, I don’t need that person.”

“Definitely some more transport services and what that looks like... I know we’ve had feasibility studies done on taxi services and things like that, but definitely more of our people helping our own people? How ever that might look.”

“I think it’s a really interesting concept for Councils to think of as we ensure that we do everything in that first 1000 days to protect our families in their communities, then we’re doing everything we can to reduce crap lives in the future, because pretty much guaranteed everyone will have it if you’ve got a crappy first 1000 days. It’s not going to be good for you in the future.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Taumarunui - representing people by connecting them to the world of work, whether that be through education, employment and training, and applying products available through MSD to assist them on this journey. Sometimes, they also work collectively and create projects with other organisations that have available funding. They are also beginning to be more involved in post-placement and pastoral support.
 - Jobs for Nature, Department of Conservation (DOC), Ministry of Primary Industries, Te Puni Kōkiri - working together to put the individual and their family at the centre of the experience and provide the most appropriate level of support and service suited to their needs.
 - Literacy & Numeracy Aotearoa - Working with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to support and place those with literacy and numeracy barriers into work.
 - Mayors Taskforce for Jobs - offering a programme that has placed upward of 85 people into work and employment through focusing on helping people find the right job for the right person at the right time as they believe it doesn't do anyone any good if you force employment.
 - Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust & King Country Mongrel Mob - working closely together to help break the cycle and train their own people. They have got their own farm now, they are breeding pigs, they do mutton, they are all definitely on board.
- Safety Growth Programme with Ministry of Social Development and Central King Country R.E.A.P - providing a programme designed to build confidence and knowledge so that people can sit licenses accordingly.
 - A local Charitable Trust that partners with Land Based Training and other training institutes - offering training and courses around food safety, barista training, pest control, and poultry courses, as well as helping people obtain their tickets for motorbikes and Light Utility Vehicle (LUV) so then they can go onto local employment.

“So to a large extent we do a number of things, we make sure that we are sitting at a table and we represent the people we represent in terms of connecting them to the world of work, whether that be through education, employment and training.”

“Jobs for Nature, DOC, Ministry of Primary Industries, Te Puni Kōkiri, we bring our piece to the table for that person in the middle or the family in the middle, and then we try to engage with others to see what we can do and how we can help.”

“We have engaged Literacy and Numeracy Aotearoa for next year to work alongside all of our programs in the community, it'll be available to anyone.”

“Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, we've had two rounds of funding for that. We've placed upward of 85 people into work and employment.”

- “It's bigger than a tick box exercise for jobs. The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs used to really focus on numbers, you know, we've got 70% in employment. Now it's about helping people find the right job for the right person at the right time because it doesn't do anyone any good if you force employment.*”
- “We work really closely with King Country Mongrel Mob, and help train them up too. So that's there and we can break the cycle there as well because it's the majority of our town.*”
- “The safety growth programme with REAP.. It is a programme designed to build their confidence as well as their knowledge to sit their licenses accordingly.*”
- “We also have a local Charitable Trust that partners, like, land based training and other training institutes. They bring those trainers and they train our local people, for example, in pest control, getting their tickets for motorbikes and LUV so then they can go onto employment.*”

Some feel there is an opportunity for businesses in the region to educate themselves and be more prepared for supporting and managing their employees appropriately, such as updating their hiring, employee readiness, and human resources (HR) practices and processes.

Barriers

- Some employers find it challenging to unlearn bad habits or may not be motivated to stay updated on Human Resource (HR) legislation. This can be particularly difficult for some employers and may hinder their ability to create a fair and inclusive workplace.
- Some employers may hesitate to take on staff due to past negative experiences with training issues and/or personal grievances. Bad experiences can be particularly challenging for smaller local businesses that may have inadequate systems to protect themselves from potential legal action. As a result, employers may face difficulty attracting and retaining individuals best suited to the job.
- Some local small businesses lack networking and strong employment practices, making it hard to find positive examples of businesses in the region.

“Yeah, and same with you know, the HR side of being an employer, legislation changes all the time. And it’s quite tricky for our employers to stay up to date, given some of our digital ways as well some of our internet coverage stuff.”

“Businesses are not that motivated and they keep complaining that they don’t know.”

“Don’t want to be dealing with training them to work. Then they don’t want to be running into the potential cost errors with getting rid of them if it doesn’t.”

“I found one of the most difficult things for our district to work in is the business community. The business community is poorly networked, they are dominated by SME, they don’t have the best employment practices.”

Opportunities

- Community leaders could work together and create initiatives that support and showcase businesses with fair workplace practices, creating a more substantial business community.

“We’ve really struggled to find a business that you could really showcase and say “here are some really great businesses that employ youth”.”

Framework Tags



Good Mahi in the Community

- Ministry of Social Development (MSD) - offering employers and employees comprehensive support in employment law matters, including guidance on crucial areas that can impact employee retention.
- Ministry of Social Development (MSD) - collaborating with other contractors to ensure that the work environment and job description align with the individual’s skills and needs. Through regular communication with employers and employees, MSD can make necessary modifications and facilitate an agreement that benefits both parties if a problematic situation arises.
- Ruapehu District Council and the Employers and Manufacturers Association (EMA) - have a partnership around business support and encouraging positive employment practice by offering businesses access to the most up-to-date, hands-on support directly through a membership with the Employers and Manufacturers Association (EMA) or Mayors Taskforce for Jobs. More than eight businesses in the region have signed up so far, and it has been rolled out nationally over the last six months.

“So if they’ve got questions they ask me and I direct them to [where they] need to go. On the side, I will say where it is in the employment law that they need to look, just so that they’re aware that they’re not losing good employees for silly little things like that. Because it’s hard, retention is hard.”

“So we work with our other contracts in terms of making sure an environment and the role description is suitable for the skills that the person has. Also, that regular contact enables us to modify anything in arranging to come to an agreement between the employer and the employee. Without that person, perhaps just giving up and going this is the too hard basket, let’s leave.”

“We initiated in Ruapehu the partnership with the EMA, who based on health and safety and employment practice and patients sharing their businesses have access to the most up to date, hands on, support directly through a membership with Mayors Taskforce for jobs.”

“It was just to encourage good employment practice, actually, because we were hearing stories of really crappy employment practice and not decent employment agreements. So that’s my way of trying to resolve that without having to work hands on one on one with each business.”

“It’s also for businesses to protect themselves so that they are doing things the right way.”

Some have experienced bias by employers in the region towards specific groups, such as only hiring who they know or their own whānau and not hiring ‘outsiders’, having gender preferences for roles or being unable to separate a person from a negative family history or background.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some find that well-skilled and qualified individuals may struggle to find high-paying jobs due to the perceived favouritism of local businesses and organisations towards hiring people they know. On the other hand, some have started to view this as a strength and that it is just the region’s employment style.

“It is difficult. So when I first came here I remember going ‘that’s ridiculous’. It’s just nepotism. You know you should employ outside your nieces, your nephews, your whatever. But actually that is a style of employment in this district.”

“With the employment around a bias by employers in the region. I used to say that that was true but now I’ve gone completely round the other way and actually have started to view that as a strength.”

Barriers

- Some have observed that some employers show bias towards specific groups, which can impede candidates from being hired for a position they are well-suited for, such as having gender preferences for roles or being unable to separate a person from an adverse family history or background.
- Some believe that in small communities, Māori are underrepresented in the business sector despite being a significant part of the population in the region. The underrepresentation may be due to businesses focusing on preserving wealth within the family and generational networks, resulting in Māori generating only a small fraction of the wealth from business operations.

“Māori are more or less an afterthought, if you have got extra money on hand, they cycle, normally it stays in house so families and generations of families stay within the infrastructure of their businesses, and I can name them a number of top my head about, you know, they grow they own so and rightfully so.”

Framework Tags

Reduced Inequalities Gender Equality Decent Work & Economic Growth Sustainable Cities & Communities

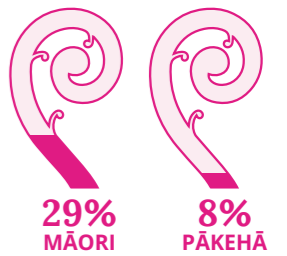
Social Cohesion

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- “Civil construction for example, they just genuinely don’t like employing women. And not because women can’t do the job. The main reason why they don’t do it is because they don’t have porter loo’s on site. And so it’s easier for a man to go wee up against the tree, little things like that, but in this day and age, it comes across as extremely sexist.*”
- “There’s a lot going on that’s like that, in this town, also where sins of the father are carried by the son as well. So if the dad has done something, sometimes the employee is quite biased towards the child.*”
- “Normally you know, Māori is one thing, but when you have Māori that are not the employers of the town... so if we are representing less than 2% of the infrastructure for businesses within small communities like this, then you know, when the chips are down, and you need workers, and you know you can only afford a certain amount, would you hire a group of Māori, or would you hire your own?”*
- “We [Māori] represent 17% to 18% of the population, but we only represent 2% to 3% of the wealth in terms of business operation, and until we can actually change that right across the board. That’s always going to be the case.*”

29% OF RUAPEHU MĀORI ARE UNEMPLOYED, COMPARED TO 8% FOR PĀKEHĀ.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 1: End Poverty.



Many have observed a widespread increase in the presence of women across many industries and within leadership and managerial positions. There is, however, still a way to go within some industries with some gender biases still present.

Strengths

- Many have observed an increasingly female presence in several traditionally male-dominated organisations and industries across the region, including Council and within the elected members, the emergency management and community welfare space, social services and on farms.
- Many feel that the region boasts a number of strong female leaders who work from their hearts and are evident in many industries, including schools, Iwi, farms and community organisations.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some believe that gender shouldn't play a role in job selection. Instead, the job should just go to the best person for the job.

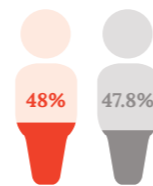
“Gender equality isn't just in your smaller business and jobs in town but we are seeing this now in farms too with both partners more equally involved in the farming operation.”

“Council at one stage was 70% female and it's probably still the same. That's when I first started there was that, because I came from the military prior to going to council and yet we did have a woman in leadership roles, but so we come to Council and I'm the only guy on our team of nine and our wider group.”

“It was really interesting to come into a more female heavy workplace which was cool, kind of refreshing!”

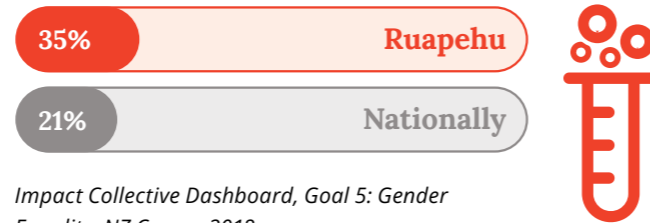
“We were female heavy in our top tier management for a number of years. Kōkiri, women, Ngātī Rangi, women, the high school, women.”
“My team at Civil Defence and in the welfare space, women are generally better in that space.”
“We've got more compassion, us women, and we've got more heart.”
“We don't work with our brain, we work with the heart.”

48% OF RUAPEHU WOMEN ARE IN THE LABOURFORCE, COMPARED WITH 47.8% NATIONALLY.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 5: Gender Equality, NZ Census 2018.

35% OF RUAPEHU WOMEN ARE TRAINED IN STEM (SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS), COMPARED TO 21% NATIONALLY.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 5: Gender Equality, NZ Census 2018.

36% OF RUAPEHU WOMEN ARE IN MANAGEMENT ROLES, COMPARED TO 37% NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 5: Gender Equality, NZ Census 2018.

Framework Tags

- Gender Equality
- Reduced Inequalities
- Good Health & Wellbeing
- Decent Work & Economic Growth
- Sustainable Cities & Communities
- Social Cohesion
- Financial & Physical Capital
- Self-managing and empowered leaders
- Cohesive, resilient and nurturing
- Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Barriers

- Some feel that some organisations in the region are a little 'stuck in the past' and are against hiring or bringing women into their environments.
- Some feel that whilst there has been an improvement concerning gender equality in employment, there is still some work to do about more equal opportunities and pay for females.

“There are still some fire stations out there that won't recruit women, they are so stuck in the past so are just waiting for the old grey dickheads to get out.”

“There is again, a lot of women leadership, but there is a very heavy old boys club in this town. And it's almost impossible to break into.”

“I don't think that we perform well in terms of gender equality because that is not mentioning opportunities or pay.”

Opportunities

- Better enabling and empowering smart entrepreneurial women who are based at home with their children to start their own small businesses.

“I think nationally, women will stay home with the children but also will be their own boss, do their own, you know, entrepreneurship and start their own small business.”

Good Mahi in the Community

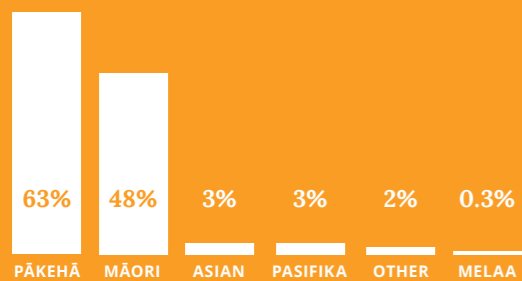
- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - running wāhine programmes to empower women and providing women with opportunities to get into programmes in traditionally more male-dominated industries, i.e. trucking.

“We had so many women on our trucking courses last year, we ran two courses just for women and they're all driving, driving all the Downers and big trucks and diggers, and big tractors at the moment.”

“Definitely a lot of women, and we run a lot of wāhine programmes to empower women, if that's what they want to do, there is no harm in trying.”

Some have noticed that there is a divide within the community across and within cultural groups, i.e. Pākehā and Māori, as well as within Māori communities and groups.

THE RUAPEHU POPULATION HAS A STRONGER MĀORI INFLUENCE THAN OTHER PARTS OF NEW ZEALAND, WITH 63% OF RESIDENTS IDENTIFYING AS PĀKEHĀ, 48% IDENTIFYING AS MĀORI, 3% IDENTIFYING AS ASIAN, 3% IDENTIFYING AS PASIFIKA, 0.3% IDENTIFYING AS MELAA (MIDDLE EASTERN, LATIN AMERICAN OR AFRICAN) AND 2% IDENTIFYING AS OTHER.



**Please note that the sum total is larger than 100% because individuals can identify with more than one ethnicity.*

Stats NZ, 2018 Census.

Strengths

- Some feel that schools are a space where the Māori and Pākehā communities have great overlap, with children, in particular, seeming to have much less of a division between the two groups than their parents and older community members.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some believe that the Māori and Pākehā communities within the Ruapehu region tend to exist in parallel, with minimal cross-over. Some also believe that some Māori prefer to keep to themselves and are reluctant to participate in some community groups or events.

“There’s some that bridge between both worlds frequently, often and happily, but there are definitely communities that run parallel to each other and the school is basically the common ground.

“Māori Ward’s seem to generate more involvement across the community. We didn’t have that voter turnout at all, but it was good to see that.

“We do actually have two parallel communities that actually run with some overlap in certain areas... the needs are quite similar but the organisations are quite different.

“We’ve been told Māori come past the shop and go ‘oh, that’s not a place for us’.

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities Good Health & Wellbeing Reduced Inequalities

Human Capability Social Cohesion

Self-managing and empowered leaders Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Barriers

- Some have observed that some Māori families in some townships are also very isolated from themselves and will sometimes not communicate with one another, even when they live on the same street. Some feel this may be lwi and/or gang-related.

“That is due to the treaty settlement, that doesn’t help either. That’s completely divided us, divided us as people.

“Even though they live in the same street and they’re all Māori. They’re very isolated. And that is what people don’t see.

Whilst there is some rural wealth in the community, many in the region are living in deprivation, which can cause households to do many things to survive, including working multiple jobs, relying on benefits, creating unlawful income streams, and in some cases, leaving children at home unattended while parents have to work. This is seen to be particularly evident in Taumarunui and Raetihi.

Strengths

- Some feel that some townships in the region are doing okay and aren't as highly deprived for various reasons; tourism has propped up Ohakune and National Park, and the army base and its higher salaries have propped up Waiouru.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some acknowledge there are some areas of rural wealth in the region; however, farming can be an industry that has good and bad years.

“Yeah Waiouru is higher because of, obviously, the army, Ohakune, a little bit higher than Taumarunui because there is a little bit more around there.

“Waiouru is high income due to the army base, and National Park gets that tourism, and Raetihi does benefit from that as well.

“We've got some quite financially well off in the community...we've got our farmers who often asset rich and cash poor, and the good farming year or bad farming year as well.

Barriers

- Many have the view that there are many benefit dependent people living in high deprivation across the Ruapehu region, particularly in the Raetihi, Ōhura and Taumarunui communities.
- Some have observed that the highly deprived communities in the region also have high Māori populations, with some feeling there may be a link between the two.

- Some believe that the lack of high-income employment in Taumarunui and Raetihi contributes to the high deprivation level experienced in each community, as the higher earners have no reason to stay.
- Some believe that living in deprivation causes multiple complexities for people and their needs, making it challenging to offer the most appropriate support services.
- For those living in high deprivation, making ends meet can be challenging and mean they need to work multiple jobs or turn to do unlawful things just to survive or supplement their income, i.e. leaving kids at home unattended to work, growing and selling illegal substances, having side hustles for extra cash. Some also believe making ends meet is also difficult for people on medium to high incomes and is a nationwide issue.

“Everything for Ruapehu is magnified. If there's a housing issue, it'll be worse. There's a cost of living, it'll be worse, there's a health issue, it'll be worse.

“You've got a lot of elderly people and you've got a lot of beneficiary dependent people.

“You've got Taumarunui central that is very high deprivation, and you have got Raetihi that is high deprivation. And you have got Ōkura which is right at the top of the region with high deprivation as well.

“What strikes me about this particular stat is that you know, Taumarunui and Raetihi are the two biggest Māori populations in the district. Whereas National Park, Waiouru, they're not.

Framework Tags



“Higher earners aren't staying around in Taumarunui, and it's going to get worse with the mountain close down, a lot of people do casual jobs in the mountain.

“Not just on the mountain but it feeds down into some of the other industries like hospitality. Like staff in the motels, waitresses in the restaurants, Airbnbs, the cleaners, all of that.

“I think it speaks volumes to the complexities that people come in with, or come on our radar with... we know that sometimes access is a barrier and we have services in place to support access in particular, but quite often, someone will present for one need but in conversation and assessment, they're actually there for 10 things not one thing.

“Yep, definitely here we saw that during COVID-19 when we're doing their welfare stuff. Hearing some of the stories, some of the households and yeah, with everything only going up in price is hard.

“It's not just those ones that are already struggling, even middle income people are starting to cut right back, it's nationwide.

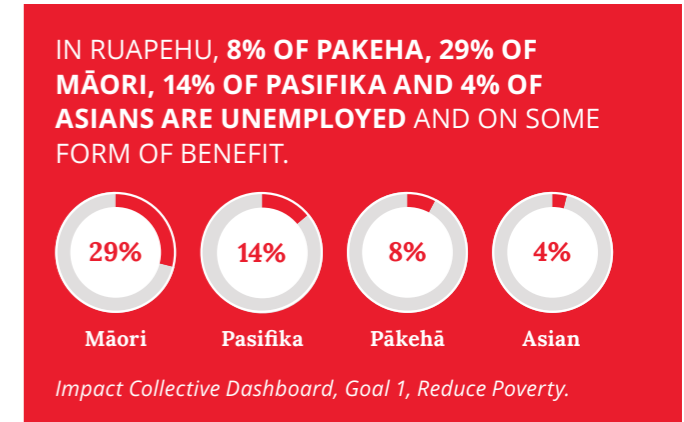
“It also means people have to do unlawful things to survive as the benefit is not enough anymore.

“There are a lot of people looking to supplement their income. And you know, Taumarunui is notorious for resilience in that area in terms of the tonne of people who do markets and you know, have little side hustles that are not necessarily legit, in order to top up their income.

“Leaving children at home unattended, under age. That's happening. School aged children but under aged. They are at school but over the holidays their parents have to work.

RUAPEHU'S OVERALL MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IS \$66,000, WHILE FOR MĀORI IT IS \$62,000, FOR ASIANS \$65,000 AND FOR PASIFIKA \$64,000. NATIONALLY THE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IS \$94,000 GENERALLY AND \$91,000 FOR MĀORI.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 1, Reduce Poverty



Good Mahi in the Community

- Raetihi Charitable Trust - focusing on uplifting people out of deprivation in the township.
- Inland Revenue Department (IRD), Working for Families - financially supporting many struggling families across the region.

“There are several families around here who live just on what the government gives. It's not the dole, it's Working for Families.

“Working for Families is 100% the income and when I do my tax return, the Working for Families shows that I've made an income but actually like, I haven't done any work but it looks like an income.

“So it is quite diverse but we want to focus on that deprivation.

Whilst some view drug use as not highly visible in the region, many are aware of the presence of marijuana and the increasing presence of predominantly methamphetamine, as well as cocaine and MDMA, across the region. There are growing concerns about the numerous downstream impacts of those supplying and consuming these drugs, including youth.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some believe that whilst they are aware drug use is on the rise across the region, it isn't super noticeable in the townships and generally doesn't affect people who aren't into it.

"I don't think it interferes with people who don't want to be part of it. I don't feel I don't feel at all pressured to do it. But I know of quite a few who do [consume substances]."

"You can see a couple of people in town who are clearly on drugs or alcohol, but it is certainly not the majority, and I have certainly not seen it get any worse."

Barriers

- Many believe that drug use and social issues are highly intertwined and lead to a number of downstream impacts, such as offending or selling substances to fund their lifestyles, increased violence and increased car accidents due to people being high on drugs.
- Some feel less safe in their community due to a few people around town appearing high or agitated.
- Many in the region are aware of the amount of drug use and the number of suppliers in their communities, acknowledging that it is highly accessible and that if they wanted it, they would know exactly where to get it.

- Despite being a gateway drug, some feel that marijuana is almost socially acceptable in the community and not viewed as harmful (compared to methamphetamine), having experienced employers and police becoming more lenient towards the drug.
- Many in the region are increasingly concerned about the increase of methamphetamine use in their communities and believe that it is now surpassing marijuana due to being highly affordable and highly accessible, which is having many concerning downstream effects on families (including youth).

"I think this is a whole lot of drug use, social issues, they are all intertwined."

"I'm not saying that they're not offending out there. I suspect they are, and I suspect they are to fund lifestyles. I think there's a lot of drugs out there and they cost money. I think a lot of the offending is probably around that issue."

"In town, I feel less safe now compared to when I was younger but unsure if that's an age thing and I don't have the capability that I used to."

"I wouldn't go wandering around at night, you come across people around in town who are high and agitated. The ones you do some across do make you feel unsafe but it's just one or two."

"If I wanted it, I know where I could go and get it, right now. But because I'm not wanting to be involved. I don't see it."

"It is a hard one, we know that weed is a gateway drug and I think if you're vulnerable and young, you know, that could segway into meth. And I think that's the danger of marijuana."

"There's an unwritten rule that you don't call the police and they don't come here."

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing No Poverty Sustainable Cities & Communities Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

Human Capability Social Cohesion

Leading healthy lifestyles

"I do get concerned that there is a growing number of meth users and that doesn't seem to be going down anytime soon. And they're not functioning. That scares me a lot."

"We have a huge P issue, when I was talking to a friend up in Ōwhango, he said that a lot of the marijuana growers and dealers I guess, voted against the legalisation or decriminalisation of marijuana and that referendum because they thought that their businesses were going to go, they were going to lose their businesses."

"That is the stuff we need to be concentrating on is the P, that is the big killer, and it is getting our kids."

"And we're going to end up with the same scenario as Philadelphia with all those zombies on the side of the street, it's just creating more homeless."

"It's a huge issue and a lot of them are saying it [meth] is cheaper than buying marijuana, that is a major issue!"

Opportunities

- Finding ways that drug offenders can leverage probation to give directly back to the community as some have experienced that 'stuff they could have a community impact on they felt good about'... and better telling these stories to the community.
- First responders are wanting to do more drug testing for motor vehicle incidences, rather than just testing for alcohol.
- Better utilising people skilled in growing marijuana to grow hemp or enabling them to grow marijuana for medicinal use (when they get caught).

"What I'd like to see from those drug offences is that probation comes directly back into the community. Because what we found was that the stuff they could have a community impact on they felt good about."

"Since I have gone away from being a first responder, the vehicle side of things, crashes and that, is more of a problem and I know they are trying to test more now for that side of things, instead of the old breath alcohol, they are now there with a drug side of things."

"We have grown hemp and all that, and our whānau that went to jail, that were put in jail for growing, actually came out and grew it and we have got awesome seed that we've exported to overseas, and we made income out of it."

Good Mahi in the Community

- Ohakune Carrot Adventure Park - supported by offenders who assist with grounds keeping.

"It's important for us to grow some narrative and understanding around this [drugs]. A lot of those drug offenders [support] our Carrot Park for example. Probation [is] a big part of Carrot Park."

"Where's those positive comms coming out of the Council for relationship building with our community? Why don't we hear those stories?"

Whilst there is a sense that family violence is discussed more freely and reported more often by some, many feel it is still prevalent right across the region as a result of underlying issues including poverty, hardship, drug and alcohol abuse, personal and family stressors, lack of employment, lack of access to spaces to unwind or dependencies where victims of violence are unable to leave abusive environments.

THE FAMILY VIOLENCE RATE IN RUAPEHU IS 58 INVESTIGATIONS PER 10,000 PEOPLE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS, COMPARED WITH 17 INVESTIGATIONS PER 10,000 PEOPLE, NATIONALLY. THIS HAS, HOWEVER, DECREASED FROM 68 INVESTIGATIONS PER 10,000 PEOPLE IN MARCH 2021.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 16: Safety and Inclusivity.

Strengths

- Some people believe that family violence is more commonly reported nowadays. In addition, some believe the advantage of a small town and community is that incidents are more likely to be discussed openly and that people are likely to let each other know when they know family violence is occurring.
- Some feel that there has been more training in some key organisations and services in the region, making family violence easier to spot and report for some people.

“I think maybe for the family violence, I think some of it is that it’s more commonly reported now than what it would have been back then.

“You think too, like Taumarunui is one of those towns where, we are kinda small enough to make a difference amongst us and so a lot of the local trends in things are discussed at the kaumatua hui and on a quite a broad scale and quite openly discussed.

“I used to work for a women’s shelter, and I think it is the same thing like most of the people that are reporting family violence are family members and for me, I don’t think family violence is any probably bigger than any other place. But I think we definitely are more quick, are very quick to say hey, I don’t like that at all, I don’t think that’s okay.

“We are still a community of name and shame, they will shame you.

“And I think our centres, our schools, our hospitals, Work and Income, the MSD staff, the training is so much greater now in terms of family harm in the awareness, situational awareness, what to look for the signs and things that you wouldn’t expect to be looking for that pop up and you realise that it’s the there’s family harm going on.

“I think with that increasing, that training and that awareness increasing, particularly in hospitals, child prediction services, it’s probably being reported more often there too.

Framework Tags



Barriers

- Many are aware that family violence is prevalent in the region and has been for many years, with many perceiving it as a daily occurrence. Some also attribute the awareness of family violence to regular reports in the local newspapers.
- Some feel there is still a lot of family violence that isn’t reported or included in the statistics. Some believe this is due to some fearing that if they are the ones reporting it, the police will assume they are the ones causing it.
- Many believe high and increasing family violence rates across the region are likely a result of and linked to increasing poverty, unemployment and alcohol and drug abuse.
- Many believe family violence results from men (and women) not knowing how to adequately address mental health issues or get to the root cause of what is going on for them. Some feel there is also a lack of support available, particularly for men, to help them get to these root causes, including those who are doing the offending.
- Some believe that being financially dependent or entwined with a family or household may be a reason that victims of family violence cannot leave.
- Some believe family violence is intergenerational for many families in the region, which is modelling and teaching kids to respond to challenging situations with violence from a young age.

- Some believe that significant travel times to certain communities across the region mean police and emergency response times to many family violence incidents are poor. They are either taking too long and not arriving at the time of the incident or not coming at all.
- Some have noticed that experiencing family violence during childhood can create deep trauma, which is seen particularly prevalent for young men, who often find it difficult to open up about their experiences. Without any available resources in the region, it becomes challenging for those affected to seek help.

“There’s no anger management that I’ve found and I’ve actively looked. There’s nothing to help change, even the counselling in Taumarunui. There’s no counselling available because they’re so bogged down, they say ‘right look, we can do Zoom,’ but you’re only allowed four sessions. if you don’t have zoom access, and like we can’t do it.

“I think that [family violence] has been there for a number of years. Many years ago when I worked at Waikune Prison, and that’s back in the 80s, there were a lot of people in jail because of their family just saying.

“Just have to look at the section in the newspaper outlining what incidents have happened over the week and a lot of them are family violence.

“I suppose there’s a lot of unrecorded stuff which makes up the bulk of the work compared to the actual reported offences.

“Probably the biggest hurdles and challenges that we face are probably drugs and alcohol, poverty and hardship for them...it's the drug and alcohol, it's the stresses of the family, it's the schooling, the education, the mahi.

“I was in the women's refuge for five years. I'd say the statistics are higher, because that's only what is reported.

“But it's definitely but boredom, stress, you know, there's all those, like all those issues that cause family violence are more prevalent here.

“People won't report it because the police will turn up and say 'oh you're always causing it'.

“A lot of males who are in their 30s, 40s are suffering major mental health issues and they don't know how to deal with them, so a lot of them will verbally abuse.

“So we had a meeting a couple of years ago around this, and a number of reports that were coming in from areas like Ohura, Owhango, quite outlying areas. And the reason for people staying was that lack of transport, there wasn't a regular bus going out there. In order to be able to know that hey, I've got a lifeline coming at 11 o'clock and I can jump on it and I can get away. Without having to actually have a service come out and intervene.

“If they have no or little money where would they go? They could go walking. That is a relevant comment. There isn't much here to do which is concerning.

“And so they're in this cycle of not being able to leave because if they leave, they might miss a week's pay and everything gets messy and then, you know, it doesn't help sometimes.

“It's also becoming a learnt behaviour, a lot of these kids are going into relationships and they are learning domestic violence as teenagers.

“You're stuck right in the middle of a cyclical argument, basically. There's just no support to fix it. Even though the guy is willing to change and work, the girls are willing to work with the issues. It's just not helpful.

Opportunities

- Providing spaces across the region for people to visit, decompress, and escape heated environments (ideally before violence occurs).
- Creating more jobs in the region to give people purpose and a reason to get out of bed in the morning so that family violence decreases.
- Offering more preventative support for families that looks at the root causes to fix or break the cycle of family violence.

“You could pour money into fixing family violence but you have to look at the causes.

“I think we really have the opportunity to build some really good relationships with people through living in the community and knowing them.

“People also grow after we've become involved with them and their levels of confidence to be up there. And ultimately, they're doing all of this for the children because they want the children to have a better life.

“I think that's what people say. If there was somewhere to go to decompress, it would be better.

“Some people sit around drinking or getting high and they start fighting. It's horrendous really. The only way I can think to improve on this is by having jobs, having a reason to get out of bed in the morning.

“Providing jobs may not necessarily fix all of the woes but would go about improving a number of these things.

“While we do the family violence lens, we need to work in collaboration with our partnering agencies, to get all those other needs met.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Women's Refuge - supporting women, men and families through their family violence journeys and building networks and relationships across the community to try and address their needs as best they can. They have also just landed a new contract to help mothers experiencing abuse by implementing security around children going to school so that they are not approached, taken or stolen by their other parents. Women's Refuge is seen to partner with agencies such as the Food Bank and the Police to utilise each organisations strength.
- Police programmes - working on the issue of family violence in the Taumarunui community and developing programmes such as a small Timeout and camps.
- Man Up - providing a 15-week programme that helps people identify, expose and understand core root issues of dysfunctions experienced by men. It gives men the platform to 'open up, not harden up', heal and restore themselves, and become stable in their situations.
- Church Groups in many townships - hosting Men's Groups for men to vent, express and discuss issues that may exist in their homes and lives.

“Women's Refuge is unique in the way that we don't tell our clients what to do. It's the voice, it's their journey. When they come from a place where as long as it's legal and safe for them, we're going to help them achieve their goals. And as our community realises that, and as our wahine realise that, we are getting more and more in.

