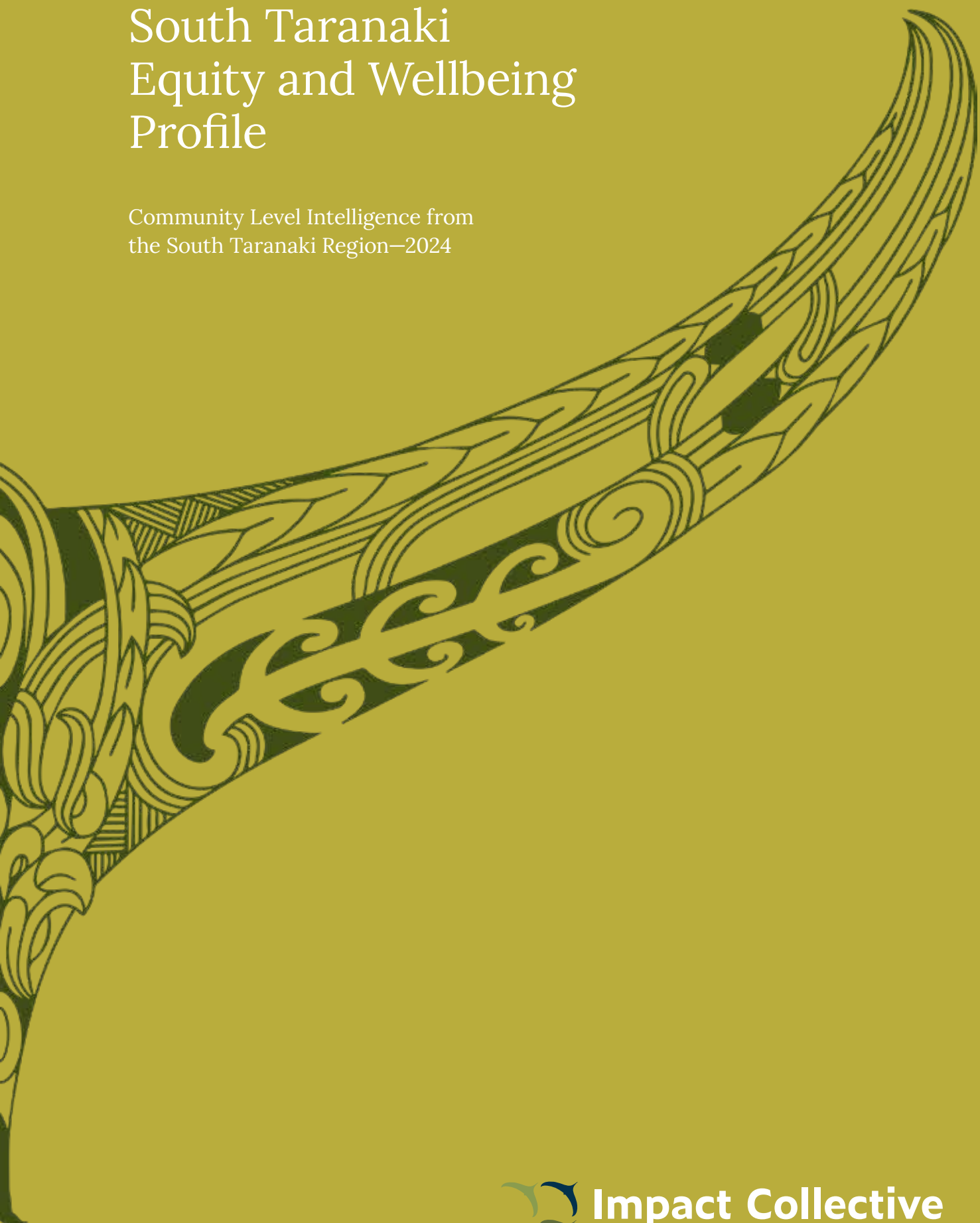


South Taranaki Equity and Wellbeing Profile

Community Level Intelligence from
the South Taranaki Region—2024



Impact Collective

Rangitikei, Ruapehu, South Taranaki and Whanganui

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Whakataukī

He aha te kai ō te
rangatira? He Kōrero, he
kōrero, he kōrero.

What is the food of the leader? It is knowledge. It is communication.

This Whakatauki acknowledges the power of the community insights that is presented in this South Taranaki Equity and Wellbeing Profile for the leaders within the rohe - 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 ngā 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 South Taranaki Equity and Wellbeing Profile. They are acknowledged below.

The South Taranaki 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 102 individuals, representing over 43 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 South Taranaki 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:

- Alzheimers Taranaki
- Bizlink
- CCS Disability Action
- Chamber Hub Employment Taranaki
- Dairy Trust Taranaki
- Egmont Refuse & Recycling Ltd
- Eltham Community Development Group
- Eltham Events
- Forest and Bird
- Hāwera Budget Advisory Service Inc
- MTFJ Whai Mahi
- Ngaa Rauru Kiihahi
- Ngāti Ruanui Whānau Ora
- On the House
- Plunket
- Pregnancy Help Taranaki
- Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust

- The Salvation Army
- South Taranaki District Council
- South Taranaki Neighbourhood Support
- South Taranaki Whānau Centre
- Taranaki Disabilities Information Center
- Taranaki Retreat
- Taranaki Rural Support Trust
- Te Ara Pae Trust
- Wild for Taranaki
- Workwise
- Yellow Brick Road
- Your Way | Kia Roha

Good Mahi Stories & Podcasts:

- Alzheimers Taranaki
- Dairy Trust Taranaki
- Eltham Community Development Group
- Everybody's Theatre
- Friends of Hāwera Parks
- Ebony Kalin: Youth MP
- MTFJ Whai Mahi
- Ngaa Rauru Kiihahi: Rawiri Walsh
- Pregnancy Help Taranaki
- Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust
- Te Ara Pae Trust
- Yellow Brick Road

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 endeavoured 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.

ACC – Accident Compensation Corporation.

AGM – Annual General Meetings.

ADHD – Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

Āhua – Te Reo Māori for ‘somewhat’.

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

A&E – Accident and Emergency.

ANZCO – Asian New Zealand Meat Company.

Aotearoa – Te Reo Māori for ‘New Zealand’.

Awa – Te Reo Māori for ‘river’.

CAHMS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

CBD – Central Business District.

CBT – Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

CEO – Chief Executive Officer.

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.

CST – Cognitive Stimulation Therapy.

CV – Curriculum Vitae.

DHB – District Health Board.

DOC – Department of Conservation.

EAP – Employee Assistance Programme.

ECE – Early Childhood Education.

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

EGL – Enabling Good Lives.

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.

GP – General Practitioner.

Hapū – Te Reo Māori for ‘Sub-tribe’.

Hihi – Rare sparrow-sized bird.

HIP – Health Improvement Practitioner.

Hōhā – Te Reo Māori for ‘tedious’.

IPS – Individual Placement and Support.

iSite – New Zealand’s official visitor information network.

Instagram – A free photo and video sharing app.

IRD – Inland Revenue Department.

Iwi – Te Reo Māori for ‘Tribe’.

Jobseeker Support – A weekly payment that assists people while they are looking for work or for those unable to work.

Kai – Te Reo Māori for ‘food’.

Kainga – Te Reo Māori for ‘home’.

Kapa Haka – Māori cultural group or Māori performing group.

Kaumatua – Te Reo Māori for ‘Elders in Māori society’.

Kaupapa Māori – Te Reo 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.

Kōrero – Te Reo Māori for ‘talk’.

Kuia – Te Reo Māori for elderly women.

Kura – Te Reo Māori for ‘school’.

Kura Kaupapa – Te Reo Māori for ‘schools operating under Māori custom and using Māori as the medium of instruction’.

LGBTQ+ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual.

LSF – Living Standards Framework.

Mahi – Te Reo Māori for ‘work, do, perform, make, accomplish’.

Manaakitanga – Te Reo Māori for ‘generosity’.

Mana motuhake – Te Reo Māori for ‘Self-determination, autonomy’.

Mana whenua – Te Reo Māori for the ‘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 – Rangitikei, 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.

Māori-dom – The world or sphere of Māori people.

Marae – Te Reo Māori for ‘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’.

Matariki – A star cluster that appears in the early morning sky in New Zealand during the mid-winter months. Matariki is a special occasion in the New Zealand calendar which marks the start of the Māori New Year.

Mātauranga Māori – Te Reo Māori for the ‘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 – Te Reo Māori for ‘Work’.

MBIE – Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

MDMA – 3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine, commonly known as ecstasy.

MDT – Multidisciplinary teams.

MS – Multiple sclerosis.

MSD – Ministry of Social Development.

MTFJ – Mayors Task Force For Jobs.

NCEA – National Certificate of Educational Achievement.

NGO – Non Government Organisation.

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OPHRS – Older Persons Health and Rehabilitation Services.

OT – Oranga Tamariki.

Pākehā – Te Reo Māori for ‘English, foreign, European, exotic - introduced from or originating in a foreign country’.

PSGE – Post Settlement Governance Entity.

Pūtia – Te Reo Māori for ‘money’.

Rangatahi – Te Reo Māori for ‘Younger generation, youth’.

Rohe – Te Reo Māori for the ‘Territory or boundaries of iwi. In this instance it refers to the communities, whānau and individuals within Rangitīkei, Ruapehu, South Taranaki and Whanganui areas’.

Socioeconomic – The interaction between the social and economic habits of a group of people.

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

SME – Small and medium-sized enterprises.

Snapchat – A messaging and social networking app for smartphones.

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

STDC – South Taranaki District Council.

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.

Taiao – Te Reo Māori for ‘natural world’.

Tangata Whenua – Te Reo Māori for ‘the iwi or hapū, that holds mana whenua over that area’.

Te Ao Māori – Māori world view.

Ngaa Rauru – Te Kāhui o Rauru.

Ngāruahine – Te Korowai o Ngāruahine.

Ngāti Ruanui – Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Ruanui.

Te Reo / Te Reo Māori – Māori language.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi – New Zealand’s founding document.

Te Whatu Ora – An organisation responsible for the planning and commissioning of health services as well as the functions of the 20 former district health boards.

Tikanga Māori – Te Reo Māori for ‘Protocols and customs. Approaches and protocols embedded in Māori customary values and practices’.

Tikanga – Te Reo Māori for ‘The correct way to do things’.

Tiktok – A social media platform for creating, sharing and discovering short videos.

TRC – Taranaki Regional Council.

TSI – The programme formally known as The Southern Initiative.

Tuakana – Te Reo Māori for the elder sibling of the same sex.

Tūrangawaewae – Te Reo Māori for ‘Domicile, standing, place where one has the right to stand - place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship and whakapapa’.

UK – United Kingdom.

Uri – Te Reo Māori for descendant.

VIN – Violence Intervention Network.

Whakamā – Te Reo Māori for ‘To be ashamed, shy, bashful, embarrassed’.

Whakapapa – Te Reo Māori for ‘a line of descent from one’s ancestors’.

Whānau – Te Reo Māori for ‘Family, extended family’.

WINZ – Work and Income New Zealand

WITT – Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki. Now referred to as Te Pūkenga.

Youtube – A video sharing website and app where registered users can upload and share videos.

A message from the South Taranaki...

Nau Mai, Haere Mai

Welcome to the South Taranaki Equity and Wellbeing Profile.

I am honoured to present this profile, a reflection of our community's heart and resilience. This report, facilitated by the Impact Collective, captures the essence of South Taranaki's spirit and lays out our collective journey towards an even more cohesive and vibrant community.

In South Taranaki, our strength lies in our people. Our region, with its diverse landscape from mountains to the coastline, is more than just a backdrop; it's a crucial part of our identity. It shapes our lifestyle, influences our traditions, and fosters a sense of unity and belonging among us. This connection to our land and each other is what makes South Taranaki special.

Our communities, though varied in their makeup, all share a common thread of tight-knit bonds and mutual support. We celebrate our rich cultural heritage and are committed to preserving it for future generations. Our district's history is not just remembered; it's a living part of our daily lives, informing our approach to community development and engagement.

The wellbeing of our families and community members is central to our ethos in South Taranaki. We strive to create a nurturing and supportive environment, where each individual can thrive. Our community's health, education, and welfare are priorities, and we continuously seek ways to improve these essential aspects of life.

In this report, you will find stories and insights from our community members, an overview of our challenges, and our collective aspirations for the future. It's a document that not only provides a snapshot of where we are today but also guides our path forward.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Impact Collective for their dedication to this project. Their efforts in bringing together the diverse voices of our community have been invaluable in creating a report that truly represents South Taranaki.

To our residents, this report is an opportunity to reflect on our shared experiences, to celebrate our achievements, and to collaboratively shape our future. As we move forward, let's use the insights from this profile to continue building a strong, vibrant, and inclusive South Taranaki.

Nga Mihi,

Phil Nixon
Mayor - South Taranaki District

“I would like to extend my thanks to the Impact Collective for their dedication to this project. Their efforts in bringing together the diverse voices of our community have been invaluable in creating a report that truly represents South Taranaki.

Phil Nixon
South Taranaki

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 South Taranaki District is unique in New Zealand, with South Taranaki being rich in cultural history with many well-preserved pā sites, original blockhouses, and museums. The vast geography supports an abundance of environmental and recreational activities. Each community from Waverley to Pātea to Hāwera to Ōpunake and Eltham is distinct in its character, ethnic heritage, geography, employment, and housing.

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 South Taranaki District an even better place to live.

The report is underpinned by current, local data and the analysis of South Taranaki’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 South Taranaki District and its people significantly for many years to come.

Ngā mihi,

Justin Lester
Director
DOT Loves Data

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

Justin Lester
Director
DOT Loves Data

The Impact Collective Operational 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
Executive Director

Dedicated to supporting businesses, whānau and individuals realise and live to their full potential.

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 Rangitikei 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.



Ko Whakarara te Maunga
Ko Wainui te Moana
Ko Mataatua te Waka
Ko Ngāpuhi tōku Iwi
No Whakatāne ahau
Ko Briar Goldie tōku ingoa

Briar Goldie
Senior Systems Strategist

I am an experienced 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 a shared vision and collective action, I believe we can achieve positive change that reaches far beyond individual wellbeing to the wellbeing of our community.



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

Dayna Stevenson
Intern Systems Strategist

Having graduated from the University of Otago with a Bachelor's degree in Science, majoring in Psychology, I have dedicated the early years of my career to deepening my expertise in this field. My journey began with proactive engagements as a research assistant and further expanded through two enriching research internships. These roles provided me with valuable experience in promoting positive Māori health outcomes, utilising both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

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

The Impact Collective Operational Team



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.

“The team know that by working with the communities to support them to tell their stories, that we can uplift their experience and create positive impacts. By combining the data and the stories, funders can see the areas of very real need, and fast track ways to supporting them. In times where financial pressures are being experienced, now is the time to step out and speak up for our communities.

Steve Carey
Executive Director
Impact Collective



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.

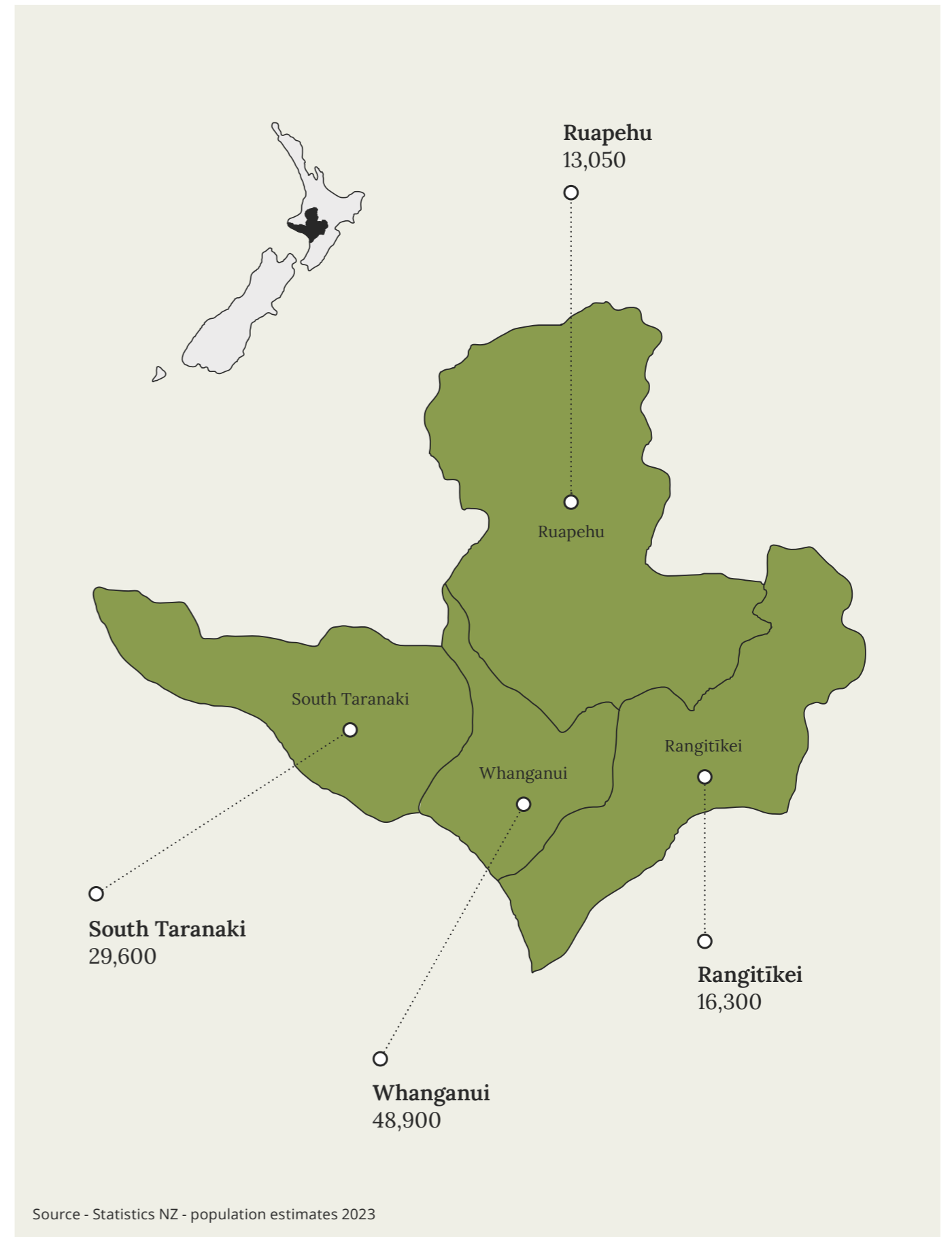


Figure 1 – Snapshot of the Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu and South Taranaki regions

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 the Whanganui, Rangitikei and Ruapehu Equity and Wellbeing Profiles in 2022/2023. Since these profiles have been released, the team moved across into the South Taranaki 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 South Taranaki communities.

The only way to build this profile was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the different South Taranaki 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 South Taranaki community is similar in its complexities to the Rangitikei and Ruapehu Districts, 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 South Taranaki communities, the team are able to present 64 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 communities.

Across the South Taranaki 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, Decent Work & Economic Growth, Reduced Inequalities, Quality Education, Life on Land, Peace Justice & Strong Institutions, and Affordable & Clean Energy. 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 South Taranaki communities; Sustainable Cities & Communities, Good Health & Wellbeing, Decent Work & Economic Growth, Reduced Inequalities, Quality Education, Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions, No Poverty, Life on Land, and Affordable & Clean Energy.

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 South Taranaki communities.

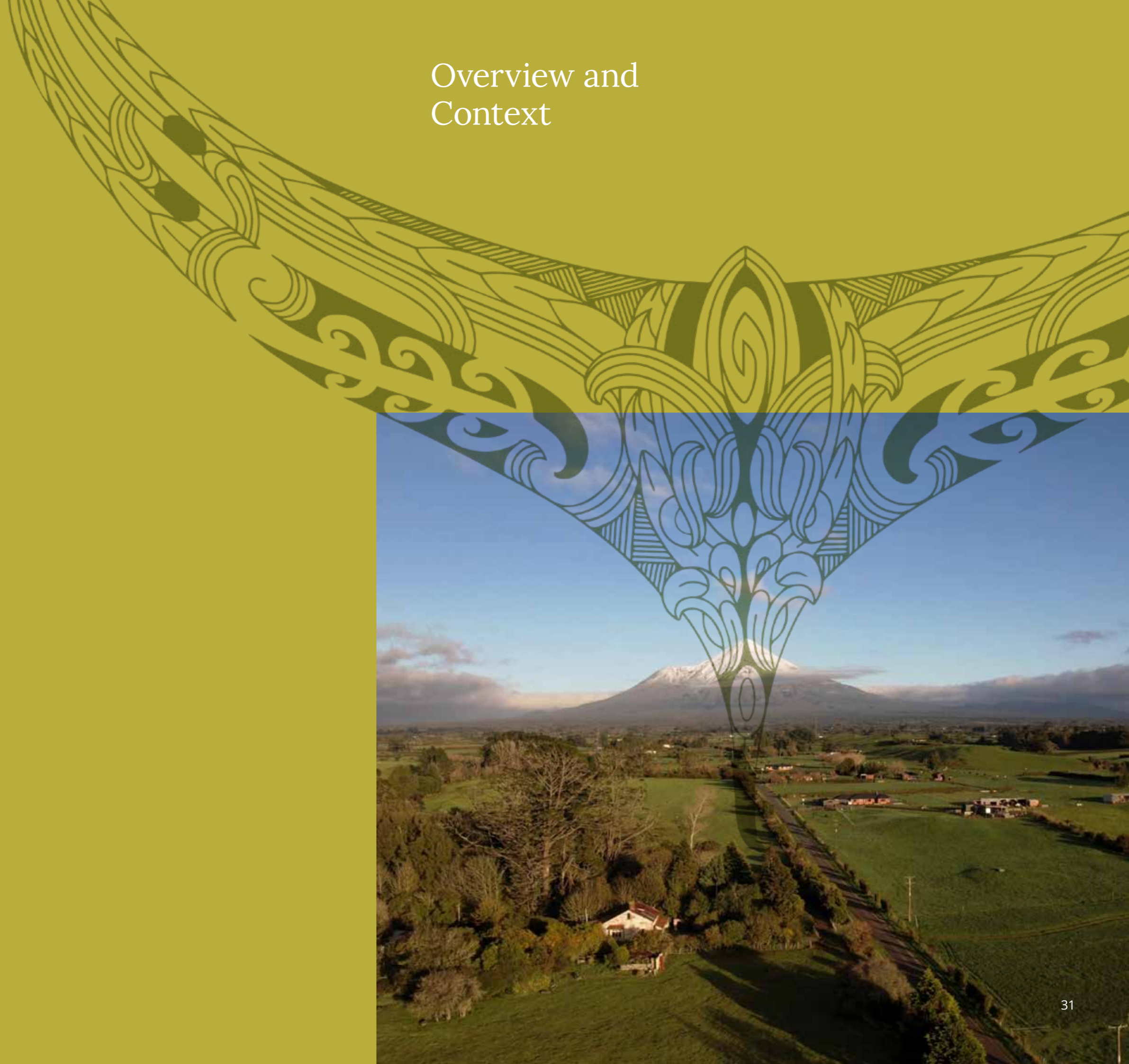
Our hope is that the intelligence provided in this report achieves a number of outcomes. These include being representative of the voice of the South Taranaki communities, aligning the lived experiences with the data insights to tell the full story, capturing and highlighting the complexity of the wider 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 community. 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 South Taranaki 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’

Throughout the Impact Collective journey we have maintained the knowledge that without those who came before us in the areas of collective impact the way in which we can now forge a path of data and people insights would not have been possible. This recognition of the past is central to ensuring that we shape the future in a way that creates a positive impact for the people across the motu and whenua upon which we stand. Within Aotearoa New Zealand we are all global citizens that play a vital role in being kaitiaki for environments, the communities and supporting the whānau in the places we call home. As such, we must work together on behalf of our tupuna, for the benefit of our tamariki and mokopuna to ensure that we are doing the best we can to co-design and support a future that sustains us all - giving back more than we are receiving.

To support this important mahi, the Impact Collective investigated the international, regional and local contexts to develop a framework that was reflective of the global, national and local aspirations of the people within our rohe.

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 Wellbeing 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 15 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.

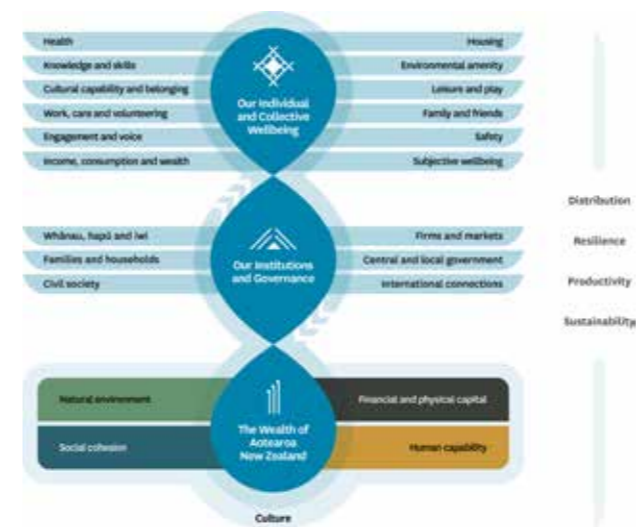


Figure 3 – Treasury Living Standards Framework (Updated October 2021).

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.

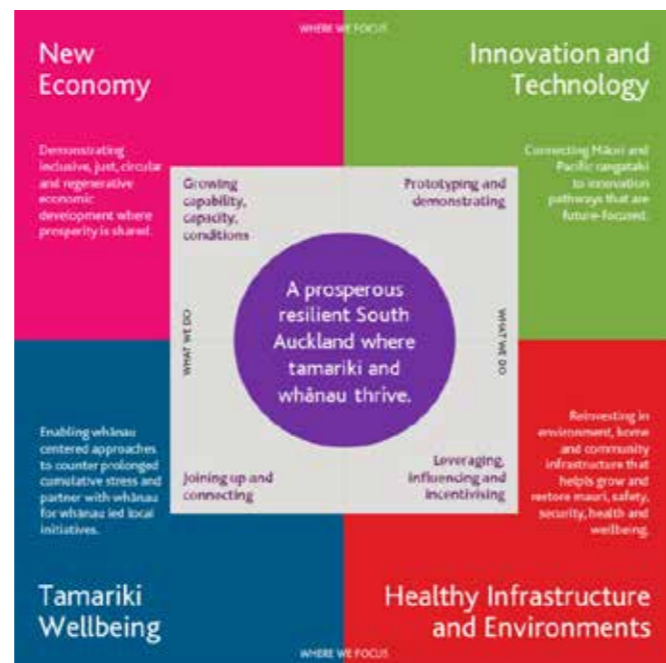


Figure 4 - The Southern Initiative (TSI) Four Focus Areas 2022
Source: <https://www.tsi.nz/about-us>

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 3^[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.

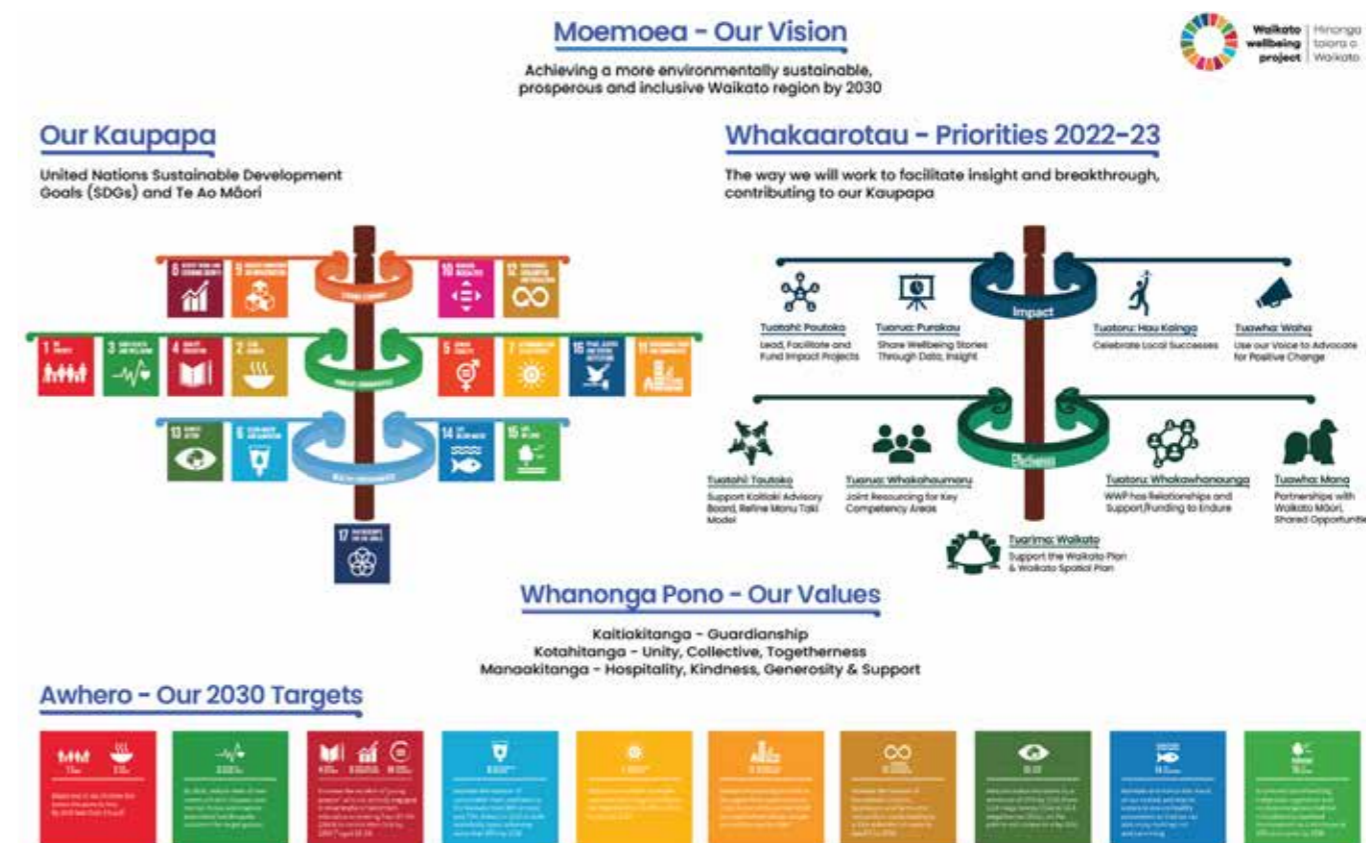


Figure 5 - Waikato Wellbeing Project 2022-2023 Business Plan

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).

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

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."^[11] - tclt.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.

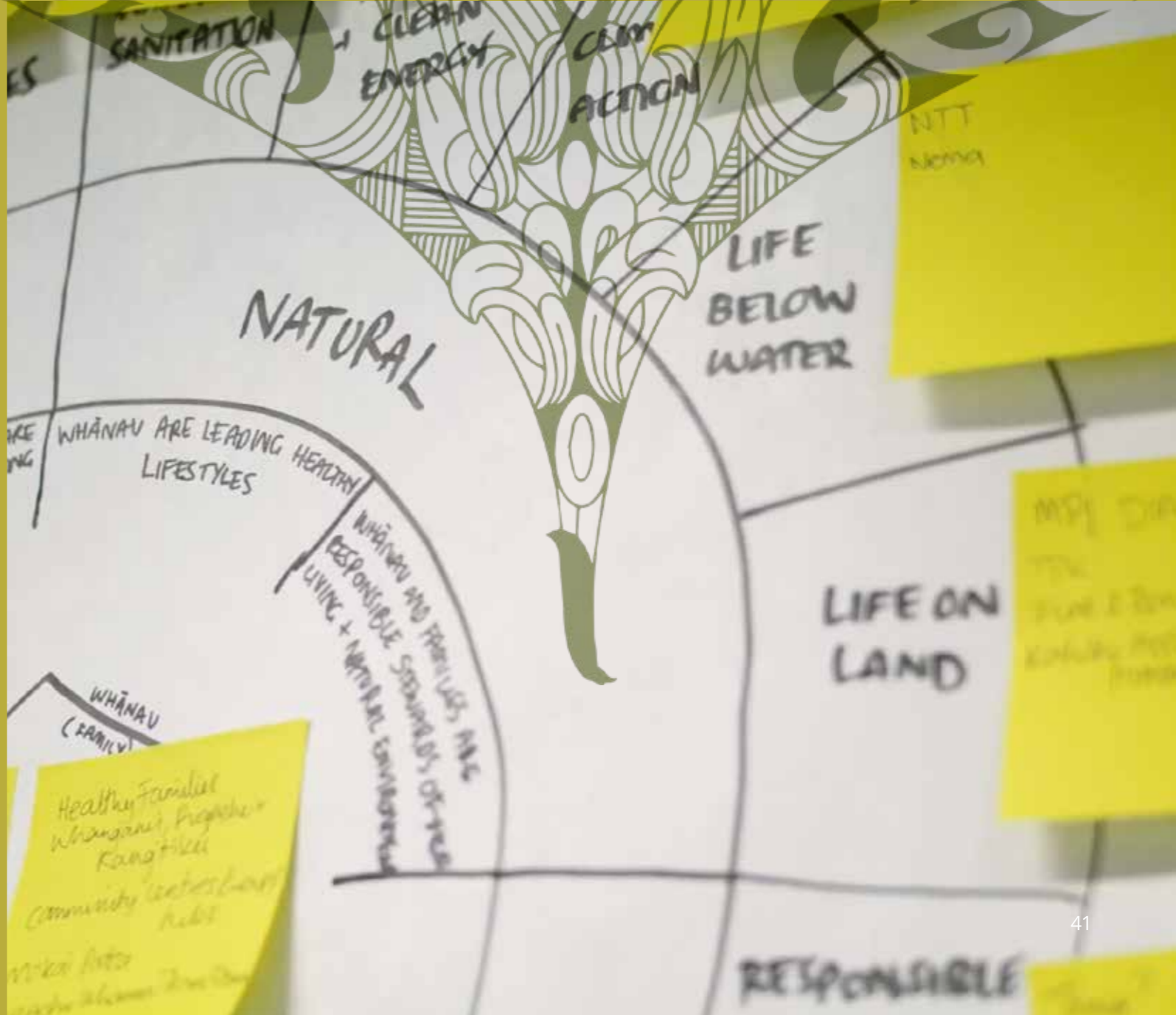
TCLD Trust and TCLT remain mindful and grateful to all its funders, contributors and supporters as positive change continues alongside our awa whānau.

"Mā te mahi tahi ka ora te katoa"



Figure 6 – River Valley Community Hub - Rānana

Our Framework



Our Equity and Wellbeing Framework



Figure 7 – 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.

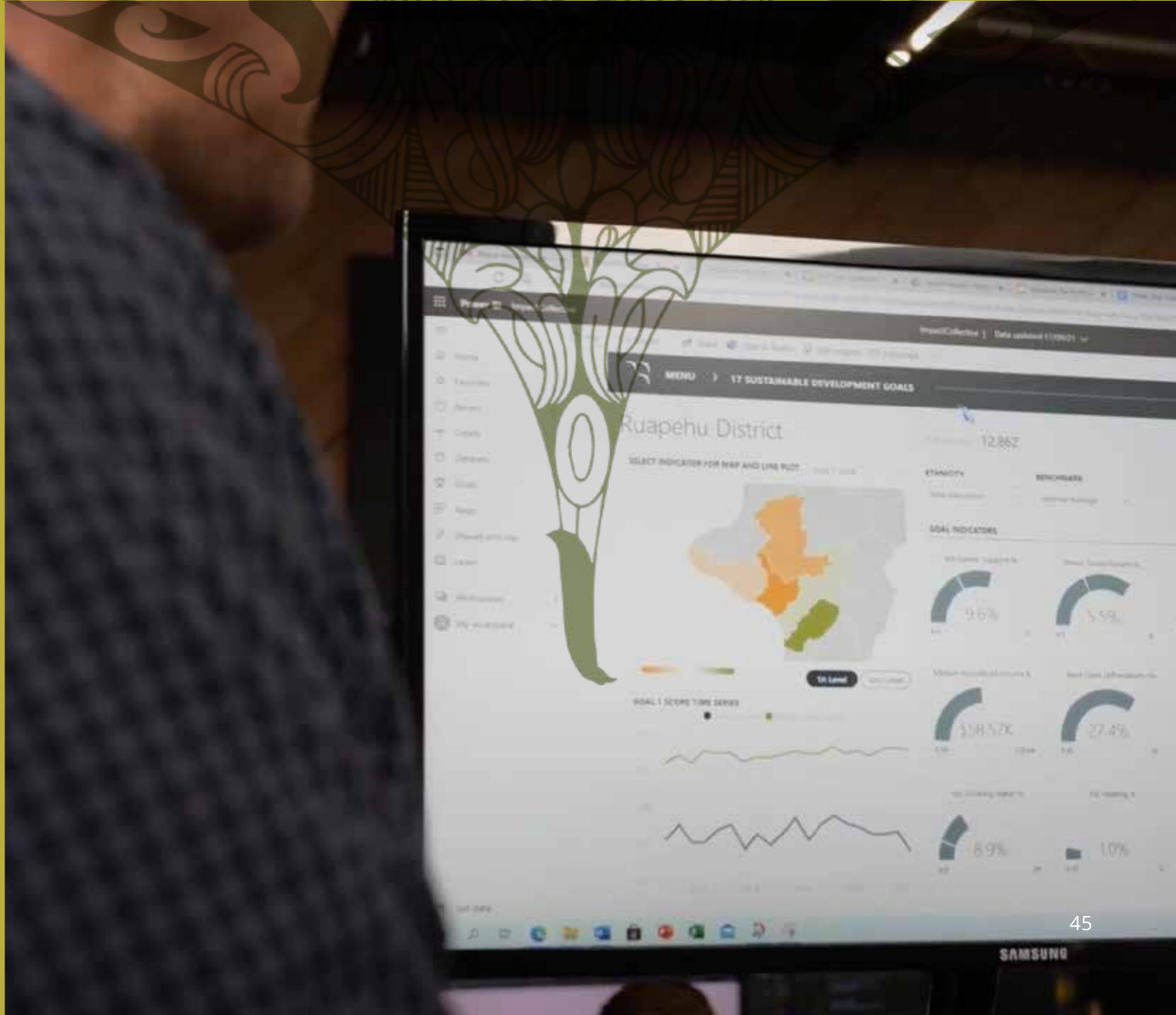
Updated in October 2021, the LSF consists of three levels - Wealth of Aotearoa New Zealand, Our Institutions and Governance and Our Individual and Collective Wellbeing. Level One, Our Individual and Collective Wellbeing, includes 12 domains that have been shown to be important for the wellbeing of both 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

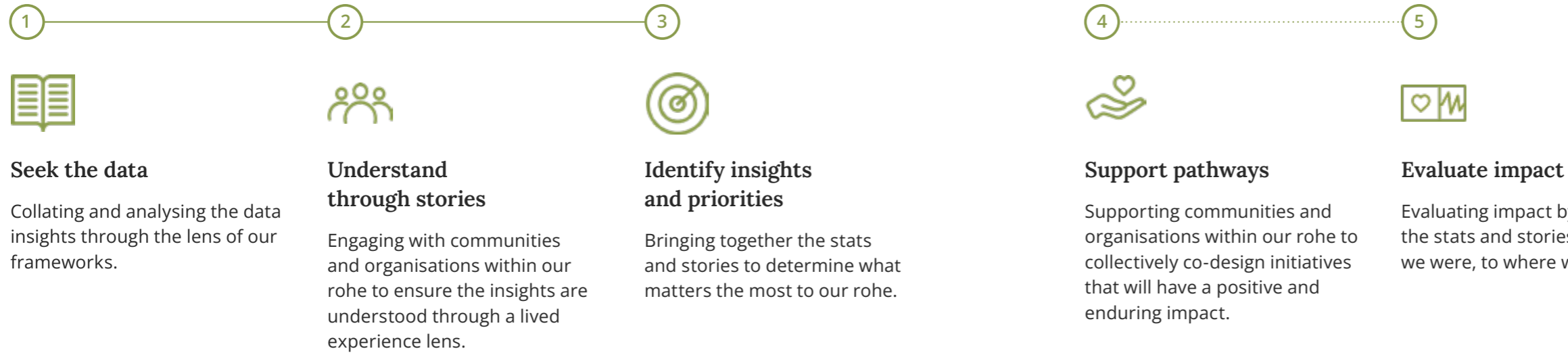
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

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 South Taranaki region. Phase one encompasses steps 1-3 of our process.

This report is the fourth in a series of Equity and Wellbeing Profiles to be delivered, focusing specifically on the South Taranaki 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 South Taranaki 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

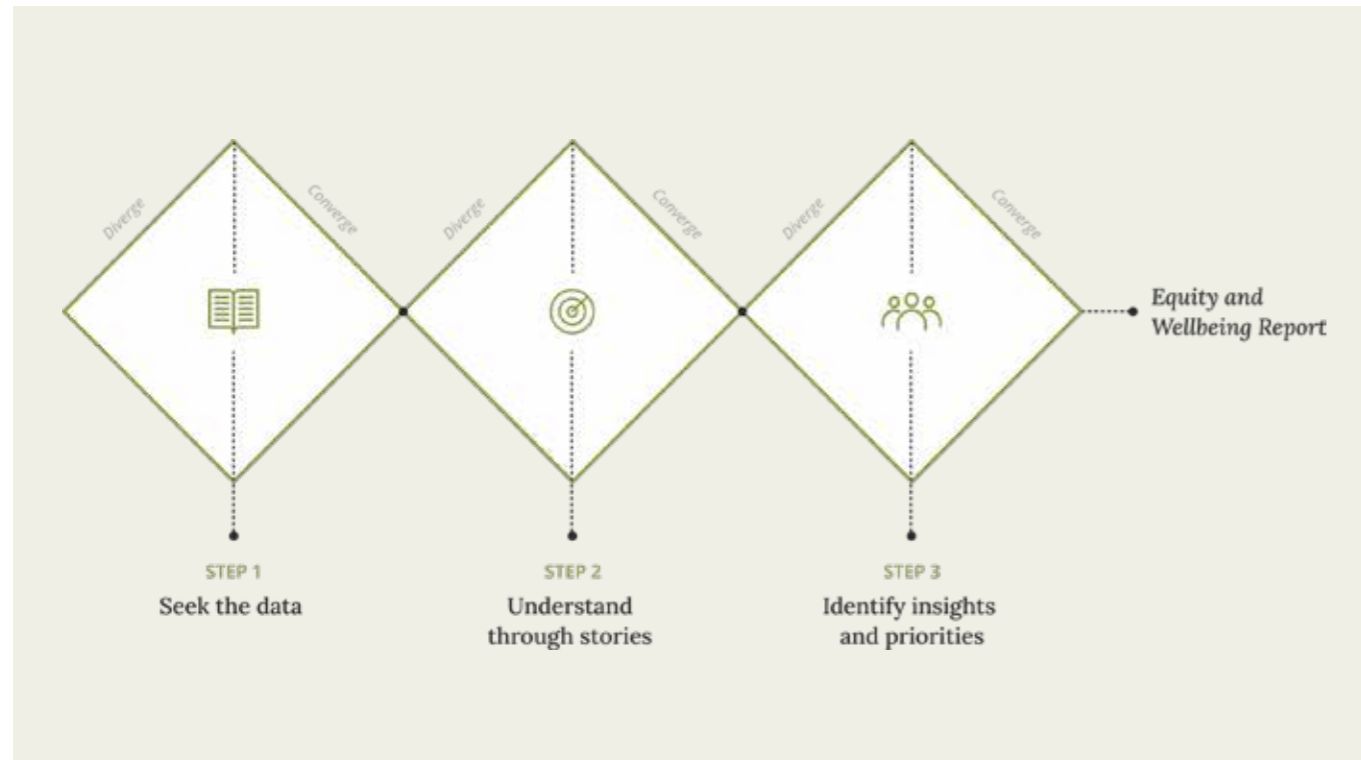


Figure 8 – Phase one of our process.

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

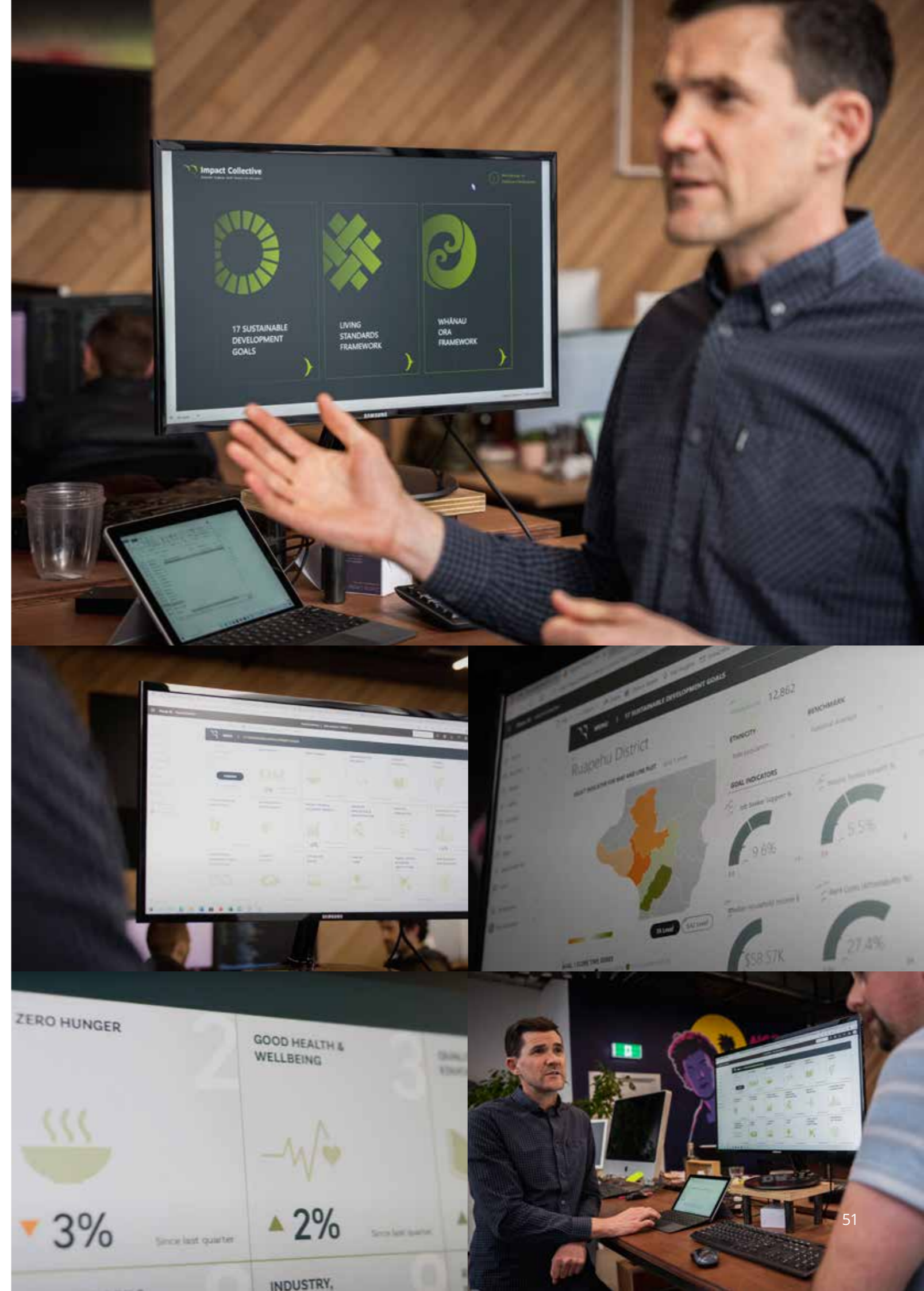
This dashboard pulls from many validated national and regional data sources in order to ensure good coverage across all of the frameworks and indicators. It was important that the Impact Collective presented data from these validated sources to ensure that when working with our communities and agencies 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
- 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
- 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

South Taranaki Equity and Wellbeing Workshops

The purpose of these workshops is to gather the stories and lived experiences of the South Taranaki 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 South Taranaki 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 South Taranaki 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 36 workshops with over 61 individuals from the South Taranaki community, representing 29 organisations. Below is a list of the wonderful organisations we have been so fortunate to have engaged with.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Alzheimers Taranaki, Bizlink, CCS Disability Action, Chamber Hub Employment Taranaki, Dairy Trust Taranaki, Egmont Refuse & Recycling Ltd, Eltham Community Development Group, Eltham Events, Forest and Bird, Hāwera Budget Advisory Service Inc, MTFJ Whai Mahi, Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi, Ngāti Ruanui Whānau Ora, On the House, Plunket, Pregnancy Help Taranaki, Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust, The Salvation Army, South Taranaki District Council, South Taranaki Neighbourhood Support, South Taranaki Whānau Centre, Taranaki Disabilities Information Center, Taranaki Retreat, Taranaki Rural Support Trust, Te Ara Pae Trust, Wild for Taranaki, Workwise, Yellow Brick Road, Your Way | Kia Roha.

'Good Mahi' Stories

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 14 groups or organisations in the South Taranaki community, speaking to an additional 41 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 PARTICIPANTS

Alzheimers Taranaki, Dairy Trust Taranaki, Eltham Community Development Group, Everybody's Theatre, Friends of Hāwera Parks, Ebony Kalin, Youth MP, MTFJ Whai Mahi, Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi, Pregnancy Help Taranaki, Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust, Te Ara Pae Trust, Yellow Brick Road.

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 South Taranaki Equity and Wellbeing Profile (this document) which aims to represent the collective strengths and opportunities of the South Taranaki 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 9 – 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 South Taranaki 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 10 – 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 South Taranaki 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 11 – Example of a validation sheet.

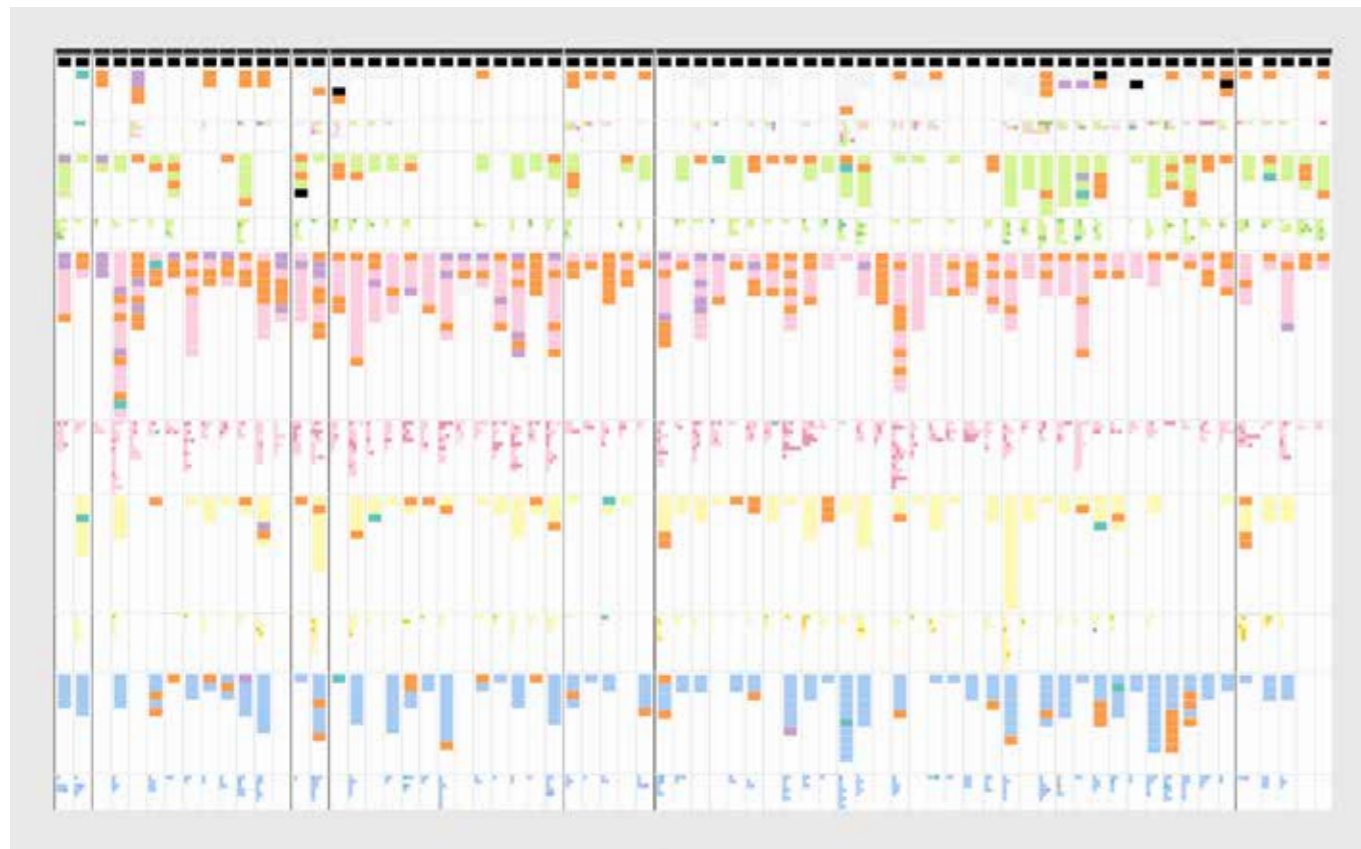


Figure 12 – Complete view of the comprehensive insights map.



Figure 13 – 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 South Taranaki Equity and Wellbeing Profile can be captured as a single system - albeit a very complex system.

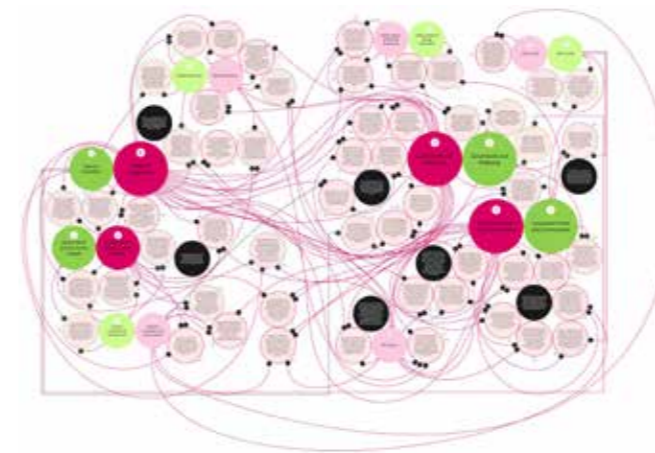


Figure 14 – Iteration of work in progress systems map.

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 South Taranaki community
- To tell the full story, aligning the lived experiences with the data of the South Taranaki 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 South Taranaki community
- To highlight and present the biggest strengths and opportunities of the South Taranaki region and act as the springboard to inspire collective action to either enhance existing strengths, or overcome existing barriers, in the South Taranaki 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.



Figure 15 – Work in progress refinement of barriers.

Phase Two—Supporting Collective Action

This phase will commence upon the completion of each Equity and Wellbeing Profile, as they are completed for each region, on an annual basis.

This phase includes the last two steps of our process.

- Supporting pathways
- Evaluating impact

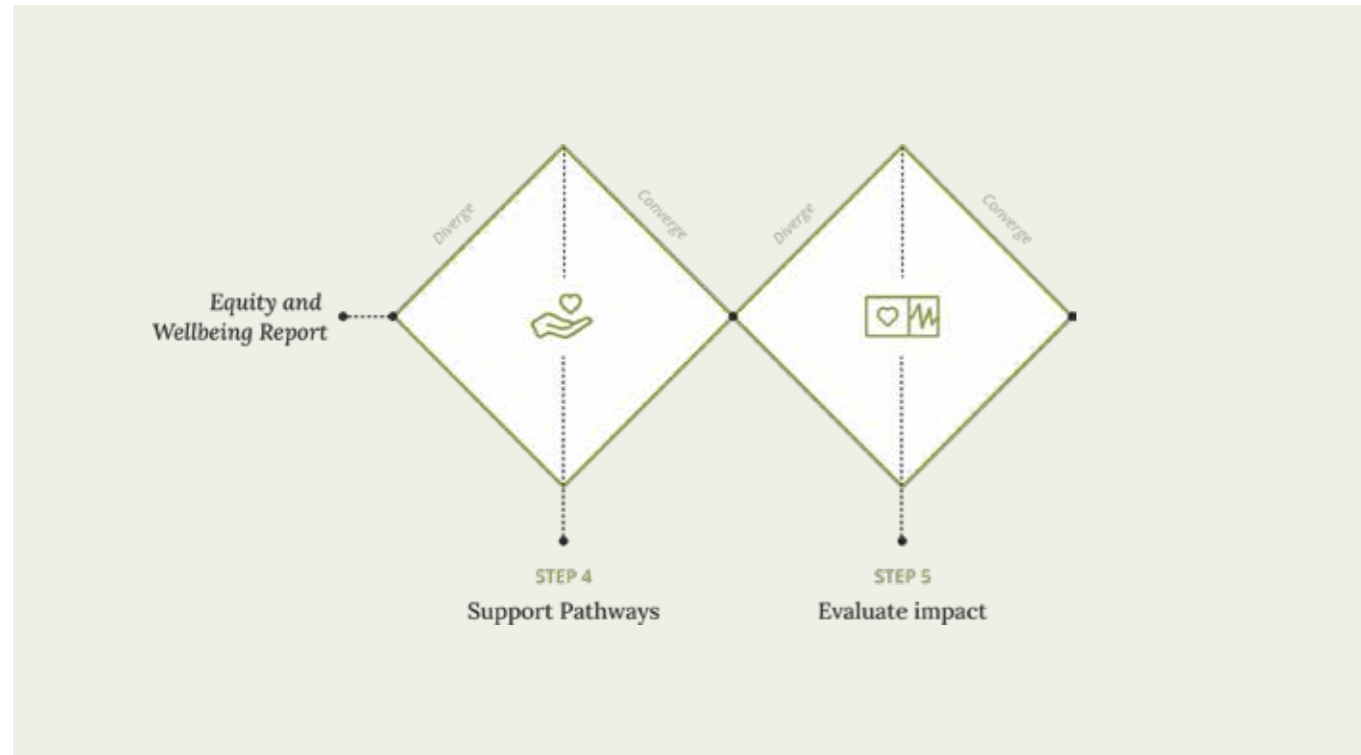


Figure 16 – Phase two of our process.

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 South Taranaki 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.

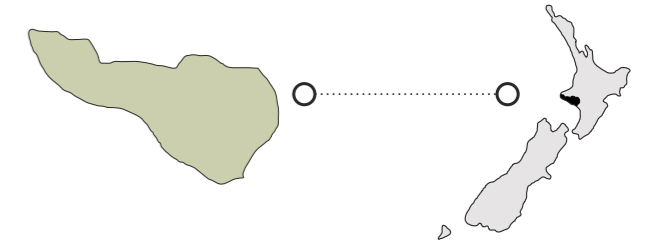
Tasks included in this step:

- Gathering fresh data insights from our dashboard.
- Gathering fresh community narratives via workshops and interviews.
- Measuring change in the data and the people insights.
- Impact Assessment Report post the release of the Equity and Wellbeing Profiles.

The South Taranaki Community at a Glance

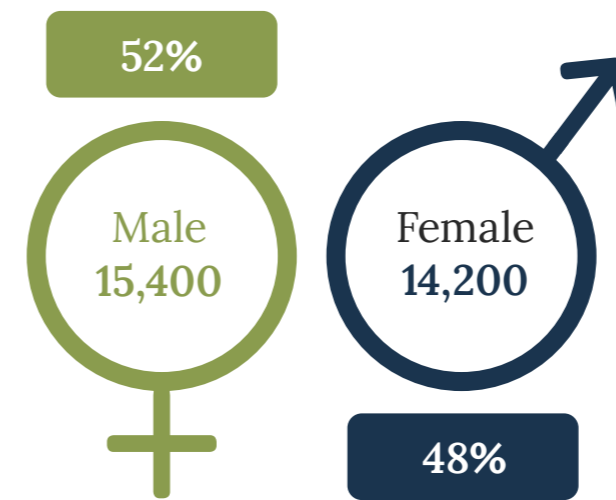


South Taranaki Region

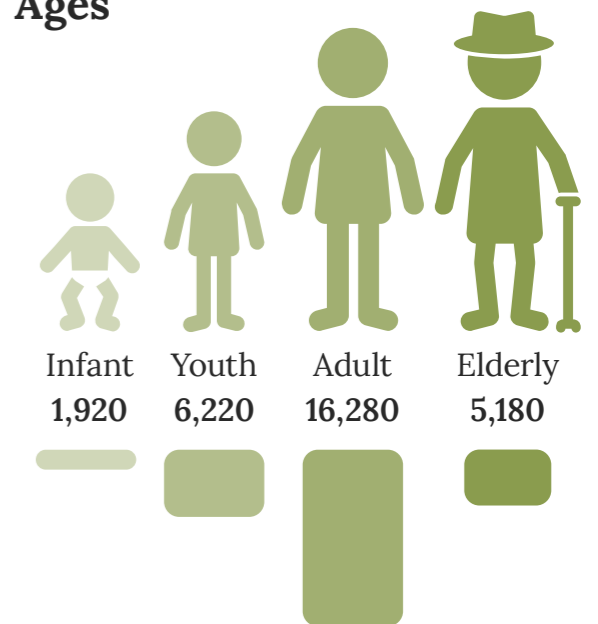


Total Population: 29,600

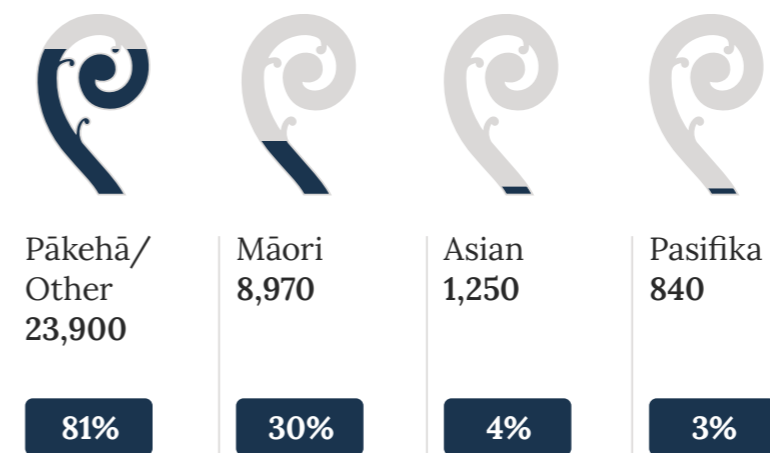
Gender



Ages



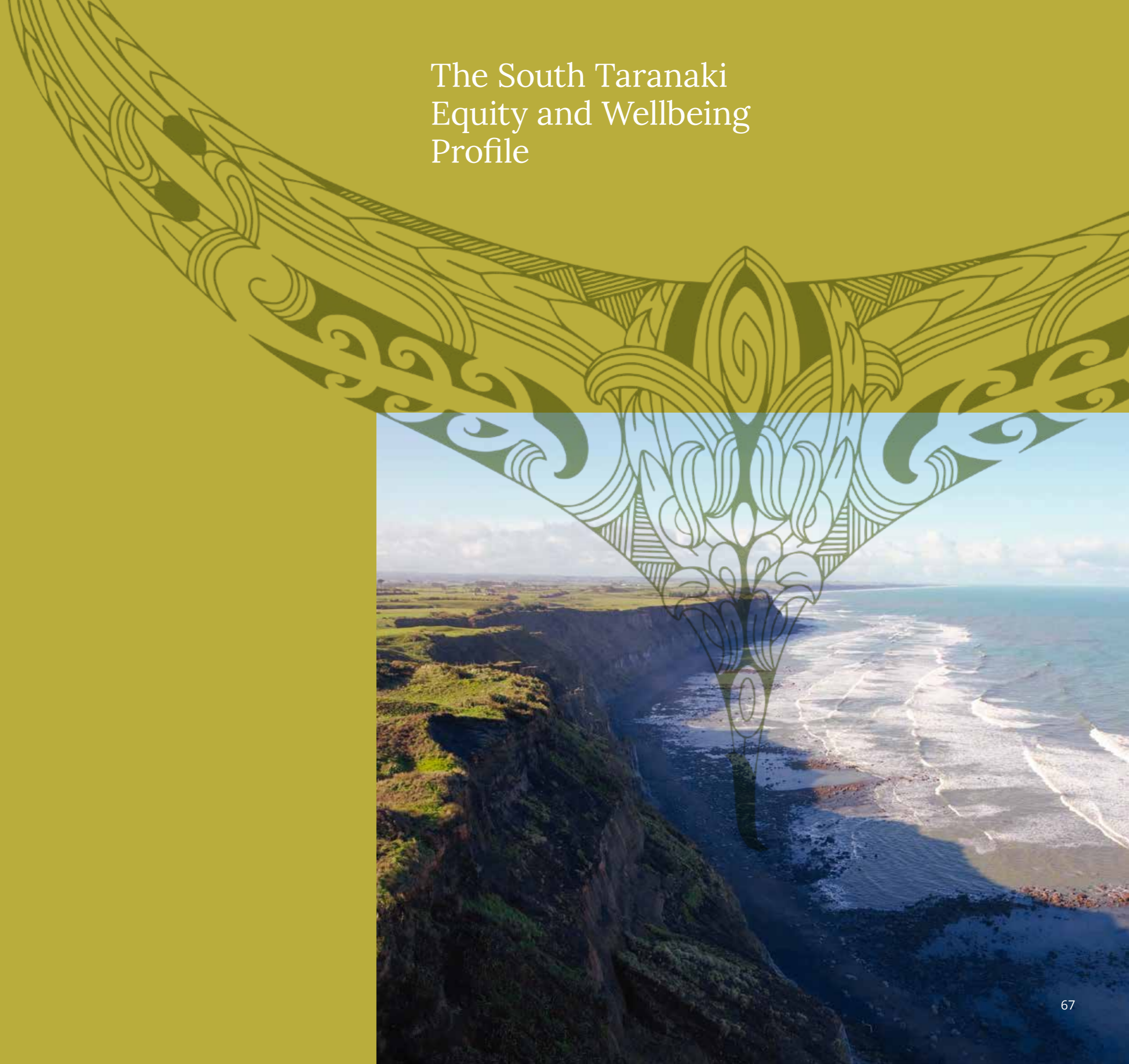
Ethnicity



It is important to note that with ethnicity statistics these can total more than 100% as people can select multiple ethnicities.

Figure 17 - Snapshot of the South Taranaki region.

The South Taranaki Equity and Wellbeing Profile



The South Taranaki Communities Systems Map

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

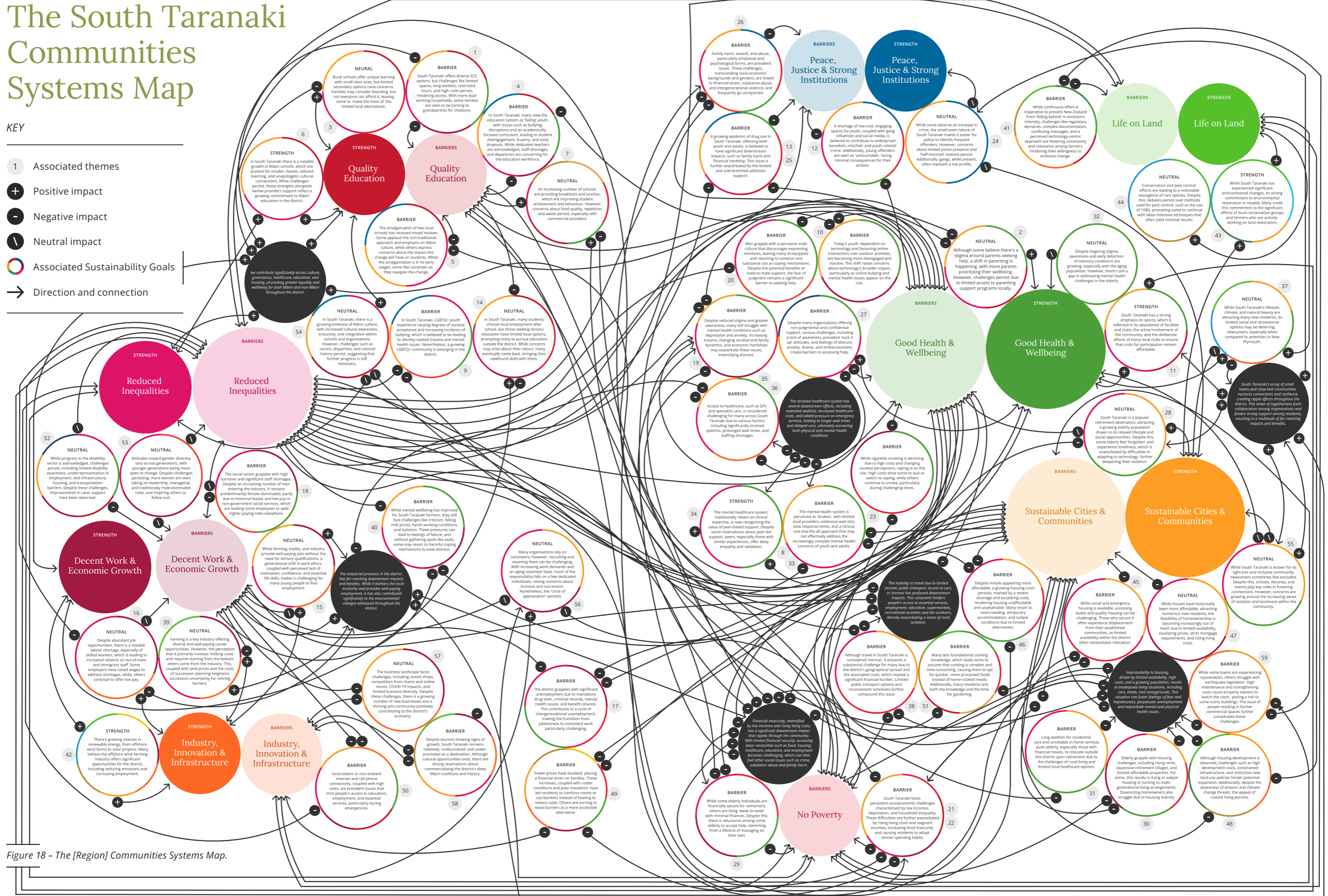


Figure 18 - The [Region] Communities Systems Map.

How to read the insights

This is the main insights section of the South Taranaki Equity and Wellbeing Profile.

Themes

The system map on the previous page (see figure 18), 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 South Taranaki community.

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 South Taranaki 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 South Taranaki community across these various life stages.

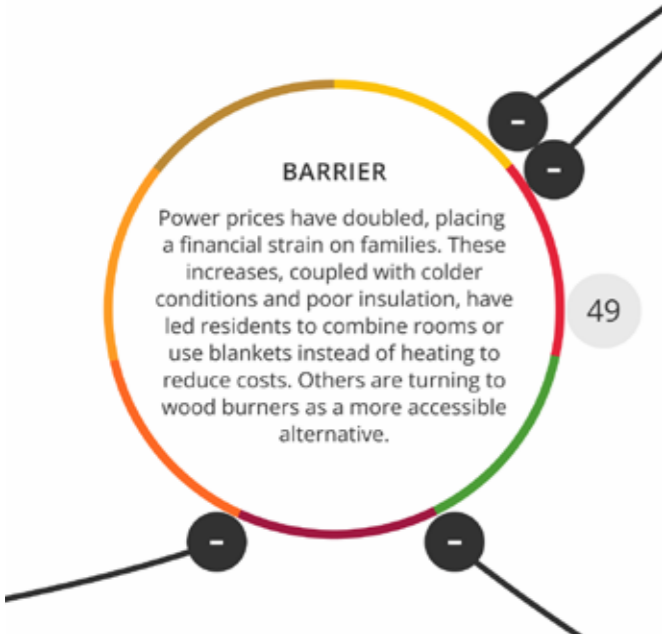


Figure 19 - Close up of theme numbers attached to Systems Map.