“No matter who you are, no matter who you are, women, men, family, professional community people come in and talk to us [Women's Refuge] we're happy to talk to you.

“Womens Refuge has just landed a new contract this morning to help mothers in need who are experiencing abuse and all that. It's around the implementation of security around children going into school, where they are not going to be approached, taken or stolen by their other parents.

“There are a lot of different organisations or people in the community who run certain things like in the churches, for example, and men's groups.

Women's Refuge & Support Centre - Taumarunui

"We [Women's Refuge] have safe housing... we deal with crises in the middle of the night, and all of that mahi that gets generally associated with Women's Refuge."

"We're [also] doing the preventative stuff, we're doing courses, we're doing programmes, we're trying to be more than the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, and trying to get preventative work in there as well."

"Women's Refuge is unique in the way that we don't tell our clients what to do. It's their voice, it's their journey. We come from a place where as long as it's legal and safe for them, we're going to help them achieve their goals. And as our community realises that, and as our wahine realise that, we are getting more and more in so its been really good."

"We looked at the research from Backbone Collective who interviewed a lot of family violence victims, and the predominant feedback was, they don't want to be just a number, they don't want to be a tick box of the agency. So we got rid of all those boxes, we've got rid of the majority of our intake paperwork, we only have the mandatory paperwork now."

"We have this tool that we use called the Empowerment Star... it just gives us a feel of these nine main points that we recognise as being consistent with most family harm experiences...One of those points is empowerment. So to see our clients empowerment grow from being no confidence at all...to [them] coming into the office and saying thank you...is huge."

Their whole journey is getting better and safer. And we want to take all the other responsibilities off of them.

We have tried to make our service all about relationships, relationships with our clients, with our partnering agencies...our whole service is about maintaining these good relationships.

"Those whānau who experience family violence, those who are going through that journey, have way more needs than just family violence. It is the stuff that underpins that. It's the drugs and alcohol, it's the stresses of the family, it's the schooling, the education, the mahi. While we do the family violence lens, we need to work in collaboration with our partnering agencies, to get all those other needs met."

I think we really have the opportunity to build some really good relationships with people through living in the community and knowing them.

People also grow after we've become involved with them and their levels of confidence. Ultimately, they're doing all of this for the children because they want the children to have a better life.

"We are a Women's Refuge, but we help Tane. If a man were to come through our doors and say 'I'm unhappy at home, things are not healthy, I've been a victim of family harm', then we will help. We're not going to say no to anybody who comes in. So just talk to us [and] talk to each other."

No matter who you are; women, men, family, a professional, a community person, come in and talk to us, we're happy to talk to you.



Some feel there is a lack of social support services right across the region, such as support for mental health, drug, alcohol and domestic abuse. Furthermore, there is a sense that police response times are too long, and that they have insufficient social support training to address these problems. There is also a hesitancy for those needing support to seek help from some services due to a fear that there is a lack of confidentiality or that services could come from people that know their family.

Barriers

- Whilst there are some mental health workers working across the Ruapehu community, many feel there is a significant lack of timely and specialised mental health and wrap-around social support services available across the region for people in crisis, meaning that the Police are often having to do their best to plug this gap, despite not having the appropriate skills, training, or resource.
- Some believe that the lack of support services available to those in crisis means that many turn to substances to escape (or address) what is going on for them.
- Some experience numerous personal barriers that prevent them from accessing available services across the region. They experience shame or embarrassment regarding asking for help and a fear that the service provider may be someone who knows them or their family.

“Lack of timely interventions when somebody is down they don’t want to hear yes, you can have an appointment, but you’re waiting two months for it, you know, our window of opportunity is really narrow.”

“We haven’t got the facilities, we haven’t got drug rehab and all that that can hold the capacity of the needs we have, and that is why it is getting worse and worse and worse.”

“Lack of timely interventions when somebody is down they don’t want to hear yes, you can have an appointment, but you’re waiting two months for it, you know, our window of opportunity is really narrow.”

“More money too, because money being invested into providing those timely programmes is really, really important.”

“It doesn’t matter how minor the offence, it is mainly that it is more widely accepted, you know, with everything going on in the world too, that people are reaching for substances versus, especially, what’s available to support people.”

“We’ve got, you know, two counselling services shut down guys. You know, we’ve got Taumarunui Counselling closing, we’ve got Wellstop closing.”

“So yeah, of course, someone’s gonna drink a glass of wine or have a smoke or whatever, you know, like, they’re looking for ways to escape the situation. An immediate escapism, versus I know I’ve got to wait three weeks or four weeks. So what the hell, you know?”

“To tell you the truth, because we are a small rural community people don’t want to access these services in our community because “they know my aunty, or they know my cousin”

“[There is] that embarrassment around it or embarrassment of being on the benefit and asking for that sort of help.”

“They are not confidential. They’re saying people’s names in a board meeting. We should not be naming names, it should be purely data. That’s a big part and why I would say it’s way higher in a rural area.”

Framework Tags



Opportunities

- Creating safe and anonymous spaces for people to talk openly about their experiences and what is going on for them.
- Leveraging people with lived experience to help support those who are struggling.
- Bringing in a mental health support worker in the region to assist police (one that is locally based and from the region).
- Introducing “Creative Prescriptions”, a new approach to mental health that acknowledges the therapeutic benefits of both traditional treatment and creative expression. By providing access to creative outlets for community members, individuals can foster their well-being and personal growth.

“So a magic wand here would be to get a mental health support worker in the region ASAP.”

“Accessing services is an issue with drug problems. You don’t want to because you don’t quite fit the mold well enough or these people have never been abusers themselves so they don’t get it. Sometimes I feel like you’ve got to speak from experience in that area of offending.”

“We want to be able to set up a safe place for people to talk about it. You might not even talk about drugs but it’s that mental health support and the safe space.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Raetihi Charitable Trust - have just completed a pilot programme to help lift deprivation in the township. The programme focused on reconnecting whānau experiencing hardship, one whānau at a time, to dig deeper into the issues experienced and help them heal.
- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - providing counselling services for their students with the help of Mana Kai Institute. With many students needing counselling and support services, Mana Kai Institute provided Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust with a counsellor as there is no available counselling service in Taumarunui.

“We have just done a pilot in one project and that one is totally to lift deprivation. It was more about reconnecting whānau that are experiencing issues.”

“It could be anything, it could be domestic violence, it could be that they’re just in this cycle that families get into, it could be drugs and alcohol, it could be that the kids are disconnected with technology. It could be anything.”

“We have a real problem with youth crime... so if we can help reconnect families to cope better, even one at a time, because there is a ripple effect when one family goes through something then there is a ripple effect.”

“I’ve just been given a counsellor so I’ve got a counsellor on board with us because there is no counselling service in Taumarunui so we grabbed it.”

“And I have got Mana Kai Institute with me, so they are sending counselling down to us, because my students need counselling, they need support.”

Elderly

This life stage encompasses all older adults that are aged 65 years old and above.

Industry, Innovation, & Infrastructure

Theme 32—Some elderly happily live independently, without support; however, with the lack of housing, some face financial and availability barriers as they look to downsize.

Good Health & Wellbeing

Theme 33—Many elderly members of the community who are becoming less mobile and transitioning from independent to dependent living are experiencing multiple barriers to accessing in-home care, nursing homes and appropriate healthcare to meet their higher needs across the region.

Some elderly happily live independently, without support; however, with the lack of housing, some face financial and availability barriers as they look to downsize.

18.2% OF THE RUAPEHU POPULATION IS 65 OR OLDER COMPARED TO 16.4% NATIONALLY.

Infometrics, Regional Economic Profile, 2022.



Strengths

- Some elderly are happily independent and love living locally, with very active social lives and hobbies, i.e. gardening, weaving, hanging out at the Cosmopolitan (Cossie) Club or Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association (RSA), attending festivals or camp-outs and taking trips out of town together.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- There are some affordable units and houses available for elderly in the region; however, some believe these have significant waiting lists and inadequate availability to service the need in the community adequately.

“You’ve got a mix of elderly, ones coming in from the farms. Yeah, some of them want to stay locally. The ones that have been in their own home for the last 30 years. They are absolutely fine.

“We have a kaumatua rōpu, and they are so active. I’m like where do you find this energy, oh my god. They do gardening, weaving, they have a roaming group where they travel out, or travel up on the hospital bus and go to Hamilton for the weekend... They do things together.

“They have a way of social life. They all hang out at the Cossy or the RSA and they are always doing something. The group we have, far out. I hope I’m like that when I’m their age. They go to festivals and camp outs. They are beautiful, they have a lot of fun.

Barriers

- Some elderly are living in homes that are too big and deteriorating due to a lack of assisted and dependent living situations or retirement villages available in the region, where elderly can be independent, but still live and have some communal spaces and support.
- For some elderly who don’t own a home or are not freehold, they can no longer afford to rent a house on a pension as a result of rising rent costs across the region.

“Because we don’t have enough sort of dependent supported living situations or retirement village circumstances where people can be independent but still be living and have some communal spaces and support.

“Then we’ve also got a tonne of elderly people living in homes that are too big for them that are deteriorating, and they’re living there on their own.

“Those that are freehold, the house does tend to be too big for them to manage.

“Whānau want to move back home and they [elderly family members] want to give them the opportunity to move back... so they displace themselves so that their whānau can be home and to have them close.

“If they don’t own the home and they’re not freehold they can’t afford to live on a pension and rent a house, that’s just the reality of it.

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Good Health & Wellbeing

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Reduced Inequalities

Human Capability

Financial & Physical Capital

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Good Mahi in the Community

- Ruapehu District Council - providing housing support for the elderly. They recently repossessed the Waimarino Rest Home and are investing considerable finances in returning this to healthy home standards, which will provide 20 units when complete. They have also recently completed six new flats in Moore Street in Ohakune for the elderly.
- Mana Ariki housing development - 13 marae in the community, Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK) and the government are funding to build 90 houses, mainly for the kaumātua. Mana Ariki is a special place that is about bringing unity and all cultures together.
- Kaumātua Olympics - a national initiative for the elderly to compete in various sports. Many active elderly from the region travel across the country to compete annually.

“Funding to build 90 houses for anyone but mainly the kaumatua up in Mana Ariki, 13 marae that are in our community, TPK and other government funding.

“It [Mana Ariki] has always been a huge place of bringing people together as it’s this massive training space. It was shut down for about 13 years due to the head profit passing away. But now it’s come back to life. It’s all about bringing unity of all cultures together.

“We have the Kaumatua Olympics where groups team up, our group has the trophy at the moment. They travel all around and they held one here.

Many elderly members of the community who are becoming less mobile and transitioning from independent to dependent living are experiencing multiple barriers to accessing in-home care, nursing homes and appropriate healthcare to meet their higher needs across the region.

44% OF RUAPEHU HOUSEHOLDS HAVE NO DEPENDENTS (CHILDREN) LIVING WITH THEM, COMPARED WITH 41% NATIONALLY.

NZ Census 2018.

THE AVERAGE AGE AT DEATH FOR RUAPEHU RESIDENTS IS 72, COMPARED WITH 75 NATIONALLY.

NZ Census 2018.

Strengths

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some have experienced that leeway is given to elderly so that they can keep their license in smaller towns compared to larger centres.

“I have a suspicion that because of the size of the town, there’s a little bit more leeway given to people keeping their licenses than what maybe in other centers.”

Barriers

- For those elderly entering their ‘high health needs portion of life’, some feel there is an increasing lack of access to care within the region, meaning many are having to travel to access care, which can become problematic for those who are less mobile, e.g. they can’t travel to hospital, doctors appointments, etc.

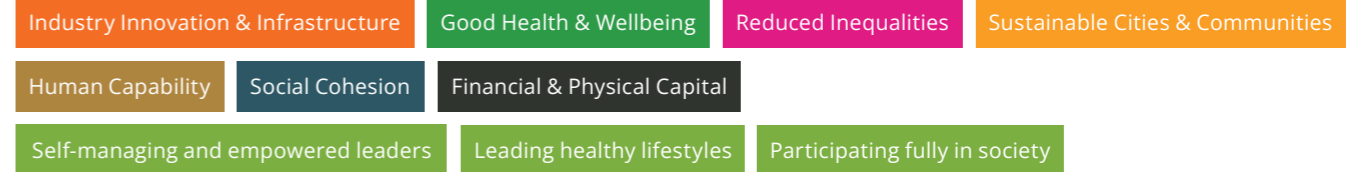
- Some have experienced difficulties navigating the fact that the Ruapehu region crosses two District Health Board (DHB) boundaries, providing additional barriers to accessing appropriate care for elderly.
- For some elderly, losing their drivers license and ability to drive can be a significant loss of independence, isolating them from accessing many needed services.
- For elderly that need to transition to assisted and dependent living, many feel there is a lack of options in the region, meaning they are getting displaced from friends and family in order to access nursing home care they need.
- Due to the lack of options within the region, some elderly are unable to transition to assisted and dependent living. Instead, they are getting displaced from friends and families in order to access the level of in-home care they need.
- For some elderly who aren’t freehold homeowners, they can no longer afford to rent a house on a pension as a result of rising rent costs across the region.

“It is awful being elderly in our region. Especially when you’re straddling two different DHBs and trying to navigate those.”

“It’s a real issue for people and because, of course, at that age they need medical support, it usually means getting up to Hamilton, which creates another issue with accessing and getting into appointments. Those sorts of things become very, very difficult for those that are getting into our high health needs portion of their life.”

“For people who are mobile, and can drive, that’s fine. But there are a few of us, mainly older people, who find it very difficult to go to the hospital. It’s an all day event.”

Framework Tags



- “Our elderly aren’t able to attend doctor appointments because they don’t have vehicles or they’re not allowed to drive.”*
- “Tony needs some surgery done. But he can’t actually get to the hospital or more importantly, get back from the hospital, because he doesn’t have any family around. So we quite literally have elderly dying.”*
- “That’s great. But also our elderly don’t know how to use the computer, don’t have the internet, so it’s [online healthcare] not going to help.”*
- “The moment they lose their ability to drive, they’re relying on the mobility of friends and family to get them around.”*
- “We’ve got a lot of elderly and they’re not able to drive or it’s the neighbours that are basically keeping them alive by going to get the groceries and stuff like that.”*
- “My dad passed away in October and he was living in Taumarunui. And he had to come and live with me in Raetihi and we’re straddling two different DHBs’ so I reached out for support when he was in my house to the Whanganui DHB who didn’t want to give it to me.”*

Opportunities

- Providing greater and easier access to doctors, nurses and healthcare for the elderly and prioritising training people for healthcare services and providers.
 - Increasing independent and dependent living options for elderly within the region.
- “But like health care in our town is a massive issue and emergency services are an issue and if anything happens... we just need more access to doctors.”*
- “We need more doctors and nurses, I tell you that. Kokiri Trust needs to worry about training those people up.”*

Good Mahi in the Community

- Avonlea Rest Home and Hospital - providing 60 independent living units for elderly with on-site support when needed.
- Ruapehu District Council - providing housing support for the elderly. They recently repossessed the Waimarino rest home because it was with a trust and wasn’t well managed. They are investing considerable finances in returning this to healthy home standards, which will provide 20 units when complete. They have also recently completed six new flats in Moore Street in Ohakune for the elderly.
- Maniapoto Training Agency - providing in-home assistance for the elderly.

“Units have been built [at Avonlea] to enable elderly to go up there and have independent living with that have backup and support.”

“We’ve [Council] been in the process of picking those 20-odd units [at Waimarino Rest Home] back up and trying to bring them up to a healthy home standard and providing tenancy agreements.”

“We’ve recently just taken back the Waimarino rest home because it was with a trust and wasn’t well managed. And so yeah, we’re sinking in a whole lot of money to get that back up to healthy home standards and fix it for the people that [need it].”

“Maniapoto Training agency goes into people’s homes to do the assistance and stuff for home help. So yeah, they do that in the community, which is important.”

“We’ve achieved some good things through the community health forum by using the hospital bus for public transport. Just connecting kaumatua to services, like accessibility.”

This phase captures themes that are relevant for the Ruapehu community across all life stages.

Good Health & Wellbeing

Theme 34—Whilst some feel that access to healthcare in the region is cheaper and non-discriminatory (if you can access it), many are increasingly concerned and frustrated at the lack of access to appropriate healthcare right across the region. Many face issues with doctor wait times, hospital nursing and staff shortages, lack of prenatal care and long ambulance wait times. Ultimately this may be driving some to consider leaving the region or not relocating to the region due to a lack of service

Theme 39—For many first responders, responding to emergencies in the region can take a mental and emotional toll, as being a small community, they often know the individuals and families impacted by an event. However, they feel well supported by their organisations and the community when dealing with these emotional impacts of the job.

Life Below Water

Theme 40—The region boasts some great rivers and swimming spots, particularly in the north, with the perception that water quality is improving in some areas; however, flood events, chemicals, treatments and farm pollution are an ongoing threat to the region's waterways.

Industry, Innovation, & Infrastructure

Theme 35—Whilst living rurally in the Ruapehu region has its benefits, many believe it comes at a cost, with less choice, less access and greater travel times required to many essential services, employment, education, emergency services, healthcare and leisurely facilities.

Additionally, there is a lack of public transport to access these, and the region's roading infrastructure needs work and investment.

Theme 43—Whilst some are happy without access to the internet, many struggle with the many black spots and a lack of consistent connectivity across the region, which can create multiple barriers to working remotely, accessing education online and running for local businesses.

Clean Water & Sanitation

Theme 42—Whilst Raetihi seems to be reasonably happy with their water quality due to more recent upgrades, the rest of the region feels the drinking water is poor and declining in quality, especially during extreme weather events, i.e. droughts and floods, meaning they need to spend more effort and money to improve water quality by boiling water, collecting spring water or filtering water, which some can't afford to do.

Life on Land

Theme 37—The topic of forestry and carbon farming is viewed as a contentious topic by many in the region. On the one hand, unproductive farmland that is put into pine with the intention of being harvested is viewed as a positive. In contrast, farmers are much more concerned when productive farmland is put into carbon farming or lifelong forests.

Theme 41—Some efforts are being made around weed and pest prevention across the region; however, this is a controversial space, with some disagreeing with and being vocal about this around conservation workers' approach to caring for the environment.

Theme 50—Ruapehu is viewed by many as a great region to be sufficient off the land, with high access to affordable and healthy local produce, including fruit and vegetable stores, plenty of hunters supplying meat, and many who have their own gardens and share their produce with the community readily.

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Theme 48—Whilst tourism has typically been the industry propping up the local economy and offering many jobs for the region, this is now at risk and changing due to the threat of climate change and recent financial hardship and closures of core local businesses, particularly for the southern townships closer to the mountain, i.e. Ohakune.

Many feel there is a need for the region's tourism sector to diversify relatively urgently, as they believe the region has much more to offer beyond the mountain.

Peace, Justice, & Strong Institutions

Theme 51—A considerable benefit of a small community is that everyone knows everyone and looks out for one another, which leads to a general feeling of safety and lower crime in the community. Many feel that when crime is present, it is handled promptly and informally through personal networks.

However, some feel that this may be starting to shift due to more out-of-towners relocating to these small communities.

This phase captures themes that are relevant for the Ruapehu community across all life stages.

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Theme 36—Some view Ruapehu as a region that is culturally rich, has great climate and weather, boasts great access to the natural environment and outdoor activities and is a great place to live for families that appreciate the rural New Zealand lifestyle.

Theme 38—Whilst many feel the Ruapehu community has a great team of first responders, there is the sense that the community themselves, particularly those facing hardship, lack knowledge and education and are unprepared for emergencies. Responders would love for them to be more proactive and prepared.

Theme 44—Whilst traditionally, housing prices in the region have increased along with the rest of the country, and many holidaymakers and investors from outside of the region have invested in property in the region, more recently, a shift has been observed with the housing market slowing and prices beginning to decline, potentially opening up more opportunity for local home buyers or renters to find a home.

Theme 45—With housing prices still high and with a large number of families in the region on low incomes or facing hardship, purchasing a home is still viewed as unattainable for many locals in the community.

Theme 46—Many believe the allocation and utilisation of housing is a core issue contributing to the lack of housing availability in the region, with a high number of empty holiday homes and/or expensive Airbnb rentals located near the mountain (particularly Ohakune) that are either unavailable or unaffordable for long term renters or people wanting to move to the region for work.

Theme 47—With many of the community unable to buy a house, many are facing additional barriers to rent due to ineffective allocation and utilisation, limited availability, and poor quality of housing stock in the region that is coming at a high cost, making these unattainable, particularly for local low-income and high-deprivation families.

There are also concerns around the slow progression of urban planning and housing development across the region that may alleviate some of these stressors.

Theme 49—Whilst many organisations are supportive of volunteer work, and it is viewed by many as a way to connect with and support their communities, many people are becoming increasingly time-poor and in need of paid work to make ends meet, making it harder to attract, recruit and retain in the volunteer space across the region. This can be challenging for many community organisations in Ruapehu as they rely on volunteerism to operate efficiently and cannot get the funding to pay their staff.

Theme 52—Whilst some see there are many benefits of living in a small rural community, such as great support systems, community networks and the ability to utilise local bartering systems, some feel as though there is still an element of community division, personality clashes, or a reliance on key individuals to keep their community as one.

Theme 53—Whilst the rural location and lifestyle of living in Taumarunui is viewed as attractive by some, some also believe that the rural location of Taumarunui has contributed to the loss of industry, key services and degrading infrastructure in the township itself.

For those who remain in the community, they are experiencing increasing challenges as a result including lack of jobs, increasing poverty and a lack of variety and access to many forms of services.

Theme 54—Whilst living in Raetihi is viewed as attractive by some due to the beautiful landscape and it being more affordable to live there, the community has also experienced a loss of industry and key services, meaning there is not much left in the township. Many feel this is contributing to a lack of jobs, increasing poverty, lack of variety and access to most forms of services and a general sense that the township lacks things to do for entertainment.

The Raetihi community also seems to be one that has some community division, which may be holding it back from moving forwards.

Theme 55—Although many feel that Ohakune has traditionally been a bustling town propped up by its tourism, some share concerns around the impact this is having on housing allocation and utilisation in the township, as well as noticing a number of local businesses recently closing down.

Theme 56—National Park is viewed by some as having a strong business support network, a progressive community approach, and is seen as a treasure to the Ruapehu region. Some, however, would like to see more business development in the township, such as more local cafes and restaurants that are open more often.

Theme 57—Whilst some feel working at the Waiouru Military Camp has many benefits such as affordable housing, rural allowances, and a good social life, they still struggle attracting people to the camp and the township due to some having the view that there are limited rural opportunities, and a sense of division between the camp and civilians.

Whilst some feel that access to healthcare in the region is cheaper and non-discriminatory (if you can access it), many are increasingly concerned and frustrated at the lack of access to appropriate healthcare right across the region. Many face issues with doctor wait times, hospital nursing and staff shortages, lack of prenatal care and long ambulance wait times.

Ultimately this may be driving some to consider leaving the region or not relocating to the region due to a lack of service.

Strengths

- Some believe that for those that can get in to see a general practitioner (GP), doctors in the region are cheaper than in other areas of the country and are equally accessible for all groups.
- “This is the one where every cloud has a silver lining. It’s really cheap to go to the doctor here.
- “If they are accessible, it’s equally accessible to anybody.
- “I had a good experience with a Taumarunui GP, I know there are long wait times though.

Barriers

- Some believe that the traditional 9am to 5pm opening hours of medical centres can be problematic and act as a barrier for some when accessing a doctor in the region.
- Many have experienced declining maternity services in prenatal and antenatal care across the region, with midwifery and broader parenting support services decreasing over time, many people now have to travel to access them (or cannot access them altogether).
- Many have expressed concerns about the declining level of care at Taumarunui Hospital, noting significant nursing shortages, gaps in specialised care, and long ambulance wait times. In some instances, people have to get transported by helicopter, elsewhere.
- Some are concerned that the increasing lack of health services in the region may force people to leave.
- Some have observed and experienced difficulties when accessing health care due to being at the edge of two health boards. The extended duration it takes to travel from their community to larger hospitals like Whanganui or Hamilton is a significant concern for them.

Framework Tags



“We’ve got massive, massive deprivation in the health sector that’s gonna start forcing people out of the area.

- “They [GP] may be cheap, but they’re hard to get into. We’ve got something like three GPs in town, with the potential of that dropping down to two.
- “Over the last three years, wait times and timeframes are getting worse. It was six to eight weeks. I heard somebody say something similar to that recently.
- “You know, if you’re sick and you need to see a doctor. You’re well by the time you get your appointment.
- “There’s a national issue with how GP practices operate anyway, because they seem to have this nine to five Monday to Friday ethos.
- “We’re short on midwives and you don’t have the doctor support. One of my team members had a baby a year ago, she never saw anything like Plunket, an early child health nurse or anything like that, until the child was 11 months old.
- “It’s good to raise a family here but our maternity is a joke.
- “When I moved to Raetihi, there were three amazing midwives in our area. But by the time I had my last kid, we had none. I’m having to drive to Whanganui, which is, from where I live, an hour and a half journey to get all my maternity care.

- “I had to drive to Ōtorohanga every week to see a midwife because there wasn’t one available in the town for me. And then I gave birth in Waikato because there weren’t any services for me here. But I could afford to do that.
- “There are women in town who are the same age as me who don’t even have a midwife yet, because they couldn’t afford to drive to get one. So there’s no maternity services, there’s two midwives and Taumarunui. And they’re fully booked.
- “We are even running short on registered nurses, there are no nurses for one in three shifts at Taumarunui hospital.
- “If you’ve got something that needs to be addressed before eight to 10 weeks, you’ve got to go to ED basically - which you don’t even trust.
- “One of my team members had a child with a really high temperature and they were getting really worried and they just couldn’t get into the doctor. They had to go to the emergency and that was during working hours and there just isn’t the scope. They do what they can but there’s only so much that they can do and yeah, it’s a little bit scary.
- “It’s 50 minutes from our house to the nearest hospital, but they can’t fix anything we’re likely to have wrong. So it’s actually a three hour drive to the nearest hospital that can help or helicopter.

“It [Taumarunui Hospital] can’t do heart attacks, can’t do strokes, but it also can’t do things like steal in your eyeball. It’s got a maternity department but they are for very, very, very stable women.

“I got helicoptered out with my son about a month ago because he had a temperature and it was gonna take too long for the ambulance to arrive.

“The hospital when we first came here, 46 years ago, Taumarunui hospital was brilliant. They were bringing in people from out of town to have operations here. We’ve gradually seen it go down and down.

Opportunities

- More doctors and medical centres in the region and more flexible hours so that they can better accommodate their patients.

“We need to get more flexible working hours and GP practices to start with. But the bottom line is we don’t have the GPs to even do that.

THE AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME TO A MEDICAL CENTRE IN RUAPEHU IS 35 MINUTES, COMPARED WITH 13 MINUTES IN AUCKLAND AND 9 MINUTES IN WELLINGTON.



Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Taumarunui Community Kokiri Trust - addressing some of the health issues within the community at the ground level.
- Nurses who do call-outs for maternity care - are said to be crucial to the region given the gaps in this space.
- Community Health Forums and kaumātua meetings - gatherings held in the region focused on health that have been noted as successful and of great value; however, some have expressed concerns that these may dissolve.

“Kokiri is doing a lot of work in this area in terms of trying to get out to the community and deal with some of the health issues at the ground level.

“It’s God’s grace that there are a couple of old nurses who do emergency call outs.

“So it really reflects the good mahi and the community actually around the strength of the kaumātua meeting, followed by the Community Health Forum, around really being able to share information (advocacy for waiting times, hospital care, transport disabilities etc.).

Whilst living rurally in the Ruapehu region has its benefits, many believe it comes at a cost, with less choice, less access and greater travel times required to many essential services, employment, education, emergency services, healthcare and leisurely facilities.

Additionally, there is a lack of public transport to access these, and the region’s roading infrastructure needs work and investment.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some from the region are returning home, wanting to relocate for the lifestyle, to be with family and to give back to the community, with an understanding that this may come with financial implications, i.e. less income.

“So you relocate to where you want to be with your whānau. But you’re relocating back for the lifestyle, not the money.”

Barriers

- Many feel the lack of public transport in the region contributes to a number of downstream impacts and can act as a barrier for some when obtaining employment and/or accessing essential services and recreational activities.
- Some feel that the roading across the region is an issue, with a number of temporary fixes due to a lack of resource, i.e. staff and money, to do this properly, leading to some frustration in some communities.
- Many feel a downside of living rurally and remotely is that you have less choice in relation to attracting staff on farms.
- Many feel that the distance to other areas, services, etc, becomes a challenge for remote and rural communities, with many deciding to ‘just do things themselves’, which can often mean rules are ignored, or things don’t happen as well as they should.
- Some feel that being remote and rural also comes at a higher financial cost for many living, utility and infrastructure expenses, as it is more difficult to get resources into the region.
- Some feel that being remote and rural can also mean communities are often isolated from emergency services as they experience longer response wait times or, in some cases, they aren’t able to access services as it is too far for them to reach.
- Some believe the support and equity of service the region receives is drastically impacted by the region’s overlapping administrative and political boundaries, such as government department boundaries, Iwi and hapu boundaries and territorial authorities.

Framework Tags



“We don’t have public transport, we probably never will to the extent that we probably need it, because it’s like everything else, you know, we don’t want to actually put in the infrastructure and spend the money.”

“We need to recognise those [challenges of] poverty, homeownership, access to cars, access to technology, having no public transport, you know, the levels of education.”

“If you don’t have a car, you don’t move out of the environment of Raetihi.”

“I drive to Ohakune probably at least once a day taking my grandson to nursery or going shopping or something. You know, it’s a 24km round trip. It’s actually quite expensive. Those expenses you don’t have if you live in a town.”

“It is just like wow, there is a really big problem, I mean, I’ve got to drive the roads quite a bit. They are passable, but there’s still a lot of issues on some of them.”

“I think with Ruapehu, there was a lot of angry people here, particularly at the moment, we’ve got trouble with roading through the weather events but there is a whole lot of historic sites within the Ruapehu region that have had temporary fixes that still, like, for example, stock tracks can’t get through, this sort of stuff.”

“I believe it [mental wellbeing] is probably worse in areas where you have farms where they need a lot of employees, because they haven’t got the employees to hire, so it puts a lot of stress on farming families when there’s not the staff to bring in. You see they have to work longer hours.”

“Being a rural community, there’s not much on offer, we have one pool and we don’t have facilities in areas where people can go and do activities when it’s raining. It’s quite limited.”

“When it rains here, like I said, where do we go and do stuff?”

“The distance from anywhere to here, becomes a challenge. It’s a geographical reality.”

“The one thing when you start living this far away from anywhere, people, they might want support, but they don’t always expect that they’re going to get it.”

“Independence of thought means that things don’t happen as well, or that people just ignore the rules and make things happen themselves.”

“We had a meeting with the lines company, and the infrastructure needs to be upgraded. Basically, if they need to get that upgraded, they look to charge that on to the consumer.”

“High prices in anything and everything here because we are rural and it is hard to get resources into us because we’re two and a half hours out of any city or main town, so it is a bit of a mission.”

“That’s why they [the mountain] have a lack of employment all the time because there’s no travel... the cost of petrol now will be a huge restriction.”

“Yeah I think there is zero public transport, I think the train stops through Taumarunui now but that’s about it.”

“That first one’s absolutely right. You know, when we’re looking at things for youth, you can’t just run it in Ohakune and expect that our kids are going to be able to get there from Raetihi, because they won’t be able to.”

“The choices are a lot more challenging here, because we are so more remote and rural.”

RUAPEHU IS CATEGORISED BY STATISTICS NEW ZEALAND AS REMOTE, OR VERY REMOTE, MEANING IT TAKES 60 TO 120 MINUTES, AND 120 MINUTES OR MORE TO ACCESS A MAJOR, MEDIUM OR LARGE URBAN AREA AND COINCIDING SERVICES, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES.

Urban accessibility – Methodology and Classification - Statistics New Zealand 2020.

THE AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME TO A MEDICAL CENTRE IN RUAPEHU IS 35 MINUTES, COMPARED WITH 13 MINUTES IN AUCKLAND AND 9 MINUTES IN WELLINGTON.



THE AVERAGE WALKING TIME TO PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR RUAPEHU RESIDENTS IS 47 MINUTES, COMPARED TO 13 MINUTES RESPECTIVELY IN AUCKLAND AND 9 MINUTES IN WELLINGTON.



THE AVERAGE DRIVING TIME TO SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR RUAPEHU RESIDENTS IS 15 MINUTES, COMPARED TO 4 MINUTES RESPECTIVELY IN AUCKLAND AND 3 MINUTES IN WELLINGTON.



Dot Loves Data, Community Compass, Access to services.



Opportunities

- Providing more exciting events and entertainment in rural townships, especially during the evenings.
- Bigger and better community facilities that are sustainable and well utilised, e.g. multi-purpose hubs.
- Re-activating the rail transport networks as a form of public transport across and through the region, i.e. a high-speed rail that stopped through the centre of Auckland or Wellington. Rail transport could also be used for employees to commute to their workplace.
- Improving and connecting cross-sector boundaries so that the region is more supported with equitable access to services

“Those boundaries are the single, number one factor that needs to be improved in order to be able to get equity of services to this district.

“Trying to make connections so that our district is supported better because we do get lost in the boundaries quite often.

“We’re desperate for stuff to do and exciting things, entertainment.

“The dream is to have a multi purpose facility. It doesn’t have to be state of the art but it needs to be purposeful.

“The vision is to have a purposeful multipurpose community facility, one where everybody can come together in its resources. It’s very cost effective for our community.

“We really want to think about getting people out of their cars, getting fleet off the roads and on the trains.

“A high speed rail that stopped through the central platter to Auckland or Wellington. You could commute to Wellington every day if you wanted to.

“We’ve got to think outside the box if we want to actually improve the quality of life of rural New Zealand and we’ve got to have a will to do that.

“But when it comes to employment, they need to have a bus [from Taumarunui] that goes up to the mountain every day. So there’s always been that issue here.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust - providing communal resources and equipment for their community to utilise.
- Hamilton to Taumarunui bus service - some have commended the bus service from Hamilton to Taumarunui for its usefulness in transporting people to the hospital and other destinations.

“Pretty much every room is filled to the brim with resources and equipment which are communal resources and equipment... We lend our gear out to the high schools, primary schools and the ECE space if they require it. But also people and families who are requiring any gear and equipment. We just ask for a koha to give to the trust.

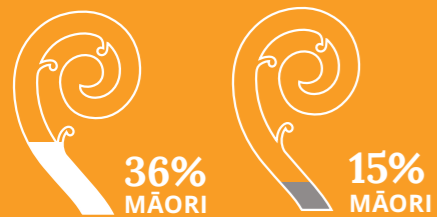
“The bus from Taumarunui to Hamilton is an awesome service. The bus is traveling to Hamilton every day, so that’s good. That takes people [from Taumarunui] to the hospital or the bus station. That’s always been there, and has been an awesome service.

“They have a bus that travels there. And that’s usually to the hospital or to the bus station in town. So if anyone needs to go up there, they can just jump on the bus or go for a visit. It’s an awesome service. They pick up whānau from Te Kuiti and Ōtorohanga and all the way up. So it’s really good.

Some view Ruapehu as a region that is culturally rich, has great climate and weather, boasts great access to the natural environment and outdoor activities and is a great place to live for families that appreciate the rural New Zealand lifestyle.

THERE ARE SIX IWI IN THE REGION: NGĀTI HAUA, NGĀTI RANGI, TAMAHAKI, TAMAKANA, TE ATI HAUNUI-A-PĀPĀRANGI, UENUKU.

THE RUAPEHU MĀORI POPULATION IS 36% OF THE GENERAL POPULATION, COMPARED WITH 15% NATIONALLY.



Stats NZ, Census 2018.

Strengths

- Some feel Ruapehu is a culturally rich district with great cultural and spiritual connections.
- Some feel that with Ruapehu having the highest Māori population across the country, people in the region have the opportunity to build greater cultural awareness because of the many different marae and dialects. This opportunity is something quite unique to the district.
- Many feel that the Ruapehu region is 'authentic New Zealand', as it boasts a unique landscape recognised worldwide and is a true treasure for the nation.
- Some feel Ruapehu has had a relatively good climate recently and has been well protected and sheltered rurally from extreme weather events.
- Many feel the Ruapehu region has excellent access to the natural environment and outdoors, boasting access to some of the best fishing and hunting in the country for free (or very cheap).
- Some feel that having such great access to the outdoors positively impacts people's mental and physical health and well-being across the region.
- Some believe that despite its challenges, living rurally in the region offers a very good and easy lifestyle, as smaller communities are able to make things more cost-effective for one another.

"You grow up in Taumarunui and think it [being culturally rich] is the norm, but then you go out and you realise, it's not. You're like, wow!"

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Good Health & Wellbeing

Reduced Inequalities

Life on Land

Natural Environment

Social Cohesion

Leading healthy lifestyles

Confidently participating in Te Ao Māori

Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

"We're a culturally rich district, we have about seven main Iwi in the Ruapehu district, we also have the Whanganui river flowing through our district, which we have a spiritual connection to. We also have our maunga."

"You get to know the whakapapa, the marae, you're rich in terms of your cultural awareness because we've got so many marae and you get to understand different dialects. So, when you go on powhiri you get really culturally aware of different perspectives, how different whānau live and what is spiritually and culturally important in different ways."

"We've got communities through Ruapehu that are 58%, 60% Māori. We've got the highest Māori speaking communities in the country. We've got the most Māori I've ever seen anywhere."

"We really are authentic New Zealand - we hunt, we fish, we farm."

"All of our kids, they'll go hunting, they'll get to really understand the land, something you don't often get."

"The volcanic landscape is very unique to this region. That is we are living and existing within this landscape, and not taking it for granted."

"The natural environment is amazing, I mean, you've got all of the walks. You've got mountain biking, primo!"

"In Ruapehu, we're quite sheltered from here from a lot of the extreme weather, so in terms of general feel around the place, and I'm talking rural by the way, not town, it's reasonably positive at the moment."

"We have access to an abundance of outdoor activities in Taumarunui, the rivers, playing areas, bush areas, local pools etc."

"It's just so good for you [the environment in Ruapehu], good for your health, good for your mental health, all those sorts of things."

"Living here has its challenges but it's very good and a very easy life at the same time."

"What we're able to do in our rural community is, like, making things more cost effective for local people."

Opportunities

- Helping people new to the region accept who and what Ruapehu is and that it will never be comparable to a city.
- Greater awareness, savvier marketing and storytelling around the opportunities that do exist in the region.
- Encouraging locals to get outdoors more often so that they reap the mental and physical health and well-being benefits the region offers.
- Enabling mana whenua to improve and lead the way through storytelling methodologies - telling their stories in innovative ways that can be easily understood.
- Providing more education for visitors around Ruapehu landscapes and potential hazards, i.e. for the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, here's how it should be done, here's how you should be culturally aware and here's how the experience should be enhanced to be meaningful.

“We need to accept who we are. I think most of the Māori community happily accept that, and the farming community. But people who want to move here might struggle a bit more. Understand that we're not as developed as a satellite city, we're not as developed as [other cities].

“The opportunities are there and they don't cost a lot of money. Whether people take them up is a matter for social media to address.

“Also connecting with the outdoors and going for a walk or going for a run is free. I'm trying to encourage them that it doesn't need to be expensive for you to live well.

“We need to improve on storytelling through multiple means. We need to tell our stories in smart and innovative ways that are easily understood, and not necessarily perceived in an ill way. That will take a long time, beyond my lifetime to be honest.

“We're a district, with a small town and that's quite a unique situation. You're competing with the rest of the country. So our marketing, we need to be better and more savvy at how we market the district.

“When people are out there doing their recreation, we're still getting those classic scenarios about people being ill informed, ill prepared, physically, mentally, and unfortunately, the impact of more visitors means that those circumstances present themselves a lot more these days.

“We need to understand how that [tourism] product is actually impacting the landscape. I understand that if there's an insistence of people to visit this area, here's how it should be done. Here's how you should be culturally aware. Here's how the product should be enhanced to be meaningful.

“We've got the best fishing in New Zealand, hunting is endless, we really are resourceful in terms of what we have across Ruapehu, that's a point of difference if you have a young whānau, and you want a different type of upbringing, very grounded. It gives you different types of attributes that you wouldn't get if you were raised in a city because you're very grounded and aware of your surroundings.

Workshop participant

The topic of forestry and carbon farming is viewed as a contentious topic by many in the region. On the one hand, unproductive farmland that is put into pine with the intention of being harvested is viewed as a positive. In contrast, farmers are much more concerned when productive farmland is put into carbon farming or lifelong forests.

THE AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY INDUSTRY MAKES UP 23% OF RUAPEHU'S EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRY, COMPARED WITH 13% NATIONALLY.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 1: End Poverty.

10,000 HECTARES OF LAND (INCLUDING THREE FARM STATIONS) HAS BEEN SIGNED UP FOR SALE TO CARBON FORESTRY NEAR TAUMARUNUI IN 2023.

Ruapehu District Council, May 2023.

Strengths

- Some feel there are some positives of carbon farming as it allows farmers to utilise and earn an income off their unproductive land and offset some of their carbon.
- Some prefer carbon farming to forestry, which is seen to be less damaging to local roading infrastructure as fewer logging trucks will be on the roads.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some have noticed a significant amount of land converted into forestry has increased. On the one hand, they believe this is beneficial when land is suited for forestry due to being quite steep and open to erosion; however, they have also observed a lot of productive, flatter land converting to forestry, which is raising concerns.

“Forestry has a big impact in this area. They are buying a lot of the land in this area. Probably a lot of it is suited to forestry to a degree because it's quite steep. And it is quite open to erosion, that sort of thing.

“Planting in areas where it is not very productive for them anyway, because some of the areas are quite steep hill country and actually grazing it is quite hard.

“It's a little bit double edged, it is helping the farm and securing the land and in an essence the farmers are making a lot of money out of it as well. So it's a bit of a no brainer for them.

“I'm a volunteer firefighter as well and I'm a bit anti, but also quite pro these carbon credit farms and stuff because it obviously offsets all the emissions and everything and surely its going to do the planet some good.

“A lot of the farms are medium to steep hill country, they're actually quite hard to find. Probably the best place for the carbon farms.

Framework Tags



Barriers

- Some feel that carbon farming and lifelong forests put communities at additional risk in significant weather events due to the amount of slash they can create.
- Many are concerned that the mass purchasing of farms and converting them to forestry means that once thriving, small rural communities are now diminishing as they are losing schools and services. For the few families that remain in these communities, they are becoming increasingly isolated.
- Some share concerns about forestry and the impact young pines have on the waterway quality across the region.
- Some believe that forestry is destroying roading infrastructure across the region, leaving the financial burden on Council to fix or replace these roads.
- Many feel the downside to carbon farming is that it removes employment from the region, as forestry workers aren't required, and neither are farmers and farm workers on farms sold and converted.
- Some are nervous about carbon farming as it increases the risk of wildfires as the region gets hotter, drier summers; these trees aren't like a usual crop, as they aren't maintained and often do not have fire breaks or water reservoirs.
- Many share concerns that the implications of carbon farming are significantly distorting land prices, meaning that many young up-and-coming farmers are missing out as they can't afford to go out on their own.

“I think there's about three or four communities that are highlighted for being absolutely in the firing line with the current strategy and the fact is, people, they're going to be sacrificial lambs for the 'greater good'.

“Look at what's happening in Gisborne and Wairoa in particular [slash], there is a concern that we may end up with similar problems with the way climate change is starting to impact the amount of rain we get.

“We have a lot of roads out here that are 40 kms long and come to a dead end. There's only one way in and one way out. There is a concern that a lot of those areas are being planted for forestry and that reduces the number of farming families down the road.

“There's also quite a large concern around the forestry and rural areas, where's the point of no return? These families are the last down the road and the rest is just forestry.

“You start to lose services like schools, the pupil numbers drop and you see school closures, you don't have enough of a committee to keep things at a community level.

“The government has put the situation in place for ideological reasons. And it's going to kill communities.

“Forestry is coming in and not just planting out hillsides, they're also planting up the flat land.

“It's really interesting because when pines are young, it actually makes the water quality worse.

“One of our friends drives one of those forestry trucks, his rig is three quarters of the road even when he’s being kind....it’s destroying infrastructure and the Council cannot afford to replace the [roading] infrastructure.

“[Because of carbon farming] we lose the families that would have been working on those farms and the children at the rural schools. The rural schools close as a result or they can’t get the teachers. That’s another huge employment issue that, perhaps, isn’t unique to our district, but our district is really suffering as a result, and we’ll continue to do so.

“Obviously there’s a lot of anger toward carbon farming out in our community. We are a rural community and we have a big rural sector.

“It actually compounds another issue too. So obviously, we are charged rates and we expect a certain amount [in return]. When you turn your farm into forestry, you’re rated differently. They remove all the assets off, so the rates are actually reduced. But we still need the same amount of money. So that just means that the cost moves. The more that is turned into carbon farms, that impact actually moves to different households.

“If we do get hotter drier summers, then that is going to become a real threat as well with wildfire. Because these trees aren’t going to be like a normal crop, be maintained, have fire breaks in them, and have water reservoirs.

“A challenge for our community that scares the bejesus out of me amongst everything is the impact of carbon farming on land prices. What’s the implications of carbon farming.. which is significantly distorting land prices, so the land prices are 50% higher than what they should be?

“Every farm that goes on the market, the question is, who’s going to buy it?

“The 60 to 70 year old farmers that I guess are just selling up to Pine because it’s good money and you don’t have a family that wants to take over the business. You can’t blame farmers for taking the money.

Opportunities

- Forestry as an industry can produce jobs for the region through the harvesting and milling of the wood.

“And who knows in the future, those farms, maybe they will mill the wood so there’ll be a renewable source here, and jobs and everything.

“We’ve got so much steep land, we should be putting it into forestry for carbon credits. Because it will save all the erosion as well, which is making our river look ugly.

Whilst many feel the Ruapehu community has a great team of first responders, there is the sense that the community themselves, particularly those facing hardship, lack knowledge and education and are unprepared for emergencies. Responders would love for them to be more proactive and prepared.

Strengths

- Some feel that the region’s lahar events are well monitored, which allows the community plenty of time to react, and first responders have a good understanding of the area and potential hazards.
- Many believe people and agencies across the region work well together when responding to an emergency - many of which are volunteers. The region also has good relationships with surrounding districts, enabling them to help when needed.

Whilst the following have been identified as a strength, they have also been identified as a barrier:

- Some feel that there is a worldwide increased awareness that more extreme events are happening and having extreme impacts on communities.
- Some feel that southern Ruapehu is slightly better off with their emergency responses, e.g. their response times.

“Lahar events, we have plenty of time to react, everything’s censored and monitored and everything we know exactly where everything is and what’s happening.”

“So yeah, so there’s that good, good, strong bond with everyone, we just get stuck into each other, and help each other.”

“We [Civil Defence] have good relationships everywhere, we try to maintain them and do what we can.”

“Relationships with the surrounding districts, especially on the Taupō side, sometimes if we have a localised event, I think back to the tornado that ripped through National Park, the guys from Taupo came down and assisted with that as well. It’s definitely common knowledge worldwide that more and more events are happening and the extreme side of things that’s going on.”

Barriers

- Many first responders feel there is a real lack of awareness and preparedness amongst the Ruapehu communities concerning people knowing what to do in an emergency event, and educating these communities is not considered easy. This is particularly prevalent in families living in high deprivation.
- Some feel that there are a few gaps in first responders and a lack of an 0800 emergency helpline in the region, with a sense by some that you have to know the right people in the right spots to get things happening.
- Some feel the farming community contributes to several of the region’s fires, with human error in farming or equipment, or a failure to report fires being common causes of these events and call-outs
- Some feel that there may be a misperception of the role, size and resources provided by Civil Defence to cater for emergency events across the community, which can lead to locals feeling disappointed with response times and a lack of resources.

Framework Tags



“Our lower socio economic part of our community is overrepresented when it comes to our statistics with respect to deaths caused by fires.”

“I looked at a whole lot of different communities for one of our papers and it was the lack of knowledge and everything that each community has [around what to do in an emergency].”

“It wasn’t until last year when Ruapehu was rumbling, and my phone was going off the hook, like ‘can I still do the Tongariro crossing’, ‘can I still do this’, and everything.”

“We even had a new hotel owner asking when we should be evacuating Taumarunui. The whole town was thinking that all of this lava flow is gonna come out and the mountain is going to explode and there are going to be rocks thrown everywhere.”

“With the Ruapehu, I wanted to get that stat right up with preparedness and everything, and there were plenty of ways of doing it, but what I thought might be quite an easy job is actually quite taxing and it does take a lot of time.”

“Normally it is a lot of herding wild cats, getting everyone into a room who have no situational awareness, basically of what’s going on, have had little experience dealing with this sort of stuff. And then, just trying to organise them all to help the community in something massive.”

“Pressures that come on, with respect to housing and tough things like that, with respect to what we do as an organisation. What that translates to sometimes is, perhaps having homes where families aren’t quite as ready for an emergency as we would like.”

“I wouldn’t say it’s well equipped with first responders. For example, when the alarm goes off Whakapapa FENZ will send three trucks to go to it. The National Park fire truck could be hooning up the mountain with just one person driving it. Yeah, that’s normally during the day because everyone’s busy during the day. The nighttime is a little bit different. We normally can pretty much get crews everywhere. We see sometimes our houses, you know, don’t have enough smoke alarms to be able to alert people... Unfortunately in our region we don’t have, like, the Red Cross, we can draw on them, we can get them coming in here but nothing like that is set up. But they are only an hour and a half down the road in Whanganui. 99% of us are volunteers, so it’s not always easy. I know a lot of brigades are trying to recruit and then well, yeah, but the sense of volunteerism doesn’t really factor into a lot of youths’ mindsets at the moment.”

Opportunities

- Increasing public awareness and education for families of all socio-economic levels around responding to emergency events and building an emergency plan so communities are resilient and more prepared.
- Improving the sharing of information to reassure people in the case of an emergency event that they will be okay.
- Ensuring the farming community reports fires by going to and reviewing the fire prevention and fire safety website, checkitsalright.co.nz.

“You would expect to have an 0800 number you can just tap into but sometimes that doesn’t work, you need to know the people in the right spots to be able to get straight through to them and get stuff happening.

“[We need] public education on what to do and how to look after yourself until Council can stand up and then start getting the mahi done to help everyone out.

“So it’s never too early to make sure yourself and your whānau are ready, it doesn’t cost anything. Just make sure you have a plan. And you know what you’re gonna do if the worst happens.

“We need messages to people to be able to look after themselves for three days. Because if they’re cut off then it’s gonna take us a while to get to them. So we’ll get marae preparedness plans, community resilience plans are needed as well.

“It’s a case of just trying to calm everyone down and say ‘look, this isn’t the case, ’95, ’96, if you remember these eruptions around then, this is what happened’, that sort of thing.

“Just giving information out, sharing info from all the different outfits, just to let people know that everything is going to be okay.

“[Farmers lighting fires need to] go to checkitsalright.co.nz and make sure they look on that website.

“What am I doing about it? Ruapehu is split into four different wards, I’ll be writing up a resilience plan for each of those wards, where they can be available either online or on the Council website.

“A one stop shop, so hopefully people will realise, especially with the weather events we are having more and more of, just you’re basically having something already written out for them that they can go to, tune the radio into the stations that we use to put information out or that it will help them be prepared.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Civil Defence - working with Council, first responders and the Ruapehu region communities to ensure the region is prepared for large-scale emergency events by providing training, resilience plans etc.
- Civil Defence - provided a youth emergency services programme in schools run by a core group of young and skilled first responders; however, most have now dispersed from the region.
- Horizons - ensuring the ongoing monitoring of emergency events and providing a platform people can access information with their phones, tune in, and get alerts before, during and after an event.
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ), Ruapehu - managing community readiness, recovery and risk reduction by visiting homes, discussing home fire safety with families, and installing smoke alarms.
- Te Whare Taumarutanga - a collective of northern-based Iwi with people connected to Council and other agencies, assists with community response to emergency events.
- Ruapehu District Council - developing a programme that involves collaborating with youth as first responders. The initiative will include partnering with Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, Civil Defense and Emergency Management to implement Marae Preparedness programmes.
- There are discussions about establishing programmes by groups and organisations, including Iwi and Mayors Taskforce programmes, aimed at educating the community about emergency and rescue services and providing guidance on how to respond during a natural disaster.

“So that goes into the public awareness and education of being resilient as much as they can themselves. So that’s when we nationwide [to] promote the old three days worth of food, water and everything to be prepared.

“The generic nationwide Civil Defence message of being prepared is three days worth of food, water, etc. It’s about having a plan. What to do, having a plan when your kids are in school, what’s going to be happening there, all that sort of stuff. And to write down a list of telephone numbers of who to contact, what radio stations listen to all that sort of stuff. So hopefully every household and repeating this message [will have an impact].

“A lot of it is making sure Council [is] trained to be able to deal with large scale emergencies. Training council staff, training the community and training schools, is a big part of it.

“They’re literally looking at a rangatahi as a first responders programme through the Mayors Forcefor Jobs, working with our Civil Defense and emergency management through marae preparedness programmes. There is a real desire and willingness to work to do this. It’s because it’s 74 marae I believe. Yeah, we’re actively working on that.

“Throughout every region, there are plenty of areas where everything is monitored. And people can tune into these as well to get alerts on their phones, which will be part of the resilience plan that people will be able to tune into and figure out how to do it themselves.

“We [FENZ] have an umbrella organisation who specifically looks after community readiness, recovery and risk reduction... That’s looking at things like visiting houses, and talking about home fire safety with families in installing smoke alarms,

particularly smoke alarms, smoke alarms are the things that will save your life in a fire, to alert you early so you can get out.

“In the north, they [Iwi] have got a bit of a collective now where they’ve got a base of people with which can go and assist with community response as well as tying on with Council and other agencies as well. So that is pretty cool.

“A lot of work [is] happening around the rescue and emergency services, we’ve got a programme running, Mayors Taskforce has one running and the Iwi are going to start getting into that. Training people in case of a natural disaster.

For many first responders, responding to emergencies in the region can take a mental and emotional toll, as being a small community, they often know the individuals and families impacted by an event. However, they feel well supported by their organisations and the community when dealing with these emotional impacts of the job.

Strengths

- In the instance of a ‘good save’, many first responders and their communities can find this really rewarding.
- Many believe effective processes have been implemented for first responders, including establishing reliable support networks, reducing the number of individuals present at a fatality scene, and offering thorough debriefings following an incident.
- Some first responders find that many emergencies they respond to are related to tourists rather than locals.

“It is good when someone you saved, you know from the public, only when there’s a good save.

“Like that lady who we’ve installed smoke alarms for today, like her house was safe, although her neighbour alerted us to it, but her house didn’t burn down and they’re really rewarding because you know that something bad or worse could have happened. And it didn’t.

“But there’s good support networks within agencies and everything to help each other out, including families. Yeah. It’s something that like friends I know, have been quite proactive and sorting out better support systems for it.

“Then when we do go to one, go to a fatality or something, and we know it’s potentially going to be fatal, we try to manage it by limiting the amount of people that actually go into the site itself.

“Good debriefs and everything, and what I tell them is like this is part of the job. So what’s gonna happen is you’re going to expect it and you’re going to try and train to be able to deal with it, but then if someone is struggling you help them out.

Barriers

- Some first responders feel that the downside of being in a small, close-knit community is that they often save people they know, which can be mentally and emotionally tough on these individuals.

“One of the really challenging things about being a firefighter in our area is the part where we do go to house fires and medical events and car crashes that involve people that we know or people in the crew know, family members, friends and such.

“On one hand, it can feel like a privilege sometimes to have been pulled out to assist our community members that we know... but it can be really tough on the crew, with some of the difficult situations that we find ourselves in dealing with emergencies and our loved ones.

“Went to a lot of car smashes and that and some locations where tourists, like National Park, it isn’t really locals.

“We’re a small community. So when one of our community members is injured or dying, it is our people that attend there and that is what’s tough. Yeah, that’s really not a good thing.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing Decent Work & Economic Growth Sustainable Cities & Communities

Human Capability Social Cohesion

Participating fully in society Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Opportunities

- Ensuring emergency responders have an open space to talk to their crew, family and friends so that they are able to cope with the lows.

“The lows can be difficult at times, and you have to talk with your crew. The best thing I’ve found is to talk to my crew and my wife. And yeah, not bottle it up.

“When you get a bit frustrated and a bit upset, gotta have a word somebody.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) - providing outside help and support when needed for staff. FENZ will bring in professionals to support those involved in emergency responses to go over what happened. Typically, everyone involved in the call-out will be involved in that conversation.

“So we’ll have a debrief if there’s something that’s not very nice, and we’ll just go over everything and talk about it.

“And then we can even talk to each other individually like if there’s someone else in the brigade that we want to talk to, we can talk and we always seem to get together afterwards and have a debrief.

“And if we need outside help FENZ will bring in some more professional people to talk to us to go over what happened, and normally everyone that was at that job is involved in that conversation.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand - Taumarunui

“The Rural Fire Brigade or Wildfire Brigade, mainly does the vegetation fires. So any scrub fires, any large fires, forest fires, we attend those.”

“Importantly, we’ve got people who don’t fight fires at all, as well. We’ve got brigade support members who come along to assist with the running of our stations. And that’s a really important role as well.”

“There’s no such thing as hierarchy or anything, everyone just helps each other out.”

“We’ve got good experienced guys who know their stuff. So they can hopefully pass that on down to them [new recruits]. So yeah, one day, they can be at my position, leading a crew deploying wherever we need to go.”

“Having a really good mix of people in the firetruck gives you the ability to see problems from different angles, and find a good solution.”

“I think even for people who don’t have a direct career pathway into the organisation, it can give people a sense of community and it’s an opportunity to learn new skills, gain confidence, especially for young people.”

“We’ve had guys from high school start to join us and work their way up. I can think of [ex first responder], who started from high school, started with the emergency youth programme, and youth and emergency services, and worked his way up to crew leader, and has now been on deployment over to Australia.”

“The good thing about rural fire is you get unit standards so you can actually use them as your NZQA, so it is really good.”

“The life skills I’ve [gained], have taught me to deal with conflict, have taught me to deal with adversity, taught me to appreciate life. I’ve seen loss of life, though, and it has taught me to appreciate the people around me.”

“I’ve learned a lot about myself, I suppose, and different situations. I don’t panic as much over things where I can be calm.”

“If we need outside help [with coping with the ‘lows’], FENZ will bring in some more professional people to talk to us to go over what happened, and normally everyone that was at that job is involved in that conversation.”

“The biggest part is bonding with your crew and getting to know them, and they are basically your family, especially when you’re in deployment.”

“What makes me want to do this? It’s helping the community. It’s getting out there, face-to-face with the community, face-to-face with the farmers, and yeah, talking to them.”



The region boasts some great rivers and swimming spots, particularly in the north, with the perception that water quality is improving in some areas; however, flood events, chemicals, treatments and farm pollution are an ongoing threat to the region’s waterways.

Strengths

- Some feel that the closure of the mining and sawmill in Ōhura has meant river quality has since improved in the area due to no longer using the river as the primary mode of transport for the trees.
- Some have seen many programmes available in the region that educate community members around environmental safety.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some feel the region generally offers some great swimming spots, particularly in the north, as long as they are not in flood.

“The ‘98 flood was when mining released water, and they were using the river as a way of moving trees to the sawmill; those two have gone away and we haven’t had a flood since. The rivers are better in that sense.

“Swimming spots, when they are not in flood, are pretty good.

“We have two public swimming pools... but the kids seem to feel better swimming in the river.

THE SWIMMABILITY OF RUAPEHU’S SITES HAS IMPROVED FROM 0% IN 2018, TO 22% CURRENTLY.

Safe swimming sites are defined as excellent or good annual/long-term swimmability of the swimming sites being monitored in the area.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass, LAWA.

Barriers

- Many believe the increasing number of significant weather events poses an increased threat and risk to the region’s river ways, quality and infrastructure, with rivers rising much more frequently.
- Some farmers who are willing and wanting help to improve their waterways have felt the onus has been put back on them, with experiences of Horizons stating it’s the farmers’ responsibility to clear the river on their section of the farm.
- Some share concerns about the threat that weed sprays pose to the waterways, with some observing sprayed weeds being dumped into the region’s waterways or roadside spraying going straight into the region’s streams.
- Some have concerns around the chemicals Council is using to clear waterways and the downstream impacts those may be having on these natural environments and the fish.

“The majority of the community are like ‘oh yeah, it’s raining again, so what?’, but this one particular river on Sunday morning this week rose five and a half metres in two hours, which was never seen there before.

“The river infrastructure is the big one being impacted by the weather events, our rivers are rising much more often.

“We did a 12 month snapshot of that, and how many times it’s spiked over that final level compared to the years gone by and yeah, it’s crazy. The amount of times this year, it’s almost monthly now that it will happen. Compared to two to three years prior. Yeah, it was like only half a dozen times a year.

Framework Tags

Life Below Water | Good Health & Wellbeing | Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

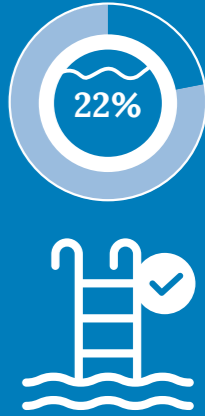
Sustainable Cities & Communities | Life on Land

Human Capability | Financial & Physical Capital | Natural Environment

Leading healthy lifestyles | Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

- “That flood scoured the river bed but it’ll happen again unless the rivers aren’t cleaned and dead trees aren’t removed...”*
- “Our water quality deteriorates in some rivers with large weather events.*
- “Horizons have come to the town several times now and put the onus back on farmers. So it’s the farmers responsibility to clear the river on their section of farm.*
- “I just saw some men chucking all the stuff they sprayed off the bridge into the river... I said, ‘you’re gonna kill those fish in there’. And there are people who picnic here, and swim in there.*
- “I’m very concerned about all the roadside spraying that goes on. I think it’s disgusting. And it goes straight into the streams that are then straight into our rivers.*
- “The worst location is here right outside my doorstep... we have been watching, and you could tell the change of the smell of the river.*
- “Most of those spaces are the most safest training areas for a lot of the kayaking, rafting and that, they do all of their training when they come into town, and that’s where they [Council] put either the janola, or bleach that goes into the water systems to keep the water clear. But that also creates algae and all this other stuff which is killing trout.*
- “Our trout when we do fishing programmes with the kids they pull out trout and they are all deformed and that. So we catch and release them a lot. And we actually don’t eat anything which is terrible.*
- “I just read a study results from the study that came out from GNS and 90% of New Zealand lakes were deemed unswimmable, but I think they are figuring out ways on how to clean them up.*

ONLY 22% OF RUAPEHU’S SWIMMING SITES ARE DEEMED SAFE FOR SWIMMING, COMPARED WITH 40% NATIONALLY.



Safe swimming sites are defined as excellent or good annual/long-term swimmability of the swimming sites being monitored in the area.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass, LAWA.

Opportunities

- Taking more of an 'if it affects one person, we've got to do something about it' approach to dealing with degrading waterway infrastructure.
- Clearing willow trees out of the river systems more frequently to help water run more freely.
- Utilising organic spraying solutions similar to the Waiheke Island organic spraying tanker (see Good Mahi for description).

"In Waiheke Island they've had it for decades, this little spraying tanker. It has hot, boiling water and coconut in it and it's organic and they spray everything with that. And it works. Why can't we have that technology everywhere?"

"There's a lot of contributing factors to that, so some of these rivers are really remote, it doesn't affect a lot of people. But like I said earlier, if it affects one person then we've got to do something about it."

"Clearing Willow trees out of the river systems is going to help water run more freely. That becomes Whanganui's problem, because it all ends up down there."

"We could be raising the roads slightly higher in some areas as well to stop at crossing roads and blocking routes off."

"GNS Science (Te Pu Aō) has good data about the lakes and I'm pretty sure they monitor rivers too."