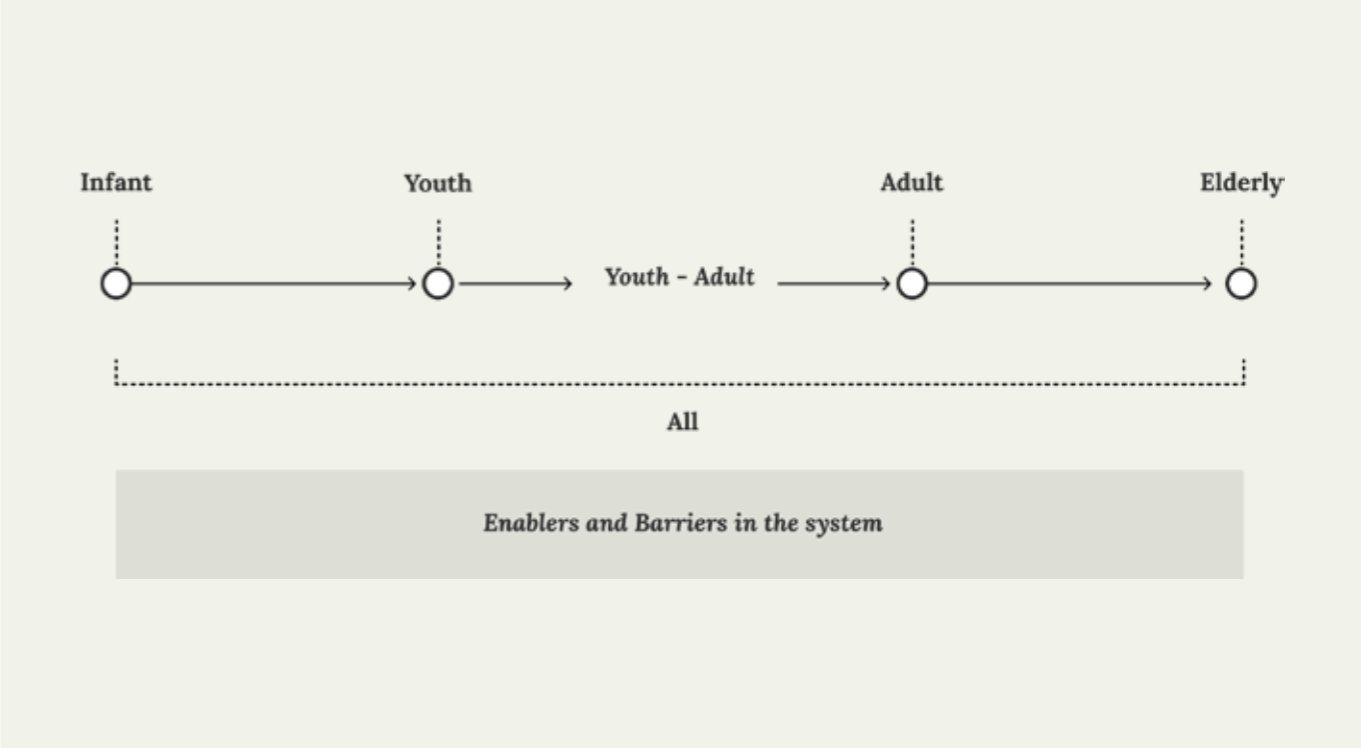


Figure 20 - Life stages.

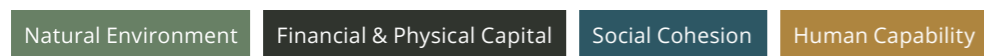
Framework Tags

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:

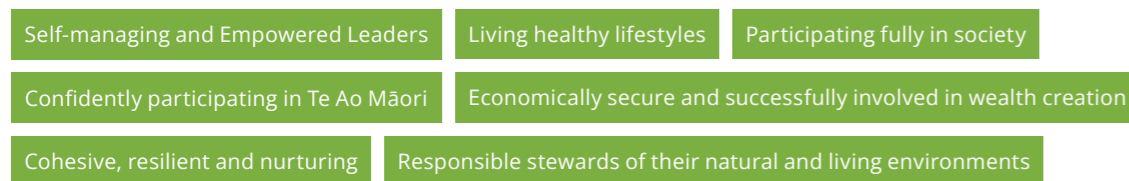
Sustainable Development Goals tags:



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 393, 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—Many believe that South Taranaki offers a diverse range of early childhood education (ECE) options. However, challenges, such as limited spaces, long waiting lists, restricted hours, and high costs, even with government subsidies, persist, making access difficult for many families. This, coupled with the increasing trend of dual-working households, is leading some families to rely increasingly on grandparents for childcare support.

Good Health & Wellbeing

Theme 2—In South Taranaki, although some believe there's a prevailing stigma around parents, especially rural fathers, seeking help, a shift in parenting dynamics is evident, with more parents now prioritising their own wellbeing. However, this change faces challenges due to limited access to parenting support programmes locally, leading to a growing preference for online platforms as a source of parenting support.

Theme 1

Many believe that South Taranaki offers a diverse range of early childhood education (ECE) options. However, challenges, such as limited spaces, long waiting lists, restricted hours, and high costs, even with government subsidies, persist, making access difficult for many families. This, coupled with the increasing trend of dual-working households, is leading some families to rely increasingly on grandparents for childcare support.

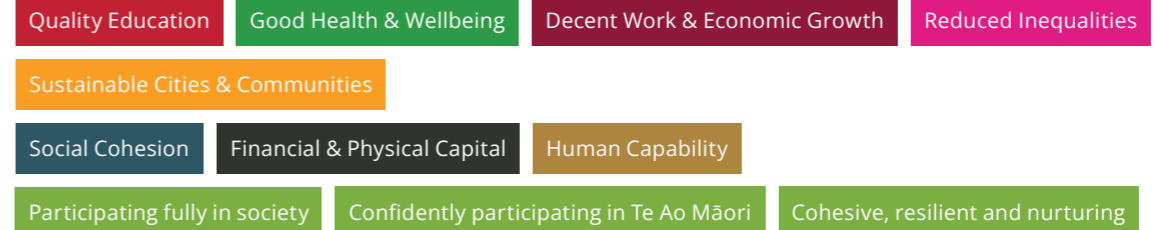
Strengths

- It is observed by some that the district offers a diverse range of childcare options. These include numerous daycare centres, home-based care, Kōhanga Reo, and other childhood education centres, which are believed to have high participation rates and good reputations.
- Many believe that government funding for early childhood care significantly reduces financial and emotional pressures on families. Even when parents are at home, the funded hours offer a chance for them to complete personal tasks.
- There is a belief that the district has more single-income households compared to cities where dual incomes are often necessary. Some believe this allows for parents to spend more time at home with their children, which some see as preferable to placing them in early childhood care.
- Some believe that for farming parents, it's easier to have their children 'in tow' or growing up on the farm rather than enrolling them full-time in early childhood education (ECE), particularly when both parents are involved in the business.
- Some recognise the value of raising children within extended family units, where the involvement of grandparents, aunts, and uncles helps 'share the load,' provides financial support, and contributes to the overall wellbeing of the family.

"In the city, both parents normally have to work... because things cost double. But our lifestyle [in South Taranaki] means that we can be more relaxed, so the mum doesn't have to work, and that makes a difference."

- "We have massive amounts of daycares in South Taranaki... We have five, off the top of my head, that are actual centres, then we have home-based ones."*
- "From what I know, a lot of the preschools have really good reputations. I don't think there's any preschool that doesn't have a good reputation, at least none that I'm aware of. But a lot of the spaces are usually filled pretty quickly."*
- "In our district, childcare education is being catered for very well."*
- "So, even if you're at home with your kids, that's 20 hours that you can be free to, you know, catch up on things like laundry. But it can [also] give you opportunities to [pursue] education and see counsellors or budgeting advisors."*
- "It's not necessarily a bad thing either. So, the mum's at home, or the dad is at home with the kids. There are benefits to that, I believe, compared to sending them off to someone else to look after them."*
- "A lot of my friends who are farming have their wives working in the business, so they just have the kids in tow."*
- "For them, it's actually just as easy to have the kids growing up on the farm since they can work around them because you're effectively working from home on a farm."*
- "In the north of the south, there's a high farming population. This often means that children spend a lot of time with their parents on the farm."*
- "There's definitely, for my kids, the benefit of having their nan all up in our business, all the time."*
- "It's a great thing having this massive family unit around you to support and grow these children who are going to be massive contributors to our society when they grow up."*

Framework Tags



"In terms of contributing to wellbeing, it's a good thing. You share the challenges and the load, whether it be financial, which is certainly one aspect, or the stress of being a sole parent. At least you've got the support of both mum and dad. There are many contributory benefits."

Barriers

- Some believe that the number of Kōhanga Reo in the region has diminished over time due to challenges in accessing quality and qualified teachers.
- While interest in early childhood care remains high, many parents are believed to face significant challenges in securing available spots as local providers often have limited capacity. This is leading to extended waiting periods for many families, particularly those new to the district or looking to switch providers
- Some believe that, even with government subsidies, early childhood education remains costly, consuming a significant portion of some household incomes. For some, particularly those with lower incomes, staying at home to care for their children is seen as a more economical option.
- Some point out that the limited operating hours of early childhood care facilities, such as Kōhanga Reo, pose challenges for some working parents, especially those in shift work or full-time employment.
- Some note that the high frequency of illnesses among daycare children presents challenges for some parents, who often rely on grandparents for emergency childcare support in cases of sudden illness.

- Amid the rising trend of grandparents caring for their grandchildren, it is observed by some that many of these grandparents feel exhausted and socially isolated, often becoming disconnected from typical activities of their age group due to their caregiving responsibilities.
- Some argue that parents are not adequately equipping their children with essential life skills before school, resulting in increased pressure on teachers who are now tasked with both educating and parenting children to fill these foundational gaps.

"I have a daughter who's a chartered accountant, so [she's] on a fairly good wage, and even she finds the cost really difficult. Really, is it worth working, or is it worth not working? The cost is exorbitant."

"When I was a child, we had kōhanga reo, and for such a small area, that was a massive number [of children attending]. We've got two now, one in Waverley and one in Pātea. They have small numbers too."

"All of our kōhanga were run on the marae, and they were largely run by kuia. So once those kuia passed, there wasn't anyone coming through. They had helpers, and they're not the qualified staff that they needed to keep them open."

"Certainly, the feedback that I get from people is that they line up, get on waiting lists, and stay on waiting lists for quite a long time."

“If you’re unhappy, it can be really hard. So, if you’ve taken a long time to get into a preschool and then you’re not happy with how that preschool is going for your kid, it can make you uncomfortable to go and look again because you don’t want to go through the pain of having to try and find another place.

“We send our youngest to daycare. Cost is probably a big prohibitor. Our daughter’s two and a half, so we have to pay for that, and by the time my partner works, a big portion of her salary goes to pay the daycare. I can imagine that would put a lot of families off.

“Given that people do have government support, there is still a financial component; even with the subsidy, it still isn’t viable.

“Because a lot of our [community members] here are shift workers, it doesn’t work for single parents because they need day care, and [they] don’t run 24/7.

“For me personally, kōhanga reo did not work. I worked full time and my husband worked full time, and kōhanga reo was from nine till three. That’s certainly why I didn’t choose kōhanga.

“Children in daycare can pick up so many bugs that they can be fine at eight o’clock in the morning, but by 10 o’clock, they are running a temperature. So that’s where parents rely on grandparents.

“The whole structure of the family has changed quite considerably.

“Over the last decade, more and more, it is the grandparents who are bringing the children, and when you talk to them, it’s the grandparents that have the children most of the time because both parents are working, and childcare is expensive.

“I’ve got aunties and uncles who aren’t at retirement age, but they moved back to Pātea where it is cheaper to live, and they’re just not working. Instead, they’re helping raise mokopuna so that the kids can go to work, and the kids contribute to the household.

“By the time they are hitting 60 or 70, you’re not meant to be parenting four- or five-year-olds. They are exhausted and a bit socially isolated.

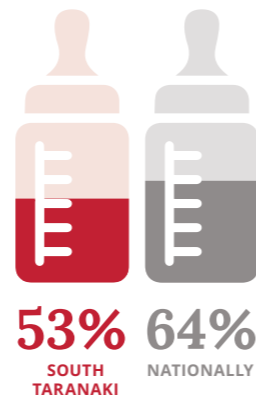
“Because they’re so tired from doing the parenting, they don’t take the opportunities to socialise like you would normally once you’re 60 or 70. So there is a whole gap for them.

“Now they need to parent the children a lot, for example, teaching them how to speak, how to put their clothes on, how to open their lunch boxes... those are jobs we would normally expect the parents to address before the children arrive at school.

“So much is asked of teachers these days; they are basically parenting the kids.

IN SOUTH TARANAKI, 53% OF CHILDREN AGED ZERO TO FOUR YEARS ARE ENROLLED IN LICENSED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMMES, IN COMPARISON TO 64% NATIONALLY.

Education Counts, ECE Participation Rates (Impact Collective Dashboard)



Good Mahi in the Community

- Ngāti Ruanui - provides schooling, such as Kōhanga Reo, in the district.
- Plunket - provides correspondence early childhood education options for families facing barriers such as transportation issues, financial constraints, or social anxiety.
- Plunket, bilingual playgroup - creates an inclusive environment where families, regardless of their proficiency in the language, can immerse themselves in Te Reo Māori. This initiative aims to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and tangata whenua in a system often seen as neglecting them.
- Salvation Army - offers a unique approach to early learning, emphasising education through play.

“The mothers, the fathers, and the babies, they didn’t necessarily need to know the words; they just needed to be a part of that mauri, a part of that ahua. That was my way of acknowledging Te Tiriti.

“We have got Ngāti Ruanui; they have their own schooling system there, and Kōhanga Reo down that way.

“If there [are] whānau who are more than six kilometres away from an ECE, or have trouble getting to an ECE because of lack of transport, lack of money, social anxiety, or anything like that, then we would bring in a correspondence version of an ECE, Te Kura, or through the HIPPY programme. Accessibility shouldn’t be a problem.

“Te Kura ECE, Correspondence ECE, and the HIPPY programme are where the facilitator goes into the home and facilitates with the parent, and then the community meets. That’s more of a focus for people who are looking to homeschool their children.

“I thought, let’s get people engaged in waiata Māori and stories, so I created a bilingual playgroup which was very, very basic.

“We have preschool here... they’re quite young. We do have a lot of people that come. It’s not really education, I suppose; it’s more like, I guess, education through play.

Theme 2

In South Taranaki, although some believe there's a prevailing stigma around parents, especially rural fathers, seeking help, a shift in parenting dynamics is evident, with more parents now prioritising their own wellbeing. However, this change faces challenges due to limited access to parenting support programmes locally, leading to a growing preference for online platforms as a source of parenting support.

Strengths

- Some have noticed a shift from parents focusing solely on nurturing their children to nurturing their own wellbeing alongside their children by taking care of themselves and supporting each other.

“I realised that this isn't just about the babies anymore, this is about protecting and nurturing the parents as well... Babies are important, but so are we.”

“There ended up being a real shift in the focus where life stopped being about their children... The playgroup ended up being a situation where the mothers took care of themselves and supported each other and said, ‘This is my struggle, this is what's going on.’”

Barriers

- Some believe there's a significant stigma associated with seeking help as a parent, particularly noticeable among fathers in rural areas, as many are seen to be reluctant to admit they are struggling or unable to afford essentials for their children.
- Some notice that while funded parenting programmes exist outside the district, South Taranaki significantly lacks such resources, especially in rural areas. This is believed to be challenging for the number of young mothers in the district who would greatly benefit from these services if they were available.

- Some parents in the community are believed to feel 'too much pressure' to participate in certain parenting programmes, due to the costs and commitments associated with these spaces.

“Some of it is that there is still that stigma around asking for help as a parent. I see it all the time talking to parents on Facebook, and they're like, ‘Oh, man, I feel so bad asking, but I can't afford to get nappies.’”

“Dads, talking a little bit about that stigma there, about asking for help. We'll get a couple of young dads in our business, and like, they don't know that they probably don't get help when needed because they're worried about what people think... there's probably a gap there.”

“Particularly in rural areas, men are notoriously bad at asking for help, in general. But especially when they've become dads, they don't want to put their hand up if they're struggling.”

“I know from my previous roles that there are funded parenting support programmes that exist in Stratford and different parts of the region that don't make their way down to South Taranaki, just because there isn't enough funding to cover that, even though we see a need for it.”

“I also see a lot of younger mums in South Taranaki than in other areas of the region, and it is my perception that they could do with the additional support and would take it if it was made available to them. Then, put that on steroids when you are talking about rural communities. If you think of Waverley, Patea, I don't know what it's like in Ōpunake, but those areas would definitely feel it.”

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Quality Education

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“The feedback that we received from some of our clients [was that] when they were looking for parenting support, people would suggest places like playcentre, and they go, ‘But there's a fee’ or ‘You had to be on a roster.’ For some of those parents, that felt like too much pressure.”

Opportunities

- Breaking down the stigma associated with asking for and receiving assistance as a parent.
- Creating a safe space where parents can confidently seek professional support and ask questions without fear of judgement.
- Providing spaces for parents to come together to talk and establish connections with other parents without feeling pressured.
- Strengthening the connections between parents, their children, and other parents, as well as with supportive organisations, so that parents are both confident and connected.
- Supporting parents holistically by addressing their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs to enhance family wellness and foster a thriving environment.
- Expanding the availability of essential items like car seats, cots, and prams through a lending system, allowing families to borrow and return items as needed.

“Creating that space where they can kind of build that confidence to go, ‘Hmm, I might need help here,’ and creating that safe space where they are really willing to ask questions and be redirected without being judged or anything is quite good.”

“It's breaking that stigma of ‘My contribution isn't enough’ or ‘I don't need to ask for help because I'm not really poor, my kids have food on the table’... and I'm like, no, if you use our service, then you bring your stuff back, then other people get to use it too.”

“Advocating for health and safety... and making sure that the parent is as informed and educated as possible, even if that means an uncomfortable conversation.”

“They wanted somewhere where [they] could go and talk to somebody and get help and connect with other parents, but they didn't want that pressure.”

“My aspiration is really developing their partnership, that connection between parents to the children, the connection between parents to each other in the social sense, and the connection between parents and organisations that can provide support.”

“I want to see growing, confident, and connected parents who are so confident and connected that it makes them better parents.”

“Some of the areas we'd love to grow more in are around the security of those big ticket items, like car seats, cots, and prams. [Where] we create our own store for that people kind of pick up items and then return them.”

“That would be a real help for some of our families, that they could go ‘oh yep, I can get a car seat and when I've finished with it, it can go back’ and be put back into service.”

“Wellness isn't just about my physical needs being met. Wellness is about balancing all areas, spiritual wellbeing, emotional, mental, as well as those practical needs... It's all of those things that come together to help the parents to raise up and be thriving.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Kōrero and Coffee - a collaborative initiative established by several agencies, including Kiddylandz Toy Library, the South Taranaki Whānau Centre, Plunket, and Pregnancy Help, to provide a space for parents to build friendships, access resources, and seek support.
- Plunket - brings together new parents, particularly mothers with young infants, to connect during the early stages of parenthood and subsequently form independent groups. Many of these groups have maintained their connections both online and in person.
- Pregnancy Help - supplies essential items for families, including cloth nappies and a maternity wardrobe, ensuring that those in need have access to necessary maternity wear.
- Pregnancy Help - provides individual antenatal classes where parents can invite any member of their support network to join.
- Salvation Army, Movement in Music - offers a preschool programme where parents and children engage in singing, dancing, and play. It offers an opportunity for parents to connect and promote wellness while their children enjoy the activities.

“In Hāwera, we have a kōrero and coffee group for our parents that we started earlier this year. We combined with three other agencies to provide that service: ourselves, the local toy library, the South Taranaki Whānau Centre, and Plunket.

“We bring practical needs, we can help provide clothing, toys, and equipment. But we also partner with South Taranaki Whānau Centre, so they're here providing counselling support, parenting classes, legal advice. We help to meet those needs.

“Kids have heaps of space to play inside, it's not dependent on the weather, you [the parent] can have coffee and build friendships... The benefits for the parents is that it's completely free for them.

“There was such a rise in women who were like 'I've got a six-week-old or I'm pregnant and I really need to know what's out there'. We were getting 14 or 15 requests a fortnight, so I thought okay, so there is a need for people with small young babies to connect.

“We connect with people in different ways. We have cloth nappies and a maternity wardrobe as well... If they don't have anything, we connect them with maternity wear... We also have a really good supply of prem items that we can package up really quickly and send out to families.

“What we've done is we have individual antenatal classes where they can sit with an educator, they can invite whoever they like, not just the partner. They can invite their parents, they can invite their best friend, they can invite whoever is part of the support network.

“We recognise that for some people being in a group can be quite anxiety-inducing and so that's not producing wellness for the mum. So, they can ask those questions and find out things without having the pressure of being in a group or in a wider setting of regular weekly visits.

“Movement in music is preschool. The parents come with them. It's a music programme, effectively, they sing and dance and play with toys and whatnot.

“It's just a chance for all the mums to connect, or fathers that come. It's an intentional time of wellness amongst everyone while the kids are having fun doing their thing.

Pregnancy Help Taranaki

“Our mission as Pregnancy Help is to provide wellness for families. When we see families thriving, that brings real value to what we do, and why we do it. That wellness can be anything from providing clothing, [or] sitting with someone and having a cup of tea with someone and finding out what’s happening in their world. It can also be connecting them with other services as well, to help them with other needs that they might [have].”

“As part of our initiative to work in South Taranaki, we put together, with other organisations, a group called Kōrero and Coffee, and it’s all about families coming together, learning and playing together and building their networks.”

“It’s really a pleasure to welcome new pregnant mums into our service and [saying], ‘Hey, if you need some clothing, if you need to get some items that fit a bit better,’ it’s great that we can help them with that.”

“Our [maternal] clothing range goes from size eight, right through to size 20, and even in those cases, we do allow for some bigger sizes where we can. It just helps mums to feel like they’re special, and they’re being looked after as well.”

“When they hit their third trimester, we set them up with anything that they need to get ready for the baby, so it might be a clothing pack, which will have around 80 items of clothing. That will get them through the first three months, everything from woollens right through to outfits for the next three months. Then every three months, we encourage families to come back and get the next size up.”

“We were able to give away 30,000 items last year to back out into the community, and that makes a difference.”

“For some people accessing Pregnancy Help is the first time they’ve had to access any kind of social support before, and so they feel a little bit like ‘oh, I haven’t done enough as a parent to be able to provide.’ I say, ‘well, no, actually what you’re doing is you’re just joining our sustainable circle. Yes, we’re giving you some clothing. But we know that you’re going to come back and we get you’re going to contribute to another family.’ So it’s not necessarily about you needing help, but by us helping you, you’re then empowered to help others.”

“If we can do that on a bigger scale, the more clothing packages we can get out to people, that’s more clothing that’s not going to the rubbish or going to the landfill. That’s clothing that can be then redistributed.”

“It’d be great for every family to know, they don’t have to do it alone. So that we can make sure that every kid starts life thriving and warm and happy and families feel they are thriving and doing well because of that.”



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

Quality Education

Theme 3—While many believe that rural schooling offers a unique learning experience for students, primarily due to its small class sizes, some are concerned about the limited secondary school options in the district. This scarcity prompts some families to consider boarding outside the district; however, boarding isn't financially feasible for all, raising concerns among those families who must 'make the most of' what is available locally.

Theme 4—In South Taranaki, many view the education system as 'failing' youth, with significant issues such as bullying, mental health and behavioural challenges, and disruptions like COVID-19 and teacher strikes severely impacting learning. This situation, combined with an academically-focused curriculum, is leading to increased student disengagement, truancy, and early school leaving. While the dedication of some teachers is recognised, issues, such as staff shortages and teacher departures, raise concerns about the education workforce.

Theme 5—Many observe that the amalgamation of two local schools has received mixed reviews. Some are optimistic about its non-traditional approach to education and emphasis on Māori culture, while others express concerns about the impact this change will have on students' experiences, particularly given the school's 'chequered past.' While some acknowledge that the amalgamation is still in its early stages, there's a general feeling of uncertainty as the community navigates this change.

Theme 6—In South Taranaki, particularly in coastal areas, there is a notable growth in Māori schools, many of which are commended for their smaller class sizes, tailored teaching approaches, and unapologetic cultural connections. Despite challenges in ensuring equitable opportunities and broader educational integration for Māori students, these strengths, alongside robust support from Iwi/Iwi providers, highlight a growing commitment to Māori education in the district.

Zero Hunger

Theme 7—Some observe that an increasing number of schools in South Taranaki are offering breakfasts and lunches, with notable improvements in student achievement and behaviour as a result. However, concerns exist about the quality, repetitiveness, and freshness of food, especially from commercial providers, leading to significant issues of food waste.

Good Health & Wellbeing

Theme 8—Many believe today's youth face increasingly complex challenges, such as societal pressures, escalating anxiety, intergenerational trauma, and low resilience and self-esteem, all of which significantly affect their mental health. These issues are worsened by an often inadequate or 'non-existent' youth mental health system, characterised by clinician shortages, high youth worker turnover, stringent criteria, long waitlists, and insufficient crisis response, hindering many youth from accessing the help they desperately need.

Theme 10—There's a growing sentiment that today's youth, increasingly dependent on technology and often preferring online interactions to traditional outdoor activities, are becoming more disengaged and inactive. This shift raises concerns about the broader impact of technology, particularly as online bullying and mental health issues, often linked to extensive social media use, are seen to be on the rise.

Theme 11—In South Taranaki, although some are concerned about the use and limited expansion of existing sports facilities, the district is well noted for its strong emphasis on sports. This is reflected in the abundance of facilities and clubs, along with the community's active involvement in sports. Despite financial challenges for some families, many local clubs are seen to be making deliberate efforts to ensure costs for participation remain affordable for youth.

Theme 13—Some have observed an increase in vaping and drug use among youth in South Taranaki, with some using marijuana at increasingly younger ages and 'getting caught up in' harder drugs, such as methamphetamine and MDMA, due to their perceived accessibility. This trend is partly linked to drug use within the home and limited activities for youth, potentially leading to substance use out of boredom.

Reduced Inequalities

Theme 9—In South Taranaki, LGBTQ+ youth are perceived to experience varying degrees of societal acceptance, partly influenced by persistent and outdated attitudes from older generations. This situation is compounded by increasing incidents of bullying, which is believed to be significantly contributing identity-related trauma and mental health concerns among these youth. Despite these challenges, and a shortage of local LGBTQ+ support services, there are signs of a growing LGBTQ+ community in the district.

Peace Justice & Strong Institutions

Theme 12—Many believe that, despite the abundant facilities and natural resources in South Taranaki, there is a significant shortage of low-cost, engaging spaces for youth, contributing to widespread boredom and mischief. It's perceived that this, along with gang influences and social media, is increasing instances of youth-related crime. Additionally, the belief that young offenders are 'untouchable' and face minimal consequences is thought to further exacerbate these issues.

Theme 3

While many believe that rural schooling offers a unique learning experience for students, primarily due to its small class sizes, some are concerned about the limited secondary school options in the district. This scarcity prompts some families to consider boarding outside the district; however, boarding isn't financially feasible for all, raising concerns among those families who must 'make the most of' what is available locally.

Strengths

- There is the perception that rural schools, with their smaller class sizes, offer unique opportunities for youth in contrast to larger schools. By providing more individual attention as well as fostering community involvement and class cohesion, these schools are perceived to cultivate essential life skills among students, such as teamwork, respect, and leadership.
- Some believe that small rural schools foster close relationships between the principal, teachers, and parents. These relationships ensure students are held accountable, preventing them from 'hiding' and ensuring that they are there to learn.

"I've taught in small schools, as well as two-to four-teacher schools. Our children went on to take leadership opportunities in the secondary schools in New Plymouth because they had to mix very well. You have to find ways of working out how to be friends with everybody because you can't be cliquey; there's not enough children to do that."

"Because the principal and the teachers have such a close relationship with the parents, the kids actually have to get it together. There's no hiding."

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

- Some perceive that while primary schools in the district are generally regarded positively, there is a belief that the secondary schools face more challenges.
- While scholarships exist to enable students, especially those from low-income families, to attend boarding schools, some believe that these scholarships are not equitable, as they are perceived to be available only to those who are skilled in sports.

"I've heard more positive stuff about the primary schools in South Taranaki; it's the secondary schools that are struggling."

"One area that is maybe not as well-known is scholarships, you know, for kids whose parents can't afford it, but they might be talented, particularly at sport. But that again, they [scholarships] are not equitable; you've got to be good at sport to get that opportunity."

Framework Tags



Barriers

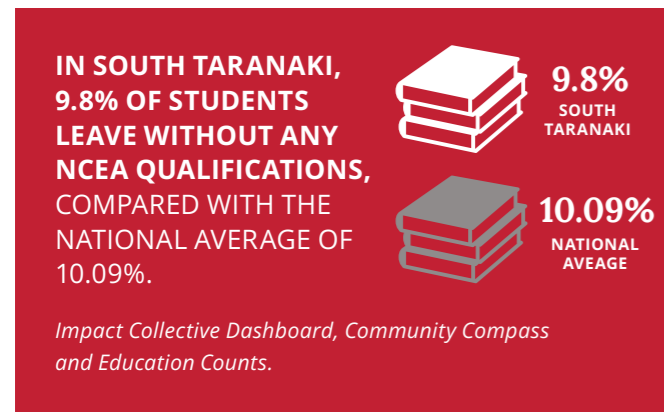
- Some believe that due to the lack of comprehensive schooling options—spanning primary through secondary school—particularly in small townships, such as Waverley and Ōpunake, many students are required to commute significant distances daily to attend school.
- Some feel that the district's limited schooling options, particularly for secondary schools, concern parents when faced with the decision of where to send their children. Given the troubled reputations of some local schools and the financial constraints of many families, alternatives like boarding schools or schools further away aren't financially feasible, requiring them to 'make the most of' what is available locally.
- While many farming families traditionally opt for boarding school, it's perceived by some that parents are sending their children to schools outside the district due to the perceived limitations in local education, including limited curricula, elite sports, and extracurricular opportunities.

"We have very little choice. There's not really anything else I can say, other than, we are in trouble with our education. I feel we are in trouble."

- "We don't have the necessary primary, intermediate, and high schools in each of our towns."*
- "So, as a parent of children looking at going to school, what are my choices? I've got to travel. I've got to pay for boarding fees to go an hour away, which we're not in the financial situation to do. The travel to and from, that's unreasonable."*
- "I know of a few people at New Plymouth Boys High School, in the boarding school environment, because they're elite in sport. They would have had the opportunity to play their sports in Ōpunake but not necessarily get on the global stage."*
- "He knew what we wanted to do early on, and Hāwera High School didn't have a curriculum around that, whereas New Plymouth Boys did. So it was simply the subject choices."*
- "Particularly in rural [areas], they send their kids to boarding schools, whether that's in New Plymouth or Whanganui. So, a lot of rural farming families send their kids, even to Manawatu. But that's obviously not an option for everyone."*

Theme 4

In South Taranaki, many view the education system as ‘failing’ youth, with significant issues such as bullying, mental health and behavioural challenges, and disruptions like COVID-19 and teacher strikes severely impacting learning. This situation, combined with an academically-focused curriculum, is leading to increased student disengagement, truancy, and early school leaving. While the dedication of some teachers is recognised, issues, such as staff shortages and teacher departures, raise concerns about the education workforce.



55% OF SOUTH TARANAKI SCHOOL STUDENTS OBTAIN NCEA LEVEL 3, COMPARED TO 59% NATIONALLY

Education Counts.

Strengths

- Some believe that teachers in the district show dedication and are seen to work hard to ensure that all youth, regardless of background, receive the education and skills they need.
- Some perceive a growing enthusiasm among youth towards education, shown by an increased interest in gaining extra credits and engaging in a more positive conversation about the benefits of education than previously observed.

“I know that teachers work really hard to make sure all children in their classrooms achieve the skills and knowledge they need.”

“There’s been a change recently that I’ve noticed that people are wanting to gain those extra credits, I suppose, to have a better life in the future.”

“A lot of the children are talking more positively about the strengths of education. That’s something I’ve noticed. I live in a rural community in South Taranaki, and that’s what I’ve seen there, particularly.”

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

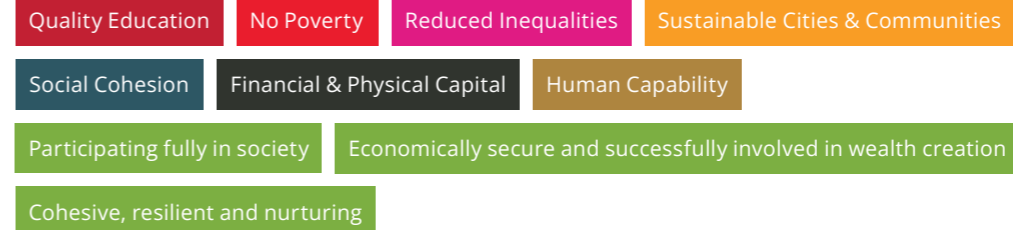
- Some believe that while second chance learning is valuable, there ideally shouldn’t be a need for it, as the initial time spent in school should be effective and not wasted.

“It’s really sad to see. Second chance [learning] is great, but there should never be a need for second chance learning. You’re in school long enough; that’s valuable time that’s wasted. It should never be wasted.”

Barriers

- It’s observed that some students are ‘ghosting’ in school, slipping through unnoticed and disengaging, neither excelling nor failing. This growing disengagement for some is linked to intense bullying and personal struggles, leading to their withdrawal from both academic and social settings. Consequently, these students are believed to be in ‘constant survival mode,’ leaving school without essential skills due to their ‘ghosting’ behaviour.
- Many observe that bullying, including severe cases, is widespread and a daily occurrence across primary and secondary schools in the district. With incidents occurring both within school and public areas, some families are believed to seek alternative schooling arrangements, sometimes outside the region, for their children’s safety.

Framework Tags



- Some perceive that, despite incidents occurring ‘under the noses’ of teachers, they appear significantly limited in their ability to discipline or intervene with ‘troublesome’ students. This perceived lack of authority to impose consequences is viewed by some as contributing to significant dysfunction within schools and to teachers leaving.
- Some express concerns about current behavioural management approaches in schools, which leave teachers feeling powerless and students without responsibility. This has raised alarms about teachers departing because of their inability to manage disruptive students and environments, which are increasingly perceived as unsafe for educators.
- Some believe that students in the region have experienced significant disruptions in their schooling due to factors such as COVID-19, teacher strikes, and the establishment of a new school. Coupled with a perceived teacher shortage, many youth are believed to find it challenging to maintain stability and consistency in their education, with some feeling as though they’ve ‘hardly been there.’
- After the COVID-19 pandemic, some noticed an increase in anxiety among youth about returning to the school environment, and parents seemingly unable to get them to school. This anxiety is believed to have made the return to school and the continuation of their education challenging.
- Some believe that the mental health challenges faced by students are impacting their ability to engage in education.
- Some believe that upcoming curriculum changes pose challenges for many education providers, particularly due to the perceived lack of adequate support and resources from the Ministry of Education when introducing these changes.
- Some believe that the education system is heavily focused on academic learning rather than vocational, potentially setting some students up to ‘fail’ early on. Traditional educational settings, like secondary schools, may not cater to youth with diverse learning styles or personal situations.
- Some perceive that the educational challenges extend beyond temporary disruptions like COVID-19 and teacher strikes, suggesting that the fundamental structure of the schooling system itself is failing to adequately support youth.
- Many believe that the district’s education system faces a notable shortage of teachers and specialist teacher aides, particularly for alternative education like ADHD support, which intensifies the strain on existing educators.
- Some believe ‘there’s not the same passion’ among teachers in the education system, and, despite good intentions, feel that certain educators might not be well suited for teaching roles.
- Some believe that schools in the district lack adequate support and educational alternatives for struggling students, particularly those with ADHD or dyslexia who find it challenging to engage and succeed in mainstream educational environments. This situation, in some cases, leads to the exclusion or underachievement of struggling students, or them exiting education altogether.

- Some perceive that the district grapples with considerable truancy issues, with a notable number of students regularly out of school.
- Some observe that the truancy system in the district seems to have become less active or possibly undergone service cuts in recent years, leading to ‘no follow up’ on students who aren’t attending school.
- Some perceive that challenging home environments, including parental substance abuse or low motivation to encourage school attendance, significantly contribute to youth truancy, as captured in the observation, ‘where there are more issues in the home environment, it’s going to impact young people going to school.’
- There is the perception that some youth in the district are leaving school too early without completing their qualifications, particularly between the ages of 16 and 18, as keeping them engaged in education or at home during this age bracket can be challenging. Some believe they often feel ready to move out and assert their independence, even if it might limit their employment opportunities.

“We’ve got a gateway student in the business, and she’s 16. She comes to us once a week... She started as a year 9 in COVID-19... Her entire year nine is a write-off, and then years 10 and 11, there were still lots of lockdowns and teacher strikes. She’s now in sixth form... and she was saying, ‘My school experience has been pretty rubbish, I hardly feel like I’ve been there.’

“They haven’t engaged in school. They haven’t engaged in anything in school. They haven’t necessarily done well in school, but they haven’t done badly; they ghost.

“It’s just the dysfunction. I could spend all of my time saying ‘that starts in the home’, but I know that things aren’t any better at the school, [especially] at intermediate level. There is a lot of dysfunction. Youth are in a constant survival mode.

“You see that when you’re driving to work. You see these kids; a lot of them just look like they’re walking a death sentence. You know, they’re just disengaged from life.

“The bullying at school is shocking. I know of a few families that have taken their kids out of [the school] and sent them away to boarding school, even though they can’t afford it, just to get them out of there.

“Then it’s ‘oh, we can’t do anything,’ but it was right under the noses of the teachers.

“From what I see, teachers don’t have the power to give consequences... It’s pretty dysfunctional.

“There’s a real issue with our teachers being unable to handle these situations. I know of teachers who are leaving because they have to give nine warnings, which then carries over to the next day, to a troublesome child who is going out of their way to disrupt the whole class.

“It will not be safe to be a teacher with a lot of our social issues. I know it sounds dramatic, but I’m at the point where I’ve got children now. Liz has grandchildren in the same situation.

“This year, kids have barely had a week where their day hasn’t been interrupted. There was COVID, then there were strikes, and then they were establishing a new school. They’ve faced many challenges. Not a week has gone by without either a shortage of teachers or needing to learn from home. There’s been no stability.

“The anxiety levels following the pandemic have made our children fearful of being in groups, even returning to the school environment.

“I remember one of the secondary trends we are seeing is the mental health of our youth today. It’s also impacting their ability to engage with education.

“We have a lot of youth pulling out of school. We have many truancy issues which we’re still trying to address as a community.

“We’ve been without a truancy system here for the last two years; it’s now just gone into another contract again. Whether that’ll start to change, time will tell.

“Around the family situations, it might mean that mum or dad are not awake, they could be hungover, or there are lots of reasons and just not motivated to take their kids to school.

“It’s their catchment, that in-between age, 16 to 18. They don’t necessarily want to hang around and get qualifications. They’re big enough and they want to leave. They think they’re mature enough to leave.

“Patea and Ōpunake have issues; it’s around our whole schooling system. COVID-19 obviously had some issues, along with things like teacher strikes. But I really believe another part of it is that the whole school forum has just really let the entire community down.

“From the educator’s point of view, from what I’m hearing from teachers, is that they’re not getting ministry support to actually understand what they’re supposed to be delivering.

“It’s very focused on the academic rather than vocational, and so you’re setting up so many children to fail so early.

“You cannot teach a class with 30 odd children all in the same way. They are not all visual learners, not all academic learners. They can’t just pick up a book and read... and our education system really needs to take a hard look at that.

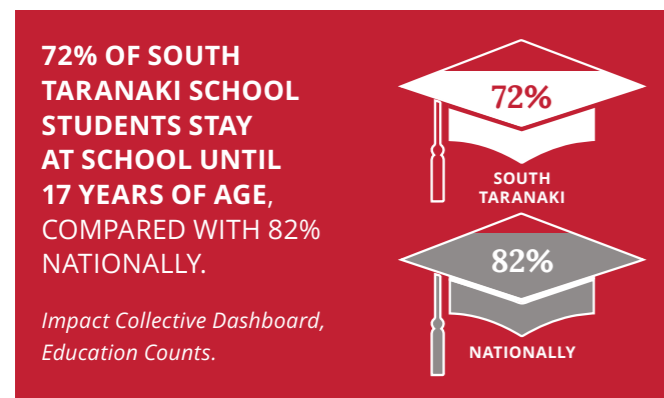
“It’s a lack of specialist teacher aides to support that. I think they are under-resourced, the education system, especially for alternative education.

“It’s not to say that people haven’t had good intentions... some people do have good intentions. As for some of the other teachers at that school, you just want to say, ‘Honestly, you are in the wrong job, mate.’

“There isn’t that support pathway for kids in primary school that then leads them into high school to be [fully] engaged, especially if they’re neuro-diverse or suffering from ADHD. There isn’t that continuation or pathway to help them achieve.

“When I was in high school, I wasn’t very engaged in school. I am neurodiverse, so I have dyslexia and ADHD. So for me, school was about turning up, doing my thing, keeping my head down, and keeping going.

“The alternatives aren’t there, and the support behind the alternatives is not there, so they get dropped off the list and swept out.

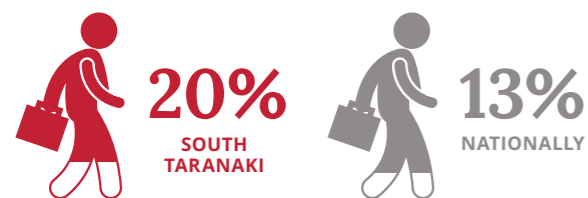


THE STAND-DOWN RATE OF SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SOUTH TARANAKI IS 52 STAND DOWNS PER 1000 STUDENTS, COMPARED TO 27 NATIONALLY.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Education Counts.

TEACHER TURNOVER IN SOUTH TARANAKI SCHOOLS IS 20%, COMPARED TO 13% NATIONALLY.



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

Opportunities

- Providing alternative spaces for youth to engage in education that isn't a traditional educational setting, one that is more holistic, such as combining education with physical activity, social engagement, employment opportunities, and trauma support.
- Adapting educational approaches to accommodate diverse learning needs, including those with ADHD and dyslexia, by providing holistic and tactile learning options that extend beyond conventional methods.
- Recognising that NCEA isn't for everyone and providing alternative opportunities for youth, such as work placements or polytechnic studies.
- Ensuring parental and whānau involvement in education to help youth gain academic achievements, as their absence can foster an 'I don't care' attitude towards education.
- Providing a supportive environment, free from bullying, for disengaged youth to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

"If we had more opportunities for young people to engage in education that wasn't high school, but in a more holistic or approachable way, where it was some education, some work. Then we would have more engagement.

"Especially being someone who is neurodiverse, I know that people engage differently and simply knowing, you know, this is the format, doesn't actually work for a lot of kids. There have to be holistic and tactile options for kids and not just at the high school level either.

"Simply the recognition that NCEA isn't the pathway for them. They can stay engaged at school, but through other forms of education, whether it be work placements or polytech studies, that might actually challenge them more than NCEA standard stuff.

"I do think children's achievement levels are influenced by parental expectations and parental involvement. If you have parents that aren't involved in their children's achievements, it may not be a conscious thought, but they'll be thinking, 'Well, who cares? Mum and dad don't, so why should I?'

"A lot of our kids are in that space. A lot of those kids are disengaged. And it's a no-brainer, right? Put them in a different place, or put them in a different space.

"When we talk about being safe, it's not about putting them in cotton wool, it's about putting them in a space where they can just be around people that aren't going to bully them every day.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Learner Me - a tech training academy that makes IT study accessible to everyone. A campus is coming to Hāwera in partnership with Ngāti Ruanui.
- South Taranaki District Council, LibraryPlus - offers an annual summer reading programme, emphasising literacy, numeracy, and computer skills, to address declining reading levels in children and adults.
- South Taranaki Whānau Centre - offers self-confidence programmes in local schools, working alongside school social workers. Additionally, they have introduced a programme tackling anxiety, which has gained significant success over the years.

- Taiporohenui Marae - reportedly collaborates with educators and support staff to engage students in community activities initiated from the marae, aiming to equip them with life skills and inspire future pursuits such as employment or further education.

"They have a lot of programmes running now, like Learner Me, computer programmes, and sporting programmes. There's a whole raft of things that they're putting out there.

"We're actually going back to a very reading-based programme this summer because what we're seeing is about 40% of adults are functionally illiterate. Along with that, the reading age of school children has dropped a lot. So we think it's time to move back to something that's very reading-based.

"They're working on projects at local Marae with teachers and teacher aides and support people who pick them up from school in the morning, and then they do activities in the community based from the Marae, Taiporohenui Marae.

"So the idea is that you introduce them to some life skills and learning, in a different way. So that they potentially see goals at the end, which could be employment, going back into school, higher learning, that sort of stuff.

"I developed another programme around dealing with anxiety in our day-to-day life, and I've rolled it out over the last few years, with some really good success.

Theme 5

Many observe that the amalgamation of two local schools has received mixed reviews. Some are optimistic about its non-traditional approach to education and emphasis on Māori culture, while others express concerns about the impact this change will have on students' experiences, particularly given the school's 'chequered past.' While some acknowledge that the amalgamation is still in its early stages, there's a general feeling of uncertainty as the community navigates this change.

Strengths

- Some have observed that the local amalgamated school boasts proud, interested, and committed students, which contrasts with those from other schools. This is evidenced by their active participation and noticeable success in inter-school events.

"We have an agricultural school secondary schools challenge every year, and all of the high schools are represented; there were seven schools, and Te Paepae O Aotea was one of those schools and they won. I've never been more impressed with the four senior [male] students. They were just proud proud boys."

"[The boys] were just so different to the other schools where there were some meek and humble people who would sit back and didn't have any input into the workshop."

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

- Although a few families were supportive of the recent amalgamation of a local intermediate and secondary school, many were initially unsupportive of the change. Despite the varied responses, some feel that by bringing the intermediate and secondary school together, 'things are turning around' for the schools.
- While some perceive the integration process of the intermediate and secondary school as not fully 'ironed out', there is a general sense of optimism for its future success, with some acknowledging that it's still early days, and challenges in such significant changes are to be expected.

- Some appreciate the non-traditional method of learning adopted by the amalgamated school, known as 'open learning', and recognise its long-term potential. However, others express concerns about the challenges students might face adapting to this new approach, suggesting that while these methods 'look good on paper', they might not result in effective learning.
- It is perceived by many that there is an emphasis on Māori engagement at the local amalgamated school, notably through the use of Te Reo Māori. However, some perceive this increased engagement has not been well received by all.

"At the end of last year, the local intermediate and high school joined together, so now the high school caters from year seven right through to Year 13. There were some families who were supportive of it, but largely there were a lot of families who weren't supportive of that move."

"I'm only speaking to Hāwera Intermediate and Hāwera High. But things are turning around now that they are bringing the intermediate and the high school together, which worked really well in Kawerau."

"I love their long-term plan at the school, so I have nothing against the school. It's a new way of learning. It's open learning. It's, I think, in five years' time, it will be brilliant."

"I have hopes for futuristic thinking, so I love the concept of a not so traditional way of teaching."

"She's a pretty diligent kid but it is an open learning environment. I'm not knocking that, but there are kids that struggle with it."

Framework Tags

Quality Education Reduced Inequalities Sustainable Cities & Communities Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

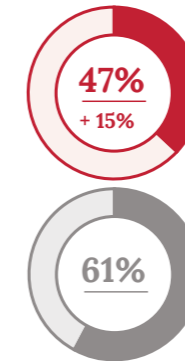
Social Cohesion Human Capability

Participating fully in society Confidently participating in Te Ao Māori Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- "I certainly had to clear schools of thought around this one. One being optimistic that the school's potential and enjoying the non-traditional approach, and then the absolute flip side that it's too far shifted towards hauora and wellbeing and less towards academic."*
- "There's a lot of things that aren't quite ironed out with this school in the integration process. Again, I think it'd be fantastic in the end, but there's a lot of things that, right now, are not happening to prepare students for the real world."*
- "I have great optimism about the school though. It's going to take some time. I think in five years' time it could run well, I've got huge optimism but at the moment there is a lot of sorting out to do, which is probably normal when [in] the process of amalgamation of a big school."*
- "Te Paepae O Aotea, they are very focused on Māori engagement... They have a lot of whānau time, they have the four houses, which in most schools are random European names, but in our school, it's all local names that resonate with them."*
- "Te Paepae tried to do that, but when you've got a whole big school and you're trying to make everyone fit into a kaupapa Māori [framework] it doesn't work."*

47% OF TE PAEPAE O AOTEA STUDENTS ATTAINED NCEA LEVEL 3 IN 2020, COMPARED WITH 61% NATIONALLY. THIS IS AN INCREASE OF 15% ON PREVIOUS YEARS.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Community Compass and Education Counts.



Barriers

- Some believe that the local intermediate and secondary school, which have now amalgamated, experienced significant dysfunction and 'a chequered past,' with reports of drug use and behavioural challenges among students. This perceived dysfunction is reportedly creating a 'bad culture' for students as they transition into secondary education.
- Some believe that there is 'excessive' bullying and behavioural issues within the merged school, with the amalgamation perceived as having led to a notable increase in bullying among younger students. This issue of bullying within education is observed district-wide.
- Some express concerns about mixing younger students (years seven and eight) with older students (years seven to thirteen) within a secondary school setting, fearing it may expose them to more mature and potentially harmful environments, with many preferring to keep these groups separate.
- Despite efforts from the amalgamated school to keep youth engaged, it is believed that a significant number of students remain disengaged, as shown in their body language and in their reluctance to attend school. This issue of student disengagement is observed district-wide.
- Some are concerned that the amalgamation has made the new school too big.
- Some believe that the current period of change and disruption, caused by the recent amalgamation, may disadvantage some students attending the school, causing them to miss out on opportunities and experiences as the school navigates its new formation.

Theme 5 (continued)

- Some perceive that the merger of the local intermediate and secondary school has led to unrest and a negative educational environment, prompting an increase in parents seeking alternative schooling options for their children, including schools outside the region or online learning.
- Many in the community feel disappointed and overlooked by the Ministry of Education's decision to amalgamate the local school, as despite extensive consultations and vocal concerns, their opinions and issues were not adequately addressed or supported according to some.
- Some perceive that the amalgamated school, despite having progressive and ideal ideologies, lacks the necessary infrastructure and resources to effectively implement and deliver its desired goals and learning models.

“With the local high school, I’ve talked about the issues we have had. I’m hoping that will change with our new school in the future, but we’ve had a very chequered past with our high school.

“There is speculation around the students and drugs. [They are] bringing drugs to school and that high level of dysfunction in a home, which then translated into disrespect towards the teachers, which further endorsed that level of dysfunction in the intermediate.

“What’s not good is Te Paepae O Aotea with the change; the bullying is unbelievable.

“The only concern I have heard about the amalgamation has been the increased bullying of those that are younger; it has been a big deal for the intermediate age groups.

“While there are good things that are happening and they are trying to do their best, there is a huge number of disengaged students. There is no good reason for them to go to school. You can see it on their faces that they know that too. You see it in their body language.

“The kids walking to school, our young ones walking to school, the ones that [go early] are pretty happy going to school. But there is a whole group of kids going in later, a larger number of kids, they look like they are walking to their execution. It’s not nice.

“But we’ve got my child right now; I don’t want him to miss out on the next four or five years while they work it out. So right now, it is a disruptive time, and it’s a time of change, and this change is always difficult for different people.

“In Hāwera, in particular, there was a lot of concern around, this year, the intermediate and high schools have joined together. Parents felt like the school has now become too big.

“On the outside, it seems like this is a new way of learning. But I just don’t think they have got the infrastructure to be able to deliver the vision and the aspirations.

“The school itself has seen a lot of unrest over the last two years since the joint has been announced.

“So around education, since the intermediate and high school have merged, there has been an increase, a massive increase, in parents looking at alternative education. Whether it is in the boarding schools, even as far as going to online learning. This is because the environment in Te Paepae is not perceived as a positive environment.

“There’s been a real opt-out of that. People who are not opting for Pātea area school for the same reason. They don’t want their children mixing with those big kids.

“I think, and a lot of others think, that the younger ones should have stuck at the primary school rather than the high school. You’re putting vulnerable children into a volatile situation.

“For many, there’s real disappointment about the ministry’s decision for making that school.

“There was a lot of community consultation, a lot of community consultation, but some feel that they weren’t heard.

“It’s been a really hot topic in our local forums. When parents have concerns with their children, it doesn’t seem that things have been addressed. They sort of just get fobbed off. Parents do not feel supported in any form.

17% OF TE PAEPAE O AOTEA STUDENTS LEAVE SCHOOL WITHOUT ANY NCEA QUALIFICATION, COMPARED WITH 10% NATIONALLY.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Community Compass and Education Counts.

Theme 6

In South Taranaki, particularly in coastal areas, there is a notable growth in Māori schools, many of which are commended for their smaller class sizes, tailored teaching approaches, and unapologetic cultural connections. Despite challenges in ensuring equitable opportunities and broader educational integration for Māori students, these strengths, alongside robust support from Iwi/Iwi providers, highlight a growing commitment to Māori education in the district.

Strengths

- Some observe a growth in Māori schools in the district, particularly in coastal areas, with a noticeable presence of Kura Kaupapa Māori and Kōhanga Reo schools across the region offering full-immersion experiences for Māori.
- Some note that the local intermediate has recently become the school for Māori and has extended its classes, enabling students to progress seamlessly from early childhood education to secondary school fully-immersed. Some believe this has enabled continuous learning and deeper engagement with their community for many students.
- Some believe that local Māori schools are gaining a positive reputation, attributed to their smaller class sizes, tailored educational approaches, and broader subject offerings, all of which contribute to more individualised attention and potentially higher achievement rates for students.
- Some perceive that the success of Māori schools is attributed to the deep connection and unwavering support from whānau and their unapologetic attitude to their tikanga.
- It is recognised by some that the Iwi and/or their providers are strongly supportive of Māori education within the district, demonstrating a deep commitment to ‘doing their best’ for all Māori, particularly the youth.

“Kura kaupapa, we have two, Ngāti Ruanui and Ngāruahine, they are well supported because their whānau are so connected. They are very strong and connected, and unapologetic about who they are and what they do – it’s awesome. It is what makes them so successful.”

“I feel like in Taranaki, there are more predominantly Māori schools. There is a higher percentage of Māori compared to other ethnicities.”

“I think there are also quite prominent schools around the coast... We’re seeing growth in those in the kura schools. So that’s quite encouraging, actually.”

“The Māori kura that we have available allows for our kids to be a bit more well catered for, and that opportunity. The fewer numbers make it a bit more achievable, that we get better rates, in comparison.”

“With Māori, there’s a lot more opportunities in subjects that we provide for, catered for, in terms of different educational opportunities. They’re trying to look outside of the box.”

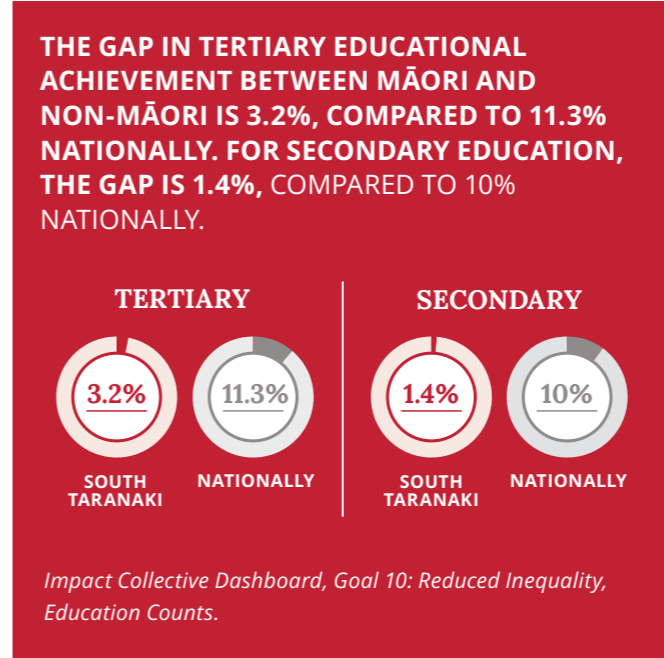
“The intermediate has become the local kura for Māori and Iwi. So they have been able to extend into senior classes and continue right through from Kōhanga Reo, right through to high school age. Which is fantastic for those students that they can continue with their Māori learning and being engaged at their level with their own people.”

“They are unapologetic about their tikanga, these kids stand up and they know who they are, and that’s what makes them strong.”

“We’ve got very strong Iwi, so Ngāruahine and Ngāti Ruanui, Ngāa Rauru, and I think they bring together their own to enable people to feel safe to be able to learn.”

“The Iwi are very much behind education for Māori in this area, so they have a lot of initiatives themselves to promote and engage rangatahi as well. Particularly Ngāti Ruanui and Ngāruahine. So I think they understand and want to do best for all Māori, so they are certainly having an impact alongside rangatahi.”

Framework Tags



53% OF SOUTH TARANAKI MĀORI SCHOOL LEAVERS OBTAINED NCEA LEVEL 3 OR HIGHER, COMPARED WITH 58% OF MĀORI SCHOOL LEAVERS NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 4: Education, Education Counts.



Barriers

- Some perceive that the education system is failing Māori, particularly through certain programmes, which, despite their intent, result in Māori students being segregated and disengaged from the mainstream school environment, often without adequate support or resources.
- Some believe that the growth in students attending Māori schools is due to an increasing number of youth being excluded from mainstream schools, and despite concerns about staff feeling overworked, these schools continue to take in these students.
- Some have the belief that students in Māori schools may experience fewer opportunities for team sports, as these schools are often smaller.

“I think one of the biggest issues with education and our community is definitely failing our Māori students in mainstream schools. We have had a massive increase of rangatahi Māori being shoved into a box to the side, [Ko Wai Au] programme. But these kids, they are probably on the roll, but they’ve been disengaged from the school environment.”

“One area, I think, will improve as they grow, certainly from a sporting perspective as the kids get older, there may be less opportunity for team sports in the small kura.”

“I think the increase of kura kaupapa is more to do with picking up that influx of our Māori kids getting kicked out of mainstream [schools].”

“I think it got to a point where it was impacting staff’s wellbeing with the influx of tamariki. But as they didn’t want to leave these kids without education, so they took them all. They are mentally overworked.

“The tamariki that have been on this programme are 100% Māori. I think their argument is they provide the resources, so that makes them look as though they’re still members of the school. Reality shows that every day they weren’t able to enter the school grounds.

“I believe that it probably looks good logistically. But the reality is they put these kids to the side because that’s the delivery of it, to be honest.

“So we work really closely with the two people that were running it, just to ensure that these kids were not either home alone or doing things in the community, but they found themselves pretty much babysitting these kids because they had no support from the school. There was no safe place for them to stay connected to education.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Ngāruahine and Ngāti Ruanui - reportedly actively support education for Māori in their district, particularly through schooling and various programmes focusing on youth.

“The Iwi are very much behind education for Māori in this area, so they have a lot of initiatives themselves to promote and engage rangatahi as well. Particularly Ngāti Ruanui and Ngāruahine.

“They [Iwi] have quite a few programmes for Rangatahi. So I think they understand and want to do the best for all Māori, so they are certainly having an impact alongside rangatahi.

“They are unapologetic about their tikanga. These kids stand up and they know who they are, and that’s what makes them strong.

Workshop participant

Theme 7

Some observe that an increasing number of schools in South Taranaki are offering breakfasts and lunches, with notable improvements in student achievement and behaviour as a result. However, concerns exist about the quality, repetitiveness, and freshness of food, especially from commercial providers, leading to significant issues of food waste.

Strengths

- Some perceive that since the introduction of school breakfasts and lunches, there has been an improvement in student achievement and behaviour, as these meals are seen to address the challenge of youth coming to school hungry and struggling to concentrate.
- Some observe that certain schools are involving youth in menu planning and food preparation for school lunches, which is believed to help foster essential life skills in these students.

“We have school lunches. We also have breakfast in schools... Since they've been doing breakfasts in schools, we've noticed that it's actually moved them up in their achievement and their behaviour has changed.

“That's why the free lunches were brought in. With a whole effect of these kids coming to school hungry and not being able to concentrate and all the rest of it.

“I love the approach on it. It's very community and life skills focussed. So you've got the tuakana kids, they make the menu for the week and they make the kai. So whether that's a spaghetti toasty, this is something that the kids are gonna eat.

Barriers

- Some believe that while the concept of providing school breakfasts and lunches is beneficial for many students, there is a significant issue with food wastage, as youth are believed to be 'fussy,' often getting sick of the food, not eating it, and ultimately throwing it away.
- It is observed by many that the quality of food from certain commercial school lunch providers is declining, with concerns arising about meals that lack variety and freshness. Some even liken these meals to 'second-grade hospital food'. As a result, students are believed to typically favour food from local providers over commercially produced alternatives.
- Some argue that the introduction of the government-subsidised school lunch programme, along with licensing requirements, has led to the closure of some local school lunch providers, previously known for offering 'wholesome' food.

“Those school lunches, it depends who's creating it but it's like second grade hospital food that I wouldn't even feed my dog.

Framework Tags

Zero Hunger

No Poverty

Good Health & Wellbeing

Quality Education

Reduced Inequalities

Responsible Consumption & Production

Natural Environment

Social Cohesion

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

Opportunities

- Improving food management in schools by considering daily attendance and specific needs, in order to reduce wastage.

“[There is] lots of concern about wastage. On one hand, we get it, and it's a useful thing, but the way it's done could be managed better and they're not taking into account roles, not asking who's at school today so they are throwing out so much food.

“Some of it's gross and it's getting worse. Compass is our provider; they also provide to hospitals and it's not good.

“The breakfasts in schools, there is a lot of waste. My little grandchildren, they live in a house where they can afford to feed their children, so my grandchildren are fussy and they are in an environment where a lot of their friends are fussy too, so there is a lot of waste.

“The Kai Kitchen in Hawera started to help out with that situation and that was getting really well used, Kai Kitchen would deliver lunches for about 50% of our schools until the government system came in... which is a bit of a shame because that's killed that cause.

“The government was making it hard because they had to have a certain licence in order to be doing that [school lunches]. So that was probably the biggest impact on something that was working so well.

“Then there was a local cafe, Tika Catering. They were providing lunches. They always loved Tika and hated Subway and Pita Pit. They brought their Subway home to me once and it was pretty disgusting, just lettuce in it, soggy, yucky, disgusting.

“They trust the community like Tika Catering, who know how to make good food for kids. The other options were horrendous.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Fonterra and Sanitarium, KickStart Breakfast programme - provides breakfast in schools, addressing the issue of youth coming to school hungry.
- Kai Kitchen - known for providing lunches to many local schools, gained positive recognition for its high-quality food. However, it has since closed.
- Tika Catering - provides food to many local schools and has gained positive feedback for its high-quality offerings.
- Waitōtara School - replaced the government-funded school lunch programme with a local food provider who prepares healthy, waste-free meals for the students.
- Some schools are reportedly providing nutritious breakfasts and appealing lunch options, including Weet-Bix, toast, and Milo, to ensure students start their day well.

“Kids were coming to school hungry for whatever reason, you know, low incomes. So that’s a joint effort with Fonterra and Sanitarium and they do breakfast in schools.

“It’s a local business here called Tika Catering. A lovely lady called Kelly, she has a whole team of people.

“Another local initiative that got the contract, I think they deliver a great lot of food and a variety of food to local schools, and they do a great job. My kids have never been the recipient of those because they’re not eligible but I have heard great things.

“When they come in, in the morning they can have Weetabix, toast and a Milo. So that gives them a good kick start for the day.

“[I went to] Ōpunake school, primary school just at lunchtime, and they were bringing in their [food]. I couldn’t believe what they were having that day, it was pizzas, I thought ‘man, can I stay for lunch?’

“What they’ve done in Waitōtara is that they’ve ditched the government meals, lunches, and they have employed somebody to come in and they are making food for the children and it’s being consumed. There is no wastage. It’s very popular.

“So they have a lady that comes in and they have bags of spuds, carrots and lots of broccoli and they chop it up and disguise things and it’s all healthy. The kids are enjoying it.

“Since they’ve been doing breakfasts in schools, we’ve noticed that it’s actually moved them up in their achievement and their behaviour has changed.

Workshop participant

Theme 8

Many believe today's youth face increasingly complex challenges, such as societal pressures, escalating anxiety, intergenerational trauma, and low resilience and self-esteem, all of which significantly affect their mental health. These issues are worsened by an often inadequate or 'non-existent' youth mental health system, characterised by clinician shortages, high youth worker turnover, stringent criteria, long waitlists, and insufficient crisis response, hindering many youth from accessing the help they desperately need.

Barriers

- Some suggest that today's youth struggle with resilience, finding difficulty in handling a simple 'no', a challenge that is sometimes mistaken by youth for more severe mental conditions.
 - It is noted by some that today's youth face more complicated challenges than previous generations, grappling with greater societal pressures, exposure to overwhelming information, and complex issues surrounding gender identity at increasingly younger ages, which contribute to heightened stress and mental health concerns among youth.
 - Some believe that intergenerational trauma significantly affects youth's mental health and development.
 - Many perceive a significant lack of sufficient mental health services and support for youth in the district, with current services believed to be stretched or even 'non-existent,' with growing waitlists and instances where families and referrals are declined.
 - Some believe that accessing timely support from CAMHS (Child And Adolescent Mental Health Service) has been a longstanding issue, with some families waiting extended periods for appointments or assessments. This delay is perceived by some to exacerbate mental health challenges among youth while they await support.
 - Some perceive the region as having limited local child and adolescent psychiatry specialists, relying on occasional visits from North Taranaki, where specialists are also seemingly scarce.
 - Some observe that families face challenges in accessing mental health services for youth due to stringent criteria, with many cases deemed 'not acute or severe enough' despite experiencing significant issues. This perceived high and rising bar for support results in growing waitlists and more declined applications.
 - Some believe that the crisis team's phone assessments often inadequately assess youth, failing to address their urgent needs and leading to repeated critical incidents in some cases
 - There is the belief among some that youth workers in the district frequently face burnout and compassion fatigue, often leaving the profession within a couple of years.
 - Some parents are believed to experience burnout and 'throw up their hands' when supporting youth with mental health issues, due to overwhelming frustration and a lack of external support for them, such as counselling.
 - Some believe that parents often adopt a 'fix my kid' mentality, expecting solutions for their child's behavioural or mental health issues without actively supporting or making changes themselves.
- "The world today is harder than what I had it. I'm coming 60 and I know it's harder than what it was when I was that age. Definitely, no argument about that."*
- "Our society, rightly or wrongly, has ended up putting more pressure on children before they become adults. They give them far too much information at such a young age. And that showed quite clearly at the end of my time [as a youth worker]. This just isn't right; let children be children."*

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

"They think they're in depression, or in this terrible mental state, but it's just because they don't know how to handle it."

"People are more so presenting with high levels of anxiety that is impacting their ability to function in their usual way, and it is probably higher than it has ever been."

"But statistics are showing us that kids are coming through now with more anxiety and less confidence."

"A lot of that is intergenerational trauma [that] causes mental health [issues] in children. It was just really evident how trauma, through the generations, affects children, and then affects their adult lives, because they don't develop properly, and their brain systems and such."

"If we have children or teenagers who are suicidal, attempting to commit suicide and doing it on a regular basis, and they are verbalising that they don't want to be here on this earth, our police are fantastic with their limited resources, but our mental health [support] is non-existent."

"There seems to be a lack of mental health services for youth in South Taranaki and for clinicians in Te Whatu Ora. The waitlists are high everywhere, but they will probably be seen less, if they get the service in the first place."

"So our whole mental health [system] when it comes to our youth is totally non-existent. We've got parents waiting for their children to be picked up under the mental health act, then they just keep getting fobbed off or have to wait on extensive, massive waiting lists."

"Accessing support and getting assessments done through CAMHS used to take me probably 18 months to get an initial appointment. It's been like that for probably the last 25 years, probably more. So now, it's really difficult to access support for students."

"[South Taranaki] is an area that, while there is no child and adolescent psychiatrist, they come down from North Taranaki, and I think they are few and far between up there as well. So it's a lack of service."

"It is definitely one of the biggest issues amongst families we come across; they tend to all be on the waitlist or they are declined. They'll have pretty big issues going on but they are declined because the bar is set really high."

"They are told [that] your family is not acute enough, not severe enough for services."

"We have a crisis team that will assess, nine times out of 10 on the phone, and deem that the child or adolescent is okay and return them back to their environment, and within a very short timeframe, they'll overdose again. I'm talking from personal experience here as well."

"I was a youth worker, but I've not done it for the last 6 years... Most youth workers run out in about two years, so I was a bit of a statistic in the world of youth workers."

"Some of our families get to a point, and I understand that through frustration, they turn their back, and that's probably the worst thing that families can do is throw their hands up and say, 'I'm done.'"

"But some of our families have got to the point where they've burnt out; there's no support for them, external support, like counselling or anything like that, to put the supports in."

"The other one is parents doing the 'fix my kid' [approach]; my kid has behavioural issues, they'll come and see you, and we'll be over here not supporting and continuing on [as usual]."

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE (CAMHS) IS CURRENTLY TREATING 267 ACTIVE CASES ACROSS THE WIDER TARANAKI REGION WITH 167 YOUTH ON THE WAITING LIST FOR MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT - A TOTAL OF 434.



Stuff, Taranaki Daily News, April 2022

Opportunities

- Creating accessible and safe spaces for youth to discuss mental health issues so that they receive the necessary support and quality counselling.

“There’s a huge need for support in mental health for our young ones, having spaces where they can feel safe to talk with others. Their life is falling apart because they don’t have the support, and the quality counselling that they need.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- South Taranaki Whānau Centre, Raising Complex Kids for Parents programme - supports parents of youth with complex needs, including conditions like autism and Asperger’s, to help them understand their children’s unique perspectives.
- Yellow Brick Road, Rangatahi programme - focuses on alleviating youths’ worries and emphasising self-care. Through exploring and understanding emotions, the programme de-stigmatises mental health and equips youth with skills to recognise their feelings and those of others.
- Your Way, Kia Roha - provides support to families with youth diagnosed with ADHD.

“The Rangatahi programme is really about removing worry from children. We try to take a bit of that [worry], which includes a lot of self-care and that.”

“We explore our emotions quite a lot. The feedback from kids following the programme is that [understanding] emotions is a strong part of it, [that] they are understanding how they feel and the emotions others are feeling. So they take some of those skills to school with them.”

“In Taranaki, we have a very small contract for those young children who don’t see a psychiatrist as such but have been diagnosed with ADHD, and we can allocate a small portion of support to families to enable them to have breaks.”

“There’s a huge need for support in mental health for our young ones, having spaces where they can feel safe to talk with others. Their life is falling apart because they don’t have the support, and the quality counselling that they need.”

Workshop participant

Theme 9

In South Taranaki, LGBTQ+ youth are perceived to experience varying degrees of societal acceptance, partly influenced by persistent and outdated attitudes from older generations. This situation is compounded by increasing incidents of bullying, which is believed to be significantly contributing identity-related trauma and mental health concerns among these youth. Despite these challenges, and a shortage of local LGBTQ+ support services, there are signs of a growing LGBTQ+ community in the district.

IN SOUTH TARANAKI, 2.8% OF THE POPULATION IDENTIFY AS LGBTQI+, WITH 22.5% OF THESE INDIVIDUALS AGED BETWEEN 18-24 YEARS.



Household Economic Survey, Stats NZ, 2020.

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

- Some observe that there is a strong and growing LGBTQ+ group in the district, where youth feel safe to participate; although it's perceived that some youth remain uncertain about joining, possibly due to peer pressure.
- Some perceive that Pākehā individuals face significant challenges in being accepted by their families when coming out, while male Māori are also seen to struggle with acceptance, whereas other ethnic groups appear to receive better support.

“Pākehā are often the ones that feel dismissed from their families when they come out. If it's not them, it's male Māori that struggle. Other ethnicities have great support.”

“We have a quite strong LGBT group, made up of primary school and secondary school students, and young adults in the community. That has grown; the kids now feel quite safe to actually come to that.”

“From my understanding, they've got the consistent ones, but then I think you've still got some youth that are just sitting there and unsure. It all comes back to that peer pressure.”

Barriers

- Some are believed to have difficulty understanding and accepting LGBTQ+ identities, often seeing them as temporary 'phases' or 'mental health issues'. This perception is thought by some to be influenced by 'old school' beliefs and biases from previous generations.
- Some believe that LGBTQ+ youth and those with diverse identities face considerable bullying, abuse, and non-acceptance from society, which can profoundly affect their mental health. This adversity is thought to increase suicidal tendencies and set them up for adulthood with trauma related to their identity.
- Some express concerns about the potential for premature medical interventions, such as hormone blockers, for youth who are still in the process of understanding their own identities.
- Some perceive that the district lacks sufficient in-person LGBTQ+ support services, with many resources primarily based in urban areas like New Plymouth, leaving those in southern areas with limited options beyond online support groups.

“It goes back to that bias of the past generations... you have so many of that older generation [thinking] 'this is a phase'... but it's not, there are studies, there is research. They just want to be accepted. Why can't we as a society accept that and move past some of these biases?”

“Just from his perspective, he struggles with the concept of mental health, and he struggles with [the concept of] transgender.”

Framework Tags

Reduced Inequalities

Good Health & Wellbeing

Gender Equality

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“Some parents' perceptions, especially some of the older generations, are very much close-minded. Whether our kids go through fads, we all go through different things.”

“Rainbow youth and diverse identities face bullying and non-acceptance from society.”

“We're setting these kids up to go into adulthood with trauma around their identity and what does that do? That leads to our mental health deteriorating.”

“I had a meeting just yesterday with the rainbow community and I agree with the statement, and I'd even go so far as to say that the organisations that are set up to support, for instance, in Taranaki, Rainbow Youth, are based in New Plymouth. They would be the first ones to say that they do not have the resources to deliver down South.”

“They were talking about putting her on drugs. She said 'hold up, hang on. Who decided this? When was I going to be informed [about] this? This is my daughter, she's 13 years old. I don't think we need to talk about drugs right now.' Because we're in, quite rightly so, the stage of working out who we are.”

“Some have concerns about that kind of [hormone] intervention, especially when a child is still working themselves out.”

Opportunities

- Enhancing awareness and inclusivity of diverse identities and experiences in schools to ensure education environments are 'more with the times.'
- Increasing community and school efforts to address bullying towards LGBTQ+ youth to promote greater acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Ensuring that models of care adapt to the evolving experiences of youth, especially regarding gender identities, so that they remain relevant and effective for each new generation.

“Schools need to be more aware of diverse identities and experiences. Our schools need to be a bit more with the times... and being aware of it.”

“The bullying aspect of it, it's still there. As much as the Rainbow community and their team are really supportive, it needs to be in the rest of our community and in our schools.”

“We can't stay static in how we care... My 20-year-old lived the first 18 years of his life as a female and now as a guy, and the models that were around when he was growing up as female were messed up.”

“I think it's about the community, being inclusive of everybody. It's no different than [supporting] someone that has a mental health [issue] or disability; everyone is entitled to be able to live for who they are, and the world should be able to perceive them for who they are, not in a judgmental way.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Te Ara Pae Trust - a not-for-profit organisation that provides counselling to young people from 13 years onwards, including counselling for the Rainbow Community. (Te Ara Pae Trust, n.d.).^[12]
- South Taranaki Whānau Centre - actively supports and works with the rainbow community, as well as providing meeting spaces for rainbow youth at a reduced cost.

“We’ve got rainbow youth at the moment using our rooms once a month. They use our facility to have a regular meeting place, and we give it to them at a reduced cost because it’s just about supporting, but there’s still a lot of work to be done in and around it.”

“She goes to Te Ara Pae, they have a really strong support [system] and have created their support around the needs of the rainbow community. They are very inclusive.”

“It goes back to that bias of the past generations... you have so many of that older generation [thinking] ‘this is a phase’... but it’s not, there are studies, there is research. They just want to be accepted. Why can’t we as a society accept that and move past some of these biases?”

Workshop participant

Theme 10

There's a growing sentiment that today's youth, increasingly dependent on technology and often preferring online interactions to traditional outdoor activities, are becoming more disengaged and inactive. This shift raises concerns about the broader impact of technology, particularly as online bullying and mental health issues, often linked to extensive social media use, are seen to be on the rise.

Strengths

- Some observe that despite associated challenges, youths' ability to use modern technology, such as smartphones and automation, may provide them a significant advantage in the workforce, where their ability to use technology is increasingly valued and can, in some cases, outweigh years of experience in some industry.

"With our farms now, like there's such a high level of tech, having an understanding of how to use a smartphone and how to use that tech puts you streaks ahead of someone who might have five years in the industry but doesn't [understand the technology]. It can be a real advantage."

Barriers

- Many observe a noticeable shift in youth behaviour, noting that today's youth appear less engaged in and attracted to outdoor or hands-on activities, such as eeling or fishing, than past generations. Instead, they are more drawn to technology, opting for the instant gratification of digital worlds over traditional physical activities and exploration.
- Some suggest that the prevalent use of social media and technology is intensifying mental health challenges, potentially leading to heightened anxiety and an increase in suicide rates among youth.
- The widespread use of social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat is thought to have escalated online bullying, with the reduction in face-to-face interactions perceived as leading to greater disrespect and dehumanisation of others.

- Some believe that due to the busy schedules of working households, parents often rely on devices to occupy their children instead of engaging in activities or games with them.

"You can do a lot from your room, in this day and age, that's the instantaneous reward that you get out of playing the game."

"I'm an avid sportsman, player, and coach. I don't see our Māori kids engaged the way we [were] when I was a kid. My kids hate it when I say that, but it's true; any chance to go outside, I'd be outside. Instead, they have their PlayStation."

"[They are] massively driven by technology, all these platforms, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, and that's where a lot of our bullying is happening on these platforms."

"It used to be at school you had someone giving you a hard time, you could just avoid them. Whereas now, it's 24/7 with social media, which is no doubt lifting anxiety."

"Because you can become a keyboard warrior. You can say whatever you like behind a keyboard, but saying that face to face isn't as easy. They can be really venomous."

"Social media for our youth has brought around so much harm. If you actually look at technology and mental health, they actually very much go together because a lot of our social media issues that we have are actually making our mental health system for our youth 10 times worse."

"That's why we have such a massive suicide rate in our teens, because of the whole social media platforms that they use."

"It's probably too easy, when I'm busy, to leave them on their devices. It's parent laziness if I'm honest."

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Natural Environment

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Opportunities

- Enhancing real-life engagement, beyond online interactions, to foster a tangible connection among people, the land, and the broader world.

"We need to have greater engagement with their lives in real time, not just on Facebook... physically doing stuff in their own lives. So that they have a tangible connection to people, whenua (land), and to the world. A real tangible connection rather than this virtual connection."

Good Mahi in the Community

- Eltham Library - provides access to computers, game consoles, and a dedicated holiday programme for youth.
- Ngāa Rauru Innovation hub - operates an innovation hub that includes a gaming centre, a learning lab, and a co-working space for startups, with an emphasis on technology and addressing climate change.
- Ngāti Ruanui Whānau Ora - reportedly focuses on engaging youth through hands-on, proactive activities such as gym, biking, and outdoor experiences, emphasising traditional methods over technology use.

"The library [in Eltham] is really well supported. The library has computers, they have the game console, and a holiday programme, but this is for younger children."

"We do a lot of proactive activities with them, whether that is gym, bike, lake, beach, so it is very rare in our space if they are reliant on technology."

"We do a lot of work in education. The floor that I'm on in our office is an innovation hub. We've got a gaming centre, a learning lab, and a coworking space that have a number of startups."

"The focus from an Iwi perspective for that innovation space was around doing something in technology, being the way of the future, and climate change."

Theme 11

In South Taranaki, although some are concerned about the use and limited expansion of existing sports facilities, the district is well noted for its strong emphasis on sports. This is reflected in the abundance of facilities and clubs, along with the community's active involvement in sports. Despite financial challenges for some families, many local clubs are seen to be making deliberate efforts to ensure costs for participation remain affordable for youth.

Strengths

- Many believe that the district boasts a robust sporting culture, with an array of well-supported and frequently utilised facilities and clubs for activities such as rugby, soccer, netball, boxing, and hockey. This array of facilities and clubs is seen to provide diverse opportunities for youth to engage in sports and outdoor activities.
- Local sports clubs are perceived as breaking down cost barriers to sports, ensuring youth participation by offsetting fees through alternative funding sources and fundraising for equipment and uniforms for those unable to afford these expenses.
- Some believe that youth growing up in rural and coastal areas, particularly on farms, tend to lead healthier, more active lifestyles, often engaging in practical activities that provide them with a range of experiences beyond those of their urban counterparts.
- Some perceive that there's a strong sense of family and community involvement in the sports across districts, with parents actively participating in and gathering to watch their youth play sports.
- Some note that many parents are supportive of helping kids participate in sports, as some are known to provide transportation for youth to access sporting activities when other parents cannot.
- Some believe that involvement in sports can enhance youths' mental health and social skills, providing them with increased self-esteem and sense of worth.

"If you are in the big city, you have a long way to travel, it's a lot more expensive, whereas a lot of our sports clubs here fund the fees themselves. For example, you can join athletics in Eltham for \$10 a child. They offset the fees with other funding sources."

"We do have lots of sporty things. We have netball, soccer, and rugby clubs out of Eltham and they are all still flourishing. As well as boxing and dancing. There are lots of little clubs, lots of places for kids if they want to be involved."

"You go out on Saturdays, the netball courts are full, and the playing fields are full. So certainly, there are a lot of families and children out there engaging. So I don't see any issues around it."

"Our sporting facilities are fantastic in South Taranaki, Hāwera, the hockey in Waverley play, Maxwell [Pākaraka], and Waitōtara, which is amazing."

"Funding always seems to be there for children that might not have enough money or [for] families that might not have enough money for uniforms. I've never heard of anyone being restricted from participating."

"More often than not, the kids are out on the farms or they're out with the rest of their family, their cousins, and everything, playing and living a bit of a healthier lifestyle than our city kids."

"You got the school rugby, you get to the sideline and you see heaps of parents, families gathering there. Everyone comes to watch their children play sports, swimming too. Rather than them just sending their kids off. That's a rural thing."

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Quality Education

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

"Because the kids can play as a team, they have always transported other kids whose parents don't have vehicles or whose parents work."

"As far as mental health goes, having that socialisation with others... I think sport is a really good way of giving balance, it gives children self-esteem, it makes them feel their worth."

"I'm a great believer in children being involved in sports, it helps, often, their mental and socialisation, but that's not always able to be achieved by families living rurally."

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

- Some observe that schools in the district provide good resources for sports and outdoor activities, like surfing and bush walks; however, there are concerns about whether schools are adequately motivating students to participate in sports, leading to increased efforts outside of school to re-engage them in sports.

"They [schools] do provide good resources in that space [sports], but I'm not sure about the motivation space. We're dealing with a lot of kids who we're reconnecting back into sports because they're not getting their motivation at school."

IN SOUTH TARANAKI, 70% OF CHILDREN MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT, COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 65%.

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



THERE ARE 173 SPORTS RELATED FACILITIES IN SOUTH TARANAKI, INCLUDING SCHOOLS, POOLS, INDOOR AND OUTDOOR COURTS, COMMUNITY CLUBS, FIELDS, MEMORIAL HALLS, AND FITNESS CENTRES.



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Sport Taranaki, 2023.

IN SOUTH TARANAKI, THERE ARE 71 REGISTERED INCORPORATED SOCIETIES INVOLVED IN SPORT.

Sport Taranaki, 2023.

Barriers

- Some believe that many sports and recreational facilities across the region are under-utilised, particularly by youth, who are observed to engage with these spaces less frequently than previous generations.
- Some feel that, despite the availability of facilities like sports clubs and gyms, the high costs associated with these resources make them inaccessible to many, especially families with multiple children engaged in sports or those with limited income.
- Some express concerns about the seemingly short-sighted approach in constructing sports facilities within the district, often built to meet current needs but lacking in future planning. This issue becomes more pronounced as the community grows, potentially leading to limited space and higher development costs in the future.

- Some believe that in areas dominated by sports and farming, youth with different interests experience isolation due to a lack of activities catering to their preferences, leading to a sense of pressure to relocate in search of more diverse opportunities.

“Just because the facilities are there doesn’t necessarily mean that they are accessible for all people in the community.

“It’s just the cost of it, that becomes out of reach for a lot of people. Especially if they have multiple children wanting to play different sports too.

“The fact that, as a user of the stadium, we have that gymnasium, it’s still underutilised, because I don’t see the same usage as when I was a kid, we pretty much lived at the stadium.

“Our region, I think, [has] a real issue with looking short term. We’re really good at building something for now, and then in 10 years’ time going, ‘oh, we should have built that bigger’... if we know we’re growing we should build it for 10 years’ time now because it’s not going to get any cheaper. But yeah, we don’t do that in this region.

“I will say there is a drive for kids who like sports, or have that rural focus. But if the kid or family members are not into sports, they become isolated. If you’re an artsy kid, it’s a real struggle living down there.

“Teenagers, they feel pressured to leave essentially, to be like, ‘Well, I have to get out of this town because they don’t play football’, or whatever it is. It’s a struggle, and there is a disconnect between some of the parents and the children over there.

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

- Some perceive that while there are funding opportunities for sports teams through District Council subsidies, not everyone has the capacity or knowledge to access these resources.

“There is quite a lot of money out there for people who are clever enough to access grants, but not everybody has the ability to do that all the time.

Opportunities

- Offering subsidies for recreational facilities and sports activities to lower costs and enhance accessibility for youth.
- Exploring strategies to enhance engagement and attract the next generation to the use of the TSB Hub.

“I’ll definitely say cost is one part of it. So if there’s an opportunity to subsidise that to help people get into that, it would be massive.

“If there [are] ways, maybe whether it’s council or funders can work with the gyms to make that more accessible, there’s an opportunity there.

“We’re actually trying to find ways to keep [Hub] engagement with our broader community. That could be an area for us as council. Trying to entice that next generation to be involved as much, and even the parents, because there is a bit of a gap there.

Good Mahi in the Community

- E-Town Youth Centre - offers alternative programmes, such as art workshops, which are perceived to cater to those less inclined towards sports. (Bishops Action Foundation, n.d.).^[13]
- Venture Taranaki - gathers disused sporting equipment and redistributes it to schools to support youth participation in sports, particularly in underserved areas.
- South Taranaki District Council - invests in the community by maintaining various facilities, including seven swimming pools, 36 playgrounds, skate parks, and hosting free summer events. These amenities contribute significantly to the recreational activities available in the area.
- South Taranaki District Council - provides sports teams with free-of-charge use of district council green spaces.
- TSB Hub - known by some as an ‘amazing resource’ for the South Taranaki community, providing local youth and community members with opportunities to engage in various sports and activities.

“We have an amazing resource there. For me, as a Māori, that’s where I grew up. I spent most of my days down at the stadium or at the rugby fields, at the sports fields.

“Sport Taranaki have a scheme for disused sporting equipment that they can collect and distribute to schools where children don’t have those, so that they can participate. It’s a great initiative.

“Sport Taranaki, I think it’s a national initiative called Tu Manawa, and they are going around all the halls in Taranaki, talking to committee members about getting sports equipment and play equipment in all the halls for children over five to get them off the technology and get them doing physical things together.

“We have the pools during the summertime, we put on events, we have a number of play spaces and parks, skate parks.

“For older youth, that’s where our youth centre comes in. Our youth centre wants to identify the gaps in our youths’ lives and our goal, our aim is to fill them up as much as we can. Next term, it is art-based and it is for those youth that aren’t so sporty.

“E-town [Eltham] centre has always identified that there are different kids. So we try to do different things.

“We’re a big investor in our communities. We think about the stuff that we have, we have seven swimming pools, we have 36 playgrounds, we’re geographically spread out [across] the district.

“We do things like events, we put on free events for the community to attend. So part of their encouragement [is] trying to keep people within our district or we’re trying to, even with our facilities.

Theme 12

Many believe that, despite the abundant facilities and natural resources in South Taranaki, there is a significant shortage of low-cost, engaging spaces for youth, contributing to widespread boredom and mischief. It's perceived that this, along with gang influences and social media, is increasing instances of youth-related crime. Additionally, the belief that young offenders are 'untouchable' and face minimal consequences is thought to further exacerbate these issues.

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

- Many observe that while natural attractions and recreational facilities are abundant and well-utilised in the district, socioeconomic factors, such as limited income and transport, prevent many, particularly those from lower-income backgrounds, from accessing these resources.
- Some perceive that despite efforts to keep community recreational facility fees low in the district, there are still those who find the cost of accessing amenities, such as swimming pools, to be prohibitive.

"There are a lot of natural [attractions], but it requires a parent to take the initiative and take you out on a hike or have the time and the money to do those things, to transport you to those places. Those in the lower socioeconomic area wouldn't have those same opportunities.

"The parents can't, whether it's because they have five kids, they are a solo parent, or they just have low income and can't afford [travel], especially with the rising food costs and costs of living.

"I always hear, when I hear of people who move to Taranaki, they're just surprised by how many parks, pools, and spaces there are for kids.

"People could come and use our pools, [it would] cost them nothing... Even though we try and keep our fees as low as we possibly can, there's still elements of our community who still can't afford to bring their family to the pool, or go play basketball, volleyball, or whatever, because the cost is still prohibitive.

Barriers

- Many believe there is a significant lack of engaging spaces and activities for youth in the district, especially when compared to New Plymouth, Stratford or Whanganui, leading to widespread boredom experienced by youth. Some believe this is particularly challenging for youth who aren't in school.
- It is commonly argued that, due to limited entertainment options for youth across the district, boredom is increasingly leading them to engage in mischief. This is evidenced by observations of youth roaming the streets, engaging in drug use, and participating in criminal activities; encapsulated in the sentiment, 'If they get bored, they're going to play up.'
- Many believe that youth-related crime has increased across the district, with a recent spate of young offenders breaking into houses, vandalising parks, and stealing cars, even those parked near homes.
- Observations suggest that the presence of gangs contributes to youth crime, as youth are reportedly being actively recruited by gangs and drawn into criminal activities ranging from stealing cars to drug dealing.
- Some notice a generational pattern of gang involvement, with concerns that youth crime is increasing as youth follow the paths of their parents and grandparents, facing challenges in choosing alternative life directions.
- Some believe that the increase in youth crime within the district is driven more by exposure to criminal techniques on social media platforms like TikTok and YouTube, which are seen to provide both inspiration and how-to guides, rather than by gang influence.

Framework Tags

Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

No Poverty

Good Health & Wellbeing

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Natural Environment

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- Many believe that youth offenders are seen as 'untouchable' due to their age. With the police seemingly unable to discipline, youth are believed to receive minimal consequences for their actions, which some feel might result in recurring offences, as they seemingly 'don't learn their lesson'.
- A common view within the community is that there is a lack of programmes, support networks, and resources, such as youth aid officers, for youth offenders, which they feel impacts their ability to change.
- There are increasing concerns that changes in family dynamics, with both parents often working, contribute to increased unsupervised time for youth. This may be leading to their engagement in mischief and a rise in aggressive behaviour, as youth are required to 'stick up for themselves' without parental support.
- It has been noted by some that how some youth interact with adults is 'jaw-dropping', with some lacking basic skills in how to engage with people, such as saying 'please' and 'thank you'.

"The kura in Hāwera has a lot of children that have come up from that side of town where there is high crime. So it'll be interesting to see what they choose, because I don't think their parents have changed but the children might once they get to that young adult. In their decision towards whether they go down the gang route or go off to university.

"We don't have a lot here for our youth in Hāwera, whereas Stratford has heaps for their youth, as well as New Plymouth. Whereas in Hāwera, we have a skatepark and yeah. We don't have a lot for our youth to do.

"They don't have anything else to do. There are no clubs for youth who aren't in school.

"This is why the youth are running wild around here at the moment, with all the car thefts... because if there were things for these kids to be doing, maybe that wouldn't be happening.

"She stood up and said, 'kids are just going to be kids. If they get bored, they're gonna play up.'

"[They are] breaking into houses and ransacking things to see what they can find. There are a lot of burglaries, breaking into houses and stealing items. And as a rule, it's youth that are getting caught for doing this.

"We have cars getting smashed, stolen, taken for joy rides.

"The gangs as well, we have them trying to recruit them, so that's why we've had a lot of damage to vehicles and breaking into vehicles. Youth going around people's homes, breaking windows trying to get into cars.

"Boredom. Bored... [crime has] come because it's cool and they've seen it on TV, TikTok has a lot to do with it... They can watch all sorts on their phones. So they do it because it's cool, they can brag about it.

“Boredom. Bored... [crime has] come because it’s cool and they’ve seen it on TV, TikTok has a lot to do with it... They can watch all sorts on their phones. So they do it because it’s cool, they can brag about it.

“I don’t think crime is influenced by gangs. I think it’s more boredom, and they just [follow] really clever YouTubers. They’ve got all of the goods for them. They have shown us so many things around how they would break into an electric car, how they can remove the whole data startup box, pretty clever.

“South Taranaki has a strong Black Power influence. So that’s the gang of choice in South Taranaki. So you can see the generational move of younger children, whose parents are members, and how the youth crime is increasing.

“This is what happens when people are untouchable and don’t learn their lesson.

“They are underage, so they are untouchable, they give them a slap on the hand and they are out again.

“There [are] no programmes for the young offenders. They aren’t going to get any help, so it could be that, or it could be other issues like no support networks around them, nothing is going to change.

“We used to have a youth aid officer, well, that just doesn’t exist anymore. So the lack of resources wrapped around this situation is very scary.

“The whole framework for the family shifts. Often you got both parents working now and that makes it hard. So you got a whole lot of kids between 3 and 5 o’clock with not much to do but get into trouble.

“Now kids have to be more aggressive to stick up for themselves because mum and dad aren’t there. So they are sticking up for themselves and getting into trouble.

“I spent half an hour at [the local school] yesterday and the language of our young people, in how they interact with adults, was jaw-dropping.

“About 20 students came and went, came and went, and the rudeness was just astounding. I just couldn’t believe what was happening in front of me.

YOUTH OFFENDING RATES IN SOUTH TARANAKI ARE ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE, WITH 105 OFFENCES PER 10,000 PEOPLE, COMPARED TO 75 OFFENCES NATIONALLY.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 16: Safety & Inclusivity.

Opportunities

- Providing youth and their families accessible and affordable community activities and entertainment.
- Providing early intervention for at-risk youth, particularly during kindergarten and primary years, to prevent potential offending and ensure timely support for them and their families, rather than addressing issues after they offend.
- Providing more opportunities, such as activities and events, for youth to help keep them engaged and reduce the likelihood of negative behaviours, such as theft, occurring.
- Promoting opportunities for youth, such as in the school newsletter weekly, so that they are aware and able to pursue them.
- Establishing supervised youth spaces to provide safe, engaging environments for youth, helping them grow their interests.
- Repurposing vacant buildings for recreational uses to keep youth engaged and off the streets.

“It’s trying to, [whether] through the council or the community, find ways to try to help our kids become engaged again, [so] they don’t think about smashing a window, or stealing a car.

“Running a firework display or an event at the park, or having movies at the park or something that people can just come to... It’s something free for the family, it’s something they can actually afford to take the family to, as long as they’ve got a vehicle to drive there.

“I want to actually list the opportunities in the school newsletter every week, so that kids can see what’s out there and what’s on offer, so that they can take advantage of those opportunities and feel confident in applying for them. Because you can, and you will do something, if you put in the hard work and put in the effort.

“Maybe we need to start early rather than starting later. When you look at support structures for whānau and rangatahi as well, not waiting until there is an episode or event to happen.

“Maybe identifying issues early and dealing with onset rather than waiting for crime [to happen], because I think that [has] a lot to do with it as well.

“They need to be picked up when they are at kindergarten. These kids show signs in kindergarten. So, [in the] first year [of] primary, they need to be picked up. Something needs to be done.

“We do the annual residence survey. We asked residents for their opinions on various things, and then the verbatim comments every year, it’s the same; we need more for young people to do. We just get that comment frequently, year after year.

“Even if it was a youth club, and there was someone manning it, they didn’t have to be with the youth but just somewhere that was watched over so that there was no gang stuff going on, or dodgy dealings or anything like that.

“I think, yep, youth do need their own spaces, but they also have to want their own spaces and they have to be able to use them too. If the space is there, you’ve got to utilise it.

“There needs to be something here to occupy them. We have the skatepark, but we have a lot of empty buildings here that could be a bowling alley or a pool. I don’t know, something to get them off the streets causing mischief.

Good Mahi in the Community

- E-TOWN Eltham - a space that is intentionally youth-focused and youth-led and is available for use by agencies and services supporting the Eltham community.
- EmpowerYouth - a forum in South Taranaki created by Ebony Kailin that allows youth to discuss and convey their ideas to local government, serving as a platform for youth advocacy and community engagement.
- Police Blue Light - works in partnership with the police to deliver an extensive range of youth programmes and activities, including the Youth Driver Navigation Programme and Blue Light disco. (Blue Light, n.d.)^[14]
- S.T.A.R.T. Taranaki Programme - an eight-week programme that immerses youth in the Taranaki wilderness and S.T.A.R.T.'s Ora Toa residence. (S.T.A.R.T Taranaki, n.d.)^[15]
- Some Iwi are reportedly offering strength-based learning through mau rākau to help mentor youth.
- Some believe there has been funding secured for a youth facility in Pātea to help keep local youth engaged and off the streets.

“EmpowerYouth is a youth committee in South Taranaki that aims to engage, connect, and inspire rangatahi of South Taranaki to be involved within our community.

“Our mission is to first be the advocacy or the youth voice for our district and our second goal is to simply engage our youth within our communities across South Taranaki.

“Our mission is to first be the advocacy, or the youth voice for our district. Our second goal is to simply engage our youth within our communities across South Taranaki, we aim to do this by working with the South Taranaki District Council, whether that looks like sending submissions on council projects for our youth voice, or running events within our community aimed at youth to get them out and about and involved within our community.

“They [Iwi] are teaching strength-based learning through mau rākau, and I noticed that some of the mentors are out there with rangatahi who are troubled, and who present with challenges, they are able to mentor [them] by using different methods like mau rākau, using their voice to address issues like violence.

“There was a chap who ran a programme, he lived out Kaponga way, he was working with youth who were troubled, and he did, like, a bootcamp.

“It's one of the reasons that we've got all the pools. Often those kids are getting back to town at 4:30 pm, so it's really good that we've got the library opened and the swimming pool available to them, so they've got a bit of leisure time when they get back from school.

“They've got the funding for it [a youth building in Pātea], they've just got to find a building now.

“There is an initiative going on in Pātea trying to find a youth building so that our youth can get off the streets and actually do something.

“The Police did the Blue Light programme, and they'd go around getting driver's licences for youth to remove those obstacles when getting into employment.

“Youth do need their own spaces, but they also have to want their own spaces and they have to be able to use them too. If the space is there, you've got to utilise it.

Workshop participant

Ebony Kalin: Youth MP

“My name is Ebony Kalin. One of my greatest achievements is being elected as the Whanganui electric youth MP.

“One of the things that I took away from [speaking in parliament] was how communities across Aotearoa involve their youth. So I set myself a goal at the start of the year to achieve this, and I can now say this afternoon, I am bringing applicants to say they are successful in entering this committee, which is called Empower Youth.

“Empower Youth is a youth committee [in] South Taranaki that aims to engage, connect, and inspire rangatahi of South Taranaki to be involved within our community. So it’s a group of 10 to 15 individuals from the ages of 12 to 24.

“Our mission is to first be the advocacy, or the youth voice for our district. Our second goal is to simply engage our youth within our communities across South Taranaki. We aim to do this by working with the South Taranaki District Council, whether that looks like sending submissions on council projects for our youth voice, or running events within our community aimed at youth to get them out and about and involved within our community.

“In policy at the moment, they are trying to increase employment, but how can they increase employment when you don’t have the skills to actually be confident in applying for a job? This is something that I wanted to point out, and I gathered a youth voice on this through surveys and community focus groups, then presented this in a two-minute speech in Parliament.

“Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I call on the New Zealand government to include CV and cover letter construction in the New Zealand curriculum. 25% confirmed they had never prepared a CV, 50% confirmed they needed assistance building a CV, and over 90% claimed they had never been taught how to prepare a CV. This tells me, Mr. Speaker, that the youth of the Whanganui electric don’t know how to prepare a CV. They don’t know what a CV includes, some don’t even know what a CV is.

“The struggles that I feel that youth are facing at the moment [are] motivation and confidence to do something. There are so many opportunities out there for rangatahi, communities are sometimes even dangling them on a carrot, and no one steps forward to take advantage of those opportunities. Rangatahi quite often see the barriers before they see what the opportunity really is.

“So they might see an opportunity and it might be an application process, or they might have to have an interview and it puts them off from doing something.

“The education system needs to ensure that our rangatahi are prepared for their future job applications, easing the transition between education and the workforce, strengthening the link between qualification and employment, because employment for youth secures their future. Employment for youth secures New Zealand’s future. Let’s enhance youth skills and knowledge of job applications because knowledge is power, Mr. Speaker.



Theme 13

Some have observed an increase in vaping and drug use among youth in South Taranaki, with some using marijuana at increasingly younger ages and 'getting caught up in' harder drugs, such as methamphetamine and MDMA, due to their perceived accessibility. This trend is partly linked to drug use within the home and limited activities for youth, potentially leading to substance use out of boredom.

NATIONALLY,
ONE IN FIVE
HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS VAPE
OR SMOKE DAILY.



Asthma and Respiratory Foundation, and the Secondary Principals' Association, 2021.

Barriers

- Many believe that a significant number of youth in the district are turning to vaping as an alternative to smoking cigarettes or, in some cases, drinking, despite its perceived high cost.
- Some express concerns about the prevalence of vaping shops near schools.
- Some perceive that alcohol, rather than smoking, presents a more significant issue for youth, acting as a gateway to drug use.
- Some believe that marijuana, initially used in social settings, has become more accessible and is now being used by youth at increasingly younger ages.
- Some perceive that youth with mental health challenges are increasingly turning to marijuana as a form of self-medication to manage sleep and emotional regulation, which may, in reality, exacerbate their issues.
- Many believe there is an increasing issue with drug use among youth in the district, observing a shift from marijuana to more readily available and cheaper drugs such as methamphetamine and MDMA, affecting both urban and rural communities.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

No Poverty

Quality Education

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- It's perceived by some that the lack of opportunities and activities for youth in the district could lead to youth turning to substance use out of boredom.
- Some suggest that drug use among youth may be linked to high unemployment and drug use within the household, potentially setting an example that influences youth behaviour, as captured in the sentiment, 'Dad did it, so I'm going to do it.'

"It's just the cycle within their families. Dad did it, so I'm going to do it."

"Especially the younger ones, and I don't know how they can afford to [smoke] to be honest, because it's so expensive."

"Vaping is an issue. [There are] so many vape shops near schools."

"Youth with mental health issues are increasingly moving towards the use of marijuana as a self-medicating drug. Using it to get to sleep, to regulate emotions, but [this is] kind of making everything worse."

"It's been marijuana that seems to be creeping into younger [ages] and younger down south."

"The amount of youth that can get their hands on drugs. We used to worry about cannabis, but we've got our youth getting their hands on methamphetamine now. It's so much more accessible than cannabis."

"Not only marijuana due to what's perceived accessibility but also the cost of meth is cheaper than marijuana."

"It's not meth, it's more MDMA, and marijuana is more [prevalent] coming from more rural areas."

"Alcohol is the bigger problem, much more detrimental for youth. Cultural, rugby, sports, and drinking is more of a gateway to drugs than what smoking is."

"Drug use within families [is] normalised, so smoking weed with mum...just the stories like that coming out in the last few weeks around the South. Especially coastal ways. It's spanning across households."

"There is just not much to do, for the teenage population especially, instead they are congregating at the park and doing drugs, pills, snorting, etc."

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 14—While many in South Taranaki choose to stay in the district, opting for immediate employment after school, those aspiring to tertiary education face limited and uncertain local options. This, coupled with the desire for broader experiences, encourages many to seek education outside the district. Although there are concerns that those who leave won't return, many eventually do, bringing with them their newfound skills and experiences.

Decent Work & Economic Growth

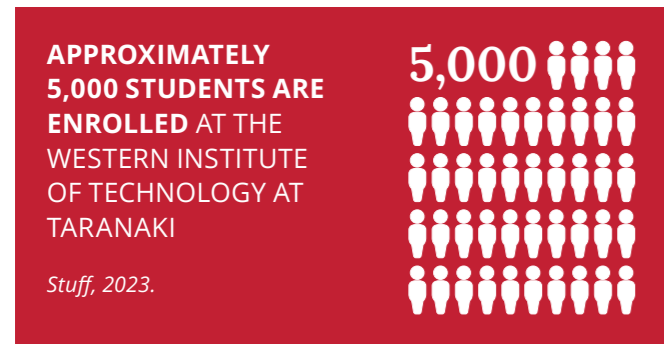
Theme 15—Many note that there are numerous employment opportunities in farming, trades, and industry in South Taranaki, offering good salaries without requiring tertiary qualifications. However, a generational shift in work ethics is observed, with some young people favouring more work-life balance over traditional factory roles. This shift, combined with a perceived lack of motivation, confidence, and essential life skills, makes securing employment in the district increasingly difficult for many young people.

Theme 14

While many in South Taranaki choose to stay in the district, opting for immediate employment after school, those aspiring to tertiary education face limited and uncertain local options. This, coupled with the desire for broader experiences, encourages many to seek education outside the district. Although there are concerns that those who leave won't return, many eventually do, bringing with them their newfound skills and experiences.

THE WESTERN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AT TARANAKI (WITT), IS THE ONLY STATE TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTE IN THE REGION.

Taranaki Like No Other, 2023.



Strengths

- Some observe that although many young people depart the district for education or work, a significant portion eventually return, often driven by personal reasons, such as raising a family or pursuing careers in their hometown.
- Some believe that young people, especially young Māori with strong whakapapa to the district, are more likely to return after exploring opportunities elsewhere, as their connection to the district provides them with a sense of belonging and a place to call home. This contrasts with some urban youth who might not have a strong awareness of their connections and origins.
- Some believe that, for the young Māori, the aspiration of attending university has become more common and achievable, compared to past generations.

- For some, leaving the district to gain qualifications and experiences, then returning is seen as beneficial, offering a more global perspective.
- Many suggest that young people from generational farming families often choose to work on or inherit family-run farms, rather than pursue tertiary education. For those who do leave for education, it is believed they still tend to return to their family farms.

“That’s probably the only positive of us Māori, is that you want to come home because that’s where our ties are, but you don’t have that connection for everybody.”

“I have lots of families who have gone away to university and come back to raise their children here.”

“We’re advertising for a role at the moment and our top three candidates, all outside the region, are all from the region originally. So that’s pretty cool and they are in their early 20s and they want to come back.”

“I could also argue that you’re actually leaving the region and picking up some other skills and then bringing them back, which is as good, if not better, because they’ve got a bit more of a global lens or a worldly view.”

“For me, when I talk about that as aspirations for our kids, for me as a Māori, my parents were ecstatic that one of the kids was going to go to university, whereas now we make it quite a common aspiration for our generation or for our kids.”

“It’s an older farming generational thing. South Taranaki is known for farming; the kids don’t need to go to tertiary because they’re just going straight to family farming. That’s what they do. You know, this has been our farm for 100 years.”

Framework Tags



“A lot of families do still generationally get into farming. Even some of those that go off to university, they still come back, start families, [and] work on the farm.”

Barriers

- Many believe that a significant number of young people in the district choose immediate employment after secondary school instead of pursuing tertiary education, with those attending university often viewed as ‘the exception.’
- Many hold the belief that the limited number of tertiary education providers in the district, with WITT as the primary local option offering limited courses, drives many young people to seek education elsewhere. This situation is widely perceived as a significant factor in the departure of youth from the district, as they move or travel for more diverse educational opportunities.
- Some note the uncertainty surrounding the district’s tertiary education industry, characterised by ongoing restructures and potential cuts to local offerings. With just one primary provider in the district, there is a fear that any instability might prompt more people to pursue education outside the region.
- While some remain hopeful that those who leave the district for tertiary education and employment will eventually return, others believe it could take ‘decades’ before they do, with a few speculating they might never return, as opportunities are seen to be greater elsewhere.
- Transitioning from small town living to big cities for tertiary education is believed to be overwhelming and challenging for some young people, as they go from ‘country bumpkins’ to big cities.

- Some believe that tertiary education costs a fortune, making it unattainable for some students and families, particularly those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, restricting their ability to pursue higher education, especially outside the district.
- Many perceive that transportation is a considerable barrier for many people attending or considering courses in New Plymouth. The costs of some public transport, combined with limited schedules and long commutes, make attending courses tough, especially for parents who find the prolonged days and early starts ‘impossible’.
- Some note that local tertiary and training institutions struggle to get enough students for their courses. This, coupled with a perceived shortage of tutors, is thought to render certain programmes and classes unviable.

“I’m not the rule, I am the exception. I’m the exception that I decided to go to university. There aren’t too many of my cousins that went to uni.”

“Coming back [to Hāwera], it’s quite surprising how many people have stayed in Hāwera without having to go to university. They’ve ended up getting a job out of high school and kind of staying there without the need for tertiary qualifications.”

“There are a lot of kids that will leave and never come back. My kids are a perfect example. They went through school here, they went off, neither of them could get the educational opportunities that they wanted in Taranaki so they both went to Wellington.”

“But certainly, if you’re looking at, you know, accounting, law, commerce, arts, or law degrees, even agriculture, you got to get out of the region.”

“WITT, Western Institute of Technology, is our only tertiary provider in the region. Any instability there would be a major [issue] for South Taranaki. It would certainly accelerate the move out to Palmerston North or Dunedin at that stage in life.”

“We have to lose them for those decades before we get them back. I decided ‘I miss home, it’s time to get back to my community’. That’s why I came home. But we have to lose them for those decades before we get them back.”

“Especially younger ones. We wait for long periods of time for them to come home, before there’s any desire or interest or need. Because there’s more opportunities in the larger regions.”

“My kids, I sent them to university and it was the hardest thing ever. They’ve gone from these little country bumpkins down to these big cities and it’s scary and horrible. I’d say there’s a certain number of kids that are saying that and coming home.”

“So what happens is they usually don’t have enough students to fulfil the course and they don’t have a tutor, then they can’t run anything.”

“So we know WITT are struggling to get numbers, AXIAM are struggling to get numbers, land-based training is struggling to get numbers...there’s a labour shortage. We don’t know why that is, is it just because we don’t have the numbers?”

“There are more impoverished people and lower socioeconomic groups that don’t get to see what they want to do [at university].”

“She went to Dunedin, from Hāwera, and she was 16 turning 17... it was difficult for her. Flattening and the financial pressure, you know, she was on student study allowance. She had to work to pay rent, food and all of those things.”

“New Plymouth has like computer and programming courses that students from Hāwera would find difficult to attend, because they’re not run through the Institute of Technology and they have to make their own transport up there. They can still get on the bus but at a cost to them.”

“If somebody wants to do a carpentry course, and they live in Pātea and they have children, it’s impossible for them because they would have to leave Pātea at about six o’clock in the morning to come to Hāwera to catch a bus to get up to New Plymouth to be in class. Then by the time they get back, it would be like six o’clock at night.”

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

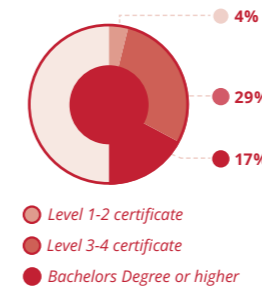
- Many note that a significant number of people don’t leave the district once finishing school. While some attribute this to strong connections and family ties, others suggest it’s due to a lack of ambition or compelling reasons to explore opportunities elsewhere.

“It’s amazing how many people don’t want to leave Taranaki.”

“The people in the factories, or those who couldn’t get a job, they would just stay, there isn’t any vibrant reason to go out of here.”

“A lot of people in South Taranaki have stayed here because their parents [are] here, their families are here.”

4% OF SCHOOL LEAVERS IN SOUTH TARANAKI COMPLETE A LEVEL 1-2 CERTIFICATE, 29% COMPLETE A LEVEL 3-4 CERTIFICATE, AND 17% COMPLETE A BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER.



Ministry of Education.

49% OF SCHOOL LEAVERS FROM SOUTH TARANAKI ARE NOT ENROLLED IN TERTIARY EDUCATION, COMPARED TO 35% NATIONALLY.

Ministry of Education.

IN 2021, 60 OUT OF 107 FEMALE AND 80 OUT OF 141 MALE SOUTH TARANAKI SCHOOL LEAVERS DID NOT ENROL IN ANY FORM OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN THE YEAR FOLLOWING THEIR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION.

Education Counts, South Taranaki, 2021.

Opportunities

- Offering incentives to retain graduates with tertiary education so that their skills and knowledge remain local.

“Once you have gotten a tertiary education, and I wonder, on a national level, whether there are some incentives we need to have in order to be able to keep them here.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Taranaki Regional Council - provides a free connector bus for people attending WITT classes in New Plymouth.

“So you can jump on the connector bus for free to get to the WITT classes, which is great.”

Theme 15

Many note that there are numerous employment opportunities in farming, trades, and industry in South Taranaki, offering good salaries without requiring tertiary qualifications. However, a generational shift in work ethics is observed, with some young people favouring more work-life balance over traditional factory roles. This shift, combined with a perceived lack of motivation, confidence, and essential life skills, makes securing employment in the district increasingly difficult for many young people.

Strengths

- Many believe the district offers a wealth of employment opportunities in sectors such as farming, trades and industry where tertiary qualifications aren't essential. These opportunities are perceived by many as attractive options for school leavers, as they are seen to offer attractive salaries straight out of school.

“We have these big employers who pay well, and that's the thing, they can come out of school and they can go straight into pretty good money. So it is a really noticeable feature for South Taranaki and has been so for a long time.”

“There are more options; we can go out and get a job straight away on a farm or in a trade. There are just more options apart from tertiary education and you get life skills straight away.”

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

- Some observe that, while there are numerous apprenticeship opportunities in the district, with many young people opting for these pathways in trades and industry, some companies are believed to face challenges in filling apprenticeship positions.

“They had four apprenticeships last year in different trades, and they really struggled. They really struggled to fill their positions for youth that want to do it.”

“In Fonterra, you can do a whole range of apprenticeships... but a lot of them don't [do them]; a lot of them stay at a factory level.”

“We have these big employers who pay well, and that's the thing, they can come out of school and they can go straight into pretty good money. So it is a really noticeable feature for South Taranaki and has been so for a long time.”

“There are more options; we can go out and get a job straight away on a farm or in a trade. There are just more options apart from tertiary education and you get life skills straight away.”

Barriers

- Some believe that the chance to 'earn good money' or their own income through local employers can outweigh the benefits of staying in school or pursuing higher qualifications, especially for those in low-income households, as earning money is believed to be more important.
- Some perceive a generational shift in work ethics among young people, observing a lack of motivation and willingness to work, while others believe this perception may be influenced by generational differences in values and expectations surrounding work.
- While some believe there are ample employment opportunities in the district, young people are seen as lacking the confidence or motivation to engage due to increased anxiety. This makes integrating them into the workforce more challenging, as some focus more on potential barriers, such as application processes or interviews, rather than the opportunity itself.
- Some believe that many young people lack the confidence and necessary skills for employment, such as creating resumes and preparing for interviews, posing a challenge to increasing employment rates.

Framework Tags

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

- Some employers in the district seem reluctant to hire young people aged 16 to 24 due to the significant pastoral care required to integrate them into the workplace. This care includes training in job-related skills and basic life skills, such as punctuality, creating an additional burden on employers who are often perceived as having to assume roles akin to 'trainer, mother, and father.'
- There is a perception that people who haven't been adequately equipped with learning or problem-solving skills in school tend to give up quickly when faced with challenges in their workplace, leading to frequent job changes and a diminished willingness to persevere.
- Some believe that the district's high minimum wage may inadvertently create barriers for young people seeking their first job, as employers might prefer hiring older, more experienced workers at the same wage rate.
- Some believe that unemployment among young people is linked to transportation challenges, such as limited public transport availability and the distances to employment locations.
- Some link unemployment among young people to drug use issues, with some noting that a number of unemployed young people 'would not pass a drug test.'
- Some observe a growing trend of young people obtaining medical certificates for conditions like anxiety and depression, potentially to qualify for job seeker exemptions.

“Sometimes getting qualifications isn't as important as getting a job.”

“If you have a household where you don't earn enough money to survive, and you have an eldest child who can leave school, not get their qualifications but go out and earn money for the household.”

“Sometimes getting qualifications isn't as important as getting a job.”

“A lot of them do that because there are opportunities to make money, so why would I stay at school when I could be earning good money.”

“But how much do you need to do for them, or can they actually learn to be self-motivated. We don't have self-motivated youth; they have their hand out waiting for work.”

“On the outside it looks like they are unmotivated and lazy, but that's how we see it because we grew up in a different generation.”

“There are so many opportunities out there for rangatahi, communities are sometimes even dangling them on a carrot, and no one steps forward to take advantage of those opportunities.”

“The rangatahi quite often see the barriers before they see what the opportunity really is. So they might see an opportunity. And it might be an application process, or they might have to have an interview, or it puts them off from doing something.”

“But statistics are showing us that kids are coming through now with more anxiety and less confidence. So that's a challenge for us, in terms of how to get them into work, and how to give them the ability and surety again.”

“The issue that I identified was that youth don't know how to prepare a CV and they don't know how to prepare for an interview.”

“In policy at the moment, they’re trying to increase employment, but how can they increase employment when youth don’t have the skills to actually be confident in applying for a job?”

“One of the things it seems to be tracking currently is that employers are quite reluctant to take on young people, young people between 16 to 24.

“Now, the employer has to be the trainer, the mother, the father. So if we can push all that out before they get past training and into employment, that’s half the battle.

“I think it’s an extension to that kind of the probably as a knock-on effect of all of those other things in the youth section, that pastoral care that’s needed with some of these young people to integrate them into a work environment, isn’t what you would normally expect. You employ someone to do the job. It takes time and admin.

“So we can definitely talk [about] youth unemployment. It’s due to accessibility. The bus system is terrible. Yeah. Nonexistent, not accessible.

“Most of our people that come through the doors for support, I’d probably say more than half of them would not pass a drug test.

“It is just increasing, the medical certificates for anxiety, depression in young people so that they are eligible for job seeker with the exemption.

“Also if someone hasn’t been exposed well at school, they don’t know how to learn properly. So, therefore, when they reach something they don’t know how to do in their workplace, they quit quite quickly, then move on.

“They haven’t been engaged in school, they haven’t learnt how to learn. They just live in the moment, their thinking isn’t challenged. We don’t know what to do with the information they get.

“They never go outside their box, never challenge themselves, never think ‘so why do I do that, why do I think that’. So what that means is they leave, then get employment and at any point of difficulty, they leave again.

“They haven’t been taught how to problem-solve or critically think about something. Then they get into this pattern of ‘no one is going to employ me’.

“If I was a business owner, I’m not going to pay the same amount for 14/15-year-olds when I can pay a 30-year-old to do.

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

- Some observe that young people today have a different outlook on employment as they steer away from traditional shift work and demanding industry roles due to their long, irregular hours. While this is interpreted by some as a reluctance to work hard, others believe the younger generation is seeking more work-life balance for themselves and their families.
- Some perceive a sense of entitlement among certain young workers, who appear reluctant to start in entry-level positions and instead expect high-paying roles without the traditional learning process. However, others note that not all young people fit this description, with some demonstrating a willingness to ‘start from the bottom’ and gradually work their way up.

“The younger ones are always resentful that you, as a business, are using me. It’s a sense of entitlement, I don’t want to sweep floors, I don’t want to start from the bottom, I want to go straight on a machine and make all this money.

“The way that young people see jobs, or employment, or their future is just so different than how we were brought up. They are not looking to do a nine-to-five job, they’re not looking at shift work... They just view employment way differently to what we do.

“If you talk to employers, it seems that they don’t want to work hard, they don’t want the shift work, they want more life balance, they don’t want to work on the weekends, they don’t want to do nights.

“Is it realistic having your employees working 12-14 hour shifts? We struggle to get truck drivers and it’s because the young people coming through don’t want to work long hours because they have families, they want to be there for their kids.

“I’ve had three [young people] recently come through my house... and I’ve had no trouble getting them jobs. They’ve all got full-time jobs and they’re working hard.

12.7% 

12.7% OF YOUTH AGED 18-24 IN SOUTH TARANAKI RECEIVE THE JOB SEEKER SUPPORT BENEFIT, IN CONTRAST TO 7.5% NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Ministry of Social Development.

Opportunities

- Engaging and preparing young people from an early age, e.g., as early as primary school, about their future aspirations and monitoring that throughout school, into adulthood.
- Introducing youth to work at an earlier age offers them a ‘golden opportunity’ to foster a sense of pride in earning and contributing, positively shape their mentality around work, and alleviate boredom.
- Promoting apprenticeships and hands-on work as valuable career paths, especially in light of their essential role during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Providing gateway programmes and practical training opportunities for students, allowing them to explore and determine their interest in trades.
- Instilling confidence in young people to enable them to believe in their capabilities, and with the right support, achieve their aspirations.
- Empowering young people to overcome personal barriers, believe in themselves and feel confident to undertake employment opportunities that are available.
- Providing young people with pastoral care and ongoing support so that they receive the necessary guidance and support before and after transitioning to employment.
- Changing work structures, like shift patterns and long hours, to ensure employees have greater work-life balance and ample time off.
- Introducing a ‘minimum youth wage’ for those aged 14 to 17 to help engage young people in employment and foster work ethics.

“Encouraging that it’s okay to do apprenticeships. When COVID-19 came along, it wasn’t us “intelligent people” going to work, it was the essential workers, they call them essential workers for a reason.

“It’s going to have to go further than just targeting and recruiting. They are going to have to change the way they are doing work, e.g., shift patterns, long hours. There has to be a work-life balance. So even if they have shift work, make it so that they have a work-life balance with a decent amount of time off. Not five days of shift work, two days off.

“We need to celebrate that it’s okay to have hands [on work] as such.

“Kids think that they can’t do things, and yet, they just need that confidence and that push a little bit, it would be really cool.

“Kids just need to believe in themselves. If our young families could just believe that they can do it, that would be just a big step forward. We can do it. We can help you.

“Now, the employer has to be the trainer, the mother, the father. So if we can push all that out before they get past training and into employment, that’s half the battle.

“A lot of the younger ones just need that maintenance around moving them into work first. So pastoral care is the hardest thing whereas the training, if they are pono for what they do, that’ll come easy.

“[Gateway programmes] is a great way for kids to work out trades, whether they like them or not.

“I think kids are more likely to go to the gateway than to do their NCEA, to be fair.

“Those opportunities are out there and they are waiting for rangatahi to be taken. So feel confident to do something, and motivate yourself to do something.

“It’s just knowing that you can take that leap of faith, you can do it on your own, and you can be confident in yourself to do it.

“We need to have a minimum youth wage, to keep kids off the street and get them money, and give them those [opportunities] because they’re growing up entitled.

“Having those conversations, preparing them, building capacity, right back then asking them what they want to do when they grow up, those sorts of conversations, and then monitoring those all the way through to the high school level and into the adult level as well.

“It starts with youth being able to work from a younger age. There is a golden opportunity age to get them into that mindset and build that pride of earning money.

“Kids are bored. They need to get into work so that they are contributing. That will set them up for their future to be more engaging and contributing to their family, so that they feel like they can pay their own way.

Good Mahi in the Community

– Dairy Trust Taranaki - provides youth with hands-on farming experience and introduces them to aspects of farming such as emissions and soil quality.

– Eltham Youth Centre, Getting Ready for Work programme - prepares youth for employment through mock interviews with local businesses.

– Fonterra and Silver Fern Farms - focus on enhancing relationships and pastoral care.

– Tree Machine - provides second-chance learning opportunities, often leading to employment prospects for its graduates (Smith, 2022).^[16]

- Whai Mahi MTFJ - a collaborative initiative led by mayors and supported by councils, local government New Zealand, and the Ministry of Social Development to aid in employment. The programme focuses on providing employment and training opportunities, especially for young people up to age 25, and provides an open-door policy to assist people seeking jobs.
- Whai Mahi MTFJ - collaborates with other providers to help young people obtain forklift and driver’s licensing courses for job seekers.
- Whai Mahi MTFJ - offers a three-month care programme focused on making young people job-ready. The programme supports them in areas like punctuality, discipline, personal preparation, finance and licences, ensuring a smooth transition for both the employee and the employer.
- Whai Mahi MTFJ - provides marae-based learning programmes that integrate skill development, such as building, with the teaching of whakapapa and tikanga, aimed at giving people a stronger sense of identity and preparation for life.

“It’s really exciting to see so many young people into work, that possibly could be still sitting on a couch somewhere, lost to the community. So that’s wonderful, because that’s fantastic futures for these young people.

“Whai Mahi is set up to provide opportunities and employment in training with our local businesses. Just working with our unemployed, and those ones that are seeking employment from [out of] their jobs, maybe [they are] ready to move on.

“We’ve got an open-door policy, on the daily they have people coming in and enquiring about work, we’re there to help them move into the employment area.

“When we developed our programmes, we did a three-month care programme to incorporate with the training. Most of it was around, getting up on time, making sure you’ve got kai for the day, making sure you’re not late, no cell phones on site, and so on. That seemed to work for a lot of the younger ones.

“I suppose financial support as well, which is a big barrier for all of our people coming in. So we try and make it a seamless transition, not only for the client coming in, as well as the employer.

“They needed their staff to get forklift licences. So we said that we would pay for the course. They have it at their facility because they’ve got the forklifts, and if any of our job seekers are needing forklift licences that would put them into that as well. So that works really well. We’re going to continue to work on that.

“Term one, we did a getting ready for work programme. The community came together [for that]. At the end of it, we had mock interviews and we had organisations from around town interviewing the youth... The local business people were really impressed and one of those youth secured an apprenticeship in an engineering role. So that was a tick. 12 youth attended and one got his dream job.

“We target the younger generation. So [we] really focus on engaging with schools. We really want the rangatahi, who are going to be our future farmers, seeing what we’re doing across our farms and learning the aspects that we’re looking at to try and improve, you know, whether it’s emissions or soil quality for [the] farmers of the future. So that’s a big focus for us.

“Fonterra and Silver Fern farms are working really hard on relationships and pastoral care. So I know they are working on those things.

MTFJ Whai Mahi (Mayors Taskforce for Jobs)

“Whai Mahi was set up to provide opportunities, employment, and training with our local businesses; those who are seeking employment. We have an open-door policy.

“We have networks with local providers such as MSD, health providers, [and] Iwi. They refer a lot of their people to us, their clients, and then we bring them in, have the conversations around what they’re wanting to do in employment or a career, [and] also provide pathways for training to help them in the employment and career space.

“That’s one of the real advantages of being able to do this away from government agencies really, is that we’re able to look at the whole person. So when somebody comes in, Tina and Alan are able to see all of the issues that need addressing, or need some support.

“We can support them in areas such as financial or if they’re needing their licences, or they’re needing PPE gear to move into work, for the trades. Financial support as well, which is a big barrier for all of our people coming in here. So we’re trying to again, make it a seamless transition, not only for the client coming in, but the employer as well.

“It’s whānau and family, brothers and sisters, who may need work as well, or they might need some help with transport as well. So the wraparound services that we can offer are a bit different, really. [We provide] lots of support, it’s really good. It’s nice to see kids respond to that, where there is a bit more love and less of a number, less of a statistic..

“Some of them come in, especially our rangatahi, they come not knowing where to go or what to do. So it’s having those conversations, putting them around what we have available for them, who are the people we can connect them to, the businesses or industries, and try to provide that pathway for them so they can seamlessly move into those jobs that are available.

“We had a goal last year through [the] Mayors Taskforce for Jobs programme and the Ministry for Social Development to be able to put 50 people into work. Well, we actually achieved 70 here in South Taranaki.

“The pride that they often feel in terms of being one of the few in the family who’s got a full-time job or got some training. It’s a good thing for the whole family. Everybody is proud of that.

“Employers are fabulous. I think there’s a real desire by our local employers to see kids stay here.

“I think that there’s just so much opportunity and feel-good about South Taranaki, and that’s what I really enjoy about it. I think we’ve got a real positive future for us here, that’s for sure.



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

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Theme 16—Many observe that in South Taranaki, despite the availability of numerous jobs across various industries, there is a significant local labour shortage, particularly for skilled workers, leading to increased reliance on out-of-town and immigrant staff. While some employers have raised wages to address these shortages, others continue to offer low pay, despite having high expectations for their workers. Additionally, although remote working is on the rise, securing well-paying jobs outside of traditional industries remains challenging.

Theme 17—In South Taranaki, many perceive the district grapples with significant unemployment where factors such as mandatory drug testing, criminal records, mental health challenges, and benefit dependency hinder many from securing employment. This struggle is believed to contribute to a cycle of intergenerational unemployment for some, making the transition from unemployment to consistent work particularly challenging, despite its transformative potential.

Theme 18—In South Taranaki, many believe that the social sector grapples with high turnover and significant staff shortages, especially of qualified workers. Despite an increasing number of men entering the industry, it remains predominantly female-dominated, a situation some attribute to societal biases and historically low pay in non-government social services. As a result, employees, regardless of gender, tend to gravitate towards higher-paying positions, despite ongoing efforts to achieve greater pay equity.

Good Health & Wellbeing

Theme 19—While some perceive a decline in the stigma surrounding mental health and an increase in awareness, a significant number of people still grapple with conditions such as depression and anxiety. As more people experience trauma and changes in societal and family dynamics, many conditions are seen as becoming more severe and complex. Additionally, some argue that current economic hardships exacerbate these issues and intensify feelings of distress.

Theme 20—Some believe that in South Taranaki, men struggle with a pervasive male culture that discourages expressing emotions, leaving many ill-equipped to handle emotional struggles and often resorting to isolation and substance use as coping mechanisms. Despite the potential benefits of male-to-male support, many men are believed to face substantial hurdles, including the fear of judgement, when seeking the help they need.

Theme 23—While many observe a decline in cigarette smoking, attributed to both high costs and changing societal perceptions that increasingly 'outcast' smokers, there's a noticeable rise in vaping. Although the expense drives some to quit or transition to vaping, others continue to smoke, especially when facing challenges or feeling 'in a negative frame of mind'.

Theme 27—In South Taranaki, despite many organisations offering non-judgmental and confidential support, various challenges, including a lack of awareness, prevalent 'suck it up' attitudes, and feelings of anxiety, shame, and embarrassment, create barriers to accessing help. These challenges are further compounded by the distrust in, and the daunting and disempowering processes within some organisations.

No Poverty

Theme 21—Many believe that South Taranaki has grappled with long-standing socioeconomic challenges, marked by low incomes, high deprivation, and greater inequality among households. A lack of financial literacy, often attributed to inadequate early education, along with debt, is believed to further exacerbate these issues. These accumulating challenges can foster a deep sense of hopelessness, leaving some feeling constrained by their financial circumstances and unable to see a way forward.

Theme 22—As the cost of living rises and incomes stagnate, an increasing number of people are believed to be experiencing food insecurity, with some barely 'keeping their heads above water'. This financial strain is perceived to be leading many to adopt stricter spending habits, rely on foodbanks, and turn to more affordable but lower-quality food options. For those without transportation, these challenges are further exacerbated, as local store options are limited.

Peace Justice & Strong Institutions

Theme 24—While some observe an increase in crime, the small-town nature of South Taranaki is believed to make it easier for the police to identify frequent offenders. However, concerns about a declining police presence and 'half-manned' stations persist. Additionally, although the presence of gangs is noted, they are seen to generally keep to themselves and do not overtly display affiliations in public spaces.

Theme 25—Many believe that drug and alcohol use, particularly of methamphetamine and MDMA, is 'rife' in South Taranaki, leading to devastating downstream issues such as family harm, financial struggles, and food insecurity. When intervention is necessary, some believe accessing addiction support is challenging due to limited resources, overstretched services, and a referral system that hinders immediate care. This is believed to result in insufficient support during critical times and recurring substance use.

Theme 26—Many believe that in South Taranaki, family harm, assault, and abuse, especially in emotional and psychological forms, are prevalent. These challenges, transcending socio-economic backgrounds and genders, are often seen to be linked to financial stress, substance abuse, and intergenerational cycles of violence. And, despite the frequency of these incidents, many still go unreported.

Theme 16

Many observe that in South Taranaki, despite the availability of numerous jobs across various industries, there is a significant local labour shortage, particularly for skilled workers, leading to increased reliance on out-of-town and immigrant staff. While some employers have raised wages to address these shortages, others continue to offer low pay, despite having high expectations for their workers. Additionally, although remote working is on the rise, securing well-paying jobs outside of traditional industries remains challenging.

AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND FISHERIES CONTRIBUTE TO 14.8% OF THE WIDER TARANAKI REGION'S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP), AND MINING CONTRIBUTES TO 10.8%.



Dot Loves Data Community Compass, Economy Pillar.

Strengths

- Some observe that in the district, there are ‘huge amounts of work available,’ with many factories and industries actively seeking workers to address staff shortages.
- There is a belief that the influx of immigrant labour, particularly in the dairy sector, has not only fulfilled workforce needs but also culturally enriched and strengthened rural communities, with notable contributions from Filipino and Fijian Indian communities.
- Some have observed that certain industries in the district have raised their hourly wage, quickly transitioning from being severely understaffed to adequately staffed in a short period of time as a result.
- The COVID-19 pandemic, as observed by some, has opened up opportunities for more people to work remotely in the district, enabling them to retain high-paying jobs elsewhere while residing in the region, bringing economic benefits to the local communities.

“Places like Eco Wise have seen that value, and look, they’ve now got a full quota of staff. They’re doing the job better.”

“We’re getting migrants to cover the shortage in our factories. We’re heavy in factories, Fonterra, ANZCO, and beef exporting... There’s huge amounts of work available if you want it.”

“Well, as much as anything, just the fact that there is a lot of employment here now, there is an awful lot of employment available here.”

“They [Eco Wise] needed 24 staff, and they were working with 12 at times, and it’s just no good. No good for people. It doesn’t get the job done. You end up overworking your staff. So, they’ve gone from being severely understaffed to now full, and that took a month to do.”

“There’s heaps of opportunities for people to live in this region and work remotely now since COVID-19.”

“A lot of my mates have moved back after COVID-19 from the UK and they’ve still got the UK roles and they are earning big bucks.”

“Yes, there is a reliance on immigrant labour, but a lot of those immigrants have brought communities with them as well and actually strengthened rural communities, particularly in the dairy sector.”

“The Filipino community is quite big in Taranaki, and the Fijian Indian community. So this point is positive culturally as well.”

Framework Tags

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Reduced Inequalities

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

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

- Many observe that the district boasts several major employers, which not only contribute directly to employment but also create a trickle-down effect for related sectors. However, some share the perception that the district’s high dependence on these few major employers presents risk, as any potential setbacks or decisions to relocate could have profound impacts.
- Some observe that while many industries across the district offer well-paying employment opportunities, there’s a perception that, due to the mono-skilled nature of these local employers, employees might lack diverse skills for other positions—posing a risk if these industries were to ‘dry up.’

“That provides a lot of employment for people in our community, but also the trickle-down effect for engineering outlets, and trucking outlets, creates a significant impact.”

“We’ve got these few very big employers and a very narrow sphere of activity, so we are highly dependent on them. If one of those decides to pick up and go, we have a problem. It might be unlikely, but Silver Ferns has threatened it in the past.”

“Traditional skill businesses, the likes of Pātea, who previously had mono-skilled industries... based around the meat works, offering singular, large-scale employment that pays well.”

“People continue to do it because it pays really well. But when that employment dries up in these towns, and you don’t have as much in the way of transferable skills.”

Barriers

- Some perceive a significant labour shortage in local industries, leading to a growing dependence on international workers. For some, this situation represents a ‘lost opportunity’ for the locally unemployed population, while others argue that employing international workers is crucial when local employment falls short in filling these gaps.
- Some believe the district is facing a significant shortage of skilled workers, as higher-level jobs that require degrees are rarely filled locally, attributed to a lack of qualified candidates in the area.
- Many observe a significant number of workers commuting from outside the district to local industries, with speculation that these workers are earning locally but spending outside the district. This perception raises concerns that the local economy might be missing out on the benefits from these out-of-town workers.
- Some believe that there is a limited variety of alternative and well-paying employment opportunities outside predominant sectors like farming and industry within the district.
- Some in the community observe that the prevalence of short-term and shift work in the district poses significant challenges for families, as the irregular and demanding nature of these jobs can lead to instability and disruption in family life.
- Some local employers are perceived to have high expectations of their employees regarding qualifications and job responsibilities, while offering only minimum wage, highlighting a potential imbalance between requirements and compensation.

- Some believe that long-term employees in smaller businesses may not experience frequent income increases, as they are often unaware of current national pay standards. This contrasts with more transient employees who bring pay expectations from previous jobs.

“Employers want people to come in with all the qualifications in the world. They don’t want to train them, pay to train them, and they want to pay them less and as little money as possible. That’s got to change!”

“We’ve got high unemployment, we still have people that we can put into jobs and train that are New Zealanders, and more specifically, New Zealand Māori. It’s such a lost opportunity if we don’t do it now.”

“Not only do we have Fonterra, we have Silver Fern Farms. We get a lot of workers from the islands because local people don’t apply for the jobs down there... It’s sad. Is it just [that] people don’t want to work in these places or it’s just not the right job for them?”

“The problem is we have all the workers coming into Eltham for work... because the people that can’t afford to live anywhere else live in our community, and those that actually are working in the jobs in our community take the money out.”

“They don’t spend that money here because they work 12 hours a day, they work shift work, and they are out of town. So that money just goes straight back to New Plymouth, and we don’t see it. We don’t benefit from it. That’s one of the peculiarities of South Taranaki that we have to live with.”

“The industry is down there. So, there are not a whole lot of corporate jobs, where you’re making money through investments and banking. It’s all through production. At least a lot of it is through production, which really only pays so much.”

“Most businesses, you see them advertising for positions, and it’s like, are you serious? You’re asking somebody that, and you’re gonna pay the minimum wage? We still see ads in the paper between \$20 and \$25 an hour. \$20 isn’t even minimum wage.”

“Because a lot of businesses stay small, they don’t see that need to increase [incomes]. Because they’ve had stable staff, those pay rises are slow to be actioned. Whereas, if you have people coming into a new position, they’ll bring with them, “oh, well, this is how much I was getting in my last job,” so therefore we need to match that. Whereas, if you have young guys who have been in the same job for 16 years, they don’t realise that the normal [income] for their job has actually increased even more than what they’ve been getting.”

“For the staff that have stayed a long time in their job, and that’s the majority of workers, their rate of pay is not being kept up to date with what’s happening on a national level.”

“Majority of our work is shift work. When you’re doing shift work, it’s not a good environment, especially if you’ve got mum and dad working. It’s not a good environment for families, for the interaction of families. The families that I’ve worked with, I think it actually drives separating them.”

“Regional Council, District Council, there’s always these environmental, waste management jobs that all require degrees and they are all very seldom sourced locally.”

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

- Many perceive that obtaining employment in the district is often based on personal connections rather than one’s skills or capabilities, suggesting that sometimes it’s ‘who you know, not what you know.’

“When I think about it, [in] some of the bigger industries, it’s never about what you can do, it’s about who you know, to get in. Once you’re in, you’re in.”

“It’s not what you know, it’s who you know in South Taranaki.”

“I know there’s a process to follow, but there’s still a backyard, shoulder tapping, and all of that relationship, that’s built on people getting jobs in places that are usually hard. It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.”

Theme 17

In South Taranaki, many perceive the district grapples with significant unemployment where factors such as mandatory drug testing, criminal records, mental health challenges, and benefit dependency hinder many from securing employment. This struggle is believed to contribute to a cycle of intergenerational unemployment for some, making the transition from unemployment to consistent work particularly challenging, despite its transformative potential.

Strengths

- Some believe that transitioning from unemployment to employment can be ‘absolutely transformative,’ enriching both individual and household wellbeing. With employment comes a renewed sense of purpose and, alongside a boost in income, it ensures access to essentials such as healthcare, food, and internet.
- Some note that there’s a distinct sense of pride among people who secure full-time employment, particularly when they are the only ones within their family with such an achievement.
- It is believed that some potential employees demonstrate considerable honesty during interviews, especially regarding pre-employment drug testing, by admitting to drug use before proceeding, which aids in streamlining the hiring process.

“I just about cried because he got to this place where he was strong enough to articulate and value himself and get a better job for himself. I’m exiting him as we speak because it’s now been six months. He’s thriving. I talked to the employer on Friday and they love him... He’s working. He’s proving himself. He’s contributing to his family [and] doing better things. Life is better.”

“When somebody goes from not being employed at all, to having a well-paid job, it is absolutely transformative for their household. They actually can have a real meal. That’s number one. Number two is being able to have food, power, all those utilities that they haven’t been able to have, including phone and internet, which other people take for granted.”

“I mean, that’s the thing, the pride that they often feel, in terms of being one of the few in the family who’s got a full-time job, or got some training, even real basic things like getting their boots, just really cool to see.”

“We’ve certainly found people pretty honest. That’s certainly a question we ask, we say ‘we do pre-employment drug testing, is that going to be an issue?’ and often people say ‘yeah, that will be’. So they are pretty honest and we can stop it right there.”

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

- While some note that nurturing the growth of people with employment barriers can be demanding, it can lead to notable development and the emergence of exceptional individuals.

“We see that as being a bit of a reciprocal thing really, if we can help to grow someone’s confidence in the workplace, then we’ve really added value to that person, and to the organisation, but it’s very hard work.”

“So looking after and growing those people is hard work. It’s not easy. But the diamonds that come out of that pressure process are beautiful, amazing people.”

Framework Tags



Barriers

- Especially in more rural areas like Eltham, Manaia, and Pātea, it is observed that there is a noticeable prevalence of unemployment, with many people not actively engaged in work or seeking employment for various reasons
- Some observe a multi-generational pattern of unemployment across the district, where families, spanning second and third generations, appear content with unemployment and benefit reliance. This seems to have downstream influences on youth, whose aspirations appear to be directed towards a similar path.
- Some believe that the closure of Pātea’s primary industry, the freezing works, has contributed significantly to the township’s widespread unemployment and lingering intergenerational unemployment.
- There is a perception that, despite available job opportunities in the district, some residents lack the motivation to seek employment, instead favouring the comfort of relaxing at home.
- Many believe that some people prefer being on benefits over seeking employment due to its predictability and consistency, allowing them to maintain their lifestyles without interruption. Additionally, there’s a perception that the government might unintentionally make choosing benefits more appealing than work due to its ease.
- It is widely believed that gaining employment, especially low-earning or part-time roles, may offer minimal financial advantages or even be disadvantageous compared to receiving benefits, particularly when considering the added costs associated with working, such as transportation, food, and childcare.
- Some believe that moving from long-term unemployment to employment is ‘scary’ for many who have received long-standing and consistent government support. This change is believed to bring about uncertainties around income and potential changes to support benefits, like housing.
- Some observe that certain workers have lost confidence and hope due to the impacts of COVID-19. With some unable to get vaccinated, their return to the workforce has become notably challenging, leading a few to explore new career directions.
- After an extended period of unemployment, some believe that individuals can find it challenging to adapt to the demands of consistent employment, often struggling to ‘hold down a job.’
- Some believe mandatory drug testing can be a significant obstacle to gaining employment for many in the district, as many major employers require these tests, which are considered essential for ensuring workplace safety and maintaining business reputations.

- Some perceive that strict policies regarding criminal history, including past high-risk offences, present barriers for people seeking employment, as these policies can be inflexible and influenced by decisions made at higher organisational levels.
- Some observe that transportation issues, marked by limited public transport, the absence of driver's licences, and lack of personal vehicles, have considerable ripple effects on employment across the district.
- Some believe that many specialist mental health services adopt an approach of waiting for someone to 'get better' before engaging them in work, potentially diminishing their chances of improvement and limiting them to day services. Some argue that these people don't need to be fully 'well' to be considered work-ready.

"We have more jobs available per capita in New Zealand than [any] other place. But that's not necessarily ideal for those in Eltham. You'd think it would be, but it's not. They are either on drugs, so Fonterra, the Meatworks, and Cheese factory won't have them, or they don't care.

"People don't pass drug tests. Simple. If you talk to employers about it, you'll hear that they just can't get people to pass drug tests.

"I believe the struggle to find work due to factors like mandatory drug testing, but it is actually a good thing that they brought in drug testing because otherwise, those people would just take their issues with them to another job.

"We've got to remember that these businesses are businesses and they've got reputations. Some of the things, particularly on farms or in factories that you're doing, if that's not done right, that could cause further harm down the supply chain. If something goes wrong at Fonterra, for example, and then all of a sudden infant formula has got the wrong powder in it. It's a massive issue and that's why these organisations have to take these seriously.

"In our rohe, if I look at Pātea, there are a lot of people who aren't working. I am just like scanning my family while I'm thinking. There are a lot of people not working.

"I was standing in WINZ... reading the list of all the jobs available in South Taranaki. There must have been about 30 and they weren't all requiring qualifications... So the jobs are there. We just have lazy people in our community.

"Why go to work when I can just stay at home and relax, there is that bit of attitude here.

"You repeat the cycle, the cycle repeats. So in terms of being on a benefit, that repeats and then it repeats to the next generation, that's my experience anyway.

"The people in Eltham are happy to be unemployed, they are second, third generation. They know how to work the system.

"When it closed, there was huge trauma. There was a complete lack of capacity for people to cope and find a new path for themselves, and it's taken multiple generations to change it.

"In Pātea, the primary industry was the freezing works, which closed in the late 80s and of course, hundreds of people lost their jobs... We had a really high level of unemployment for a long time and there is just, kind of, this learned helplessness which is intergenerational unemployment.

"Some are quite content to stay on a benefit because it's consistent, they know what's coming in. They rely on that, and the lifestyle, with no interruptions, so you know for some it probably is just that predictable income.

"The government allows us to not push ourselves, [not] to look at opportunities to work, [because] we can take the, maybe not the better option, but the easier option.

"If you start going into a pay scale, where actually you're not getting any support, you're actually at a disadvantage more than those who are getting government support funding.

"Then you have added costs onto that which are your travel costs, your grocery because you have to change the way you do your meals, and of course childcare. It almost costs them more to work, than to not work.

"So making sure that transition is good is important for us. If we don't get it right and they get wobbly, because the income isn't the same or there's a variation from one week to the next.

"Some of them are in Housing New Zealand homes, so that once they start getting an income that automatically affects that, so it's quite a scary kind of process for them; going from being on MSD payments to working.

"Long term unemployed can't cope once they get a job with getting up and the consistency of holding down a job.

"A lot of the farm jobs around here too, you need transport and there is no bus service around here that people can get to work.

"Travel is a huge problem in South Taranaki and has a huge flow-on effect with employment. A lot of it is transportation. A lot of them don't have cars or don't have licences. They just get around somehow. I don't actually know how they get around.

"The problem with the approach of going 'one day when you're better you can' is that by ensuring somebody stays unemployed, we reduce the chances of somebody being one day better, rather than improving them.

"This has led to services over the years, particularly in specialist mental health services, where people are in day services which have been consigned. It can be really, really tragic to meet somebody who's in their 50s or 60s who has spent most of their life in a day service.

"I have a teacher, two registered nurses, and an engineer that had all lost their confidence and hope due to COVID-19. So they're struggling to get back into the workforce.

"Some of them couldn't have the vaccinations due to health conditions. These are people that have been in the career that they've loved for all these years and not being able to go back into that and then having to seek a new direction. So that was a bit of an eye-opener for me as well. These kinds of factors that you may not consider.