Good Mahi in the Community

- Raetihi diesel spill that affected Raetihi's water supply - the unfortunate event helped focus the community Raetihi's attention on the health of their river and how they could improve that, and it followed on from there.
- Raetihi Promotions, Makotuku Track - created the Makotuku Track project based in Raetihi to allow the community to better care for their river.
- Waiheke Island organic spraying tanker - providing organic weed management using hot boiling water and coconut. According to some, it is highly successful.
- Many people and initiatives across the region are passionate about monitoring the waterways and water quality, i.e. Ngāti Rangī, Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust.

"Absolutely, I have been monitoring the river for the last 20 years and it's just been a passion of mine around water quality and environment because of all our food supply."

"I think Ngāti Rangī does all the monitoring as well and there's a few others up there that have been doing it."

"There's so many programmes happening at the moment. So with Jobs for Nature, everything around the taiao, everything around environmental safety is really happening up here. It's pumping."

"I think one thing that really happened nine years ago was they had a diesel spill on the mountain, and it affected the water supply. That for the town... focused people's attention on the health of our river, and the ways in which we could improve that. And it followed on from there."

Workshop participant

Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust – Makotuku Track

“It was about nine years ago. [Our team] had a vision of actually putting this track along the banks of the river in the [Raetihi] township, as an amenity for the whole town.

“What projects like this do, it gives the town, or the people in the town, an agency that they didn’t have.

“They love it. And we get a lot of community help. It’s just been a joy for our locals and for our visitors to come and share this environment.

“It’s bringing people even from Ohakune over, we’ve got so much to offer in Raetihi. So, this is just another one to add to the list to come visit.

“The four magic words for becoming part of a community [are] ‘how can I help?’.

“Being able to be involved, one of the things that I really enjoy, is being able to bring people together into a project like this, and facilitate that.

“The families, they come out here with their children, it’s just a place for them to get out and enjoy the outdoors...it’s [encouraging] people to get together.

“It’s just so good, good for you. Good for your health, good for your mental health, all those sorts of things.

“Everyone enjoys their walks down here. In the summertime, the kids are playing in the river. There’s two swimming holes. It really is a very positive focus for the town.

“It’s probably the best project that we’ve ever done. And it’s ongoing.

“Project Tongariro has employed [a] really enthusiastic young lady who is now taking our local schools down to the track...she is now teaching them how to plant, identify the weeds, how to control the weeds, whether they need spraying, cutting and pasting, she’ll be doing all sorts.

“We’ve got to think outside the box if we want to actually improve the quality of life of rural New Zealand and we’ve got to have a will to do that.



Some efforts are being made around weed and pest prevention across the region; however, this is a controversial space, with some disagreeing with and being vocal about this around conservation workers' approach to caring for the environment.

Strengths

- Some have noticed many pest control programmes in the community.

“There are heaps of programmes for pest control.”

Barriers

- Some feel the grasses, i.e. convolvulus and biddy bid, are rampant in the region and are a significant threat and killer of native plants and bush.
- Some have expressed concerns that the nation's divided perception of 1080 and its association with the Department of Conservation (DOC) and their use of the pesticide as a tool creates a lot of negative stigmas, threats and judgement towards Department of Conservation (DOC) workers, often making it harder for them to do their jobs.
- Some have expressed concerns about the sprays used to control weeds across the region getting into waterways and the negative impacts this may be having.

“As you can see, the grasses, they're rampant up here. This is quite a hard site for us to get something established. There's convolvulus, biddy bid, so we're just doing what we can to help suppress the weeds and identify where our plants are.”

“The big killer when we plant our natives, the big killer is the grass. It gets up so high, it grows, it just takes a plant over like this.”

“These are non-natives, and they'll just choke our bush if we allow them to continue.”

“It's the tool 1080. Nationwide focus out there, not necessarily just in the regions but within the public of New Zealand. That it's a serious tool and it's creating a division. There's a lot of perception particularly that that is what DOC does, but that's not what we do. It is part of what we do, but not just what we do.”

“[Due to the use of 1080 as a tool] we have been threatened, thankfully we haven't been assaulted. We have been vandalised, there has been lots of causes for concern to me and my people. None of it has been fair or justified.”

“I just saw some men chucking all the stuff they sprayed off the bridge into the river... I said, 'you're gonna kill those fish in there'. And there are people who picnic here, and swim there.”

“I'm very concerned about all the roadside spraying that goes on. I think it's disgusting. And it goes straight into the streams that are there straight into our rivers.”

“After doing research over our own area, we've noticed that even though we're doing all the bush work, where are all the rats moving to? The city. They are in the towns, in people's houses and sheds.”

“We are worried about things like climate change, those coastal sites being reclaimed by the sea, those weather events, changes in vegetation, the lifecycle of the pest species we're trying to eradicate.”

“We are also worried about the influx of biosecurity issues, the influx of pests, organisms that are impacting the floor, anything that's impacting the Pacific, the marine pests. It's a whole cycle.”

Framework Tags

Life on Land

Clean Water & Sanitation

Life Below Water

Natural Environment

Social Cohesion

Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

Opportunities

- Releasing grass and weeds around plants more regularly, i.e. every six months.
- Some feel pest control efforts should be directed towards cities rather than rural areas. According to their experience, pests are more commonly seen in urban areas rather than rural environments.

“What they need to focus on with pest control is that they need to concentrate on the cities. Because most of the animals are running into the cities, not into the bush.”

“It's important to keep releasing (the weeds) every six months. Just go and check on your plants. Yeah, just release the grass around them.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Department of Conservation (DOC) - striving to build positive relationships with their communities whilst keeping the environment's best interests in mind.
- Ōwhango Alive - significantly contributing to the environmental space within the region. Their group's mission is to protect and enhance the environment of the Ohinetonga Reserve, Whakapapa River and Ōwhango township.

“In terms of the environment, someone that you may not have come across as an organisation called Owhango Alive and they should be commended for what they're doing for their community and they should be recorded and interviewed for a good mahi story because they do some amazing work.”

“We [DOC] are definitely in a better space with tangata whenua now than before.”

Whilst Raetihi seems to be reasonably happy with their water quality due to more recent upgrades, the rest of the region feels the drinking water is poor and declining in quality, especially during extreme weather events, i.e. droughts and floods, meaning they need to spend more effort and money to improve water quality by boiling water, collecting spring water or filtering water, which some can't afford to do.

Strengths

- Many have experienced an improvement in Raetihi's water quality since the township upgraded their water infrastructure following the diesel spill, rebuilt their filtration plant and fitted many houses with filters. Many now feel the township has good quality drinking water.

"The water quality in Raetihi was appalling at one stage when I first came here but it's probably around six years ago that they rebuilt the filtration plants so Raetihi water has been upgraded significantly. The quality is good."

"Prior to me coming to Raetihi there was the diesel spill, so the water site got completely upgraded and all houses were fitted with filters. Yeah. So that could be why we have great water here."

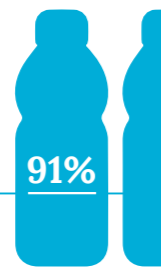
"Water seems to be great in Raetihi, maybe not so much in Ohakune."

"We don't need that in Raetihi, every house was kitted out with a water filter and it's really good water."

"I just think it's improved over the years. But in terms of across the board... okay. I'm on town supply and I like it."

91% OF RUAPEHU HOUSEHOLDS STATE THEY HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER.

NZ Census, 2018.



Whilst the following have been identified as a strength, they have also been identified as a barrier:

- Due to the poor water quality, many in the region drive to Piriaka Springs to fill up on water despite the additional fuel cost, as they want the best for their family's health.
- Many feel that the drinking water quality across most of the region is poor and declining, especially when extreme weather events occur, i.e. floods or droughts. On the other hand, some don't have an issue with the water and seem to like it.

Barriers

- Some feel that the pending changes around the Three Waters Reform Programme is going to impact smaller suppliers in the region as they won't be able to afford to upgrade their infrastructure, which many believe will lead to non-compliance.
- Some feel that having poor quality and poor tasting water across the region can make it hard to encourage well-being, as people would rather choose cheap, sugary and better-tasting options that are bad for their health.
- For some who can't afford filters, tanks or the drive to the Piriaka Springs, they just have to put up with the poor water quality. Even if they do have a tank or filter, it doesn't guarantee good quality water as maintenance and upkeep are required on these, which also comes at a financial cost.

Framework Tags

Clean Water & Sanitation No Poverty Good Health & Wellbeing Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Financial & Physical Capital Natural Environment

Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments Leading healthy lifestyles

"It is a basic need isn't it, and it is a shame to see that it's only eight locations that are improving because it is a life-force for many of our people and a basic right just to have good water."

"Yeah there is more pollution going on. It's a reflection of the impact, and not just impact of any specific sites, it seems like the quality is declining all over."

"I remember when I went overseas, we went to London. You pour a glass of water and on the label it says it's been recycled about three times. So this whole taking for granted thing around New Zealand to pour a glass of water, you're not so sure anymore."

"I don't drink the water here in Taumarunui, it is horrible, just the taste, it is disgusting. It's drinkable and all that, you can stay hydrated if you drink it, but I definitely prefer a pump bottle over tap water or I'll make sure I load up my water at national park, fresh stuff off the mountain."

"The whole of Taumarunui, the water quality isn't great. It tastes terrible and if you can't afford a filter you just have to put up with that."

"Sometimes it smells like the river when it comes out. Especially in the summer."

"As soon as the drought comes, which it does every summer, it's getting worse, the river silt is brown and your town water changes straight away as well."

"You can tell when it's drought because the town water tastes like chlorine because they're trying to get the silt out of it."

"I know when it rains hard lots of boil water signs get put up in Ohakune. So when there is a lot of rain, usually in Winter, you'll find it semi-regularly, there will be big digital signs put up 'please boil drinking water'."

"You know, there's a lot of people still really hesitant to drink it and I know for me if I was going to drink it I would boil it first."

"If I go between drinking from the tap and drinking from the spring, there's just a huge difference. Huge difference."

"I am not impressed with the water supply, did you know that a lot of people go out to Piriaka to see the natural spring? Everyone goes because we all know the water here has got bleach or something in it, you can taste it. They say it's alright to drink, it's not... Nah Water sucks!"

"Not everyone can afford to go up to Piriaka and get their water all the way out there."

"They have tanks doesn't necessarily mean their water is very good because a lot of them have old style... dead rats and things in them. And they can't afford filtration systems."

"We've got a water tank that comes off our roof and our road is so, so dusty that we accumulate lots of dust on the roof and I get a sore tummy. So often, we have to keep treating our water all the time... The Council's known about it for years and never ever done anything."

“All these requirements that your small community based water suppliers are going to have to meet now. That’s a huge cost. There’s just going to be a huge amount of non-compliance, that’s what’s going to happen as a result of that, because these small suppliers can’t afford to upgrade.

“Then you’ve got your marae, how are they going to fit in there with these new requirements? Which is a huge challenge our district will face with all the different marae.

“For the likes of drinking water it’s not very nice. Especially when you’re trying to encourage wellbeing and drinking enough water. People would rather go for the other options of drinks and purchase something cheap, nasty and sugary as opposed to just having a drink of water.

“Our family only drinks water from springs. So we go up, doesn’t matter if it costs us petrol, we go up [to the springs] twice a week sometimes, and fill up, you know, because I want the best for my kids and my health.

Opportunities

- There is a general feeling that something has to be done about the water quality issues across the region (but people don’t know where to start).

“Something has to be done about improving water quality, given the fact we have the standards, then there has to be something done to improve them. Because property rights and to finance waterworks have not worked.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Piriaka Springs - providing the ‘best’ quality water to the region. Piriaka also has tanks where locals can fill up for free.

“Piriaka has got the best water and I don’t say that because I live there. It was cool that they chucked those tanks up, that was cool, I liked that.

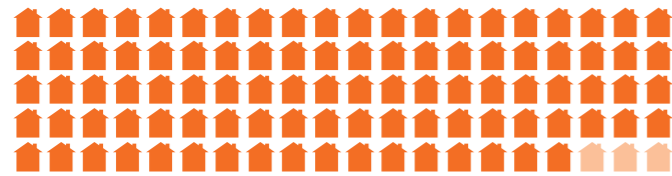
IN 2020, RAETIHI WAS REPORTED TO HAVE THE ONLY FULLY COMPLIANT WATER SYSTEM IN RUAPEHU.

Annual Report on Drinking Water Quality 2019-2020, Ministry of Health, 2022.



Whilst some are happy without access to the internet, many struggle with the many black spots and a lack of consistent connectivity across the region, which can create multiple barriers to working remotely, accessing education online and running for local businesses.

97% OF RESIDENTS IN THE RUAPEHU REGION HAVE THE ABILITY TO CONNECT TO THE INTERNET, COMPARED WITH 99.4% NATIONALLY.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 11 Sustainable Cities.

Strengths

- Some have observed more 5G towers in locations where 5G wasn't available before, leading to increased reception in some areas across the region.
- Some in the region are more 'old school' and have the view that they don't need access to or want to rely on the internet for a portion of their lifestyle.
- Some believe there are cheaper and more basic ways of accessing the internet, which is all they need, i.e. an affordable phone plan and free data to access Facebook.

“There is a percentage of families who don't want it, as a lifestyle, and you can understand why, sometimes watching the news every day can be a bit depressing for people and so there's a percentage of families who will choose not to have it as part of a lifestyle and not to buy into the international marketing and the consumerism and some of those other things.

“Whilst some are happy without access to the internet, many struggle with the many black spots and a lack of consistent connectivity across the region, which can create multiple barriers to working remotely, accessing education online and running for local businesses.

“We have got to think about that desire. Some people here just don't need it.

“For a lot of people, they can still be fairly old school. My parents are the older generation. For example, my parents don't need or rely on the internet.

“I'd say 60% of our town [Ohura], don't have internet or phone or actively don't want to have it as well.

“Some people just think, 'oh yeah, that's Ruapehu, this is where we choose to live and that is just the way it is'.

“There's kids who don't have internet and they go and sit outside the post office every evening to be able to access that.

Framework Tags



Barriers

- Many struggle with limited access to the internet and inconsistent cell phone reception across the region, as there are many black spots and scenarios where the only way to get decent internet is to pay expensive rates for Starlink, which many cannot afford.
- Some believe the region's reputation of having poor internet access is a barrier and contributes to businesses being reluctant to move to the region, as access to the internet is becoming increasingly essential to run effective businesses, including farming businesses.

Whilst the following has been identified as a barrier, it has also been identified as a strength:

- Some accept that poor internet and cellphone reception is 'just part of rural life' and that that is just how it is for where they choose to live their life.
- Some community members are able to access free modems or free Wi-Fi in townships; however, many are unaware of these offerings, and some local businesses have experienced barriers when trying to access these.

“We have got Wi-Fi on the main street, but it doesn't hook into any of the businesses.

“We said is there any way that we can have like an extender so that we can have Wi-Fi that would be a real help to us as a business trying to improve Raetihi, if we didn't have to pay for Wi-Fi ourselves, that would be a kind of win win because it's right there just outside the window and they [Council] said 'oh, no, the Wi-Fi is there for the tourists, not for the locals'.

“You might have one of those wireless transmitters around or you may not and if you do, it's really expensive.

“Also when talking about people being able to check websites for updates for events and all that, that was one of the first things that came out pretty quick is a lot of our communities don't have access to that sort of thing. So how are we going to get the messages out to them?

“Oh, internet is so bad. It is so so so bad. Wow. My phone doesn't even work when you're on one of the main streets.

“I'm a photographer and I often upload loads of photographs for weddings and stuff onto the internet. Give clients your own website. And the amount of times it cuts out, is really disappointing.

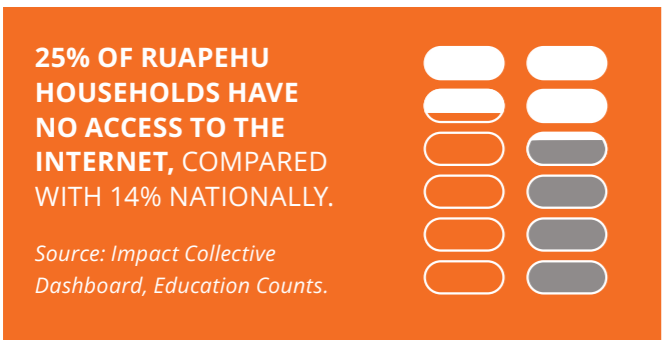
“If you live outside the main town. The mobile reception is intermittent at best. Maybe 50% of phone calls, you end up having to ring them back because it has dropped out.

“I think a lot of it is black spots, it is just crazy, like the high school, is basically like almost, like really hard to get internet access.

“Yeah, we've got roads in this township that don't have access just because there's no coverage. It's crazy.

“Cost is still an issue, even with Skinny Jump Programme, you know, sometimes having a small amount of internet allocated so many gigabytes to a whole family actually causes more trouble. They're not, you know, if mom and dad are trying to use it, to save it to access the internet for online banking, paying bills and things like that. You've got somebody who wants to access it for other stuff. You know, family argument kind of material.

“They have got access but again it comes down to budgets... again, financial.
 “I’m not surprised by that one, we absolutely struggle. There are pockets of Wi-Fi in the township that struggle to get internet connection, and some of these areas aren’t that far out of town either. A lot of these families wouldn’t even have a computer.
 “I’d also heard anecdotally that there are people who’ve thought about moving here, there’s a lot of people who have holiday homes here and they would like to move here. They want to get out of the cities, but they can’t set up their businesses here because the internet’s not reliable enough.



42% OF RUAPEHU ACCESSES THE INTERNET VIA THE COPPER NETWORK.

Chorus, March 2023.

Opportunities

- Some are hopeful that the new One New Zealand (formerly Vodafone New Zealand) agreement with SpaceX will improve internet access and reduce the number of black spots within the region.
- Better and more affordable access to StarLink for rural areas.

“When we had the Raetihi water disaster, Facebook was the only way that the District Council could communicate with people. Why Facebook? Because data is free.

“Accessing Facebook is, you only need a \$1 or \$10 plan and your data will last for ages as long as you don’t go on to something else.

“Also some of them just don’t know there are free modems out there that whānau can access for kids in education.

“You need Wi-Fi or internet connection to run an efficient farming operation. You’ve got to be connected.

“Hopefully with the new Vodafone One NZ and the agreement that they now have Elon Musk and SpaceX will fix it, but we’ll see.

“One word: StarLink. Apparently the council is put in an order for something like 50 units or 40 units.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Raetihi Charitable Trust - provided 50 free modems to families during COVID-19 to ensure they were connected.
- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - offering free skinny jump modems for students to ensure they have access to Wi-Fi.

“So we [Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust] do the skinny jump modems and most of our students do have access to Wi-Fi.

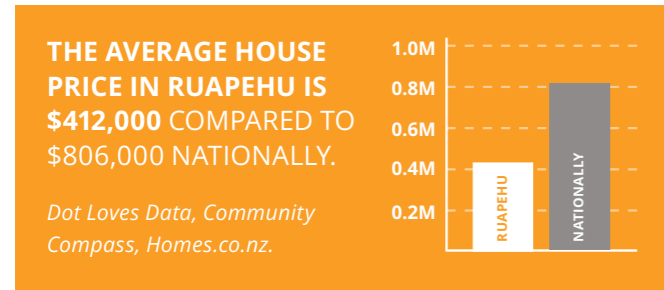
“What we [Raetihi Charitable Trust] did during COVID-19, is we handed out a tonne of modems to families, because they had to be connected... we handed out 50 and only had one handed back to us.

Whilst traditionally, housing prices in the region have increased along with the rest of the country, and many holidaymakers and investors from outside of the region have invested in property in the region, more recently, a shift has been observed with the housing market slowing and prices beginning to decline, potentially opening up more opportunity for local home buyers or renters to find a home.

Strengths

- Some believe Ruapehu appears to be 'holding out alright' compared to some of the house price drops seen in some bigger cities across the country.

"I have been watching markets elsewhere as well... comparing Ruapehu to Wellington, it seems like Ruapehu seems to be holding on alright, house prices, compared to the bigger centres."



Barriers

- Some have observed a significant stall in the housing market across the region, with houses taking much longer to sell or not selling compared to last year. Some property owners have even had to drop their house prices to encourage more interest.
- Increasing mortgage rates are viewed by some as an increasing concern for homeowners and investors with mortgages, with predictions that this may lead to many houses on the market or many people struggling.
- Some believe that global warming, the lack of snow and the diminishing ski season may further impact the value of housing in the region, particularly closer to the mountain.

"A lot of people got into the market and now they're coming to, probably, the end of their fixed rate and the official cash rates have gone up. How can you afford to pay your mortgage now? So in 12 months time there is either going to be a lot of houses on the market or a lot of people struggling."

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities | Industry Innovation & Infrastructure | Reduced Inequalities

Financial & Physical Capital

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

- "What's happening in Ruapehu is what's happening across the country, stalled housing."*
- "Two houses together went on the market in June and clearly are still for sale. What's happening across the country is happening here, it's stalled housing."*
- "Houses outside of town, the slightly bigger ones, are not selling, they would of last year, but they aren't any more. People are holding off."*
- "There are people who came into Taumarunui five, six years ago, who bought 10 properties. So, there are landlords, there are people out there, with 10 to 15 houses under the wing. All these rental properties are going to run into a lot of trouble because with the economic downturn, people won't necessarily be able to pay their rent. Then you're going to see those mortgage sales."*
- "The region as well with the lack of snow last year and potential ongoing of that and global warming and everything, that could have a real big impact [on housing]."*

Opportunities

- Slumping or stalling house prices may open up more opportunities for lower-earning locals to enter the property market.
- "I do think that we'll see a huge shift and an increase in our sales, probably within the next 12 months."*
- "Although I'm not sure we'll have a housing [shortage] crisis in 18 months. I suspect half of our district will be for sale."*
- "Ohakune, by in large, there's a lot of outside ratepayers that own properties down there. Times are getting harder, so I think we'll see a lot of impact in the market."*

With housing prices still high and with a large number of families in the region on low incomes or facing hardship, purchasing a home is still viewed as unattainable for many locals in the community.

Strengths

- Some locals fortunate to own their own homes have experienced a growth in the equity of their properties and have been able to invest this into updating their properties.
- Some locals who took advantage of the cheap property market five to 10 years ago and purchased their neighbours' homes to land-bank and have greater control over who they lived next to are also now in a more fortunate position.

Whilst the following have been identified as a strength, they have also been identified as a barrier:

- Many from outside of the region have moved to Ruapehu as the cost of purchasing a home and the cost of living is viewed as lower compared to some larger cities, with some having the ability to be homeowners 'debt-free' by making the shift to the region.
- The 'tourist hotspot' nature of Ohakune and the associated higher costs due to this has meant some locals have relocated to more affordable townships in the region, such as Raetihi, to purchase a home.
- Some believe the lift in housing prices in the region seems much more significant due to many houses starting at such a low base compared to larger cities.

"They [Aucklanders] have realised that they can make a transition to a more affordable city. They can sell their house in Auckland for \$800,000, buy one here [Taumarunui] for \$400,000, then potentially be mortgage-free down here, live a different life and still run their businesses remotely.

"A lot of people moved here four or five years ago, it was what I called the 'Auckland refugees', people who came for an affordable lifestyle, who were maybe in their 50s, early 60s. So, there was this older group that came in.

"Now [that we] have paid our mortgage, we are debt free. If we sold this place and wanted to move elsewhere, we'd never get a place equal to what we have here. We would have to go back into debt which we don't want to do.

"We've got so many different people in our town. But they are good people. It's [the] only place they can come to get housing.

"One [of my children] recently moved back to Taumarunui to build a house... he decided to settle here because he could build a house with no debt.

"We had this saying a couple of years ago that the locals all live in Raetihi because it's more affordable, and it's a little bit more homely than the tourist destination of Ohakune.

"A lot of people would have experienced that growth in equity in their property. When you go around some parts of the town, you can see it and the updating of the properties.

"About 10 years ago, looking at houses in central Taumarunui town were only maybe 60 grand to 100 grand to buy, so everyone brought their neighbours' so they knew who their neighbours were. It was a way to have the people you want near you or exclude the gang presence in some of those places.

Framework Tags



Barriers

- Many believe that having many people from outside the region buying and owning property has resulted in increased house prices and the cost of living in some areas.
- Some families are choosing to leave the region, as they can now access greater opportunities elsewhere, i.e. Hamilton, and no longer feel they have the advantage of cheaper housing and cost of living in the region.
- Many feel that purchasing a home is now unattainable for many locals due to incomes in the region not increasing at the same rate as the housing market, many of which are already on low incomes.
- For the portion of the region living in deprivation or relying on the benefit, their income is no longer enough to afford to buy a house like it once was.
- Many feel there is an overarching lack of education, advice, budgeting and other services in the region to bridge the knowledge gap that exists for many of these families around how to purchase a home, i.e. how mortgages and Kiwisaver work.
- For some wanting to return home to the region, the rise in house prices has meant they can't, as it is no longer affordable.
- Poor housing quality, and the additional investment required to get these homes up to a liveable standard, can be an additional barrier for those in the region wanting to purchase their first home.
- Many locals in the region are self-employed or seasonal workers, which can be an additional barrier to getting a mortgage approved to purchase a home.

"The median house price seems affordable at \$430,000. But our median income hasn't gone up along those lines. The people who can afford to buy houses for \$430,000 are in the minority.

"his is a nasty piece of work from going from two years ago from 80,000 to now 350,000 and if you weren't in the market aye, you know.

"I don't know if it's Taumarunui housing market that has impacted that [decline in quality education]. A lot of our whānau have left because it's the same price to live in Hamilton as it is in Taumarunui but you don't have the same opportunities.

"Not surprised, we have such a low base to start with housing prices, so maybe we have caught up a little bit with the house prices increasing nationally. It probably seemed like much more of a significant lift because we have such a low base.

"We still have locals who can't buy. They are never going to be able to buy. And there [are] no rentals, so what do they do?

"I'd suggest that many in Ruapehu might have bad credit, many of our families in Raetihi would.

"Whilst house prices are relatively low, I can remember 10 years ago, you could buy a house and Raetihi for 100k. But those people who live in Raetihi are probably still earning the same amount of money now than they did 10 years ago. So because this house prices [are] low compared to the national average. It's still out of reach for most that live here.

"Again comes back to no jobs, no jobs and if you are living on a benefit, home ownership must not even seem like an option. With the prices going up, even more so. It fits with the high deprivation levels.

“It’s huge, that is a major upset within our community you definitely can’t even afford to pay rent, let alone a mortgage on a benefit.

“A lot of our people in Taumarunui don’t understand the market, how it works and they don’t understand how mortgages work. A lot of them are not good with money. Just in terms of not saving it in terms of wise spending.

“I think there’s a lack of education about things like KiwiSaver. We’ve got a lot of people who have lots in KiwiSaver but just don’t know how to access it and use that to their advantage.

“Yeah, a lot of people invest from outside. Definitely declining. We’ve dropped our price quite a bit. I don’t know if local people can still afford houses at [the] moment. Yeah, just when interest rates and the whole cost of living is so high.

“It’s an overwhelming theme, since I have lived here, around people wanting to return home, people wanting to come home. But that boat has sailed in terms of affordability.

“I noticed a lot when I was working in Ohakune and Raetihi, a lot of people are self-employed, or they are seasonal workers. So it’s actually really hard for them to get mortgages to be approved for lending, which has always been a big challenge in our region.

“You can’t get housing for the locals to live here and the houses are over populated but the Ministries and all that are bringing people over here for people to have our houses before our own people can have our houses.

“House prices still aren’t where they used to be, you know, rocking up and getting a place for under 100k. That was only a few years ago.

“There have been huge complaints around real estate here overcharging for houses. They’ll have a government valuation and they charge you three times as much.

“It still links into the fact that we have the enormous amount of deprivation here that people simply aren’t going to be able to afford to buy a house, even if it is a little bit cheaper than it is nationally.

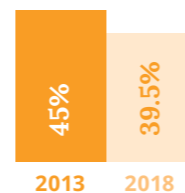
39.5 % OF RUAPEHU INDIVIDUALS OWN THEIR OWN HOME, COMPARED WITH 41% NATIONALLY.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



HOME OWNERSHIP LEVELS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN RUAPEHU HAVE DECREASED FROM 45% IN 2013 TO 39.5% IN 2018.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



Opportunities

- Educating and teaching people about how to live within their means so that they can purchase, or maintain ownership of their own home, especially when they are on the benefit.
- Providing alternative ways of purchasing property for low-income families who might otherwise be unable to buy a home, such as home loans, buy-backs or rent-to-buy schemes.

“Yes absolutely, I look at it too, those that live here have the opportunity to actually purchase their own home but because there is no education and no advice and no budgeting and no services and that to help them to actually understand what it’s about when purchasing the house that actually makes them settle. Whereas a lot of them just see it as a bill, but not seeing it as it’s a home for your family for the rest of your life, it’s about changing that mindset of thinking.

“So we have got to find ways on how you can teach those sorts of programmes while you’re on the benefit. This is what MSD should be looking at.

“There’s gonna have to be a lot more education in regards to teaching people to how to live within their means to be able to keep owning their own home

“This [household income] was a driver for what we did when we looked at the housing models. When we were juggling the ideas between how we would build the housing, what was going to be affordable and the different mixed models of homeownership. So, if we were going to attract homeownership, we’re basing it off the median income, that means home loans, or buybacks, or rent to buys. This is something we can definitely consider.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Ngāti Rangi - provided a homeownership programme a few years ago, which helped many whānau purchase their own homes.
- Housing Corp and Westpac New Zealand - provided a programme years ago to help single mothers on the benefit purchase their first home.

“Ngati Rangi used to run a housing programme, so they could help whānau get into their own homes, that was before COVID-19. She’s gonna do that again. And she said she absolutely is, so they do some cool work in that space.

“When I bought my house there was a group of single mothers of us, we all ended up buying houses and the sort of project program, which was with Housing Corp and Westpac. We ended up buying our houses before the house market jumped up so my house at the moment is worth just under half a million and I bought it for \$42,000.

“They [Ngāti Rangi] bought in a mortgage broker and literally sat down with groups of people and worked out how they could do it, whether it’s through second tier lenders, or how it was possible just work your magic and make it happen. And they did.

Many believe the allocation and utilisation of housing is a core issue contributing to the lack of housing availability in the region, with a high number of empty holiday homes and/or expensive Airbnb rentals located near the mountain (particularly Ohakune) that are either unavailable or unaffordable for long terms renters or people wanting to move to the region for work.

Strengths

- As a result of COVID-19, some holiday homeowners are now renting their holiday homes to long-term renters, which has helped significantly with the housing issue.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Whilst many view Airbnb as a negative for the housing allocation and utilisation issues across the region, some believe it has increased the standard of short-term accommodation available, which comes with some benefits for the local tourism economy.

“So Airbnb has its place especially in a community that for years complained about there not being a good standard of accommodation.

“There is one hotel in Ruapehu that offers a high standard of accommodation... Everything else is very mediocre. You can get better accommodation at an Airbnb place, generally, than you do at a hotel.

“We have seen a little bit of that over COVID-19, holiday home owners, renting them to long term renters, which has helped significantly with the housing issue.

“But we have seen that changing in terms of not the recent sales, but people who have owned holiday homes for a longer period of time, have started to consider long term rentals and they don’t necessarily advertise it either.

“I was working for visit Ruapehu and we had a new staff member start and she came down from Te Puke, and she was relatively well-off, and did exactly that... went through all the Airbnb bookings places, contacted the owners and said, I’m looking for a house for a year or you rent it to me for a year. She easily got a place doing that. But then she didn’t buy a house.

Barriers

- Some believe the region has a housing allocation crisis, with a visible housing shortage, yet, many houses are being sold up to and owned by holidaymakers, sitting empty, without an incentive to live in them or rent them out long term.
- Many believe that there is a lot of money to be made through Airbnb, especially in the holiday season, which contributes to the high number of unoccupied holiday homes during the ‘off season’, as they have made enough money and can afford to leave them empty for half of the year.