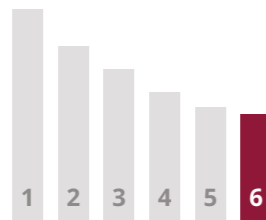
"There is a seven-year clean slate, but if he's done a burglary or an armed robbery 15 years ago, there's a lot of things that don't come with a clean slate and they're generally the higher-end risk factors.

"Sometimes they're governed by someone higher up that then set this policy that no, we're not going to accept anyone.

IN THE TARANAKI REGION, THE BENEFIT DEPENDENCY RATE RANKS 6TH HIGHEST AMONG NEW ZEALAND'S 16 REGIONS, WITH 11.5% OF THE WORKING-AGE POPULATION RECEIVING GOVERNMENT BENEFITS. IN SOUTH TARANAKI, THIS RATE IS EVEN HIGHER, WITH 13.8% OF THE WORKING-AGE POPULATION RECEIVING GOVERNMENT BENEFITS, THE HIGHEST IN THE REGION.

Toi Foundation, Regional Research Report, 2021.

6TH HIGHEST BENEFIT DEPENDENCY

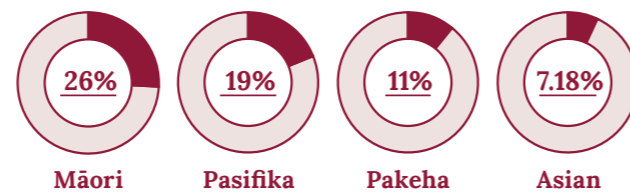


IN SOUTH TARANAKI, 7.8% OF PEOPLE RECEIVE JOBSEEKER SUPPORT, WHILE 10.5% RECEIVE EITHER MEANS TESTED OR SINGLE PARENT SUPPORT BENEFITS, BOTH OF WHICH SURPASS THE NATIONAL AVERAGES OF 1.6% AND 3.08%.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 16: Safety & Inclusivity, Ministry of Social and Development, Benefit Fact Sheets.



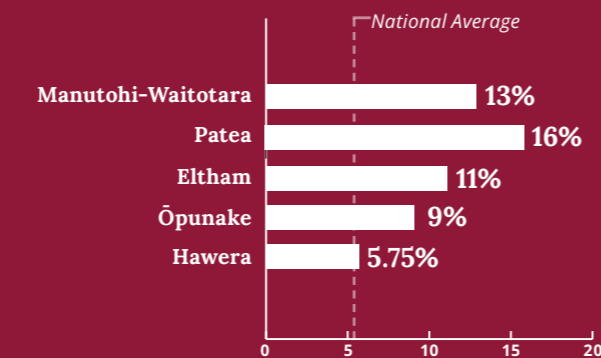
IN SOUTH TARANAKI, 26% OF MĀORI, 19% OF PASIFIKA, 11% OF PAKEHA, AND 7.18% OF ASIANS ARE UNEMPLOYED AND RECEIVING SOME FORM OF BENEFIT.



Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 1, Reduce Poverty

THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE AGED 18-64 RECEIVING JOB SEEKER SUPPORT BENEFITS VARIES ACROSS REGIONS. IN MANUTOHI-WAITOTARA (INCLUDES WAVERLEY), 13% OF THE POPULATION FALLS INTO THIS CATEGORY, FOLLOWED BY 16% IN PATEA, 11% IN ELTHAM, 9% IN ŌPUNAKE, AND 5.75% IN HĀWERA. THIS IS COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 5.5%.

Ministry of Social Development, Benefits Fact Sheet.



Opportunities

- Ensuring a smooth transition period into employment to prevent long-term unemployed people from feeling overwhelmed and discontinuing work.
- Prioritising early employment intervention to prevent issues before they arise, focusing not only on placing people into employment but also on preventing them from becoming statistics of unemployment.
- Providing comprehensive pastoral and wrap-around care to help people become work-ready by improving their personal appearance, boosting their confidence and ensuring they have the essential resources and skills needed for employment success.
- Transitioning from a train-then-place approach to placing people into employment first and then providing training to get them into paid roles as quickly as possible and enhance their overall quality of life.
- Promoting the idea of second chances by encouraging employers to overlook past criminal records and mental health issues.

“I think that as far as people with criminal records, I believe that everybody should be allowed to have a second chance, they shouldn't be judged. Same with mental health. They shouldn't be judged on past experiences. Everyone deserves a second chance, and that and I think some employers still sit in that judgmental role.”

- “I always allow for a three-month transition. I always say to the case managers, please don't just flip them straight off right now. Give them this chance to transition. Because I've had a couple of clients just go 'actually I'm not going to work because it was too hard for me.'”*
- “It's really important for us to get that transition right because some of them have been unemployed for quite a while.*”
- “There is a lot of pastoral care. So being able to identify that one of the clients that came to me was very poorly presented. So, I had that conversation with him about improving his personal appearance to be more employable, to be marketable to be employed.*”
- “For young people, everyone is different, so it's all very well saying 'oh you know I can give you a job' and you go off into a job. But actually, [asking] have you got a licence to get there? Have you got the tools you need for it? So through Whai Mahi, we're able to resource and support all those things in an ongoing way.*”
- “We have an urgency to support people into paid employment with all of the benefits that come with being employed, the income, all the different impacts on my life, my whānau and their life, my sense of community, my choices, all of the things that can support me.*”
- “It's about the evidence and the approach being to support people into real jobs for real pay as quickly as possible. That was the opposite of what we used to do many years ago, which is 'one day when you're better you can'.*”
- “As much as it's about placing young ones into employment, it's also about prevention of them becoming that unemployment statistic.*”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Ngaa Rauru, Jobs for Nature - provides support to both employers and employees, addressing concerns about mental health in the workplace. They intervene during mental health crises, assisting employees to ensure they retain their positions.
- Workwise - commits to preparing and placing people into employment within 28 days, emphasising immediate action over waiting 'until they are better.'
- Workwise - delivers comprehensive wrap-around support to ensure that newly employed people with mental health challenges can thrive in the workplace. This includes offering continued guidance for up to six months. (Work Wise, n.d.).^[17]
- Workwise - provides Individual Placement Support (IPS), a proven approach that assists people with serious mental illness in re-entering the workforce. By integrating employment support with clinical mental health teams, they offer cohesive assistance through collaboration for comprehensive support.
- Workwise - provides support to both employers and employees, addressing concerns about mental health in the workplace. They intervene during mental health crises, assisting employees to ensure they retain their positions.
- Workwise - offers training opportunities, such as obtaining a first aid certificate, with the ultimate goal of guiding people towards and into meaningful employment.

"This is where we differ from the other employment services you'll see out there with work and income. Our employment consultants will sit within the clinical mental health team, three or four days a week, and are part of the whole service delivery, and then still come back out to be supported with and connect with our organisation in the community.

"We're very fortunate that we can upskill, they can do vocational training. Little things like a first aid certificate, like 'oh my gosh, I can go get a first aid certificate?' Yes, you can. Those are small gains.

"The big gains are getting into meaningful employment, they come and they want to have a decent job. So to be able to foster and nurture that and help you get there is really rewarding for me but also just so great for them.

"Within the first 28 days, we'll complete all the preparation stuff... All of that is going to happen in less than 28 days before we embark on [an] active job search because we're going to get started when somebody's interested, and we will place them into employment as quickly as possible.

"While they're in the crisis, we can start talking to the employer on their behalf. But showing them what is possible, because often they think 'I'm just going to lose my job' and it just adds to the horribleness of what they're going through. So we come in quickly, and support them to keep their work.

"The second contract we've got here is Jobs for Nature. That was a COVID contract. People who were displaced during COVID, putting them into work and growing that capability and capacity of those working teams.

"We have an urgency to support people into paid employment with all of the benefits that come with being employed, the income, all the different impacts on my life, my whānau and their life, my sense of community, my choices, all of the things that can support me.

Workshop participant

Theme 18

In South Taranaki, many believe that the social sector grapples with high turnover and significant staff shortages, especially of qualified workers. Despite an increasing number of men entering the industry, it remains predominantly female-dominated, a situation some attribute to societal biases and historically low pay in non-government social services. As a result, employees, regardless of gender, tend to gravitate towards higher-paying positions, despite ongoing efforts to achieve greater pay equity.

Strengths

- Some perceive that the move towards pay equality in the social sector, especially with MSD and Oranga Tamariki (OT) contracts, is a positive development, leading to better retention of registered staff in non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
- Some observe that while certain organisations within the social sector might not be able to offer competitive pay, they prioritise nurturing a supportive environment, ensuring the wellbeing of their staff so that they don't burn out.

“We are constantly watching each other and supporting each other, and we do it outside of the organisation. Every weekend we check on each other. That’s going to be so important in terms of longevity because there’s two sides: us being able to give to the community, and making sure that we are whole.”

“One thing that is becoming a positive now is the pay equality that is starting to be rolled out. So a lot of our MSD and Oranga Tamariki contracts are now rolling out funding to actually pay a social worker because now a social worker is a registered title.”

“But also, how do we attract and retain staff? We can’t pay what OT pays, so we have to provide the best environment.”

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

- While some notice that the social sector is largely female-dominated, others report an increasing number of males entering the field.

“Working in social services, it’s still so much predominantly female. We have a lot more men coming in. I think that’s really good.”

“I was just at a wananga, and it was the first time they had 11 males participate in that course, so it’s sort of the same sector. Perhaps there may be a change, a swing. That was kind of cool to see.”

Framework Tags

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Good Health & Wellbeing

Gender Equality

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Barriers

- Many perceive a significant shortage of qualified social and support workers, particularly in mental health, aged care, disability, and drug and alcohol support. This shortage is attributed to the impacts of COVID-19, including overseas workers returning home and vaccination hesitancy, compounded by an ageing workforce, and historically low pay in care and support-related roles.
- Some believe that recruiting male workers in the care industry is challenging, with some attributing this to past events that have impacted men's willingness and perception of working in this sector.
- Some observe a 'double-edged' perception where societal views position women primarily in caring and support roles, while simultaneously creating an expectation for men to be in sectors like oil, gas, and construction.
- Some believe that traditionally male-dominated industries, such as farming and gas, often offer higher wages compared to traditionally female-dominated sectors, which is thought to further discourage some men from pursuing careers in the social sector.
- Some note that many social workers are leaning towards government agencies over non-profit positions due to seemingly substantial pay differences, even though non-profits provide critical services on the ground.

- Some believe that employment in the rural support sector frequently faces instability due to uncertain job durations; as the needs of clients in the district change or conclude, some note that the job availability tends to decline.
- Some are noticing a high-turnover of staff rate within some social service organisations, suggesting either challenges within the job itself or in the public perception of the work.
- Some express concerns that some support workers occasionally go beyond their position's mandate boundaries, venturing into areas like counselling or therapy, instead of maintaining their main duty as connectors.

“Most jobs have got some longevity. One person may have very high needs, but that person then moves into a rest home or passes away, then there is no more work, because there are no more people in that region.”

“Basically, the sector is just under-resourced, part of this comes from migrants who previously would have done some roles, [then they] went back home during COVID. Some resulted from COVID when people didn't want to be vaccinated. Some has come from people ageing out of the workforce, and also the fact that generally, the aged care, disability support workforce, has not been well paid.”

“[That] service, who are the biggest employer of supporting people with intellectual disabilities, employed 900 staff across the sector last year, and only 140 stayed. So there's something wrong there, isn't there? People are leaving quite quickly. So there's something wrong in the way that that work is viewed or how people think that the work is going to be.”

“We struggle with recruitment for male support workers. There’s probably more detail into why that is the case. It’s probably to do with issues that have come up for men, working in the care industry when things have happened.

“In South Taranaki, we have big employers, Fonterra is a huge employer, the gas industry, farming, meatworks, there are big employers that pay a lot more than the caring industry.

“That’s your classic double-bladed sexism. Again, women are seen to be in caring roles, support roles, etc. The double-bladed part would mean that men don’t feel like they can, instead they need to be in oil, gas, and construction.

“A lot of social workers left NGOs and went to government agencies because government agencies paid a lot more than what NGOs do... yet there are a lot more NGOs on the ground doing the mahi and [they are] not paid to what government agencies are.

“One of the issues is boundaries. Support workers have a tendency to go beyond their mandate, their boundaries.

“The issues in the rural sector are not new. That has been an issue since I started, and it’s because you don’t have a guaranteed number of hours for people to work from now and forever.

Opportunities

- Overcoming gender biases in support and care industries where male support staff are rare.
- Mitigating risks when males support females in the care industry to ensure men are not placed in positions where inaccurate allegations can arise.

“It doesn’t matter what gender you are. If you’ve got the drive and you want to do it, then we need to get past some of those biases.

“It’s not that the male is the problem, it’s if any allegations are made, it is completely different for a woman. We have to make sure we are supporting any male staff, to not put them in a position where that sort of thing can happen.

“We are constantly watching each other and supporting each other, and we do it outside of the organisation. Every weekend we check on each other. That’s going to be so important in terms of longevity because there’s two sides: us being able to give to the community, and making sure that we are whole.

Workshop participant

Theme 19

While some perceive a decline in the stigma surrounding mental health and an increase in awareness, a significant number of people still grapple with conditions such as depression and anxiety. As more people experience trauma and changes in societal and family dynamics, many conditions are seen as becoming more severe and complex. Additionally, some argue that current economic hardships exacerbate these issues and intensify feelings of distress.

Strengths

- Some believe that younger families are more receptive to engaging in healthy discourse about emotions and wellbeing.
- Some observe that children are actively teaching their parents about emotional wellbeing and breathing techniques, highlighting a role reversal where parents are learning from their kids about self-regulation.

“I see a lot of younger families, so younger than millennials, quite open to being engaged with healthy discourse about emotions, and wellbeing.”

“It’s quite funny. I’ve heard lots of kids teaching their parents, because the kids are learning about emotional wellbeing and health, how to breathe properly and take time during their tantrums to self-regulate.”

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

- While some perceive that the stigma surrounding common mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety has improved, there’s a sense that severe mental illnesses, like psychosis or borderline personality disorder, are still largely misunderstood and carry significant stigma.

“In the clinical sense, the mild to moderate mental health conditions, like the everyday stuff, depression, and anxiety, then certain diagnoses like ADHD, Autism... those I think are more [accepted], but it’s almost like the reverse is happening. Where I don’t think it’s moved, is still the more severe mental illness stuff, where people with mental illness are seen as still quite further removed. Which I think is a shame.”

Barriers

- Many believe many people grapple with mental health challenges across the district, particularly depression, and anxiety, with some suggesting that these challenges are more prevalent than some might expect, especially when compared to North Taranaki.
- It is perceived by some that mental health challenges in the district are more prevalent than official data shows, with feelings of shame, denial, and inadequate access to care causing many issues to remain unreported and untreated ‘behind closed doors’.
- Some observe that a significant number of people throughout the district bear histories of intergenerational trauma and, often, some form of abuse, more so than in other areas of the region. While trauma is seen as a major contributor to suicide in the district, there is a belief that inadequate care and nurturing during early childhood are at the heart of the problem.
- Some believe that damage to attachment during formative years can significantly impact a person later in life, particularly in their self-esteem and their ability to cope with challenges. This lack of healthy attachment might hinder some from recognising their own strengths and developing skills to self-soothe during distressing situations.
- There is a belief that due to the perceived economic downturn and rising cost of living, there’s increased pressure on residents’ mental health, even among those not previously deemed predisposed to distress.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

No Poverty

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- Some mental health professionals believe that, due to the growing complexity in mental health and family dynamics, traditional methods of support, such as offering a cup of tea and a chat, are no longer adequate. As a result, some argue, there is a greater need for trained social workers to address these multifaceted challenges.
- Some believe that while support workers provide valuable assistance, they can sometimes struggle with more complex mental health referrals.

“The days of cup of tea support, which we still do, are over, as things are more complex.”

“I’m seeing mainly depression and anxiety. Definitely a lot of depression and it wouldn’t take people much to have some issues.”

“It [mental health rates] would be on the high side of people getting support or having an issue. Because based on the population our referrals shouldn’t be that high in South Taranaki compared to North.”

“Mental health is a little bit higher than what is presented in figures. Not everyone is coming forward as they feel shame to say ‘I’ve got problems’.”

“[Access to mental health] is lower than it really is because mental health support in South Taranaki is not as good as other areas. Although there are some services, there [is] probably more [mental health] behind closed doors than being measured.”

“But the thing is that when it comes to mental health, even myself as a registered social worker, we’re doing counselling and there is only so much that I can do to assist them because they actually need that more expertise. I’m only going by the different levels of experience that I’ve had over my 20 years, but I’m not an experienced mental health clinician.”

“When we’ve had support workers, and this might be just in our experience, they do great support but then they’ll occasionally get a referral that’s got a bit more complexity to it and more risk, and they seem to get stuck.”

“I feel like South Taranaki families compared to maybe the rest of the region experience more intergenerational trauma, abuse, for instance.”

“The essence of the truth of the matter is that we haven’t taken enough care of our children, and kept them safe enough. I’m already sad to say, and that is the heart of it.”

“If formative years, in particular, have involved really any significant degree of attachment damage, then we won’t necessarily have developed those self-soothing skills to the same level.”

“I mean, there’s the whole epidemic with the rural sector. You know, with the downturn in the economy and all of that, that puts pressure on people that potentially weren’t needing mental health services that now are.”

Opportunities

- Supporting people to be the ‘ambulance at the top of their own cliff,’ by undertaking simple steps to enhance their mental health and wellbeing.

“We worked through the five ways to wellbeing, brainstorming ways that they could be the ambulance at the top of their own cliff and really helped them, in terms of giving them ideas, giving them that hope and empowering them.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Bernados - offers early learning services to all under-fives, to create strong foundations for children's educational and life outcomes. (Bernados, n.d.).^[18]
- FAX Programme - provides caregiver training support so that family members can better understand and navigate the challenges of living with people who experience emotional dysregulation. (Pathways, n.d.).^[19]
- Pathways - provides a range of community-based services to support people in shaping their own futures and achieving their goals and dreams. This includes mobile support, wellbeing respite, addiction and recovery services, and youth services.
- Taranaki Retreat - a suicide prevention and postvention initiative providing support through a residential retreat and community outreach programme. It offers a community sanctuary, providing time-out space for families and individuals to stay, free of charge, when times are tough. (Healthpoint, n.d.).^[20]
- Taranaki Retreat - noted by some for its dedicated support workers in Eltham, Ōpunake, and Manaia, who, under regular mentorship, engage in group supervision as part of their roles. This commitment is evident as team members frequently travel within South Taranaki, integrating these journeys into their routine responsibilities.
- Te Ara Pae Trust - a not-for-profit organisation that provides counselling to individuals and whānau affected by family and sexual violence. (Te Ara Pae, n.d.).^[21]
- Yellow Brick Road - walks alongside any family in New Zealand that needs support, knowledge, advocacy, and empowerment as they journey towards mental wellbeing. (Yellow Brick Road, n.d.).^[22]

"We have support workers in each of the places we've just named [Eltham, Ōpunake, and Manaia], and we mentor those people for group supervision regularly. Each member of our team has roles that take them back and forth from South Taranaki all the time, which are built into what we do, so that we do bother making the journeys constantly. There's a new programme called FAX which is caregiver training support, but is for family members of people with emotion dysregulation. It's around understanding them, why do they emotionally flood so easily? How can you and your environment navigate that and help them with that?"

"The essence of the truth of the matter is that we haven't taken enough care of our children, and kept them safe enough. I'm already sad to say, and that is the heart of it."

Workshop participant

Theme 20

Some believe that in South Taranaki, men struggle with a pervasive male culture that discourages expressing emotions, leaving many ill-equipped to handle emotional struggles and often resorting to isolation and substance use as coping mechanisms. Despite the potential benefits of male-to-male support, many men are believed to face substantial hurdles, including the fear of judgement, when seeking the help they need.

Strengths

- Some believe that some men are willing to challenge misogynistic perspectives, such as those surrounding stay-at-home dads, fostering supportive and healthy conversations with respect for differing opinions.
- Some observe that in the care and social sector, having male support workers can create a more comfortable environment for male clients, particularly young men, who are seen to benefit from the distinct male-to-male dynamic, which differs markedly from support received from female workers.

“It is true when they say that men will just get on, they’re not talking so much. I guess it’s just feeling comfortable, having a male-to-male support. It makes a difference.”

“I think culturally as well, for particularly rangatahi, they gravitate more to male role models as well.”

“One of the dads is like ‘there’s no shame in being the stay-at-home dad, bro’. So that was really nice, knowing that men back up their women, that’s what I’m trying to say. Not everyone has that misogynistic view of looking after their children.”

“These men were able to say to this man, ‘I respect your opinion, but I politely disagree’. So just knowing that those are the conversations that were coming out of the group was awesome.”

Barriers

- Some believe that a ‘harmful’ male culture has evolved over generations, particularly pronounced in rural regions, where hiding emotions is often regarded as a ‘badge of honour,’ and showing vulnerability is perceived as a sign of weakness.
- Some believe that these cultural norms have contributed to a gender that is ill-prepared and equipped with inadequate coping mechanisms to manage distress and emotions.
- Some observe that some men in the district turn to substance abuse as a coping mechanism for stress and frustration, often due to a lack of emotional expression skills and support in managing life’s challenges.
- It is believed that in challenging times, there’s a tendency among some men, particularly in rural areas, to isolate themselves, avoiding social interactions until they feel better, due to a perception that showing vulnerability or distress is not acceptable.
- Many believe it is common for men to face significant barriers in seeking help, as they often fear embarrassment and judgement, which is compounded by the frustration of being turned away due to limited services.

“Rural, I would argue, is a lot worse than urban. It’s like a badge of honour to not complain, not have any issues, not talk about feelings.”

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Gender Equality

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Opportunities

- Increasing access to male support networks and counselling to address the long-standing need for male-to-male support within the community.
- Ensuring parents allow children to express their emotions freely and be ‘whatever they want to be’ without the constraints of traditional gender roles.

“A lot of men want a male to engage with rather than a female and it’s something that our community has needed for a very long time.”

“A lot of our clients come from community probation. So we have men that have come from broken homes, have been in Oranga Tamariki as a child, and have been subjected to quite a lot of physical and emotional abuse. So having that male counsellor that has lived experience [is important].”

“It’s about changing the way that we parent, our children, boys and girls, so that they can be whatever they want to be. That it’s ok if they cry, male or female... because it’s a human emotion.”

“We, over the generations, have raised our men to be tough and strong and that they can’t show their emotions. Because if they do that, it’s a sign of weakness. But it’s not. It’s a sign of being human. Coupled with that, we have developed a culture, a male culture, which is harmful. We haven’t yet got to the point where we have really re-imagined what that might look like.”

“We have a whole gender which is a bit lost, and not equipped to deal very well with distress.”

“That’s why a lot of our men that I have worked with over the years have said they turned to alcohol or drugs to cope with some of those stressors.”

“Once you’ve got those substances in your system, then that boils over to the anger, because they’re frustrated. They don’t know how to express their emotions because they’ve never been taught or have been told to suck it up.”

“For me personally, if I don’t feel good, I isolate. I don’t go around people, I isolate. That’s the trouble.”

“That’s definitely a male thing, you know, until they get a couple of beers under [their] belt, they don’t want to say anything. They think because they are on the farm, no one will see if they are upset or if things go wrong they just hide it in themselves.”

“Asking for help or showing emotion for men is hard, we have a lot of men that do, but there’s just so much more that could be done to enable our men to have a better understanding of their emotional wellbeing.”

“Probably the biggest thing that stops men from getting the help that we need, is that we are terminally afraid of embarrassment, and looking weak, and being judged really as a huge fear. We’re terrified of being judged.”

“For a man to come through a door and ask for help and feel vulnerable, is massive.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Salvation Army Men's Breakfast - a monthly gathering where men cook and share breakfast, engage in prayer, and participate in a devotional session to foster spiritual growth and community bonding.
- South Taranaki Whānau Centre - offers a supportive environment for male sexual abuse survivors.
- Te Ara Pae Trust - initiated a series of workshops led by volunteers to provide a space for men to engage in meaningful conversations together.
- Whānau Centre - employs a male counsellor, to conduct workshops aimed at helping men understand and manage their emotional wellbeing, with a significant focus on learning about anger.

"We also have a dedicated tāne counsellor that works with me, rather than putting a negative spin on it, we don't call it anger management. We call it our everyday learning to cope with everyday emotional wellbeing because anger is a natural emotion.

"I still think that there's still a lot more driven female support than there is for men. So having a male counsellor come on board at the end of last year has been a real positive thing. Not only for us as a centre but for our community as well. That there is a place that men can come in, feel free to talk about things without having a financial component to it.

"We do have in South Taranaki now a group for male sexual survivors. So we have a men's group going in.

"The other thought was that there was nowhere for men to go. So it was easier to withdraw the man from a very volatile situation, the police would just drop them in a bus stop or a bus shelter. So we set up a place for men, and we could wrap services around them as well.

"We're going to have evening opportunities for men to have their kōrero together. Gordon is going to drive that.

"Men's breakfast is a little bit more spiritual. The men will come together and make breakfast together. They have prayer and a word, or devotion and then share together. They do that once a month.

"Probably the biggest thing that stops men from getting the help that we need, is that we are terminally afraid of embarrassment, and looking weak, and being judged really as a huge fear. We're terrified of being judged.

Workshop participant

Theme 21

Many believe that South Taranaki has grappled with long-standing socioeconomic challenges, marked by low incomes, high deprivation, and greater inequality among households. A lack of financial literacy, often attributed to inadequate early education, along with debt, is believed to further exacerbate these issues. These accumulating challenges can foster a deep sense of hopelessness, leaving some feeling constrained by their financial circumstances and unable to see a way forward.

Barriers

- Many observe that the district has a long-standing history of socioeconomic struggles, with numerous families believed to be 'living on the edge of poverty,' and noticeable signs of deprivation, especially in the more southern parts of South Taranaki.
- Some perceive the district as having more pronounced economic inequality, with a clear divide between those who are economically well-off and those experiencing poverty. This disparity seems more evident when contrasted with North Taranaki, where economic differences appear less noticeable.
- There is a belief that those in benefit-dependent situations face substantial constraints, especially regarding food and housing, due to their limited incomes, leaving many with little control over their lives or ability to better their circumstances.
- Some people express the sentiment of feeling stuck in a financial loop where savings are minimal and easily depleted by unexpected expenses. Combined with rising living costs, this cycle leads some to believe that 'getting anywhere' is increasingly challenging.
- Some observe that a significant number of people within the district are living paycheck to paycheck, largely due to substantial credit card debt and a lack of financial literacy.
- Some believe that people grappling with mounting personal debts often feel overwhelmed and defeated, leading to feelings of hopelessness and depression, where they are unable to envision a way forward.

- Despite the underlying assumption that most people naturally know how to manage their money, many are believed to lack essential financial management skills, attributed to a lack of early education by families and schools.

"Some people don't want to be in their mouldy [home], but they can't control that. Landlords don't do anything, they can't afford to move out, they can't find a home to move into. Their children go to school, they don't have any food, they can't control these things. They're just a product of their situation."

"We've always been a low socioeconomic district. It's quite historical."

"Actually, living on the edge of poverty is now quite high. Kids are growing up with that all the time, and I hate that."

"It makes me think of the households I visit in South Taranaki compared to the houses I see in North Taranaki... I feel like they are a bit more unequal down there. I notice that a lot more down in South Taranaki, that split than in North Taranaki where people are a bit more averaged out, a bit more middle class."

"You'll visit someone who's doing alright because they have a farming background or work in industry, or you'll visit people who are really not doing alright and are living in poverty."

"Just things we notice because we work in the system, we get people coming in and a lot, especially in the South. They may not know how to make their money go further. However, they don't have any money."

"Some people come in defeated, don't see a way forward because [of] just too much debt. A lot of people come in depressed because, once again, there is no hope."

Framework Tags

No Poverty

Quality Education

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

"Once you're in that mental capacity, where you're just running the treadmill, saving so minimum, then if the washing machine breaks down you lose the momentum. It's hard to think that you're ever going to get anywhere."

"I think when you're on the benefit, you get X amount of money, you're only allowed this amount for food, you're allowed to live in this house, everything is really controlled."

"The amount of even my team that are living paycheck to paycheck is scary because of their debt."

"Credit card debt is one of the biggest ones and they lack financial literacy massively."

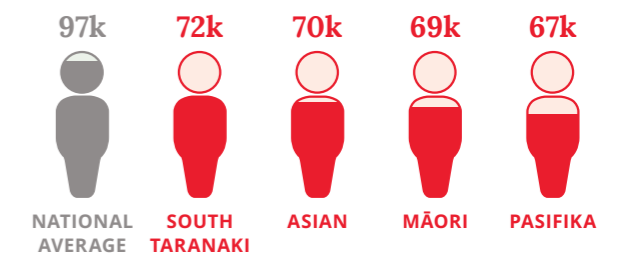
WITH A SCORE OF 9 OUT OF 10 ON THE DECILE INDEX (1 = LOW DEPRIVATION, 10 = HIGH DEPRIVATION), SOUTH TARANAKI EXPERIENCES HIGH LEVELS OF DEPRIVATION, WITH 90% OF ITS COMMUNITIES FACING HIGHER DEPRIVATION LEVELS COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 50%.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Ministry of Social Development.



THE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN SOUTH TARANAKI IS APPROXIMATELY 35% LOWER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE, TOTALLING \$72,000 COMPARED TO \$97,500 NATIONALLY.

WITHIN THIS DISTRICT, THE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME VARIES AMONG DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS: FOR MĀORI FAMILIES, IT IS \$69,000; FOR ASIAN FAMILIES, IT IS \$70,000; AND FOR PASIFIKA FAMILIES, IT IS \$67,300.



AS OF DECEMBER 2022, SOUTH TARANAKI RANKED 53RD IN TERMS OF DEPRIVATION AMONG NEW ZEALAND'S 67 TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES. THIS RANKING INDICATES A HIGHER LEVEL OF DEPRIVATION COMPARED TO MOST OTHER AUTHORITIES.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Community Compass.

Opportunities

- Equipping people with better money management skills and financial literacy skills through education and workshops to improve their understanding of income, expenditures, and savings.

“We need more work around financial literacy. Some of these people [have] been working for a long time, if there’s some financial literacy they could be working towards having their own house.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Debbie Ngarewa-Packer - a significant pillar in the community and Te Pāti Māori party leader, is reportedly supporting initiatives that address poverty and education disparities.
- Hāwera Budget Service - offers one-on-one budgeting advice and mentoring.

“Debbie is in [the] Te Pāti Māori party, with Rawiri, she’s from here. She has a very strong bond with Ngāti Ruanui and Ngāruahine, and this is where a huge investment into rangatahi is happening.”

“So when I talked about the programmes earlier, she’s backing right behind all of these initiatives to address poverty, to address the disparity in education, to stress all these main political issues that are happening.”

“When push comes to shove and they admit they can’t do it on their own anymore, people come in and say ‘I don’t know how you are going to help me, I have no money’ but then you help them realise they have some options.”

“Once you’re in that mental capacity, where you’re just running the treadmill, saving so minimum, then if the washing machine breaks down you lose the momentum. It’s hard to think that you’re ever going to get anywhere.”

Workshop participant

Theme 22

As the cost of living rises and incomes stagnate, an increasing number of people are believed to be experiencing food insecurity, with some barely ‘keeping their heads above water’. This financial strain is perceived to be leading many to adopt stricter spending habits, rely on foodbanks, and turn to more affordable but lower-quality food options. For those without transportation, these challenges are further exacerbated, as local store options are limited.

Barriers

- Many emphasise that both locally and nationally, there’s a noticeable cost of living crisis with prices ‘going through the roof.’ With food noticeably more expensive, numerous families from a range of socio-economic backgrounds are struggling to afford even basic necessities. As a significant portion of family budgets is now dedicated to essentials, many are believed to be cutting back on their spending.
 - Some perceive that in smaller towns, like Pātea and Waverley, the reliance on grocery stores like Foursquare, which reportedly have higher prices and limited selection, can impose an added financial strain on families. This is especially true for those without transportation such as the elderly, as reaching larger supermarkets becomes infeasible.
 - There’s a growing concern about food insecurity across the district, as many households severely struggle to afford food for themselves and their families. With often limited incomes, the funds left over for groceries are minimal or non-existent.
 - Some perceive that the rising cost of healthy foods, when compared to the affordability and accessibility of unhealthy alternatives like processed foods and takeaways, is leading many families, especially those with limited incomes, to choose cheaper, less nutritious options. For these families, bread becomes a staple to ensure they don’t go hungry, despite its limited nutritional value.
- Amid the rising cost of living, some organisations are noting an increase in people seeking welfare support, including those who have never needed assistance before.
 - As the cost of living rises, some observe a growing number of families turning to foodbanks across the district for support. However, some express concerns about whether the support is helping address the deeper issues families are facing, such as employment, mental health, and housing.
 - It is believed that despite the rising cost of living, incomes and benefits have not increased proportionately, requiring families to stretch their financial resources even further.
 - Some observe that, when under financial strain, some people are required to prioritise their spending, leading them to forgo habits like smoking and drinking, or even essential services like an internet connection and medical care, in favour of putting groceries on the table due to unsustainable costs.
 - In difficult times, some believe even the ‘average’ person has contemplated unconventional methods of earning income, like growing marijuana, selling drugs, or resorting to theft, in order to make ends meet and financially maintain themselves.
 - Some observe that individuals seeking help often face multifaceted challenges, from homelessness to familial issues, making their situations complex and difficult to address unless highly qualified.
- “We all know the cost of living has gone through the roof, and I don’t think it’s going to be fixed any time soon.”*

Framework Tags



“You can understand where the insecurity comes from, given the prices in the supermarkets, the horrendous prices for some basics of foods as well. You’re putting less and less in your shopping cart, because the prices are just so high, and you’re constantly having to take things off your list. The cost of living crisis is huge. I often say to myself, and I certainly speak for the average person. I’m not lower socio-economic by any means, but we struggle with three kids. I don’t know how people do it. So the old people, those with not much money, so their food is bought by a Foursquare, instead of at a proper supermarket. That’s something that I have seen. So either you’re old, or you have no vehicle, and you have to shop there. You’re losing so much money to that supermarket. I live in one of these rural areas. I bought special blend coffee on Saturday, which you get from the supermarket for \$2... then at the Foursquare that I live in, that was \$6. So imagine if you can’t get out of the area. It’s really hard... The cost of living is going up, but with that, incomes haven’t really increased. Costs are increasing all the time, but not in line with how much they’re receiving in living payments. A lot of it’s going to also come down to individual choice. As adults, we’ve got to make decisions. [Do] we pay our rent, do we put food on the table?... If we’re going to look at it, say tobacco, do I buy a \$70 pouch of tobacco this week? Or should I buy \$70 worth of groceries. The challenges around the cost of living are flowing through our community and the effect that, that has on how you prioritise your weekly paycheck towards food, medicine, travel.”

“It’s a choice between phone, internet connection, or sticking to the essentials because there are obvious signs of deprivation. When you’re trying to get by you’ll do anything to get a bit of extra money. We toyed with the idea, to get ahead, to plant some weed and I’m just average Joe Bloggs, you know. I don’t smoke or do drugs, it’s just about what we can do to get ahead. Either steal food from the supermarket, or steal metal to sell for food at the supermarket. So those are things that I’ve seen a lot. Those are things that I’ve heard of a lot. So scrap metal. Stainless steel, copper, all those sorts of things. Things have gone upside down out there, as far as food prices are concerned. You can buy soft drinks that are cheaper than milk. With the cost of living, it’s cheaper to buy junk food, not the good food, the healthy stuff. In the most recent couple of years, we’ve had a cost rise and cost of living so we’re seeing families who have never had to access support services before coming in and saying, ‘my kid just needs some warm clothes, because it’s winter and we can’t afford to get new clothes’. We have about 95% walk-ins, which has increased in the last 18 months. These are people who would have never thought they would walk into our door. I know that there are a lot of good families out there that can’t afford to feed their kids and that’s not right. The feedback that we get from the foodbanks is that there is a growing need and that people are inquiring more about their access to foodbanks.”

“Community foodbanks, they just give food out. They might say, go and visit budget services to sort out your budget, but it doesn't really underpin the reasons for them needing food, and how we can help them in other ways.

“Most that come through are complex, they might be homeless... single parents, big families, that just can't afford to continue on.

“[They'll say] 'we haven't got food, and this has happened in the family, and this has happened, and this happened, and this'. Then it becomes multiple issues that surround that person. That is really hard to navigate unless you are well qualified.

IN THE CANSTAR CONSUMER PULSE REPORT, 40% OF SURVEYED TARANAKI RESIDENTS CITED GROCERY EXPENSES AS THEIR PRIMARY CONCERN.

Canstar Consumer Pulse Report, March 2023.

IN NEW ZEALAND, AROUND 40% OF HOUSEHOLDS FACE FOOD INSECURITY. THIS ISSUE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTS DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS:



26.4% OF MĀORI HOUSEHOLDS AND 37.3% OF PACIFICA HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCE FOOD INSECURITY, COMPARED TO 10.9% OF PĀKEHĀ HOUSEHOLDS. ADDITIONALLY, 19% OF CHILDREN IN NEW ZEALAND LIVE IN HOUSEHOLDS STRUGGLING WITH FOOD INSECURITY.

Stuff, May 2023.

Opportunities

- Raising the confidence and self-esteem of foodbank recipients through a choice-based foodbank model, which gives them control, empowers them to make informed decisions and effect positive changes in their lives.
- Increasing education around budget management.

“It might be the only choice they have in their whole life at that time. But that's what we want to provide, we want to provide a level of control that they can be in charge of.

“It's about raising confidence, raising self-esteem, building them up, so that they can actually do some of the stuff in their own lives. They are valued, they are worthy. They can do stuff.

“When you're trying to do something on a budget, there may need to be more education around that. Does MSD have support in that space?

Good Mahi in the Community

- Hāwera Budget Advisory - offers a budget advisory service and has voluntary advisory groups in Hāwera, although their availability in other parts of the district is uncertain.
- Hāwera Foodbank - providing food parcels for those in need.
- Kai Kitchen Trust - focused on producing school lunches, later expanding into food rescue and operating a free store. After a decade of operations and collaborations with other providers for school lunches, the Trust eventually closed its doors.

- Local secondary schools and Yarrow's - donates food, such as cans and bread, to community foodbanks.
- New Zealand Food Network - established during COVID-19 to bolster food hubs across New Zealand, including foodbanks in across the district.
- Nola Hewitt Trust - supplies food vouchers to local social services for distribution to families in need.
- On the House - collecting surplus food and distributing it to foodbanks across the district, such as Salvation Army and Ōpunake Foodbank, with the aim to expand by securing more suppliers and supporting additional community groups.^[23]
- Pataka Kai - facilitates community food sharing, with several locations across the district where residents and businesses can donate surplus food for families and others in need.
- Salvation Army - offers welfare and a family store in Hāwera, providing essential items like furniture and clothing for low-cost and free to meet the growing community needs.

“So they [Kai Kitchen Trust] started out making and producing school lunches. They branched out into doing food rescue, and they had a free store. Then the food and lunch side of it, or the other places got involved with providing school lunches.

“We [provide] furniture for homes, clothing for kids, anything that is in the shop that they need, and we can give it away for free.

“Our local high school is giving us something like 2000 cans of food.

“Yarrows are very, very good. They give us bread. So then we can give food passes to clients or anyone who comes in.

“We've been providing Ōpunake Foodbank as well. So...we've been able to send a shipment down the coast to them.

“New Zealand Food Network does what we do, but on a bigger scale. So they are working with food producers, and they purchase food as well.

“Nola Hewitt Trust, they tend to give us food vouchers, quite often and we use those a lot.

“Pataka Kai, people take the old countdown bread and put them in there for families to eat, if they're hungry.

“We still have a budget advisory service and we still have some voluntary advisory groups available in Hāwera, I'm not sure where that is in the rest of the district.

Theme 23

While many observe a decline in cigarette smoking, attributed to both high costs and changing societal perceptions that increasingly ‘outcast’ smokers, there’s a noticeable rise in vaping. Although the expense drives some to quit or transition to vaping, others continue to smoke, especially when facing challenges or feeling ‘in a negative frame of mind’.

Barriers

- Across the district, a shift from traditional smoking to vaping is evident, with cigarette smells becoming less common. While some attribute this to former smokers using vaping to quit smoking cigarettes, others see it as merely a switch to ‘chain-vaping’ from chain-smoking.
- Some observe that the increasing presence of vape shops in the district may be contributing to the popularity of vaping, with some questioning how people are expected to quit when shops continue to open.
- Some believe that although the high cost of smoking is a notable financial strain, leading many to quit, many others continue to smoke despite its significant expense.
- Despite complaints about the rising cost of living, some note that there is a willingness among some to spend significant amounts on cigarettes, even when they are under financial strain. This behaviour highlights the challenge of breaking these habits, particularly during tough times, as some resort to costly habits like smoking when feeling less hopeful or optimistic.
- Some observe that the cultural perception around smoking has shifted, with those who smoke feeling increasingly like ‘outcasts’ in society, while vaping is perceived by some to be more socially accepted.

“As they keep opening up more and more shops here, how can they expect people to stop?”

“It’s now vaping; it was chain smokers, now it is chain vapers. I was at the hospital yesterday and the amount of people that were vaping was surprising.”

“I’ve noticed that as well, that when you’re walking down the street it’s highly unusual to smell cigarette smoke now, you’re more likely to smell lollipops and bubble gum.”

“But when you’re in that less hopeful optimistic frame of mind, you will drink or smoke or whatever. It’s difficult to lift yourself out of that and give up those habits. I know I’m not alone. When you’re struggling you do waste money on stuff like this [smoking] that you can’t afford.”

“Yeah, definitely the vapes or the smokes, the dope or alcohol, is that release outlet.”

“Cost has a lot to do with it, although it hasn’t stopped me it has stopped a lot of people.”

“They do seem to smoke down there quite a bit, which is quite surprising because they cost 5 bucks a cigarette.”

“Whereas the smoking section used to be the most colourful, chatty bunch of people and the coolest place to hang out. That’s not so much anymore. You’re an outcast. Everybody has a vape. It’s more accepted now.”

“The culture is changing around smoking as well. It’s not the same. You are the outcast of society if you are a smoker.”

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

No Poverty

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

20.5% OF THE SOUTH TARANAKI POPULATION ARE SMOKERS, COMPARED WITH 4% NATIONALLY. THIS HAS DECREASED FROM 22.5% IN 2013.

20.5% || **4.4%** ||

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

Theme 24

While some observe an increase in crime, the small-town nature of South Taranaki is believed to make it easier for the police to identify frequent offenders. However, concerns about a declining police presence and ‘half-manned’ stations persist. Additionally, although the presence of gangs is noted, they are seen to generally keep to themselves and do not overtly display affiliations in public spaces.

SOUTH TARANAKI HAS THE 33RD HIGHEST LEVEL OF CRIMINAL OFFENDING OUT OF ALL 67 DISTRICTS IN NEW ZEALAND.

NZ Police Database, Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

Strengths

- Due to the small-town nature of the district and less frequent police rotations, some note that the police have developed a deeper knowledge of the residents, often enabling them to identify offenders with greater ease.
- Some observe that in the district known for its gang presence, members generally keep to themselves and look after one another, not overtly displaying gang affiliations in public spaces.

“In those small towns, we’ve got smaller policing that might not be rotated as often, then people build up that knowledge around who’s likely to have done what.”

“The biggest point that I see gang affiliation is actually in the pools and when they can’t hide, but that’s okay. They can’t hide it there, and they are not choosing to display [their gang tattoos] actively. It’s because they are in their togs. So I agree with that sentiment. I don’t actively see gang activity.”

“They do provide each other with a very strong support network. Strong family-orientated and strong support and that might not necessarily integrate with the rest of the community, but they do look after each other.”

While the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a neutral:

- While some perceive an increase in crime in the district, others believe that the level of crime is not significantly different from other areas of the country.

“With crime, I don’t think it’s any worse than anywhere else in the country... It was way worse in Palmerston North, and the populations weren’t that much different, Manawatu to Taranaki.”

Barriers

- Some believe that the police force across the district has faced significant reductions, with a noticeable lack of adequate police presence and ‘half-manned’ stations. This leads to delayed responses as officers are stretched thin and often come from distant locations.
- There is a belief that the diminishing police presence and longer response times in the community make the district an appealing target for criminal activities, especially compared to areas like New Plymouth, which are believed to have quicker police responses.
- Despite reports to the police, there’s a sentiment among some that law enforcement may have limited influence over gangs, as they are perceived to ‘run certain streets.’
- Some are concerned about the prevalence of online scams, which have reportedly affected several local people, with financial losses extending into the thousands of dollars.

Framework Tags

Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Social Cohesion

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“That’s actually across the whole of South Taranaki. Hāwera police station is only half manned... Pātea and Waverley had none, but I believe they have a couple back in there now because of the severity of offences happening. Ōpunake had four, and they are now down to one part-time.”

“They’ve severely, severely reduced. Originally we had three local constables in town, then it went to two. Then it went down to one, and that one constable went down to part-time because she was stretched.”

“Then we ended up with none. So when we call the police for Eltham or Kaponga, they have to come from Stratford. It’s often a 40 minutes to an hour wait for them to appear, unless you are fortunate enough for them to be in town.”

“There is not enough police presence here. For the amount of crime and things that are happening, Police can’t be everywhere, and they are doing the best that they can.”

“We have a really low police presence in Eltham... We’ve had our numbers reduced significantly. Our police station isn’t even manned anymore. It doesn’t take long for the underworld or those inclined to do this stuff to be like, “you’ll be sweet because it’ll take half an hour for the police to get there anyway”, if they turn up at all, actually.”

“A lot of the families I’ve met with go to the police, but then the police don’t do anything about them. So they [Black Power] run certain streets.”

“Lots of the families I have visited in Hāwera have problems with Black Power living next door where the police do very little about them. They are either in fear of them or used to it.”

“People were selling things online and people were getting sucked in. They were putting the money in, but there was no product there. That was absolutely huge. I know two people here where that’s happened to, and you’re not talking a few hundred dollars, you’re talking thousands.”

IN SOUTH TARANAKI, THE OVERALL CRIME RATE IS 13.09 OFFENCES PER 10,000 PEOPLE, COMPARED TO 19.6 OFFENCES NATIONALLY.

OVERALL CRIME
PER 10,000 PEOPLE
13.09 | **19.6**
SOUTH TARANAKI | **NATIONAL AVERAGE**



NZ Police Database, Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

Opportunities

- Recognising gang members as part of the community, much like everyone else, to promote understanding and unity within the community.

“I've always been an advocate, we need the gangs now. Stop pushing them away. They're part of our community.

“Having them come into that community to see they're just like you and I, but they also have a different whānau with a patch on.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Neighbourhood Support - a nationwide community-led movement that brings people and neighbourhoods together to create safe, resilient, and connected communities.
- Te Ara Pae Trust - works closely with local gangs to address and understand the challenges they face.

“We had a robbery down in Pātea... and the officer sent me an email about it, so I put it out to all the Pātea people and information would come back to me so I'd flick it off to the officer. Within 24 hours they had arrested two offenders. That's not never happened before. So that's the way it works.

“The stuff that we're doing here now is extremely respected through the community, definitely through the gangs, especially through the gangs at the moment.

“We do a lot of the work with the gangs, understanding the demons that we live with, the pressure that catches with us later on in life.

“There's a few streets in Hāwera that are renowned for being almost entirely gang streets, but [you] don't see heaps of them out here on High Street. They keep to themselves, look after each other. Of course, there are exceptions, but this is what I see.

Workshop participant

Theme 25

Many believe that drug and alcohol use, particularly of methamphetamine and MDMA, is 'rife' in South Taranaki, leading to devastating downstream issues such as family harm, financial struggles, and food insecurity. When intervention is necessary, some believe accessing addiction support is challenging due to limited resources, overstretched services, and a referral system that hinders immediate care. This is believed to result in insufficient support during critical times and recurring substance use.

Barriers

- Some believe that drug use, particularly MDMA and methamphetamine, is 'rife' among the community, spanning all ages and backgrounds, with growing concerns over the accessibility and affordability of methamphetamine, which is reportedly easier to obtain than marijuana.
- It is perceived by a few that methamphetamine is favoured by some people due to its perceived quick elimination from the system, enabling them to sustain employment in industries with mandatory drug screenings.
- Some perceive that drug abuse, particularly methamphetamine, contributes significantly to a range of social concerns, such as family harm, financial hardship, and food insecurity, with funds often used to sustain drug habits.
- Some believe that methamphetamine use is leading to devastating outcomes in the lives of users and their families, resulting in lost relationships, unemployment, and changes in personal character.
- Many voice that the district is grappling with a 'real problem' regarding drug, alcohol, and addiction support services, which are either overwhelmed, based outside the district, or altogether absent, leaving people battling substance dependencies without access to the necessary support for recovery.
- Some describe the process of accessing addiction support, which requires General Practitioner (GP) referrals, as 'disastrous,' considering it an unnecessary barrier that hinders access to timely care in critical moments, a situation that is believed to disproportionately affect those without access to a doctor.

- Some note that although attitudes towards marijuana use may be shifting, the effects on individuals and families remain substantial, with the prevalence of marijuana addiction within the community considered to be high.
- Some observe that alcohol-related issues within the community have dramatically increased, particularly when compared to previous generations.
- Some believe that the lack of comprehensive education about the dangers of drugs, particularly methamphetamine, has resulted in people using the drug without full awareness of its detrimental effects.

"There is a high number of drug and alcohol users; you just need to go into the court to see that they are all related to either."

"Yeah, methamphetamines. Huge down south. It has been for quite a while, and it seems to be currently spiking a little more recently as well. I think it's become cheaper down there again."

"Meth is more in rural areas, and MDMA is more available than meth [in urban spaces]."

"The clinical team down south, it's in the background of I would say 80 to 90% of the referrals at the moment seem to have the mention of meth or similar. It's the isolation too, they're just out on a farm somewhere on meth, essentially."

"This is their mentality, young adults or older youth. They're like 'if you smoke meth, they can't test that the next day' because it's quick out of your system. So it's turned a lot of them to that drug, because they can keep their jobs."

Framework Tags

Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

No Poverty

Good Health & Wellbeing

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

"[Drugs] also lead to the violence, offending, probably relates to the education levels as well."

"It would also link back to not having enough food and all of that lingers, money is being spent on drugs, it's all part of the picture."

"The devastation of friends and family that have been lost to that ugly drug. Friends whose kids are addicted. I see it a lot in the younger adults, you just see their whole energy change. I can personally tell if they are wired or not. Its effect is massive."

"We lost this generations ago, and I'm not saying back then was always perfect. But when you look back to simple little things [compared] to what we have now, the progress of alcohol problems in this country is out the gate."

"I know that the alcohol and drugs service can't get enough people through because they're just so busy."

"That then highlights mental health services, drug addiction and alcohol addiction. Trying to get support for that through mental health services is pretty hard. It sort of just goes around in a really bad circle."

"Alcohol and drugs are a real issue. My brother struggles with substance abuse and the support is needed. There is no real support available at the time of need."

"It is disastrous, why the hell should I need to go and see my GP because I'm drinking too much and I want to get help with my alcohol consumption? What's that got to do with my doctor? I don't need a doctor to tell me whether I need help with my alcohol or not."

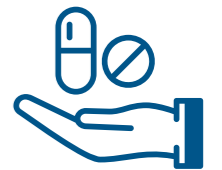
"People can't see their GPs. So, if you want their help, and the only route is through a GP, you're not going to get it then, are you."

"Even with marijuana, there's not the concern that people once had. Yet, when you see it from a housing or socio-economic background, the harm that it's doing to some families is really hard to watch."

"When the harder drugs came in and to be honest, a lot of people I know got on those drugs, but they didn't really know how harmful they were. But I feel like there's not a lot of discussions or awareness about how, how bad meth actually is."

DRUG OFFENDING RATES IN SOUTH TARANAKI ARE ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE WITH 16 OFFENCES PER 10,000 PEOPLE, COMPARED TO 10 OFFENCES NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 16: Safety and Inclusivity.



Opportunities

- Offering walk-in support services for those dealing with addiction to provide immediate, localised assistance.
- Enhancing the drug and alcohol addiction referral process to prevent inefficiencies, time wastage and reliance on the GP system.

“So the HIP [Health Improvement Practitioner] concept is a really nice thing if you’re lucky enough to have access to it, but let’s not set those around GP clusters, please.

“It needs a whole different approach to how people are referred to services, and bottlenecking it on the GP causes a huge amount of wasted GP time.

“We want to base a Waimanako style hub concept, but for that concept to have a bit more addiction walk-in support available.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Salvation Army - offers a free nine-week residential recovery programme, providing a structured environment for people to become substance-free with support from MSD. Despite being based in New Plymouth, the programme is accessible to all within the South Taranaki District.

“We have the bridge programme in New Plymouth. It’s a nine-week live-in programme. It’s a pretty big programme. It’s free. And it’s all done through MSD, I believe. So anyone can go on it. And it’s the only one around this area.

“That then highlights mental health services, drug addiction and alcohol addiction. Trying to get support for that through mental health services is pretty hard. It sort of just goes around in a really bad circle.

Workshop participant

Theme 26

Many believe that in South Taranaki, family harm, assault, and abuse, especially in emotional and psychological forms, are prevalent. These challenges, transcending socio-economic backgrounds and genders, are often seen to be linked to financial stress, substance abuse, and intergenerational cycles of violence. And, despite the frequency of these incidents, many still go unreported.

Strengths

- There is a perception that incidents of family harm have reduced since the surge observed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Some believe that there are numerous organisations and individuals in the district assisting people experiencing family harm.
- Some have the perception that younger men nowadays are more respectful compared to previous generations, suggesting a positive shift in the right direction.

“I do find that younger men nowadays are far more respectful. So I think we’re headed in the right direction.”

“There are a number of community organisations that deal with people that have been involved with these situations [family harm].”

“You don’t hear about so many [family harm offences] now, as you would have during COVID-19. So, from that, I would say it’s reduced.”

THE RATE FOR PHYSICAL ASSAULTS IN SOUTH TARANAKI STANDS AT 11.12 INCIDENTS PER 10,000 PEOPLE, COMPARED TO 19.6 INCIDENTS NATIONALLY.



NZ Police Database, Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

SEXUAL ASSAULTS IN SOUTH TARANAKI STAND AT A RATE OF 11.2 INCIDENTS PER 10,000 PEOPLE, COMPARED TO 19.56 NATIONALLY.

NZ Police Database, Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

Barriers

- Some perceive a notable prevalence of sexual abuse in the district, with it being described by some as an ‘epidemic’ impacting numerous households.
- Many observe an escalating trend of family and domestic harm within the district, with increasing instances of physical, emotional and psychological abuse, including belittling, name-calling, and controlling financial behaviours.
- Some believe that drug and alcohol use plays a major role in the rise of family harm and sexual assault across the district. While some perceive drugs as a key contributor, others feel alcohol has a more pronounced impact on family harm and assault compared to other substances.
- There is a belief that the rise in family harm incidents is connected to ongoing stressors related to low incomes and food insecurity, which are believed to amplify family tensions and lead to outbursts of violence, especially when coupled with drugs, straining finances further.

Framework Tags

Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

No Poverty

Good Health & Wellbeing

Gender Equality

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- Some believe that intergenerational patterns and a history of family harm profoundly shape a person’s behaviours and their acceptance of family harm. This highlights the importance of someone ‘breaking the cycle’ to be better role models for future generations.
- Some believe that diminished self-worth, self-value and feelings of failure can lead people to lash out, resulting in family harm or abuse.
- Some observe that the repercussions of past abuse are substantial, as impacts echo through multiple generations, leading to ongoing distress and, in some cases, overprotective parenting stemming from fear.
- Some believe there’s a widespread misconception surrounding family harm, implying only women and children are affected. However, many emphasise that both genders can experience harm, especially given the notable presence of violent women across the district, a reality often underrepresented in the media.
- Some believe that family harm transcends specific demographics, impacting various age groups, ethnicities, and financial backgrounds, highlighting common misconceptions about who can be on the receiving end of harm.
- Some perceive that a significant number of incidents, particularly those involving sexual and physical assault, go unreported in the community. The reluctance to report stems from various factors, including fear of further harm, concerns over privacy and ‘people finding out,’ reluctance to incriminate family members, uncertainties about living conditions and financial security, and scepticism about the effectiveness of reporting.

- Some express concerns about the discontinuation of a local ‘safe house’ due to funding cuts, which leaves vulnerable people without immediate refuge during family harm situations. Although there are facilities in New Plymouth, they are perceived as inadequate due to their distance from the district.
- Some observe that the absence of a Women’s Refuge in the district results in a dependence on services in New Plymouth, which some believe ‘categorically does not work’ for the district.

“I’d actually have to say that I think our psychological abuse is more prevalent in South Taranaki and it’s the psychological stuff that has a long-lasting impact... The psychological abuse, the name-calling, the belittling.”

“A lot of the people I meet in South Taranaki disclose sexual abuse, so much so that I think South Taranaki has an epidemic of sex abuse, to be honest. It seems to be in the background of most of the households we visit because the mental health is from that.”

“Definitely the emotional and psychological... yeah, like controlling, and financially controlling people.”

“Because a lot of people down there don’t report it, they just don’t think anyone is going to do anything about it, or it’s normal in the household, it’s a family or family friend so they don’t want to bring it up.”

“[They’ve gone unreported because] women don’t want everyone in the neighbourhood, or anyone else to know that they’ve been beaten up.”

“Only the people that have been in it understand that it is hard for a victim to walk away, because the unknown of not having a man bring in a little bit of money, even though she gets a hiding, at least she’s feeding her children. So she’s not gonna say anything to get kicked out.

“If you can’t pay the bills, you can’t feed the kids, life sucks. People can lash out, and again sometimes people just boil over, it’s heartbreaking.

“Family violence exists because people are using drugs, their finances may go there, tension can rise.

“I do see a lot of drugs and alcohol, and there is violence that comes with the drug and alcohol.

“It’s that whole idea that my parents smacked me. So, there’s nothing wrong with that. I grew up to be a relatively good and charming person.

“One of the most prominent things is that it’s intergenerational. So, somebody has to break that cycle.

“We work with the person who inflicted the abuse, but nine times out of 10 it’s because there’s a history of family harm or abuse.

“It happened to my family... and it absolutely blew my family to bits and that was back in [the 90’s] and the repercussions are still with us today. They are ok, but they still have problems. They are still getting over it to this day.

“It goes into the next generation. They are overly protective of their children. They are terrified. It just absolutely blows the world to bits.

“Self-worth, self-value, opinion of yourself, you know, you lash out on other things. It’s learnt behaviour.

“It’s not portrayed in the media the same as a man assaulting a female. Okay, there are females out there assaulting men too.

“We have a lot of angry women as well. I can’t say this enough ‘let’s not blame men for family violence’.

“When we think about these types of figures, we think of a particular type of people, but I see a lot of people who would fit into, some of them middle age, some of them well-off Pākehā families, that would still, unfortunately, fall into this category.

“There was a couple in their late 30s... and her partner got to a point where he was scared to call the police. Because the guys think, you know, we should be able to stand up for ourselves, but we don’t want to hurt our partners. So there’s a misconception that violence has just happened toward women or children. But actually, it’s a whole range of people, a range of ethnicities, a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

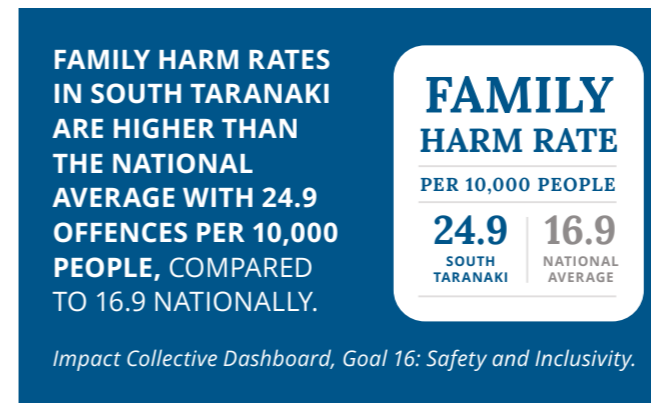
“We used to have funding for what we called a safe house...we would use it for when the police went into a family violence situation, they could extract the mum and the child and we could wrap services right around them... it was so successful but we lost the funding.

“We lost the funding as we have nowhere to put them. We were drawing on our reserves for the last year because it was cancelled over a year ago. But we don’t have those reserves anymore.

“I do sympathise with the police, if they go into a home where it’s volatile, they’ve got no way to take one of the family members out of the equation.

“They said ‘but we’ve got it in New Plymouth, there’s a Women’s Refuge there’. Well, that doesn’t work. That categorically does not work for our South Taranaki community.

“If you are an organisation that carries Taranaki we are part of Taranaki, whether we’re south or north. It’s never been included. So when it comes to any form of a Women’s Refuge, we’ve got nothing at the moment. It’s totally, totally disabled.



Opportunities

- Breaking the cycle of intergenerational family harm by fostering awareness of ‘how we interact,’ so that people create better outcomes for children.
- Offering continuous and consistent support for trauma recovery to people impacted by family harm.
- Building the self-confidence of people impacted by family harm and ensuring they understand they are not at fault for what has occurred.
- Offering long-term support to ensure people impacted by family harm receive care tailored to their personal journey, so they are not rushed through the system.
- Ensuring that everyone, including those involved in causing family harm, receives a second chance without shame or blame for past wrongs.

“Even though we have a 4 week programme... Some clients have been with us for a good year because they need that constant support because of the trauma of what they’ve been subjected to. They need someone to walk alongside them.

“They may only see us once a month for a check-in, but that’s really, really important for them to be able to keep moving forward for their wellbeing.

“That’s my driving force, is that everybody has the ability to have chances. I don’t believe that just because somebody has stuffed up or done something wrong that they should be shamed or blamed.

“Somebody has to break that cycle... But to be able to break that cycle, you have to feel strong enough within yourself to be able to go ‘just because I was raised doesn’t mean that was right... I don’t want this for my children’. So, to be really conscious and aware of how we interact.

“When you’re working with family harm, if you’ve got the victim it’s about building their self-confidence and their ability to see that it’s not their fault, that they are not to blame for what’s occurred.

“We don’t rush people through the system. We’ve got a couple [of] people who’ve been coming, it’s around sexual violence, for three years and they will stay as long as they want.

Good Mahi in the Community

- South Taranaki Whānau Centre - offers advocacy, support and guidance for survivors of sexual harm or rape and family harm. (Healthpoint, n.d).^[24]
- South Taranaki Whānau Centre - offers a parenting course for people who have experienced or have a history of family harm.
- Taranaki Safe Family Trust - dedicated to ensuring family safety and tackling family harm, in collaboration with various local initiatives and organisations.
- Te Ara Pae Trust - provided a safe house where people experiencing family harm were provided shelter and comprehensive support services; however, due to changes in funding, this initiative has been discontinued. (Te Ara Pae, n.d).^[25]

“There’s a whole team that takes care of the family violence, just the entire family violence kaupapa. They’re the ones that just keep an eye on those families and provide support to the families who have been on the radar before.

“Our parenting comes under Oranga Tamariki contract, for anyone who has had, the new word is family harm, but family violence, whether they are in the situation or they have a history of family harm. So we offer that parenting course.

“We work with the person who inflicted the abuse, but nine times out of 10 it’s because there’s a history of family harm or abuse.

Workshop participant

Theme 27

In South Taranaki, despite many organisations offering non-judgmental and confidential support, various challenges, including a lack of awareness, prevalent ‘suck it up’ attitudes, and feelings of anxiety, shame, and embarrassment, create barriers to accessing help. These challenges are further compounded by the distrust in, and the daunting and disempowering processes within some organisations.

Strengths

- Many perceive that numerous organisations are dedicated to fostering safe, non-judgmental spaces that help lift the ‘cloak of shame’, where people are welcomed without barriers, ensuring a supportive environment for those seeking assistance in various aspects of their lives.
- Some perceive that while there is some anxiety around accessing services in the district, others find it notably straightforward to obtain support, such as counselling, with some services offering assistance as promptly as the next day.
- Some believe that the strict confidentiality upheld by certain organisations helps build trust and foster a secure and private environment for those accessing support.

“We try and remove that cloak of shame. We thank them for coming, because they are helping us.”

“For whatever reason that distrust exists, we do a lot of work around creating a space where everyone feels safe, where they’re not going to be asked challenging questions, or they’re not going to be judged.”

“Some of the stuff that comes into my room can’t be repeated. It’s not just the confidentiality that you sign with me. It’s stuff I won’t type on my system... I’m not repeating nothing.”

“I found it pretty easy to get people into counselling down there, to be honest, easier than in North Taranaki, where you have to have a referral and all that. Whereas there are services down here that you can call up and they’ll take them the next day.”

Barriers

- Some perceive that there is a lack of awareness about what support services are available in the community, especially among newcomers to the district or those without internet or GP access. This leads to uncertainty about how and where to seek assistance when needed.
- Some believe that anxiety and shame, coupled with the fear of being seen and judged for seeking help, can create significant barriers to accessing support services, with some taking months before they feel ready to seek help.
- A prevalent ‘eat some concrete’ and ‘suck it up’ mindset is believed to exist within the district, particularly in farming and rural communities, which discourages some from seeking help, especially when they are under the presumption that their needs are less important than others.
- Some observe that those with severe mental health issues are often housebound due to anxiety, suggesting that the most vulnerable may not always be receiving adequate support or services.
- Some in smaller towns are believed to avoid accessing local services due to concerns about ‘knowing people too well,’ fearing that their personal information may spread as a result.
- Obtaining support from agencies like Work and Income and the Ministry of Social Development is seen as a difficult, daunting and time-consuming process. This poses a significant barrier for those in need of immediate assistance and often requires external support to navigate these systems effectively.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Partnerships for the Goals

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- Some believe that the process of obtaining support can be disempowering and retraumatising, as it requires people to recount their traumatic experiences and hardships numerous times to multiple organisations, potentially worsening their distress and increasing their burden.
- Some people are believed to be deeply disillusioned by support services, having slipped through numerous cracks. This often leads to a prolonged and difficult process of rebuilding trust.
- Some perceive that a personal and intergenerational distrust of government and organised groups, particularly those associated with religion, may create a barrier for some people from seeking support.
- Despite many local foodbanks being run by well-intentioned people, some suggest that the process of accessing local food support is impersonal and may lead to feelings of judgement and embarrassment, potentially deterring people from utilising these essential services altogether.
- Some believe that although support services are available in the community, the effectiveness of receiving support depends on a person’s desire to change and willingness to accept help when it is offered.
- Current messaging around encouraging people to ‘reach out’ when they are struggling is believed to be nonsensical due to the ubiquity of trauma.

“Because I think it’s linked a little bit to the GP’s. Most people go to their GP and then if the GP doesn’t know about something they’re not going to suggest it, are they?”

“If you aren’t a local you won’t be familiar with the local service.”

“There are so many options out there, and a lot of them are online so having access to that is an issue for some.”

“With the lack of GP’s and things people aren’t necessarily able to go and see their GP who then directs them in the right place. I don’t think that is always an option for people.”

“I know there are organisations that are actively trying to engage with people, but there’s a difference between having services available and people accepting help.”

“There seems to be quite a staunch “no, we don’t need that help, that help is for other people”.”

“It’s okay to help others but not yourself, suck-it-up mindset.”

“I think there is a lot of that intergenerational, how we were raised, where research is showing now that that’s not how you should have done it, you know that hard, eat some concrete, get on with it mentality has done a lot of damage.”

“It’s not easy to come off the street and decide to walk in a place that is opposite the Warehouse. Everyone could be driving past and seeing [that] you’re walking into a counselling or advocacy agency looking for help.”

- “I remembered it took me three months... but my problem was, I didn't want anyone to know who I was.*
- “We're just trying to create that one-stop shop, because it's very disempowering for anybody who's suffered any form of trauma to go agency-to-agency to tell their story from scratch. It's actually disempowering and it's actually retraumatising them.*
- “We have our foodbank, and they do an amazing job. But people feel judged going into them. Because it's run by, and don't get me wrong they do a wonderful job, but they do make sure that you've got your name down, and how many people you'll be feeding.*
- “We get people coming through the door here, that have fallen through so many cracks. By the time they get to us, they are so disillusioned, so desperate, that it takes us so much longer just for them to even believe they can trust someone, any agency.*
- “We create such a safe space, a lot of our customers can be distrustful, so we're apolitical and non-religious. A lot of our customers are distrustful of government-organised groups.*
- “Due to distrust of the system, which can be perpetrated from a very young age, and intergenerational. They aren't necessarily aware of these things.*
- “People are used to going to someone like MSD for help, and that help taking a long time to kind of get through.*
- “Some are meant to go to MSD, but it's quite daunting going in there, isn't it? It's a difficult thing to do for a lot of people.*

- “If I go in with a client, and support a client through any sort of process with Work and Income, they seem to be able to access the service more easily. Whereas if they go in by themselves, they can't, they experience the barrier.*
- “I think a lot of the people that need it most are people that don't necessarily leave their house that often.*
- “We've done a lot of messaging around 'hey if you're struggling then just reach out'. But the ubiquity of that trauma makes that a nonsensical proposal, which is problematic.*
- “Some people don't access services in those areas because they know people there too well, or they've had previous experience with them or family. We get the 'we don't want to work with that group of people because actually, that's my cousin. I know that person, and I'm worried about the spread of information'. It's in the smaller towns. There is a real fear.*

Opportunities

- Enhancing awareness and education about existing support services, especially for those not well connected to the community, to ensure that people are informed and can benefit from the locally available resources.
- Providing a 'one-stop shop' that offers comprehensive wrap-around support to streamline assistance for families and reduce the need for engaging with multiple organisations.
- Offering genuine care and providing a welcoming and non-judgmental space for people to off-load, so that they feel supported and heard.

- Maintaining strict confidentiality in support services to build trust and provide a stigma-free environment for people in need.

- “If we don't have confidentiality, we don't have anything you can't build trust then. So for us, number one is confidentiality.*
- “Building that trust is really important too. Gaining that trust and being able to be in a position to have these conversations is really important.*
- “Sometimes they need to off-load first before they can move onto something else.*
- “We would really like to see a really welcoming space that people come into, to get all their needs helped.*
- “If you think about it, people always talk about that person who heard me, who understood me, who gave me their time, who saw me for who I was and didn't judge me, etc.*
- “If there can be more done under one roof, around the support mechanisms for the whole family unit. That is more empowering for change than going from organisation to organisation.*
- “It's probably just more around making people aware of what supports are actually out there.*
- “I'm hoping people out there know enough about us to not fall through the cracks.*

Good Mahi in the Community

- Salvation Army - reportedly transitioning their foodbank to a 'choice model' to allow people to select their own food in a supermarket-style setup and foster a more welcoming and shame-free environment.

- Taranaki Retreat, Waimanako Support Hub - provides a safe space for people seeking emotional support, offering on-the-spot assistance from trained peer support workers in a comfortable and non-clinical environment, based in New Plymouth.
- Taranaki Support Expo - initiated by Taranaki Retreat, it is perceived as a unifying event that congregates diverse community services under one roof, facilitating direct engagement and accessibility for locals during Mental Health Awareness Week.
- Te Ara Pae Trust - a community-focused initiative that invites people to seek support during challenging times in their lives. They prioritise walking beside and empowering community members, aiming to create a ripple effect of empowerment.
- Te Ara Pae Trust - establishes a confidential and safe space by implementing a strict confidentiality agreement, which guarantees privacy except in situations where safety concerns are evident.
- Te Manawanui - a collective of primary health providers in the Taranaki region who are committed to improving health outcomes and health equity for New Zealanders. (Healthpoint, n.d.).^[26]

“That's what we're really aiming for here is to walk beside the community, empower people, that they can then go back into the community and empower others.

- “By having the new model, it’s going to be much different. It’ll be like coming to chat with some friends, and not having shame around going for food. That’s the hope anyway.*
- “When they come to a foodbank, and they can choose their own food, they can have a really great relationship, they can come in for a nice cup of tea and a cake and meet with friends. That’s that choice.*
- “If you wanted some listening ears and you rocked up today, you just stick that on your menu with your toasty, or your breakfast, and someone from the team, a trained peer support worker, will come and join you, either in the cafe space or in one of the support rooms and start to unpack what is on your mind.*
- “Last year, in Mental Health Awareness Week, we did three expos around the region: one in Stratford, one in Hāwera, one in New Plymouth. We just got those services together under one roof for people to be able to wander in and meet the people.*
- “When they go and meet with a clinician, they will go through what confidentiality means to us. They will then sign with the clinician a confidentiality agreement.*
- “That’s the agreement that we would never disclose unless we feel you could harm yourself or someone around you could be harmed. Other than that, it’s confidential.*
- “We are humbled every day that people trust us, that people will come here and they will expose their deepest, darkest secrets and fears, and allow us the privilege of working with them and walking beside them.*

“We’re just trying to create that one-stop shop, because it’s very disempowering for anybody who’s suffered any form of trauma to go agency-to-agency to tell their story from scratch. It’s actually disempowering and it’s actually retraumatising them.

Workshop participant

Te Ara Pae Trust

“What we focus on really, are the dynamic individuals within this community, who, like all of us, reach a point in their life where they need support. For us, the privilege is that they reach out. We are humbled every day that people trust us, that people will come here and they will expose their deepest darkest secrets and fears, and allow us the privilege to walk beside them.”

“That’s what we’re really aiming for here is to walk beside the community, empower people, that they can then go back into the community and empower others.”

“[We’re] finding ways to reach the most unreachable. So how do we bring them in and make this their place, [so that] this is an extension of their community, this is their home?”

“I had a pretty rough life and I actually wanted to do something for people who’ve been through some of what I’ve been through. So often, when I’m working with people, I will say, I know ‘what you mean, I know what you’re going through’. I always reiterate to them, ‘I don’t say this unless I have been through it’.”

“It’s so easy now to just prescribe medication. I’m getting clients that are overdosed. We’ve lost our way to be grounded and that’s why I got sick, [we’ve] forgotten to be grounded in this world.”

“Not going out anymore catching up at the local coffee [shop] for a lot of people, I’m finding more and more are staying isolated at home and don’t know how to leave. The more you become isolated the less you become.”

“We get people coming through the door here that have fallen through so many cracks. By the time they get to us they are so disillusioned and so desperate that it takes us so much longer just for them to even believe they can trust someone.”

“When they go and meet with a clinician, they will sign and go through what confidentiality means to us, and they will then sign with the clinician confidentiality agreement. If we don’t have confidentiality, we don’t have anything. You can’t build trust then. So for us, our number one is confidentiality.”

“To me, sitting down face to face with someone and being privileged enough to share their innermost pain and struggles is such an honour. Sometimes you go home and you think, ‘oh, gosh, I haven’t really made a difference’. But yeah, you have, because when you get people walking out, thanking you so much or saying, ‘I feel so much lighter’ then you know that you’ve done something good.”

“I think everyone here, they just want to give, they just want to take a little bit of pain away.”



This life stage encompasses all older adults that are aged 65 years old and above.

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Theme 28—Many perceive South Taranaki as an increasingly popular retirement destination, attracting a growing elderly population drawn to its high-quality, relaxed lifestyle, rich with social opportunities. However, despite these advantages, some elderly feel ‘forgotten’ and experience loneliness during their retirement years. This sense of isolation is amplified by difficulties in adapting to technology as many are seen to be increasingly ‘left behind’ with technology advancements.

Theme 30—In South Taranaki, while many elderly own their homes, others, initially drawn by historically low rents, may be struggling with rising rental prices. The high costs of retirement villages and properties further limit their options, leading many to live in poor housing conditions or turn to multi-generational living arrangements. Meanwhile, homeowners looking to downsize, face challenges due to the scarcity of suitable, affordable and available housing options.

No Poverty

Theme 29—While many believe some elderly in South Taranaki have set themselves up well for retirement, a significant portion are perceived to be living ‘week to week’ with minimal finances. However, there is a noted reluctance among the elderly to accept help, stemming from a lifetime of managing on their own.

Good Health & Wellbeing

Theme 31—In South Taranaki, despite the expansion of some rest homes, it’s believed that long waitlists for residential care and unreliable in-home services are contributing factors leading many elderly, particularly those with financial means, to relocate outside the district upon retirement. This trend is primarily driven by the challenges of rural living and the limited healthcare options available in the district.

Theme 32—Some observe that despite a lingering stigma hindering full understanding and support for dementia, there is a growing awareness and early detection of memory conditions, particularly as the ageing population increases. Meanwhile, there remains a gap in adequately recognising and addressing mental health challenges in the elderly.

Theme 28

Many perceive South Taranaki as an increasingly popular retirement destination, attracting a growing elderly population drawn to its high-quality, relaxed lifestyle, rich with social opportunities. However, despite these advantages, some elderly feel ‘forgotten’ and experience loneliness during their retirement years. This sense of isolation is amplified by difficulties in adapting to technology as many are seen to be increasingly ‘left behind’ with technology advancements.

23,330 PEOPLE IN SOUTH TARANAKI ARE AGED 65 AND ABOVE, ACCOUNTING FOR 19.8% OF THE TOTAL POPULATION COMPARED TO 17% NATIONALLY.

Infometrics, Regional Economic Profile, 2022.



Strengths

- Some observe that the elderly population in South Taranaki is increasing, along with national trends, which some attribute to healthier lifestyles and the ageing baby boomer generation.
- Some believe South Taranaki is becoming an increasingly popular retirement destination due to its affordable housing and lifestyle, enabling retirees to benefit financially, especially when relocating from urban centres.
- Some believe that the elderly in the district enjoy a notably high quality of life, characterised by a laid-back and stress-free lifestyle.
- Some perceive that the district provides abundant opportunities for elderly residents to engage in social groups and clubs, with many already seen to be reaping the benefits of such involvement.

- Some note that certain Iwi-affiliated elderly are eager to contribute more actively to their community, showing a desire to move beyond traditional activities like ‘sitting around and drinking coffee’ to having a more meaningful impact within their Iwi.

“I would say that in Ōpunake the elderly group are well engaged in social groups and clubs. We do pretty well for ourselves up there in that age group.”

“Particularly, the percentage of the [elderly] population doesn’t surprise me and we know it’s increasing. It’s just the same as it is nationally.”

“They are living longer now because of healthier living and there’s more in the age group now as we’re getting into the baby boomers.”

“We’re very much aware of our ageing population in particular. I think they like living here because it’s a lot more laid back.”

“Just thinking [about] the other people I know who are actually retired. I would say that they have a pretty reasonable quality of life in Taranaki.”

“That’s why people come to live here. We’ve got people selling up in Auckland and buying two houses down here. One to live in and one to rent. That’s happening more and more and more.”

“They don’t want it to be sitting around, drinking coffee, singing kapa haka, they want to be more active and contribute a bit more positively across the Iwi.”

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Good Health & Wellbeing

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Participating fully in society

Confidently participating in Te Ao Māori

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

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

- While some perceive that the elderly are well cared for by Iwi and Iwi providers across the district, there are concerns that not all, especially those not directly descended from Iwi, receive the same level of support and resources.

“I think they’re very much well looked after by the Iwi. They are made sure that they’re comfortable, they have plenty of food, they have warm clothing, that they are out and about and present in their communities.”

“What I’ve seen is that they [elderly] are pretty well catered for. Even though we’ve lost a few of our local pastoral care units, Ngāti Ruanui have been really good in making sure kaumātua are looked after that way.”

“There are those who are not affiliated, and these the ones I worry about, the ones who perhaps are not affiliated to the Iwi and may be isolated, you might see some social issues from them.”

“This is where some of our kaumātua feel let down, because they have been involved with Iwi, are in-laws of uri, but they do not get the same perks as those who are uri.”

Barriers

- Some perceive that the elderly, despite having contributed to society throughout their lives, often feel undervalued, overlooked, or forgotten once they reach retirement age.
- Many believe there is a growing concern of loneliness and social isolation among the elderly, often attributed to financial constraints and limited access to transportation, which restricts their ability to ‘go out and about’ and engage with society. This issue is significantly contributing to the decline in the elderly’s mental health and wellbeing.
- Some perceive that the transition to digital and automated services presents significant challenges for the elderly, who often prefer more traditional transaction methods and struggle to adapt to new technologies. This change is thought to contribute to increased isolation and a disconnection from essential services and social interactions for the elderly, as they are seen to be increasingly ‘left behind’ in a technology-driven world.

“The sadness of that is that suddenly, you [are] met with a machine. Now for many older people, the only person they spoke to was the person that did the groceries and had the conversation ‘hello, how are you today?’”

“They’ve worked their whole lives and contributed and when they get to the retirement age it’s just like they get forgotten.”

“I’ve noticed that elderly people, I feel that they get missed a lot, or they get thrown into a home.”

- “They’ve worked their whole lives and contributed and when they get to the retirement age it’s just like they get forgotten.*
- “I’ve noticed that elderly people, I feel that they get missed a lot, or they get thrown into a home.*
- “Trying to empower them to do a transaction online but you’ll find a massive amount of that generation will not do anything online. They’ll go to a bank or an ATM, withdraw the money and pay in cash.*
- “It’s not just youth that struggle with technology. Certainly, the older generation, they are getting more left behind and isolated without technology.*
- “It breaks my heart actually because you’ll see older people, who don’t have the skills to use a scanning machine floundering, they’re having to do something that actually, they don’t believe in, they don’t see the need for that sort of thing.*

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

- While some note that many people often move to New Plymouth upon retirement, due to its appealing lifestyle, beaches, and walkways, others prefer to stay and retire in the South Taranaki district, with a portion remaining due to financial limitations.
- “There is more to do, and beaches are nicer, there’s also a concrete walkway... so that’s appealing. They can get out and exercise.*
- “The ones [elderly] that aren’t doing so well, the ones that are struggling on the old-age benefit [pension]. They can’t afford to move, they don’t have the luxury of moving to the bigger towns. So they are stuck here.*

Opportunities

- Creating opportunities for the elderly to share their skills and experiences so that they feel a sense of purpose and increases their mental health, while also offering learning experiences for others.
- “All the older people that are out there have done something all their lives. What is it they’ve done, and what can they share?*
- “I think it would give them all purpose. I would give the older person something to do with their time, that sense of purpose that we all need. We all need that, it helps with mental health. It’s an untapped skill.*

Good Mahi in the Community

- Age Concern - provides support to older people to have a healthy lifestyle, full of opportunities and protection against harm.
- Age Concern and local banks - provided coaching for the elderly on using online services during COVID-19. (Age Concern, n.d.).^[27]
- Ngāruahine and Ngāti Ruanui Kaumatua groups - reportedly offer comprehensive support services for the elderly, including health clinics and holistic care such as shopping, medical appointments, and community group activities.
- South Taranaki District Council - provides various facilities, such as parks and libraries, which offer social engagement opportunities free for the elderly.

“The parks, the libraries, you have those things that give [elderly] social contact and somewhere to go for free. So in that sense, we are reasonably well set up for our older population.

“Ngāruahine and Ngāti Ruanui run kaumātua groups. So, I’ve referred some people to them so that they can attend some of those days. The more that we can get for our people, the better and they’ve also referred people to me.

“They’ve got health clinics, they are huge. They have a lot of health workers, they look after the holistic [health] of somebody. So, for that kaumātua or kuia it’s shopping, it’s appointments, it’s their medical. It’s everything really. They are very good.

“The banks did a little bit of coaching with people through COVID-19 to help elderly get online and things. I think Age Concern did a little bit but I don’t know of any bigger scale projects or long term projects.

Theme 29

While many believe some elderly in South Taranaki have set themselves up well for retirement, a significant portion are perceived to be living ‘week to week’ with minimal finances. However, there is a noted reluctance among the elderly to accept help, stemming from a lifetime of managing on their own.

17.5% OF SOUTH TARANAKI RESIDENTS ARE SUPERANNUITANTS AND RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR WELFARE, COMPARED TO 17% NATIONALLY.



Stats NZ, National population estimates: At 30 June 2023

Strengths

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

- Some observe a notable divide in financial health among the district’s elderly community. While a portion is seen to be well-prepared for retirement, having set themselves up well from careers in industries like oil and gas, a significant number live ‘week to week,’ dependent on limited pensions and without savings for retirement.

“The older generation that don’t have a house, have lost their partner, or haven’t saved for retirement... So they’ve hit that age, above 65, and the average of them don’t have that much.

“A lot of them worked in the oil and gas industry, which set them up for life as well.

“Definitely. I have people in my life who have nothing, now on the pension and they are just living week to week.

Framework Tags

No Poverty

Good Health & Wellbeing

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Reduced Inequalities

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Barriers

- Some observe that certain elderly individuals, in an effort to save costs, cut back on expenses like heating, which raises concerns about the potential negative impact of this frugality on their health.
- Some elderly individuals are seen to struggle with asking for and accepting help, rooted in a deep sense of pride and self-reliance, stemming from a lifetime of ‘getting on with it.’

“With elderly, you’ve got a generation of people who see asking for help as something that does not come super easily, and secondly, they don’t complain about it. They just get on with it because there is no such thing as anxiety, you just get on with it. Get the job done.

“We think ‘oh my gosh, they haven’t turned the heater on and the house is freezing’, but they’ve got three or four layers of clothes on.

“That is where my clients are really good scrimpers on that [power]. But is it good or is it detrimental to their health?

“When it comes to asking for help, that generation is really hard to penetrate because it’s a pride factor.

“Not only pride, but they’ve done everything themselves all their lives so why would you ask for help now.

Theme 30

In South Taranaki, while many elderly own their homes, others, initially drawn by historically low rents, may be struggling with rising rental prices. The high costs of retirement villages and properties further limit their options, leading many to live in poor housing conditions or turn to multi-generational living arrangements. Meanwhile, homeowners looking to downsize, face challenges due to the scarcity of suitable, affordable and available housing options.

Strengths

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

- While some believe that many elderly in the district own their homes, there are many who, having been attracted by historically low rents, missed the opportunity to buy and are still renting in their later years. For some, this raises concerns that renting for the elderly, especially for those on unstable or fixed incomes, will only become more challenging as housing issues intensify.

“A lot of the older generation here all own their own homes and so their general quality of life is a lot higher as they’ve lived a better life than a struggling family in South Auckland.”

“Some of the people that they know, in their 70s, are still paying rent and still have unstable incomes.”

“People that are coming through that are now 45, are now reaching 65, obviously 20 years ago now. A lot of those people never bought their own homes, because rent was cheap. So there is not as much wealth coming in for them, that’s where the gap is.”

Barriers

- Some elderly, seeking to downsize their homes because of the effort required to maintain larger properties, face obstacles in finding suitable and affordable options, with many reluctant to take on mortgages at this stage in their lives.
- Some believe the costs of both purchasing homes and retirement villages are financially out of reach for many elderly.

- Some perceive that financial pressures, due to high rents, are leading to multi-generational living arrangements, where the elderly are moving in with their children, or families are consolidating into one household to manage economically.
- Some observe that some elderly in the district live in poor conditions, often residing in old, inadequately insulated homes that are cold and not up to healthy living standards. This situation has led to a desire among some to proactively plan for their retirement to avoid similar challenges.
- Some are concerned that the strict financial eligibility criteria for subsidised housing forces elderly to deplete nearly all their resources before receiving housing assistance.
- Some believe there is a shortage of council-provided housing for the elderly in the district, leading to waitlists for the available units.

“We are very short on the local district council, their flats and houses around the place, and the kaumātua flats. There is a bit of a waiting list for those.”

“For those that do own houses, they want to downsize and pay a bit more. A lot of them don’t want to get into a mortgage again and they, at this stage, are mortgage-free so they have to buy something within their means.”

“Elderly end up setting up with their families, people with one or two-bedroom houses, with mothers, children, everything in it. Their babies will take care of them as a last resort, when they really should not be in that position.”

“A lot of our elderly are actually moving in with their children because the market rents are just horrendous. Yeah, and they can’t survive on that. On a pension.”

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

No Poverty

Good Health & Wellbeing

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“They see older people living on pensions in old draughty homes or renting council flats that are cold, dark, and dingy so [my parents] are wanting to think ahead, so that we can once we hit retirement age, we can buffer those types of things and we’re not sitting shivering over a single heater.”

“The conditions that elderly live in are a lot worse in the South too, they’re a lot more isolated and they’re living in conditions that aren’t very great at all. Just really run down.”

“I can’t believe you’re only allowed \$10,000 to your name. You have to go right down to nothing other than your \$10,000 before you get subsidised housing.”

“Yeah, definitely there is not enough housing for the elderly. They can’t afford to buy, or don’t want to buy. Retirement villages are popping up, but they are unaffordable.”

IN 2018, 32% OF TARANAKI RESIDENTS AGED 60 TO 64 YEARS DID NOT OWN THEIR HOMES, COMPARED TO ONE IN FOUR (25%) IN THIS AGE GROUP NATIONALLY.



Housing in Aotearoa, 2020.

Opportunities

- Providing housing solutions that alleviate financial burdens for the elderly with limited income, potentially through shared land arrangements or co-living with family.

“Creating that space where they don’t have to pay a mortgage or pay rent or that they can continue to live sustainably on super as much as they can. Because they don’t have a lot of extra income at all, because they worked low-income jobs most of their lives.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Housing initiative with Bishops Action Foundation - an emerging concept that aims to connect elderly homeowners with spare rooms and people seeking accommodation, utilising a traditional concept of boarding, to address housing needs in a creative and mutually beneficial way.
- South Taranaki District Council - maintains 72 council houses for the elderly, many of which are reportedly undergoing renovations to exceed healthy home standards.
- Ngaa Rauru, Kaumatua Critical Repairs initiative - ensures that the elderly in the Ngaa Rauru region have access to fundamental amenities like water and heating.

“We only have housing for the elderly. We’ve been doing all our flats up above and beyond the health homes standards. One group had just had whole new kitchens put in, nothing was wrong with them, they were just really outdated.”

“They’ve come up with a really cool concept, which isn’t anything new, but of offering a service where people can actually find accommodation.”

“There’s a lot of elderly with a spare room in their house so that they can be paired up with the right person.”

“We do support initiatives like the kaumātua critical repairs where we actually go out to make sure that there’s water and heating, the more critical basic needs in houses.”

Theme 31

In South Taranaki, despite the expansion of some rest homes, it's believed that long waitlists for residential care and unreliable in-home services are contributing factors leading many elderly, particularly those with financial means, to relocate outside the district upon retirement. This trend is primarily driven by the challenges of rural living and the limited healthcare options available in the district.

IN TARANAKI, THERE ARE 19 REST HOMES, OF WHICH ONLY THREE ARE LOCATED IN SOUTH TARANAKI, WITH TWO IN HĀWERA AND ONE IN ELTHAM.



Eldernet, 2023.

Strengths

- Some perceive that numerous rest homes in the district are undergoing expansions, including planned extensions like dementia wings, to accommodate the growing ageing population.
- Some observe that introducing in-home care and support to the elderly who previously lacked such services can profoundly transform their lives, markedly improving their overall wellbeing and life perspective.

“Helping people with support, when they have not ever had support before, and you help them with that. Their whole life changes, they’ve been at home by themselves, they don’t want to come here, but having somebody in [helps].”

“We have had a number of consents over the last few years for extensions of existing rest homes, so they’re giving rest home overhauls or just making them bigger, obviously to accommodate the older population. So that’s not a bad thing.”

Barriers

- Many observe that as people age, particularly in rural areas of the district, they tend to relocate to larger centres, such as New Plymouth, for greater access to healthcare and services. This is particularly noticeable with farmers and those who are in more rural and distant townships, due to the challenges associated with rural living.
- Some express concerns about the shortage of residential care facilities for the elderly in the district, observing long waitlists and a limited number of available beds, which is seen as further driving families to relocate outside the district for access to care.
- Some believe that the commitment from some existing in-home care services is lacking, with workers frequently failing to show up for care, leaving patients without the necessary support.
- Some believe that the shift from regular housework assistance to a needs-based model for in-home care is leading to increased isolation among some elderly who previously relied on these interactions for social connection.

“So you don’t want to get old and need rest home care if you live in Hāwera because you probably won’t get into a rest home in Hāwera.”

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Good Health & Wellbeing

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Opportunities

- Enabling elderly individuals to live independently in their homes for as long as possible due to the limited availability of hospital beds and retirement homes.

“They also know that there’s not the hospital beds or rest homes as people continue to live longer, so they are thinking ‘we need to be able to make sure that we can live in our house for as long as possible.’”

“A lot of people, especially farmers, they’re getting a bit older and retiring to New Plymouth, which is North Taranaki, for better access to doctors. So if you have the option, that does happen.”

“You do hear a number of people that leave South Taranaki to move to New Plymouth because the services are available. But I imagine other provinces suffer the same thing.”

“If you’re elderly and you’re having to face the prospect of putting your husband into care and you need hospital-level care, and there isn’t a bed in your local area, and you’re going to have to travel all the time to visit him, it makes sense to move areas where you can put him in a facility close by.”

“There’s a lack of services and the commitment from the existing services, the people just don’t turn up. There’s never a phone call to say why or that they might be coming tomorrow. It’s pretty miserable for some of them.”

“If a person had someone come in to do the housework once a week, that was one person they could talk to, to build some exterior networks, but they don’t do just housework anymore, it’s got to be more of a need. I can see more people becoming isolated because of that.”

Theme 32

Some observe that despite a lingering stigma hindering full understanding and support for dementia, there is a growing awareness and early detection of memory conditions, particularly as the ageing population increases. Meanwhile, there remains a gap in adequately recognising and addressing mental health challenges in the elderly.

Strengths

- Some observe that there is increasing awareness of dementia, particularly as the current 'baby boomer' generation ages.
- Despite its inherent challenges, some believe that early detection of dementia is ultimately positive because it allows people to receive help sooner.
- Some believe that creating accepting and understanding environments, where 'people just get on with it,' significantly boosts the confidence and sense of normalcy for people with dementia.

"Being picked up early is a good thing for them and for us [as support providers] to be involved. Sometimes people will plod along not knowing there's something wrong."

"We're getting more [people] because we're coming up to the baby boomers and there's more awareness. Definitely more awareness out there [of dementia]."

"So it's just kind of accepted, isn't it, and people just get on with it. I think that's what helps people's confidence and things, because they just feel normal."

"When they're here, we don't talk about it a lot; that's not all we talk about. Everybody's accepted for who they are, and it doesn't matter if they forget something, or they get something wrong, or they repeat something because everyone's in the same boat."

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

- Some perceive that while progress is being made in addressing dementia, there remains a gap in adequately dealing with mental health issues among the elderly.

"We're getting there in terms of dementia, but I don't think we're there yet in terms of mental health for the elderly."

"Mental health for the elderly probably isn't recognised or treated properly. The council and stuff, through ACC, try to help."

Barriers

- Some believe that the number of people with dementia will rise significantly in the coming years, partly due to the ageing baby boomer population and the elderly living longer.
- Some perceive a significant stigma associated with dementia, which hinders understanding and support for those in the early stages of the condition, as public perception often jumps to extreme scenarios, such as end-of-life care, rather than understanding the gradual progression of the disease.

"It's growing. So currently, nationally, we're sitting at around 70,000 people living with dementia. But that's set to increase to 170,000 by 2050. That's not that far away and it's going to [be] more than double."

"That's partly because we're an ageing society, and the longer we live, the higher the risk of the development of dementia."

"The stigma around dementia memory concerns is huge, and we're trying to break that down."

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

NATIONALLY, APPROXIMATELY 70,000 PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED BY DEMENTIA, WITH PROJECTIONS INDICATING THIS NUMBER COULD RISE TO 170,000 BY 2050.



Alzheimers New Zealand, 2023.

IN THE TARANAKI REGION, ALZHEIMERS NEW ZEALAND EMPLOYS THREE PART-TIME COMMUNITY ADVISORS TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THOSE AFFECTED.

Alzheimers New Zealand, 2023.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Alzheimers Taranaki - collaborates closely with the mental health team for the elderly, geriatricians, and the elderly community's support services, ensuring a comprehensive support system for elderly needs.
- Alzheimers Taranaki - focuses on engaging people with dementia through socially and cognitively stimulating day programmes, also known as 'club', to boost their confidence and interaction. These programmes not only benefit the clients by reducing isolation and enhancing mental engagement, but they also provide essential respite and support for carers.
- Alzheimers Taranaki - provides specialised cognitive stimulation therapy (CST) for people with early-stage dementia, focusing on activities like memory-stimulating games and heart-healthy exercises, designed to enhance brain function and overall wellbeing.

- Alzheimers Taranaki - dedicated to improving the quality of life for people living with dementia, focusing on extending and enhancing the quality of their lives for as long as possible.
- Dementia Pathways - a referral tool for Health and Social Care Professionals to assist them in supporting people living with dementia and their families.

"There's education for carers. We work really closely with the mental health team for the elderly, the geriatricians, older persons, [and] community support services. We've got a really good team that works around us."

"There is a good system in place for GPs to make referrals. It's called Dementia Pathways, and it's really easy for them to refer to us."

"The idea of these programmes, and the day programme, is that we're trying to draw people out and increase that confidence again and get them to interact."

"By running these sorts of things, our day programme is for our clients, and a lot of the day programme is socialisation. It's so important for them, and it also is about giving the carer a break, that day break."

"Yes, it really has that twofold effect. It's great for the people with dementia to come along, and they get involved and have social time, and it's cognitively stimulating. So there's lots of activity and things, but it also gives the family and whānau that time for themselves."

Alzheimers Taranaki

“About five years ago, Elf ended up being on his own. My sister had been living with him, but she wanted to move on and do other things, and one of the [questions] was ‘what’s dad gonna do?...The Alzheimer’s Club was presented as an option for Elf. Elf didn’t want to go to begin with, but once [he was] here, wow.

“Last year was his 96th Birthday, fell on a club day, he chose to come here instead of having a family lunch. So it’s really important to him and he loves the activities here.

“This is our major social interaction in a week, it is so important. Elf has done really well with his dementia. There’s only really been gradual change.

“With me being here for one day, [that is] one day that Adrienne can spend on her own without having to worry about what I’m doing. It just gives a little bit of a break for her.

“Alzheimer’s volunteers and management are very into understanding us, making us be the best people we can, whether it is the activities they give us to do, if something comes up, they’ll quite happily discuss it with our caregivers. [My caregiver] has the opportunity to learn behind the scenes what might be happening to me that I don’t know myself. So they do all that, and they are so professional about it. Many of them are nurses, so they understand what people need.

“Each client is treated exactly the same. We have documents that we obviously have to do, which includes care plans that are person-base. Whānau, family [are] involved in the initial get together that we have, we have a visit, it’s not an assessment, it’s just a first visit we do. So we do get a feel of where the people might be on, on their journey for a start [and] what support they might need.

“Our job is to keep them at home for as long as possible with support, with their carers, that their carers are fine, and that they’re safe.

“We try wherever possible to help put things in place so that they can manage safely. It’s our role to try and talk to the families and the whānau and talk about options and what they could do, but at the end of the day, it’s their choice, and every person is different, and it’s got to be what’s right for them.

“We have a lot of volunteers who go and pick people up because obviously we’re having to collect people from such a vast area that we can’t send vans everywhere. So we rely on volunteer drivers. We could not do it and get the people we do here without them, definitely. So that really does help, and that’s something we’re always looking for.

“One thing with dementia is that people really live in the moment, I think it really makes you appreciate things a bit more, you feel really privileged to be able to do what we do, really.



This phase captures themes that are relevant for the South Taranaki community across all life stages.

Good Health & Wellbeing

Theme 33—In South Taranaki, many perceive the mental health system as ‘broken,’ characterised by limited local providers, extensive wait-lists, slow response times, growing caseloads, and inadequate follow-up care, making timely crisis support significantly challenging. Additionally, there is a belief that the system’s predominantly clinical, one-size-fits-all approach and heavy reliance on ‘quick fix’ solutions like medication and CBT may not effectively address diverse and deeper mental health concerns.

Theme 34—Some observe that while the mental healthcare system has traditionally relied on clinical expertise, the importance of lived experiences and peer-based support appears to be growing. Despite some reservations and concerns about peer-led support, it’s believed that peers, especially those with experiences similar to the people they support, provide deep empathy and validation.

Theme 35—In South Taranaki, many believe the GP system is under significant strain. With limited practices, massive wait times, rising costs, and staffing issues, coupled with a growing reliance on telehealth, people are increasingly turning to online platforms like Healthline and the Emergency Department, or delaying care altogether. Amidst these challenges, many commend Iwi/Iwi providers for stepping up by providing affordable medical services in the district.

Theme 36—In South Taranaki, many perceive ongoing challenges in accessing specialist and hospital care. Despite the presence of some outreach posts, the shortage of local specialist services, extended wait times, and declining services at Hāwera Hospital lead many residents to seek care outside the district or turn to private options. While district health board boundaries have become more flexible, challenges around accessing healthcare in neighbouring regions still exist.

Theme 40—Some believe that although mental wellbeing has improved for South Taranaki farmers, they still confront significant challenges, such as unfair criticism, declining milk prices, tough working conditions, and profound isolation and loneliness. These pressures lead some farmers to grapple with feelings of failure, and in the absence of traditional community gathering spots like pubs, some may turn to harmful coping mechanisms to alleviate distress.

Theme 51—In South Taranaki, many are believed to lack foundational cooking knowledge, including skills in meal planning and budget cooking. With this limited understanding, it’s believed that people may assume that cooking is complex and time-consuming, causing some to choose quicker, more processed foods instead of home-cooked meals. Additionally, although vegetable gardens are common in the district, it is believed that many residents lack both the knowledge and the time for gardening.

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Theme 37—South Taranaki is believed to be increasingly attracting residents, drawn by its free from hustle-and-bustle lifestyle and great climate. The district’s proximity to diverse natural resources like coastlines and reserves, while often under-utilised, also adds to its charm. Despite these positives, there’s a perception that the district may be less appealing to newcomers, primarily due to its limited social and recreational options, which fall short compared to those in New Plymouth.

Theme 38—In South Taranaki, although travel is considered ‘normal,’ it poses significant challenges for many. The district’s geographical spread and the costs associated with travelling impose a considerable financial burden, especially on low-income families. For residents without cars or licences, the limited options and inconvenient schedules of public transport increase the issue. Consequently, some residents resort to extensive planning and consolidating trips to minimise travel expenses.

Theme 45—Some observe that, although social and emergency housing seems to be available in South Taranaki, many, particularly single individuals, find accessing stable and quality housing challenging. It’s believed that those who do secure social housing risk displacement from their established communities, as limited availability within the district often necessitates relocation to nearby townships.

Theme 46—In South Taranaki, despite rentals appearing more affordable compared to urban areas, many note a growing housing crisis, characterised by a severe shortage of rentals and escalating costs, making rentals increasingly unaffordable and unattainable for many. The impacts of this crisis are believed to ripple throughout the community, with many resorting to overcrowding, temporary accommodation, or subpar conditions, clinging tightly to what they have due to limited alternatives.

Theme 47—In South Taranaki, many believe that houses have historically been more affordable, which has attracted numerous new residents to the district. However, due to limited availability, escalating prices, strict mortgage requirements, and rising living costs, the feasibility of owning a home is becoming increasingly out of reach for many. As a result, some are believed to be opting for multi-generational living as a means to share housing costs.

Theme 48—In South Taranaki, although housing development is observed in certain areas, challenges such as high development costs, constrained infrastructure, and restrictive new land-use policies, which are environmentally beneficial, are believed to hinder potential expansion. Additionally, despite awareness of coastal erosion and climate change threats, the appeal of coastal living persists, with some appearing willing to overlook these hazards, especially if they are not imminent.

This phase captures themes that are relevant for the South Taranaki community across all life stages.

Sustainable Cities & Communities (continued)

Theme 55—While South Taranaki is seen as a closely-knit community where everyone knows everyone, some believe this close bond can present challenges, especially for newcomers who may encounter a sense of ‘cliqueness’ among residents. Despite this, many believe the district has an inclusive spirit, with schools, libraries, and community events playing key roles in fostering connections. However, there are growing concerns about the increasing sense of isolation and loneliness, as social interactions appear to be declining.

Theme 56—In South Taranaki, many believe organisations heavily depend on volunteers; however, recruiting and retaining them is an ongoing challenge. With increasing work demands and ageing volunteers, some believe that much of the responsibility falls on a few devoted volunteers, raising concerns about volunteer burnout and succession. Despite these challenges, the ‘circle of appreciation’ endures, with many people passionately serving communities that once supported them.

Theme 59—While Hāwera experiences notable rejuvenation efforts, other townships struggle as earthquake legislations are seen to impact numerous buildings. High maintenance and strengthening costs have led many commercial property owners to ‘watch the clock tick’, posing a risk to the district’s iconic buildings as buildings fall into disrepair. This issue is exacerbated by the trend of people living in former commercial buildings, further straining building upkeep and complicating efforts to maintain the district’s appearance.

Theme 60—Eltham, celebrated as a ‘town of firsts’, is well-known for its strong community spirit and distinctive lifestyle, enhanced by its affordability and proximity to New Plymouth and natural surroundings. While some believe the town risks being overlooked due to its position between districts, others believe it provides broader opportunities for youth. Despite these attributes, Eltham still faces challenges, such as an understated township, housing shortages, and significant unemployment.

Theme 61—While Ōpunake is widely known for its picturesque coastline and recreational amenities, its ‘in-between’ location between Hāwera and New Plymouth is perceived to present some challenges. Given this, the community is believed to have fostered a unique sense of independence and resilience, emphasised by a proactive ‘get on with it’ attitude. These traits, along with a deep sense of community, are notable characteristics associated with Ōpunake.

Theme 62—Hāwera is perceived by some as a friendly community, featuring flourishing community gardens and substantial recreation facilities. While there are concerns about the lack of entertainment options outside business hours, others believe Hāwera offers everything a small town needs. Additionally, the town is seen as having significant upside potential, driven by the presence of major employers and the development of new industrial areas and subdivisions.

Theme 63—Pātea is perceived by many as facing numerous challenges, including economic hardship and generational unemployment, largely linked to the closure of the freezing works. These challenges are further compounded by limited services, youth facilities, and transportation options. Despite these barriers, Pātea is also regarded as a beautiful town that is becoming increasingly attractive to newcomers due to its affordability.

Theme 64—In Waverley and Waitōtara, while there is a strong sense of community support, challenges like limited employment and recreational facilities persist. Being situated between regions, these towns can feel ‘left in between’, overlooked, and not fully integrated into the South Taranaki district, with many residents preferring to travel to Whanganui for goods and services.

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Theme 39—In South Taranaki, farming is acknowledged as a key industry offering diverse and well-paying career opportunities. However, the perception that it primarily involves ‘milking cows’ and requires newcomers to start from the bottom is deterring some from entering the industry. This perception, coupled with high land and succession planning costs, and the younger generation’s increasing preference for urban jobs, heightens succession uncertainty for many farmers nearing retirement.

Theme 57—In South Taranaki, the business landscape is perceived as facing challenges, including a significant number of closed shops, competition with chain stores and online shopping, impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, and a limited diversity of businesses. However, some notice an increasing number of new businesses emerging, alongside a flourishing arts community, both of which are positively contributing to the district’s economic landscape.

Theme 58—While some believe that tourism in South Taranaki has shown signs of growth, the district largely remains ‘undiscovered’ and under-promoted as a destination. Although cultural opportunities exist for the tourism sector, there are strong reservations about commercialising the district’s deep Māori traditions and history, with many advocating for their protection rather than promotion.

This phase captures themes that are relevant for the South Taranaki community across all life stages.

Climate Action

Theme 41—While some argue that New Zealand currently boasts low emissions intensity, with many farmers committed to caring for their land, others believe that continuous effort is imperative to prevent ‘falling behind’. However, challenges such as increasing regulatory demands, complex documentation, conflicting messages, and a perceived technology ‘tunnel vision’ is seen to create uncertainty and stress among farmers. This is believed to leave many hesitant to adopt even minor changes due to concerns about potential financial setbacks.

Affordable & Clean Energy

Theme 42—In South Taranaki, there is noticeable interest in renewable energy initiatives, ranging from large-scale offshore wind farming to smaller projects like solar-powered farms. Many believe the offshore wind farming industry offers significant opportunities for the district, including reducing emissions and increasing employment. However, concerns exist about the potential impact this industry may have on marine ecosystems.

Theme 49—In South Taranaki, many believe that power prices have doubled, placing a financial strain on numerous families. These increases, coupled with colder conditions and homes often lacking adequate insulation, have led to a rise in “power poverty.” As a result, residents are increasingly combining rooms or using extra blankets instead of heating to reduce expenses. Meanwhile, others are turning to wood burners as a more accessible and cost-effective alternative for heating.

Life on Land

Theme 43—While it is believed that South Taranaki has experienced significant environmental changes due to past farming and forestry practices, the district is noted for its strong commitment to environmental restoration. Many credit this commitment to the significant efforts of local conservation groups and farmers who are seen to be actively working toward restoring the land, primarily through riparian planting and wetland rejuvenation.

Theme 44—In South Taranaki, a rising passion for conservation and enhanced pest control efforts is leading to a noticeable resurgence of rare and native species, especially within pest-free zones. Despite this progress and the growing acceptance of pest management, certain methods, such as feral cat control and the use of 1080, continue to spark debates. Consequently, many are seen to persist in using labour-intensive techniques, which often yield minimal results despite immense effort.

Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure

Theme 50—In South Taranaki, many note that the district suffers from inconsistent or at times, ‘nonexistent’ internet and cell phone connectivity, particularly in rural areas. This combined with the high cost of internet connectivity often forces families to forgo these services or prioritise other essential expenses. This is believed to substantially disadvantage people, affecting their access to education, employment, essential services, and communication, notably in emergency situations.

Reduced Inequalities

Theme 52—Many perceive that progress has been made in the disability sector, notably through the introduction of Enabling Good Lives principles, individualised funding, and efforts from the Council. However, ongoing challenges, including limited disability awareness and underrepresentation in employment, as well as barriers in infrastructure, housing, and transportation, continue to affect those with disabilities. Nevertheless, some believe that improvements in carer support, such as increased remuneration, have helped alleviate carer stress.

Theme 54—In South Taranaki, while older generations may show more resistance, many, particularly younger generations, are believed to be embracing Māori culture. This is evident in the community’s growing cultural awareness and inclusivity, as well as in the integration of Māori culture into school curriculums and organisational practices. However, challenges such as racism, socio-economic disparities, and the impact of colonial history suggest that further progress is still necessary.

Gender Equality

Theme 53—In South Taranaki, a generational divide in attitudes toward gender diversity is observed, with younger generations appearing more receptive to change. Although traditional views and gender pay gaps persist, an increasing number of women are seen to be stepping into leadership, managerial, and traditionally male-dominated roles, such as farming. This shift, driven by many women setting strong examples, is thought to encourage others to pursue similar success.

Theme 33

In South Taranaki, many perceive the mental health system as ‘broken,’ characterised by limited local providers, extensive wait-lists, slow response times, growing caseloads, and inadequate follow-up care, making timely crisis support significantly challenging. Additionally, there is a belief that the system’s predominantly clinical, one-size-fits-all approach and heavy reliance on ‘quick fix’ solutions like medication and CBT may not effectively address diverse and deeper mental health concerns.

THE MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT AND BRIEF CARE TEAM IN TARANAKI RESPONDS TO OVER 450 CALLS PER MONTH, WITH A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF THESE BEING SELF-REFERRALS OR CALLS FROM CONCERNED WHĀNAU.



450+

Te Whatu Ora Health Taranaki, June 2023.

FROM JULY 2020 TO JUNE 2021, 81% OF NON-URGENT MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS WERE SEEN WITHIN THREE WEEKS THROUGH THE TARANAKI DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD.

Ministry of Health, OIA Request response, 2022.

Barriers

- Some perceive the mental health system as ‘broken,’ extended wait-lists and non-existent or lack of local providers leaving people desperate, without timely support and nowhere to turn for refuge or professional help during critical times.
- Some believe that obtaining crisis support for mental health within the district is a significant barrier due to slow response times, as services often travel from North Taranaki.
- Some express concerns that the increasing demands on mental health services are overwhelming existing staff and resources, with a view that the situation may deteriorate further as societal pressures intensify.

- Some believe that certain mental health spaces, like the Te Puna Waiora care unit for people with acute mental illness, weren’t designed with a trauma-informed approach. This raises concerns about the sense of safety these spaces provide, which can hinder the healing process for those with trauma.
- Some perceive that the follow-up and ongoing support for people reintegrating into the community after receiving mental health care is insufficient, potentially causing them to struggle or relapse without adequate assistance.
- Some perceive that while the health system aims to be whānau and community-focused, its current structure is predominantly clinical and adopts a one-size-fits-all approach, which may not effectively address the diverse and complex needs of people in mental health care.
- Although building relationships and cooperation between clinical and non-clinical services is seen as important, establishing trust is believed to be challenging due to differing views on qualifications and expertise, with some clinicians being more willing to collaborate than others.
- Some express concern about the prevalent reliance on medications and quick-fix therapeutic approaches like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). While these methods might offer immediate relief, they often don’t address the deeper, underlying causes of some mental health issues. Additionally, there’s a perception that although CBT provides immediate intervention, its long-term effectiveness in healing trauma and attachment damage might be counterproductive.
- Some consider the treatment for suicide as ‘shocking,’ with reports of patients being sent home too soon from hospitals due to a lack of beds.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- Some believe that the shift of mental health clinicians from public to private practice, driven by higher earnings, creates barriers for those who cannot afford the high fees of private care, particularly during tough economic times.
- Some perceive that the constantly changing landscape of mental health support is daunting, with concerns that some care providers may struggle to continuously adapt.

“The crisis service, for instance, will take, say, 45 minutes to get somebody down there just because they are based in New Plymouth hospital. Its geography as well needs to be recognised as a significant barrier.

“Our whole mental health system here is totally broken, it’s totally severed.

“Mental health is a huge issue here in Hāwera, and to access support for people with mental health [issues], [or] disability, it’s dreadful, it’s a tragedy actually. From our organisation, when we try to support people, it’s very hard for us to find support for them.

“The workload that myself and the other staff are getting here is going to get doubled. Yesterday I signed up seven new ones in one day. I’m booked out. So, going forward, we’re going to get worse.

“The spaces that we’ve provided for people to find their wellbeing again, weren’t configured with a trauma-informed lens.

“So I’m very familiar with our residential base in Taranaki for clinical support for mental health. That’s Te Puna Wai Ora, a hospital here in New Plymouth. So it is not a very nice place.

“Yeah, it’s not somewhere where I tend to feel very safe, and the reality is when trauma is part of who we are, in terms of our experience and the damage that we carry, unless we are in environments where we feel safe and secure, then it’s impossible for us to get better.

“There would not be the follow-up support that was needed; they try to cope, and that eventually the wheel would come off. Those situations were, I think, really preventable.

“I think that’s really key, particularly around mental health support; the environment is so utterly constantly changing, the pace, it’s nuts.

“Key to those reports is that they indicate how important it is that clinical and non-clinical services cooperate and work well together. That turns out to be a bit of a challenge.

“There’s not been a high trust environment there, and that’s partly to do with ego, and partly to do with fear of these people wanting to do a better job than us, or pretend that they are, but we’re actually the ones who are trained to do this and are qualified.

“We’ve got really obsessed with the quick fix approaches to the symptoms, rather than the root causes of those problems.

“So we are obsessed with [CBT] because it’s quick and cheap, and we look like we’re doing something but it isn’t effectual in addressing people’s more deep-seated stuff. In fact, it can be just really traumatising.

“So anybody that has mental health concerns or anything like that, to gain or access any form of mental health therapy through our DHBs and Community Services, is just non-existent. You’ve either got a massive waiting list or they just keep throwing, I suppose, is a quick fix medication [at you]. The actual medication only does a part of the work. It’s the rest of it, the therapy, that actually helps as well.

“The treatment of it [suicide]. We’ve got a really good friend whose dad’s tried a few times and he tried the last time, and they were literally in hospital, New Plymouth mental health unit, and there was a shortage of beds so two days in they said you can go home if you want. It was shocking.

“So a lot of our mental health clinicians have decided to go to private practice. That’s my interpretation of it because there’s more money there than working in the hospital.

“If they can’t afford \$180 [for a] session to see a private clinician, you know, especially in these tough times, what do they do? They’re just we’ve got families that are really struggling, let alone with how our youth [are] struggling and our whole mental health system has just gone.

“The health system itself is supposed to be whānau focussed and community-based focussed, so having a clinical model is not necessarily the be-all and end-all. We need to think outside of the square.

“Mental health structure is such that it’s still very clinically focused. And so it’s a one-size-fits-all kind of model. So when we’re talking about youth waiting on a waitlist, for example, we’re talking about a whole range of different complexities waiting on the same waitlist, from mild to moderate, [from] anxiety to depression, that one-size-fits-all is not really the ideal for dealing with that.

IN SOUTH TARANAKI, THE RATE OF MENTAL HEALTH NEED IS THE 6TH HIGHEST IN NEW ZEALAND, WITH 5.3% OF THE LOCAL POPULATION HAVING ACCESSED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT, WHICH IS HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 4.8%.



Toi Foundation, Regional Research Report, 2021.

Opportunities

- Ensuring wider community responsibility in supporting the wellbeing of people, by recognising that clinical support is crucial, yet only one part of a broader collective effort.
- Promoting the training and recruitment of local support workers to ensure effective and prompt support for those requiring help.
- Providing free mental health services to enable greater community engagement, especially for those unable to afford private practice clinicians.
- Offering face-to-face mental health support to provide more supportive and reassuring care that encourages openness. This is believed to surpass the level of connection possible over the phone, especially in vulnerable times.
- Creating environments where people feel safe and secure, which is seen as essential for trauma recovery, so that they can heal rather than perpetuate their state of ‘fight, flight or freeze.’
- Connecting people and families with lived experiences of mental health issues together, enabling them to support, listen to each other, and exchange insights on navigating personal and systemic challenges.

“They understand, they find ways to work together and even hearing someone, feeling heard is really important. So connecting people who are suffering from various mental health issues and connecting whānau to support each other is an absolute no-brainer in my mind.

“We couldn’t have done more, we could just have pointed fingers and said, ‘well, it was somebody else’s fault’. But overall, it’s the community’s responsibility to help and to hold people well... Clinical supports form a part of that, but they are only one piece of that.

“We have to feel safe as a pre-determinant for getting better. If we don’t feel safe and secure, then we won’t get better. We’re just [in] fight, flight, [or] freezing all the time.

“When you’re dealing with someone who has mental health concerns, face to face is so much more supportive and beneficial because they can see your body language, they can hear your voice. What they hear in our voice can be totally different [from] what our body language is.

“That’s how they can feel comfortable and rest assured that they can open up with you and say what’s actually happening for them in vulnerable times, rather than a voice over the phone.

“So that’s kind of been our approach, we actively look for and train and raise up support workers throughout the region, but particularly, we aggressively market for people to help in those places where there is that need. So we can say ‘actually, we do have someone who lives quite close to you who can visit’ and that seems to work quite well.

“Unless you’re part of an employee’s EAP scheme or things like that, the general public cannot afford to be forking out for clinicians and private practice. So keeping the access to be able to get the services free of charge gets more of a buy-in from the community and the members of the community that are needing help and support.

“It’s about individuals who have mental health issues supporting each other and whānau supporting each other too because actually there is whānau who are struggling with mental health, where to get help, how to navigate the system and actually, when they connect, it is invaluable.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Taranaki Retreat - operates on a continuous growth model, through self-reflection and examining each client story to help inform the organisation's development.
- Taranaki Retreat - offers a supportive therapy programme where individuals or whānau are connected with qualified psychotherapists. Participants co-fund their sessions based on what they can afford, with the retreat covering the remaining costs, ensuring sustained therapy for as long as needed.
- Workwise - delivers mental health and employment services that are within the community, closer to the community, whānau and people.
- Workwise - utilises an Individual Placement Support (IPS) approach to offer integrated mental health and employment support, maintaining a low caseload limit of 20 to ensure a high-quality service for clients.
- Yellow Brick Road - facilitates whānau support groups in Eltham and Manaia, providing platforms for 18 to 20 people to meet monthly and foster natural, supportive relationships; these groups now operate independently, with Yellow Brick Road available for assistance as needed.

“That’s an aspect of what we have at the very core of our whole way of being, is that the organisation intentionally has to constantly heal itself by looking at every story, and then re-incorporating what that story tells us, in terms of how we grow and develop and change.”

“The way our organisation is structured is that we have to operate this constant growth model.

“One piece of what we do is provide a supportive therapy programme. So that means that in our support process, we identify together, for example, psychotherapy would be helpful. Then we will connect up with a psychotherapist who checks out, and who is good, and we will arrange for that therapy to enter into an agreement.

“So we’d say how much can you afford to pay [per] session, if it’s \$10, awesome. We don’t want this to put stress on you. So you contribute \$10, the Counsellor offers the session at \$100, we’ll find the other \$90 and we’ll do that for as long as you need the therapy.

“We feel like we’re on the leading edge of how to do that because we do that inherently. That’s the nature of what we do.

“With IPS also they can only carry a caseload of 20 at a time because that’s the best practice, 25 max. So that means that there’s only those 20 people in each of those regions that are able to access the service really, because we’ve only got that one person.

“We run whānau support groups, and they work really well. They are now independent of Yellow Brick Road, so we are around if they need us but they have autonomy.

“We have one in Eltham and one in Manaia. They have 18 to 20 people that meet up once a month, and it’s great. They love it and they’re really beautiful, natural relationships that support each other on a day-to-day [and] week-to-week basis.”

“We have to feel safe as a pre-determinant for getting better. If we don’t feel safe and secure, then we won’t get better. We’re just [in] fight, flight, [or] freezing all the time.”

Workshop participant

Yellow Brick Road

“We support people with self care, to build resilience, to have the energy to look after their loved ones, and also to think about how they support their loved ones in a way that’s really effective.”

“Our starting point is usually a journey of self care. It’s really powerful when we come in to support someone whose life has revolved around someone else’s wellbeing for a long period of time, and to help them focus on their own wellbeing is a really great place to start. You can’t support someone effectively, if you’re struggling yourself. So we give people the permission to look after themselves really, because we’re working with people who are generally really selfless.”

“We do education, so we help people understand mental illness, for lack of a better phrase, diagnosis, those sorts of things that can throw people a lot and can be very, very hard to make sense of.”

“Often services are heavily influenced by clinicians opinions, and clinical assessment. But whānau have their own view and that’s really important.”

“Whānau support is designed around a non-clinical model. So we consider that whānau are first and foremost the experts when it comes to what they need and what their loved one needs.”

“We still have a medical model quite hardwired into our mental health system. It’s about individuals who are unwell and providing treatment to them. That’s not really how wellbeing works.”

“A big challenge we have is that when whānau come to us, they’ve often already been on a really long journey of trying to get help for their loved ones, and they probably haven’t even considered getting help for themselves. Often things have gotten pretty bad before people have been able to get help, and often there’s still a bit of a wait to get those services. The opportunity to help people earlier on and prevent the need for more complex and invasive and intense services would be great. But it’s very much a work in progress.”

“So we want to change our focus [from] unwell individuals to well communities, to people that have the skills to support each other to be well.”

“It’s really natural for us to partner with organisations that are supporting people who are accessing mainstream mental health services. It’s a great way to collaborate because often whānau and their loved one have different worldviews and have different opinions on things. So it’s great for them to have their own support and for that support to be able to, to come together to get good outcomes for everyone involved.”

“South Taranaki is a great place for collegial cooperation, all the organisation’s are really generous with sharing resources and work to the betterment of the people in that community. People pull together really well and cooperate really beautifully.”



Theme 34

Some observe that while the mental healthcare system has traditionally relied on clinical expertise, the importance of lived experiences and peer-based support appears to be growing. Despite some reservations and concerns about peer-led support, it's believed that peers, especially those with experiences similar to the people they support, provide deep empathy and validation.

Strengths

- Some feel that the 'peer element' in providing support is crucial, as people often show greater respect and trust towards support workers who have 'done the hard yards' and navigated through similar challenges.
- There is a perception that support workers with lived experiences, particularly of situations like anxiety or prison, are able to deeply empathise with, understand, and validate the experiences of those they assist, as their own journeys through similar challenges enable them to authentically 'get it.'
- Some observe that some people who previously received support are now using their lived experiences to help others, highlighting a transformative shift from being recipients to providers of support.

"He works with his peer support worker, he's got someone now who he holds with this mana and self-esteem. So that peer element is crucial [because] he knows that he managed to control his violence and to learn how to respect women properly."

"He works with his peer support worker, he's got someone now who he holds with this mana and self-esteem. So that peer element is crucial [because] he knows that he managed to control his violence and to learn how to respect women properly."

"I think when you're working with people, if you've got a similar experience, you have authenticity. You get it."

"If you're talking about anxiety, or you're talking about the thing that you've done in prison or outside, there's a reflection that I'm going to understand."

"He's done the hard yards; he now knows and understands, and suddenly this boy has got this person who he realises, validates, who understands his life journey, and what it meant to be in that situation."

"The magic of starting out, being at the receiving end, and then ending up being at the supporting end, is the dream that we live."

"I had a pretty rough life and I actually wanted to do something for people who've been through some of what I've been through. So often, when I'm working with people, I will say, I know 'what you mean, I know what you're going through'. I always reiterate to them, 'I don't say this unless I have been through it'."

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Barriers

- It is believed that some are cautious of peer-led organisations due to past negative experiences, particularly in instances where these groups have failed to provide adequate training and supervision to their support workers.
- Some express concerns regarding the emotional resilience of people with lived experience who are in roles to support others, particularly in mental health and suicide, fearing that their involvement might unintentionally 'bring stuff up' and resurface challenges for these people.

"They're all putting their hands up and mental health strategy and suicide strategy nationally are all looking at these lived experience people but it could bring up lots of concerns rather than support."

"There's plenty of examples where peer-led organisations don't do their share properly. Don't train and supervise their people properly, and stuff people up."

"If you've had depression, then how strong are you standing on your own solid ground, yet going in and supporting others with depression? We don't want to re-litigate something. So that's a real nervousness around the table at the moment."

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

- Some believe that clinical evaluations for support, often made without personal interaction, can disadvantage some people as they are judged solely based on documentation, while an approach based on lived experience is seen to provide more effective support through direct, face-to-face engagement.

"People get disadvantaged because all they're seeing is a person on paper and not face to face. Whereas the lived experience person has had that face to face conversation, and they've been with them, walked with them, and know them. You get two different outcomes."

Opportunities

- Ensuring peer support organisations have more than 'just good intentions,' which includes having clear policies, service specifications, and responsible models to ensure genuine and safe assistance for those in need.
- Using personal experiences and challenges to guide and inspire others, including family members, towards 'a better way of life.'

"You've got to do a good job really, if you're operating in that space. It's not good enough just to get a whole bunch of people together and go, 'hey, let's go and help people'. I think that's probably, to be fair, a lot of the experience.

"Then there's, how do you operate? What are your policies? What's your service spec? What are your service models? Are you a bunch of sweet do-gooders who are going to do people harm and then it will be my fault?

"How do we use the stuff that we've been through to divert ourselves into a better way of life, not just for you firstly, but also your partner, or your children.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Taranaki Retreat - provides a peer-led support environment for people and families dealing with challenging mental health situations, offering residential stays and wraparound care without cost or formal referral requirements.
- Yellow Brick Road, Building Bridges Programme - in collaboration with Te Pūkenga, the Building Bridges Programme aimed to enable people with lived experiences to have sessions with second-year nursing students. It is unclear whether this workshop is currently still running in the district.

"So in a way, we wanted to recreate that Ronald McDonald House experience, we wanted to provide an environment that was peer-led, based on that experience of what it was to be around others who were dealing with similar [issues] in their lives, and how helpful that was.

"So that site has a host whānau space where a family lives residentially and is provided the wraparound care. Whānau are staying there right now, providing that peer environment.

"We wanted it to be freely available, without barriers, that you wouldn't need a GP referral, that it wouldn't cost you any money, and that it would be safe and secure.

"Us and Like Minds, who closed down, we collaborated with them and WIT (Te Pūkenga); we did this thing called Building Bridges. So, we find family members and people with lived experience, tāngata whaiora, with various amounts of experiences and we support them to go to WIT and do sessions with the year two nursing students. That's one of our main anti-stigma workshops that's worked really well.

"I think when you're working with people, if you've got a similar experience, you have authenticity. You get it.

Workshop participant

Theme 35

In South Taranaki, many believe the GP system is under significant strain. With limited practices, massive wait times, rising costs, and staffing issues, coupled with a growing reliance on telehealth, people are increasingly turning to online platforms like Healthline and the Emergency Department, or delaying care altogether. Amidst these challenges, many commend Iwi/Iwi providers for stepping up by providing affordable medical services in the district.

Strengths

- Some perceive that Iwi healthcare providers are ‘stepping up’ to bridge communities’ healthcare gaps at an affordable rate, by establishing their own health services and clinics in various locations.

“So our Iwi are stepping up in that space, Ngāti Ruanui and Ngāruahine. Ngāti Ruanui have created their own health service. One at the front of the hospital in Hāwera and they have a doctor that goes down there [to Pātea] one or two days, and they also operate online.

“As far as the Iwi side of things, [it’s] much better; a lot of people are now changing or moving to the Iwi Doctor service because it’s more affordable and more accessible.

“A GP in Hāwera, in particular, you can be waiting to see for 3 to 4 months and pay \$60 just for one visit. If you go through the likes of Ngāti Ruanui, it’s only \$18 and about a two-week wait.

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

- Some perceive that while the establishment of a new doctor’s surgery at Hāwera Hospital was intended to serve unregistered patients, the practice inadvertently attracted patients from existing practices, resulting in an overflow that has left the unregistered patients still struggling to access medical care.

“It was decided that we would get a doctor’s surgery based in the hospital, primarily to gather up the people who weren’t already registered with a doctor. That was the primary purpose. What has happened is that [the] doctor’s surgery has taken a lot of patients from the already existing two doctors that we had, and they transferred to this new surgery. A lot of them couldn’t get doctors, as there was such an overflow.

Barriers

- Many believe that the district’s healthcare system is under considerable pressure with practices frequently overwhelmed, operating at full capacity, and new patient registrations often closed, limiting options for people looking to choose or change their providers.
- Some observe that across the district, accessing timely medical appointments is challenging due to massive wait-lists, with people often waiting several weeks to see a GP or dealing with cancellations, which can cause distress for patients and their families.
- Some express concerns about the challenges of accessing timely medical advice, leading many to rely on helplines like Healthline or internet searches to judge the urgency of medical issues when immediate GP appointments are not available.
- Many believe that the overburdened GP practices in the district are driving patients toward emergency departments for non-urgent care, causing a bottleneck in emergency services, as people are believed to have no other choice.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

No Poverty

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- Some believe that the rising costs of public and private healthcare are prohibitive for many low-income families, requiring some to choose between medical care and basic necessities like groceries.
- Some feel that the geographic spread and limited availability of medical centres in rural and coastal areas of the district present significant challenges due to the distances residents must travel for healthcare.
- Some believe that lengthy delays in obtaining medical appointments may prompt some to downplay serious health conditions or manage on their own, which could result in delayed diagnosis and treatment.
- Some perceive that the district faces significant challenges in attracting and retaining medical professionals, resulting in high turnover and few new practitioners settling in the area. This is further exacerbated by existing GPs retiring or reducing their work hours, leading to a critical shortage of healthcare workers to meet the community’s growing needs.
- Some believe that disparities in pay are leading to a shortage of medical staff in the district, as medical professionals can earn significantly more for working in countries like Australia.
- Due to a significant shortage of general practitioners in the district, some believe some residents are driven to sign up to a medical service further afield, even in places as distant as New Plymouth.

“We do have it here in Hāwera, but it’s a numbers game. You know, there’s just not enough people. Not enough professionals to meet the needs within the community.

“That’s access to healthcare. There’s a massive GP shortage in South Taranaki. The hospital has opened up a GP because there was only one GP left in a town of 20,000 people. And Ōpunake has lost their GP.

“The only thing is that we have a bit of a turnover of GPs. We get ones that are only here for a few months and they only just learn the system, then they’re gone again.

“She’s taken up a position... now earning twice, maybe even three times the amount of money that she would get here, paying for her to fly over to Australia.

“There are two medical centres, one is Ngāti Ruanui, and one is Mountain View Medical Center. Both of them are under so much pressure. We can’t keep doctors here, for various reasons.

“It’s not necessarily going with the GP that’s a right fit for you either. I would probably prefer to be with a different GP, but there’s not the opportunity, like you can’t change because then I might not have any GP.

“The time that they wait, between seeing somebody is quite a lot, and I know, it’s distressing for families, because they see their loved ones in pain and there’s not much they can do about it except wait and put up with it.

“I was just trying to make an appointment, like a non-emergency appointment, and the wait was five months. Then they cancelled it, the week of.

“It’s all well and good if you have a little bug, but if you have something serious going on, it would be easy to say it’s not a big deal.

“You might not think it’s a big deal, but it’s actually a big deal. It could lead to something else, you know, other serious illness. It could prolong getting diagnoses.

- “You get told don’t go to A&E unless it’s an emergency, but actually, sometimes you have no choice.*
- “There is one GP in South Taranaki, one proper one. Which then overloads the hospital, which flows onto the next one. It’s a domino effect.*
- “People are getting advice either from the internet or a helpline because they can’t see their GP for two weeks, [asking] do I need to go to the emergency doctors for this? Or is it okay to leave it for two weeks?*
- “To get a GP, you may have to sign up somewhere further afield, like even New Plymouth, just because there is such a massive shortage of GPs.*
- “We have a rural doctor service now at the hospital, which takes the overflow from the A&E. But it’s not subsidised, so you’re still paying at least \$40 for a consult. Which for some families is groceries.*
- “Depends on where you live in South Taranaki. It can take you an hour to get to a medical centre depending on where you live... We’re a big region.*

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

- Some observe, while there is an increasing reliance on telehealth to alleviate healthcare strains, particularly among younger practitioners, older generations remain sceptical, perceiving this method to be inadequate in providing thorough assessments and in building doctor-patient rapport.

- “Some of the doctors do need to engage more with telehealth, but I think some people have been quite cautious of it because they don’t understand what’s involved.*
- “You do see younger doctors who are engaging with the likes of telehealth, and, I think, that is having quite a good impact.*

Opportunities

- Expanding pharmacies’ consultation services to alleviate the strain on healthcare systems.
- Promoting the use of telehealth services like Healthline, which offer free advice and quick answers to health-related questions, to increase accessibility and reduce wait times for families seeking simple medical guidance.
- Establishing an immunisation and vaccination centre to support under-five and pregnancy vaccines, while also offering essential health services alongside educational support to families who currently face long waits at hospitals or doctors’ clinics.

- “The other space we’d love to venture into is an immunisations and vaccination centre in South Taranaki. So looking at under-five funded and pregnancy vaccines.*
- “Some of the pharmacists that I know, they’re gearing up to provide more consultation, they’re using other forms of technology to take care of some of that day-to-day admin. Which I think will be really good.*

- “We’re always talking to families about the fact that they don’t have to wait to ring their midwife to ask some questions. They don’t have to talk to their doctor to ask some questions. They can use [a] helpline, and it doesn’t cost anything. It’s making people aware that there are services out there that will answer some of those questions.*

Good Mahi in the Community

- Ngāti Ruanui Healthcare - located in Hāwera and Pātea, provides comprehensive health and social support services, including a GP practice and various other healthcare offerings. (Healthpoint, n.d.).^[28]
- Pinnacle - a network of general practices that manages the healthcare of people enrolled with 84 practices in Tairāwhiti, Taranaki, Rotorua, Taupō-Tūrangi, Thames-Coromandel, and Waikato. (Pinnacle Practices. n.d.).^[29]

Theme 36

In South Taranaki, many perceive ongoing challenges in accessing specialist and hospital care. Despite the presence of some outreach posts, the shortage of local specialist services, extended wait times, and declining services at Hāwera Hospital lead many residents to seek care outside the district or turn to private options. While district health board boundaries have become more flexible, challenges around accessing healthcare in neighbouring regions still exist.

THE AVERAGE WAIT TIME FOR A HIP REPLACEMENT IN THE TARANAKI REGION INCREASED SLIGHTLY FROM 112 DAYS IN 2017 TO 115 DAYS IN 2021/2022, WHILE THE AVERAGE WAIT TIME FOR GALLBLADDER SURGERY DURING THE SAME PERIOD SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED FROM 79 DAYS TO 145 DAYS.

↑
145
DAYS
2022
79
DAYS
2017

OIA request, Te Whatu Ora Taranaki, 2022.

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

- Some note that district health board boundaries have become more flexible, now providing residents, particularly those in the south, with greater choice over where to access healthcare and hospital services, whether in Taranaki or Whanganui. However, some believe issues persist when accessing healthcare across different district health boards, especially with hospital discharges and the continuity of community support.

“Those geographic borders are becoming less important, and there’s more focus on what makes sense for the person, and where it is best for them to access those services.”

“That’s all that we’ve experienced here. It’s always been a bit of a barrier for people to be under one DHB but to actually, in practice, use another DHB.”

Barriers

- Many believe the district suffers from a shortage of specialist medical services, such as cancer treatment and diagnostic scans, depending instead on infrequent and inconsistent visits from travelling specialists and outreach posts, often resulting in long wait times.
- Many observe that the lack of local specialist healthcare services often requires residents to travel to larger urban centres, where more comprehensive and prompt care is expected; however, the travel presents significant challenges for those without access to personal transportation, especially when public transport can be difficult to navigate.
- Some perceive that with reduced bed capacity and limited services, Hāwera Hospital primarily serves as a triage or transit point rather than a full care facility, with more serious cases often transferred to New Plymouth for comprehensive care.
- Many believe the healthcare system is severely strained, with lengthy wait times for procedures such as hip replacements, prompting those who are financially able to seek private treatment. Meanwhile, others, particularly the elderly, endure extended wait times for surgery and specialist care, potentially prolonging discomfort and worsening existing conditions.
- Some in the community perceive that the response of emergency services for remote areas has declined, with concerns about delays in helicopter dispatch due to the requirement of prior ambulance assessment, a process that some believe wastes critical time.
- Some perceive that relocating dental care to the hospital has drastically decreased its uptake, attributing this decline to negative connotations associated with hospital visits and challenges in accessing the services.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“Hāwera hospital, their services are pretty limited. It has some beds. But people ultimately know, if it’s serious, just go to New Plymouth. Because you’ll be transferred to New Plymouth anyway as they can’t deal with it in Hāwera.”

“There’s also the barrier that Hāwera has a hospital, but most people will get transferred through Hāwera to Taranaki, so the base hospital is in New Plymouth. That is still a barrier.”

“A friend of mine was in hospital recently and said that they felt the compulsion to leave earlier than recommended, because the nurses were all saying, ‘We’ve got no beds, we’ve got no beds’... there was that pressure on the patient.”

“The specialist services are not here; they have to come from Auckland. It is the same with neurological services. Say you have Parkinson’s or MS, you’ve got to wait probably two or three months to see a Neurologist.”

“If you travelled now for an hour to get to, say, New Plymouth for a doctor, you would have a better solution, or a quicker solution, if they want you to see a hip doctor, you would be referred straight to the specialist and that seems to be an easier in.”

“Our hospital is in New Plymouth, which is an hour’s drive. So when people need to go to the hospital if they don’t have transport, they have to catch the bus or they have to find somebody. It’s not an easy thing for people to get to the hospital.”

“I went to the doctor; the hospital sent me a letter saying that hopefully, in six months’ time, I’d get to see a specialist and then get put on the list.”

“The hospital system is concerning. I don’t have a good thing to say. My mother-in-law is up there and if you don’t go and help them, nothing will happen.”

“The dental health in primary schools is shocking, to

say the least. Part of that, we tried to tell them that our parents would not go to a hospital for dental treatment, for many of them you go to a hospital if you’re really sick or you don’t come out alive.”

“We got the dental bus, and then they decided that the dental services would go to the local hospital. So we now have the dental services being done from the local hospital. Within probably two years, we went from about 98% uptake of dental health to something like 30%. It’s even worse now.”

“The emergency services, what happens when you live remotely, the ambulance has to come out and assess it before they bring the helicopter in. I have never agreed with that.”

“I’ve felt that most rural people are reasonably capable... if they ring emergency services and say, ‘I am in need of a helicopter lift,’ they should provide one.”

“We’ve had six instances out here where the ambulance had to come out and assess, then they get the helicopter, well, you’re wasting that magical two hours.”

Opportunities

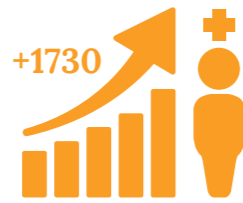
- Increasing Hāwera Hospital’s range of services due to its central location between Whanganui and New Plymouth, in order to distribute physical health services more evenly across the region.

“It’d be good to see if Hāwera did get more services because of the way we sit between Whanganui and New Plymouth. It’s basically being in the middle, and if we had more services offered, it would actually benefit a lot more people.”

Theme 37

South Taranaki is believed to be increasingly attracting residents, drawn by its free from hustle-and-bustle lifestyle and great climate. The district's proximity to diverse natural resources like coastlines and reserves, while often under-utilised, also adds to its charm. Despite these positives, there's a perception that the district may be less appealing to newcomers, primarily due to its limited social and recreational options, which fall short compared to those in New Plymouth.

SOUTH TARANAKI'S POPULATION HAS INCREASED FROM 27,480 RESIDENTS TO 29,210 RESIDENTS, BETWEEN 2013 AND 2021.



NZ Census 2018, Community Compass.

Strengths

- Some believe the district offers a laid-back lifestyle free from stress, traffic, and urban 'hustle and bustle,' which, while not for everyone, appeals to those who prefer an easier and more tranquil life.
- Some perceive an increase in the district's population, with a notable number of people relocating from larger areas like Auckland for a lifestyle change, a shift believed to be altering the district's socio-economic landscape.
- Many believe the district's proximity and ease of access to diverse natural resources—from its coastlines to the mountains, and reserves like Lake Rotokare—provide a wealth of recreational opportunities close to home for many residents.
- Some feel the district has a great climate, experiencing less rainfall and more sunshine than nearby areas.

"You can go two minutes pretty much in any direction and get to something that's natural."

"The coastline runs all the way around, the maunga you can approach from the south, and the natural environment you don't have to go far."

"Because of our closeness to the land, to the sea and the mountain, we do have some amazing access to spaces, native spaces."

"Hāwera has less rainfall and more sunshine than New Plymouth. Whatever you see on the news is not true for here. Our weather patterns, because of the mountain, I always go by the forecast of Whanganui, which is more accurate for here."

"I mean, look outside my window, there are trees and grass, and if you go outside there are birds and no traffic. Again, it'll only attract a certain type of person because some people don't like it; it's not the hustle and bustle... which impacts the amount of income you get and everything."

"Yes, absolutely lifestyle. We see people wanting to move all the time, coming in from Auckland, and we have space for people to move here."

"I do feel people are moving out of the bigger places and moving to South Taranaki, and that is changing the [low-socioeconomic] demographic a little bit, although those people are still there."

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Good Health & Wellbeing

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Life Below Water

Life on Land

Natural Environment

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Barriers

- Some believe that the district's natural treasures and recreational offerings remain under-utilised, with many long-term residents often unaware of and still discovering the gems that are available in their backyards.
- Some perceive the district as potentially less appealing to newcomers, especially younger individuals and families, due to its limited social and recreational offerings for all ages, which seem unable to compete with New Plymouth's walkways, cafes, and retail stores.

"It's not a place that attracts single [people] under 30; there is nothing really happening in our town like you would get in New Plymouth or Whanganui. There is hardly a variety of restaurants, there is no nightlife."

"We can't compete with New Plymouth's coastal walkway, the cafe culture, and the range of shopping and services in the restaurant that's available in New Plymouth. Commuting is still relatively easy; it's become more expensive, but it's still relatively easy."

Opportunities

- Encouraging people to work remotely in South Taranaki so that they can benefit from lower living costs and a desirable lifestyle, while still accessing employment opportunities in larger cities.

"I think working from home or remote work is also helping South Taranaki. Like, I know plenty of people who live in South Taranaki and have jobs elsewhere, and they can just go up to Auckland once a month or can go up to the New Plymouth office once a fortnight and stuff like that, so then they reap the benefits of the lower cost of living and being at the beach."

Good Mahi in the Community

- Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust - provides recreational opportunities, such as powerboating, camping, and walking activities.
- Kaupokonui Beach Camp - a volunteer-run local campground known as an 'absolutely amazing place' in South Taranaki.

"Powerboating has continued. People are still enjoying the site for camping, for walking, there's been an additional walkway added by the trust that was built in two weeks in 2013 to increase recreational opportunities at the site."

"It's a little gem of a place. It's a very basic campground, with basic amenities."

"Now that is completely run by a volunteer society, and it has been for probably close to 100 years. It's an amazing place. It's an absolutely amazing place."

Theme 38

In South Taranaki, although travel is considered ‘normal’, it poses significant challenges for many. The district’s geographical spread and the costs associated with travelling impose a considerable financial burden, especially on low-income families. For residents without cars or licences, the limited options and inconvenient schedules of public transport increase the issue. Consequently, some residents resort to extensive planning and consolidating trips to minimise travel expenses.

IN SOUTH TARANAKI, IT TAKES RESIDENTS AN AVERAGE OF 20 MINUTES TO TRAVEL TO MEDICAL CENTRES, COMPARED TO 18 MINUTES NATIONALLY, AND 18 MINUTES TO REACH SUPERMARKETS, COMPARED TO 8.5 MINUTES NATIONALLY.



THE AVERAGE JOURNEY TIME TO A SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR RESIDENTS OF SOUTH TARANAKI IS 8 MINUTES. THIS COMPARES TO AVERAGE TRAVEL TIMES OF 4 MINUTES IN AUCKLAND AND 3 MINUTES IN WELLINGTON.



Dot Loves Data, Community Compass, Access to services.

Strengths

- Some perceive the increased frequency of public transport, such as the Ōpunake to New Plymouth service, as a positive development, noting an increase in usage as a result.
- Some believe that the district’s flat terrain and general sense of safety have encouraged residents to choose more sustainable and healthy modes of transportation, such as walking and biking.
 - “There’s been some increases in the frequency of public transport. So, the long-haul stuff, you can get from Ōpunake to New Plymouth four times a week now, instead of once, and the service coming the other way.”
 - “There is now a bus that goes six days a week... Tuesday to Thursday, it goes from Waverley to Pātea. I see people using that, so that’s a really good service.”
 - “Then the proximity to everything, so we only have one car as a family. We made that choice so we can walk outside. So, we get everywhere we need to by walking or cycling.”
 - “I have noticed more people biking in Hāwera, I think it’s because it is flat and relatively safe.”