Framework Tags



- Many of these holiday homes that are available to be rented are only available during the off-season as seasonal rentals, as homeowners want to use them during winter when the mountain is open.
- Some are aware that some holiday homeowners considering long-term rentals don’t advertise and need to be approached directly, which poses additional barriers for those looking to rent as they may be unaware of this.
- With most holiday accommodation being used by homeowners over winter, this poses additional accommodation barriers to seasonal workers who are vital for the day-to-day running of the mountain, the surrounding towns, and local economies. Some must commute from Taumarunui each day, which comes with additional fuel costs.
- Some have the perception that many out-of-town holiday homeowners and investors only want to make money and don’t necessarily keep their rentals up to standards.
- Some families have experienced devastating impacts of separation and displacement when their intergenerational rentals are sold to people from out of town or converted to holiday homes.

“Airbnb is the thing now, you can extract far more money out of a property if you rent it during the ski season and charge \$700 a night, as opposed to \$400 a week.

“What this tells me is the fiction that is called the housing crisis, there is no housing crisis in New Zealand, there is a housing allocation crisis.

“One of the highest numbers of empty homes in the country is Ohakune.

“So you actually have locals selling up houses for holiday homes. And that’s why 70-80% of the homes in Ohakune don’t have people in them, because they are holiday homes.

“A lot of places just want to be seasonal, because with holiday homes, they obviously want to come and use them as their own which is fair enough.

“Private renters are there for a profit and, and they’re not necessarily going to provide housing that is of a higher standard.

“It’s going to be expensive, comparatively speaking, the rents aren’t going to be governed by what is affordable. They’ve got to be governed by what you can charge, how much they can extract.

“Especially in Raetihi, it was a really devastating thing recently. A whole lot of these rental homes were being sold to people coming from Auckland or holiday homes so our whānau have real trouble trying to procure a place for them, especially when there is that intergenerational living.

“That’s why you have so many homes empty because they’re on Airbnb during the season because that’s where the money is.

“Housing is a huge issue within the whole of the Ruapehu and it is because of the people buying holiday homes and using them as Airbnb’s as another income source.

“As soon as a house comes on the market, generally, a high percentage would be sold to holiday home owners which then just leave it vacant. And that is another house that is taken out for our locals not to be able to rent.

“When we first moved to the region I was just wanting to rent first. And I went on the Airbnb sites because we wanted to live in National Park, because I was still in the army, and she [my wife] was working in a town in Taumarunui and we thought okay that’s in the middle. I hit up every Airbnb and Book a Bach property, sent them a message and everything, and only two properties were available for full time rent, but it was at rates higher than Wellington. Two out of 40 properties.

“I don’t think Airbnb is a problem in terms of overall housing availability, or allocation, I think the government should surely have known that that was an unintended consequence of increasing standards for rental properties.

“We used to rent out one bedroom and we made about \$2000 a year, but we stopped... partly because of the pandemic. And because the young people who liked the cheap Airbnb weren’t coming to New Zealand anymore. But we also stopped because they [Council] would have doubled our rates. Another unintended consequence.

“You literally have to go through the Airbnb’s and you have to approach the owners. So there is a lot of work to get yourself a rental.

“It’s not just a ski field, you know, it’s the restaurants and all the things that make the town buzz. They’re all creaking along, you know, at breaking point because there’s just no accommodation for people [staff] to move here.

“I know people were travelling from Taumarunui to go up the mountain each day, and they were struggling because of the fuel costs and all that.

“We talk about our community and being involved with our community, they [out of town holiday home owners and investors] are not. And their spend, if they are making money off our people from this area, where do you think they spend it? They are not from here, they are from Auckland.

“We have real problems with seasonal staff coming in, because then they can’t get any accommodation, so that means that the ski field doesn’t work properly, because they can’t get the staff that they need because the staff can’t get houses here. If the field is not working properly, that affects the whole community negatively.

THERE ARE MORE THAN 20 SHORT TERM RENTALS FOR EVERY 100 LONG TERM BONDS IN RUAPEHU, AMONGST THE HIGHEST IN NEW ZEALAND.



Housing in Aotearoa 2020, P.123 - 2021 revised version.

Opportunities

- Providing better protection for renters, i.e. security of tenure (similar to what exists in the Netherlands).
- COVID-19 has caused some holiday home owners to consider long term rentals, and a silver lining of a lack of a ski season may mean more either start selling their holiday homes or renting them to long term renters too.

“I think what needs to happen is there needs to be better protection for people that are renting. We need to put in place systems like those that exist in the Netherlands.

“You know, they’ve tried policies around Airbnb and rates. You gotta ask, what are the legal mechanisms they can implement in order to keep everyone happy?

“So in the Netherlands. Corporations and huge housing estates just look like ordinary streets. They’re nicely built homes, that people have security of tenure. The house is redecorated at the owners cost every 10 or 15 years. And people respect them. So there aren’t enough protections in New Zealand.

“That’s just contributing to the deprivation, hopefully that might change a little bit, if the ski season is a bit of a bust, then hopefully people will either start selling their holiday homes or renting them to long term renters.

Good Mahi in the Community

- The Park Hotel Ruapehu - previously used as accommodation for National Park staff. They would share facilities; that way, it was more affordable.
- Department of Conservation (DOC) - offering accommodation for their workers; ‘we can’t just offer someone a job and expect them to find housing with stats like that’.

“I think that might be one of the things that National Park did because I think they built the Park Hotel. I think they use that as staff accommodation if they need to. So they’ve got enough space to house all their staff. Because they’ve, you know, they’ve thought outside the box.

“So they’re all sharing facilities, and that way, it’s cheap for them. We get the staff we want and you know, so National Park’s kind of working better from that point of view.

“We [DOC] are lucky as there are opportunities to provide housing for workers... Being able to provide some housing options as an employer is key. My team is bigger so the demand is bigger. We can’t just offer someone a job and expect them to find housing with stats like that

With many of the community unable to buy a house, many are facing additional barriers to rent due to ineffective allocation and utilisation, limited availability, and poor quality of housing stock in the region that is coming at a high cost, making these unattainable, particularly for local low-income and high-deprivation families.

There are also concerns around the slow progression of urban planning and housing development across the region that may alleviate some of these stressors.

Strengths

- Some have observed many new buildings, growth and subdivisions happening, particularly in Ohakune, over the last three years.
- Some property owners, who have experienced their own struggles, are much more empathetic and don't charge market rates for rentals in the hope they can make things a little more affordable for their renters.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some areas, such as Taumarunui, have seen decreasing numbers on social housing waitlists. However, many people are still on waiting lists in multiple communities across the region, with a perception that the region lacks state and social housing.

“There’s been more building happen in the last three years than they had in the previous 20.

“Ohakune is quite different, that’s seen a lot of growth and subdivision and has had a lot of new builds. So, I think they are quite well diversified. Horopito also.

“We don’t charge market rent on our place, it’s probably me and my too bigger heart. We charge \$300 when it should be \$400 according to the agent. But I’ve been there before, I’ve struggled.

“There is a lot of whānau, so nobody is going to allow somebody in their family to go without a roof.

THE MEDIAN RENT PRICE IN RUAPEHU IS \$306, COMPARED WITH \$526 NATIONALLY.

RUAPEHU \$306 | NATIONALLY \$526



Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

Barriers

- With many experiencing significant price increases in rentals across the region, many also feel that the quality of rentals is declining, with many old houses that don't meet standards still being rented at expensive rates or sitting empty, deteriorating as landlords cannot afford to bring them up to standards.
- Those living in deprivation are particularly struggling with the high cost of rentals across the region, leading to a number of downstream impacts, including compromising or going without other essential living costs to afford their rent.
- Some feel that some tenants don't always know how to be tidy or clean and take care of their rentals, leading to some getting kicked out in some instances and forced to live in their cars.
- Some feel there is a lack of bare land available across the region, which, coupled with the affordability of land and building development, is viewed as a barrier to housing development and growth in the region.

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities | No Poverty | Good Health & Wellbeing | Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Human Capability | Social Cohesion | Financial & Physical Capital

Self-managing and empowered leaders | Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

- Māori land settlements are viewed as an additional barrier to housing development and growth in the region, as some people are reluctant to purchase land that they think will become Māori land.
- Some have experienced some diversification in the new homes being built; however, they have concerns that there is still a lack of variety, such as smaller two-bedroom apartments or shared and communal living spaces being developed.
- Some feel that the lack of rentals and housing availability is a significant contributing factor to many employers in the region attracting staff, which can have many downstream impacts on the local economy.

“So the economy is really stretched, against those with low incomes, they’re there they’re in a bind in a lot of ways, food, a roof over your head, power, you are pretty much shot.

“For Taumarunui, there were over 200 people waiting [on the housing waitlist] when I started. But as I mentioned, many of the people were kaumatua, so some have unfortunately passed on or moved away so I’ve been able to get that down.

“In Ohakune there are [many] on the social housing waitlist.

“The only housing that’s in Raetihi that is in the public sector is all the flats on Seventh Street that were, you know, were originally created for retirees, that have sort of become social housing.

“Far too much of what we have, life’s necessities, are market driven now. And they shouldn’t be.

“There’s a place very near us that used to be rented. It’s not rented at the moment and I suspect that’s directly as a result of that. Because of course any landlord has to be compliant with healthy homes and the standards don’t suit old weatherboard homes.

“It’s a nationwide thing, and the quality of housing sort of proves the market is looking for opportunity and yet still there is still a lot of bad quality housing, at unaffordable prices.

“There’s some places that shouldn’t even have been built in the first place let alone in the climate we see here.

“A lot of our homes are the 1920’s style homes. In the last few years, that’s diversified a little bit and there’s been an increase in new builds, but we don’t have two bedroom apartments or different kinds of living for different kinds of people.

“It’s the market right at the moment, though. Yeah, that’s extremely high. You might pay \$400 but that will be for a shit house, a really under par house.

“House prices have increased so much here, but what’s really awful is the rent, it’s impossible. I don’t know how people are affording the rent.

“We’ve got a lot of people renting houses and paying a lot of money for rent at the moment. Not that long ago, you might have been paying \$150, which used to be a lot a week for rent. Some people are now paying \$350 for the same home.

“Some renters are held ransom almost because if they complain about the state of their house, which may not meet code, they get kicked out.

“I don’t know if it [happens] often, but I have seen it and then I said to the real estate agent, I said ‘are you gonna fix that?’ and they were like, ‘well, it’s just basically take it or leave it’.

“Māori specifically, you are going to be renting and you are not only talking about renting today, but you’re talking about renting when you’re a national superannuation and the chances are you won’t be able to afford a place unless there are two or three of you going into a rented place.

“Rentals, whilst they might say more affordable, when you’ve got rent of \$400 for a three bedroom home and you’re on the benefit. Your benefits are only \$300, maybe \$320 if you have got temporary additional support. That’s still more than 100% of your income.

“We have got overcrowding in houses, they’ll go live with family, some of them have to leave the region, they don’t have a choice, but generally they will live with family and in houses that aren’t healthy.

“I’ve had some students living in my car park at our campus and not say anything to me because they’ve been too embarrassed but still committed to coming to the courses to get those tickets so they can get employment to get a house.

“It’s a nightmare to try and find a rental so you can’t get people to get jobs because they have nowhere to live. That’s quite common.

“When I was looking from Waiouru, for somewhere to rent, there was nothing so I hit the Airbnb and Book a Bach website and contacted everyone... ‘they were a full time professional couple, with only one small dog at that stage, and shit, we were paying \$480 a week to live in National Park, which had a gas station and a pub.

72 RUAPEHU RESIDENTS ARE ON THE HOUSING REGISTER WAITLIST FOR SOCIAL HOUSING AS AT MARCH 2023.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass. Ministry of Social Development, Housing Register.



THE RUAPEHU HOUSING REGISTER WAITLIST HAS INCREASED FROM 15 PEOPLE TO 72 PEOPLE OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass. Ministry of Social Development, Housing Register.

Opportunities

- Increasing housing subdivisions of lifestyle blocks and cross-lease of sections across the region.
- Providing clarity around tiny homes and campgrounds with town planning so that they manage social outcomes, people’s behaviours and aesthetics, and they don’t become slums during a housing crisis.
- Creating a social housing project in Taumarunui.
- Monitoring housing standards more closely, for example, Council saying ‘keep the house up to a standard, or you lose it’.
- Gathering insight from emergency service providers, i.e. police, fire and ambulance services, on the lived realities of the housing shortage across the region.
- Being more open to different solutions, i.e. US trailer parks, communal living, and smaller homes as seen in Hong Kong.

“You can’t just wait for a listing to come up, you have to be proactive if you want a place.

“We haven’t partnered up with any housing providers. Everyday I read in the paper, someone’s got a housing subdivision. We need to get better with that,

“One of the things that will immediately create growth, I think, is subdivision of lifestyle blocks and cross-lease of sections. Where those larger areas with a house can cross lease and put another dwelling on their property.

“We need to be looking at land use. So having lifestyle blocks, having industrial zones, because that’s limiting growth and development.

“I’d like the Council saying “keep the house up to a standard or you lose it. Make your main street look nice.”

“So in the United States they have trailer parks. And in these trailers are no maybe 15 square meters or no slightly bigger than then maybe 30 square meters. They get routinely ripped up by tornadoes. They’re a way of living, owning the trailer or renting the trailer on somebody else’s land.

“So we need to be open to different solutions in the city. Why does every house have to have a kitchen and a laundry and a bathroom? Why can’t a number of houses share those facilities?

“In Hong Kong. The flats are really small. It’s not common to invite somebody to your home and Chinese culture. You meet at a cafe. So these homes are really small. They do the cooking in the home and the sleeping in the home. All of the communal space. You know the lounges that’s out in the open because the open courtyards are designed for people to socialize together. And so why are we building 200 square meter homes with three lounges and two garages?

Good Mahi in the Community

- Some locals are renting their spare bedrooms to help with the housing shortage.
- Moore Street Ohakune (Ruapehu District Council with the support of local Iwi) - achieved a lot with social housing, improving standards, etc., and has built six new flats in Ohakune.

“So I think then there will be different innovations. At the beginning of COVID-19, the government gave a whole lot of transportable homes or camper vans to people way up north. I hope like hell those people still have them because they used to just live in rotten wooden shacks.

“So when we bought our place, there’s spare bedrooms and all that, so every winter we have had couples staying with us. It has been pretty cool.

“When I came on board the Council was in the process of building six new flats in Ohakune, completed in October this year. That was a cool achievement.

“Iwi wanted to see what that looked like and what Council could do to start it off, and then move towards a space where we would have whānau supported by Iwi with a wrap-around service from council. So that’s how Moore Street was developed.

Whilst tourism has typically been the industry propping up the local economy and offering many jobs for the region, this is now at risk and changing due to the threat of climate change and recent financial hardship and closures of core local businesses, particularly for the southern townships closer to the mountain, i.e. Ohakune.

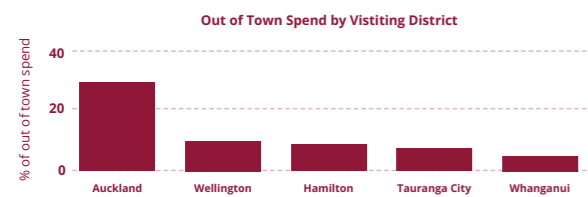
Many feel there is a need for the region’s tourism sector to diversify relatively urgently, as they believe the region has much more to offer beyond the mountain.

TOURISM SPEND CURRENTLY MAKES UP 56% OF TOTAL CONSUMER SPENDING IN RUAPEHU DISTRICT.



Eftpos NZ.

ONE THIRD OF RUAPEHU’S DOMESTIC VISITATION COMES FROM AUCKLAND.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Ministry of Social Development.

Strengths

- Some believe that due to Taumarunui’s northern location, changes to the Ruapehu tourism industry, e.g. closures and global warming, have less impact on the community, as their link to the mountain isn’t as strong as some southern communities, such as National Park and Ohakune.
- With many great things to offer beyond the mountain, some people have been seen to have already come up with alternative ideas to tourism for the region.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Although some believe tourism is great for the local economy, those who benefit from tourism aren’t necessarily those living within the Ruapehu community.

“In Taumarunui, it’s a little bit more insulated from the mountain than what like National Park and Ohakune, the southern Ruapehu area, is.

“I think the orientation and the hills mean that Taumarunui looks North more than South. There’s a link to the mountain but it’s not a really, really strong link.

“There’s already people coming up with alternative ideas to tourism.

“Taumarunui is quite robust. It’s now starting to realise the value of, you know, the timber trail, the walkers, the tour channels or bikers. Then you know, there’s stuff that’s happening on the river too.

Framework Tags

Decent Work & Economic Growth | Industry Innovation & Infrastructure | Sustainable Cities & Communities | Climate Action

Natural Environment | Human Capability | Financial & Physical Capital

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation | Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

Barriers

- Many believe changes to the Ruapehu tourism industry, such as closures of key destinations, will significantly impact the region as tourism has historically propped up the economy and has provided employment for the Ruapehu community. As changes occur, some anticipate core tourism communities, such as Ohakune and National Park, changing as unemployment and deprivation increase.
- Due to the changing landscape of tourism, some fear that local businesses, particularly in Ohakune, will severely struggle without support from the Council and knowledge of how to diversify their business. Some anticipate closures having a significant impact and ‘domino effect’ on the local economy as local shops and businesses close, with fears of creating ‘ghost towns’ in what were once vibrant townships.
- Some believe Ruapehu hasn’t been marketed enough for people to visit and live in the district; instead, it has focused primarily on tourism.

“No one’s putting support around the businesses at all, you know, the local economy is just gonna die if they’re not careful.

“Recently the Chateau closed. That’s going to impact tourism immensely.

“Both RAL and the Chateau are two scenarios that are driven by the current economic situation. There are two factors here, COVID-19 and climate change, that’s driving them.

“Tourism is going to take a hit obviously so I would expect that unemployment level to go up a bit.

“It didn’t help, obviously, with a very poor ski season last year. It’s an industry that provides a lot for this community.

“With RAL, when it’s in season, between the two ski fields, they employ 700 odd people, probably about a good 700-800 people all around.

“Ohakune and National Park have those jobs that are closer to the mountains, but if the mountain closes, and of course the Chateau is closed, that stat [unemployment] may change and they may start to look like Taumarunui.

“In terms of jobs, there are far fewer and the jobs that we now have are based primarily in tourism, and hospitality, and they’re based in Ohakune or on the mountain or the chateau.

“I’m also a business owner in Ruapehu as well, so we own a business in Ohakune. We have all the issues that have happened with RAL, and the Chateau, and it’s not just that it’s the two big things you see on the news, but we can see businesses around us every day that are closing their doors and walking away.

“The problem that we have is that if our businesses don’t understand how to diversify their income streams, they’re not going to survive.

“Businesses have no clue, and people aren’t paying their bills, so it is this huge domino effect which will just close all the businesses down and if there’s no businesses there, there’s no town that’s Ohakune.

“Yes, tourism coming into our region is great for our local economy. But generally our people aren’t the ones who keep that money.

“Taumarunui has been doing well. Everyone’s crying foul in Ohakune for the first time, and for many, many, many years where Taumarunui used to complain, that it never got anything around the visitors.

“Last ski season was pretty much non-existent. I’m not a skier but friends that were working out there and everything... There’s, maybe, probably one good season in five, I think it’s climate change.

“If the mountain closes, the emphasis will change quite dramatically from a service industry to one where we’re going to be very dependent on central government, they are going to be providing relief, people are going to be on the dole, and they will leave, and that is what happens of course, and the only people left, are the people that can’t leave.

Opportunities

- Diversifying what brings income into the Ruapehu region by thinking outside the square, focusing less on tourism and driving different opportunities.
- Decentralising government agencies and placing them within rural New Zealand, instead of Wellington, to inject more jobs and money back into the region.

“Tourism drives a lot of our community and what I’ve tried to pitch to the Council, is that we need to not focus so much on tourism. Yes it brings the income into our community, but we need to consider delivering for our people that are from here, that are living here.

“We’ve got some really good things beyond skiing that are good for young people.

“Staff have probably seen tourist seasons becoming broader and shoulder seasons becoming more of a busier season, I suppose. More opportunity because of the weather. Our destinations [are] becoming more year-round, as opposed to seasonal.

“I’m like this is crazy, the towns are going to become ghost towns and no one’s going to attract new businesses in, to help businesses grow, help businesses diversify their income streams. No one’s doing that there.

“What we haven’t been doing is marketing our district for people to come and live here, work here, etc. We’ve only focused our investment on economic development for tourism, for destination marketing.

“What we haven’t been doing as much marketing of our district for people to come here, live here, and work here.

“The review of economic development will allow us to be able to say, “we need to market our district”. Whanganui does a great job. But we haven’t been doing that and there’s an opportunity for us to really look at that. Not just marketing the mountain, the rivers and the pretty things to do.

“This is the year we need to really drive community and Council around opportunities. Rather than just look at tourism. The snow might end due to global warming.

“We need to diversify our business portfolio that we have in the district by thinking outside the current square that we seem to operate in.

“We’ve just got an opportunity this year to diversify our economic development portfolio away from traditional areas [tourism] and start to look at all these things, health, wellbeing, recycling hospital opportunities, horticulture and marijuana, marae development, Māori economy, digital economy, we have all these opportunities.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Ruapehu District Council - diversifying the region’s economic development portfolio away from traditional areas, such as tourism, to health, wellbeing, recycling, horticulture, marae development, Māori economy, digital economy, etc.
- Ta e Po Koauna destination management plan - an initiative put in place to benefit the future of tourism, along with values around the environment and employment.

“Ta e Po Koauna destination management plan launch has really nailed down the future of tourism, along with a whole bunch of values around the environment, employment, etc, which, for the first time since I’ve worked here [at Council], sits well as a document in terms of its values.

“So that’s the business confidence issue around RAL and the future of the mountain. Yes, the document will look at that and already can look at alternative diversification.

“I’ve been told fair and square in many emails. It’s not just about snow. It’s not just about, you know, tourism, it is about many, many other things. And so yes, this document services that purpose.

Whilst many organisations are supportive of volunteer work, and it is viewed by many as a way to connect with and support their communities, many people are becoming increasingly time-poor and in need of paid work to make ends meet, making it harder to attract, recruit and retain in the volunteer space across the region. This can be challenging for many community organisations in Ruapehu as they rely on volunteerism to operate efficiently and cannot get the funding to pay their staff.

APPROXIMATELY 21.5% OF NEW ZEALANDERS UNDERTAKE VOLUNTEER WORK.

Tūao Aotearoa, Volunteering Statistics, 2022.



Strengths

- For some, volunteering has many benefits, such as getting a ‘kick’ out of helping others, being face-to-face with the community, and being part of a healthy social volunteer network.
- Some workplaces and employers in Ruapehu are very supportive of their employees who volunteer, particularly those who are in the fire brigade.

Whilst the following have been identified as a strength, they have also been identified as a barrier:

- Many feel that Ruapehu has a good group of volunteers involved in emergency response in the region, particularly for Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) and Civil Defence, with many people wearing multiple hats and volunteering for multiple organisations. The flip side, however, is that they need to do so due to a lack of volunteers in the region.
- Some organisations within the region rely heavily on volunteer support; without it, they wouldn’t be able to achieve what they do.

- “Volunteerism, there is a good group that are pretty good up here.
- “Our trust is heavily driven by the volunteers that are behind it. Without our volunteers, we wouldn’t be able to do what we do.
- “It’s a huge big engine that’s got to be running... that’s all run off volunteers.
- “I get a kick out of helping my community and being able to do it [volunteering], like, we’re at a lucky position where I’m able to do it.
- “What makes me want to do this? It’s helping the community. It’s getting out there. Face to face with the community face and face with the farmers and yeah, talking to them.
- “The underlying themes are that people are usually keen to help the community, especially communities like ours.
- “And I remember thinking “oh no, my boss told me he thinks I’ve been out all this time on my new job”, but he was really supportive. And they still paid me for that whole day even though I wasn’t there. And still let me go to fire calls after that.
- “He [my boss] was very very supportive. I think it’s their way of giving back to the community too.
- “We require a lot of volunteers to run all of these activities, like athletics, that’s close to 50 volunteers to run that day.

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities No Poverty Decent Work & Economic Growth Partnerships for the Goals

Human Capability Social Cohesion

Participating fully in society Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Barriers

- Some believe that with increasing financial pressures across the country, volunteers are becoming more hesitant to gift their time, especially if it requires losing income for callouts or time off. For some, paid roles are, at times, more desirable than volunteering for the love of their community, as it can be difficult justifying this to their families.
- Whilst many organisations are actively trying, they are experiencing challenges with recruiting and retaining volunteers due to many volunteer roles being unpaid.
- Many have noticed dwindling numbers and fewer volunteers committing their time to volunteer groups and organisations, meaning that the region is required to rely on one core group of volunteers who do most of the work and share concerns that they aren’t getting any younger.
- Some volunteer organisations who have invested time and resources into training and up-skilling their volunteers feel as though they are losing out when volunteers leave. This can impact their operations as training new volunteers takes time.
- Some feel that when volunteers become paid employees, their motivation may shift from personal interest and donation of their time to a financial necessity, which can lose the feel-good ‘kick’ they once felt. Some are concerned that paid volunteers may find it hard to maintain the same level of dedication and enthusiasm they once had.

“Going back a little bit further. It was usually one income earner in the home. Now while our standard of living has undoubtedly improved, people are busy making ends meet and there just isn’t the volunteerism that there used to be.

- “People are out there just not volunteering as much as they used to.
- “I see it all the time, it is the same people doing all of the hard yards, and they are not getting any younger.
- “People aren’t putting their hands up to do the mahi that they used to.
- “The first one, yeah. I saw an ad on Facebook asking for volunteers for the SPCA ops shop just this morning. So getting volunteers is definitely an issue...
- “We’ve become more responsive to ourselves, and less responsible for our communities... we’ve become more inward looking.
- “Obviously, it’s a volunteer role. But you have to be committed to something, you know, to a certain extent and know that you’ve got the time because it is a commitment.
- “The membership has declined, the average age has gotten older, and people are less inclined to put their hands up for volunteer work, but nevertheless, we seem to be almost as active as we were two years ago. It’s just that fewer members are putting their hands up to do things.
- “Yeah, but it’s harder to get volunteers. Because people need to make money to prop up their incomes or their pension. To be fair. Those volunteers are usually in the older bracket by the way.

“The problem with having sufficient members, is when members joined the society, volunteerism was taken for granted... teachers taught sports teams after school, they turned up at games on a Saturday. Everybody volunteered for everything.

“And it tends to be people who either work for an agency and are paid, who are in the sector of trying to improve society, or who are independent and completely volunteers and they’re not paid at all.

“She insists that we are open 7 days a week, which is quite a bit of pressure because it is really only supposed to be a hobby job and we don’t get paid.

“It’s [volunteering and not earning] definitely stressful, but also justifying it to your family, justifying it to your family is hard.

“We’re just too proud to go and get any money from the government. Also too busy to be a job seeker. We’re very lucky that we have husbands who earn enough to keep us going, kind of thing.

“We bought two employees on last year, which were volunteers originally. Going into the paid space changed the whole dynamic of how they offered their time and that didn’t quite work out. It tripled my workload and was really unexpected.

“[When they were volunteers] they would do it because they were wanting to, but when it changed to an expectation to have to do it [because they were getting paid], they didn’t want to.

“It is hard mahi aye, trying to put out a scrub fire. You know you are probably going to be there a few days, and if you are, you are going to have a loss of income from your job and it’s like, well why bother?

“Yeah, and I’m thinking, I have put so much into this and why am I doing this? When I’m on the bones of my ass.

Opportunities

- Increasing promotion around volunteerism and its non-financial benefits, i.e. building skills, confidence and knowledge, to attract more volunteers.
- Reinstating the Taumarunui High School Youth in Emergency Services programme.
- Financially incentivising volunteer roles to make volunteering a more economically viable pathway, ultimately increasing recruitment and retention for these organisations.

“You’ll find there is a core group in the Ruapehu that will turn up to everything and try and manage stuff but they are getting older and greyer, so it is trying to find our replacements.

“Back in the day rural volunteer firefighters were paid - this made a huge difference. Because back in the day, our rural volunteer firefighters were employed under councils, they got an hourly rate when they went to go and fight fires. And now people just do it for the love of it, that’s again why it is probably quite hard to recruit I suppose.

“Yeah, I have to go to work, basically. And if I can’t make this pay, then it’s going to fall over.

“I think there needs to be a bit more promotion around volunteerism.

“If rural fire crews especially knew that they were going to be looked after when they are attending these incidents, then recruitment would go right up, but it is just not there yet.

“I’m proposing that we all get paid a wage so that we can all work three days a week and be happy in our work. Because at the moment it’s so stressful. We’re all on the breadline. Yeah, all of us.

“I’ve been doing all this work, kind of hoping that one day it will pay, that one day someone will see the value in it and go ‘yes, we’re on board, we’re going to fund you’, I’ve always got that hope and the back of my head.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Youth in Emergency Services - facilitated a programme with Taumarunui High School and Ruapehu District Council that develops the next generation of volunteers and professionals; however, the programme is no longer active.
- Some fire brigades are now providing financial incentives for their volunteers.
- Some reported that there is a new business aiming to use disruptive blockchain technology to facilitate cryptocurrency exchange for volunteering in the region.

“The National Park Brigade is also quite a good way to do the social side of things as well, we’re not saying that it is for games and booze or anything like that, but just to meet new people and all that.

“I am lucky in the Winter months that with the Rural Fire Brigade, they don’t get a lot of call-outs for fires, so they double hat if you like. A bit of a group there, 10-15 people, and a core group of about 5 that come and assist.

“It is an issue. It is certainly, and that’s why the Civil Defence Programme for rangatahi as first responders doesn’t need to be an employment outcome. It’s actually, if the outcome was increasing volunteerism in your communities, that should be equivalent.

“There’s a big project that’s happening by one person in Ohakune that lives in Raetihi. She [is] working on a blockchain disruptive technology output for community work. So you actually get like a cryptocurrency in return. So you can actually live off doing volunteer work. So it’s big. It’s big. No one knows about it yet.

Ruapehu is viewed by many as a great region to be sufficient off the land, with high access to affordable and healthy local produce, including fruit and vegetable stores, plenty of hunters supplying meat, and many who have their own gardens and share their produce with the community readily.

Strengths

- As the region boasts an excellent climate that makes growing easy, many families, particularly those living more remotely, grow their own gardens and trees, which produce an abundance of fruit and vegetables and allow them to live off their garden and keep costs down.
- Many families within the region are willing to offload and share their excess fruit, vegetables, hunting and fishing with neighbours and the wider community, and view this sharing of produce as a part of the Ruapehu culture.
- Many believe fruit and vegetables are readily available and easy to come by right across the region as there are plenty of stalls, particularly in the south, where people can access local produce at a reasonable price.

“You know, we can’t sell it and we don’t give it away. So we’ve got hunters that will go out. We’ll get venison and just come back and just fill everyone’s freezers. Amazing. That’s why I love living in this region.”