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

- While some perceive that improvements in roading across the district have greatly enhanced travel to centres like Whanganui and New Plymouth, concerns persist for others about road safety and conditions, particularly noting the prevalence of potholes.

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

No Poverty

Reduced Inequalities

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“Possibly roading [and] transport. Whanganui used to be a bit of a distance from here. The roads have improved; it’s only 45 minutes from where I live in Whanganui and an hour and a half to New Plymouth. I think that’s probably been a significant feature.”

“Our roads are appalling. They’re dangerous for a start, full of potholes. But two hours every day travelling? We feel really limited. I’m not alone in this either. It’s quite scary.”

Barriers

- While many residents view travelling as a ‘normal’ aspect of rural living, the geographic spread and substantial travel required to access basic amenities such as supermarkets, employment, schooling, and healthcare can cut considerably into residents’ time, especially for those living further from main towns.
- Many observe that a substantial number of residents neither own cars nor possess driver’s licences, which limits their access to essential services and involvement in community events.
- Many observe that rising transportation costs, such as high petrol prices and ongoing vehicle maintenance, present a significant financial challenge for families. For some, these costs necessitate careful planning of their travel or limiting their trips so that they can manage expenses.
- Many in the district perceive public transport as a significant issue due to limited bus services, restrictive schedules, and high costs that render them inaccessible and unaffordable for many residents.

- Many in the district view the availability and affordability of taxis and shuttles as a major challenge, especially for the elderly and those with disabilities, due to the limited operating hours and high costs associated with these already scarce services.

“Everything just has a cost and it just makes everything more complex, compared to what we would experience in New Plymouth, where you’ve got your main town, everybody can catch buses and taxis.”

“I have lived in other places in New Zealand, and we had to recalibrate our expectations around how long it took to get to these sorts of things, you need to get to fairly regularly, like, it’s 25 to 30 minutes for us to go to the supermarket.”

“We are used to it, it’s normal so we don’t think about it any other way.”

“The way that people move around the region is very regional, like you do move between the settlements. I find we move around between the settlements a lot more than I probably would have in other regions that I’ve lived in.”

“But for those [people] that can drive, they’re still going to be able to purchase a vehicle, pay a vehicle off, pay for fuel, those maintenance costs, but most people actually can’t. So for people to get from A to B, that’s a real challenge. It’s also an extra cost.”

“We have people ask us for petrol vouchers for appointments. So that is telling us that people are willing to travel, and even have transport, they just cannot afford it.”

- “They’ve got to determine when they go out, what they’re going to do, so if they need to go into town, they’re going to try and do everything in one hit. They’re going to try and do whatever they need to in town because actually, when it comes to going out and about, they can really only afford to do it once or twice a week.*
- “A lot of it is transportation. A lot of them don’t have cars or don’t have licences. They just get around somehow. I don’t actually know how they get around.*
- “The libraries and those sorts of places are really essential. But still, kids and adults still have to get there and how do they get there without a car, without petrol and all that sort of thing. That’s pretty hard.*
- “There’s no bus. Well, there’s one in the morning and the afternoon, but it’s pretty limited.*
- “My concern is for the older people who don’t travel, may not be driving, and their ability to move around in the local community is somewhat difficult because we don’t have a taxi service. We actually do have one taxi for the elderly and disabled, but it is just one taxi.*
- “We only have one taxi service but I don’t know what the availability and catering is like for the elderly, and cost is something to consider too.*

Opportunities

- Collaborating with organisations to enhance transportation options, like using vans for community transport.
 - Encouraging more people to use scooters and bike tracks in flat towns like Hāwera.
- “But we’re looking at ways to collaborate with organisations, the RSA sometimes have vans, get those vans and go and transport people to and from.*
- “Hāwera is the most flat place, so perfect for scooters, so we need to encourage more people to get scooters as well.*
- “There are more opportunities to get kids back on bicycles, can we not have more mountain bike tracks and cycle lanes that would help with transport as well.*

Good Mahi in the Community

- St. John - provides transportation by operating a daily van service to New Plymouth for those unable to catch the bus.
 - STOPS - a service functioning similarly to a taxi that provides transportation within the district.
 - Taranaki Regional Council - provides a well-coordinated bus service for the community, including free transport for those with hospital appointments and a connector bus that facilitates regional access.
- “How they have got around that [buses] is that they have St John. They have a van they run to New Plymouth every day for those that can’t get on the bus. They have solved the issue by putting this under a service.*
- “We do have a connection to New Plymouth by bus that is free for people travelling to any hospital appointment. That’s free and the bus runs five times a day.*
- “We have got a bus that goes from Pātea to Hāwera, for those that want to shop, but we also don’t want to take the business away from the local shops so it’s hard.*
- “They do have a connector bus that travels up four times a day and it connects with the hospital as well. So, it’s a regional [service]; it’s a collaboration of the Regional Council.*

- “We have Stops, which is like a taxi service, but that’s all we have here. We don’t have taxis per se, if you were wanting to go to the local club. They have a courtesy van but that only does around the local Hāwera area.*
- “Stops, it will pick people up, go and get them and take them down to Hāwera and take them home again. I think the price they get is a script from the GP, it’s really cheap.*

Theme 39

In South Taranaki, farming is acknowledged as a key industry offering diverse and well-paying career opportunities. However, the perception that it primarily involves ‘milking cows’ and requires newcomers to start from the bottom is deterring some from entering the industry. This perception, coupled with high land and succession planning costs, and the younger generation’s increasing preference for urban jobs, heightens succession uncertainty for many farmers nearing retirement.

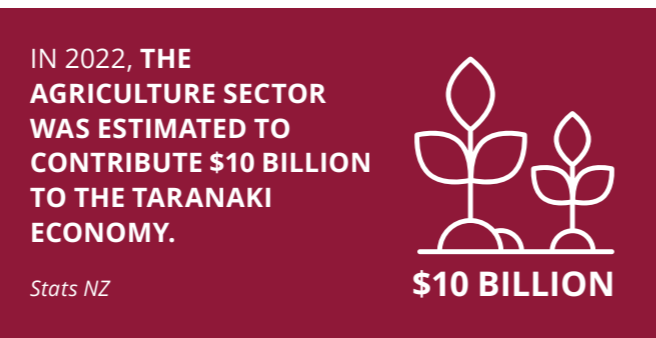
Strengths

- Some believe that the rural sector plays a significant role in both contributing to and sustaining the district’s economy, with some noting its substantial influence on local employment and businesses.
- “Hāwera, Stratford, Eltham... a lot of their shops are rural servicing. You’ve got a meat works, a dairy factory, a fertiliser works. A lot of that town would be employed, or their employment would be connected to the rural sector in some shape or form.
- “Hāwera is definitely a service town for the rural sector. So when the farmers are doing well, then the rest of the community reaps the benefit of that, particularly in retail as well.

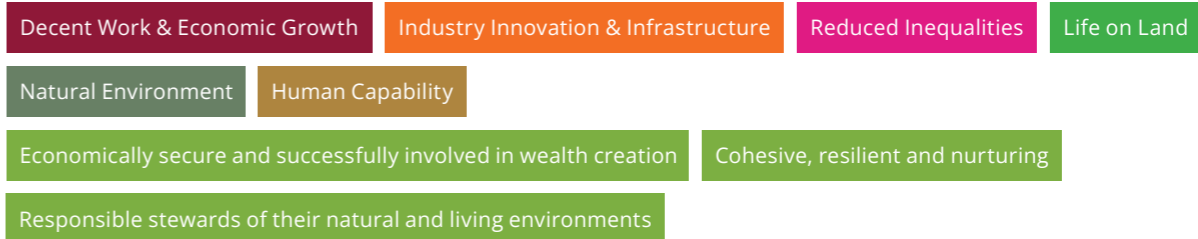
While the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:

- Some believe that farmers, known for their business savvy and willingness to take risks, often lack essential leadership and people skills. This is attributed to farmers often being ‘thrown in the deep end,’ where they must rapidly take on multiple roles and responsibilities without sufficient support or training in managing people.

- “You’re often thrown into the deep end managing people, and you don’t have the same systems or people around you to support.
- “As a farm owner, you’re the head of HR, the head of finance, the head of strategy; you do it all, and you don’t necessarily have the skills to do all of that, so you have to learn quickly.
- “They’re quite business-savvy, but they don’t all have good leadership and people skills.
- “Particularly in farming, a lot of farmers, and I have a lot of family in this situation, have got to where they are, running these bigger farms with lots of staff, not through being good people leaders, but through being good farmers. By taking risks, taking on debt, which is really risky.



Framework Tags



Barriers

- Some in the rural community believe there is growing angst over farm succession, as traditional methods of passing farms to the next generation are becoming less viable, leading to a tendency among some farmers to ‘stick their heads in the sand’ and avoid addressing the issue.
- Some perceive a persistent stigma against non-traditional paths into farming, where skills and experience from outside conventional farming roles are often undervalued. The old-school belief in ‘starting at the bottom and earning your way up’ is believed to create barriers for those with relevant skills seeking to enter or advance in the sector, as they are often not recognised for having ‘done the hard yards.’
- Some believe there is a growing challenge in transferring family farms to the next generation in the district, as an increasing number of young people from farming families are drawn to career opportunities outside the district and urban employment, resulting in fewer returning to take over family farms.
- As the ‘days of purchasing farmland’ appear to be diminishing for younger generations, many young families are no longer able to ‘buy out’ properties due to increasing costs, further complicating farm succession. Some believe this trend is shifting the demographic landscape of farm ownership, favouring wealthier older generations who have more substantial resources to afford farmland.
- Some farmers view the high cost of succession planning, even with partial subsidy from Venture Taranaki, as a substantial financial challenge, despite acknowledging its long-term benefits and importance.

“It makes it harder for the young ones to buy a farm because one farm becomes so much more valuable. Next thing you know, you’re looking at very wealthy people, the only ones who can buy out. The days [of purchasing farmland] have gone for the young people.

“There is stigma all around. I run a business that is six or seven times the size of my dad’s farm, and he’ll still be like, ‘Your skills aren’t transferable to my business,’ just because I’m not milking the cows. But farming is so much more than that now.

“There’s an old-school narrative still, where you’ve got to start at the bottom and earn your way up, which is really unfortunate because there are a lot of people that I know who would love to go farming, but they can’t afford to start on the bottom salary, and they’ve got the skills to be coming in at a manager level. They don’t need to be coming in at the relief milker level.

“There’s a lot of that perception because a lot of farmers have got where they are through hard work, whereas their kids and others have gone off, got careers, done other stuff, and actually learned a whole lot of other skills, which is actually really complementary, and they think, ‘Oh, no, you can’t farm.’

“I see it as an opportunity for myself, but I know there’s a lot of angst in the rural community around what that looks like, what succession looks like.

“A high percentage of farm owners in Taranaki are over 56, and succession planning with their family is coming unstuck. It’s not how they thought they would end up being.

“Quite often, they’re not young people with young families. They’re older with other resources developed to buy something big and new. Once again, our children suffer.

“That’s a massive challenge: how you pass assets down generationally, particularly when kids have had far better opportunities to go and have careers outside of Taranaki.

“The price of doing a succession plan with an expert is a barrier; it’s \$10,000. Venture Taranaki pays half, and the farmer pays five, so that’s an expensive input, but it’s so worth it.

“A lot of kids leave Taranaki today to go to university. They may come back, but what I see from my own friend group is, they come back once they start to have their own families. But they’re not coming back to the farms; they’re coming back to hybrid, remote work jobs, or roles in New Plymouth.

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

- Some believe that while farming careers face a lingering stigma, often narrowly associated with tasks like ‘milking cows’ or unfairly labelled as suitable only for ‘dumb kids,’ this perception is seen to be shifting, particularly in agricultural sciences as the sector’s diverse and financially rewarding opportunities are becoming more recognised.

“I’m really passionate about exposing kids to these opportunities. You don’t have to milk cows; this puts a lot of kids off. There are heaps of cool careers in the rural sector where you can earn really good money, and you don’t have to milk a cow.

“When I was at high school, I wanted to be a farmer, but I was told, ‘You don’t want to be a farmer, farming is for the dumb kids, you want to be an accountant or an engineer.’

Opportunities

- Introducing youth to the diverse range of career opportunities in the rural sector, highlighting the potential for lucrative and fulfilling jobs that go beyond traditional farming roles, such as agricultural science and biology.
- Shifting away from the stigma associated with starting from the bottom in farming, to encourage more people to enter the industry.
- Providing opportunities for farmers and farm owners to develop their people and leadership skills.

“I’m really passionate about exposing kids to these opportunities. You don’t have to milk cows; this puts a lot of kids off. There are heaps of cool careers in the rural sector where you can earn really good money, and you don’t have to milk a cow.

“That’s where the sector needs to really do a lot of work around the people side and providing opportunities for farmers and farm owners, in particular, to upskill around the people stuff.

“There’s that stigma that a lot of farmers have, that ‘unless you’ve done the hard yards, you don’t know what you’re doing.’ We’ve really got to move on from that as an industry.

Theme 40

Some believe that although mental wellbeing has improved for South Taranaki farmers, they still confront significant challenges, such as unfair criticism, declining milk prices, tough working conditions, and profound isolation and loneliness. These pressures lead some farmers to grapple with feelings of failure, and in the absence of traditional community gathering spots like pubs, some may turn to harmful coping mechanisms to alleviate distress.

Strengths

- Some believe that the mental wellbeing of farmers in the district has improved in recent years, with this change attributed to a growing recognition among farmers of the importance of supporting one another.

“When I started working here five years or so ago, farmers were not in a good place. There were lots of suicides and such happening. My understanding is that it has improved since then.

“It has improved, yes, but is it because there’s more support now around rural support? It’s been recognised that farmers need to support one another.

Barriers

- Many believe that a profound sense of isolation and loneliness is experienced by numerous farmers, attributed to the solitary and remote nature of their work, along with increasing regulations and declining milk prices. This is thought to contribute significantly to the decline in mental health and an increase in suicide rates among farmers, an issue that is particularly concerning for newcomers, transient workers, and farmers whose partners work in town.
- Some observe that working conditions on farms, particularly following COVID-19 and during intensive seasons like calving, are challenging for many farmers due to long hours and harsh work environments, which some believe contribute to increased mental stress among farmers.

- Some feel that farmers are often subject to unfair criticism, predominantly amplified by the media and a vocal minority, creating a distorted public image that doesn’t truly reflect the broader community’s views and tends to overshadow the positive contributions farmers make to the district.
- There is a belief that farmers, despite receiving a fraction of the final cost, are unfairly viewed as responsible for rising milk prices in retail stores, which are often due to factors beyond their control such as retail mark-ups and associated processing and transport costs.
- Some observe that declining milk prices, due to reduced international demand, are significantly impacting farmers. With production costs surpassing profits, many are believed to be experiencing heightened stress and financial hardship. This economic pressure, marked by decreased payouts and rising expenses, is seen to have farmers ‘backed into a corner,’ unable to leave the sector, with some struggling severely as a result.
- Some believe that younger farmers in the district may face workplace bullying, a situation they attribute to older farm owners being set in their ways, and to some frustrations experienced in the farming sector.
- It is believed by some that a number of farmers are grappling with a sense of failure in both their family and work environments, which is believed to be contributing to a decline in their self-worth and mana (prestige).
- Some believe that farmers grappling with isolation and a sense of inadequacy might resort to alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- Some perceive that the decline in community gathering places, such as pubs and clubs, presents a challenge for farmers, particularly newcomers. It is believed that the closure of local pubs, which once served as informal support networks where farmers could socialise with friends, share their troubles, and feel less alone, has left a void in the farming community.

“But what you find is the people that criticise farmers are also the people that criticise anything and are very vocal. Whereas people who support farmers don’t go around yelling about how much they support farmers.

“There is a deception in the media that ‘everyone’s against farmers’. But really, it is a small minority.

“Definitely, farmers get a bit of a bad rap here... but they’re doing way more than people know.

“When the price goes up, the farmer is the one that gets criticised, because it’s harder for them to defend themselves.

“Certainly, from a milk perspective, we don’t get any more for it when the supermarket puts the price up... It’s often the supermarket that takes that extra value.

“The price for our milk [has dropped], and our costs have gone through the roof. There’s virtually no margin in that now.

“It’s huge. Everyone feels like they’ve been backed into a corner and there’s no way out. You can’t just exit by selling your farm and say ‘that was close’ because there’s no one to buy your farms or take your jobs.

“We’re in it. We just gotta ride it out and hope like hell that you can get out the other side. Some people will be able to and some won’t. That’s the concerning part of it, there are those who will really struggle.

“They’ve got employees on the farm, whether it’s a contract milker or share milker, and conditions have been really tough, especially this year, or maybe since COVID-19. During and after COVID, there were a number of farmer suicides. I don’t know what the numbers [are], but it’s a hard life.

“A big thing for me is around improving their work experience, particularly on the farm, a lot of it is quite hard work and it’s got a bit of a reputation, you know, long [hours], harsh elements, particularly this time of year.

“One of the issues faced by quite a few of the younger farmers that I’ve met with in the last few years in South Taranaki is being sort of bullied by their farm owners, the kind of retirement age guys who are just ‘this is how we do things’. Then they sort of pressure them and some of the conditions are not great.

“As a husband, you could feel like a failure, a failure [as a] provider, whatever it is, the mana of farming is eroding at the moment.

“A lot of people think our farmers are wealthy and that they have an easy life. But no, it’s not easy. It is hard and it is lonely and a lot of farmers work alone on the farms.

“Quite a few of the farm workers are transient, so they move there and they just keep to themselves because they think they aren’t going to fit in. Or they may realise there is a cliquiness so they won’t even bother in the first place, so they stay isolated.

“They definitely feel isolated and [are] definitely declining in their wellbeing but that would be more towards declining milk prices and increased regulatory and compliance requirements [and] increasing paperwork.

- “I have always worried more about farm staff. Sometimes it’s much harder for them. They move in and if they haven’t got children to go to a playgroup or into school, they really can be quite isolated. Farm owners need to be really aware of that.*
- “Especially if they’ve got a partner and the partner works all day in town, and they [the farmers] are at home alone. That’s really when our suicides have been happening.*
- “A lot of farmers, whether it be male or female, come home and they’ve been on their own all day, and then they walk in the door and they’re feeling inadequate, so alcohol and drugs are used as a tool to solve that problem.*
- “A lot of our local pubs have closed down, which actually, that was a really good support to go and drink four or five beers, chew the fat and realise that you’re not the only one in the shit.*

Opportunities

- Encouraging regular check-ins and communication among farmers to ensure everyone’s connected and supported, especially during challenging economic times.

“I think those conversations are going to become really important in the next 12 months, because I know for one that a \$7 payout, the foot is firmly up my ass so it ain’t so exciting no more.

“If you haven’t seen anyone for a while. You just call him for five minutes, just to make sure they are alright.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Dairy Trust Taranaki - addresses traditionally long farming hours and enhances worker satisfaction by aligning farm roles more closely with urban employment in terms of hours and benefits.
- Dairy Trust Taranaki - initiated an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) providing confidential, free counselling services to employees and their families, aiming to support mental wellbeing and improve overall job satisfaction.
- Dairy Trust Taranaki - implemented a wellbeing programme for their team that includes health screenings and an employee allowance for activities that promote off-farm work-life balance.
- Rural Support and Dairy NZ - organises events aimed at uniting farmers, providing them with opportunities to connect and enhance their support network within the agricultural community.
- Rural Support Trust - provides mental health support for farmers within the South Taranaki district. They are believed to have successfully reduced suicide rates through persistent outreach and showing care.
- Young Farmers Club - connects young people aged between 16 and 31 in rural communities together.
- Some observe a number of community gatherings for farmers happening within the district, providing farmers with a space for social support and connectivity.

- “We’ve been made aware of a community function that a woman set up, it was like a soup evening. She had a fantastic turnout from the community and from the farmers.*
- “If they are attending these soup evenings, it gives us another opportunity to join up with them and let them know that they’re not alone and that there is someone that can help them.*
- “Young farmers here are certainly the strongest in the whole region. You have to be below 30. They get involved with the school, they had all these gloves full of water and they showed them how to milk.*
- “The likes of Rural Support, Dairy NZ and the different farming organisations that have events and days that bring farmers together, I think they’ll need to potentially step up the game so that there’s more opportunities for farmers to connect.*
- “Some of the things we’ve brought in is we’ve tried to make the rosters a little bit more friendly, [which is] really aimed at [how] farming has a history of quite long hours. It’s enjoyable work, but it’s long work.*
- “What we’re really doing is trying to work towards making the roles closer to a town job. So better rosters, better benefits, and really just trying to improve employee engagement.*
- “We’ve also launched an employee assistance programme, so EAP support. That’s confidential, no one in the business knows who’s using it, but really just providing those free counselling services to the team if they need it. It’s also open to family or dependants of our team as well.*

- “We’ve introduced a wellbeing programme. So what we’re doing there is health checks and skin checks for our team. So [this is] really important, particularly the skin checks, [as they] are out in the sun a lot. So making sure that they’ve been well looked after and getting on top of anything that’s identified early.*
- “What’s really cool [about] that wellbeing package, is that we give an allowance to the team, everyone who’s a permanent employee can access it, which is \$350 towards a wellbeing initiative... We found that, that has been well received.*

Rural Support Trust Taranaki

“We receive 190 calls to the trust each year, and 80% relate to stress, distress, anxiety, or depression. The chair of the trust and I brain-dumped, and there were 154 stressors across 14 categories that city folk don’t have.

“[The rural community] is in an era of pressure, and so, with that comes staff who are tired, very tired. Loneliness, which is a huge thing for rural people. Illness, whether it be mental illness, physical illness, alcoholism, all sorts of aspects of illness. A lot of people don’t actually have that many close friends. We don’t always appreciate just how lonely a lot of people really are.

“The [areas] that are big at the moment are finance; there was one farmer who told me the other day [that] he’s paying \$40,000 more a year on his borrowing than the year before with the interest rates going up. They are all concerned about the global trading market with Fonterra saying, we’ll pay you \$7.50 and that’s now dropped \$1.25. So their costs are just about equal to their income. There’s [concerns of] some large pieces of legislation coming from the government and from local councils. [Another] stress is paperwork. They are doing a hard bit of mahi on the farm during the day, and then one farmer told me that she’s at the computer until 11 o’clock at night doing bloody paperwork, and it’s driving them spare.

“There are strong organisations and people in the industry or in our community who are there to provide support. We’ve got facilitators around the region; I’ve got about 60 farmers scattered throughout Taranaki that I can ring and say, ‘John’s not doing too well. Can you go out and see him, have a cup of tea?’. Sometimes we say ‘hey, look, nah, he’s not getting on with his workers. He’s going to be fine, but I’ll go and check him in two weeks.’ Otherwise, we’re like, ‘no, he needs some counselling pretty quickly.’

“These workshops that I’m doing are all about empowering the community with knowledge of ‘what does it look like when someone’s not doing too well? Then what do I say, and then where do I go for help?’ So if we can equip a lot of community people and those that go up and down farmers’ drives with that information, then that’s going to support the cause at the moment.

“I’ve learned a lot tonight... with what’s going on now with the farming community and everyone’s struggling. Businesses are going to be struggling, [so] we need to be a bit more aware of and look out for people.

“It’s definitely a learning thing for everybody. It’s really important now going forward that we all look for the signs and then try to talk to people. We’re all guilty of not asking for help.

“If you feel as though you’re struggling, please reach out. Rural Support is there. Reach out to someone, even if it’s a neighbour, and say ‘can you tell me who I can contact, can you help me I need to talk to somebody.’ Reach out because if you don’t reach out, no one knows.



Theme 41

While some argue that New Zealand currently boasts low emissions intensity, with many farmers committed to caring for their land, others believe that continuous effort is imperative to prevent ‘falling behind’. However, challenges such as increasing regulatory demands, complex documentation, conflicting messages, and a perceived technology ‘tunnel vision’ is seen to create uncertainty and stress among farmers. This is believed to leave many hesitant to adopt even minor changes due to concerns about potential financial setbacks.

Strengths

- Many perceive that farmers in the district demonstrate a strong commitment to land stewardship, actively working within their means to respect and care for their land, understanding that this is integral to their success.
- Some believe that the district’s long-standing legacy in dairy farming gives local farmers a strategic advantage in adapting to new emissions regulations, thanks to the district’s well-established practices and lower emissions intensity.
- Some perceive that the Taranaki Regional Council maintains high environmental and farming standards, noted for collaborating with farmers to resolve unintentional issues and firmly addressing deliberate non-compliance.

“TRC, Taranaki Regional Council, they set a very high standard, but they’ll work with you. If they see it’s a mistake then hey, but if they see it’s deliberate, they’ll fine you.”

“We’ve been a dairy farming region for quite a long time. We’re considered one of the sort of original dairy farming areas of Aotearoa.”

“That does create quite a big opportunity with a lot of the new regulations and change coming in, particularly around emissions, as we are starting from a good position, purely from an emissions intensity point of view.”

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

- Some perceive that New Zealand’s current low emissions intensity rating, while positive, is leading some farmers to believe that no further action is necessary, there is a prevailing sentiment that, without continual improvement and adoption of new practices from the district’s farmers, the country’s leading position in emissions intensity could diminish over time.

“The big one, it’s really topical at the moment, is around lowering emissions. Aotearoa is already, from an emissions intensity point of view, [which is] the amount of emissions per kilo of product produced, the lowest in the world. But like any good sports team or business, we can’t just sit still [otherwise] we will quickly be passed by other countries.”

“I am a farmer, but I know we look after the land. If you’re a farmer, you have to be a keeper of the land; you have to respect what it is. If you’re not a farmer who does that, you’re not going to succeed in farming either. So look after what you’ve got.”

Barriers

- The increasing regulations and compliance demands, particularly concerning emissions, are believed to pose major challenges for many farmers who find themselves increasingly burdened with excessive and time-consuming paperwork. This situation, often exacerbated by a lack of adequate support, is seen as leading to significant stress and, for some, prompting questions about the viability of continuing in the farming industry.

Framework Tags



- Some believe that many farmers, especially those with a practical background rather than formal education, struggle to understand complex agricultural documentation. This challenge is exacerbated by a reduction in local representatives who previously assisted with comprehension and compliance, making navigating these documents even more difficult.
- It is believed that farmers often feel overwhelmed when navigating the overload of information and advice they receive from multiple sources, which are thought to carry inherent biases and conflicting interests, as each source is believed to be motivated by sales targets.
- Some believe that farmers can feel caught between conflicting messages from the government and industry processors regarding emissions reductions, leading to inaction and an erosion of trust within the farming community due to uncertainty about which guidelines to follow.
- Some believe farmers face significant uncertainty regarding the upcoming emissions tax, feeling unclear about its financial implications and questioning the cost-benefit of investing in new technology or system changes to reduce emissions. It is perceived by some that, without clarity on tax savings, farmers are hesitant to adopt new technology or practices, especially those wary from past unprofitable investments. This caution has led to a wait-and-see approach, which some believe is causing many to overlook more cost-effective opportunities and delay making incremental improvements that could help achieve regulatory targets.

- Some argue that the government’s focus on technology for achieving emissions targets is impractical for many farmers due to the high costs and often unproven long-term impacts of these technologies on farming practices, suggesting that achieving these targets might be possible through simple changes in farm systems alone, without relying on new technology.

“I know a family who feels as though they’re not winning at all because the government’s putting so many restrictions on them. They are looking at getting out, [as it’s] no longer a viable option for them.”

“The big topical one is the amount of new regulations and compliance. That includes emissions and what’s in that space and the time that it takes to work through that... it is one of the biggest challenges we see our farmers having.”

“My neighbour found the paperwork extremely hard because he doesn’t read or write, and there wasn’t any facility for him to have help with his. He’s done riparian planting and had to comply. I definitely think there needs to be more consultation over the whole thing with farmers.”

“I talked to a Fonterra rep about the publications coming out to help with some of this sort of stuff [paperwork]. The communications team at Fonterra have lost sight of people’s understanding of the written word.”

“A farmer who’s sitting in an office with a degree from Lincoln is fine, but somebody who has come up through the school system, perhaps left school early to come home to the farm, finds it incredibly difficult to read the communication as a starting point.”

“Fonterra restructured and reduced the reps that came in to help farmers with those sorts of things. They restructured and cut the rep and gave them much bigger areas.

“In places that had had access to those reps to help them with the understanding of the compliance, that’s been made more difficult in the last few months as they have less access because their areas are much bigger.

“The challenge you’ve got, though, particularly in the rural space, is [that there is] a lot of information overload, there’s a lot of views on how things should be done. You know, Fonterra is sending them information, their fertiliser company is sending them information, and some of these companies have got a biased view.

“When you go to a farmer, they need to halve their nitrogen use. For a fertiliser company, that’s lost sales. So there’s always going to be that sort of bias.

“It’s certainly not great for rural communities, because the issue you’ve got is you’ve got government’s looking at it from one angle, you’ve got your customers looking at it from another, and then the rural communities [are] going, ‘we’re just not going to do anything, because there are two different messages we’re getting, around what we need to do.’

“A lot of farmers don’t know what to listen to because they’re getting one message from their processor, and then another message from the Government. It’s not aligned. There are some big challenges there, which we need to work through.

“The whole government saying one thing, Fonterra saying something different, what has happened is that there has been a lot of eroded trust with farmers.

“They’re at this point where they can start adopting technology, or they can start adopting system changes. But if they don’t know how much that’s going to save them from a tax point of view, they don’t know how much to spend.

“It is a really confusing time for farmers because they don’t know which one they could do. They could invest in all this infrastructure to reduce emissions and that actually has no benefit to them.

“What they end up doing is they just end up waiting and doing nothing when they could be making changes now that don’t cost a lot of money around systems and those kinds of things.

“Then if they don’t adopt [technology], because it’s too expensive, it’s hard to then get them back in, say, 5 or 10 years’ time, because they’ll be like, ‘well, I tried that and it cost me a lot of money.’ They become a bit gun shy.

“So it’s really narrow-sighted of these big government arms... like [the] Climate Change Commission, who are making these recommendations and saying we’ve got to get on with technology when we don’t. We can get to the 2030 goals without them, and we’ve proven that without any technology, just simple farm system changes.

“The thing with technology is that it’s exciting, it’s startups and shiny things, and everyone gets excited about it. But it’s expensive. Some of the costs of technology [make] it not worth doing. It’s just too expensive at the moment.

“A lot of farmers haven’t gotten into farming to do the paperwork, they’ve got into farming because they love the land and looking after the land and their animals. The amount of new regulations and compliance and just the time that it takes to work through that. It is, you know, one of the biggest challenges we see farmers having.

“Some of those regulations as well, we work to make sure that they are fit for purpose for Taranaki. We have different soil types here to other regions around Aotearoa, so a one size fits all approach doesn’t always work.

Opportunities

- Adapting regulations to accommodate the unique and diverse farm systems across South Taranaki to ensure that practices are fit for purpose rather than applying a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.
- Enhancing farm practices to lower emissions while remaining profitable and sustainable, ensuring the approach ‘financially stacks up’ for farmers.
- Adopting practices that simultaneously lower total emissions and emissions intensity to ensure agriculture is sustainable, while working towards zero emission goals.
- Providing guidance and information alongside or through a farmer’s trusted circle of advisers—such as bank managers, vets, and accountants—to enhance the likelihood of farmers listening and to boost their confidence in adopting new practices.
- Ensuring that those who recommend best practices, scientific approaches and improvements are themselves successful farmers to establish trust and credibility among the farming community.

“So we’re doing a lot of work to help reduce emissions, but [what is] really key is remaining sustainable and profitable.

“If we want to drive change on farms, we really need to still stack up financially for farmers; otherwise, there’s no incentive there [for them] to make that change towards a lower emissions dairy farming system.

“Adapting regulations to accommodate the unique and diverse farm systems across South Taranaki to ensure that practices are fit for purpose rather than applying a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.

“What we’re trying to do is, particularly with our zero emissions farm, is we want to [get] to zero emissions. We could do that tomorrow, reduce our total emissions, but we wouldn’t be producing any food. So we want to reduce emissions intensity, as well as reduce total emissions, and do those hand in hand. Not one at the expense of the other.

“It’s getting in front of them [farmers]. Farmers will have a sort of trusted circle of advisers, so often, their bank manager, their vet, their accountant, and potentially their farm advisor. So it’s getting to those people as well, because that’s who farmers trust and listen to.

“We need to be really good farmers. So farmers will listen to us, and also do the science. So it’s a double-edged sword. We can’t just be bad farmers while we’re doing the science because farmers just go, ‘I’m not listening to you guys, your farm looks terrible’... you get all these arguments.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Dairy Trust Taranaki - delivering relevant, innovative, world-class research aimed at advancing knowledge and discovering solutions to ensure the future viability of dairy farming in Taranaki and New Zealand. (Dairy Trust Taranaki, n.d.).^[30]
- Dairy Trust Taranaki, Step Change Trail - successfully reduced emissions while increasing profitability over three years, demonstrating the effectiveness of small modifications to farming practices. The initiative highlights a gradual yet significant transition towards both economic and environmental efficiency within the agricultural sector.
- Fonterra - provides expert advice to farmers to help them achieve net zero emissions.

“On one of our other farms, we’ve got the Step Change trial... we’ve run that trial for three years, and in the third year, we’ve just finished on that trial, we reduced emissions by around 20 to 21%. And we’re actually more profitable on that farm now, but it’s taken us three years to get there.

“We’ve only changed three things really. We’ve changed our stocking rate, we’ve changed the amount of nitrogen fertiliser we’ve put on, and we’ve changed the amount of imported feed, which is palm kernel. In the first year, we were only 12% down on profitability. Last year, it was pretty even. Then this year, the future one is about 13% more profitable.

“From a partnership point of view, the net zero farm is our main one. They [Fonterra] are involved in that and are providing a lot of expertise to help us

achieve that goal of net zero.

“Now, each of those 14 [catchment groups] are charged with educating farmers in their area about fresh water...I said this is the work that should have been done from the get-go, to help farmers overcome the myths and mystery around all this new legislation coming.

“I’ve been attending those meetings [Taranaki Catchment Collective], and they are a very productive group. They get water scientists from Lincoln University speaking to you. They get in people from Massey to talk about plants. It’s a very progressive group.

“I am a farmer, but I know we look after the land. If you’re a farmer, you have to be a keeper of the land; you have to respect what it is. If you’re not a farmer who does that, you’re not going to succeed in farming either. So look after what you’ve got.

Workshop participant

Dairy Trust Taranaki

“Dairy Trust Taranaki was set up about six and a half years ago and what it was bringing together the three research and demonstration farms in Taranaki.

“The purpose or mission of Dairy Trust is to deliver relevant world class research demonstration extension to the farmers of Taranaki and also Aotearoa, New Zealand.

“We do a lot of research into some of the challenges that dairy farmers are facing, whether that be environmental emissions, production profitability, and so we try to share those insights with as many farmers as possible, rural professionals, and trusted advisors are farmers with the idea that they adopt those learnings, and that helps improve their own business to be more resilient.

“In Taranaki, there’s been a huge amount of work done particularly around riparian planting of waterways, from a water quality point of view. All farmers want to leave the land better than how they found it, no one wants to make it worse for the next generation. So there’s a huge amount of work that goes in that the farmers don’t get enough credit for.

“A lot of farmers haven’t gotten into farming to do the paperwork, they’ve got into farming because they love the land and looking after the land and their animals. The amount of new regulations and compliance and just the time that it takes to work through that. It is, you know, one of the biggest challenges we see farmers having.

“Some of those regulations as well, we work to make sure that they are fit for purpose for Taranaki. We have different soil types here to other regions around Aotearoa, so a one size fits all approach doesn’t always work.

“From an emissions intensity point of view, New Zealand or Aotearoa is already the lowest in the world. If we want to drive change on farms, we really need to stick out financially for farmers, otherwise there’s not the incentive there to make that change towards a lower emissions dairy farming system.

“We really want the rangatahi who are going to be our future farmers seeing what we’re doing across our four farms and learning some of the aspects that we’re looking at to try and improve whether it’s emissions, environment, or soil quality for farmers of the future. So that’s a big focus of ours.



Theme 42

In South Taranaki, there is noticeable interest in renewable energy initiatives, ranging from large-scale offshore wind farming to smaller projects like solar-powered farms. Many believe the offshore wind farming industry offers significant opportunities for the district, including reducing emissions and increasing employment. However, concerns exist about the potential impact this industry may have on marine ecosystems.

Strengths

- Some believe there is a substantial and growing interest in offshore wind farming in South Taranaki, as the area attracts numerous developers motivated by the district's potential for economic and industrial development, coupled with the opportunity to reduce emissions.
- Some observe a notable rise in minor and major on-site renewable energy projects in the district, with farms increasingly utilising their land for solar projects to help power their operations.

"It's the opportunity that attracts them and... they are passionate about the opportunity that reducing emissions can bring. So they're right on board with the reason why they're doing it."

"We've seen a lot of interest in renewable energy. So, at the moment, we're getting actually quite a lot of consents for very small onsite solar farms... we've seen a lot of these cool new initiatives in this space."

"We're seeing both minor... or it's quite a large scale and it might not look pretty, you see all these solar panels on the ground... but its value in terms of renewable energy is really cool."

Barriers

- Some express concerns regarding the uncertain impacts of offshore wind farms on marine life, such as the migratory patterns of blue whales and albatross.
- Some believe that the scale of current onshore wind farm projects may not be sufficient in scale to meet the net-zero 2050 targets.

"Those projects just don't have the scale that would be required to meet our net zero 2050 targets. That's why for us, offshore wind is more attractive, because it could really generate some energy."

"I've heard a little ramble in terms of the vibration of the turbines, and what it's going to do to the fish and the whales and dolphins and things like that. There are a few unknowns around the migratory patterns of blue whales and albatross."

Framework Tags

Affordable & Clean Energy

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Responsible Consumption & Production

Life Below Water

Life on Land

Natural Environment

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

Opportunities

- Introducing offshore wind farming is seen as a significant long-term opportunity that may increase renewable energy and industrial growth, bringing both economic and environmental benefits to the district.
- Establishing offshore wind farming to increase local employment opportunities for the district, particularly for townships like Pātea and Waverley.
- Transitioning existing industry workers in oil and gas to roles in renewable energy and offshore wind farms, once these industries are established, to utilise their expertise and support these emerging industries.

"The size of the industry and what it can mean for New Zealand, off the coast of South Taranaki, is really significant as well... So they love the reason why they're doing it and can see that the opportunity is large."

"[The offshore wind farm] would be a massive turnaround in terms of employment and opportunities for our people."

"Even the tier one jobs, around accommodation and hospitality for the people who need to build the turbines, would be big for Pātea, and it'll probably flow over into our Waverley community too."

"You've got the oil and gas industry where we could convert a workforce from there into working in the offshore industry."

Good Mahi in the Community

- The emerging offshore wind farm industry near Pātea is perceived as a potential game-changer for the district, with several companies indicating interest in establishing the town as a strategic service and operations hub. This development is seen by some as a promising transformation for the local economy.

"The offshore wind companies... There are three of them that are at a pretty similar stage, and one of them has publicly said that they think Pātea is the service and operations hub that makes the most sense. So that could be a transformational new industry in town."

Theme 43

While it is believed that South Taranaki has experienced significant environmental changes due to past farming and factory practices, the district is noted for its strong commitment to environmental restoration. Many credit this commitment to the significant efforts of local conservation groups and farmers who are seen to be actively working toward restoring the land, primarily through riparian planting and wetland rejuvenation.

IN TARANAKI, 93% OF THE LAND IS CLASSIFIED AS RURAL, WITH 28.6% BEING USED FOR DAIRY PRODUCTION.

Our Place - Taranaki State of Environment, Taranaki Regional Council, 2022.

Strengths

- Many believe the district is strongly committed to and passionate about restoring the environment to its natural state, with a growing number of projects and people seen as focused on and collaborating to ‘do their best for the land’, particularly through native riparian planting.
- Many regard the wider Taranaki region as ahead of other regions in environmental restoration, especially due to its longstanding and comprehensive efforts in riparian planting, with restoration work largely completed across many farms.
- Some observe that there has been significant progress in riparian planting along the district’s waterways, noting that it’s increasingly uncommon to find waterways that haven’t been planted.
- It’s perceived by some that the district’s reasonably consistent rainfall eliminates the need for irrigation and the reliance on groundwater extraction, proving advantageous for farming.

“Most waterways everywhere you go have been planted; you very rarely see a waterway now that isn’t planted.”

“I’m on the board for Forest and Bird South Taranaki and I went to an AGM [Annual General Meeting] by the group Wild for Taranaki and there were a lot of people from different groups. The room was full with all these people doing their best for the land.”

“In Taranaki, there’s been a huge amount of work done, particularly around riparian planting of waterways. I’d say, hand on heart, [that] Taranaki is one of the leading regions in Aotearoa for that.”

“People are trying to plant more native riparian plants and there seems to be more projects popping up to support native species. People just want to beautify the place and get it back closer to what it was.”

“We are very fortunate with the maunga, that our rainfall, although it doesn’t always come when we want it, we do get reasonably consistent rainfall throughout the year. We don’t have to irrigate currently.”

“That is a really good opportunity, when we look at water quality, we don’t have big bores sucking water out of the ground and it allows us to almost create a unique proposition as a region.”

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

- Although some believe the district’s environment may never fully revert to its original state, efforts to restore the environment, such as through stream and wetland restoration, are gradually showing positive results, with an increased presence of birdlife being a notable improvement.

Framework Tags

Life on Land

Clean Water & Sanitation

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Climate Action

Life Below Water

Partnerships for the Goals

Natural Environment

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

- Some believe that while many farmers generally look after their section of the river with measures like riparian planting and fencing, some may not, which ultimately affects those downstream, indicating that there is still progress to be made in collective water management.

“We’ve lost our forest and drained a lot of our wetlands... but I know on our properties, we are planning out our streams, giving a bit back to swamps... It’s just the job that we live in and it’s so much cooler now to see the birds coming back.”

“Maybe I’m taking more notice of it, but it actually is moving. We’re not going to get back 60% of our forest, you know, that’s gone. But everything else seems to be moving. It’s pretty cool to see all the birds back, the tui and the bellbirds.”

“One thing that happens is that you might be taking care of the water on your property but if the guy upstream isn’t, it’s going to affect you.”

“The challenge being is, this relates to the dairy farming land. One farm will have fences and plants along their boundaries and the other will have cows walking through the stream because they are dry stock, not dairy. So we have a little way to go.”

“If you have a stream running through your property, what you do with your land will affect the person further down the stream. So we are all affecting each other.”

Barriers

- Some are concerned that the Three Waters regulations could introduce difficulties for farmers, as water quality issues stemming from uncontrollable environmental factors, like natural mineral content and road runoff, may lead to disproportionate blame being placed on them.

“All this Three Waters coming in is going to create a problem. We get runoff from the road, which means after a dry spell, you might have diesel from the road leach into the rivers that we will probably get blamed for... but there’s nothing we can do about road runoff.”

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

- While past farming and factory practices are believed to have significantly impacted the district’s environment through deforestation and water pollution, many farmers are now proactively engaged in environmental restoration through riparian planting and improving waterways. This is believed to demonstrate their commitment to reversing past damage and leaving the land in a better state for future generations.
- While some see restoration work as a challenging and time-consuming endeavour that requires extended commitment, it is also seen as significantly important due to its long-term benefits for both the local ecosystem and the planet.

- While some observe that the district has experienced a significant reduction in wetlands, affecting the quality and availability of underground water sources, there is a growing awareness and effort towards their restoration, as the importance of wetlands in supporting a healthy environment is becoming increasingly recognised.

“Certainly, from a water quality point of view, all farmers want to leave the land better than how they found it. No one wants to make it worse for the next generation. So there’s a huge amount of work that goes on that farmers don’t get enough credit for.”

“It is unfortunate that a lot of its wetlands have been lost to farming culture. But that being said, there are plenty of farmers who are now trying to actively put those facets back into the farm.”

“So they [farmers] are really keen to see that coming back to how it was, and they’re aware that it was their predecessors that had created this, so they are vastly wanting to undo it.”

“All of it links to the farming sector, but it’s not the farmers; they copped it, but it was actually the factories that were doing a lot more environmental damage.”

“I think farmers have a lot to do with it. They’ve really supported and have done a lot of the riparian planting back on their farms... because there has been so much damage from past practices.”

“There is some real acknowledgement from farmers that they want to do more in [the environmental] space to put trees back and put wetlands back.”

“It is hard work. It is really hard work, and it’s time-consuming. So restoration work is not just a quick fix. It takes years, years and years. But it’s worth it.”

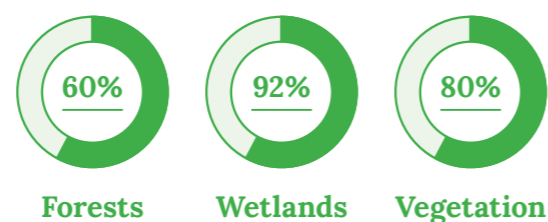
“When I’m long gone, the trees are still going to be here; they’re still going to be growing and that helps the whole planet, every tree, so it’s worth doing; it’s really important.”

“There’s definitely a lot of wetlands that have been lost, you can see that. But they are also coming back too.”

“People are realising that great expanses of countryside are not working, so they are realising too that wetlands are more important than they realised.”

“We have areas where people are putting land back into wetlands now and encouraging that whole thought process, so that’s a positive.”

SINCE HUMAN SETTLEMENT, TARANAKI HAS LOST 60% OF ITS FORESTS, 92% OF ITS WETLANDS, AND OVER 80% OF ITS COASTAL VEGETATION.



Biodiversity Overview Information Sheet, Taranaki Regional Council, 2023.

Opportunities

- Equipping people with the knowledge and tools to monitor their own waterways so that they can make informed and independent decisions for the welfare of their environment.
- Some believe that the ratification of the mountain will bring about specific protections for the National Park area, thereby safeguarding the local plants and wildlife, and providing local Iwi with a stronger voice in decision-making about industrial developments near the mountain.

“We will see long-term changes to the environment, or to our environment, if we continue teaching people how to look after their environment better.”

“A lot of it is around education... educate our people and they can make the decisions that they need to at the place. That’s where we’ll see the benefits come through over time.”

“We’re going through the ratification of the maunga... So, there’ll be some specific protections put around the National Park area that will help to protect plants and flora or fauna.”

“If people want to carry out activities or build something in the area of the Maunga, before we were a tick box, whereas now we will have a more active voice to say ‘go away’ and ‘we don’t want our maunga to have another factory or another dairy farm put next to it.’”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Damian and Jane Roper - reportedly undertaken significant reforestation efforts on their farm, planting tens of thousands of native plants.
- Eltham Community Development Group, Native Planting - initiated a project to replace gum trees and invasive weeds in local parks with native trees, involving community volunteers in large-scale planting days.
- Forest and Bird, Rawhitiroa Wetland Project – an environmental restoration initiative that’s focused on planting two hectares of wetland and creating an outdoor classroom, with funding and support from Fonterra.
- Ngaa Rauru - actively engaged in environmental conservation through contracts that focus on monitoring freshwater systems and restoring the Waitōtara catchment.
- Rotokare Scenic Trust - a predator-free reserve that facilitates the resurgence of native flora and endangered species in South Taranaki, serving as a notable example of environmental restoration. (Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust, n.d.).^[31]
- Taranaki Catchment Collective - actively engaged in monitoring and improving the health of waterways across the South Taranaki district.
- Taranaki Regional Council, ‘Environmental Woods’ event - celebrates commendable environmental efforts and achievements within the local community.

- Taranaki Regional Council - has a riparian planting programme aimed at enhancing and protecting the region’s waterways.
- Some local schools are reportedly participating in environmental restoration by constructing new wetlands and engaging students in planting days.

“I know that Taranaki Regional Council has been very unique in that their riparian planting programme, I think, has been going on for like 20 years or something. So a lot of our waterways are very planted out due to that programme.”

“I don’t know if it’s the same with other regions, but certainly, the Regional Council locally does. Environmental Woods once a year, they celebrate some of the cool things that people are doing.”

“There seems to be people that are creating wetlands spaces as well. The school down the road, they’ve just constructed a new wetland as well, which is very exciting.”

“So the local parks had a lot of gum trees cut down, they’ll just get too dangerous, and then I noticed all the weed trees, and just all sorts of weeds were growing. So I thought, ‘hey, that’s a great place to start’ putting in some new native trees.”

“So the first lot of trees we planted, I believe it was 1200 trees. We had a public planting day. So we had about 50 volunteers, it took about two hours, it was a great day, [and the] weather was great.”

“I’m a member of the South Taranaki catchment group, which is looking at all the waterways throughout the district. We’re meeting on a regular basis now; it’s so fantastic.”

“We’ve got a small project called the Rawhitiroa wetland project. It’s two hectares that we are planting out and making an outdoor classroom. It’s a little bit closer to town.”

“Someone from Fonterra drove past and said ‘what are you doing there?’ and we said, ‘we’re hoping to get some ponds put in one day as we want to put mudfish in’. Mudfish are quite endangered. A couple of weeks later, they came back and said, here’s 30 grand... it just fell in our lap.”

“Damien Roper and his partner [Jane] have been involved in planting tens of thousands of native plants on the farm.”

“We do heaps in the environment. If you talk to any PSGE [Post Settlement Governance Entity], they do heaps in the environment too.”

“We’ve got two big contracts. We’ve got the one contract which is around freshwater systems and monitoring of our freshwater. Looking at restoring our Waitotara catchment and making sure our values and our lenses are across that.”

Theme 44

In South Taranaki, a rising passion for conservation and enhanced pest control efforts is leading to a noticeable resurgence of rare and native species, especially within pest-free zones. Despite this progress and the growing acceptance of pest management, certain methods, such as feral cat control and the use of 1080, continue to spark debates. Consequently, many are seen to persist in using labour-intensive techniques, which often yield minimal results despite immense effort.

THE REGION REMAINS HOME TO 52 RARE AND ENDANGERED NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS, INCLUDING 40 THREATENED SPECIES OF BIRDS, MAMMALS, REPTILES, AND INVERTEBRATES, AS WELL AS OVER 10 ENDANGERED PLANT SPECIES



Biodiversity Overview Information Sheet, Taranaki Regional Council, 2023.

Strengths

- Some perceive that there’s a widespread commitment to environmental restoration and the reintroduction of rare and native species in the district, with various organisations and initiatives actively regenerating and supporting the recovery of native wildlife.
- Some observe that, due to significant pest control efforts and the establishment of predator-free zones across the district, there has been a noticeable resurgence in native and rare flora and fauna, with a significant increase in previously vulnerable or absent bird populations.
- Some have noticed that as rare and vulnerable species flourish in reserves throughout the district, there has been an increase in these species migrating to and breeding on neighbouring farms. This trend is believed to spark a deeper interest in conservation among farmers, as they are proud to host and witness the growth of rare wildlife on their land.

- Some initiatives are believed to be equipping people with essential wildlife knowledge and conservation skills, such as monitoring and pest control, enabling them to identify species and contribute independently to environmental management.
- Some observe that over the past decade, perspectives on pest management have evolved, with increasing acceptance and understanding of the need for predator control to protect the environment.
- Some observe that pest-free areas, characterised by their dense and diverse bush, feel significantly different. Due to their unique wairua (spirit), these environments are believed to have a deep, rejuvenating quality that can be felt both physically and emotionally, with some suggesting they possess unique healing properties.

“You’ve got a space that is totally pest-free, you can really significantly feel the difference. Just being in the bush, and the life that lives in it.

“I do know that there is the passion for environmental changes and revitalising and reintroducing our species, so the consideration is very strong here.

“One of the Kiwi this year, most Kiwi will have one offspring a year, well this one Kiwi, he sat on the nest three times this year. He’s had three babies and it’s absolutely unheard of.

“There’s an old orchard right next to us and there is a kākā, and he’s been there for about four or five years just on his own... blow me down, he now has a mate. So now we have two kākā, and there are less than 20,000 left in the world, and we’ve got two of them as neighbours. All we’re doing is just trapping around them, just keeping the possums off them because the possums will eat their eggs.

Framework Tags

Life on Land

Responsible Consumption & Production

Life Below Water

Natural Environment

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

“We do bird counts through the reserve, and a number of species that would have been present in really low numbers before are now booming.

“There’s a real testament to Kane’s work, like brown Kea, which were extinct in Taranaki for 100 years, that are now living on our neighbour’s farm ponds, which is so cool. What a neat thing for them to be able to experience.

“A lot of those farmers are stoked that they’ve got these rare species; it’s the fourth rarest waterfowl in the world, now living on their farm pond.

“It sounds real funny, but what he’s feeling is the bush; you feel it physically and emotionally. Even if you’re not really a spiritual person, without even knowing, you are in the spirit of this place when you are here, which is what I find really special about it.

“It’s so dense and it’s more about the wairua and the spirit of the place, so it just feels different.

“It’s changed a lot as well... a decade ago, people were really confronted by the idea of ‘oh my god, you guys kill stuff to protect stuff’ like ‘it’s just so backwards’... With these predator-free movements, that perspective is changing. It seems a lot more acceptable to have those conversations, ‘oh yeah, pest management’.

“There are many people and they are involved with us at different levels, say with kiwi listening. They may have come to us at that point in time, they didn’t have a clue what a kiwi sounded like and now have trained and become competent now that they can identify that in their environment.

“People who helped volunteering here in terms of the pest management or monitoring have built those skills that they then know how to do that themselves.

Barriers

- It is perceived by some that animals such as mice, goats, and feral cats, though often considered harmless, can become substantial threats to the district’s wildlife ecosystems in the absence of natural predators.
- Some believe that while pest-control tools have advanced, they remain insufficient and excessively labour-intensive, with some equating them to ‘mowing a lawn with scissors,’ suggesting there is a need for greater access to more efficient methods, such as vaccines, that are currently not allowed.
- Some express concerns about current pest control efforts, feeling that their continuous and near full-time dedication to the cause is futile as it has little impact on the pervasive problem, captured in the sentiment that ‘the pests just keep coming.’
- Some express frustration as some people are seen to lack genuine commitment to conservation, instead participating in conservation initiatives due to its perceived trendiness or personal agendas, such as political advancement.
- Some believe that for youth who have never visited a native, predator-free environment before, the rarity of such experiences may create a barrier to forming a connection with these unique natural settings.

“What the situation is [like] at the moment is the government, or the powers that be, are asking us to mow a lawn with a pair of scissors.

- “You think a small mouse is quite an innocuous thing, that’s not going to do much damage, but certainly without the pressure of other predatory mammals, they will cause quite a bit more damage.”*
- “The feral cats are a big problem. It’s not uncommon to catch a feral cat and it weighs 10kg. Their tails are getting shorter... Their faces are bigger and squarer. Their chests are bigger, and they’re a bigger animal. So we’re not talking about domestic cats anymore.”*
- “There were lots of times during those years when volunteers said what the hell are we doing out here and it’s a legitimate question because we would sometimes think we’re doing nothing, we are just pushing shit uphill because the pests just kept coming.”*
- “We’ve got the tools but they’re not available to us. There is a vaccine ready to go for possums and they’ve been experimenting with it for a long time overseas... What they do is feed the predator a contraceptive so that they breed themselves out. But we’re not allowed to use that.”*
- “That was before conservation was trendy, some people just get involved in it just because it’s trendy and that’s annoying.”*
- “There was one guy in particular. He got involved in a conservation outfit and he was really difficult to deal with... I said ‘this guy’s got an agenda’ and blow me down less than 6 months later, he wanted to join a political party and wanted the benefits of being great for conservation.”*
- “We get a range of schools coming through, different deciles, some may be more well-off and get to go to all sorts of different places and on school visits, and some, this may be like the only time they get to come out for the whole year.”*

- “But when you just throw kids that have never really been out in the bush before, sometimes it’s harder to make those connections.”*
- “To do nothing, or even, to keep doing what we were doing, we’ll lose countless species. But we’re losing species at a great rate, particularly mokomoko. We aren’t out on our hands and knees, crawling through every blade of grass to find, so we’d be losing species that hadn’t even been discovered. In terms of our birds, the famous one is we can get some kiwi, but we’ve got the bittern out on our coasts, which is getting hammered.”*
- “From a farming point of view, we should all care as well. We spent a lot of money as a country on fertiliser, synthetic or natural. Whereas once upon a time, we would have had all these seabirds flying into the ngahere and bringing all that guano in, so with those dropped in populations, we’re actually degrading now our whenua as well. So it matters. It matters if those species aren’t there.”*

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

- Some note that discussions on feral cat pest control often evoke strong emotions, with personal attachments to domestic cats leading to strong resistance against some control measures. However, there is a perceived shift, with growing awareness and rising acceptance of the need for these measures due to the damage feral cats are seen to inflict on local wildlife.

- Some view the use of certain pest-control methods, particularly 1080, as controversial, fueling ongoing debates due to concerns about their environmental impact and interference with hunting activities. However, as the positive effects of these toxic management strategies on environmental spaces become more evident, they are believed to be gaining more acceptance.

“People are changing, but the key now is to just keep it up. People are starting to realise now that cats are a big problem.”

“It’s sort of a challenge where people do have positive emotional relationships with their pet cat, so it can be confronting for people to reconcile that you’ve got this positive emotional connection with this animal, but yet that same kind of animal, in a different setting, can be hugely disruptive.”

“The conversation is changing now at a national level, but once upon a time if you raised it [feral cats], you could be pretty confident that you’d get a negative response from the community, in terms of us being cat-hating.”

“Not everyone is on the same page regarding that outcome. And we’re arguing about many things, such as the tools we’re using [for pest control], or whether we use them at all.”

“Even some of the people that are involved with this space, like toxins dropped in the reserves, as part of that initial eradication. Some of our community was really opposed to that initially.”

“Now, seeing the change in the site as a result of that toxic management, [people] have sort of come around to it. It’s not to say that 1080 is the best tool.”

Opportunities

- Promoting a shift in public mindset to embrace the registration and monitoring of domestic cats, similar to the management of dogs to help mitigate pest issues.
- ‘Keeping on top of’ pest and predator control efforts to protect and support local wildlife.
- Empowering people to take action regarding pest control by ‘getting stuck in,’ rather than depending on external funding and support.
- Inspiring district-wide engagement in environmental care and collective conservation efforts to create interconnected ecosystems that enable wildlife from reserves to expand and thrive.
- Engaging youth in the maintenance and appreciation of community spaces to foster a long-term commitment to looking after the environment.
- Enhancing community engagement, particularly among youth, with pest-free reserves to cultivate a closer connection with the environment and foster a greater understanding of rare and native species.

“It’s something that I think more people need to be putting in a bit more work, not just hoping some other company or government will do it, we need to be doing so.”

- “It’s just about making sure that they have those moments that they can connect with because all the work gets done around the site here... with the environment and with the biodiversity work creates the perfect space for them to see something that they may have never seen before.*
- “You can’t change their life overnight, you may have a bigger impact on some kids, but you’re just building upon those experiences they have in connecting with the environment.*
- “You want to inspire people in the region to take care of their environment so that it can spread out, you know, that’s the biodiversity corridor.*
- “Working together with other entities to have better conservation outcomes... It’s certainly something that we’re thinking about now. How do we work together to make connected spaces that are better for wildlife?*
- “People just need to change their mindset, that’s all. Because I’ve never seen a dog stray in the bush. But it’s because people have got used to the fact that they’ve got to register their dogs and they’re not allowed to let them wander. People can’t get their head around the fact that it’s actually possible for cats also. It would save us so many problems.*
- “To be completely pest-free. There’s still a mindset shift.*
- “There’s not enough money in the world to pay someone to do it, so you might as well just get stuck in and do it.*
- “There are people interested, but we want to succeed so we’ve just got to keep on top of the pests and predators here.*
- “Hopefully, it sparks something in the children too, and they want to grow up looking after the environment, or they can watch the trees keep growing over the next few years and beyond.*

Good Mahi in the Community

- Rotokare Scenic Reserve - offers unique experiences for visitors to observe rare wildlife, such as kiwis, in their natural environment.
- Rotokare Scenic Reserve - focuses on ecological restoration, reintroducing native bird and plant species into a pest-free sanctuary, and enhancing biodiversity.
- Rotokare Scenic Reserve - transfers thriving populations of Kiwi to other conservation sites to support other entities with their biodiversity aspirations.
- Rotokare Scenic Reserve - serves as an educational hub, attracting numerous students yearly through its programmes that integrate local environmental knowledge with the school curriculum, facilitating both indoor and outdoor learning experiences focused on native wildlife and conservation.
- Rotokare Scenic Reserve - established a Bush Classroom, a new educational facility designed to connect the community with the environment and foster outdoor learning. This initiative bridges the traditional classroom environment with natural surroundings, enhancing engagement with local flora and fauna for learners.
- Taranaki Kiwi Trust - engaged in pest management across various sites, ensuring they are prepared for the reintroduction and recovery of kiwi populations.

- “It’s a really cool spot for people to come and actually see kiwi. If you just walk around the lake, sort of dusk and onwards, you have a pretty good chance of seeing a kiwi just walking along the track. That’s pretty cool for people to be able to come and experience that.*
- “The trust’s overall vision for the site is to restore the ecosystem, its site to return species that were lost and to enhance what is already present.*
- “We’re working on trying to return what would have been here previously, but also with other opportunities, which we can support national conservation outcomes.*
- “In the last few years, [we] have also begun translocations [of kiwis] out of the site, which is a real great reflection of the success of the project, but also a fantastic thing to be able to support other community entities with their aspirations.*
- “Last year, we had just over 2000 school kids come through the reserve or engage with our programmes.*
- “We help with engaging with local stories, and the local community. We’re able to share that local knowledge, through our programmes as well. But obviously, most of them are environmental based.*
- “The latest creation has been in the pipeline for a long time. It just opened a few weeks ago, [it] is our new Bush classroom, which helps bridge the gap between classroom and nature, because it’s really just about connecting into nature.*

Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi: Rawiri Walsh

“We’re here at Ashley Park, essentially a petting zoo and accommodation site in the workshop shed, and we’ve just been modifying some DOC 200 traps that we’re going to be putting out onto our whenua to protect our native species and remove some of the pests such as mustelids, rats, and hedgehogs.

“My background is in winemaking, so I was a winemaker for 10 years. I worked overseas in places like Austria, Canada, and Hungary, working in areas where the connection with the taiao is gone. What we have left is so special, and we are taking it for granted, and it is declining.

“Essentially, four months ago when I started, I was looking for somewhere to put traps, and I looked at a map and thought, ‘well, I bet there are lots of areas there where there are manu and taonga that need protecting.’

“I’ve already got the background in trapping and things, so if I can get people out here with me and teach them that, then they’ll start to engage and start to be aware of the damage that’s been done.

“To do nothing, or even to keep doing what we were doing, we’ll lose countless species. But we’re losing species at a great rate, particularly mokomoko. We aren’t out on our hands and knees, crawling through every blade of grass to find, so we’d be losing species that hadn’t even been discovered.

“From a farming point of view, we should all care as well. We’ve spent a lot of money as a country on fertiliser, synthetic or natural. Whereas once upon a time, we would have had all these seabirds flying into the ngahere and bringing all that guano in, so with those dropped populations, we’re actually degrading our whenua now as well. So it matters. It matters if those species aren’t there.

“There is a whakatauki I learnt recently, which was ‘Ka rongō, ka wareware, ka kite, ka mahara, ka hangaia, ka marama au,’ so for us being out there and really getting into te taiao and getting our hands in and doing it, that’s when we really learn, and that’s when we really understand.

“The short-term goal is to have more staff in the taiao space. So we’re looking to have them come in under DOC training. So they’ll hopefully be uri, if not uri, then Māori or some nearby Iwi. From there, they’ll come back into our rohe. So they won’t just stay in Whanganui, or they won’t just stay in Taranaki; we’re trying to essentially do a haka and draw those resources and people in.



Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust

“One of the initial goals from the trust was to do some possum management. So they raised \$30,000 to do some possum control, which they’ve managed to achieve. We thought, ‘what else can we do for the space?’ A few years later, and a fair bit more fundraising, and a few conversations with [the] central government, the trust was able to secure an 8.2-kilometre pest-proof fence that was built in 2008, surrounding the 30-hectare reserve. It also includes 12 hectares of land that was gifted to us by our community.

“So the community has always been an important part of the story right from day one. It’s through their blessing that we’ve been able to make the space the place that it is.

“The Bush classroom that we now have, is off the back of our office and education centre. That education centre was the old school. So we were gifted that by one of our neighbours, and it has been lovingly restored to be a classroom again, so wonderful to be able to continue the history of that building.

“Around about 2,000 students come through here every year, they have different modules that they can learn. Some of them are NCEA levels, and some of them are right down to early childhood. They can come and learn about the environment and what they can achieve, things that they can do at home. Some of the kids come away here with real sparks of information.

“Volunteers are an incredibly huge part of what we do here... we couldn’t deliver the programme that we do without volunteer support, and without the support of our community. It was volunteers that made this project that started it in the first place.

“Kiwi are now found at the site, it’s a species that has done really well with the absence of pests. When the fence was first put up, there were no Kiwi within the sanctuary. They’ve all been brought in. They’ve been 40 birds that have been brought in to give us a really good genetic base of Taranaki Kiwi, so they’ve been sourced from all different sort of pockets across the motu.

“We’re achieving what we wanted to achieve. We’re looking after the species that were here, we’re bringing in species that weren’t here, but should have been here. Some of them hadn’t been in Taranaki for 100 years or more. So to get those back into Taranaki and into here is just so special.

“We don’t profess to know everything. We’re always learning, we work with other community groups, other organisations, trying to find out what is the best way of doing things. We’re not professing to be experts in anything, always wanting to learn, and want to try and do the best for this and share our ideas with other people as well.



Theme 45

Some observe that, although social and emergency housing seems to be available in South Taranaki, many, particularly single individuals, find accessing stable and quality housing challenging. It's believed that those who do secure social housing risk displacement from their established communities, as limited availability within the district often necessitates relocation to nearby townships.

Barriers

- Many perceive a significant challenge in accessing emergency housing in the district, with even established organisations like the Ministry of Social Development struggling to provide this support for their clients.
- Some observe that due to the limited availability of emergency housing within the district, people are often relocated to neighbouring regions, resulting in their displacement and the disruption of their social networks, as they find themselves in unfamiliar communities without established connections.
- It is observed by some that a number of facilities, including motels, converted rest homes, and campgrounds, are being used to accommodate people in emergency housing or on emergency housing waitlists.
- There is a belief that the short-term nature of emergency housing hinders residents from establishing a permanent and secure home, leading to a continuous cycle of 'being shifted from one emergency house to another.'
- Some perceive that single people face additional challenges in securing emergency housing, as priority is often given to families with higher needs.
- Some believe that the poor quality and confined space of some emergency housing in the district are not only disgraceful in some cases, but also contribute to a sense of hopelessness among residents.

"Part of that is also housing, because the housing situation here is really bad. Actually having social housing here, transitional housing, and just more rental spaces for people to actually live here would be great, because that's one of the key issues that we always hear about that are around."

"Plus, there was a rest home that was sold years ago, that has taken in some emergency housing as well, and he's sitting pretty. And it's a rest home, so you can imagine what a rest home would be like: it's rooms with communal living."

"Emergency housing is in motels, and there's a campground in Pātea and the campground in Hāwera also. So that would be in a caravan or a cabin."

"I've definitely met with a couple of different people who are in motels on the emergency housing list."

"Even just going from the MSD meeting where they look after people and try to get them housing, and they just couldn't. It's gotten a bit better, but they have to pay the high rents."

"I have known quite a few people who have had to move away to access emergency housing."

"But then they're displaced. They don't know the community. They don't know anyone. It really isn't that great for that person, [moving] to the new schools for kids, but [it's a] different culture, different communities."

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

No Poverty

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

"Then they go into emergency housing, but they can only be in there for a short time. So they just keep getting shifted around from emergency house to emergency house."

"You've got no security; you've got nowhere you can call home."

"People in emergency housing, they have their life in a room; you can't even do a food shop for a week because there is simply not the storage and [the] space. People are feeling hopeless."

"There's a lot of single people. So they're last on the list, if you're looking under Kāinga Ora, because obviously families have a higher need than someone who lives by themselves."

AS OF MARCH 2023, THERE ARE 120 HOUSEHOLDS IN SOUTH TARANAKI ON THE WAITLIST FOR SOCIAL HOUSING, ACCORDING TO THE HOUSING REGISTER.



Dot Loves Data, Community Compass. Ministry of Social Development, Housing Register.

OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS ON THE SOUTH TARANAKI HOUSING REGISTER WAITLIST FOR SOCIAL HOUSING HAS RISEN FROM 24 TO 120, WHICH REPRESENTS A 400% INCREASE.



Dot Loves Data, Community Compass. Ministry of Social Development, Housing Register.

Theme 46

In South Taranaki, despite rentals appearing more affordable compared to urban areas, many note a growing housing crisis, characterised by a severe shortage of rentals and escalating costs, making rentals increasingly unaffordable and unattainable for many. The impacts of this crisis are believed to ripple throughout the community, with many resorting to overcrowding, temporary accommodation, or subpar conditions, clinging tightly to what they have due to limited alternatives.

Strengths

- Some observe that while rent prices in the district have increased, they remain comparatively affordable, especially when contrasted with areas like Auckland and New Plymouth.

“South Taranaki will be the last to come on board with the rent prices, as it spreads around the country. South Taranaki has always been lower.

“You can get something up there [in New Plymouth] for \$700, whereas you can get something way bigger down here for like, \$450, \$500

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

- While many are believed to be grateful for their rentals in an environment where housing availability is limited, some families are perceived to be coping with less than ideal conditions, like cramped homes, due to a lack of better alternatives.
- Some note that in the farming sector, providing housing as part of employment packages is a common and necessary practice due to the scarcity of nearby accommodation. However, it's also perceived that this leads to a trend where applicants are more drawn to the housing than the job itself, raising questions about their true motivation and commitment to the work.

“One of the big challenges we have, particularly if the job comes with a house, is we have a lot of people applying more because they want the house, more so than the job, as it is a way of getting accommodation.

“The biggest thing I see with people applying for farming roles that is of concern to me is most of them are applying for a farm role because they want a house.

“The role secures them that house, and that's their motivation for applying, not because they're passionate about it or they're wanting to move up in the industry. It's because they are wanting to secure, which I can understand, housing for them and their family.

“We rent a house and we are so appreciative of getting this house... we are appreciative we've got a house because there's not many out there.

“We're appreciative for what we have, even though it's too small for us.

“All our kids are crammed into one [room]; it's not the greatest environment. But there are no options. There's no options out there.

THE MEDIAN RENTAL PRICE IN SOUTH TARANAKI IS \$412 COMPARED TO \$525 NATIONALLY.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

No Poverty

Good Health & Wellbeing

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Barriers

- Many perceive that, despite seeming more affordable than urban areas, rental prices in the district are increasing and unaffordable for many, especially for those on low incomes or welfare support, who reportedly spend a substantial portion of their earnings on rent.
- There is a widespread perception that the district grapples with a critical shortage of available rental properties, with high demand and limited supply resulting in extensive waiting lists and intense competition for the few available properties, affecting both existing residents and newcomers alike.
- Some perceive that the rising costs of purchasing homes in the district are directly impacting rental prices, as homeowners are seen to be increasing rents to cover their increasing mortgages.
- Some believe that, despite the appeal of living alone in the district, the high cost of rent makes this option financially unfeasible, leading to a compromise in living arrangements for some.
- Many perceive that pet owners in the district encounter additional difficulties in securing housing due to landlords' reluctance to allow animals, further limiting their options.
- Many observe that the issue of overcrowding in housing across the district is significant, with families often cohabitating due to challenges in affording or accessing available housing, leading to overcrowded living conditions in some instances.
- Many in the district are observed turning to temporary accommodations, such as hotels, motels, or camping grounds, or unconventional and often substandard housing arrangements like living in garages, cabins, or sheds, driven by the lack of affordable or available housing, a situation noted in both rural and urban areas of the district.
- Many are increasingly concerned about the rising number of unhoused people within the district, as more are observed to be living in cars or other inadequate conditions, struggling to secure housing.
- Some believe people in transitional, makeshift, or unhoused living situations face the challenge of inadequate cooking facilities, often limited to basic equipment such as microwaves.
- Some observe that the rise of Airbnb and other short-term rental options in areas like Ōpunake, while financially beneficial for property owners, is contributing to a scarcity of long-term housing, imposing financial and practical burdens on those seeking stable and affordable accommodation.
- Some perceive that the instability and uncertainty of some housing situations significantly impacts people's ability to maintain stable employment, as the constant concern over basic necessities like shelter overshadows their capacity to fully commit to work.
- Some believe that across the district, particularly in rural areas, many houses are left vacant as owners are reluctant to undertake the costly and effort-intensive upgrades required to meet healthy home standards, despite the district's pressing need for housing.

- Some note that despite strict regulations for rental housing standards, some families are still seen living in inadequate housing conditions, such as homes that lack proper insulation or maintenance.
- Some tenants feel vulnerable and powerless in their rental situations, fearing that making requests for repairs or expressing concerns to their landlords might lead to increased rent or eviction. This fear compels them to bear repair costs and tolerate unsatisfactory conditions, as they believe they have ‘nowhere to go.’
- Some observe that, due to the limited availability of rental properties, tenants cling tightly to their current rentals, as relocating isn’t always a viable option.
- Some perceive that recent changes in tenancy laws overly favour tenants, making it challenging for landlords to maintain control over their properties and leading to concerns about tenant accountability regarding property damage.

“Housing is, of course, you don’t need me to talk about housing, because I’m sure you know perfectly well what the landscape looks like there, and it’s really not so great.

- “It’s just the prices these days and then the rent, you know, 60% of people’s incomes are going on rent.*
- “It is hard for people at the moment to pay that sort of rent. Especially those who are unemployed and single people. So if there’s only one person on their own, that’s unachievable.*

- “I look for somewhere that’s got one extra room, but there’s nothing around. It’s not even around the cost. I mean, cost is a great consideration, but there are no houses available.*
- “It’s really hard. Lots of people [are] wanting housing, but there’s no housing. They don’t have enough houses here.*
- “It’s so competitive. If you put a rental property up I imagine they have people coming out the door trying to go into them.*
- “I think people feel safer in South Taranaki than the main centres, so they think ‘why can’t I [live alone]?’, but it’s just too expensive.*
- “It just simply comes down to that it is increasing, but simply because the people who are becoming the homeowners are having to pay more for a mortgage.*
- “You also get landlords that don’t let pets in nowadays, and a lot of people who have pets so they find it hard to get a house to rent.*
- “There does seem to be empty houses around Taranaki in rural areas and people who own them, because of the new rules around healthy homes, farmers especially, have a house that they’d normally rent out but won’t anymore as it’s not up to standard.*
- “So what frustrates me immensely is going past beautiful dairy farms that have whole houses sitting there empty, because the farmers cannot be bothered... they just don’t need the hassle.*
- “But we would see that in town as well. I certainly have cousins who have got their three kids, the partners and the mokopuna all in a three bedroom house, and someone’s out of the garage as well. So it’s not just out in those rural areas.*

- “Gosh \$412 is a lot for the lower income. So that would cause all sorts of problems, doubling up in houses, and people will find a way to live and board.*
- “When they can’t find a house to live in, and they’re going to stay with whānau and doubling up in a house thinking we’ll be able to find something soon but there’s nothing available.*
- “One story, on the ground story... They had to live in our garage until they found something, so that took a few months. Because there was nothing, no emergency housing, nothing actually on the ground.*
- “Over in Pātea, there’s a section down the road [from] me that’s [got] four cabins on it, one bedroom, and there is a shed and outside laundry and they are paying \$300 a week for a cabin, which I thought would have been impossible for somewhere like Pātea.*
- “They’re living in the camping grounds in a one bedroom house and paying similar prices. They’re just finding it really hard to break out of that and get into something bigger to [suit] his family.*
- “We did have one family come in a couple of months ago, and it was the first married couple. So he had been here for a while working. Then he [brought] his wife over. His wife has got two children and she’s pregnant. There was no housing for them. They ended up [having] to stay in a camping ground. She was pregnant. She ended up living in a camping ground with a baby and they only [managed] to find a house about a week ago.*
- “Housing too. We have stories of people who, you know, can’t keep jobs because they can’t find a house. They’re living out of the car, and that’s no way [to] live every day.*

- “Yeah, it’s very, very hard, like super hard. There’s more homeless people or rough sleepers. We have clients who sleep in their cars.*
- “There have been, probably, three occasions of us being notified of people living in the stadium. Someone was living in the toilets. It’s terrible. It’s really terrible.*
- “We do get those that don’t have cooking facilities. So they might have a gas stove top, if they’re lucky.*
- “People who are sleeping rough, that don’t even have an oven, they don’t have a microwave, or they’re living in motels, they’ve just got a microwave.*
- “If you’re constantly thinking about that, where you’re going to live, how can you even think about turning up to work and giving 100% or doing 12 hour shifts? It’s just figuring out where you’re going to shower, where you’re going to sleep. People are doing that.*
- “Ōpunake is a holiday destination and we are seeing a couple of hundred AirBnbs there but no long term living opportunities. I wonder if it’s to do with it being easier to rent out your place on a short term deal than it is to be a landlord.*
- “With AirBnb you have got short term people. If you get stuck with somebody, it is too hard to get them out, and they get the benefit of being able to use that place as well.*
- “It’s a very expensive way to have accommodation (AirBnb). But because they were working, they didn’t have access to support.*
- “If you drive through some of the streets, you see houses where the windows are filled of moisture, you see the rotting, it’s cold and damp.*

“We feel a little bit powerless that if we moan too much we’ll get kicked out of our house. Same for if we ask for anything to be repaired. So we do everything ourselves.”

“With renting comes vulnerability, right? That if you cause too much trouble to your landlord, you’ll be kicked out.”

“We do pay slightly more than we should be. But it’s a set of circumstances where we are powerless, well we feel quite powerless.”

“So my landlords live in Rotorua, and they basically have so much power, because when I say ‘oh, we need to fix this or that’ they said ‘we may have to put the rent up’. So, we do everything we can ourselves, we pay for our own way, because we know there’s nowhere to go.”

“No renter moves to other places because there’s none available. So everyone’s holding on to their place as hard as they can.”

“When they changed their tenancy laws, it’s very much in favour with the tenant which I don’t agree with. Because it’s very very difficult for a tenant to be asked to leave. If they want to paint a room they can. If they want a dog they can. Now, that to me, doesn’t seem right. The owner needs to retain some authority.”

IN SOUTH TARANAKI, THE INCREASE IN RENT IN 2023 WAS 9.6%, COMPARED TO A NATIONAL INCREASE OF 4.8%.

\$306 | \$526

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



Opportunities

- Increasing the availability of safe, affordable, and accessible housing within the district.
- Repurposing vacant buildings for short-term housing to provide immediate shelter solutions, effectively addressing the community’s urgent housing needs.
- Integrating employment support with housing services to effectively address homelessness and provide comprehensive support.

“Affordable housing, first and foremost. Affordable and accessible housing because there isn’t many [options] out there.”

“So in South Taranaki, we have an employment consultant integrated with the specialist mental health services, and that’s how it should be everywhere, right... in a way, that’s how it should work between housing and employment services.”

“So that level of integration, so what we see internationally existing and emerging is best practice. You would not [provide] housing support or solutions for homelessness... without integrating employment support as part of that solution. It makes no sense whatsoever, not to.”

“Yeah, there’s lots of empty buildings, but I can see why with the earthquake side of it. I just feel like it could be utilised for housing, even like short term housing to help people because there’s just so many of them.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Bishops Action Foundation - collaborating with partners across Taranaki on an innovative housing strategy to address accommodation needs by matching people, such as the elderly with spare rooms, with those seeking affordable, long-term living solutions.
- Ngaa Rauru - renovated and rented the Waverley school house to address the shortage of available homes in Waverley.
- Roderick Hope Trust - operates a ‘ready to rent’ programme focusing on financial literacy and keeping to a budget.
- Silver Fern Farms - provides housing for their workers, typically in boarding situations. However, there are concerns about their struggle to accommodate families, attributed to the current lack of available housing.
- Your Way | Kia Roha - facilitates shared rental opportunities by matching people through profiles, aiming to establish compatible living arrangements.

“But we’ve put together profiles for people, and sort of said, ‘do you like animals?’ ‘Yes, I have a cat’. ‘Do you like PlayStation?’ All of those kinds of questions, and then sort of saying ‘would you be happy for me to share this with Joanne because she wants to go flatting as well’ and then trying to do the introduction.”

“It was an invitation to participate in scoping research to develop an innovative housing solution... to understand how to have underutilised bedrooms in private houses to become part of a solution to affordable long term sustainable combination and Taranaki.”

“One of the properties we got back during settlement is the old Waverley high schools site... we’re working through trying to sort the heating and stuff out in [the caretakers house] so that we can rent that out to a family.”

“We’re just trying to contribute in that way, to give one family a house in Waverley where there are no houses available.”

“Silver Fern Farms does a really good job, in that they get housing for their workers. So they are all men and in boarding situations.”

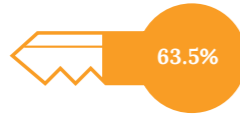
“But there is no facility for families and they are trying to do their best and they are trying and they have people looking in their pastoral care team but it’s just that there is no availability.”

“There’s also an organisation called Roderick Hope Trust that runs ready to rent programmes which involves the whole financial literacy, keeping to budget, etc, etc.”

Theme 47

In South Taranaki, many believe that houses have historically been more affordable, which has attracted numerous new residents to the district. However, due to limited availability, escalating prices, strict mortgage requirements, and rising living costs, the feasibility of owning a home is becoming increasingly out of reach for many. As a result, some are believed to be opting for multi-generational living as a means to share housing costs.

63.5% PEOPLE OWN HOMES IN SOUTH TARANAKI COMPARED TO 64.1% NATIONALLY.



Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

Strengths

- Many observe a growing number of people moving from out of town and larger cities to the district, drawn by the more affordable housing which allows them to purchase properties at considerably lower costs compared to urban areas.
- *“Some of the people from Auckland or Tauranga are coming to South Taranaki for the lifestyle. A \$1 million house in Auckland, or a \$2 million house in Auckland can buy a \$500,000 house in Hāwera and I can sit back and put my feet up.”*
- *“We do get cheaper housing in South Taranaki and you actually see a lot of people move down from Auckland, buy bigger places, and resettle down here.”*
- *“What you’re saying is people in the bigger cities selling those \$800,000 homes and then coming down and snapping up a bargain.”*

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

- While some believe that the district has historically had lower house prices, making home ownership more affordable for some, many have witnessed a substantial increase in housing prices across the district, rendering home ownership increasingly unattainable for many, even for families with substantial incomes.

- Some believe that the traditional concept of homeownership as essential for ‘getting ahead’ is changing. As property prices continue to rise, some are beginning to accept that owning a home may not be possible; however, there is still a struggle for some to fully embrace this shift in mindset.

“Homes in South Taranaki are cheaper for people to get into. So they can afford to have their own home. That’s mainly the reason. So if you can and you do have the means to own your own home, you do.”

“I sure as heck wouldn’t be trying to get into the housing market now if I wasn’t in the fortunate position of already owning. I haven’t got half a million.”

“One of the reasons for moving back to South Taranaki was to purchase a house. But even then, I was really surprised at the price of housing and how hard it was to secure that.”

“I come from the generation that [believed] if you’re going to get ahead, you’ve got to buy a house.”

“There’s a huge issue with it in our head. I’m trying to embrace a new concept of thinking, for our mental health, which is ‘it’s okay, it’s not the be-all and end-all to not own a house’, but I’m struggling with it.”

“The concept is changing, the concept of owning a house is going to have to change because that’s the old school thinking and very few people have got the money or support from their parents.”

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Reduced Inequalities

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

THE AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE IN SOUTH TARANAKI IS \$484,000, COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF \$800,000, MAKING IT APPROXIMATELY 6.8 TIMES THE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME, COMPARED TO 8.9 TIMES NATIONALLY.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass, Homes.co.nz.

Barriers

- Some believe that purchasing housing within the district is challenging due to a notable lack of properties for sale, leaving building as one of the few available options—a costly alternative beyond the reach of many.
- Some are concerned that the increasing property prices across the district are making homeownership increasingly unattainable for younger generations.
- Some believe that the escalating costs of living make achieving significant financial goals like homeownership increasingly out of reach, as many feel trapped on the ‘treadmill of life,’ managing daily living expenses while saving minimally towards a home.
- In response to escalating property prices, some believe that people are increasingly opting to reside in multi-generational homes as a means to manage housing costs, including expenses and mortgage payments.
- Some believe that a substantial number of homes in the district are owned by people from outside the community, potentially limiting homeownership opportunities for local residents.
- Some believe that, despite the district’s historically more affordable property prices, securing a mortgage is challenging, especially for low-income families, due to the stringent lending criteria and high repayment requirements perceived to be set by banks.
- Some note that the increased deposit requirements for purchasing a second home present a significant financial hurdle, making it difficult for people to invest in additional properties for rental purposes.
- Some perceive that the continually increasing cost of property rates is placing significant financial pressure on people, particularly those on fixed incomes, leading to struggles with timely payments or late payments.
- Some observe that while the housing market has slowed compared to its peak in recent years, with homes remaining on the market longer, others believe that prices have not significantly decreased.

“We lost the house so we’ve not been able to get back on the housing market. We’re too busy trying to live the treadmill of life, with the living costs, to be able to get on the market again.”

“It’s just so hard to get into housing. There are no houses for the start, to buy. Therefore, you’re left with, what, building a house? Not many people can afford to do that.”

“A lot of people I work with in their 30s and that, they can’t imagine owning their own home. They haven’t got into one now so they are going to find it really hard with prices going up constantly and affordability.”

“How the hell are our future generations going to afford to buy a house? They can barely afford rent. They are going to end up in the whānau house where the grandparents are still there and, you know, have generational families in one house because they can't afford any[where] else.

“We've got to start thinking long term and that means families cohabitating. I know families that have bought bigger houses together so they're so the kids can share the bigger backyard... So they've got that shared resource of maybe three incomes covering the mortgage.

“I'd say that all those houses will be snapped up, by either out-of-towners or people [in a] higher [income] bracket.

“They might be lower [housing prices], but no one can actually [afford it], if they're on the lower income amounts... then they're not actually gonna be able to get a mortgage.

“That whole concept is changing but it's still very early days. People still aspire to have a house but it's been made really hard with the banks' prerequisites.

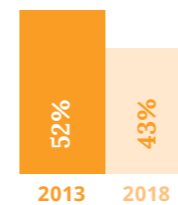
“It's also harder for people to buy a second home. Now with the [requirement that] you gotta have, you know, 20% or something like that.

“Rates is also an issue as well. So [they're] continually going up, which is putting pressure on, especially people on fixed incomes, or the elderly.

“They've slowed down quite a bit now. When it was at its peak, houses would go on the market and be sold within a week, now they [are] sitting a lot longer.

HOME OWNERSHIP LEVELS FOR SOUTH TARANAKI RESIDENTS HAVE DECREASED FROM 52% IN 2013 TO 43% IN 2018.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



Opportunities

- Increasing rent-to-buy housing schemes to increase homeownership opportunities for those who may otherwise not be able to afford it.

“There needs to be lots more rent-to-buy options like when we first purchased our house there was Māori Affairs at the time who had first home loan options. Otherwise, we probably wouldn't have got a home.

“A lot of people I work with in their 30s and that, they can't imagine owning their own home. They haven't got into one now so they are going to find it really hard with prices going up constantly.

Workshop participant

Theme 48

In South Taranaki, although housing development is observed in certain areas, challenges such as high development costs, constrained infrastructure, and restrictive new land-use policies, which are environmentally beneficial, are believed to hinder potential expansion. Additionally, despite awareness of coastal erosion and climate change threats, the appeal of coastal living persists, with some appearing willing to overlook these hazards, especially if they are not imminent.

Strengths

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

- Some observe that while Hāwera is experiencing substantial housing development, as indicated by several new subdivisions in progress, this trend is not uniform across the district, with areas like Eltham not experiencing similar development.
- While some view the new land use policies as beneficial for environmental protection and maintaining rural productivity, some feel that these regulations have notably restricted rural development possibilities, hindering growth in smaller towns like Ōpunake and leading to frustration among landowners who are now restricted in their land use.

“We have got three subdivisions that are in the process of being built in Hāwera.”

“There are no subdivisions in Eltham; there are no areas for subdivision. No one is putting money into Eltham to create that space for Eltham... for the community to grow.”

“It’s really good in terms of keeping that rural productivity of the land from not being ruined by future development.”

“A lot of people suddenly can’t do what they used to be able to do before, which causes a lot of frustration.”

“Instead of being able to do a lot of rural subdivisions, developments, or things like that, we now have to consider that policy statement within our consents, which means people can’t do what they used to be able to do.”

THE LONGVIEW DEVELOPMENT IN HĀWERA IS SET TO PROVIDE **259 NEW HOMES OVER THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS.**

Longview, 2022.

+259 

KĀINGA ORA IS INVESTIGATING HOUSING DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS FOR **BOTH CURRENT AND NEW SITES TO HELP MEET THE GROWING DEMAND FOR HOUSING IN HĀWERA.**

Kāinga Ora, 2022.

Barriers

- Some believe that the district’s limited and strained infrastructure presents a significant barrier to large-scale urban development, as projects may not always be economically and practically feasible due to these infrastructural constraints.
- Some observe that the high costs associated with developing land, such as sewage and roading, may deter developers from investing in the district, due to concerns about the financial feasibility and potential lack of profitable returns.
- Some express concerns about the ongoing trend of coastal property development, recognising that, despite potential hazards like erosion and climate change effects, the allure of seaside living continues, particularly when risks are not immediately apparent or seem distant.

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Responsible Consumption & Production

Climate Action

Life on Land

Natural Environment

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

- Some perceive that the district faces some challenges with coastal erosion, as sand dunes that were once distant are now advancing onto private land, indicating a clear change in the district’s landscape over the past decades.
- Some believe that the South Taranaki District Council may lack the ability to provide residents with accurate environmental hazard information, such as flooding and erosion.

“We want to be able to provide these things for our district and create new places for people to live or increase these current towns and make them more of a hub like Hāwera, for instance, but it’s just the feasibility of doing that, in terms of infrastructure constraints, potential hazard constraints, or previous use constraints. It’s really difficult.”

“Then developers don’t want to buy because you’re talking sewage, roading, etc., which puts the prices of that land up... which means people won’t buy because it’s too expensive... the expense is too high to be able to make a profit at the other end.”

“We do have a lot of issues in terms of coastal erosion, climate change effects, and things like that.”

“Tae road was built around a huge area of sand dunes, and the sand dunes back when it was developed were metres away, so it wasn’t an issue. But you see on Google Earth... you can see over the course of the early 2000s to now, the sand dunes are literally in someone’s property.”

“There are a lot of existing rural lifestyle-sized lots... that can still support a dwelling to be built there. So we will still have people who want to buy it and they still want to build... because living by the sea is still desired by a lot of people in this district. They wouldn’t, a lot of the time, consider the potential impacts.”

“If the risk is not imminent, and the risk is way down there, it’ll be alright. But when it hits, people are going to go ‘oh my god, I didn’t know’ but they did... If they’re not seeing the cliff eroding while they build the house, then it’s all good.”

“Council doesn’t have enough ways to identify hazards due to lack of resources and funding.”

“We have a lot of issues in terms of being able to identify many hazards because we lack resources and funding to be able to outline that in our district plan.”

“A lot of key hazards that you might see in this district would be flooding, coastal erosion, and sea level rising. But we don’t have a lot of ways to identify that.”

“People might come to us... and they might want to know what the risk to the property might be, but we can’t provide them with very accurate information.”

Opportunities

- Expanding housing developments in the district to enhance local economic growth and provide a steady workflow for contractors and businesses.
- Updating district plans to include stricter building regulations in coastal and flood-prone areas, ensuring safer and more sustainable land use.
- Developing community response plans to ensure local communities are prepared and self-reliant in civil emergencies.
- Improving emergency preparedness through the identification of hazardous areas and incorporating this data into district planning to ensure the community is better informed.

“One of the bits of work that’s going on at the moment is making sure that individual communities have got a community response plan, so that when, rather than if, something happens, communities are able to help themselves while we get out to them because of the geographic range.”

“From my point of view, I think you’d want to do quite a few of these major projects. We had one in Hāwera which is 250 new houses over the next seven years and the pipeline of firstly reputation, and what it brings into your district with a new house getting built and marketed. Then secondly, the pipeline of work for the contractors and subbies that come in and do all that.”

“We might also need to change, for instance, our district plans which might restrict, even more, being able to do activities in these coastal areas or adjacent to a water body that might flood.”

“Going forward, and as a part of emergency planning, we’ve got to keep doing the work they’re around identifying different areas.”

“Making sure that Civil Defense really starts to map out those hazards and connect it to the district plan and the maps so that we’ve got a much more comprehensive view for people.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- A local Hapū and Iwi is reportedly constructing a new marae and planning to build 200 homes, with six already completed.
- South Taranaki District Council - works actively with flood-prone communities, including Waitotara, to develop community response plans for effective flood management.

“We have one Hapū building a new marae, so they are currently in that process.”

“Building kainga, our current Iwi is wanting to build 200 homes, we’ve built six, it’s really growing and it’s vibrant.”

Theme 49

In South Taranaki, many believe that power prices have doubled, placing a financial strain on numerous families. These increases, coupled with colder conditions and homes often lacking adequate insulation, have led to a rise in “power poverty.” As a result, residents are increasingly combining rooms or using extra blankets instead of heating to reduce expenses. Meanwhile, others are turning to wood burners as a more accessible and cost-effective alternative for heating.

THE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME SPENT ON ENERGY BILLS IN THE WIDER TARANAKI REGION IS \$2,328 PER YEAR COMPARED TO \$2,360 NATIONALLY.



MBIE, 2022

Strengths

- Some believe that the accessibility and affordability of firewood in the district leads many residents to favour wood burners, viewing them as a cost-effective alternative for heating.

“If we have a look at our resource contents, quite a lot are for the installation of a burner. It is a popular form of heating.”

“It is cheaper to live in rural areas. You will find in the Taranaki region there is a heap of wood fires, which keeps those energy bills down. There’s an endless supply of firewood.”

Barriers

- Many in the community have observed a significant increase in power costs, which are believed to have doubled for some, affecting families across all backgrounds.
- Some observe that due to the high and increasing costs of power, more families are experiencing ‘power poverty’ and attempting to save on heating by sleeping in one room and using blankets instead of heaters. Some express concerns that the reduced heating may be creating homes that are cold, damp, and prone to mould.
- Some perceive that the district’s close proximity to the mountain leads to higher energy expenses, as homes in the district are colder and require more heating.
- Some perceive that while there are some homes in the district offering lower rent, appealing to larger families, these houses often lack sufficient insulation, leading to significantly higher heating costs, particularly in colder months.
- Some feel disappointed that, despite residing in a prominent energy sector district, households in the area do not benefit from more affordable energy rates, as might be expected given their proximity to the source.

“The whole ‘power poverty’ thing is massive for our people. Do you pay the power bill? Or do you turn the heater on or off? Or do you buy some food?”

Framework Tags

Affordable & Clean Energy

No Poverty

Good Health & Wellbeing

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Responsible Consumption & Production

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“My power bill has just gone up a huge amount just recently, and I am not excessive with anything I do. I see this a lot; it’s right.”

“In the last six months, we have seen such a rise in energy costs and activities, kind of double what we were budgeting for.”

“The fact that South Taranaki is almost directly under a mountain and therefore everything is colder down there, means they’ll need to heat their homes for many more hours of the day.”

“There might come a time where we don’t turn the heater on, where you’re gonna have to put your hoodie and your blanket around your legs because power is getting expensive. It’s ridiculous.”

“We wonder why our elderly get sick, because they don’t have the money, they don’t heat their homes, they put extra clothes on or sit in blankets. Very rarely did she use her oven; she’d cook things in a pot so that it uses less power.”

“The houses that need the most [heating] are usually the ones that are cheapest to rent, but also the houses that need the most heating. What people save in rent, they spend on heating.”

“Given we’re an energy sector region, you’d hope you’d get stuff cheaper, but that just doesn’t happen.”

“That’s where the opportunity exists, I mean, we’re the biggest oil, gas, and energy areas of the country, and you know, there’s no benefit to the region at a consumer level because of that, when in theory, it’s got the less distance to travel.”

Opportunities

- Some note that there may be an opportunity for Iwi to partner with energy developers to help reduce energy bills for Iwi members throughout New Zealand.

“From an Iwi PSGE perspective, how do we work in partnership with these energy developers to be able to ensure that the spend on energy bills comes down?”

“How do we make energy more affordable for our people, and not just in Taranaki. Most of our people aren’t here; most of our people are in Wellington or in Christchurch, so we’d have to think wider than just energy for Taranaki.”

Good Mahi in the Community

- Nau Mai Rā - a Māori-owned electricity company that operates nationwide with the purpose of making power more affordable for the collective. It is dedicated to providing cost-effective energy solutions for individuals and families.

“[The scheme] is nationwide, it’s called Nau Mai, a Māori-owned electric company. Their kaupapa is around the collective, and making it more affordable for everyone. Their rates are far cheaper.”

“Companies like Nau Mai Rā are looking at more affordable energy for whānau and making some positive steps forward.”

Theme 50

In South Taranaki, many note that the district suffers from inconsistent or at times, ‘nonexistent’ internet and cell phone connectivity, particularly in rural areas. This combined with the high cost of internet connectivity often forces families to forgo these services or prioritise other essential expenses. This is believed to substantially disadvantage people, affecting their access to education, employment, essential services, and communication, notably in emergency situations.

Barriers

- Many households are believed to encounter internet connectivity challenges throughout the district, particularly in more rural areas, such as Pātea and Eltham, where access is often inconsistent, limited, or non-existent, leading some residents to ‘not bother’ with the internet due to its unreliable access.
- Many in the district, particularly in coastal areas like Ōpunake, face substantial difficulties with cell phone reception, experiencing unreliable or nonexistent coverage, which raises concerns about communication, especially during power outages or emergencies.
- Some believe that in the district, a primary obstacle to internet connectivity is its affordability, as many, particularly solo parents and low-income families, often prioritise other essential expenses over having the internet due to financial constraints.
- Many in the community are believed to be significantly disadvantaged by limited internet connectivity, affecting their access to education, job opportunities, information, and essential services like healthcare.
- Some believe that some people are often ‘sucked into’ purchasing large, expensive data plans for their phones, not realising that more cost-effective options, such as unlimited home Wi-Fi, could meet their needs at a lower cost.

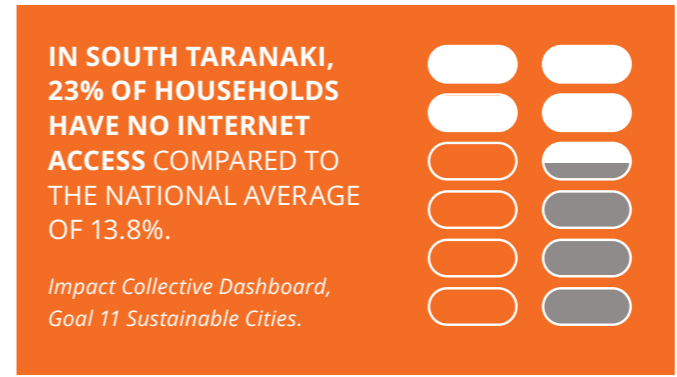
“It definitely impacts them. If they have kids they are supposed to be doing school work and they can’t do it. It makes everything that much harder. We rely on the internet so much now, even for entertainment.”

- “If people are experiencing more deprivation, they’re not going to be able to afford the cost [of internet].”*
- “If we look back a little bit, there was a lot of solo parents as well. So they wouldn’t mean, they only have that one income. So it makes it harder for them to be able to afford.”*
- “A lot of people that we support don’t have [the] internet, because it’s unaffordable. I think it’s something that I would have imagined is a trend.”*
- “We have real trouble with rural connectivity and it’s something the mayor has been lobbying for, to get more [coverage].”*
- “Pātea, and Waverley don’t have a lot [of service], and Manaia is actually just thinking about it. So sometimes you can get it, sometimes you can’t, and if it’s like that, then you don’t want to pay for it.”*
- “I think we’re certainly more rural. When looking at the likes of Pātea and Manaia, they’re quite rural towns.”*
- “It definitely impacts them. If they have kids they are supposed to be doing school work and they can’t do it. It makes everything that much harder. We rely on the internet so much now, even for entertainment.”*
- “So that has an impact on a lot of things, like organising transport, applying for jobs, being able to access information that anyone else could probably get if they had [the] internet.”*
- “We advertise our jobs online. So if you’re not online, you’re not seeing our vacancies.”*
- “These people as well, they just wouldn’t have access to any information, education, booking online systems, all that stuff we sort of take for granted.”*
- “They have to call the doctor and then the doctors have like, two three weeks wait, they have to wait three weeks to see a doctor whereas you know, people with internet can just book it all online. They don’t even know, it’s super quick and easy.”*

Framework Tags



- “It is particularly bad around the coast, in the likes of Ōpunake, there is no cell coverage. My phone will actually go dead around there, which surprises me because it is all flat so I don’t know why there are issues with cell phones.”*
- “The connection [if you can get it], is not great either. There are pockets where you can get [an] internet connection but it isn’t great.”*
- “Communication is very important in a rural area. It’s why I brought it up at this stage, it’s the most important thing in a disaster. There has been a lot of reporting on this from Hawke’s Bay. The cell phone service over there was terrible.”*
- “The personal stories that I hear is [about] people using their data on the phone. So, they get kind of sucked into having quite large data plans on the phone.”*
- “But they get signed up to data plans that make them think [they] need to have massive amounts of data for their phone. But actually, because the phone is Wi-Fi capable, they probably would spend less.”*
- “I think that’s people get, unfortunately, snagged, thinking that they need to have those massive data plans in order to kind of get around with their phone.”*



Good Mahi in the Community

- Primo - has installed free Wi-Fi throughout Eltham’s central business district and in community halls within isolated rural areas.
 - Starlink - provides satellite internet connectivity to residents in areas where fibre connections are unavailable.
 - South Taranaki District Council, Libraries - provides free Wi-Fi and computer access, catering to those who may not have internet connectivity at home.
- “We have got free Wi-Fi, and free computers for people to use as part of the national programme. Our use has continued to be high compared with other areas, because people don’t necessarily have a device or a connection at home.”*
- “As part of the community board, we just put Wi-Fi through the CBD of Eltham.”*
- “I know Primo Wireless went and offered isolated communities, if they could get 14 family homes lined up to have the internet connected through towers across the hills, some were prohibited from doing that because of the landscape, but if they could get 14 or more families connected, then they’d give free internet into the hall.”*
- “I’ve got Starlink. We don’t have fibre coming to our place even though we’re right on the town boundary. Anyone anywhere can get Starlink.”*
- “I do know that a lot of rural people have gone to Starlink, so they can get that now, whereas they didn’t have that before... Everyone that I talk to is really happy with it too.”*

Theme 51

In South Taranaki, many are believed to lack foundational cooking knowledge, including skills in meal planning and budget cooking. With this limited understanding, it's believed that people may assume that cooking is complex and time-consuming, causing some to choose quicker, more processed foods instead of home-cooked meals. Additionally, although vegetable gardens are common in the district, it is believed that many residents lack both the knowledge and the time for gardening.

Strengths

- Some believe that the lack of fast food options, such as McDonald's and KFC, potentially contributes to the lower obesity rates observed among adults and youth in the district.
- Many observe a growing interest in self-sustainability within the district, with numerous homes, schools, and towns actively engaging in gardening and growing their own vegetables, partly in response to rising food costs.

“In South Taranaki, Ōpunake, and Pātea, you don't have access to McDonald's, KFC, and other fast food options that you've got in town.

“The access to takeaways is a lot less opportunistic here, than anywhere else.

“To be honest, I think more people are becoming self-sustained. The more people I talk to, are looking at growing their own vegetables and having a little veggie garden and that, because the price of vegetables in there, it's just horrendous.

Barriers

- There is a belief that due to the time constraints of busy working families, many prefer fast or processed foods, as they are perceived to be quicker and more convenient, and occasionally viewed as more cost-effective than preparing home-cooked meals.
- Some believe that some people are susceptible to assuming cooking is overly time-consuming and complex, even though, according to some, it can be as time-efficient as getting takeaways.

- Many people are believed to lack foundational cooking skills, such as meal planning and preparing simple budget-friendly meals, as well as confidence in cooking, primarily because they have never been adequately taught these skills.
- Some believe that youth are missing out on learning to cook, as parents, increasingly busy and reliant on processed foods, are not passing down these skills to their children.
- Some people are believed to lack knowledge and confidence in growing their own food.
- It is believed that due to demanding work schedules, some families find themselves too time-poor to grow and maintain home vegetable gardens.
- Some believe that when people have plenty of financial resources, self-sustainability, like growing their own vegetable garden, becomes less important, due to their ability to easily purchase what they need.

“People adjust their lifestyle to their income... you're used to having cash and splashing cash so you don't get to teach yourself how to grow a veggie garden.

“It's easier, convenient because in a lot of households both parents are working. By the time you get the kids from school or after school care, then you're getting home. It's the time restriction. It's easier to just put something in the oven.

“We're the same, there's only me and my husband at home now but we're the same. We try to have the fast option because it's time-consuming and time is important.

Framework Tags

Good Health & Wellbeing

No Poverty

Zero Hunger

Quality Education

Responsible Consumption & Production

Life on Land

Natural Environment

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Leading healthy lifestyles

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“People can be quite susceptible to thinking that they don't have time to cook. Yet, the reality is, that the time it would take you to get into your car and go and get takeaways, wait for the takeaways, and come back home again, it's probably the same amount of time it takes to actually cook a meal.

“It's unfortunate... I think simply with the cost of food, but also there is a bit of a lack of education around cooking in general and how to cook food on a budget.

“Families that I've worked with, in the past.

Ultimately, it came down to the bit that they just didn't have the knowledge or the confidence to cook.

“Sadly, a lot of young ones don't know how to cook these days... parents are too busy working to teach them.

“The other unfortunate thing is around not understanding or having the confidence to grow food.

“We don't even have a garden at home anymore. You're just so time-poor, you're so busy at work and you haven't got time to tend to a garden.

“But when you sit down and talk to them about it, they're like 'ah, it's not as hard as I thought it was going to be'.

“It's breaking those brain barriers around 'I haven't got time to cook'.

“Understanding how to substitute items, so if they don't have pasta sauce, then how do I make the pasta sauce? Looking at their pantry and in the fridge and going 'what have I got in my fridge that I can make something with' as opposed to 'I have to go now to the supermarket'.

“It's all about education as well, around food.

Whether this is a community thing or whatever it is, it's trying to create opportunities to educate people around growing their own foods.

“I think education around being more self-sustainable, that should be more prevalent out there as well.

Opportunities

- Helping people break through misconceptions about time constraints and challenges associated with home cooking, thus making it more approachable and feasible.
- Educating people on preparing cost-effective meals using common household ingredients, like pasta and potatoes, to enhance their ability to utilise existing pantry items.
- Educating and up-skilling people to enable them to grow their own vegetable gardens and become more self-sufficient.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Community Gardens - located in towns such as Eltham, Hāwera, and Pātea, these community gardens provide residents with access to fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Karanga Maha - an initiative organised by CCS Disability Action and supported by local Iwi, that offers workshops on creating sustainable gardens and provides community members with disabilities with the skills to grow their own vegetables as a cost-effective alternative to purchasing from stores.
- Some marae are reportedly teaching families how to grow traditional crops, such as kumara and Māori heritage potatoes.
- Some primary and secondary schools are reportedly offering cooking classes that equip youth with essential cooking skills.

“We have a little community garden here in Hāwera and I know there is one in Pātea as well. So that families in the communities can access fruit and veg.

“We have a kai garden downtown [in Eltham] that is a public one which they give out with the food bank.

“So we put in the spaces, for example, in our last Karanga Maha we had workshops, which was about vegetables, how to make a sustainable garden because we all know that buying vegetables from the shop is so expensive. So let's see if there's an opportunity to learn how to grow our own.

“They are planting the crop with kumara and Māori heritage potatoes, [and] they are showing whānau how to grow these.

“They do get a lot of knowledge at school cooking. Yeah, that's probably quite right.

“My daughter is learning to cook at secondary school as well, and I think she had primary school cooking classes too.

“It's all about education as well, around food. Whether this is a community thing or whatever it is, it's trying to create opportunities to educate people around growing their own foods.

Workshop participant

Theme 52

Many perceive that progress has been made in the disability sector, notably through the introduction of Enabling Good Lives principles, individualised funding, and efforts from the Council. However, ongoing challenges, including limited disability awareness and underrepresentation in employment, as well as barriers in infrastructure, housing, and transportation, continue to affect those with disabilities. Nevertheless, some believe that improvements in carer support, such as increased remuneration, have helped alleviate carer stress.

30% OF THE SOUTH TARANAKI POPULATION LIVES WITH A DISABILITY, WHICH IS 5% HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.



Venture Taranaki, Accessibility Report, 2022

Strengths

- Some perceive that considerable efforts have been made to improve community accessibility, with the South Taranaki District Council being recognised for its proactive approach in accommodating people with disabilities, going beyond mere disability policy requirements.
- Some perceive that the ‘Enabling Good Lives’ principles show a positive shift in disability support, emphasising greater choice, control, and flexibility within supports and services, thereby giving those with disabilities greater autonomy and self-determination over their lives.
- Some believe that for people with disabilities, gaining independence, such as learning to use public transport alone, can be life-changing, especially when their achievements surpass their own expectations. This independence is thought to foster empowerment and personal growth.
- Some perceive that providing equal opportunities to those with disabilities can lead to significant personal achievements and a sense of empowerment.

- Some believe that involving those with disabilities in designing systems ensures these systems are more relevant and effective, as their first-hand understanding can drive meaningful change.
- Some observe that there has been a positive change in carer support, marked by an increase in remuneration and greater flexibility in using funds for respite—a lasting change that some report was born out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“They become really empowered, just getting into life like anybody else, and there’s a lot of stories like that. Some are small achievements, and some aren’t. The impact for people is always the same.”

“With the council, we always try to consider and cater for anyone and all disabilities. We have only one hall that doesn’t have a disabled toilet, and that’s about to be done. We pushed that as a community board.”

“It is policy to make facilities able to be used by any ability person. But it’s a mindset too. We definitely support it wholeheartedly. Because we have reams of policy, but we are actually a really caring, community-minded council and community board, all of us.”

“You might have somebody that is as quiet as a mouse, high anxiety, totally closed up, but because they’ve been offered the same opportunities as anybody else would, they’ve achieved.”

“It is quite life-changing when someone finally learns how to get from A to B and, I think, do so independently, and they might be connected with others who catch the bus as well.”

“So, I think it helps their personal growth, which becomes more significant for their independence as they are not relying on people.”

Framework Tags



“The remuneration for a day of carer support has also increased, which is again very new under Te Whatu Ora.”

“Different things had to happen to make sure that people were able to survive during that time and get what they needed. So, it was flexibility that developed out of the need, really, for doing things differently, and it was extended beyond COVID-19, and then extended again, and that’s kind of pretty much morphed into the permanent and long-term [process].”

“It keeps it real, that keeps it relevant. People that have lived experience of disability are designing the system that’s going to work for them; then it’s going to work for them because it’s designed by them. So, it just makes sense.”

“The ‘enabling good lives’ principles set people on the right track to thrive, because we’re talking about things like choice and control, individuals determining for themselves what the outcomes should be, and having a lot more flexible types of supports available.”

“We used to just have agencies that people could go to and get a prescriptive list of things that could be done for them, or to them. Whereas now it’s much more about people having their flexible budgets, and they can go to where they want and purchase, to a degree, services or the goods that they think will help them to have a good life.”

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

- Some believe that while certain townships are easy to navigate for those with disabilities, access barriers—such as non-automated doors and footpaths not equipped for wheelchair users—persist throughout the district. These areas are perceived as still needing significant progress to accommodate a substantial and growing disabled community.
- While there is recognition that individualised funding offers a more person-centric approach to disability support, providing people with disabilities greater flexibility and control over where they access support, it also presents challenges, as finding support personnel to effectively implement this type of funding remains difficult.

“That’s the unfortunate thing, [Hāwera] isn’t yet [accessible]. We’re not there yet, nowhere near, and we need to be because we have a large ageing population.”

“They are finding it more difficult to get to town. So, if we can try and implement things for those people on mopeds, it’s not there yet, but it’s something we can do better.”

“It’s been more flexible, individualised funding, but it comes with its own barriers because you still can’t find the support people to make that work.”

“It’s not everything to all people, really having that flexibility. People still need the choice between services.”

“That’s what’s been enabled by things like individualised funding, where people can go wherever they like and purchase items or services with that funding.

“It’s important for everybody to have choice and control over their lives, so it’s not a new concept. It’s probably a new concept in the disability world, where a lot of people have been disempowered and don’t have choice and control.

Barriers

- Many perceive that, despite a considerable portion of the district’s residents living with disabilities, there is a general lack of awareness of this significant population.
- Some perceive that people with disabilities face considerable barriers in accessing services and participating in community life, stemming from the district’s dispersed layout and insufficient transportation options, including limited public transit and costly shuttle services. These challenges are seen as particularly challenging for those on limited incomes and contribute to feelings of isolation among those with disabilities.
- Some perceive that there is a significant shortage of caregivers and support workers in disability support services to cater to the wide spectrum of disabilities in the district, noting that existing services are often at capacity and unable to meet the growing needs of this community.
- Some perceive that people with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in the workforce due to limited employment and vocational opportunities.

- There is a perception that some people with disabilities face significant financial struggles due to limited work opportunities, leading to a dependence on benefits, which severely restricts their ability to ‘rise above the poverty line.’ Consequently, some are believed to live quite poorly, struggling to afford even basic necessities.
- Some observe that some people with disabilities face significant challenges in finding affordable housing that accommodates their needs, often requiring organisations to advocate for them so that they are considered for these limited rental options.
- Some suggest that the ‘world around disabled people, disables them’ as barriers in infrastructure and systems are seen to disable people further, reinforcing the view that without more inclusive and welcoming communities, people with disabilities will continue to experience a quality of life that is distinct and separate from others.
- Some report a significant presence of learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, in the community, accompanied by an upward trend in ADHD and autism diagnoses among youth.
- Some feel that available support for youth with ADHD is limited and narrowly focused on medication, providing insufficient comprehensive assistance for the children and their families.

“Communication is not right. It is the world around disabled people which disables them even more.

“It starts at the top, so not having awareness that 30% of our population does have a disability. You think it’s like two people and that’s it

“We’re talking about people living in the communities until the communities become more welcoming and inclusive, then disabled people are always going to be living a different life to everybody else. If you think about rights, then that’s not right.

“My mum works in disabilities and she would have plenty to say about how poorly serviced people with disabilities are in this region.

“I know how many support services are out there and the fact that these [disability] services are all at capacity.

“It’s been more flexible, individualised funding, but it comes with its own barriers because you still can’t find the support people to make that work.

“Disabled people are underrepresented in the workforce. They are among the poorest New Zealanders because they are underrepresented in the workforce.

“Income is always going to be an issue, because if you’re in a situation where you’re not able to work, or work full time, you are benefit dependent. There’s limited opportunities to get above the poverty line.

“When you go and view a home, you won’t see a ramp, if you were looking at a wheelchair user, if you’re looking at somebody with mobility issues, you’d never find a home that would accommodate that. That in itself is limiting.

“We find that quite a few people with disabilities are struggling to find rentals and without organisations backing them they wouldn’t get on even on the list.

“[The shuttle providers] are very expensive, it’s based on their availability as well, because quite often they are linked into bus support for schools.

“They are now isolating because they’re not able to get up and out in the community and make those contacts.

“There is a lot that I think people miss out on. Literally just don’t have the same access to transport, or the means to get to the main centres.

“I’ve observed quite a bit of disability in the families we visit, I don’t know why. It’d be more learning disabilities.

“It’s quite a small, narrow contract because child psychiatry, mental health child psychiatry, can put in extra support, but generally, it’s more in terms of medication, and not the other aspect of supporting a child with ADHD for families.

Opportunities

- Raising awareness of the substantial population living with both visible and invisible disabilities to ensure inclusivity across organisations and the community.
- Equipping parents and schools with the tools and skills to adapt to and meet the complex needs of children living with autism and ADHD.
- Growing networks for people with disabilities and their families so that they can have a supportive space to share their lived experiences and coping strategies with others on similar paths with similar experiences.
- Strengthening natural networks and community connections to create robust support systems for people with disabilities, especially those without family within the district.

- Ensuring the creation of an accessible community is a shared responsibility where government and community members collaborate to ensure services empower rather than disempower people with disabilities.
 - Fostering broader community awareness and adoption of the 'Enabling Good Lives' principles, beyond the disability sector, to enhance the lives of people with disabilities across services throughout the district.
 - Ensuring people with disabilities lead and design systems based on their lived experiences to ensure solutions are effective and relevant to their needs.
 - Equipping people with disabilities with skills through mentoring and modelling so that they can independently manage life's tasks and challenges.
 - Adapting policies within government agencies to ensure genuine accessibility for people with disabilities and moving beyond token gestures.
 - Ensuring accessibility in buildings and facilities, including utilising universal design features such as standard doorways, accessible showers, and ramps, to create more inclusive environments for people with disabilities.
 - Enhancing street infrastructure to make townships more accessible and mobility-friendly for all residents, such as creating drop-offs from pathway gutters, so that people can navigate through towns more easily and safely.
 - Increasing the representation of people with disabilities in the workforce, especially in leadership roles, so that future generations are empowered and inspired to achieve similar success.
 - Enabling carers to preserve their mana (prestige) by offering opportunities for consultations and discussions in private, ensuring they can seek advice confidentially.
- "It keeps it real, that keeps it relevant. When people who have lived experience of disability are designing the system that's going to work for them, then it's going to work for them because it's designed by them. So, it just makes sense.*
- "When we're thinking about infrastructure, for example, we need to consider the fact that we do have a higher population [with disabilities] than the national average.*
- "A lot of the parenting issues that arise from that are when you're banging your head against the wall with a particular child because they believe what they see is what they see... So, it's about giving them the tools and skills to be able to adapt their parenting to their child.*
- "It's the same as seeing women in roles [in] corporate and business. Young people can see that and aspire to that, so that's what we hope in our organisation.*
- "So disabled people understand...you can talk all you want, or write goals and strategic plans, but if you live that experience, then it's much easier for other people growing up to see what they can achieve if you see people in these roles.*

- "MSD, ACC and all the others, they need to have policies around making everything accessible for people... They are saying the government department should make this a thing, and make it less of a token thing.*
- "I don't think that an organisation can necessarily achieve it alone. It's going to take the village, and it's going to take a shift in people's thinking.*
- "I'd like to see that out in the community where people go, 'yeah, this is right, why can't people in wheelchairs get on buses? Why is it that people with visual impairments can't read this information? Or get this information?' You know, all of this should actually be questions that occur to everybody in the street.*
- "They may have found an accessible space. But actually, it doesn't meet the width of the wheelchair, or there are different mobility needs that they might have. There is a whole lot that needs to be done around that universal design.*
- "We need to build houses that are accessible; they need to have standard doorways, accessible showers, and ramps, so wheelchairs can be used in them.*
- "If we come back to the enabling good lives principles, I'd like to see more general people in the street, understanding them and adopting them as a good thing to do, as the right thing to do.*
- "But for others who don't have any whānau connections here, it becomes a problem. It's about building and creating natural networks within the area, that community, where they're living.*

- "It's about asking to problem-solve with the person and their family, and look at natural supports. Who's in your community? Who is in your whānau who you'll be able to connect with to resolve some of those issues?*
- "So it's very much around modelling and mentoring, and some prompting. Working alongside so they achieve the skills to manage those tasks independently.*
- "We have to support them so that when we're not there, they are able to manage life for themselves because they've learned those skills and they know what to do.*
- "Everybody's journey is so different. But sometimes it's just a bit of an offload. They just would like somebody that they know is on the same journey as them to be able to ring up and have a bit of an offload. It's really important for them.*
- "Building networks amongst other families and people in similar situations is also really important and really empowering for people because then you know other people with the same lived experience.*
- "I know carers, they want to maintain their personal mana, and if they want to ask me something or talk about something, they like to do that on their own, which is fair enough.*

Good Mahi in the Community

- CCS Disability Services - offers support to people with disabilities, guided by 'enabling good life principles.' Their focus is on integrating people into the community, facilitating their active participation in local clubs and groups.
- Disability Business Network on behalf of CSS disability - provides a starter programme for disabled people called My Business Starter.
- Enabling Good Lives Taranaki - a local trust established by local self-advocating mana whaikaha, champions the Enabling Good Lives Principles, integrating them into local culture within communities, supports, and services.
- Karanga Maha - an initiative organised by CCS Disability Action and supported by local Iwi. It creates a safe space for people with disabilities to come together, offering educational workshops as well as a range of activities, experiences, and resources
- South Taranaki District Council - constructing a new facility designed to be fully accessible, such as ensuring doorways accommodate for diverse mobility needs.
- Taranaki Disabilities Information Center - aims to provide disability and health-related information to people with disabilities, the elderly, families, and others. (Taranaki Disabilities Information Centre Trust, n.d.).^[32]
- Your Way | Kia Roha - a charitable trust that offers information, support, and equipment to enable disabled people to thrive, living the lives they choose in their communities. (Your Way Kia Roha, n.d.).^[33]
- There are reports of scooter training in the district designed to promote safe use of mobility vehicles by adhering to footpath and pedestrian crossing rules.

- “We follow the enabling good life principles as well... it's very similar to our CCS Disability philosophy with supporting lifestyles. That's why we can align ourselves so easily to these principles.”*
- “So they're leading a steering group [Karanga Maha]. The steering group is all about creating a safe space, where people can come together and talk about what they would like to see in their services culturally, and what is important to them.”*
- “We had the support of our local Iwi, so we do have local Iwi on board. They tautoko us at the Marae for powhiri, provide kaumatua support, and support with the history of the area as well, because it's been really important to understanding the geography. It's just about our community really, and how to be connected.”*
- “We have the opportunity at CCS [Disability], that's my business, and it's about a person having the opportunity to create their own little business in support around this.”*
- “We're building a new building and everything about that has [disability] in mind, to make sure the doors are wide enough, no matter where they want to go.”*
- “Disability awareness is going well, and there is also scooter training that is going well. They are quite dangerous machines. We have to remind people to stay on the footpaths, use the pedestrian crossings, and use the lights. We help them set up their seating. It's all to make sure they are safe out there.”*
- “We've got EGL groups now that could be mentioned, like EGL Taranaki, which is made up of families or people with disabilities, to ensure that the messages are getting out there; positive messaging around disability and people with disabilities.”*

“Income is always going to be an issue, because if you're in a situation where you're not able to work, or work full time, you are benefit dependent. There's limited opportunities to get above the poverty line.

Workshop participant

Theme 53

In South Taranaki, a generational divide in attitudes toward gender diversity is observed, with younger generations appearing more receptive to change. Although traditional views and gender pay gaps persist, an increasing number of women are seen to be stepping into leadership, managerial, and traditionally male-dominated roles, such as farming. This shift, driven by many women setting strong examples, is thought to encourage others to pursue similar success.

Strengths

- Some believe that the rise in female representation in leadership roles, both locally and nationally, is setting a strong example and encouraging more women to step into leadership.
- There is a perception that female representation in farming is on the rise, with more women seeking farm roles and stepping into management positions, partly due to technological advancements that have enabled more diverse participation in traditionally male-dominated fields.
- Some believe that within Māori-dom, there is a respected balance and interdependence between male and female roles, fostering equitability through mutual understanding rather than competition.

“In Māori-dom, the male or the female isn't higher or lower than the other. Each has their role... just like our bodies work differently, our roles are too... you can't have one without the other.”

“It's only the first term that we've had that female representation, with so many women. So it's exciting. I just believe that is leading the way for more women to come through.”

“Even though people don't like Jacinda and what she did, I think she was a really good strong woman role model and that helps with gender equality - as much as people picked on her. Even looking back at Helen Clark. That helps.”

“So when we understand each other and how we work best together, then that's when you have equitability, rather than the 'I have to be stronger than you' to get there.”

“This is a growing area. Two of my four farm managers are women. There's huge untapped potential there, and it's only getting better. It's changing a lot because there's a lot of technology that can actually do the heavy lifting. So, we don't actually need the 100 kilo men to do the heavy lifting now, lifting hay bales, etc.”

- While the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:
- While community boards and elected council members are still perceived as being largely male-dominated, many observe a notable rise in female representation in leadership positions across the district, particularly in the Council and Iwi, highlighting a growing trend of women assuming key leadership roles in the community.
 - Some people observe that while younger generations are more open to change, there's a persistence of traditional views among older generations, particularly among those in longstanding leadership positions or on boards.

“We still see a lot of boards being largely male-dominated and getting through to them that women are a really valuable resource to have on their team.”

“In the PSGE (post settlement governance entity) space that I work in, we have eight Taranaki Iwi, and the three southern Iwi, which we consider the Aotea collective, are all women CEOs. All the other five are men.”

“That's interesting because our CEO [is female]. Ngāti Ruanui CEO is female too. Those are quite significant roles in our community that are female.”

“There are definitely more women in council now compared to when I started.”

Framework Tags



“My dad is in that category, and he is relatively open, but he'll speak with guys his age, and they're still very much like, 'that's not really where the woman needs to be,' or the classic, 'we don't need to change our street names to Māori names, because it's too hard to pronounce,' because 'that's not what we've done in the past.'”

“Back in the day, our men were the head of the house, and the females were more subservient. But our roles have changed. We should be an equal society. So, if you're in a relationship, you are equal partners. There is no hierarchy.”

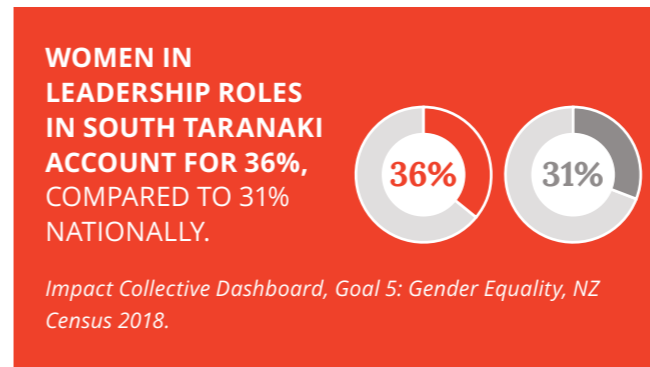
“For gender equality, I think it's just that generational change. We're getting a lot better.”

Barriers

- Some perceive that the pursuit of gender equality in leadership roles can unintentionally create a sense of competition, where elevating one group seems to require the suppression of another.
- Some hold the perception that within the social sector, despite the predominance of women working in general roles, men continue to hold the majority of leadership positions.
- Some believe the district to be quite conservative and traditional in values, where gender roles are more pronounced, and life events such as marriage, parenthood, and homeownership often occur earlier compared to more urban centres like Auckland.

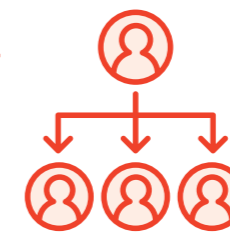
“I think there's a point where we do that [bring women into leadership roles] sometimes at the detriment of pushing down... for you to rise up, you need to push somebody else down.”

“South Taranaki is quite a conservative, traditional place. I tend to forget that, but then when I meet with people I'm reminded that it is still quite traditional roles with gender, etc.”



36% OF SOUTH TARANAKI WOMEN ARE IN MANAGEMENT ROLES, COMPARED TO 37% NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 5: Gender Equality, NZ Census 2018.



“People are getting married earlier, having kids earlier, and buying homes earlier. I never came across that in Auckland, someone in their 20s getting married, having kids, and buying a house. I was like, “wow, how? and why?”

“I think that’s the negative impact of equality, you feel like you have to put the other person down, so that you can be lifted up.

“In the social sector, in the social service side of it, it’s predominantly more women, but in the leadership side of it, I’d still say the majority are male.

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

- Some observe that, despite efforts to achieve pay equity within traditionally female-dominated and historically underpaid sectors such as social services, a notable gender pay gap continues to exist.

“I remember fighting for those things [pay parity] and saying to my boss, ‘hey, why aren’t I worth as much, I do the same job’. It’s just been women plugging away... It wasn’t a big deal, but it just slowly happened... Women are more appreciated, and men see that now.

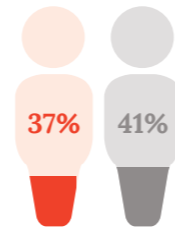
“We’ve been part of the care and support workers pay equity process, which of course, was initiated because of the gender pay gap... although there might be some promising things about those statistics, would there not be some more concerning gender pay gap statistics? We certainly see that in our sector.

“In terms of women, we see in our work women being so heavily represented in caring industries and industries being traditionally underpaid. Those employers nationally set contracts and national processes that dictate this, so we definitely see this.

“Gender equality. There are a lot of women in these kinds of roles (social services). But I still know that men are paid more. Regardless of level of experience, level of education, qualification. I mean, it’s still paid more.

37% OF SOUTH TARANAKI WOMEN ARE EMPLOYED FULL-TIME, COMPARED WITH 41% NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 5: Gender Equality, NZ Census 2018.



17% OF SOUTH TARANAKI WOMEN ARE TRAINED IN STEM (SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS), COMPARED TO 22% NATIONALLY.

Impact Collective Dashboard, Goal 5: Gender Equality, NZ Census 2018.

Opportunities

- Challenging and changing traditional stereotypes to enable women to pursue leadership roles in sectors like farming and business.
- Encouraging existing leaders to create opportunities for more female leadership and representation.
- Increasing diversity within community and industry boards so that they reflect a broader range of perspectives and experiences.

“But also, speaking more generally, they [boards] need more diversity in their leadership, they need to have more Māori, Fonterra and Silver Fern Farms in particular. It would be good to see not just females but some minorities represented on their boards.

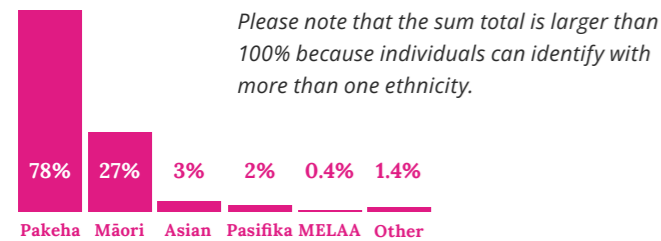
“There is space for women to be growing in their leadership positions [and] roles, but I think it’s about some of those men stepping back a little bit and creating those spaces.

“It’s breaking through some of those concepts before even having the idea that a woman can be a farm manager, or a woman can lead the business.

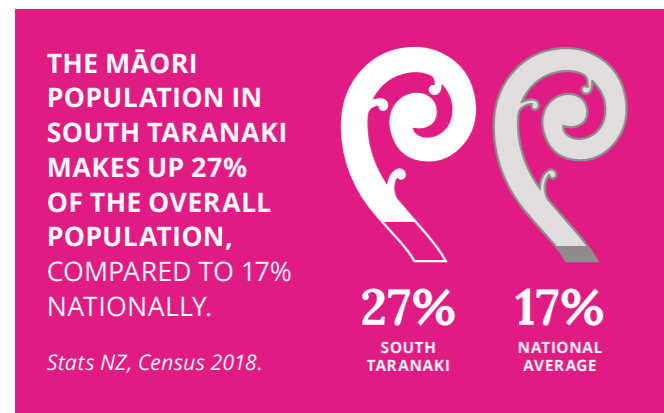
Theme 54

In South Taranaki, while older generations may show more resistance, many, particularly younger generations, are believed to be embracing Māori culture. This is evident in the community's growing cultural awareness and inclusivity, as well as in the integration of Māori culture into school curriculums and organisational practices. However, challenges such as racism, socio-economic disparities, and the impact of colonial history suggest that further progress is still necessary.

IN SOUTH TARANAKI, 78% OF THE POPULATION IDENTIFY AS PĀKEHĀ, 27% AS MĀORI, 3% AS ASIAN, 2% AS PASIFIKA, 0.4% AS MELAA (MIDDLE EASTERN, LATIN AMERICAN, OR AFRICAN), AND 1.4% AS BELONGING TO OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS.



Stats NZ, 2018 Census.



Strengths

- Many observe that Māori culture, including Kapa Haka and Māori language, is becoming increasingly incorporated into school curriculum and activities within the district, which is believed to enhance cultural engagement among students.
- Many believe that the significant presence of Māori schools 'in almost every town' across the district, emphasising Māori language and cultural practices, is believed to be nurturing a generation for whom speaking multiple languages is the norm.
- Many observe a growing enthusiasm and commitment towards learning and speaking Te Reo Māori among both Māori and non-Māori in the district, which some believe is encouraging and normalising the use of Māori language.
- Some believe that for Māori, possessing knowledge of the Māori language and culture now opens more career opportunities than it once did in the past.
- Many observe that there is a growing appreciation and integration of Te Ao Māori within organisations, where practices such as karakia (prayer) are becoming more common in their daily operations.
- Some perceive a growing confidence and readiness within the community to challenge and confront culturally insensitive views toward Māori culture, with many in the district increasingly considering these attitudes as unacceptable.
- Some feel that there is a strong desire among some people, including older generations, to explore and embrace their cultural heritage, particularly through learning the Māori language and understanding their Whakapapa, which for many is seen as both an emotional and empowering journey.

Framework Tags



“There are a lot of fluent Māori speakers, and I’ve seen a lot more people of other nationalities embracing and wanting to learn, and learning it.

“In general, being Māori and having that knowledge, and being able to speak Te Reo, there is much more opportunity than there was when I was younger, to actually get a career, to move into a career.

“I think [Te Reo] is really relevant within the education sphere in general. And as it should be, but it’s good, it’s increasing, it’s coming more into the curriculum.

“The schools are bringing it through. The kids are learning [Te Ao Māori], so it’s not different for them. It’s part of their culture. Going forward, that’s going to really help.

“Given the dense population of kura kaupapa Māori and kōhanga down there, there is one of each in just about every town, if not two. The schools down there have a really amazing focus on language and kapa haka as well.

“Having a large proponent of Māori in Pātea and Mania, having a large Māori school, having kura in Ōpunake and Hāwera as well, has helped bring about a generation where it’s the norm to speak multiple languages.

“The challenge is to call it out every time. I think we’ve got people who are prepared to call out things that aren’t right, or that aren’t correct. You wouldn’t get away with half the things that are said at home though.

“So where people have perhaps gone on a bit of a tangent and said, ‘why are they adding so much Māori onto our signs?’ people now have the

confidence to stand up and go, ‘Actually, wait, hold on a minute. We’re not just a one-language society’.

“I know a man; he’s a white farmer in his late 50s. He’s very, very Pākehā. He’s learned Te Reo, him and his wife are just from Australia, and when he first started learning and speaking, it was so cringy; he was terrible with an accent, [but] now he’s fluent. If you close your eyes... he’s just nailing it.

“We close and open all of our meetings with a karakia now. I think it’s awesome.

“The businesses that I work with, the organisations that I work with, are much more open now to incorporating tikanga Māori or tikanga into the everyday practice at work.

“They want to know who they are. They want to have a strong sense of identity, and want to be heard. They want to learn Te Reo. They want to learn their Whakapapa, where they come from, because that comes through quite strongly for quite a few people, and it was quite an emotional journey.

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

- Many perceive a generational divide in attitudes towards Māori culture and language in the district, observing that older generations tend to be ‘stuck in their ways,’ resisting change, while younger generations, including both Māori and non-Māori, are more accepting of and enthusiastic about embracing the culture.

- Many believe there has been significant growth in cultural awareness and inclusivity towards Māori culture over the years, marked by increasing understanding and progressive attitudes among many in the district. However, others strongly believe that issues of racism and stigma continue to persist, suggesting that the journey toward fully embracing Māori culture is still a work in progress.
- Some observe that, although the district offers residents locations and free courses for learning the Māori language, these courses are often heavily subscribed to, making it challenging for people to enrol in some of them.

“Some of the kids are amazing... they are just so in tune with their culture. We never had that as I was growing up. If we did, it was ignored.

“It’s more accepted for, I feel, your group, or maybe a little younger. It’s almost like ‘hey, this is awesome. I love being able to speak Te Reo, and I love being able to get a kaupapa Māori’ and they talk about that openly and freely, and I love that. I love that it’s accepted.

“With the younger generation, definitely. Rangatahi are more open to it, Māori to non-Māori interactions are accepted. Younger people are just more giving in that space.

“For people like myself, I’m not so sure. I grew up with a Māori father, who said to us, ‘don’t learn Māori, that’s not going to do anything for you’. He passed away, so I’m left with that thought.

“Embracing is too kind of a word. We saw a lot of stigma, a lot of trash talking during the elections, with Debbie being predominant within our community. This isn’t something that I would consider right now, the ‘embracing Māori culture’ bit. There is still very bad racism in Taranaki.

“Between the time that I left when I was finishing high school and going off to university, and then coming back 20 years later, the growth in people is significant, with their [cultural] understanding, even my parents.

“Even though we talked about those bigoted people, I think generally we’re very progressive. I see in the channels I work in, we’re very progressive.

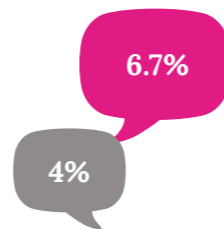
“We have an active Te Reo speaking population here with several locations where you can learn Te Reo Māori.

“A lot of the opportunities locally are either really heavily subscribed, so it’s impossible to get onto a course.

“There are opportunities that are focused on the education space, so teachers, but outside of that, it’s harder for someone who is not an educator to get into some of these courses.

IN SOUTH TARANAKI, 6.7% OF THE POPULATION SPEAKS MĀORI, WHICH IS HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 4%.

Infometrics South Taranaki regional profile 2023



Barriers

- Many perceive that the effects of significant historical events, such as the invasion of the Māori settlement at Parihaka, land confiscations, and wars, continue to impact Māori across the district to this day.
- Some perceive that within the district, there are notable disparities between Māori and non-Māori, particularly in certain socio-economic areas, which, to some, highlight a division between the haves and have-nots.
- Some believe that many Māori people are still on the journey to rediscovering and revitalising their cultural identity, a challenging process further complicated by non-Māori, seemingly more knowledgeable in Māori customs, advising Māori on ‘how to be Māori.’
- Some perceive that unfamiliarity with Māori culture can create a sense of discomfort among those who do not regularly experience the culture.
- Some perceive a disconnection in the community’s engagement with the Māori language, noting that while there is willingness to use certain words from the language, its full use remains limited.

“Only three generations ago, really, that this all happened [Parihaka]. There is still a lot of people who are bitter because our land was stolen; it wasn’t given, it was confiscated.

“You have got to look at Parihaka and Pātea in the South as well. So there was some devastating stuff that’s happened. So there’s still a lot of that stuff around for the people of South Taranaki.

“You talked about how we can better give equity and wellbeing for our people, and my focus as Māori, because that’s where I’m seeing those disparities, in terms of the haves and have-nots.

“Even within some socio-economic areas, the disparity between Māori and non-Māori can be quite significant.

“It’s hard when Māori are still learning how to be Māori; we’re still trying to find out who we are and revitalise our culture. It can be a hard place to navigate. In some cases, Pākehā knowing more than we do, then you have Pākehā telling Māori how to be Māori. It is like, wow.

“A lack of familiarity is a big part of creating those barriers. If you’re not experiencing these things regularly, and they seem sort of foreign, you’re more likely to feel uncomfortable.

“There’s a sense of disconnect in fully speaking Te Reo, even though people are willing to engage with it.

“We are a bit disconnected; we use words but are not really speaking [full] Te Reo. But people are definitely on board with it.

Opportunities

- Incorporating Māori culture and language into daily activities 'little by little' to foster comfort and familiarity among people.

"If we're having, like, little by little, all these things start to be incorporated into our day-to-day [life], so that we're not so uncomfortable with them when they come up.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Dr. Will Edwards - reportedly plays a pivotal role in promoting Māori culture and language across the district.
- Ngaa Rauru Digital Curriculum - enables remote access to digital platforms for cultural learning, including the preservation and teaching of karakia, waiata, and stories.
- Plunket South Taranaki - established a bilingual playgroup to immerse parents and children in Māori songs and stories, promoting an inclusive environment that fosters bicultural understanding and aims to acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Western Institute of Technology, Te Pūkenga - offers free educational programmes, including level one and two Te Reo Māori courses.
- Your Way | Kia Roha - a non-Māori organisation in the district, dedicated to strengthening partnerships with Tangata Whenua. They actively engage in cultural initiatives, including Matariki celebrations and Māori Language Week.
- Some schools were seen to engage with Matariki, leading to an interactive learning experience involving teachers, students, and their families.

"We want to continue on that path, in an equitable manner, because we want to try and do what we can with our systems to benefit those whom the current system doesn't benefit.

"Thinking about Hāwera in particular, the chairperson at the new school, he grew up here; he's also a very, very highly skilled speaker and highly educated. Will Edwards. He will be a good driving force to encourage the promotion of te reo and all things Māori.

"We have WITT here in Hāwera that provides the free level one and two. I'm doing the level one at the moment.

"It's great to be part of an organisation, a non-Māori organisation, that has that goal, and [to consider] how we are working with all of our teams to ensure that we are strengthening our partnerships with Tangata Whenua.

"We have a cultural advisor now. He's amazing and did some really nice work around Matariki and is going to be doing some others around Māori Language Week.

"The mothers, the fathers, and the babies, they didn't necessarily need to know the words; they just needed to be a part of that mauri, a part of that ahuā. That was my way of acknowledging Te Tiriti.

"[We're] just at the beginning of the journey and getting better at that [being a Te Tiriti partner].

"We had schools involved with Matariki. Each school had to pick a star, and that was their theme. Each school had to talk about this particular star.

"That led to teachers having to learn themselves; kids got their whānau involved.

"That is one of the projects we're working [on] this year, is actually looking at our Iwi database and completely changing that to something [that's] a bit more user-friendly and that helps us actually draw out some good information for ourselves to use.

Theme 55

While South Taranaki is seen as a closely-knit community where everyone knows everyone, some believe this close bond can present challenges, especially for newcomers who may encounter a sense of ‘cliqueness’ among residents. Despite this, many believe the district has an inclusive spirit, with schools, libraries, and community events playing key roles in fostering connections. However, there are growing concerns about the increasing sense of isolation and loneliness, as social interactions appear to be declining.

Strengths

- Many believe that there is a notable inclusive community spirit across the district, where residents, businesses, and community groups are seen to readily come together, offering their support and resources when needed, demonstrating their deep investment in looking after one another.
- Some believe there is strong local support for community events in the district, such as the Winter Festival in Hāwera, where locals are seen to actively participate and contribute.
- The isolated nature of the district’s small townships is believed to foster a sense of resilience as they are seen to ‘band together,’ which, in turn, strengthens the connection among residents.
- Some believe rural schools play an essential role in the district’s more isolated areas, serving as community hubs and connectors that foster long-lasting relationships and bring people together during community events and times of crisis.
- Some view the district’s libraries as essential social hubs, offering more than ‘just books;’ they are seen as welcoming spaces that foster a sense of community and provide a safe, cost-free environment for people to connect with others.

“What makes me proud to be part of the South Taranaki community is the people. The South Taranaki people are inclusive, supportive and encouraging people.”

- “These are actually really caring communities where people [are] invested in looking after each other and I really liked that. For me, it’s the whole connection.”*
- “Something else that might be helping is these small communities are isolated. Therefore, they band together.”*
- “I think that also adds to the strength and the connectivity and it just feeds, like a circular feeding mechanism.”*
- “School is always a good place to bring people together because the kids are there and it brings the parents in on community days. So, they feel [a] connection.”*
- “When there’s an adverse event, the school becomes the hub and where people go to and it’s where the main radio was held for communication with civil defence. It’s definitely the hub of each of those isolated areas.”*
- “Our libraries are very much more than places to go and get books. They tend to be one of the main social hubs of each of our small towns, and they provide very, very much more than books of information.”*
- “If you go to any of our libraries after school, you’ll see the same handful of kids every day. That’s their safe space where they go to where it’s warm and it’s dry and no doubt they’ll get made a cup of Milo... they’ve got really good relationships with staff. They know us and want to connect generally, which is really important.”*
- “We are really lucky in the local shop, local support, local vibe here is really strong. Most recently seen on Thursday night when we hit the winter festival in Hāwera. Just small town stuff, everyone chips in... or donate something.”*

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Good Health & Wellbeing

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- “Number one is the people in the community makes it unique. So we’re very different from the north. We have different industries. We have different schools, we have different access to training facilities, so that’s what makes us unique.”*
- “We’re a lot more rural down here. We’re a lot more connected to our Iwi.”*
- “South Taranaki has seven or so reasonably sized settlements, and the district varies widely in economic, socio-economic factors, and so on. But we’re certainly not a homogenous district by any stretch.”*

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

- Some observe that the tight-knit nature of the district’s small community creates a unique connectedness where ‘everyone knows everyone,’ due to a lesser degree of separation among residents; however, some feel this closeness can have both positive and negative aspects.

“I moved here from Wellington six years ago, and felt it immediately. As soon as you come to a much smaller town, the largest one in South Taranaki is Hāwera with 11,000, that degree of separation is way less.”

“We’re very lucky, I think that’s what happens with a small knit community because we’re not so large. So you know most [people].”

“Once people know you and can put a face to you, then everyone knows you. So that is a good and a bad thing.”

Barriers

- Some express concern about the growing sense of loneliness and isolation among residents, especially newcomers drawn to the district by affordable housing, who face challenges in establishing social connections. This sense of isolation is believed to be further exacerbated by limited employment opportunities and transport options in certain towns.
- Some note that there is still a hesitancy among some residents towards engaging with the community following the COVID-19 pandemic, continuing to affect social interactions for some.
- Some perceive a decline in social interaction, noting a growing trend where people are increasingly avoiding going out, attributed to heightened anxiety around socialisation.
- Some in the community observe an increasing sense of polarisation, characterised by an ‘us and them’ attitude that is dividing people by race and wealth, a perspective that is seen to influence some social dynamics and interactions among youth.
- Some believe there has been a decline in basic social courtesies, such as saying thank you, smiling, or greeting neighbours, with some attributing this to a fear of social interactions.

“We don’t socialise. Socialisation has become a major factor. It’s a huge factor of not going out anymore, catching up at the local.”

“The loneliness and isolation that people have, and the need for friends, and the need for connection. It’s the same issues that affect the community that affect the people that we support as well.