- “It’s a great climate, most families have some sort of veggie gardens and fruit trees.”*
- “Fruit grows here in abundance on sides of [the] street as well as backyards.”*
- “Not surprised, we can grow a wide range of vegetables. Most people I know have their own garden and grow their [own] vegetables.”*
- “Ruapehu is the old root vegetable capital of NZ, there is plenty of that around.”*
- “That one is normal for us as well to be fair, vegetables are very easy to come by in Ruapehu and much more affordable than nationwide because we’ve got Youngs out there. So obviously we’ve got the big market gardeners.”*
- “There [are] plenty of vegetable stalls in the South, you always see the shops there and they have all got local produce and it is pretty reasonably priced.”*
- “Particularly in Ohakune you have carrots, potatoes, greens, sprouts, you know, all those things grow for a good period of the year.”*
- “We grow our own, they can eat it and it’s free. Elderly grow veggies and you go knock on the door if you need anything.”*
- “There’s [a] lot of horticulture in our town, stuff grows here really well. We plant fruit trees, we have a community garden we put money into here. And we have abandoned sections with fruit trees. There’s lots of free food available.”*
- “In a month or two, I will have over 1000 pears that I’ll be trying to offload to people. Everybody’s, you know, at feijoa season you are having to tell people, ‘oh, no thanks. I’ve got 1000 at home’.”*

Framework Tags

Life on Land | No Poverty | Zero Hunger | Good Health & Wellbeing | Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

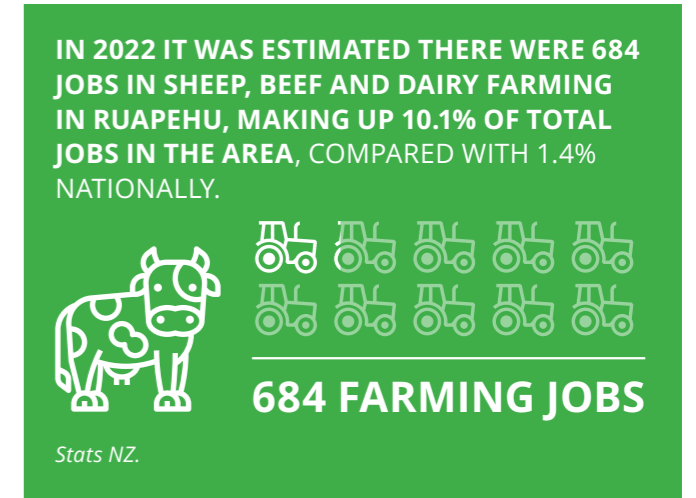
Sustainable Cities & Communities | Responsible Consumption & Production

Human Capability | Social Cohesion | Financial & Physical Capital | Natural Environment

Self-managing and empowered leaders | Leading healthy lifestyles | Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

- “Foraging is still really big aye... like giving the neighbour what you’ve got leftover. And that’s just part of our culture.”*
- “Also, all the farming communities still have apple trees on each of their properties people can go and pick from and that’s something that was quite traditional and biblical, and I think that our farming families, they still practice it, which is kind of cool.”*
- “In Piriaka, 4 of the households, we’re all like, pretty much interconnected with each other. It’s not not really a fence between us. We all have our own gardens, and we will come together and have had group dinners based on all the vegetables that were growing.”*
- “And if some of us go hunting, cool that is the meat provided or go fishing, there’s some eels, so still doing a lot of traditional Māori stuff but also just general family and community gatherings.”*
- “If you need meat there are plenty of hunters around and it will arrive in a grey sack. You just ask. We look after our own.”*
- “We also planted a really, really small fruit forest now in our section because we’ve got a little bit of land, a little lifestyle block, which we will open the gate and anyone could come in and take that once it’s grown.”*
- “I just got my gun license because I’m doing that as well. So we’ve got a huge access to hunting to get meat and when we get it we share it.”*



Barriers

- Whilst many food stalls, honesty boxes and community gardens in the region provide high-quality and affordable produce, some feel local chain stores have a disappointing range of fruit and vegetables that are low-quality and more expensive.

“The cost of living crisis is gonna hit and is hitting everywhere. The scary thing is, nationwide, it's more affordable to eat unhealthy [food]. They don't have the education in the home and the convenience factor to overrule the [cost] benefits.

“You are what you eat. So, if you eat crap you'll look crap and feel crap but they can't see that. It's convenient.

“The problem that we have, is we have a Four Square in Raetihi, which doesn't have great quality or range of vegetables or fruit, you know, just pretty pitiful.

“And you have got New World in Ohakune, which is much higher priced than anywhere else, and of course they've got the fruit vegetables and from on my foodstuffs somewhere else and just looks a bit bland to be honest.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Foodbank Taumarunui - operating from the Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) building by a local charity and welcomes all walks of life.
- Kim Young & Sons vegetable stall and honesty boxes - providing the community with access to affordable vegetables.
- Many community gardens in the region, e.g. Ohura community garden which is utilising abandoned sections or fruit trees.
- Nga Hau e Wha Maara Kai - aiming to provide the community with the means and knowledge of being self-sustainable in Taumarunui, with an extensive garden area for planting and growing food.
- The Hope Foundation - selling large amounts of cheap veggies to the community.
- Taumarunui Whakaarotahi Trust - delivering affordable vegetable boxes to people's homes.
- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - offering a hunting and gathering programme that enables people to source their own meat.

“There is a farm not too far from National Park with a big stall, and you always see cars pulling up there. You can get a massive 10kg bag of spuds for \$4, it is pretty good, constantly stocked and good stuff there.

“We've got a good number of community gardens around the place. People are trying to be more self-reliant and [resilient] given the current economic climate.

“I have also had a lot to do with Nga Hau e Wha Maara Kai, also in Taumarunui, and again, another awesome organisation surrounding native nursery, riparian planting and food.

“So they've got food gardens here as well. So it's extensive as a large area with a lot of gardens in it. And they're doing some really cool work with rangatahi up there as well.

“We've got Young's honesty box, and that's always stocked and it is always cheap. You can get a high bag of carrots, like a mega-bag, for \$6. That is why vegetables are just easier to come by.

“The honesty box, everyone's engaging in it, everyone uses it. I use it all the time.

“We know we're going to get the freshest of the fresh because you got to the Young's Honesty Box and it's been picked that morning from the field. That's the freshest, that's awesome.

“You can go out there with \$20 and feed a house full for a couple of weeks [the honesty box].

“There's this one family down here with like six huge greenhouses and they sell seedlings at the gate for \$2. The Hope Foundation sells massive amounts of cheap veggies. And then also like the Cossie club, there's a table there so if you've got surplus like I've got too much Silverbeet, it's gonna go off. You put it down on the club table and you can take it for free.

“Te Awanui-a-Rua Charitable Trust is so key with their programmes, because they're teaching people how to hunt. Now I've got my gun license, and now I'm gonna go get my own meat.

A considerable benefit of a small community is that everyone knows everyone and looks out for one another, which leads to a general feeling of safety and lower crime in the community. Many feel that when crime is present, it is handled promptly and informally through personal networks.

However, some feel that this may be starting to shift due to more out-of-towners relocating to these small communities.

RUAPEHU HAS THE 32ND HIGHEST LEVEL OF CRIMINAL OFFENDING OUT OF ALL 67 DISTRICTS IN NEW ZEALAND.

NZ Police Database, Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

2955 CRIMES WERE COMMITTED IN RUAPEHU DISTRICT OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS, BUT THE STATIC CRIME RATE HAS FALLEN FROM 43 CRIMES PER 10,000 PEOPLE PER MONTH, TO 37 CRIMES PER 10,000 PEOPLE PER MONTH BETWEEN MARCH 2020 AND MARCH 2023.

NZ Police Database, Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



Strengths

- Some believe Ruapehu is a great place to raise children due to the small-town nature of the region, where everyone knows everyone, providing reassurance that children are safe in most areas.
- Many feel that due to the small-town nature of the region, when offences do occur, everyone generally knows who is doing it, and they are handled promptly by people within the community.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Many in the region generally feel there is less crime and generally feel safe in the Ruapehu townships. However, some are beginning to feel less secure due to a more recent bad experience or encounter.

“There’s a degree of local accountability, because you’re shitting in your own nest. It doesn’t stop all crime, but it does keep it down.

“Overall crime [is] relatively low and if you’re talking [about] assault crime, it’s usually within sectors of the community and doesn’t spill over too much.

Framework Tags

Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Social Cohesion

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“We’re really lucky that, you know, we’re not having that level of violence. There’s some shit things that happen but not nearly like other areas of the country.

“I never locked the house. I don’t feel unsafe at night. Although there has been more unsettling news on Facebook more recently. But in general I think we are very lucky.

“We live out of town and have been relatively safe, only [in the] last couple of years we have started to lock our doors at night.

“It’s definitely a good place to raise children, in terms of that safety aspect. We take that for granted. Your kids go down to the park and you can check on them half an hour later. There’s that confidence that your children are safe in most places.

“You know that you can drop them [your kids] off at the swimming pool and come back a couple of hours later, they’re going to be safe because everybody knows everybody.

“The word goes out pretty quickly. There’s a shoplifter... and it goes up on social media.

“Yeah, everyone knows who it is, but no one wants to... You got to get one of the Auntie’s to go and give them a clip round the ear, it’s normally kids.

“I mean, obviously, you do know many, many people in a small community, when crime is present, it is handled promptly and formally through personal networks.

“Crime, I don’t know too much about it. There is a big gang presence, Mongrel Mob in Taumarunui, but you don’t hear a lot.

Barriers

- Many feel that the crime that does exist in the region is usually petty crime, such as burglaries, vandalism and drug-related offences.
- Some feel that they used to pride themselves and their communities on being isolated from the big cities’ criminal behaviours; however, there is a sense that these are now migrating down to these communities in the region.

“We’ll get vandalism. I had my window broken. You get a run of burglaries every now and again.

“Alcohol, vandalism, and drug related... Driving offences.

“We have silly robberies and things like that. People lose their utes, their trailers, and their tools.

“It used to be a rural thing, we used to pride ourselves on your communities for being isolated from the big cities’ behaviours. Now they’re inside communities within your own rural region, more readily available and in turn, peer pressure builds, particularly in young people to participate.

“We share a driveway, the people in the other house had an incident where someone cut their fences and let some deer out and it made us think about our security seriously. The fact someone could come in the night and not wake us or wake them is concerning.

Whilst some see there are many benefits of living in a small rural community, such as great support systems, community networks and the ability to utilise local bartering systems, some feel as though there is still an element of community division, personality clashes, or a reliance on key individuals to keep their community as one.

RUAPEHU'S POPULATION HAS INCREASED BY 570 RESIDENTS TO 12,948 RESIDENTS, BETWEEN 2013 AND 2021. THIS REVERSED A DECADE-LONG TREND OF A DECLINING RUAPEHU POPULATION.



NZ Census 2018, Community Compass.

Strengths

- Some believe that working together and contributing to the community positively impacts those involved, as many feel unified by doing something good for their community.
- Many believe the benefit of knowing your neighbours is the ability to leverage bartering systems (cashless exchanges and swapping of goods and services).

Whilst the following have been identified as a strength, they have also been identified as a barrier:

- Many feel that being part of a tight-knit rural community has many benefits, as everyone is willing to come together and support one another when help is needed. Some more rural and isolated families, however, do struggle and can feel relatively isolated, especially when they don't have family around.
- Some have noticed that different community, government and Iwi organisations work together more collaboratively than they once did across the region. However, there is still the sense that some organisations are working separately while trying to achieve the same thing.

“There were some really positive themes coming through [from DIA] around different organisations working more collaboratively together. Because we’ve all got challenges but we’ve all got the same challenges. So, there’s the hope that we can work together, instead of fighting one another. We can work together for the greater good.”

- “It’s a personal Stairway to Heaven, you feel good about yourself, and you’re doing something positive for your community.*”
- “When you get busy with other people working towards something, it’s quite unifying, it’s much better than just sitting around talking.*”
- “We got the Department of Internal Affairs questions before Christmas, and we collated the feedback. If we compare that, five years ago to today, I think that people are working more together.*”
- “There’s a flexibility and a friendliness about being part of a small community that gives you a degree of satisfaction.*”
- “A lady stopped me on my run and said “oh I need to speak to you, I need my yard cleared, would you be interested in some money for your boxing team?”. I don’t even know the lady, it’s just that small community for you.*”
- “So the bartering system is an absolute key in small centres. You know, even in our business, we do that in terms of doing contra deals and so forth. I think that that’s going to increase soon.*”
- “I came from Palmerston North so I see the community working together here a lot more than I ever did anywhere else.*”

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities Responsible Consumption & Production Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

Human Capability Social Cohesion

Self-managing and empowered leaders Participating fully in society Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- “Everyone just digs in right... everyone knows everyone, right? It’s a small town. So people come past and go, ‘Hey, cool, you’re here, blah, blah’, and just have a chat or whatever it might be.*”
- “Because we are a small community you know your neighbours, we have a bartering system. We swap eggs for vegetables, and a bit of that goes on in the community. It’s one of the nice things in our small rural community.*”
- “The positives are that, if [the trust] did reach out and go, ‘hey, we’ve got this huge issue that we need to deal with. We need people to come and help us do that’, we know they’ll turn up. People will turn up and help, right.*”
- “There’s a lot of bartering goes on. Yeah, you do this for me. I’ll do that for you. Yeah, so then [it] keeps things cheaper.*”
- “So it just sort of goes around the system. I’ll get veggies from this person, and we’ll do a bit of engineering for that person. And then this person will lend us some petrol and we’ll pay it forward this way.*”
- “If anything’s about to fall over, the community will be there to help, that’s quite cool, it’s quite a tight knit community.*”

“It’s a real friendly little place, it may not look great, because of the shops, well what shops we do have... It doesn’t look flash, but it’s a friendly little place and everyone will have your back. And everyone knows that.”

Barriers

- Working collaboratively can be difficult for some where community and people dynamics are present. Some believe this is due to some people in small towns having prominent personalities and not always seeing eye-to-eye.
- While Ruapehu has many community organisations and groups supporting the region, these initiatives heavily depend on specific people. There is a sense that when these game changers leave, others lack the confidence to take their place, leaving a significant gap in the community.
- Some people feel as though there isn’t a significant sense of support in some towns, especially if individuals do not have family members in the region.

“I think that there are people in the community who are game changers right, they can create these amazing initiatives. And I think there are others who just want to be part of that initiative, but don’t really want to lead anything and to be honest, from my perspective, I see it as a confidence issue.”

- “What we noticed, being involved with groups, was that we were all trying to achieve the same thing and trying to look for another dollar.*”
- “I like to think we work under Community Safety, Youth, Māori and Iwi, Creative Sector, Aged, Education and Employment, Economic Development, and Environment. That’s our group and that goes across our whole council. But we’re all tending to work separately.*”

“We’re actually in a position now to be able to work collaboratively together, it can be difficult in small towns where personalities are so big but we’re the professionals, we’re hopefully neutral.”

“Some interesting stories that I’ve heard about some of the dynamics. Some power plays between some of the community groups involve intimidation.”

“The community game-changers leave, and others lack the confidence to step up.”

“There’s a lot of lonely people that are isolated. There’s a lot of isolated people.”

“For us personally here, I think we don’t have a great support networks and when we didn’t have a lot of family in that period, or we did and then they moved off that I know my partner she’s struggled quite a bit as she’s not getting out as much, not having that adult contact I suppose. Because we are quite rural.”

“It’s difficult to progress things across the whole of the community because of division and personalities.”

“There are, from what I’ve seen, small parts of the community who do work together and do stuff. But it’s the same people all the time.”

Opportunities

- Ensuring community groups, initiatives, and organisations are publicising their work to get support.
- Capturing lived experience narratives and storing them in one place so that information and knowledge of the region is based on real experience rather than unofficial information acquired from another person (gossip, innuendo or chitter-chat).

“To hear that community groups are working better together, means we have enough people wanting to work together, so great opportunity for us [council].”

“I think there’s plenty of people in the region that could lead those sorts of projects. But I don’t think that they had the confidence to do that.”

“We ask our community to support us so we need to show them what we are doing.”

“This is a really great opportunity for us to start looking at those narratives and capturing the experience of the staff who have all come from here, who all or most of them, live here. We’re all part of the community.”

“All the information being shared and in one space, I can definitely see that being a huge asset.”

“I wanted to just be real hands on developing and doing stuff in our community and seeing where the needs were. So that’s when a friend of mine we both got together and had this idea of creating, like, a big hub.”

“We have the ability to strategically place ourselves, not to interfere, not to come in and do it, not to do anything other than get an understanding, make connections and join the dots together so that we can lobby on behalf of others.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Ruapehu District Council - Helping communities grow their own capability.
- Ruapehu Top Town competition - created through the Ruapehu Whānau Transformation plan; each town in Ruapehu would create a team and compete at the Waiouru army base.
- A&P Shows in the townships across the region - great community events that bring the community together.

“We have things like the Wild Food Challenge, we’ve got the A&P Show, which was just just a couple of days ago. You should see the community come out in force to support that sort of stuff.”

“Being able to be involved, one of the things that I really enjoy, is being able to bring people together, and to a project like this, and facilitate that.”

“It just feels like it’s a really worthwhile thing to do. And I think we’re all quite entrepreneurial. Yeah. So we could go out and obviously get another job, but it wouldn’t feel like we were doing as much for the community.”

“So we’ve got a lot of community participation. Yeah. There’s so many people [who] think this is a wonderful place. Yeah. Everybody who comes into the shop, local or visitor. They absolutely love it.”

“It’s quite a unique way of working where I am offering people opportunities, trying to reduce barriers, one being cost accessibility, resources, equipment, knowledge. Not trying to be everything for everyone but being there when we are needed.”

“We did run a competition called ‘Ruapehu Top Town’, but it was more through the Ruapehu Whānau Transformation plan. And that was for Ohakune, Waiouru and Raetihi, each town got a team together and we competed out at the Waiouru army base. The army guys set up courses for us like family courses. fun things to do. And we would compete against each town we compete against each other. It was just a fun thing. So that was awesome.”

“We have things like the Wild Food Challenge, we’ve got the A&P Show, which was just just a couple of days ago. You should see the community come out in force to support that sort of stuff.”

Ōhura A&P Show

“It [the Ōhura A&P Show] has been going for at least 50 years... Ōhura used to be a very big town, with five and a half thousand people. And now there’s about 150. But we still maintain some of our old traditions. I think that’s really important that we keep that going... it’s important to the town to get the inspiration to carry it on.”

“Well, first and foremost, I think it’s pretty amazing that they’ve managed to keep it [Ōhura A&P Show] going. And it’s such a small place where, you know, some of the other events have been closed down.”

“So today at the A&P Show we’ve got bouncy castles, we’ve got merry-go-rounds...we’ve also got some art stalls, and then we’ve got some of the local schools who are doing food...there’s also a bar and a bit of music today as well.”

“It’s generally like a really fun day for our community to come and just sort of spread out and do things together.”

“So [the] shearing competition is really important for the farmers around... that’s a good way of showing your skills so that you can get into the shearing gangs. I believe there’s also some fencing thing going on. So examples of their work so that they can go to the farms and get some big contracts.”

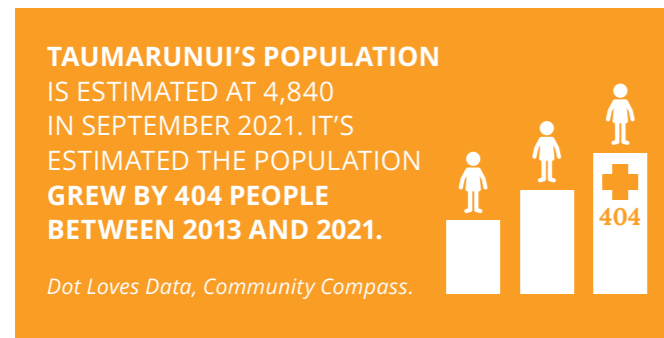
“Lately, it’s been a place where the horse competitions can come, which means that they can pick up a few points [at the] slightly smaller shows. So it gives people a really good chance, we do get people coming from all around the North Island for the shows.”

“We’ve got several little townships, quite spread out, 15 to 20 kilometres between each one. What it [Ōhura A&P show] means is you get to see people from each town in one place, which we don’t often get to do. So everyone comes together, you might see old friends from primary school. It’s a great place for people to come together that you may not have seen for a while.”



Whilst the rural location and lifestyle of living in Taumarunui is viewed as attractive by some, some also believe that the rural location of Taumarunui has contributed to the loss of industry, key services and degrading infrastructure in the township itself.

For those who remain in the community, they are experiencing increasing challenges as a result including lack of jobs, increasing poverty and a lack of variety and access to many forms of services.



Strengths

- Many feel a significant benefit of the location and lifestyle in Taumarunui is that there are many opportunities in the community for children to engage in local-level sports, with numerous opportunities to access sports affordably.
- Some believe the local Taumarunui community is incredible at supporting one another, with many people coming together and contributing positively to the community. This was especially noticed during COVID-19 when many were seen rallying together.
- Some believe the number of people discovering and moving to Taumarunui is increasing as the average home price is more affordable than in big cities. Some also believe this is needed for the rural town to change, grow and develop.

“Gosh, I’m proud of the fact that we’re so unique. There’s so many people working for the good of this community that are coming together.”

“They [the community] rallied together and completely came together over COVID-19. So, they come together when they need to, and that’s a really cool thing.”

“It’s quite demanding, some of the voluntary roles, but we have an awesome community for getting behind stuff.”

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities No Poverty Good Health & Wellbeing Quality Education Clean Water & Sanitation

Decent Work & Economic Growth Industry Innovation & Infrastructure Partnerships for the Goals

Human Capability Social Cohesion Financial & Physical Capital

Self-managing and empowered leaders Leading healthy lifestyles Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

“We’re pretty special. Because we are so multi-talented, we’ve actually gone away nationally and been able to take up tournaments. We can pull in rugby kids that have also played touch, that have also played squash, that have also got the athleticism, because of their farming work.”

“Until I went away, I didn’t realise that some kids don’t know how to swim and that some kids in high school don’t even know some of the sports. We’re very rich in terms of our upbringing and the access that we have, especially at a school level. At school level we’ve got unlimited access.”

“There’s a lot more people discovering us and coming, like selling a house in Auckland and coming down and ‘oh, well, we can buy a jolly good house for what we would have had to pay in Auckland’. So we are seeing a lot of people coming and that’s good.”

“The differences that I see between raising children in Taumarunui versus not, is that your children are multi-talented. They play every sport, they try everything, they play hockey, they play touch, they play basketball, they play rugby.”

THE AVERAGE RENTAL COST IN TAUMARUNUI IS \$358 PER WEEK, COMPARED WITH \$526 NATIONALLY.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



Barriers

- Many local organisations who are contributing positively to the town are feeling stretched and at capacity.
- For many, the drinking water in Taumarunui tastes and smells horrible, meaning that those who can afford to, they are purchasing water or accessing and bottling nearby water sources instead of drinking the town’s supply.
- Some feel Taumarunui’s tight-knit community is, at times, weary of ‘outsiders’. For some, this means people or businesses must work much harder to find a way into the community than those from the area.
- Some feel Taumarunui is a few years behind some neighbouring regions, being slower to make change, often less informed on important issues and not as well placed to implement progressive models.
- Some believe getting community cooperation in Taumarunui is, at times, challenging, as people have differing opinions.
- Some believe the high number of unskilled workers in Taumarunui is a result of many people being trapped in the poverty cycle, which impacts the community.
- Some feel the rural location of Taumarunui can be isolating and costly for those within the community, as they are required to drive to surrounding regions to access essential services or work.

- Some believe Taumarunui’s industry opportunity is decreasing, with some existing businesses closing and new businesses choosing larger centres over the rural town due to its location.
- Some believe Taumarunui isn’t an attractive location for skilled and remote workers to work due to less access to services and decreasing industry opportunities. Some also feel there isn’t much employment available and that the township doesn’t have much to offer.
- Some feel infrastructure repairs and upgrades in Taumarunui are done poorly, with some feeling that local contractors ‘only do a half pai job’.
- With a lack of youth-led initiatives in the community, some believe Taumarunui isn’t doing a great job of supporting and setting up their youth.

“If there were five people in a room in Taumarunui you would get six opinions, trying to get co-operation in Taumarunui is hard work.

“It is more about what we miss out on, so if we were to talk about it, we had a fully fledged railway, we’ve had a lot of roading paths that were here, we had a freezing works, that was the top freezing works that was here, but because of our location and because of the cost of travel to get all the things to where they need to go to, we were opted out of the market because of our location.

“We had one of the best operating freezing works here, it had over 400, 500 people employed, plus attachments to that, and being one of the most successful ones. We ain’t got closed down because we were successful, we got closed down because we were in the wrong place.

“We had a significant amount of staff on the railways, but we have lost that now too. They only have a very small number of permanent staff now. We have lost a lot of those industries that provided those jobs.

“We are so rurally isolated. It’s a one and a half hour drive to Whanganui or two hours to Hamilton. So we’re really isolated in regards to having some opportunities available.

“The jobs aren’t here so you won’t get the high incomes. I thought it might change, as we have learnt to work remotely with COVID-19, but maybe not. It’s not an attractive place to work remotely.

“You’re lucky to even get \$60k, the household income here in Taumarunui is actually the benefit income for both parents not working.

“There are a lot of unskilled workers here [in Taumarunui] which will have an effect on our district. It all comes back to being stuck in a cycle of poverty, and they can’t get out.

“The term unskilled workers comes across as unfair, but they haven’t had the chance to grow skills and some of them are stuck and don’t have the means to move out of town.

“So if you’ve got say a business, or a person who is representing a business from Whanganui coming through, unless Taumarunui has ever heard of it, that business, that person, has to work that much harder to get an ‘in’.

“Myself, I got that as I’m not from here. As soon as I walked down the street... ‘Who are you? Where are you from? What are you doing here?’.

“Taumarunui, often, we tend to be quite behind the times with discussions or we talk about things, doing things for a long time, before we actually put them into practice. And these are things that change the whole cultural education, environmental systems and the way that we do things and shape our community.

“There is nothing youth-lead for young people to do, we’re not doing a great job of supporting young people in what it is that they want to set up for them.

“I think there is one youth thing that happens every two weeks on a Friday night. I know Kōkiri is trying to start another one, but yeah, there is not much going on, especially outside of the sports season.

“Where we do have difficulties in Taumarunui, is that there is quite a lot of land that sits under the Land Information New Zealand, which has the expectation of settlement. As a result, it has to be said that it impedes development, because people don’t want to buy land that they think will become Māori land.

“I don’t drink the water here in Taumarunui, it is horrible, just the taste, it is disgusting. It’s drinkable and all that, you can stay hydrated if you drink it, but I definitely prefer a pump bottle over tap water or I’ll make sure I load up my water at national park, fresh stuff off the mountain.

“The whole of Taumarunui, the water quality isn’t great. It tastes terrible and if you can’t afford a filter you just have to put up with that.

“Not here [Taumarunui], because of fast food, everything is fast food. Vegetables are too dare here, they are too expensive.

“We don’t tend to have a theme because we tend to be seen as a place that you pass through.

THE AVERAGE INCOME OF TAUMARUNUI RESIDENTS IS \$45,000, COMPARED TO AN AVERAGE OF \$66,000 FOR THE RUAPEHU DISTRICT AND \$94,000 NATIONALLY.

\$45,000
Taumarunui

\$66,000 Ruapehu

\$94,000 Nationally

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

TAUMARUNUI CENTRAL HAS A DEPRIVATION INDEX OF 10 OUT OF 10.



Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu, 2023.

Opportunities

- A multi-purpose community facility where the Taumarunui community can come together and play sports throughout the year, especially during winter or rainy seasons.
- Identifying and defining Taumarunui's unique offering, e.g. an adventure playground or sports restoration, so that the community is known for something specific and worth stopping in for.
- Giving people within Taumarunui the opportunity to up-skill and develop professionally.

"A town needs to change, it needs to grow, it needs to develop."

"You have to have good services in town to match that though [working remotely], there's a lot going on in Taumarunui, you have river, lakes, bush, bike trails. There's a lot to offer here but the township itself doesn't offer much, you have to go out of town if you need specialist services. Even for general stuff, you may need to look out of town. You need to make services in town attractive as well."

"Health services need to be up as well, that's an area we struggle with. We have to offer a whole package."

"The vision is to have a purposeful multipurpose community facility, one where everybody can come together in its resources. It's very cost effective for our community."

"I went to a public housing meeting at Council probably over a year ago now. And the main thing that came out was a whole lot of people there that do permaculture and they wanted our town to be known for something specific."

"I know masters students did a study back in 2014, I think [it was] around 'could Taumarunui be the big adventure playground, could it also be a place for wellbeing and restoration, and what does that look like in terms of sports rehabilitation and massive adventure tourism and things like that'."

Good Mahi in the Community

- Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust - Provides a hub for the community, offering opportunities and reducing barriers around cost, accessibility, resources, equipment and knowledge. They have introduced and now facilitate a range of sports within the community to increase participation and to give youth more options to keep active, including their 'pick a pair of shoes' initiative.
- Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust iSports initiative - an internship for school kids to learn officiating and refereeing skills, while also helping them build confidence.
- Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust Boxing Academy initiative - helping youth keep active and build resilience and important life skills.
- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - training, up-skilling and hiring local Taumarunui people and creating courses for the people of Taumarunui based on what industry is available in the region, e.g. creating a butchery course due to the local freezing works.

- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - training students to grow their own food through the local Māra Kai (vegetable gardens).
- Kotahitanga Festival (run by Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust) - where cultures come together in a shared space and enjoy performances and stalls, creating a safe environment and event for local whānau to come together as one.

"Now we [Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust] run bowls, ripper rugby, soccer, orienteering, tough kids, cross-country, athletics, touch, Ki o Rahi (traditional Māori game)..."

"The athletics club lay dormant for 10 years, so we [Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust] picked it back up and got it up and running back in 2012. We relocated from the local high school down to the local domain and increased our numbers by 100."

"Our [Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust] slogan for our trust is helping people reach their potential, you can take that as wide as you'd like to see that potential can be seen in so many different ways."

"We have one shoe shop in Taumarunui, and it's a bit higher priced than what people can afford. So we [Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust] have our 'Pick a Pair Shoes' for people and they'll walk away with a big bag of shoes."

"Our community definitely recognises iSport. Our children definitely recognise iSport, our interns are from iSport. iSport students do have a leadership role in the community. Our youth, our children, our rangatahi, they look up to our high school interns."


"We have got three Māra Kai growing here, and we've [Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust] got our students training there that grow the kai, and they are actually doing boxes, \$10 boxes of heaps of vegetables, so that's working and that's how we've found a way of helping to supply vegetables to everybody."

"We [Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust] do a big music festival [Kotahitanga Festival], and I bring in bands because my brothers in the New Zealand music industry, we run a lot of concerts in Taupo and it's our way of another way of our profits from our businesses, we put on a big concert. And I train my rangatahi to become event managers and they run it."

Whilst living in Raetihi is viewed as attractive by some due to the beautiful landscape and it being more affordable to live there, the community has also experienced a loss of industry and key services, meaning there is not much left in the township. Many feel this is contributing to a lack of jobs, increasing poverty, lack of variety and access to most forms of services and a general sense that the township lacks things to do for entertainment.

The Raetihi community also seems to be one that has some community division, which may be holding it back from moving forwards.

RAETIHI'S POPULATION WAS ESTIMATED AT 1,060 IN SEPTEMBER 2021. IT'S ESTIMATED THE POPULATION GREW BY 55 PEOPLE BETWEEN 2013 AND 2021.



+55 PEOPLE BETWEEN 2013 AND 2021

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

THE AVERAGE INCOME OF RAETIHI RESIDENTS IS \$72,000, COMPARED TO AN AVERAGE OF \$66,000 FOR THE RUAPEHU DISTRICT AND \$94,000 NATIONALLY.

\$72,000 Raetihi

\$66,000 Ruapehu

\$94,000 Nationally

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

Strengths

- Many feel Raetihi has great access to beautiful scenery right on their doorstep and that following the river restoration efforts, the town now has a number of outdoor areas for people to enjoy. These also may be drawing more visitors to the area.
- Whilst Raetihi has historically struggled with a lack of services and businesses, some feel that as more people move to the area due to cheaper housing, more businesses are seen to be opening (particularly those in the trades).

Whilst the following have been identified as strengths, they have also been identified as barriers:

- Although COVID-19 had an impact on Raetihi's performing arts sector, some believe there is still a tenacious arts community with people deeply committed to the sector.
- Whilst some feel that the Raetihi community does come together positively and more often than it once did for specific events and initiatives, it also feels divided at times, with a sense that only some really want the town to progress.

"We've got the beautiful mountain on our back doorstep. It's just gorgeous. Absolutely beautiful. They're just stunned with how gorgeous that is. Because it's just natural, you know? There's always something to look at. I just can't believe how lovely it is here."

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities No Poverty Good Health & Wellbeing Quality Education

Decent Work & Economic Growth Industry Innovation & Infrastructure Life Below Water Life on Land

Natural Environment Human Capability Social Cohesion Financial & Physical Capital

Self-managing and empowered leaders Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

Barriers

- Whilst Raetihi was once seen as a thriving rural town, many believe that the closure of many businesses and services, such as the Raetihi hospital, has meant that the local economy has drastically changed, as skilled workers have left and unemployment and deprivation levels have increased.
- Some believe the average household income in Raetihi is much lower than the national average, with some families relying on multiple support organisations to help close the income gap.
- Some have noticed that due to increasing house prices, some rental homes in Raetihi are being sold, which is displacing and separating some of the townships' large families who have lived locally for many generations.
- Although many feel Raetihi has access to the outdoors at their doorstep, some feel there is very little entertainment in the evenings, with a sense that there are few venues to go to.
- Whilst some would like to believe Māori and Pākehā are 'all one', some feel Māori are isolating and excluding themselves from certain spaces in the town (e.g. events and stores) as they feel like they 'aren't for them'.

"But it's [the walking track] bringing even people from Ohakune over, we've got so much to offer in Raetihi. So, this is just another one to add to the list to come visit."

"We've had a really, really well rounded performing arts sector in the last few years. We did have an amateur theatre."

"There have been some that have just come in recently, and that's because it's cheap, but they've been like plumbers or car repairs, you know, it's the more trades type businesses that are opening in Raetihi, because they don't need the foot traffic, right? Because there is none."

"So it [Raetihi] can come together on certain things. For example, the Christmas parade brings together a number of people just working towards making that event happen, in a really good way."

"We had a proposal from the local Iwi and Council to fund the hub... and that was really well facilitated in the way in which that consultation was done. And that brought the town together. So the town can work together."

THE AVERAGE RENTAL COST IN RAETIHI IS \$301 PER WEEK, COMPARED WITH \$526 NATIONALLY.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



“The community does come together, it does come together. But it’s also multi dimensional. It’s also divided.

- “The town is poor. It needs jobs. It needs businesses.*
- “Raetihi is in a terrible state, always has been, but at least we just get on with it right? We don’t have a lot of businesses in Raetihi.*
- “We do have, like a disproportionate number of op shops in Raetihi, but that doesn’t attract people necessarily into the town itself.*
- “The community does come together, it does come together. But it’s also multi dimensional. It’s also divided.*
- “It’s a low decile town, it has its share of problems, and it’s been sidelined by a lot of the cuts that were made by previous governments, you know, in the 80s.*
- “I think you can illustrate it best by looking at what it was and what it is now. You know, in the 80s, it was a thriving township, it had a hospital, it had banks, post offices, it had all the infrastructure, it was a small town. We had a Holden dealer here, you know, it’s incredible, it was a thriving township, but take the infrastructure away, and you’re left with a shell.*
- “It was dependent to a large extent on the hospital, because the hospital provided a huge part of the economy. You had the GP’s, the surgeons, theater staff, the nurses, cleaners, porters, ambulance staff, all these people worked at the hospital, and they all lived wealthily, so you had this huge amount of money that went into the local economy. As soon as you take that out, that economy collapses because it’s unsustainable.*

- “So the businesses that were supported by those people closed down, and what we have now in terms of businesses on the high street, we’ve got a steel store, farm supplies, a doctors, the service center for the Council, a Foursquare, that’s about it. There’s nothing that can be sustained other than that.*
- “All those people go, and you’re left with the people that can’t go, and what do they do?*
- “First time buyers might jump in there, and there’ll be less rentals, possibly. There is a lot of that in Raetihi. A lot of houses that have been rented to large families have been sold. Those people then have to leave, to move on and some of them haven’t been able to find places. I know that the kaumatua have had to move into social housing separate to their family because of it.*
- “In Raetihi, it was a really devastating thing recently, a whole lot of these rental homes were being sold to people coming from Auckland or holiday homes so our whānau have real trouble trying to procure a place for them, especially when there is that intergenerational living.*
- “We don’t really have anything around here that you can go to; there’s only the cozy club in the evenings that you go to and for a drink.*
- “You know, there’s a couple of cafes that are open during the day, there’s the odd show at the theatre, but there’s a lot of people around here that don’t have cars.*
- “We are in a town, which has a lot of Māori and Pākehā, and it’s really idealistic to say we’re all one, I’m really trying to say to myself, we’re all one, but the more I’m here, the more I see that they [Māori] are really isolating themselves.*
- “We’ve been told Māori come past the shop and go ‘oh, that’s not a place for us’.*

RAETIHI HAS A DEPRIVATION INDEX OF 10 OUT OF 10.

Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu, 2023.



Opportunities

- Bringing infrastructure and industry back to Raetihi to increase jobs, access to services and to uplift the financial wellbeing of the community.
- Encouraging remote working opportunities to increase the Raetihi population and bring more skills and wealth into the community.
- Creating opportunities within the performing arts and arts sector for non-sporty youth.
- Ensuring the opening and success of the natural medicine health and wellbeing centre that the community has requested.

“We’re desperate for stuff to do and exciting things, entertainment.

- “We call it home, we have just got to help make it better, make it a better place... and that will be the opinion of everyone on our trust, they’re doing it because they want it to want to be a better place.*
- “There’s nothing to do in the evenings so I am trying to get this happening with the theatre, so we have a lot more concerts for them [the community] to come to.*
- “We’re really trying to engage more and more of the local Māori, I think our street parties, we have a little party outside on the bench there, will help.*

- “But the only way you can actually put it back is to put back the infrastructure you took out, we could, in theory, bring into rural New Zealand.*
- “That model could be done here. And you could put government departments that work remotely. And that would make a difference.*
- “There is still a massive sector as a community that aren’t sporty and are creative and that’s their outlet. And my kids, they didn’t do any sport, they were in the theatre, they were doing stage productions and they were learning to be part of a team that way.*
- “So that wellbeing centre... the community designed this wellbeing centre. Most of those wishes were around a natural medicine health centre, because they said you walk into a doctors office and you feel sick. They want a centre where you’re kept well, rather than you having to go there when you’re unwell. So when you walk in, they want someone to come greet you and say ‘what are you here for today?’, and then they direct you.*
- “So one of my blue sky things is that this wellbeing centre would reflect the community’s vision.*
- “So we want to have, you know, a place where the kids can come and drop in, in the evening and hang out with their friends and have use of the resources and create what they want to create and somebody who’s going to facilitate it.*
- “So there are Iwi that are about to settle, and I think you’ll see developments both in National Park and Raetihi due to that. So there’s gonna be a lot more coming, there’s a lot more in store for that.*

Good Mahi in the Community

- Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust - organising and sponsoring various events within the Raetihi community, including the Wild Food Challenge and the Raetihi Gutbuster.
- Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust - leading the Makotuku River Walk project with help from the wider community.
- Ruapehu Local Wild Food Challenge - encouraging people to get out into their local natural environments and source wild ingredients through hunting, fishing, foraging and gathering.
- Raetihi Gutbuster - a cycle, run and walk fundraising event for locals, put on by the Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust.
- Volcano Vibe - A collective of artists who run a local shop and gallery and offer free community based workshops with funding from Raetihi Charitable Trust. They are also in the process of their 'Next Door' project, creating a bigger space to provide art and craft classes for the Raetihi community.
- Theatre Royal project - provided concerts and events for the community to attend, some members of the community are trying to get this up and running again.
- Waimarino A&P Show - the annual Waimarino Agricultural & Pastoral Show is hosted by the town of Raetihi and a key community event to get everyone together.

“The [Makotuku River] walkway is an example of a project that the people of Raetihi got behind. It’s probably the best project that we [Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust] have ever done. And it’s ongoing.”

“If you wanted a place to ride a bike, walk with the kids or walk a dog or whatever, alongside the river, it didn’t really exist in the past, and now it does [the Makotuku River Walk].”

“Project Tongariro has employed a really enthusiastic young lady, who is now taking our local schools down to the track [the Makotuku River Walk]. She is now teaching them how to plant, identify the weeds, how to control the weeds, whether they need spraying, cutting and pasting, she’ll be doing all sorts.”

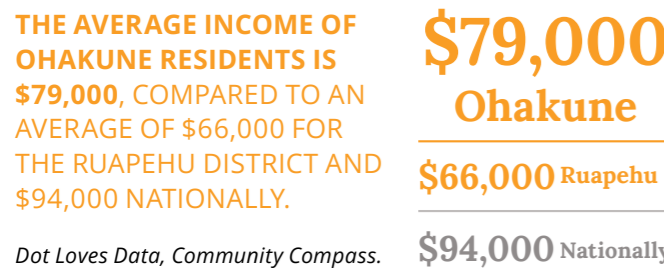
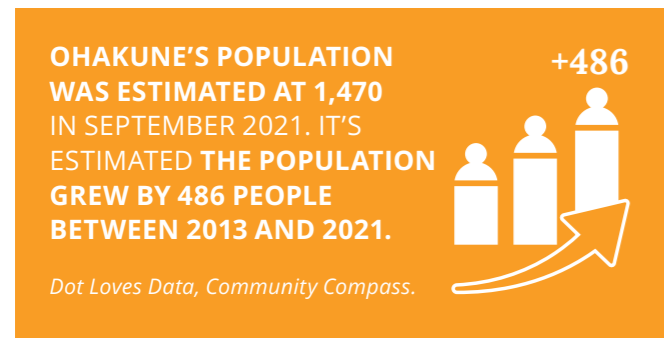
“[Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust] has organised quite a number of different events that have taken place in the community and has become an integral part in that regard.”

“There’s the wild food challenge that has quite a significant presence in the community and these are the things that we actually sponsor and encourage people to get involved with.”

“We [Volcano Vibe] have quite a few people that drop in daily here for their cup of tea and their social interaction. We’ve had quite a few say ‘this is the only social interaction I get is coming to you girls’, so that’s what we’re here for.”

“The Theatre Royal project in Raetihi was an example of a project that the go-getting side of Raetihi got behind. There’s nothing to do in the evenings so I am trying to get this happening in the theatre. So we have a lot more concerts for them to come to.”

Although many feel that Ohakune has traditionally been a bustling town propped up by its tourism, some share concerns around the impact this is having on housing allocation and utilisation in the township, as well as noticing a number of local businesses recently closing down.



Strengths

- Some see Ohakune as the 'jewel' in the region, as it is more favourable for tourists to visit.
- Some feel that, unlike other communities within the district, Ohakune is experiencing a lot more growth and development, with more new builds and subdivisions observed to be underway.

Whilst the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some feel Ohakune is an exciting place to be, with bustling and busy streets all year round; however, some feel that with many businesses closing over the summer or closing their doors altogether, they may be missing out on an opportunity to make the township an all-year-round tourist destination.

"It's bustling in Ohakune. It's probably a pity that a lot of businesses are closed over summer, but there are the people on the street that are there. It's actually quite an exciting place that maybe isn't completely getting captured."

*"Ohakune is our little jewel in the region, [it is] more favourable for visiting and people having their holiday homes there and all that.
"There's been more building happening [in Ohakune] in the last three years than they've had in the previous 20...
"Ohakune is quite different, it's seen a lot of growth and subdivision and has had a lot of new builds. So, I think they are quite well diversified."*

THE AVERAGE RENTAL COST IN OHAKUNE IS \$293 PER WEEK, COMPARED WITH \$526 NATIONALLY.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



Framework Tags



Barriers

- Some believe Ohakune is experiencing a housing allocation crisis, with many homeowners opting to Airbnb their homes rather than rent them out long-term, as they can make much more money.
- Some are concerned with the number of local businesses recently closing down in Ohakune and fear that the township may have some significant challenges ahead.

"We've had two businesses go into receivership, not RAL or the Chateau, just two weeks ago. We had another business a few weeks ago, closed down, waiting to sell, but had to stop operating. And another business again, probably about four or five weeks ago, closed the doors and sold up, they are waiting to see if there's a ski season."

*"Ohakune is where all the tourists want to stay. So everybody wants \$400 or \$500 a night for their Airbnb.
"I think that might be one of the reasons why the rents so high, because obviously there's a benefit if you've got a long term renter that you don't need to clean it all the time, and there is a lot less kind of day to day work running long term rentals, but you can get so much more for Airbnb, so that's why, especially in the winter, there's no way anybody's gonna long term rent their house [in Ohakune].
"Ohakune is our jewel in the region, take the snow away and they will be stuffed. They are trying to do more with bike tracks."*

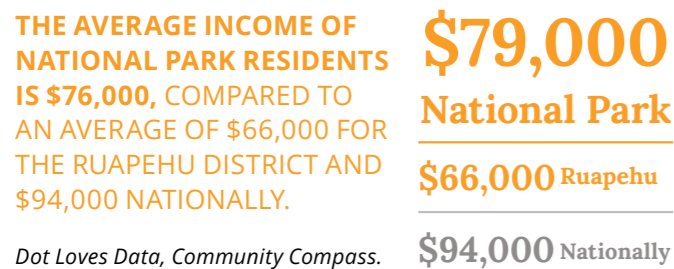
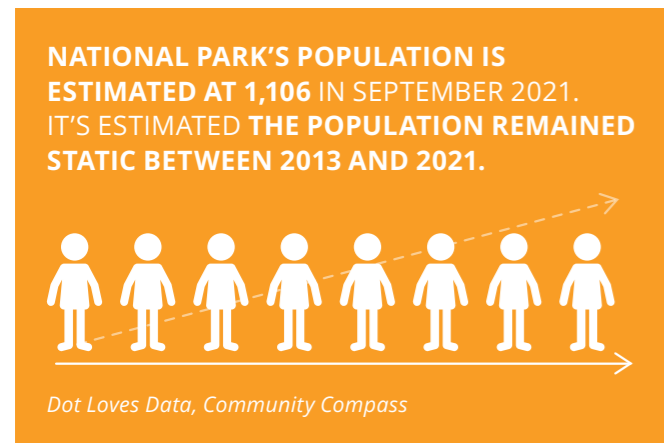
*"We've got many businesses for sale. So there's a lot of businesses in town for sale. That's not looking good.
"Then you hear people go, 'Oh, it's great, you know, everything we're doing well'. We're not, it's not doing well. Because my business is in Ohakune and yeah, it's not in a great space."*

OHAKUNE HAS A DEPRIVATION INDEX OF 7 OUT OF 10.

Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu, 2023.



National Park is viewed by some as having a strong business support network, a progressive community approach, and is seen as a treasure to the Ruapehu region. Some, however, would like to see more business development in the township, such as more local cafes and restaurants that are open more often.



Strengths

- Some believe National Park is progressing more than some other areas of Ruapehu, as they are able to come together and agree as a community on how they want to move forward, including where they want to direct their funding efforts.
- Some feel National Park is a special place and a treasure to the region as one of New Zealand's (and the world's) oldest national parks.
- Some have acknowledged that National Park has strong business networks, particularly in the tourism industry.

“The reason National Park is moving ahead, and this is what I’ve heard from people in National Park, is that they have an agreement as a community about how they want to move forward. So they have more agreement about what they should try and get funding for and what they choose.”

“My interest in conservation started as I grew up next to Tongariro National Park. There was always a strong emphasis on this special place, particularly New Zealand’s oldest national parks, and one of the world’s oldest national parks. It’s been a fixture for such a long time, and a treasure.”

“Yeah, so with National Park, that’s quite an effective little community. It has got a strong business community. So it comes together based on the fact that it has a strong business group.”

THE AVERAGE RENTAL COST IN NATIONAL PARK IS \$229 PER WEEK, COMPARED WITH \$526 NATIONALLY.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



Framework Tags



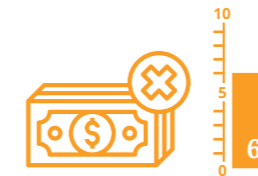
Barriers

- Whilst observing some development in the township, some feel there is still a lack of local cafes and restaurants, with the ones that are present not being open as often as the community would like.

“I have seen a bit of development in National Park. The cafe closed down but they have started up the coffee carts and railway cafe, but it didn’t meet the standards. Now you just have a Four Square and a pub, which isn’t even open half the week.”

NATIONAL PARK HAS A DEPRIVATION INDEX OF 6 OUT OF 10.

Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu, 2023.



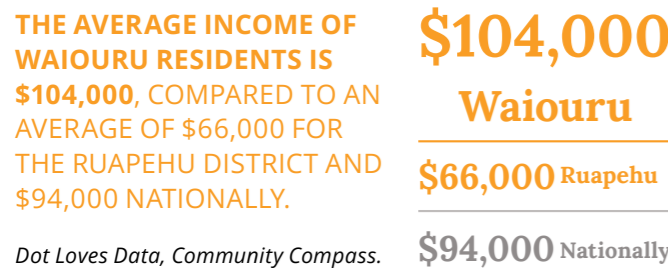
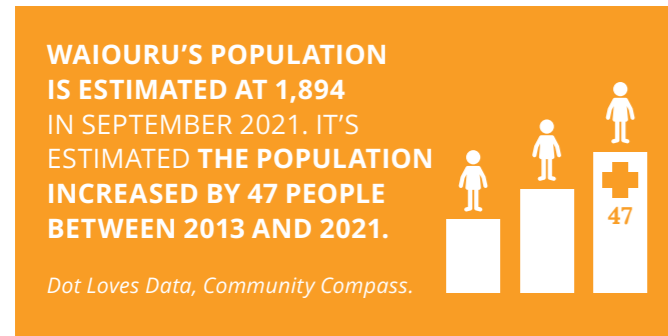
Good Mahi in the Community

- The National Park Progressive Party - have been recognised to have great ideas for the community.
- The National Park Village Business Association - a strong and active network of businesses in the community.
- National Park Emergency Management Centre - a newly built centre that serves as a hub for significant crises in the region, including mountain search and rescue operations.

“So National Park have a really strong business network. They have a business association and it’s very strong, very active, it has been for a long time. The National Park Village Business Association.”

“National Park have also just had a big emergency centre created, an Emergency Management Centre, which is behind the primary school. So that’ll house, when there’s big emergencies in the region, that’s where the centre will be, including the ones who go out to search and rescue on the mountain and in similar fields and all sorts of things.”

Whilst some feel working at the Waiouru Military Camp has many benefits such as affordable housing, rural allowances, and a good social life, they still struggle attracting people to the camp and the township due to some having the view that there are limited rural opportunities, and a sense of division between the camp and civilians.



Strengths

- Some believe that tradespeople who choose to work in the Waiouru Military Camp receive the advantages of affordable rural housing options and an attractive salary.
- Some believe the Waiouru Military Camp provides benefits that aren't typically offered in other bases in the country, including affordable rental housing and rural allowances. Additionally, the Waiouru Military Camp hosts social events that aren't always offered at other bases; 'at other camps you just do your hours and go home'.

"Waiouru has a core base of people there, the base itself has a lot of civilians who work there. Generally the pay is pretty good which may be why people stick around there."

"The camp staff there really try to make it work. It's a good place to work."

"They try to get some other benefits we don't get in other camps and bases around the place. Cheaper rental housing, and you get other allowances for being remote as well. They try to make it good for you when you are there."

"You have quite a few social events within the bars on campus. They make it really enjoyable."

"You're happy hours, other parts of army camps, as you call it, the sad 60's, you're not forced to go to get on the booze when you're there but you are required to attend. Here, you have a good time. Other camps you do your hours and go home."

THE AVERAGE RENTAL COST IN WAIOURU IS \$180 PER WEEK, COMPARED WITH \$526 NATIONALLY.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



Framework Tags



Barriers

- Although Waiouru is one community, some have observed a separation between those inside and those outside the military camp. With differing pay scales and lifestyles, combined with mixed perceptions of the military from the broader community, there is a sense of 'us and them' as those inside the camp are perceived to stay within their own community.
- Some employees that work at the Waiouru Military Camp decide to commute to and from work due to the limited rural opportunities in the region for their partners.
- Some are concerned Waiouru (outside of the military camp) consists primarily of small businesses, which leads to minimal interaction opportunities.

"Inside the camp they are very whānau orientated, they are their own small community that move around, keep in touch and have bbq's. Outside of the camp, they feel like there is a separation. They are less of a community."

"We have whānau that live in the military camp and there is a community group that we work quite closely with that's based in the camp. Then there's one that is based outside the camp. So there's a little bit of separation between the two."

- "Before working in that community [Waiouru], I didn't realise there was that feel, that there are separated types of living even though they're one community. They all live in Waiouru. They are all part of that community. But there is a 'us' and 'them'."*
- "With working with the rest of the community out of Waiouru [camp], because it's mainly small businesses there, there is a bit of a community out there I suppose, but there's not really a lot of interaction."*
- "Now it [the camp] is pretty much just the training area with the recruits and officer cadets. So there's probably only 150 full time staff here, and a lot of them commute home because there are no rural opportunities for partners in the region."*

WAIOURU HAS A DEPRIVATION INDEX OF 6 OUT OF 10.

Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu, 2023.



Opportunities

- Offering cheap rural housing as a means of attracting people to come and work at the Waiouru Military Camp.
- "So then in the end that would be offering them, I like, rural cheap housing. The old infrastructure in the camp is not that great, either. And we're downscaled quite a lot over the years so it's a way to get people in."*

Enablers and Barriers within the System

This phase captures enablers and barriers within the system that are impacting the ability for organisations to work with and effectively meet the needs of the Ruapehu community.

Barrier

Barrier 1—Communities and organisations feel disconnected from, and unsure of, the best way to work with Council, which may be contributing to a perception that they are not meeting the needs of the community.

On the other hand, many within Ruapehu District Council, including the newly elected Mayor and elected members, have big aspirations for the region and are working hard within the limited financial resources that they have.

Barrier 2—There is a sense from some that as the regions Iwi are settling or approaching settlement, they are beginning to look towards stronger partnerships and acting on potential opportunities in their respective communities; however, there is a historical strain on the relationship with Council as well as some disagreement between Iwi that needs to be acknowledged and worked through, in order to all move forwards collectively.

Barrier 3—Whilst some government agencies and charitable trusts seem to gain funding relatively seamlessly, many community organisations and initiatives are facing multiple barriers to accessing funding such as the time and skill it takes to apply for funding, finding out what funding is available and the competitive environment, all making it harder to get on and do the work.

Barrier 1

Communities and organisations feel disconnected from, and unsure of, the best way to work with Council, which may be contributing to a perception that they are not meeting the needs of the community.

On the other hand, many within Ruapehu District Council, including the newly elected Mayor and elected members, have big aspirations for the region and are working hard within the limited financial resources that they have.

Strengths

- Some have a lot of confidence in the newly elected Mayor and elected members of the Council and are excited about what they may achieve for the region.
- COVID-19 was a significant learning for Council, as it provided them with the opportunity to discover key players and understand key challenges within the community, allowing them to be more in touch with what was happening on the ground so that they could better serve community needs.

“We have had some good outcomes. We had a COVID-19 collective that was doing daily reports and it was probably the first time in crisis that we were really communicating and transparent with each other about what was going on and who was doing what.”

“We have got some really good councillors. Obviously, we’ve just had a change of Mayor and almost a complete change of Council. And that’s become a good thing.”

“We learned about players that we didn’t really know of in the community. So that was a big learning for us.”

Barriers

- Many feel the relationship between Council and the community is strained, as some would like to see them actively leading and working on issues to support the community more visibly.
- Some community organisations struggle with knowing the best way to gain the support of Council and allow them to see the benefit of what they are trying to achieve.
- Some community organisations struggle to navigate complex and generic processes and procedures with Council in order to gain licenses and permissions to do their work. Many feel these are often overly complicated and should be smaller and simpler tasks.
- Some have observed the Council car park is emptier than usual, which has led to the perception that fewer Council employees are living and located in the region, which can be a concern for rural communities as they prefer a more ‘personal touch’ with Council, such as having meetings in person.
- Some are unaware of the limited financial resource Council may have and its impact on their ability to deliver projects and services that the community needs. For those that are aware, some wonder if more transparency from Council around financial and funding limitations may help the community better understand why progress may be slow or limited.

- Some feel there is a misalignment between what Council views as a priority for the region and what the community needs, with some community members feeling that Council are ‘delivering at us, not with us.’ Some also feel this is a result of people in significant positions in Council not having built important relationships with their communities in the past.

“The community’s relationship with Council is pretty strained. And that comes from a number of different places. Some are justified and some are probably just biases that may have been past trauma with the Council that just hasn’t gone away, if you know what I mean.”

“I can look at it objectively, but our community members can’t, and they get very frustrated and they just blame the Council for everything.”

“You can tell from our Facebook pages for Raetihi, Ohakune, Taumarunui, there is a lot of discontent with our Council.”

“The Council is paying the price for not having understood community development [in the past]... but this is all about our relationships, and you’ve got people who have been in quite significant positions who have never created relationships, over multiple years, with their communities.”

“I [Council staff member] still drive down the street now when we have bad weather events and all that, and I’m still getting the evils from the locals.”

“We tried to set up support from our local Council for what we’re doing in the youth space, in the community connectivity space, which has been constant and ongoing. It’s hard when you don’t have full support from Council, from staff and the Councillors, there are some struggles there with Council really seeing the benefit of what we’re doing.”

“It’s a struggle working with Council for some things, even little things, there’s so many things that go on behind the scenes that make it really hard.”

“Some of the management for Council, they are not full time here... We’ve got the Council officers who actually live in Australia and communicate via zoom.”

“There have been a lot of complaints from the community, there’s been, ‘hey, we’ve not got any support. We’re not happy with how this is working’, and it’s just all ignored.”

“I feel as though council goes “we won’t worry about that, that’s not a real need for our community, so let’s get rid of it”.”

Opportunities

- Listening to the concerns of and working more actively with the community so that both Council and the community can move forward together, ensuring ideas are heard, new processes or plans are well understood and finding ways forward that best meet the community's needs.
- Providing more transparency, honesty and forecasting around Council's funding, including what funds are available, where funding comes from, whether projects are possible, etc.
- Council needs to get better at telling their success stories so that the community is aware of what they are achieving.

"If you've got to deal with somebody in Council, you want to sit and have a meeting with them, especially for what we're doing in the community. If I want to tell my story about what we're doing and why we're asking for certain things I want them to come have a look."

"All they have to do is do more consultation, that's all. More consultation and giving the communities time to go through their big wording as some of them don't understand."

"I don't know what is happening there with the 'Better Off' funding, I know it's potentially becoming a contestable fund at the Ruapehu District Council. And if that is the case, hopefully a lot of our Iwi will jump in and grab some and do something good with it."

"I think they [community members] just want to be listened to and for that information to go higher, which I do, but I also try not to promise them the earth, you know, I say, 'well, we'll try and sort this as quick as we can'."

"People [at Council] need to be a lot more honest from the outset in terms of whether they believe it is going to be a goer."

"I think Council are in a better position to be able to give a little bit more forecasting as to whether or not things are going to be able to happen in the next 2, 3, 4, 5 or 10 years."

"I think that there's a lot of work to be done in this space around managing expectations for what we [Council] can and can't do."

"Councils need to be [more] approachable when it comes to short term and long term planning."

Good Mahi in the Community

- Ruapehu District Council - has many success stories such as developing a 'Destination Plan' based around community needs and desires and delivering initiatives based around sporting, housing and the data lead portal, Pūwhenua ki Ruapehu.

"Now that Visit Ruapehu has refined and now does destination management, it's far more in line with the values of what this district should have been about. It is about the people, it is about the culture, it is about employment, and it's about education. So the destination management plan, hopefully will be a game changer."

"Through the COVID-19 response, that first lockdown, we [Council] really got a feel for what those challenges look like, people living in cars and living in garages, living in overcrowded homes. Although in a cultural sense, sometimes that can be seen as manaakitanga, being together in a crisis, that's actually what contributed to building better housing and that was the result of More Street."

"Visit Ruapehu have created the destination management plan... that will impact our mahi in terms of the outcomes that they have written in there of what the community desires."

"We've got some good stuff happening. But it's a long game, not a short game. We [the current team at Council] are two years in and we've got some good success stories; housing, the data lead portal, working with you guys [Impact Collective], you know, we've got regional stuff happening."

Barrier 2

There is a sense from some that as the regions Iwi are settling or approaching settlement, they are beginning to look towards stronger partnerships and acting on potential opportunities in their respective communities; however, there is a historical strain on the relationship with Council as well as some disagreement between Iwi that needs to be acknowledged and worked through, in order to all move forwards collectively.

Whilst the following have been identified as strengths, they have also been identified as barriers:

- Some organisations are working closely with local Iwi, particularly in the north, and are seeing more positive outcomes due to these relationships. However, this process can take time for some organisations with limited staff and resources.
- Although Council is aware of and is working towards developing meaningful partnerships with Iwi, they acknowledge there is still a way to go.

“Yep, [we are] working a lot with Iwi, yes, there have been bad relationships in the past between Iwi and Council, but we’ve now got a pretty good diverse bunch of elected members.”

“I’m trying to work more now with Iwi and have focused on the north and we’ve seen a lot more stuff happen.”

“Other stuff that’s going positive are our relationships, particularly with Iwi.”

Barriers

- Some feel there is still some disagreement between the southern Iwi of the region, as a result of pending settlements, which needs to be acknowledged and worked through in order to all move forward collectively. Some feel this is also causing some disruption for Council, government agencies and, ultimately, families in the southern townships.

“And then you have got the Council and all the different government agencies in here that are changing a lot of stuff due to this treaty settlement and it is disrupting everything. It is actually a real big division within our community here, a huge division.”

“Not too sure how close the three Iwi [in the south] are, I think there’s still a little bit of head butting going on there. Their own in-house sort of stuff happening.”

“There are a lot of treaty settlements going through at the moment... and we have got three or four Iwi fighting, which also disrupts families.”

Opportunities

- The co-governance space may hold unexplored opportunities for Council, as some feel certain historical processes that continue to impact the present have not been properly addressed.
- Some local Iwi have ambitious dreams and visions for the advancement and development of their community once they have achieved settlement.

“There’s a huge amount of opportunity for us in the co-governance space that we haven’t explored, Council hasn’t done enough work in the back to be able to adequately deal with the present.”

“We work very closely with Uenuku and to some extent Ngāti Rangī... and once their settlement comes through, I think you’ll find that’s gonna change significantly, they’ve got a lot of dreams and visions around that [progressing Raetihi].”

“Once Iwi reach settlement, there is potential for development opportunities to arise in National Park.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Raetihi Charitable Trust, Civil Defence and DOC - working closely with local Iwi, particularly in the north.
- Te Whare Taumarutanga - a collective of northern based Iwi who work with Council and other agencies to assist with community response.

“In the north, they [Iwi] have got a bit of a collective now where they’ve got a base of people who can go and assist with community response as well as tying on with Council and other agencies as well. So that is pretty cool.”

Barrier 3

Whilst some government agencies and charitable trusts seem to gain funding relatively seamlessly, many community organisations and initiatives are facing multiple barriers to accessing funding such as the time and skill it takes to apply for funding, finding out what funding is available and the competitive environment, all making it harder to get on and do the work.

Strengths

- Some are aware that significant investment has gone into the region to fund some government and non-government organisations and projects.
- Some have the perception that being a registered charitable trust makes accessing funding easier for some.

Whilst the following have been identified as strengths, they have also been identified as barriers:

- Some charities believe getting funding for equipment, resources and upgrades (e.g. renovations) is much easier than getting funding for salary and wages, leading to a perception in some organisations that funders are unwilling to support the salaries or wages of the people who are providing the service, impacting their ability to deliver their services.
- While some recognise the importance of utilising the funding that comes into the region, there are instances where it is unclear how certain funds are being allocated which can be confusing or frustrating for some.

“It’s taken a while to build up that credibility with some of the funders but a lot of them had faith in what we were going to be able to achieve. Also knowing people in the right places [helps].

“We’re a charitable trust, a registered charity, so it makes it really quite easy for us to get funding.

“Once you set up a good network, and once you have good funding relationships and show you’ll walk it and do it, funders will want to throw money at you.

“There’s some really good funding out there, you just have to find the time and patience to sit down and apply for it.

“It’s tough because, of course, funding procurements is what I’ve done professionally. So yeah, for our trust, I can just get money pretty easily.

Barriers

- Some believe that as a result of government agencies having easy access to funding, and a need to implement programmes in the community to maintain that funding, some are implementing programmes that aim to tick boxes and replicate existing services, rather than working with existing organisations to create programmes that are complementary and focused on bridging the gaps within the needs of the community.
- For some community organisations, finding funding is an ongoing struggle, as they are battling for limited resources and are conscious of stepping on the toes of other organisations within the community who are receiving or looking for the same funding.

- Applying for funding is extremely difficult for some community organisations, as they don’t always have funding knowledge, know what funders are looking for, how to word applications, or what boxes to tick.
- Some community organisations shy away from smaller single-year funding applications as much more work is involved than applying for larger multi-year grants.
- Some believe that some funding models are too generic and aren’t serving the needs of specific communities appropriately, i.e. the arts community.

“So there’s things like, you know, applying for funding. It’s a really difficult thing to do. It’s really hard to know how to word things and what they’re looking for and what boxes tick their boxes and all that kind of stuff.

“Again, the hardest thing for us to be able to continue to be sustainable is funding. It would be great to be able to have more funding for more hands to be able to do what we offer. But again, with different things happening around the world, and the country as well, funding gets reprioritised. So we’ve got to be able to try and readjust.

“Are we building our people up or are we just going to be fighting over contracts?

“Government funded money... I’m not saying that we wouldn’t do it but it’s trying not to step on the toes of some of the organisations in our community. We don’t want to be contract poachers.

“There is a strong feeling of pride in our town. But there are too many small groups that are almost fighting each other for funding.

“Sometimes I’ll shy away from some of those little funding applications because the amount of work involved in the smaller ones is triple the amount of the larger ones.

“I must say it’s a lot easier to get funding for gear and equipment and resources than it is for salary and wages. That’s been a struggle.

“Yeah, so we’re finding that, you know, you can get funding for, for instance, putting lino down and a builder in the new building, and it is gonna look splendid, yes, whatever, but they’re not going to support people to actually provide the service. And that is really, really short-sighted.

“People are realising that the funding models are too generic.

“Outsider groups are coming in and have no idea of what our people are about and our community. But all they want is that tick in that box and [access to] that money... they don’t listen, they are chasing the dollar, which is frustrating.

“There’s a competitive funding model. That’s what this is. That needs to be stopped or enforced so that they have to collaborate. Really big issue.

“I can get funding relatively seamlessly. Others can’t and it’s very hard for them, if you don’t know what you don’t know.

Opportunities

- Effective utilisation and allocation of funding, coupled with support from the community and Council, has the potential to create sustainable and successful project opportunities for the region.
- Knowing the right people and building relationships and credibility with people in the right places, who believe in what a charity or a community organisation is trying to achieve, may make accessing funding easier.
- Providing more consistent, larger and longer-term funding streams for organisations so they don't have to battle for funding year-in-year-out.
- Supporting groups and organisations to become registered charities with a legal identity so they can apply for charity-specific funding.
- Ensuring organisations are working together, rather than duplicating each other, so that they aren't all 'jumping on the same waka', i.e. there are seven to eight programmes targeting start-up businesses in the region.

“So there is that element of don't just find funding for the sake of funding. If you're going to be going out and doing funding, ensure that those projects are sustainable, they're successful and that they have the community backing.”

“We are looking at becoming a charity for the whole thing because we've never actually earned a cent out of it ourselves anyway... And then we can do our own funding proposals.”

“The main concern was the consistency of funding. That's why, if we had a funding source that was for a three year period, it would allow us to do so much more. A greater amount of funding opposed to getting \$40,000 here, \$20,000 there. That is the struggle.”

“I think what it is, is that all of the needs can be met, if everyone stops jumping on the same waka. Instead looking at, 'hey, we'll cover that area, you cover that area and we'll go this way'.”

“You've just got to set yourself up right and know how to talk and make sure that when you're doing delivery, that all your money is accounted for.”

“Put it in our contract with MSD that people have to get together once a year to talk about how they work together. So it's as simple as that, we're not in competition. We're all trying to achieve the same things.”

“You know, we can embrace this and see it as people have got choices or we can go, 'come on, you know, put it together and have some really targeted stuff'.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Raetihi Promotions Trust - leveraging community funding and volunteers to support their initiatives.
- Taumarunui Youth and Community Trust - created a trust with a legal identity to apply for funding.
- Ruapehu District Council - Pūwhenua ki Ruapehu, used to help identify needs in the community and apply for funding.
- Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust - leads an educational group of organisations that come together to ensure there's no overlap in what they offer.
- 'Better Off' funding - to be utilised for town revitalisation projects, however, these are still in development.
- Rach Hoskin - offers the community free training on funding and procurement.

“I don't think promotions [Raetihi Promotions Trust] has had much funding at all. They just do a little bit of community fundraising and then just do what they can and get their volunteers down.”

“Pūwhenua ki Ruapehu, we [Council] also use that information to apply for funding if we feel that it is that Council needs to step in and solve some of those issues... social housing, for example.”

“I have offered to train more people in our community for free on funding procurement. So I'm doing that in Taumarunui and Ohakune. We haven't confirmed dates yet, but I'm asking people to provide people to me so I can train them in depth on funding and procurement, because I can't do it all myself.”

“So we have got a group that sits down and has got all us educational groups that are in our community, so we don't touch on each other's stuff.”

Summary of Findings



The purpose of this section

This section aims to summarise all of the themes and insights captured in this report, into an easily digestible, and actionable format. It is designed to be used as a tool to enable active discussion and prioritisation of future focus areas for community-led initiatives and services.

Strengths and Barriers System Map Variations

Building on the system map introduced earlier in this report, this section presents two further variations. The first is to highlight the elements of the map that are strengths in the Ruapehu community (see figure 20), the second to highlight the elements of the map that are barriers in the Ruapehu community (see figure 21).



Figure 20 – Impact Collective Equity and Wellbeing Framework – Ruapehu Strengths.



Figure 21 – Impact Collective Equity and Wellbeing Framework – Ruapehu Barriers.

Strengths

This section summarises all of the current strengths in the Ruapehu community; the lived experience, what they are impacted by and what they then have downstream impacts on. The size of the circle indicates the respective size of this strength, in comparison to the others, in the Ruapehu community.

Barriers

This section summarises all of the current barriers in the Ruapehu community; the lived experience, what they are impacted by and what they then have downstream impacts on. The size of the circle indicates the respective size of this barrier, in comparison to the others, in the Ruapehu community.

Opportunities

This section aims to encapsulate all of the fantastic ideas we heard throughout the research from members of our community into a digestible and relevant format.

We hope this section, in particular, can act as a springboard for community-led creation of services and initiatives to either build on enhancing the existing strengths, or help to overcome the existing barriers.

Strengths



Figure 20 – Impact Collective Equity and Wellbeing Framework – Ruapehu Strengths.



Sustainable Cities and Communities

Youth

- Due to the community being so well connected, some believe it is difficult for youth to hide if/when they offend.

Adult

- Some view Ruapehu as a region that is culturally rich, has great climate and weather, boasts great access to the natural environment and outdoor activities and is a great place to live for families that appreciate the rural New Zealand lifestyle.
- Many feel the Ruapehu community has a great team of first responders.
- Some view volunteering as a great way to connect with and support their community.
- Many feel that a benefit of being in a small community is that everyone knows everyone and looks out for one another, which leads to a general feeling of safety and lower crime in the community. Many feel that when crime is present, it is handled promptly and informally through personal networks.
- Some see there are many benefits of living in a small rural community, such as great support systems, community networks and the ability to utilise local bartering systems.
- Some view the rural location and lifestyle of living in Taumarunui as attractive.



Good Health and wellbeing

Youth

- Some believe there are many benefits to raising children rurally or in an outdoor environment, including gaining a good work ethic, learning life skills and developing a strong sense of character and drive for personal development.
- Many believe that the region tends to cater well towards youth interested in sports and outdoor activities with several opportunities for children to participate in local, social and school-level sports in the region.

Adult

- Many have noticed less cigarette smoking due to their increased price and changing mindset of the nation.
- Some view drug use as not highly visible in the region.

Elderly

- Some elderly happily live independently, without support.

All

- Some feel that access to healthcare in the region is cheaper and non-discriminatory (if you can access it).



Quality Education

Infant

- For some families, they choose not to participate in early childhood centres, as they have strong family and community networks that allow them to fulfil childcare needs themselves.

Youth

- Some have the view that secondary education locally has improved over recent years, especially in relation to diversifying its subjects available and culture.
- Some believe achievement for Māori students has improved for some.
- Some believe technology offers youth great educational and future employment opportunities (when used appropriately).

Youth to Adult

- Some people, especially those with strong rural connections, believe tertiary education isn't necessary to achieve a good life and are instead opting for non-tertiary pathways, such as farming, building or plumbing or taking advantage of the growing number of courses and certificates available in the region focusing on hands-on, outdoor skills.



Decent Work and Economic Growth

Youth

- There are multiple programmes emerging to support youth into employment in the region.
- Some are aware that some funding has been injected into the region around youth employment.

Adult

- Many believe that one of the benefits of smaller communities is the presence of many local small and medium enterprise (SME) businesses that are well-connected and go above and beyond to promote growing, nurturing and supporting their own and their communities.

All

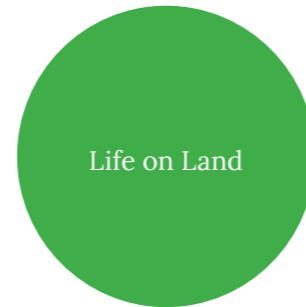
- Some believe many organisations are supportive of volunteer work.
- Some feel that for those working at the Waiouru Military Camp, there are many benefits such as access to affordable housing, rural allowances, and a good social life.
- National Park is viewed by some as having a strong business support network, a progressive community approach, and is seen as a treasure to the Ruapehu region.



Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

All

- Many believe tourism has typically been the industry propping up the local economy and offering many jobs for the region.
- Many feel that Ohakune has traditionally been one of the regions more bustling towns, due to having a large number of tourism offerings.
- Some believe that Raetihi seems to be reasonably happy with their water quality due to recent upgrades.



Life on Land

All

- Putting unproductive farmland into pine with the intention of being harvested is viewed as a positive by some in the community.
- Some feel that the region boasts some great rivers and swimming spots, particularly in the north, with the perception that water quality is improving in some areas.
- Some efforts are being made around weed and pest prevention across the region.
- Ruapehu is viewed by many as a great region to be sufficient off the land, with high access to affordable and healthy local produce, including fruit and vegetable stores, plenty of hunters supplying meat, and many who have their own gardens and share their produce with the community readily.



No Poverty

All

- Some believe the observed shift in the Ruapehu housing market, with the market slowing and prices beginning to decline, may open up more opportunity for local home buyers or renters to find a home.
- Living in Raetihi is viewed as attractive by some, due to the beautiful landscape and it being more affordable to live there.



Reduced Inequalities

Adult

- Many have observed a widespread increase in the presence of women across many industries and within leadership and managerial positions in the region.

Barriers



Figure 21 – Impact Collective Equity and Wellbeing Framework – Ruapehu Barriers.



Sustainable Cities and Communities

All

- There is the sense that the community themselves, particularly those facing hardship, lack knowledge and education and are unprepared for emergencies. Responders would love for them to be more proactive and prepared.
- Some have noticed that housing prices in the region have increased along with the rest of the country.
- Many believe the allocation and utilisation of housing is a core issue contributing to the lack of housing availability in the region, with a high number of empty holiday homes and/or expensive Airbnb rentals located near the mountain (particularly Ohakune) that are either unavailable or unaffordable for long term renters or people wanting to move to the region for work.
- Some feel as though there is still an element of community division, personality clashes, or a reliance on key individuals to keep their community as one.
- Some believe that the rural location of Taumarunui has contributed to the loss of industry, key services and degrading infrastructure in the township itself. For those who remain in the community, they are experiencing increasing challenges as a result including lack of jobs, increasing poverty and a lack of variety and access to many forms of services.

All (continued)

- Raetihi has also experienced a loss of industry and key services, meaning there is not much left in the township. Many feel this is contributing to a lack of jobs, increasing poverty, lack of variety and access to most forms of services and a general sense that the township lacks things to do for entertainment.
- Although many feel that Ohakune has traditionally been a bustling town propped up by its tourism, some share concerns around the impact this is having on housing allocation and utilisation in the township, as well as noticing a number of local businesses recently closing down.
- Some believe Waiouru struggles to attract people to the army camp and the township due to some having the view that there are limited rural opportunities, and a sense of division between the camp and civilians.



Good Health and Wellbeing

Youth

- Many believe technology is to blame for the observed behavioural shift in today's youth, impacting their attitudes, activity levels, social engagement and approach to consensual relationships.
- Some have concerns that the increasing presence, accessibility and affordability of substances, e.g. marijuana, methamphetamine and vaping, is trickling down to youth in the region, with some observing an increase in these substances 'walking through school gates'.
- Some youth in the region are experiencing additional mental and emotional strain due to living in high deprivation, disruptive households, and having no positive parental figure present.
- There is a perception that once kids get to a more competitive sporting level, they begin to experience multiple cost and access barriers.
- Many believe that those interested in non-sports or outdoor related activities, such as performing arts and creative hobbies, lack the opportunity to thrive, meaning they are left bored and/or getting into trouble.

Adult

- Many are concerned that people are starting to develop vaping habits as it's more affordable and accessible, and there are concerns that people are oblivious to the potential health implications of vaping.



Decent Work and Economic Growth

Adult (continued)

- Many are aware of the presence of marijuana and the increasing presence of predominantly methamphetamine, as well as cocaine and MDMA, across the region. There are growing concerns about the numerous downstream impacts of those supplying and consuming these drugs, including youth.
- Some feel there is a lack of social support services right across the region, such as support for mental health, drug, alcohol and domestic abuse. Furthermore, there is a sense that police response times are too long, and that they have insufficient social support training to address these problems. There is also a hesitancy for those needing support to seek help from some services due to a fear that there is a lack of confidentiality or that services could come from people that know their family.

All

- Many are increasingly concerned and frustrated at the lack of access to appropriate healthcare right across the region. Many face issues with doctor wait times, hospital nursing and staff shortages, lack of prenatal care and long ambulance wait times. Ultimately this may be driving some to consider leaving the region or not relocating to the region due to a lack of service.

Youth

- Some believe there are still numerous barriers for youth involving employment, including limited employment opportunities in the region, dealing with personal trauma, lack of work readiness, and a lack of support once they get the job.
- For some, their families play a significant role in relation to youth unemployment through modelling a lifestyle of intergenerational reliance on the benefit or requiring youth to stay home and support their family rather than work.

Adult

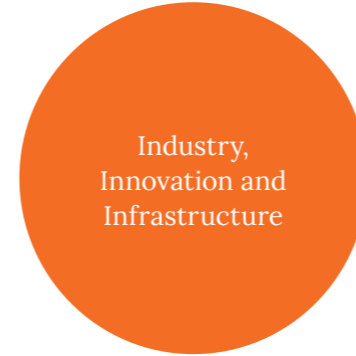
- Some believe there are barriers SMEs in smaller communities face, including the extra time and energy it takes to play multiple roles for their communities, access support and business mentors and succession planning.

All

- Many people are becoming increasingly time-poor and in need of paid work to make ends meet, making it harder to attract, recruit and retain in the volunteer space across the region. This can be challenging for many community organisations in Ruapehu as they rely on volunteerism to operate efficiently and cannot get the funding to pay their staff.

All (continued)

- Some feel there is an opportunity for businesses in the region to educate themselves and be more prepared for supporting and managing their employees appropriately, such as updating their hiring, employee readiness, and human resources practices and processes.
- Some would like to see more business development in National Park, such as more local cafes and restaurants that are open more often.



Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Adult

- There is a general sense across the community that the loss of industry within the region is having many downstream impacts on the community. Many feel this is making attracting new industry and skilled employees to the region harder as many now view the region as one that lacks opportunity, meaningful career pathways, essential services, quality schooling and infrastructure required to work and live effectively in the region.

Elderly

- Many elderly members of the community who are becoming less mobile and transitioning from independent to dependent living are experiencing multiple barriers to accessing in-home care, nursing homes and appropriate healthcare to meet their higher needs across the region.
- Some believe that with the lack of housing, some elderly face financial and availability barriers as they look to downsize.

All

- Many believe living in Ruapehu comes at a cost, with less choice, less access and greater travel times required to many essential services, employment, education, emergency services, healthcare and leisurely facilities. Additionally, there is a lack of public transport to access these, and the region's roading infrastructure needs work and investment.

All (continued)

- Many struggle with the many black spots and a lack of consistent internet and cellphone connectivity across the region, which can create multiple barriers to working remotely, accessing education online and running for local businesses.
- Aside from Raetihi, some feel that the rest of the regions' drinking water is poor and declining in quality, especially during extreme weather events, i.e. droughts and floods, meaning they need to spend more effort and money to improve water quality by boiling water, collecting spring water or filtering water, which some can't afford to do.
- Some believe tourism is now at risk and changing due to the threat of climate change and recent financial hardship and closures of core local businesses, particularly for the southern townships closer to the mountain, i.e. Ohakune. Many feel there is a need for the region's tourism sector to diversify relatively urgently, as they believe the region has much more to offer beyond the mountain.
- There are concerns around the slow progression of urban planning and housing development across the region that may alleviate some of the stressors experienced around housing in the region.



Reduced Inequalities

Adult

- Some have experienced bias by employers in the region towards specific groups, such as only hiring who they know or their own whānau and not hiring 'outsiders', having gender preferences for roles or being unable to separate a person from a negative family history or background.
- Some believe that there is still a way to go for some industries in the region as gender biases are still present in some instances.
- Some have noticed that there is a divide within the community across and within cultural groups, i.e. Pākehā and Māori, as well as within Māori communities and groups.



No Poverty

Youth

- Some believe a proportion of families in the community lack knowledge and the financial ability to utilise, access and engage in healthy eating habits, particularly those living in high deprivation.

Adult

- For some individuals experiencing high deprivation in the region, there is a sense that they may be caught in the cycle of poverty, also known as the 'poverty trap', experiencing multiple barriers to gaining and maintaining employment, including having a lack of numeracy and literacy skills, having no vehicle or transport to get to work, mandatory drug testing and being placed in roles that don't align with their passion, needs and abilities.
- Many in the region are living in deprivation, which can cause households to do many things to survive, including working multiple jobs, relying on benefits, creating unlawful income streams, and in some cases, leaving children at home unattended while parents have to work. This is seen to be particularly evident in Taumarunui and Raetihi.

All

- With housing prices still high and with a large number of families in the region on low incomes or facing hardship, purchasing a home is still viewed as unattainable for many locals in the community.
- Many are facing additional barriers to rent due to ineffective allocation and utilisation, limited availability, and poor quality of housing stock in the region that is coming at a high cost, making these unattainable, particularly for local low-income and high-deprivation families.



Quality Education

Infant

- Whilst many parents in Ruapehu want or need to send their children to early childhood centres, there are several barriers to accessing them, such as limited and full centres, affordability, lack of transport and the lack of flexibility to allow for outside of 9-5 work hours, all impacting their ability to participate and reap the benefits of engaging in early childhood care.

Youth

- There is the perception that the quality of secondary schooling is deteriorating within the region, which may be one of the reasons that families, who can afford to, are choosing to send their children to education outside the region. This has a number of downstream impacts for those who remain in the area, such as less opportunity, staff attraction and retention issues and poorer educational outcomes.
- There are mixed views within the community around the implementation and effectiveness of the new student-led learning model at a local secondary school. Many believe this may have contributed to declining teaching quality and school culture and lower educational attainment levels within the school, ultimately leading to families seeking education outside of the area.

Youth (continued)

- Some youth struggle to prioritise their education due to the number of barriers they experience, including the disruption of COVID-19, struggling with physical, mental or learning disabilities and/or behavioural issues, or leaving to support families financially at a young age, all contributing to poor education outcomes.
- There is a perception that there is a way to go as some Māori are still experiencing barriers around education, such as intergenerational attitudes around the importance of education and a lack of confidence in their abilities.

Youth to Adult

- Many youth and adults still experience several barriers to attending tertiary education due to the lack of financial backing, school and community encouragement, and access to local institutes within the region, meaning further education isn't possible for some.



Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Youth

- Some feel that the combination of youth boredom, deprivation, unemployment and lack of consequences for youth offending under the age of 14 is leading to the presence of some youth crime in the region.

Adult

- Many feel family violence is still prevalent right across the region as a result of underlying issues including poverty, hardship, drug and alcohol abuse, personal and family stressors, lack of employment, lack of access to spaces to unwind or dependencies where victims of violence are unable to leave abusive environments.

All

- Some feel the general sense of safety and lower levels of crime in the region is beginning to shift (and increase) as more out-of-towners relocate to these small communities.



Life on Land

All

- The topic of forestry and carbon farming is viewed as a contentious topic by many in the region. Some believe farmers are much more concerned when productive farmland is put into carbon farming or lifelong forests.
- Some see flood events, chemicals, treatments and farm pollution as an ongoing threat to the region's waterways.

Opportunities



Infant

- Better promoting the strong family and community networks that exist within the region to support childcare needs.

Youth

- Reinstating the region's Youth Council to provide youth with the opportunity to get involved in helping their community. Additionally, this would help ensure that youth have things to do in their space to keep them busy.
- Employing an Event Coordinator at Council or a central person that focuses on delivering activities within and for the community (including youth).

Elderly

- Increasing independent and dependent living options for elderly within the region.

All

- Helping people new to the region accept who and what Ruapehu is and that it will never be comparable to a city.
- Creating greater awareness, savvy marketing and story-telling around the opportunities that do exist in the region.

All (continued)

- Monitoring housing standards more closely, for example, Council saying 'keep the house up to a standard, or you lose it'.
- Identifying and defining Taumaranui's unique offering, e.g. an adventure playground or sports restoration, so that the community is known for something specific and worth stopping in for.
- Some local Iwi have ambitious dreams and visions for the advancement and development of their communities once they have achieved settlement.
- Increasing public awareness and education for families of all socio-economic levels around responding to emergency events and building an emergency plan so communities are resilient and more prepared.
- Improving the sharing of emergency preparedness information to reassure people in the case of an emergency event that they will be okay.

Infant

- Getting children and parents involved in creative programmes and workshops such as arts and crafts.

Youth

- Some feel that getting the whole family involved in supporting and addressing youth suffering from trauma can be beneficial and, in many cases, lead to better outcomes.
- Ensuring local organisations can provide more support to youth facing trauma in the region by doing more in-depth research to gain the necessary and relevant expertise and knowledge that is needed.
- Instilling self-confidence in young people has the potential to create numerous opportunities for them.
- Some believe mental health needs significant restructuring around youth in general.
- Better utilising existing people within the region that work in the sport space would create significant opportunities for youth to further access more sports and recreational events.
- Ensuring parents are leading by example in maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle to inspire and motivate youth to adopt similar habits.

Youth (continued)

- Raising awareness and educating people, particularly Māori families, about nutrition and how to fuel their bodies healthily.
- Planting more fruit trees around the streets in local communities (and working with Council to determine how to make this happen).

Adult

- Creating safe and anonymous spaces for people to talk openly about their experiences and what is going on for them.
- Leveraging people with lived experience to help support those who are struggling.
- Bringing in a mental health support worker in the region to assist police (one that is locally based and from the region).
- Introducing "Creative Prescriptions", a new approach to mental health that acknowledges the therapeutic benefits of both traditional treatment and creative expression. By providing access to creative outlets for community members, individuals can foster their well-being and personal growth.

Elderly

- Providing greater access to doctors, nurses and healthcare for the elderly and prioritising training people for healthcare services and providers.

All

- Bringing more doctors and medical centres to the region and providing more flexible hours so that they can better accommodate their patients.
- Ensuring emergency responders have an open space to talk to their crew, family and friends so that they are able to cope with the lows.
- Encouraging locals to get outdoors more often so that they reap the mental and physical health and well-being benefits the region offers.
- Ensuring the opening and success of a natural medicine health and wellbeing centre that the community has requested by the Raetihi community.

Decent Work and Economic Growth

Youth

- Reinstating the Taumarunui High School Youth in Emergency Services programme to better improve education and provide potential employment opportunities.
- Working with and linking young people to job opportunities and employment is necessary to help our youth take advantage of the available opportunities in the region.

Adult

- Having more business mentors and administrators to support SMEs within the region to enable them to thrive.
- Providing more support for small businesses and individuals delivered by professionals, such as training opportunities for small businesses and individual guidance for improving employment skills such as CV writing, literacy, and numeracy, to more effectively cater to the needs of community members in the region.
- Better utilising organisations that prioritise employment relations, health and safety, and strengthening relationships such as the Employers and Manufacturers Association to alleviate some of the stressors felt by small businesses in the region that need extra support.
- Enabling community leaders to work together and create initiatives that support and showcase businesses with fair workplace practices, creating a more substantial business community.

Adult (continued)

- Providing more networking events for businesses and professionals, i.e. after 5pm business events.
- Ensuring the job is aligned with what the individual wants to do and providing them with better wrap-around support services for those transitioning off the benefit into work - because 'it's not as simple as putting people into a job and away they go'.

All

- Giving people within Taumarunui the opportunity to up-skill and develop professionally.
- Leveraging trade academies and secondary school resources to create employment opportunities for youth within the region.
- Allowing more people to get the required licences and tickets for their line of work to ensure Health and Safety regulations are met.
- Providing more rural and outdoors-based programmes and tickets for those in the region's southern townships that target local employment opportunities.
- Encouraging remote working opportunities to increase the Raetihi population and bring more skills and wealth into the community.
- Diversifying what brings income into the Ruapehu region by thinking outside the square, focusing less on tourism and driving different opportunities.

All (continued)

- Decentralising government agencies and placing them within rural New Zealand, instead of Wellington, to inject more jobs and money back into the region.
- Financially incentivising volunteer roles to make volunteering a more economically viable pathway, ultimately increasing recruitment and retention for these organisations.
- Increasing promotion around volunteerism and its non-financial benefits, i.e. building skills, confidence and knowledge, to attract more volunteers.

Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Youth

- Developing Raetihi's existing arts community to create an art centre for Ruapehu and provide more opportunities for youth outside of sports and outdoor activities.
- Creating opportunities within the performing arts and arts sector for non-sporty youth.

Adult

- Offering more unique industries and jobs that align with what the region has to offer to create more employment opportunities locally.
- There are many potential benefits of manufacturing companies moving to the region; however, the region needs to discover ways to build their confidence in order for them to trust that they will find the staff they need.
- Increasing innovation and outside-the-box thinking, looking further afield and leveraging creativity and flexibility to attract skilled people to the region.
- Utilising and beautifying existing infrastructures that have potential, i.e. better utilisation and reactivation of the existing railway link infrastructure in the region.
- More transport services, in general, are needed across the region to give people better and more affordable access to employment.

All

- Providing more exciting events and entertainment in rural townships, especially during the evenings.
- Creating bigger and better community facilities that are sustainable and well utilised, e.g. multi-purpose hubs.
- Re-activating the rail transport networks as a form of public transport across and through the region, i.e. a high-speed rail that stopped through the centre of Auckland or Wellington. Rail transport could also be used for employees to commute to their workplace.
- Improving and connecting cross-sector boundaries so that the region is more supported with equitable access to services.
- Some are hopeful that the new One New Zealand (formerly Vodafone New Zealand) agreement with SpaceX will improve internet access and reduce the number of black spots within the region.
- Better and more affordable access to StarLink for rural areas.
- Bringing infrastructure and industry back to Raetihi to increase jobs, access to services and to uplift the financial wellbeing of the community.
- A multi-purpose community facility where the Taumarunui community can come together and play sports throughout the year, especially during winter or rainy seasons.

All (continued)

- There is a general feeling that something has to be done about the water quality issues across the region (but people don't know where to start).
- Increasing housing subdivisions of lifestyle blocks and cross-lease of sections across the region.
- Providing clarity around the rules, regulations and requirements of tiny homes and campgrounds with town planning so that they manage social outcomes, people's behaviours and aesthetics, and they don't become slums during a housing crisis.



Quality Education

Infant

- Exploring more flexible options that can provide care for children before and after the usual 9am to 5pm working hours.

Youth

- Finding ways to motivate youth that pursue secondary education outside of the region to return home.
- With the rise of remote work and learning, there is an opportunity for schools within the region to focus on digital and E-learning.
- Some local community groups want to see what they can do to help decrease the number of truant students at a local secondary school in the region.
- Ensuring parents stay connected with their children and teachers so students have the best opportunity to succeed at a local secondary school.
- Bettering the relationship between a local secondary school in the region and the community to improve engagement and drive better outcomes for all.
- Creating ways for the many elders in the region that have lots of knowledge and wisdom to pass this down to youth.

Youth (continued)

- There needs to be a community led conversation around how the community views education and what the needs are of the community as a whole.
- Increasing the number of international students who are returning to and attending local secondary schools to help expand the school culture.
- Better education and direction around how to use technology in a healthy and constructive way (as opposed to parents just using it to keep their children entertained).
- Creating more enjoyable, unique programmes that look at youth development as a whole, not merely concerning employment.
- Educating youth about the required skillset and qualifications needed for certain careers so that they are better prepared for the workforce.

Youth to Adult

- Providing regular transport for community members to commute to tertiary education, to alleviate some stressors that potential students face.
- Providing more opportunities for extramural study so students can remain in the region.

Youth to Adult (continued)

- Helping individuals interested in further education access financial support, such as StudyLink.
- Providing more guidance for students considering higher education, including suggesting relevant subjects for study and advising on the steps required to prepare for University education or on-the-job training.
- Providing those with numeracy and literacy barriers with extra 'hands-on' support, 'just being there' can be all they need.

All

- Considering Ruapehu as a fly-in-fly-out area for specialty skill sets, i.e. fly-in-fly-out for education; if you can't attract high-level science teachers, the Ministry could provide fly-in-fly-out teachers to fulfil those qualifications and stimulate the community that is in the region.



Reduced Inequalities

Youth

- The historical need to improve educational and employment outcomes for Māori is essential as this often underpins a number of negative downstream effects.

Adult

- Better enabling and empowering smart entrepreneurial women who are based at home with their children to start their own small businesses.



No Poverty

Infant

- Shifting the focus of community development to supporting families for the first 1000 days of a child's life in an attempt to break the cycle of living in deprivation and its many downstream impacts.

Youth

- Providing more affordable sporting activities for youth would alleviate some financial stress on families.

Adult

- Addressing poverty and deprivation needs is considered an advantageous first step to help people gain employment, i.e. car repair assistance and housing.

All

- Providing alternative ways of purchasing property for low-income families who might otherwise be unable to buy a home, such as home loans, buy-backs or rent-to-buy schemes.
- Creating a social housing project in Taumarunui.

All (continued)}

- Gathering insight from emergency service providers, i.e. police, fire and ambulance services, on the lived realities of the housing shortage across the region.
- Educating and teaching people about how to live within their means so that they can purchase, or maintain ownership of their own home, especially when they are on the benefit.



Life on Land

All

- Forestry as an industry can produce jobs for the region through the harvesting and milling of the wood.
- Utilising organic spraying solutions similar to the Waiheke Island organic spraying tanker.
- Releasing grass and weeds around plants more regularly, i.e. every six months.
- Some feel pest control efforts should be directed towards cities rather than rural areas. According to their experience, pests are more commonly seen in urban areas rather than rural environments.
- Ensuring the farming community reports fires by going to and reviewing the fire prevention and fire safety website, checkitsalright.co.nz.
- Providing more education for visitors around Ruapehu landscapes and potential hazards, i.e. for the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, here's how it should be done, here's how you should be culturally aware and here's how the experience should be enhanced to be meaningful.



Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Youth

- Enabling youth to run workshops that aim to educate and build knowledge around identifying drugs, drug use, and its associated risks.

Adult

- Finding ways that drug offenders can leverage probation to give directly back to the community as some have experienced that 'stuff they could have a community impact on they felt good about'... and better telling these stories to the community.
- First responders are wanting to do more drug testing for motor vehicle incidences, rather than just testing for alcohol.
- Better utilising people skilled in growing marijuana to grow hemp or enabling them to grow marijuana for medicinal use (when they get caught).
- Providing spaces across the region for people to visit, decompress, and escape heated environments (ideally before violence occurs).
- Creating more jobs in the region to give people purpose and a reason to get out of bed in the morning so that family violence decreases.
- Offering more preventative support for families that looks at the root causes to fix or break the cycle of family violence.



Life Below Water

All

- Taking more of an 'if it affects one person, we've got to do something about it' approach to dealing with degrading waterway infrastructure.
- Clearing willow trees out of the river systems more frequently to help water run more freely.

“[We] will be successful if everyone hops on the same waka, has the same focus and paddles in the same direction. We all want to be in the same waka. We don't want people going down a whirlpool or having one waka capsize. We want to be on a cruise ship, all going in the same direction. That is success.

Podcast participant

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