“There is an isolation factor that I have noticed down there for newcomers to the region. They may not have been able to find a social support network, as they don’t know anyone from there.

“One person moved to Pātea, for instance, because she could afford it there. But because there is no transport or employment out there, she was then unemployed, isolated and her mental health went downhill.

“They’ve had family members who have said that their unwell person has moved there from another area. So they are completely not connected with anybody there, because of the really cheap housing. So they will move in there.

“A lot of suspicion and it’s still a little bit like that now. You can tell because people won’t let you get this close to have a conversation, or you knock on their door and they open it, and they take three steps back.

“It’s all tied in with feeling unwell with the flu as well. It’s quite hard for people with long COVID-19, recognising that it is actually long COVID-19 and not the latest flu symptoms.

“We do have a bit of a ‘them and us’ mentality here. I find that it’s a very judgmental community. If you’re white, middle class, I’ve heard you’re fine. If you’re dark, middle class, and Māori, for example, you are going to be struggling, and I can say that from being on both sides of the fence.

“The anxiety around socialisation is just out of the gate.

“We’ve lost our way to be grounded. We forgot how to be grounded in this world. We forgot how to eat. We forgot to say please and thank you. We forgot to smile.

“Please and thank you, it’s as simple as that in a community, [but] we’re afraid. We were afraid of our neighbours too.

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

- Some believe that newcomers may initially struggle to integrate into the community due to its ‘cliquishness’ and a protective attitude among some long-standing residents; however, it is also thought that with time, the community embraces those who persevere beyond the initial ‘standoffish’ period.

“A lot of them struggle with the cliquishness. But it’s for a period of time, and they are there for a reason.

“It’s about the locals safeguarding you, they actually look you up and down. They don’t mean to, but they do, and if they can’t place your last name and your family lineage they get really messed up.

“I fully believe that this community has taken me, wrapped around me... once you get over the initial standoffishness.

Opportunities

- Ensuring people maintain a consistent routine and engage in social activities to counter the tendency to self-isolate and promote a healthier lifestyle.
- Creating drop-in centres in smaller towns such as Pātea and Waverley to offer spaces where the community can connect with one another.

“There needs to be somewhere for those people to come and talk. I think coastal, Pātea and Waverley are lacking.

“So, people want somewhere where it’s okay to stop and chat to other humans.

“The rule of thumb of keeping a structure and routine in your life regardless of your health, like I do, I still come home, and I force myself into socialising.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Arts in the Park - an annual event celebrating local craftsmanship and live performances, exclusively featuring handmade and local crafts to foster a community-focused atmosphere.
- Elektra - a family-friendly event displaying lights and live performances, widely enjoyed by locals and beyond.” for smoother and more grammatically correct phrasing. (South Taranaki District Council, 2023).^[34]
- Eltham Events Centre - facilitates family evenings, such as daddy-daughter and mummy-son dating, aimed at strengthening family bonds and positively influencing future relationships.
- South Taranaki District Council - hosts free concerts for the community at local parks and beaches.
- South Taranaki District Council, LibraryPlus - maintains seven library locations that serve as community hubs, providing a safe, free space for people to connect and gather, especially in times of emergency. They also offer access to essential council and government services.

“We would also do mummy [and] son evenings, and grandchildren as well. There are important links with every relationship that you have in life. So what you do to develop those relationships, and what you do with them is important.

“Keeping seven library locations open in a small district is a win... One of the reasons we keep them is the need for people to meet locally and have the safe place, but we also provide council services at each of them, so we do registration, rates, all those sorts of things.

“We have annual Arts in the park, which is something in December, where we don’t allow or enable commercial dealers and operators to come and sell their wares. It’s all about people bringing their crafts they’ve made.

“We’ve had concerts in the park. You might get two or 300 people in it, but at least we get national artists to come and perform. But it’s still something that people can come to for nothing if they want to.

“We have concerts at the beach, they are generally well supported by the public.

Theme 56

In South Taranaki, many believe organisations heavily depend on volunteers; however, recruiting and retaining them is an ongoing challenge. With increasing work demands and ageing volunteers, some believe that much of the responsibility falls on a few devoted volunteers, raising concerns about volunteer burnout and succession. Despite these challenges, the ‘circle of appreciation’ endures, with many people passionately serving communities that once supported them.

Strengths

- Many believe that numerous organisations rely heavily on the generous support of volunteers to operate effectively in their communities. Some believe that without these committed volunteers, many services and community initiatives in rural areas would not be sustainable or exist.
- There is a widespread belief that people are often driven to give back to their community, reciprocating the kindness and support they once received, thereby continuing the ‘circle of appreciation’ through volunteering, coaching, or mentoring. This sentiment is also perceived by some to be trickling down to the next generation, as more young people step up to coach sports and contribute to their communities.
- It is believed by some that giving back and contributing to the community is an intrinsic part of human nature and provides great personal satisfaction and catharsis, with many feeling rewarded by knowing they’ve made a positive difference.
- Some believe that some willingly volunteer beyond their regular employment duties out of the goodness of their hearts and passion for the community, without expecting compensation in return.
- Some perceive that the success achieved in community projects stems from ‘the whole community coming together.’

“In our small towns, if people don’t get out there and volunteer and do these things, they won’t have those things. They won’t. Those things just won’t exist.”

- “The number of volunteers, and I’m sure that happens in a lot of rural places, but we’ve got a significant number of volunteers who run organisations and sports groups that no rural town would be able to survive without them. But we’re really grateful for the fact that [they] have such a huge input.”*
- “We have lots of volunteer activities we as council run. There are so many of our staff that will volunteer to help in the day, which is usually a weekend or after work hours, and there’s no compensation or anything for them. They do it out of the goodness of their heart.”*
- “We are all volunteers. We all do it for our town, it’s our passion, it’s in our heart, so we do hold the community in our heart very much.”*
- “People want to help, they want to serve, because they’ve been helped, it’s like the circle of appreciation.”*
- “It was their chance to give back to the same community. They all gave effort to me. So it was always a given that I was going to give back to this place.”*
- “Growing up like, Mum and Dad always volunteered, always helped out if there was a working bee at the school, they were all there giving up their time.”*
- “As you give, you get. You get the smiles on people’s faces and help people through hard times. It’s worth more than money.”*
- “It is so satisfying to know that you’ve just contributed to your community and helped make it a bit better for everybody. That’s what I get out of it. It’s knowing that I’ve made a difference.”*

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

“People will give, and I think there is such a catharsis in giving, and I think it’s a real awesome aspect of human nature that people want, and are blessed by giving and wanting to find the vehicle to do that. It’s not a one-man band, we have the whole community come together to look after the park, basically.”

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

- While project-based initiatives with clear end-dates are seen to successfully attract volunteer participation, securing volunteers for ongoing maintenance proves more challenging, as ongoing tasks might not always provide visible and immediate results.

“The difficult part is so many tasks that need lots of manpower that are ongoing maintenance, like the things checks and traps and all that kind of stuff that maybe you don’t get to see exactly what your impact is like.”

“We get a larger turnout when we have something project based on, something exciting going on, for example, when we do our tracking runs.”

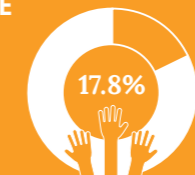
APPROXIMATELY 21.5% OF NEW ZEALANDERS UNDERTAKE VOLUNTEER WORK.

Tūao Aotearoa, Volunteering Statistics, 2022.



SOUTH TARANAKI HAS THE HIGHEST VOLUNTEERING RATE IN THE TARANAKI REGION, AT 17.8%.

Toi Foundation, regional research report, 2021.



Barriers

- Some believe there is a small, dedicated group of volunteers who are seen as shouldering significant pressure, taking on most of the workload to keep initiatives and clubs running. This raises concerns about the sustainability of such dedication and the risk of volunteer burnout, as the same individuals repeatedly take on these responsibilities due to limited participation from the broader community.
- Many organisations in the district report significant challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteers, leading to some groups ‘winding up’ their activities as volunteer numbers have significantly declined over the years.
- Some believe that the remote location of certain volunteer organisations makes attracting volunteers even more challenging as travel becomes a barrier, especially when volunteers aren’t deeply connected to the cause.
- Many perceive a decline in community volunteering over the years due to the rising cost of living and increased work commitments, with many families needing dual incomes to make ends meet, subsequently leaving little time for volunteering.
- Some perceive that out-of-town employees who are focused on returning home after work are less willing to ‘give their own time’ to community activities such as after-school coaching.
- Some believe that without a key person to lead and drive volunteer initiatives forward, recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers can be challenging, as volunteers can feel under-appreciated or unsupported in their roles.

- Some note that while many may express an intention to volunteer, only a few consistently follow through on their commitments, making those who are dedicated immensely invaluable.
- Many believe that the district is grappling with an ageing volunteer population, with a significant number being over 65. This situation sparks widespread concerns about volunteer succession, due to the notable lack of young volunteers stepping in to assume these roles.
- Some perceive that recruiting volunteers for physically demanding tasks, such as environmental management, is hugely difficult, especially as many former active volunteers age and transition to less strenuous roles.
- Some believe that increased compliance requirements, especially health and safety measures, have made volunteering 'too hard,' deterring people from participating and reducing project ownership.
- Some perceive that the concept of volunteering, while natural to some, can be unfamiliar for others who have not been raised with similar values or practices.
- Some note a growing expectation among many to be reimbursed for their efforts, making it increasingly difficult to find people willing to offer their time and skills without receiving payment.

"There's a small pool of people that make the club tick, and it's a lot of pressure on that small group of people to keep it together.

"We are now coaching and managing the cricket team because no other parent has put their hand up to do either. Across 60 parents, like really? You're not interested in helping out? Why is that?"

"Volunteers is a massive issue. We have a big challenge with volunteer burnout.

"Then you get the same people doing everything, and everyone just burns out.

"Our biggest challenge at the moment is getting volunteers and having volunteers. So we're working on that.

"[Volunteering] is harder. Plunket is a good example; our volunteers, when I went in, in 1980, had groups of women and men meeting as 20 people in a room. By the time we were out the other end, 30 years later, there were 5 of us winding up the committee, getting rid of it and handing over.

"I think it's also a barrier for volunteers as well because it's not just down the road; it's a bit more. We are isolated, even from like the main places we have here.

"When you don't have a strong connection with the site, you may not necessarily be committed to coming here for a two-hour round trip to be involved.

"Then just try and build that up, but it's the older committee members saying, 'we're tired, we've been doing it for years, there's no young people to come in and take over'.

"I think we see with volunteers, they tend to be older people who are retired. So of course, it'd be nice to get some younger ones sometimes, I think.

"It is really hard to find volunteers to do a lot of my work because it is so physical. It is a huge challenge.

"Some of those people who were really actively involved and doing the stuff up the hills, and there are some pretty punishing hills, both in and around the reserve. Some of them are not up to those sorts of tasks anymore and are shifting into other tasks.

"There's a lot of people that can't volunteer all the time, because they've got family, jobs. People are working all weekend. They don't stop.

"We just talked about the sports teams and volunteers after school, and that's because the cost of living is high and both parents have to work.

"Even church workers. Now we don't have people who work Monday to Friday...when parents do the night shift, they are less open to committing themselves to running or looking after a sports team because of the shift or the hours of the work. So you can't guarantee they're going to be there. This is an impact as well.

"Some of those major employers have got out-of-towners working for them; they're not the ones that turn up for coaching after school or do any of those things that actually develop kids and use the hub, so we suffer from those sorts of things as well.

"But also, we did rely on teachers historically, and they're not quite so keen to do that now and give up their own time. There are lots of reasons why that doesn't happen, so we could do with lots more volunteers, younger volunteers, actually.

"It's just really down to some really passionate people that are keen to give their time. But sometimes, they don't have that key person that can really drive things forward.

"Without the lead person, it's been really difficult to actually get volunteers and do the training, making sure that they feel like they're appreciated.

"It's a complex way of running an organisation. I'd certainly say that people have more goodwill and intention than they do have when it comes to the rubber hitting the road.

"So I would say that out of every 10 people who say 'yay, I'm gonna do this. I really want to help', maybe three out of them turn up to get on and do that, and those three are such bloody diamonds.

"The challenges that have popped up in the last number of years, things like health and safety, compliance for this and compliance for that. You can't do anything without a policy or procedure. Some people throw their hands in the air and [think] this is too hard.

"People putting their hand up to be volunteers. But just talking about health and safety planning and project management plan, you hear it's just too hard. I just want to come along, do what I need to do, and go home again.

"It's a family thing, which are some of the principles Hapū and whānau where you're taught the values thing. So I grew up with that... it's been eye-opening recognising that, that's not normal for everybody.

"It's recognising that there are people out there for whom this is foreign, to volunteer for someone is foreign.

"It's so hard now because people want to be paid for something. They want some form of reimbursement. We get probably more retired people that volunteer in our secondhand shops and like our foodbanks, and things like that.

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

- While utilising volunteers for mental health and suicide support requires significant commitment in terms of time and resources, their involvement is viewed by some as highly valuable. Volunteers are seen as offering a distinct form of care, rooted in genuine concern rather than job obligations, as they choose to be there without financial compensation.

“That is a huge commitment of time and resources, and in many ways it would probably be much easier and cheaper just to pay people, but it wouldn’t have the same outcomes.

“That meant people had this experience because of who was offering it, and how it was offered. That it actually meant something, that wasn’t just somebody doing their job.

“That can only happen because that person is part of your volunteer team, that’s the key thing about the peer. But not only the peer environment, but that it’s volunteer involvement.

Opportunities

- Prioritising recruitment and succession planning as volunteers age and become less capable, to ensure initiatives continue.
- Encouraging job seekers to volunteer for a few hours weekly to provide them with valuable skills and contribute positively to their local communities.

“We need to have a think around recruiting and thinking about succession planning, because as I mentioned, some are getting a bit older, and they’re not as capable.

“I think I’m probably talking about the other end of the scope here, our young ones that don’t have jobs that are sitting on job seekers and things like that. If someone is sitting on a jobseeker’s benefit, they should be encouraged to be doing so many hours a week volunteering at a local organisation to give them some of those skills, because they could be contributing back into the community that they live in.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Fonterra and DairyNZ - supports local environmental initiatives through corporate working bees.

“When we have a working bee there [Rawhitiroa], we get easily 20 Fonterra workers coming along and Dairy NZ also gets involved.

“They normally just come for a few hours or a day or whatever and we just assign them a task and work alongside them and knock out some good jobs, which is super helpful, especially around the fence because the trees are growing all the time and we’ve got to keep the fence clean. So, there’s heaps of stuff to do.

Theme 57

In South Taranaki, the business landscape is perceived as facing challenges, including a significant number of closed shops, competition with chain stores and online shopping, impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, and a limited diversity of businesses. However, some notice an increasing number of new businesses emerging, alongside a flourishing arts community, both of which are positively contributing to the district's economic landscape.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY 4,613 REGISTERED BUSINESSES IN SOUTH TARANAKI. 1,352 ARE IN THE FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE SERVICES, 706 IN AGRICULTURE, 521 ARE IN RENTAL HIRING AND REAL ESTATE, 377 IN THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SECTOR AND 329 IN CONSTRUCTION.



Dot Loves Data, Companies Office Register.

Strengths

- Some note that the district is experiencing an increase in new businesses that are relocating to and establishing themselves in the area, enhancing the local economic landscape.
- Some believe that there are numerous supplementary businesses significantly supporting the district's large industries, yet their extensive contributions and global successes often go unnoticed by local residents.
- Some perceive that the local arts community is growing, with a diverse range of artists across different mediums, including painting, drawing, and textiles, moving to the area, attracted by factors like the district's affordability.
- Some note that there's a growing trend of artists who are increasingly able to sustain themselves solely through their art, a change that some attribute to the arts community becoming more business-savvy.

- Some observe a strong sense of loyalty and support among residents towards local businesses, a sentiment that was especially evident during the COVID-19 crisis.

“What we're seeing is a lot of our artists now don't have other jobs, which is a change from a few years back. More and more of them are surviving solely on their art, which is really good.

“But what we're also seeing with it is businesses coming into South Taranaki from out of town. So yeah, there's a lot of good stuff going on in that space where councils are leading and innovating, and so things are happening, people coming to town and setting up business, it's really good.

“We've got quite a big arts community and it's growing. In the last five years, we've had a lot of artists move to South Taranaki and that's around a whole lot of things, including affordability.

“We've got a strong 2D arts community, so painting, drawing, but there's also a recently active textile community, which seems to be increasing.

“There's a lot of loyalty within businesses as well. So we saw that through COVID-19.

“I feel like during COVID-19 we saw a real emphasis on supporting our local. That's how a lot of people survived, by supporting each other, whether it's buying vouchers. Support and united in the support for one another during that time and beyond that too.

“We've just got a lot of nice businesses that supply a lot of the things that are going on, sporting, yachting, all sorts, a lot of componentry in that for a lot of things that are made here in South Taranaki that people don't realise.

Framework Tags

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“Business Carat Couplings in Eltham, they are exporting container loads of product every week all around the world, componentry for cars, componentry for heavy earthmoving equipment, and just a lot of those things that just roll on under the radar, and people don't realise.

Barriers

- Some observe that the district's business variety is limited, with some noting an overabundance of hairdressers and eateries, along with a noticeable number of under-maintained or empty storefronts.
- Some believe that the emergence of large retail stores like the Warehouse in Hāwera, combined with the growing trend of online shopping, has reshaped the local shopping environment, potentially contributing to the decline of small local businesses.
- Some people express frustration with local business owners who, after profiting from the community, often choose to relocate to larger cities such as New Plymouth, particularly upon retirement. This move is seen by some as a lack of support for the local economy and a lack of loyalty to the district.

“If they can, then they will move on. They won't show their loyalties, suddenly. They had their own businesses in the heyday and they were loyal to Hāwera, then suddenly, they'll move if they're able to.

“When the warehouse came it changed the dynamics of shopping, I have to say that, and we've lost some shops.

“There's probably more of an impact with the stores and the shops that have closed down in towns because it's more convenient just to sit home and do the shopping.

“There is a huge number of hairdressers, I would say about 30 in Hāwera town. There's a huge number of eateries, as in cafes, not so much fine dining, but cafes.

“There are not a lot in terms of different shops, there are hairdressers and food, but not very much else.

“There are a lot of shops that need doing, the frontages and stuff, and a lot of empty shops.

“I do get angry with business people. They've been in the town for years and I can name quite a few of them. But then they go and shift to New Plymouth because that's the fast lane or they are retiring.

FROM APRIL 2023 TO OCTOBER 2023, SOUTH TARANAKI SAW 150 NEW BUSINESS REGISTRATIONS, COMPARED TO 193 REGISTRATIONS IN THE WHANGANUI DISTRICT DURING THE SAME PERIOD.

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

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

- While the COVID-19 pandemic notably affected small businesses, such as the hospitality sector, in the district, some recognised a strong resilience among other sectors, particularly essential industries like dairy and oil, which continued to operate during this challenging period.
- Despite some witnessing a significant change in the district's business sector, characterised by numerous closed shops and a limited number of businesses, some believe there have been efforts to rejuvenate the district and transform the district into 'the next Hollywood.'

"I've seen the change. When I came back six years ago, a lot of shops were closed on the main street, even in terms of the businesses that we had.

"Well, I think, economically, South Taranaki has had a downturn economically, and they're trying to do their very best to turn things around, to promote and engage South Taranaki as the place, you know, the next Hollywood.

"For us, it was really epitomised through COVID-19 because in some ways for us, here in South Taranaki, the cows still got milked, the milk went to the factory, the cows went to the meatworks, and they operated the farm supplies, places operated, the oil and gas industry operated, and all the engineers that support it, and all those businesses [operated].

"Yes, it was pretty hard on people, it was hard on hospo in our area, but that is what I like about our community here, is the resilience and the people, how they just get on with the mahi and just make it happen.

"I think COVID-19 really hit some of those shops. Some of them are only working for peanuts really. You have a population of 12,000 or whatever, it's not going to grow overnight.
"It's important we keep people at work, so important to keep the shops going really, because they have had it pretty tough over COVID-19.

Opportunities

- Ensuring local stores maintain high standards to attract customers and encourage shoppers to support local businesses.
- Promoting the Taranaki Arts Trail to provide local artists more opportunity to enhance their visibility and earn income while tapping into its growing momentum.
- Increasing Māori and Iwi capacity and engagement within the business community to ensure they have equal business opportunities.

"You may be a small town but you should always have really high standards for how you hold yourselves, and if you can do something that's unique to the town, that's even better.

"What you're really trying to do is to make it, one, a place someone's going to... shop at physically instead of staying on their computer and, two, when they get there they're going to hang around longer, and they're going to check out more shops.

"That's been something that's a huge aspect of my role, to give us those opportunities as Māori and as an Iwi business community. [Iwi and Māori] are not just there as a cultural aspect.

"We have the Taranaki Arts Trail, where if you're an artist on the outside looking in you're like 'these things are great and gaining momentum, I should be a part of it and try make some money while I'm at it'.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Bizlink Hāwera - a business association focused on business support, mentoring, training, advocacy, and mediation, as well as town vibrancy, beautification, and events. (Bizlink Hāwera, n.d.).^[35]
- Bizlink and South Taranaki District Council - co-organises a startup weekend, attracting participants from across New Zealand for an event focused on solving problems and developing business ideas. This initiative is part of a growing effort to support startups in the district. (The Foundry, n.d.).^[36]
- Rebel Business School - a free 10-day business accelerator programme for people who are starting or developing their small businesses.
- South Taranaki District Council, The Foundry - the first co-working space and enterprise hub in South Taranaki that aims to foster a more connected and effective enterprise network.
- The Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme (YES) - provides an opportunity for students to unleash their inner entrepreneur and experience the start-up world first-hand.
- Venture Taranaki, Chamber of Commerce, Bizlink and South Taranaki District Council - came together promptly during COVID-19 to support businesses across the district, ensuring their survival and providing them with the necessary support.

"In COVID-19 times, what I saw was that the support organisations, the likes of Venture Taranaki, Chamber of Commerce, Bizlink and Council came together really quickly... to keep businesses afloat or to get them the right advice. They happened really

quickly and quite seamlessly as well.

"The premise of the weekend is that you need to be solving a problem, and you need to evaluate whether it's a problem or not.

"So Bizlink and STDC, they work together to support startups. It's a new thing still here, but I feel like there's increasing support so it's filtering down. It's something that's been done in most towns now. New Plymouth is quite well established, but now we're starting to see it as well, and we're building it into our initiatives.

"We also have the Rebel Business School, so it's like a 10-day learning process.

"Rebel Business School is in its second term maybe. So we are new in that space. But it is something we have seen a need for, particularly with the need to think differently about what is offered.

"Some of my team went out last night to judge or present awards for the YES programme, which is like the Young Enterprise Scheme. So even in school now, you're integrating that thinking, that young enterprise learning.

Theme 58

While some believe that tourism in South Taranaki has shown signs of growth, the district largely remains ‘undiscovered’ and under-promoted as a destination. Although cultural opportunities exist for the tourism sector, there are strong reservations about commercialising the district’s deep Māori traditions and history, with many advocating for their protection rather than promotion.

TOURISM CONTRIBUTES TO 1.8% OF THE WIDER TARANAKI REGION'S GDP (GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT), COMPARED TO 2.8% NATIONALLY.



Eftpos NZ.

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

- Despite beliefs that the district has plenty to offer as a tourist destination, it is perceived by some that its attractions and historical sites remain largely unknown and under-promoted.
- Some observe that while visitor numbers at museums across the district have increased following the impacts of COVID-19, reaching normal or even pre-COVID-19 levels, some note that this recovery has not occurred across all museums.

“Numbers plummeted, obviously, with COVID-19, but we’re finding that our visitor numbers are back to normal.”

“Some museums are back to pre-COVID levels, but not all by any stretch.”

“Numbers are bouncing back, including the international visitors.”

“People don’t know what’s around; it’s not in our faces. It’s not an iconic space. We have a lot to offer, but people don’t know, so it is not marketed.”

“We don’t get promoted as a destination, which is a shame because there’s a lot in our province.”

“People don’t realise until they come here, and it’s like, wow. Certainly, as far as the historical sites go, but they aren’t promoted.”

Barriers

- Some perceive that tourism in Taranaki is primarily concentrated in and around New Plymouth, leading to the oversight of smaller towns within South Taranaki, despite their potential.
- Many hold the view that South Taranaki isn’t set up as a tourist destination, attributing this to its lack of tourist infrastructure and attractions, particularly when compared to the more tourism-centric areas like New Plymouth.
- Although the district’s rich cultural history presents opportunities for tourism, some express concerns about sharing Iwi knowledge for this purpose, fearing that it might lead to tokenism and commercialisation of the local Māori culture and traditions, as seen in other New Zealand regions. They argue that, despite its tourism potential, Iwi knowledge should be more protected than it is promoted.

Framework Tags

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Responsible Consumption & Production

Life on Land

Natural Environment

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Confidently participating in Te Ao Māori

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Responsible stewards of their natural and living environments

“We don’t want to promote the fact that we have all of our rich history because we don’t want to be seen, or don’t want to end up being a Rotorua, with token Māori education of tourists occurring in our area.”

“We’re not a tourist destination. We’ve got the free and independent travellers who come through here, and just because they want to, great. For people who want to come to a destination, there’s not a huge amount here, in terms of tourist activities.”

“A lot of [tourism] focuses largely around New Plymouth. So, across the rest of the region, it’s not the same investment and promotion in some of these things.”

“Our tribes are still very protective of our history, and we know that there’s a market for it, because we’ve seen it now with COVID-19. We saw that domestic tourism is massive; you can get the benefits, but it’s still a high trust situation, sharing our knowledge.”

“We’ve been pretty protective of how it’s marketed, or how it’s shared, how it’s accessed. For all those reasons, the Land Wars were a huge part of our history. The opportunity is huge, but systems were put in place to protect it.”

Opportunities

- Promoting the district as a tourism destination by marketing its ‘untapped’ attractions.
- Increasing historical tourism through heightened awareness of the wealth of both known and unknown historic sites across the district, while maintaining respect for cultural knowledge.
- Respecting that Iwi and Hapū knowledge is based on trust and not freely available for use, and acknowledging that its sharing should be led by those who hold it.
- Increasing transportation and infrastructure in South Taranaki to maximise the economic and tourism opportunities presented by the arrival of cruise ships.

“Taranaki is untapped as far as tourism goes. We have our points of beauty, but we need more marketing; that would make a lot of difference.”

“With tourism, people need transport to get here. It’s so far. There is potential to jump on the tourism strategy and jump on that cruise ship ideal, however, because we don’t have a train coming down here, right it’s going to be very difficult to get them here, and further down south.”

“But one thing I see is an incredible opportunity, and incredible resource here for historical tourism. Taranaki generally is absolutely just full of historic sites. Some known, some not known, and there’s just a huge opportunity I’ve thought for years, there’s just so much opportunity.

“Also, some of the knowledge as well, it’s a trust thing... it’s not an open book for anyone to just help themselves to. So respecting that... and incorporating various aspects, but it’s not our place to lead that.

“We have the Tawhiti Museum which has got a lot of the Māori culture there.

“The museum is a really important connector for people, for people to be able to come to the museum and see history, but also it’s a good touchpoint for the council to connect with the wider community.

“We’ve got our beautiful maunga, it’s the star attraction.

“I have the iSite, so the iSite is seven days a week and provides information for local, national, and international tourists.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Tawhiti Museum - plays a key role in showcasing Māori culture and history within the district.
- Lake Rotokare - a pest free reserve located outside of Eltham that serves as a popular tourism destination.
- Mount Taranaki - viewed by some as the star attraction of South Taranaki.
- iSite - an information hub for local, national, and international tourists seeking to explore the area.
- Venture Taranaki - a regional development agency that supports local entrepreneurship and enterprises in growth, promotes the region, and aids in developing its sectors, thereby building a thriving Taranaki economy that enhances the wellbeing of the region’s people and environment. (Venture Taranaki, n.d.).^[37]

“Our tribes are still very protective of our history, and we know that there’s a market for it, because we’ve seen it now with COVID-19. We saw that domestic tourism is massive; you can get the benefits, but it’s still a high trust situation, sharing our knowledge.

Workshop participant

Theme 59

While Hāwera experiences notable rejuvenation efforts, other townships struggle as earthquake legislations are seen to impact numerous buildings. High maintenance and strengthening costs have led many commercial property owners to ‘watch the clock tick’, posing a risk to the district’s iconic buildings as buildings fall into disrepair. This issue is exacerbated by the trend of people living in former commercial buildings, further straining building upkeep and complicating efforts to maintain the district’s appearance.

Strengths

- Some perceive that the efforts of a few wealthy individuals in renovating buildings are significantly enhancing the district’s appearance.
“There are a few wealthy individuals around who are doing up buildings, which is making a big difference. But there are plenty that don’t have the means to do it either.”
- While the following has been identified as a strength, it has also been identified as a barrier:
 - While Hāwera is recognised for its significant progress in township rejuvenation, particularly with the District Council’s investment in the new library and cultural building, there are concerns among some that the funding allocated may be insufficient to meet the rejuvenation aspirations of other towns in the district.
“On the whole, I would say the [rejuvenation] is really promising in Hāwera, which is ahead of the other five towns. We’ve got a lot of laneway work, the library... We’ve got a private developer that’s going to transform one of the other iconic buildings. There’s a ripple effect that’s going to happen from the centre of Hāwera out.”
 - I was involved in the consultation four years ago about what we should do in Ōpunake to improve that town, and if we did all of those things, they would have a major impact... But my sense is we might be a little bit short on money to pull off some of our plans outside of Hāwera.

Barriers

- Some observe that the changes in earthquake legislation have significantly impacted numerous buildings, with the costs of repairs and earthquake strengthening seen as financially unfeasible for many, particularly when rental incomes are low. Consequently, many property owners are believed to be ‘watching the clock tick’ as their buildings deteriorate, unable or unwilling to invest in repairs.
- According to some, there is an increasing trend in Ōpunake, Eltham, and Pātea where families are residing in former commercial buildings due to financial constraints. This trend has raised concerns about the deteriorating appearance of these towns’ buildings, as many of these families either deprioritise or lack the financial means to maintain shop fronts.
- Some perceive there is potential risk of losing historic or heritage buildings, largely due to the high costs of maintaining or renovating these structures, which hold considerable sentimental value for many long-standing residents.
“There’s a lot of landlords that are sitting out there just watching the clock tick as their buildings get closer and closer to being unusable because the economics of doing anything about it just don’t stack up.”

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

- “The earthquake-prone buildings thing, that’s really difficult in South Taranaki because... you look at what it’s going to cost to bring it up to standard and then you’re like, ‘it has how many zeros in it?’ then you look at what you can realistically get from rent from your commercial tenant and you go ‘well, that’s gonna take me 150 years to get back’.”*
- “I live in Ōpunake and there are a couple of people who live on Tasman Street, and Eltham is certainly like that, and Pātea, we’ve got quite a few of the shops that now have families living in them, which is a whole different field.”*
- “None of them can afford to do that... They simply can’t afford to, and we have a couple of ex-commercial buildings which are now private accommodation that are quite prone, and nobody is touching them.”*
- “As a commercial person... you paint your shop and you make it look good. Whereas if you’re just living in the back of the shop you don’t really care what the front of the shop looks like.”*
- “There might be a choice of whether they can still do it or whether they have to get rid of that building, which is quite a loss, especially if it was a historic building that’s been here so long that so many people, who have been here for ages, might see that as monumental. There’s a lot of public sentiment along those lines.”*
- “Bridge Street now has houses in the shops... We’d like to change that as people can’t afford to do up the shops that they live in. So that’s sad, as our town looks drab and yuck.”*

Good Mahi in the Community

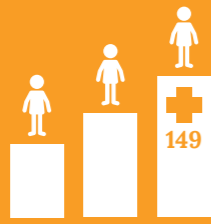
- South Taranaki District Council - actively investing in a revitalisation project across five rural towns, aiming to enhance and develop these communities over the next decade.
- South Taranaki District Council, Te Ramanui o Ruapūtahanga Library - currently undergoing the development of a new library, culture, and arts centre in Hāwera’s central business district, which some believe will help enhance the town’s overall appearance.
“The library is going to be a huge play in the right direction, in terms of giving the central town a really nice, modern, clean look.”
- “The town revitalisation plans, or they might have been referred to as our master plans, whereby we’ve committed \$2 million over the next 10 years to five of our rural towns to upgrade and revitalise, which is cool. I wish it was \$10 million over two years, but unfortunately not.”*

Theme 60

Eltham, celebrated as a ‘town of firsts’, is well-known for its strong community spirit and distinctive lifestyle, enhanced by its affordability and proximity to New Plymouth and natural surroundings. While some believe the town risks being overlooked due to its position between districts, others believe it provides broader opportunities for youth. Despite these attributes, Eltham still faces challenges, such as an understated township, housing shortages, and significant unemployment.

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2021, THE POPULATION OF ELTHAM IS ESTIMATED TO BE 2066, AN INCREASE OF 149 PEOPLE SINCE 2013.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass



Strengths

- Some acknowledge Eltham as a pioneering town, celebrated for its numerous ‘firsts’ in New Zealand, from cheese production to infrastructure achievements.
- Some note that Eltham boasts a variety of unique and eccentric shops, offering ‘something different’ for shoppers.
- Some observe that Eltham offers a stress-free lifestyle, particularly appealing to the elderly and retirees, with many choosing to relocate there for its affordability and quality of life.
- Some believe that Eltham is well positioned as it is within close proximity to New Plymouth and a short drive from both the mountain and the sea.
- Some believe significant effort has been invested in the restoration of Eltham’s township.

“It [Eltham] is close to the mountain and the sea; it’s within 20 minutes of us. That’s a little unique aspect – you can drive half an hour either way and have either of those [mountain or sea].

“We have some really eccentric shops. If you want something different... We’ve got some really unique shops with some cool stuff.

“So, Eltham is a town of firsts. We’re a town of cheese and industry, and the toilets represent that. They’ve got the veranda which looks like Swiss cheese with the holes in it.

“Do up the old pub, put into it the New Zealand firsts that New Zealand has done. We have lots of New Zealand firsts that were started in Eltham. We were the first to have a tar-sealed road, the first dairy factory, the first cow shed, lots of things.

“Eltham, like I said, my older boys and girls, they are happy – happy with life, happy with what they have. Eltham is stress-free for them.

“Some just want to retire and have funds in their bank account. They figured that if they come down here, that’ll pay for two homes’ rates, etc., and they can go travelling.

“We really want to concentrate on the restoration of Eltham; there’s a lot of mahi behind that to get it where we want it to be. Although, we are pretty much there.

THE AVERAGE RENTAL COST IN ELTHAM IS \$348 PER WEEK, COMPARED TO \$536 NATIONALLY.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.



Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

No Poverty

Quality Education

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Reduced Inequalities

Life on Land

Natural Environment

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

Barriers

- Some believe Eltham has historically been labelled by some as a ‘lower grade’ and ‘low decile’ town due to its association with the Freezing Works, an entity some believe took ‘the heart out of the community’ and contributed to the town’s ‘down on itself’ mentality.
- It is perceived by some that Eltham’s seemingly ‘drab’ and rundown appearance results from a combination of issues, such as the growing trend of residents living in ex-commercial buildings and the town’s proximity to unattractive industrial sites like the Freezing Works.
- Some note a housing shortage in Eltham, a situation that has persisted for many years, where homes for rent or purchase are extremely rare and quickly taken, leading to significant frustration for those seeking to move to or within the township.
- Some believe that certain Eltham residents are ‘happy to be unemployed’ with a generational dependence on welfare support and a lack of aspiration to pursue anything beyond these benefits, despite local employment opportunities.

“When you lived in Stratford, Eltham was always that lower-grade town. They were all lower economic people, freezing work people... With that, the town gets down on itself, and I don’t know if we’re able to get that out.

“Eltham itself is definitely a low-decile town and has been historically. It’s the meat works... you think it shouldn’t, but I think it took the heart out of the community.

“In saying that, Eltham does not have homes to buy or rentals at present, and it hasn’t for the last five years. They do come up, but you have to be quick; you have to be ready to roll.

“We get sad that we can’t move in Eltham. Which is the other thing, both of us are looking for houses, but we don’t want to move out of Eltham; we want to stay in Eltham.

“The people in Eltham are happy to be unemployed; they are second, third generation. They know how to work the system.

“Jobseeker support and Single Parent benefit, that would be in the Eltham entrapment. They’ll do what they can to keep the benefit and won’t push themselves unless they are pushed.

“For many years, if you were willing to get up and do work in the factory, young people could get \$25 an hour, and that was 20 years ago. People would travel in to do that, whereas we (Eltham) don’t get out of bed and go do it.

“Bridge Street now has houses in the shops... We’d like to change that as people can’t afford to do up the shops that they live in. So that’s sad, as our town looks drab and yuck.

“Drab township for Eltham, that drabness is partially contributed to by its main employers as well. The meat works looks awful. Just on the outskirts of town, so it’s sort of the industry sitting alongside the work that we need to do to rejuvenate the town, is an interesting thing.

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

- Some believe that Eltham falls into a 'no man's land', caught between two districts and school zones, raising concerns about representation, inclusion, and access to opportunities within South Taranaki for its youth. On the other hand, others see this situation as beneficial, noting that with many youth involved in Stratford High School and Youth Council, they gain access to a wider range of opportunities across both South Taranaki and Stratford.

"Eltham falls into this no man's land. We are everybody's and nobody's at the same time."

"Our youth aren't counted; they're not represented because they go to Stratford, and they're not in the [South Taranaki] district."

"They [Council] now have an advantage from youth because there's also representatives on the Stratford Youth Council. There's often Eltham youth on there doing it."

"Sometimes Eltham kids will get picked up with things that are going on in Stratford because they are at Stratford High School."

RESIDENTS OF ELTHAM HAVE AN AVERAGE INCOME OF \$58,000, IN COMPARISON TO THE DISTRICT AVERAGE OF \$74,000 AND THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF \$96,000.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass

**\$58,000
Eltham**

\$74,000 South Taranaki

\$96,000 National Average

ELTHAM IS RATED 10 ON THE DEPRIVATION INDEX.

Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu, 2023



Opportunities

- Enhancing and promoting Eltham's historical township to attract more film companies and boost tourism.
- Ensuring Eltham youth are included in South Taranaki initiatives like EmpowerYouth, to guarantee they benefit from the opportunities and support the district offers.

"So I think that's something we can grow on and capture, get [the buildings] all done up and then we can use them more in the film industry in the future when they're looking."

"There is amazing history in Eltham, and there I can imagine Eltham being like Arrowtown and could be a real tourist attraction, and could really make something out of it."

"We just have to remember, when things like EmpowerYouth start, that 'just remember, there are kids from here [Eltham]'."

Good Mahi in the Community

- Eltham Community Development Group, Arty Loos - transformed basic public toilets into 'arty loos', enhancing them with local art, mosaics, and stained glass to reflect Eltham's unique history.

- Eltham Community Development Group, Bridger Park Project - upgraded the entrance to Bridger Park, turning a once 'barren and weedy section' into a space that community members enjoy.
- Eltham Community Development Group, Heritage Walk - created a Heritage Walk by placing new plaques on historic buildings throughout Eltham so that visitors can be guided through the town's heritage sites.
- Eltham Community Development Group, Town Murals - showcases Eltham's historical significance as the 'town of firsts' through several murals.
- Eltham Lions Club - often recognised by some community members for contributing hands-on support to numerous projects across Eltham. Their involvement is frequently seen as crucial to accomplishing tasks and making a notable difference in the town.
- Eltham Revitalisation Project - Eltham revitalisation is part of the Council's wider programme to upgrade the town centres in South Taranaki.
- E-TOWN - a space that is intentionally youth focused and youth-led and is available for use by agencies and services supporting the Eltham community. (Bishops Action Foundation, n.d.).^[38]
- Primo Wireless - offers Wi-Fi access throughout Eltham's central business district.
- Taste of Taranaki - a collaborative event initiated by the Eltham Community Development Group, Venture Taranaki, and the Council, showcasing local food offerings; however, this event is no longer active.

"So we decided that it would be a good idea to develop that area so that the community doesn't have to look at a barren section, growing weeds and tumbleweeds, and also to create a nice space for them to come and sit down and enjoy their lunch in the park."

"We took the ideas to Venture Taranaki and the Council because we've got so much food on offer now in our district, mainly in the South. So, we came up with this idea of a taste of Taranaki."

"We pushed for it to be in Eltham because it was our idea... They entered into a joint venture, Venture Taranaki and the Council, and they did it for approximately three months, and it was hugely successful. We had all sorts... quinoa, cheese, chocolate, crackers... it brought lots of people in."

"Also, besides purchasing products, the community itself would have seen visitors coming into town, so we were busy. This had a snowball effect on our other businesses."

"Lions have been really instrumental in getting the physical work done, picking up the trees, dropping them off, digging holes... Without them, it would have been an almost impossible task. They are really great. They're so amazing in our town. They've helped with so many projects. When something needs doing, then they'll do it."

"They want to make a difference to the community; that's what they are all about."

"The youth wanted Wi-Fi in the CBD. The library already has Wi-Fi, but they wanted it throughout the CBD. So, the community board sponsored that, along with Primo, and now there is Wi-Fi in town."

"It [the art toilets] was a huge project, cost-wise as well. They call it the arty loos and they are quite cool... They've got things representing the town... it's got art, mosaic, and stained glass. They all represent something unique to Eltham."

Eltham Community Development Group

“With the development group, we have members from the Lions, we have members from the Eltham-Kaponga Community Board. We have a member from the South Taranaki District Council. The Council definitely has a huge part in the community board and fully supports what we do.”

“A few years ago now, we went out to the community with a survey, and that was to see what the community wanted. And so the development group has taken those projects and slowly ticked them off.”

“We very much keep it in mind that we don’t make the decisions for people who represent the wider community. We want their input, we want their feedback. We can have wonderful ideas, but you need to know that it’s actually what the community wants.”

“We have been most recently working on upgrading the entrance to Bridge Park, which is down on Bridge Street. We decided that it would be a good idea to develop the entrance so that the community doesn’t have to look at it and also to create a nice space for them to come and sit down and enjoy their lunch in the park; it’s very well-utilised.”

“When we wanted to develop Bridge Park, to save money, we really needed some volunteer labour. There was no more fitting group to approach than the Eltham Lions... They are used to people going and asking them for some monetary help, and I made it very loud and clear that we don’t want your money, we need your manpower. They came out in droves.”

“Without their help, it would have taken longer because we would have had to seek funding, lots of funding, for someone to do it. They’re a really great group and really add to being part of the community.”

“As a small community, it’s hard to find volunteers. So other groups that are already set up like the Eltham Lions, corrections, local school groups, they all come into the park and help plant trees and look after them and release them. I think the collaboration of people coming together. I think that makes it work so well.”

“We are all volunteers. It’s our passion. It is in our heart. So we do hold the community in our heart very much.”



Theme 61

While Ōpunake is widely known for its picturesque coastline and recreational amenities, its ‘in-between’ location between Hāwera and New Plymouth is perceived to present some challenges. Given this, the community is believed to have fostered a unique sense of independence and resilience, emphasised by a proactive ‘get on with it’ attitude. These traits, along with a deep sense of community, are notable characteristics associated with Ōpunake.

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2021, THE POPULATION OF ŌPUNAKE IS ESTIMATED TO BE 1440, AN INCREASE OF 60 PEOPLE SINCE 2013.

+60
PEOPLE
SINCE 2013

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass

Strengths

- Some believe that Ōpunake boasts a resilient community spirit, characterised by an active volunteer community, strong support among residents, and significant coastal pride, especially evident within the farming community, who are seen to rally behind the community.
- Some appreciate Ōpunake’s natural beauty, noting its relatively flat landscape, array of walkways and cycleways, and beautiful beaches.
- Ōpunake is perceived by some as well-equipped with essential services and infrastructure like a medical centre, schools, and a Four Square, which are believed to contribute significantly to the town’s strength and cohesion.
- Some believe that Ōpunake offers excellent recreational facilities, encouraging community engagement, particularly among youth, in sports.

“Ōpunake is very strong. It’s the coast, coastal Taranaki; they’ve got their own, it’s almost like a gang but in a positive way, people are really proud to be from the coast.”

“Hāwera and Ōpunake in particular, they have massive sports complexes that encourage their community to interact, encourage sports and encourage young people to get involved.”

“They [Ōpunake] have a community that has a little bit of everything and a really strong sense of community support. So there is always something happening there.”

“A lot of wealthy farming communities get in behind the community; it has always had a good community. You find that a lot in the rural and farming communities, very resilient.”

“It’s really relatively flat here. We’ve got a couple of lovely walkways and cycleways... only 45 minutes to get to Dawson Falls. You’ve got beautiful beaches in Ōpunake. We’ve got lovely lakes and bushwalks.”

“With things like their own really fresh, really well-to-do, and wonderfully managed Medical Center. They have opportunities with Four Square and the dairy. They have their high school, their primary and they’ve got kindergarten. They’ve got everything that you need in the town to keep it strong and keep it connected.”

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

- Some perceive that the community in Ōpunake, due to its somewhat isolated nature, has fostered a unique sense of independence and self-reliance, characterised by a strong ‘get on with it’ attitude among its residents, which, while efficient, some believe can create its own set of challenges.

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Good Health & Wellbeing

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Reduced Inequalities

Life Below Water

Natural Environment

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Self-managing and empowered leaders

Participating fully in society

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“You can argue that it’s really relatively isolated from the rest of the district. Ōpunake seems to have a ‘let’s get on with it mentality’, which causes a whole different problem. But do they just get together and say ‘we want this, so let’s get together and do it’? Because otherwise, they won’t get it.”

“We run into problems with people in Ōpunake because they don’t want to worry about that stuff. You have a bunch of farmers that want to come along with their tractor and get on with it, and that can create its own issues, but we totally understand why they do that. Sometimes it’s easier to just ask for forgiveness.”

“So those in between the places. I think New Plymouth based services will go ‘yes, sweet. We’ll look after Inglewood, we’ll take care of Ōakura, and Hāwera, you guys can look after Ōpunake, that’s more your gig’. Hāwera maybe goes ‘oh it’s quite a long drive out to Ōpunake, we’ll get the bigger teams in New Plymouth to look after the people in that area’.”

“I think around mental health and addictions support, and around the way that community facilities are funded and provided. Those are pretty tough places to live.”

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

- Some believe that Ōpunake has faced long-standing challenges in accessing adequate transportation services due to limited public transport, which has impacted residents’ ability to travel; however, there’s a perception among some that this situation has recently improved with the introduction of the Connector Bus.

THE AVERAGE RENTAL COST IN ŌPUNAKE IS \$413 PER WEEK, COMPARED TO \$536 NATIONALLY.



Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

Barriers

- Ōpunake is perceived by some as a particularly challenging area to live in and to provide support for, due to being located ‘in-between’ two main support hubs, Hāwera and New Plymouth. It’s believed by some that service providers in these nearby towns often pass responsibility between each other regarding who will cater to Ōpunake, resulting in a gap in available services.

“In South Taranaki, we’ve got those coastal areas, those coastal towns that have transport issues for years. When I say years, at least 20 years.”

“Now the Regional Council has gone and put the service on six days a week, and there was great feedback about that.”

“So that’s the best service that’s been improved. It’s running six times a week now, and it’s going between Ōpunake and New Plymouth.”

RESIDENTS OF ŌPUNAKE HAVE AN AVERAGE INCOME OF \$52,000, IN COMPARISON TO THE DISTRICT AVERAGE OF \$74,000 AND THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF \$96,000.

\$52,000
Opunake

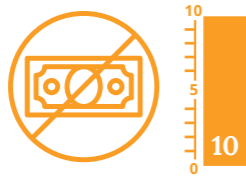
\$74,000 South Taranaki

\$96,000 National Average

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass

ŌPUNAKE IS RATED 10 ON THE DEPRIVATION INDEX.

Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu, 2023.



Good Mahi in the Community

- Alzheimers Taranaki, Alz Café (Ōpunake) - provides a supportive space for people with Alzheimer's and their carers or family.
- Connector Bus Service - a bus service operating six times a week between Ōpunake and New Plymouth, highly appreciated by the community for its improved frequency and reliability.
- Dr. Kiri Wickstead - from the Ōpunake Medical Centre, reportedly visits Parihaka's marae to provide medical consultations to those in the community.
- Pihama Lavender Farm - a small lavender grower that supplies raw ingredients and offers boutique accommodation. (Pihama Lavender Farm, n.d.).^[39]
- Ōpunake Medical Centre - an exceptional healthcare system, offering a full range of general practice services. (Ōpunake Medical Centre, n.d.).^[40]
- The Great Ōpunake Yarn Bomb - a colourful explosion of knitting and crochet installations throughout the Ōpunake main street. (Ōpunake NZ, n.d.).^[41]
- The Ōpunake and Coastal Newspaper - is distributed free to every home and business within the rural district, reportedly the 'best free paper in Taranaki.' (Ōpunake & Coastal Newspaper, n.d.).^[42]

- Tui Ora business hub - offers a wide range of support from printing, scanning, use of computers, general information, government forms, referrals to government departments and community organisations, as well as room hire. (Tui Ora, n.d.).^[43]
- Surfing for Farmers Ōpunake - provides a unique opportunity for Ōpunake farmers to take a break from their all-consuming businesses and engage in outdoor activities, enjoy fresh air, exercise, and connect with fellow farmers, rural families, and industry professionals. (Surfing For Farmers, n.d.).^[44]

"I run Alz Café, I run one in Hāwera, Stratford and Ōpunake, and that's for the client and their carer or their person, daughter, husband, son, it doesn't matter.

"There were only a few people in Ōpunake when I first started that came to the club... and not everybody comes to the club, they may not want it for whatever reason. So I had a growing number out there. So I started the Café to pull them all together.

"They have a great GP practice there [in Ōpunake]. Dr Kiri [Kiri Wickstead] goes from the local GP practice up to Parihaka to the marae there, where they've got a setup. She'll see the people that live in that community. Because there are quite a few. It's like a little village.

"Ōpunake has a very stable GP practice, and a few health NGOs as well.

"There's a really good health system in Ōpunake.

Everybody's Theatre

“Welcome to Everybody's Theatre. We're over 100 years old now and we are run by volunteers in Ōpunake.”

“In 1980, the owner of the theatre at the time, tried to sell it and no one wanted to buy it. The community was so passionate that they rallied around, did fundraising and purchased it themselves to keep it in the community.”

“We just turned 100 in 2021 as a theatre. If you go back and look at the old photographs and the history of the place, a lot of Ōpunake was centred around this theatre. It was the local meeting point, and we've got a lot of people who are still in the community who had their first date here in the theatre. So for them that nostalgia is still here.”

“We've got about 50 volunteers on the books at the moment that help run six sessions a week, extras in the school holidays and on public holidays.”

“The volunteers themselves are a passionate group, and their passion can lie in different places. So it might lie with the actual building, it might lie in a passion for Ōpunake and keeping Ōpunake vibrant, or it might lie with a passion for movies, and just for loving movies and being able to go to the movies in our own hometown.”

“We also work with Ōpunake High School for student volunteers. This came about because quite a few of our volunteers here had students at the high school who would come along and volunteer. It was our way of showing the other kids down here, that 'hey you can come along, you can volunteer in your community and help out a little bit.'”

“Ideally, we'd like to be open more. That's pretty much governed by the volunteer numbers, especially in school holidays and public holidays when you get a real influx of people here. If the weather's nasty, theatre is the perfect place to come along and relax and have a better time out.”

“We try to keep our prices down, we like to have it as a whole family event, and without volunteers, we just could not do that.”



Theme 62

Hāwera is perceived by some as a friendly community, featuring flourishing community gardens and substantial recreation facilities. While there are concerns about the lack of entertainment options outside business hours, others believe Hāwera offers everything a small town needs. Additionally, the town is seen as having significant upside potential, driven by the presence of major employers and the development of new industrial areas and subdivisions.

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2021, THE POPULATION OF HĀWERA IS ESTIMATED TO BE 10,380, AN INCREASE OF 940 PEOPLE SINCE 2013.



Dot Loves Data, Community Compass

Strengths

- Some perceive Hāwera as a friendly town with a strong sense of community spirit, highlighted by the kindness and community-mindedness of its residents.
- It is believed by some that Hāwera provides ‘everything a small town needs,’ offering residents convenient access to essential services and a diverse array of recreational activities, including sports, and quality theatre shows.
- Some believe that Hāwera’s community gardens, well-supported by both the council and the community, are beautiful and flourishing.
- Hāwera’s abundance of second-hand shops is seen as a unique shopping niche and attraction within the district.
- Some view Hāwera as possessing considerable ‘upside potential’ due to the presence of various major employers and the development of new industrial areas, contributing to a vibrant business landscape.
- Some observe significant growth and development within the district with the construction of several subdivisions within Hāwera.

“We struggle within Hāwera with lots of things, but there are many good things as well. Because it’s a small community, there’s a lot of community groups involved in the town, and you help each other out.”

“We have a huge number of second-hand shops; we have seven in a little town. They are well supported and all staffed by volunteers. I like the shopping centres, and it has its own attraction in itself.”

“Going back to the positives of Hāwera, you’ve got things like the community garden, and people getting together. That’s been supported well by our council as well. It’s a real need within our community.”

“Looks like there are heaps of new subdivisions in Hāwera. Heaps of new subdivisions.”

“There hasn’t been anything that she hasn’t been able to access quickly. Everything is close at hand. I think that once you get to a big city, that’s not the case.”

“I’ve never shopped out of Hāwera. I go to New Plymouth usually once a month, if I absolutely have to, and it’s usually for a specialist appointment, but I don’t even shop when I’m over there. We have everything here that we need.”

“People are very well served, so they remain in Hāwera... I’ll remain in Hāwera. That’s where I’ll spend my days.”

“Hāwera has a heap of upside potential. It’s flat, it’s got room to grow, housing will be easy, it’s got massive employers, council, Fonterra, Silver Fern Farms. It’s got a couple of new industrial areas growing, it’s got new big industrial businesses. There’s plenty happening in the town from a business point of view.”

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Good Health & Wellbeing

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Life on Land

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Leading healthy lifestyles

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

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

- Some perceive that Hāwera offers good sporting facilities and free parks catering to a wide age range of people. However, there is a sentiment that some of these parks could benefit from improvements.

“There are spaces, like in the free parks for them to be able to [cater for] a wider age range of tamariki, youth.”

“We have half a dozen parks around Hāwera that could really do with some work, not them.”

Barriers

- Some believe that Hāwera, in contrast to Ōpunake, hasn’t seen a significant real estate boom, which some attribute to its remote, non-coastal location, making it seemingly less appealing to those looking to relocate from larger cities.
- While Hāwera is often viewed as having more entertainment options compared to neighbouring towns like Pātea, some strongly believe there remains a notable shortage of activities and entertainment for all ages, especially outside of business hours.

“A few years prior to COVID-19, Ōpunake was the in-flavour, to buy a house on top of the hill looking over the sea, people were flocking there from Australia and Auckland. Hāwera never quite took off like that. We can rarely see the sea from here.”

“That’s one thing I’ve wondered with South Taranaki, geographically, as a young person in Hāwera, what do you do? Not a lot.”

“There is limited youth activities in Hāwera, and across the business sector.”

THE AVERAGE RENTAL COST IN HĀWERA IS \$452 PER WEEK, COMPARED TO \$536 NATIONALLY.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass



RESIDENTS OF HĀWERA HAVE AN AVERAGE INCOME OF \$76,000, IN COMPARISON TO THE DISTRICT AVERAGE OF \$74,000 AND THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF \$96,000.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass

\$76,000
Hāwera

\$74,000 South Taranaki

\$96,000 National Average

HĀWERA IS RATED 9 ON THE DEPRIVATION INDEX.

Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu, 2023.



Good Mahi in the Community

- Alzheimers Taranaki: Alz Café (Hāwera) - Alz Café in Hāwera supports people with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers. It also coordinates with volunteer drivers for medical appointments. (South Taranaki District Council, n.d.).^[45]
- Tawhiti Museum - plays a key role in showcasing Māori culture and history within the district.
- South Taranaki District Council - currently undergoing the development of Te Ramanui o Ruapūtahanga library, culture, and arts centre in Hāwera’s central business district.
- TSB Sport Hub - this multi-focused complex brings modern indoor and outdoor facilities together on one site, located in Hicks Park.
- The Foundry - the first co-working space and enterprise hub in South Taranaki, aiming to foster a more connected and effective enterprise network. (The Foundry, n.d.).^[46]
- Egmont A&P Show - one of South Taranaki’s major annual events. (Egmont A&P Association, n.d.).^[47]

“I run Alz Café; I run one in Hāwera, Stratford, and Ōpunake, and that’s for the client and their carer or their person, daughter, husband, son – it doesn’t matter.

“I’ve got contacts for the volunteer drivers. So, I’ve been lucky. If I’ve got a client that has an appointment and I’m trying to get them to hospital, I can put them onto that number.

“We have Tawhiti Museum; it made the top six, or fourth place in the world – don’t quote me – top three or four most renowned tourism attractions.

“The museum is a really important connector for people, for people to be able to come to the museum and see history, but also it’s a good touchpoint for the council to connect with the wider community.

“[The new building] has an information centre, library, bus stop, all in one area of town, which is huge. I think it’s meant to be completed by the end of next year.

“They have a huge sports hub in Hāwera; they seem to be really into it.

“They have a good Bizlink community. A lot of businesses go to it; they meet at the Foundry, and smaller businesses can use it instead of renting out places, as there are high leases for some buildings. So, they use the Foundry to work from.

“They have a really good A&P Showgrounds, so they have a good show every year. These are things the people are saying, ‘This is our thing from the council,’ and they take ownership of it. All the clubs, rugby clubs.

“We struggle within Hāwera with lots of things, but there are many good things as well. Because it’s a small community, there’s a lot of community groups involved in the town, and you help each other out.

Workshop participant

Theme 63

Pātea is perceived by many as facing numerous challenges, including economic hardship and generational unemployment, largely linked to the closure of the freezing works. These challenges are further compounded by limited services, youth facilities, and transportation options. Despite these barriers, Pātea is also regarded as a beautiful town that is becoming increasingly attractive to newcomers due to its affordability.



Strengths

- Many believe Pātea is becoming an increasingly attractive location for people to move to from larger cities, drawn by its affordable housing and appealing lifestyle. The increase in new residents is seen to be evolving the community significantly.
- Some perceive that Pātea’s area school, despite experiencing ups and downs, is on an upward trajectory, with its success attributed by some to its strong leadership.

“Pātea has a lot of people moving in for cheaper housing, so the community itself is changing quite a bit.

“We’ve got lots of people, like lots of people moving from Auckland, Tauranga, Hamilton that are relocating here. So, we’re not just looking at people who are retiring here. We’re looking at people who are still working, that are coming into this community and that it’s got a lot to offer, to thrive.

“The [Pātea] school has picked up now. It’s an area high school. By all accounts, it has its ups and downs, but I think it’s on better tracks than what it was.

“In Pātea, the principal down there achieved wonderful things because she looked at it from a local context and not just applying the standard approach.

THE AVERAGE RENTAL COST IN PĀTEA IS \$361 PER WEEK, COMPARED TO \$536 NATIONALLY.

\$361 | \$526



Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

Barriers

- Some perceive that Pātea faces significant economic challenges, with a high proportion of residents seen to be unemployed and relying on welfare support.
- It is perceived by some that Pātea faces significant challenges due to limited local amenities and services, which require residents to travel for essential needs like healthcare and groceries. This situation is further exacerbated by inadequate public transport options to and from the township.
- Despite Pātea’s location on the main road, the town faces challenges in attracting visitors due to a lack of compelling reasons for travellers to stop. This has led to it primarily being seen as a pass-through location.
- Some believe Pātea is ‘split in half’ by a hazardous main road, hindering residents’ ability to safely cross from one side to the other, a concern that has been a long-standing issue in the community according to some.

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

No Poverty

Good Health & Wellbeing

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Reduced Inequalities

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“Pātea is isolated, has little services and deals with economic hardship. Families still talk about the closure of the freezing works, and often they will go to Whanganui to get support.

“The poverty is huge, people are struggling.

“There is just nothing there; they have to travel for all services really: healthcare, work and income.

“It’s the classic ‘not enough shops, not enough dairies’; unfortunately, that is just out of our control.

“I think the transport options for Pātea can be a barrier. They have a standby service, and a weekly bus service from Pātea to Hāwera, mainly for shopping.

“Pātea is really struggling. It’s on the main road, but it hasn’t really got anything to stop for. Like Bulls, it’s sort of a pass-through, but it’s got a really good BP; there is a McDonald’s, there is a reason to stop there.

“Pātea is almost caught between Hāwera and Waverley from a rural services point of view. So, even those rural businesses aren’t based out of Pātea, they are based out of Waverley or Hāwera; so it’s kind of caught in the middle.

“It’s almost like no man’s land; it misses out because of that.

“The biggest issue in Pātea is that it’s split in half. So, half of the people live in one zone; they don’t go over to the other side because you have that main road, and it is pretty lethal. We have been fighting that issue for ages now.

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

- It is believed by some that the closure of the freezing works in Pātea was a significantly traumatic event, leading to long-term, generational unemployment and a sense of learned helplessness among residents. While the impacts of this event have taken multiple generations to manifest, there is a growing belief that positive change is beginning to occur, particularly among younger generations.

“In Pātea, the primary industry was the freezing works, which closed in the late 80s, and of course, hundreds of people lost their jobs... We had a really high level of unemployment for a long time, and there is just, kind of, this learned helplessness, which is an intergenerational issue.

“When it closed, there was huge trauma. There was a complete lack of capacity for people to cope and find a new path for themselves, and it’s taken multiple generations to change it.

“If you study when all the meatworks shut and changed, and what happened to those communities, it was like the heart was gone.

“In civil defence emergencies, other towns will be saying ‘we’ve done this, we’ve done that’, whereas Pātea people just sit there and say, ‘somebody needs to come rescue me’... It’s not a criticism of them; it’s a learned helplessness through years of poor government interventions and generational trauma.

“That’s only recently started to change, where our young people have begun to expect to finish school and go and get a job.

RESIDENTS OF PĀTEA HAVE AN AVERAGE INCOME OF \$39,000, IN COMPARISON TO THE DISTRICT AVERAGE OF \$74,000 AND THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF \$96,000.

\$39,000
Pātea

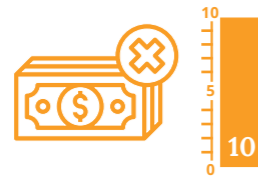
\$74,000 South Taranaki

\$96,000 National Average

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass

PĀTEA IS RATED 10 ON THE DEPRIVATION INDEX.

Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu, 2023



Good Mahi in the Community

- Ngāti Ruanui Health Centre - Pātea’s medical centre, now overseen by Ngāti Ruanui, provides essential healthcare services for the community.
- Taranaki Regional Council, Southern Bus Link from Pātea - runs from Waverley to Hāwera twice a week, providing the Pātea community with greater access to surrounding towns.
- The Pātea community is reportedly working towards establishing a youth club/forum, aiming to create activities and facilities for young people in the town.

“There’s a big kaupapa around the rangatahi and not having anything for them to do around there [Pātea]. Because the kids play up, kids are just going to be kids. If they get bored, they’re going to play up and do silly things, so the community here have come together a number of times with council to see what they can do.

“There is a bit of funding that’s around now, to have a look at what they can provide and strategic planning towards spending money on youth [in Pātea]. A youth club or something like that, like we have in Hāwera.

“It’s something like 50k to start working towards what that youth forum will look like. It’s a start to kick it off, but it’s about getting the parents more involved as well.

“They [Pātea] have got a really good medical centre down there now, and they are there for the community.

“Those people on the health board there [Pātea] are doing a fantastic job trying to keep it ticking over. I think [Ngāti] Ruanui or the iwi took it over, took ownership of it... it works in everyone’s favour, so let’s keep it going because we need it.

“Pātea has a bus, they have a local bus thing. They run once a week where they bring a bus up from Pātea to Hāwera Pak n Save. They leave at 10 o’clock and get back at about 3 o’clock in the afternoon.

Theme 64

In Waverley and Waitōtara, while there is a strong sense of community support, challenges like limited employment and recreational facilities persist. Being situated between regions, these towns can feel 'left in between', overlooked, and not fully integrated into the South Taranaki district, with many residents preferring to travel to Whanganui for goods and services.

AS OF JUNE 2023, THE POPULATION OF MANUTOHI-WAITOTARA IS ESTIMATED TO BE 2142, AN INCREASE OF 93 PEOPLE SINCE 2013.



Dot Loves Data, Community Compass.

Strengths

- Some believe that in Waverley there is a strong sense of community support and connection among residents.

“They have a community that has a little bit of everything and a real strong sense of community support. So there is always something happening there.”

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

- It is observed by some that many residents of Waverley and Waitōtara prefer travelling to Whanganui for essential services and shopping, due to its proximity and the availability of services compared to what's available locally.

“They go [to Whanganui] for shopping, for doctors, they certainly go there for the hospital. So we're talking about half an hour trip as opposed to an hour and a half to New Plymouth, which is actually their DHB because of the postal code.”

“Just in terms of where our clinics are and in Waverley, they're only open maybe two days a week. So for a lot of families, they would rather travel to Whanganui which is only a half an hour drive.”

Barriers

- Some perceive that Waverley and Waitōtara don't quite feel like a part of Taranaki, with some believing residents tend to associate more with Whanganui, particularly in terms of where they access education and services.
- Some believe that the residents of Waverley and Waitōtara, despite their resilience, face challenges due to their geographical location, being situated between two borders. This leads to difficulties in accessing services and feelings of being 'left in between', with 'little being done' to address these challenges.

THE AVERAGE RENTAL COST IN MANUTOHI-WAITOTARA IS \$402 PER WEEK, COMPARED TO \$536 NATIONALLY.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass



- Some observe that the sports and recreational facilities in Waverley and Waitōtara are limited, with a notable decrease in the presence of local clubs compared to the past.
- It is observed by some that Waverley suffers from a noticeable scarcity of local employment opportunities, presenting significant challenges for residents in securing work within their own communities.
- Some perceive that Waitōtara's flood history has resulted in numerous condemned and uninsurable homes, which are often purchased cheaply and in poor condition.

Framework Tags

Sustainable Cities & Communities

Quality Education

Decent Work & Economic Growth

Social Cohesion

Financial & Physical Capital

Human Capability

Participating fully in society

Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation

Cohesive, resilient and nurturing

“I definitely think Waverley really doesn't feel like it's part of Taranaki.”

“A lot of people from the Waverley and Waitōtara area affiliate themselves with Whanganui because a lot of people send their children to high school there.”

“There are probably a lot of people who don't think Waverley is part of Taranaki; they probably associate it more with Whanganui, where they go for services.”

“The sports and recreational facilities just in the Ngaa Rau rohe here would be lacking. We have a big rugby ground that has a netball and tennis court in Waverley.”

“My husband lived in that community [Waverley] growing up, so there were lots of clubs and stuff like that. But I don't see it so much now.”

“Most of our rural whānau down there, the ones in the rural areas, are left wanting. We brought up travel earlier, you know, which way do they travel? Do they travel to Whanganui or to Hāwera? So, they get left in between, and nothing is being done about it.”

“It's definitely difficult when you're at the end of two regions.”

“They're really isolated there; they go a week or two without seeing people.”

“They are a resilient lot down there, down further south, because they are between the borders. If you look at the iwi borders, they are between both iwi borders, so they whakapapa to both sides.”

“There are people I see whose circumstances mean they just can't work. For instance, in Waverley, a family in Waverley, there is just nowhere to work. There are no local businesses to work at.”

“Historically, unfortunately, Waitōtara got flooded, so all the houses in the township are condemned. So, you have people who have bought them extremely cheaply, and if you look at the condition of some of them, they are pretty bad.”

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

- There is a perception among some that Waverley and Waitōtara have historically received less engagement from the South Taranaki District Council. However, it is now believed that the Council's involvement in these areas is increasing.
- Some believe that the new road constructed near Waitōtara, intended to bypass the condemned bridge, could significantly reduce traffic through the local settlement, possibly turning it into a less active or 'ghost' town. However, others believe that this development may foster growth in areas like Waiinu Beach.

“For Waverley, Waitōtara being the most southern end of South Taranaki, I think the council are starting to do a lot. Whereas previously, they were left off to the side there.

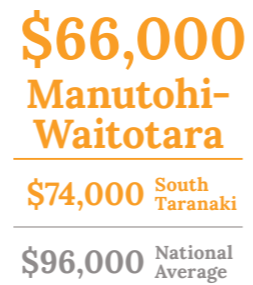
“There’s almost a disconnect between Waverley and Waitōtara in the western district. Waverley, as part of the town revitalisation plan, is getting investment, whereas Waitōtara is not so much.

“[The new road] is going to be quite a big shift, and if that bridge does decide to go, there will be less traffic going into that little settlement there, and it’ll probably become a bit of a ghost town.

“They are very excited about the new road that is going through from the border of Whanganui and South Taranaki to Waiinu Beach... because the bridge has been condemned.

RESIDENTS OF MANUTOHI-WAITOTARA HAVE AN AVERAGE INCOME OF \$66,000, IN COMPARISON TO THE DISTRICT AVERAGE OF \$74,000 AND THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF \$96,000.

Dot Loves Data, Community Compass



MANUTOHI-WAITOTARA IS RATED 9 ON THE DEPRIVATION INDEX.

Pūwhenua Ki Ruapehu, 2023



Opportunities

- Developing an independent youth group in Waverley that offers youth activities and support.

“People are trying to get something off the ground up there [Waverley], where it will be their own and that doesn’t rely on us. Like a youth group kind of thing, just giving them something to do.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Te Oranganui - operates a health clinic in Waverley and employs a rural nurse and social worker in the area to provide focused care for the local elderly community.
- Ngaa Rauru, Kaumatua Critical Repairs - an initiative that ensures that elderly in the Ngaa Rauru region have access to fundamental amenities like water and heating.

“They [Te Oranganui] have got their clinic in Waverley, but I know from when I worked there previously, most of their patient population are the farmers, and the Pākehā community more so than our Māori community. A lot of them go up into Pātea and to the Ngāti Ruanui health clinic there.

“We do support initiatives like the kaumatua critical repairs where we actually go out to make sure that there’s water and heating, the more critical basic needs in houses.

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 South Taranaki community.

Enablers

Enabler 1—In South Taranaki, despite concerns about potential service duplication and a decrease in community connectors, many organisations are recognised for having established strong partnerships with other services. This allows them to effectively bridge individuals to additional support while carefully avoiding ‘overstepping’ the offerings of other providers, ensuring that individuals receive comprehensive and well-organised support.

Enabler 2—Many commend the South Taranaki District Council for its commitment to the district’s rural communities. Despite persisting challenges, such as a mismatch between the Council’s responsibilities and community expectations, the council is believed to demonstrate genuine care and commitment to community needs through the provision of facilities, including swimming pools and playgrounds, and a proactive approach to partnerships, especially with Iwi.

Enabler 3—Iwi/Iwi providers of South Taranaki are widely recognised for their strong leadership and collaboration, consistently adopting a proactive approach to supporting people from all backgrounds. While their engagement is increasingly sought after, some suggest that capacity may be a challenge due to their numerous existing commitments. Nevertheless, many believe that Iwi/Iwi providers contribute significantly to the district, particularly through their health services.

Barriers

Barrier 1—In South Taranaki, despite the presence of many supportive organisations, many believe that the district is significantly disadvantaged by the lack of locally available services. With many services focusing on and increasingly centralising in New Plymouth, coupled with infrequent visits from external agencies, some believe the district is often ‘left out’. This situation is pushing more residents towards digital services or travelling to access what they need.

Barrier 2—While some organisations in South Taranaki are recognised for operating with greater independence, enabling them to provide prompt, consistent, and holistic support, many others encounter systemic challenges that limit their ability to offer adequate assistance. These challenges encompass bureaucratic red tape, unclear accountability, ambiguous service boundaries, and inadequate preventative strategies, all contributing to the complexity of the overall support landscape.

Barrier 3—For many community organisations and initiatives in South Taranaki, a challenging funding environment is observed, characterised by limited resources, funding losses, and difficulties in obtaining certain funds. While some are perceived as heavily reliant on financial support, caught in a relentless cycle of paperwork, others are navigating this landscape by creatively adapting their offerings and opting for a more self-sustainable approach.

Enabler 1

In South Taranaki, despite concerns about potential service duplication and a decrease in community connectors, many organisations are recognised for having established strong partnerships with other services. This allows them to effectively bridge individuals to additional support while carefully avoiding ‘overstepping’ the offerings of other providers, ensuring that individuals receive comprehensive and well-organised support.

Strengths

- Many organisations have built strong relationships, partnerships, and connections with other services in the community to ensure people receive comprehensive support.
- Some perceive that certain community organisations effectively ‘provide a bridge’ to additional support and resources, such as budgeting, counselling, and legal advice, ensuring that, if they cannot offer the necessary help, people are connected with other services that can.

“We do a lot of things combined with other people; we don’t silo ourselves – we work with other people.”

“It might be that we need to connect them with other agencies, [such as] budgeting advice, or community services, or community social workers who can help them navigate areas where they haven’t had to navigate before.”

“They’re going to be able to connect you with a counsellor, they’ll be able to connect you with legal advice, they might be able to connect you with an advocate.”

“Part of our role is to provide that connection [to other services] and to provide that bridge.”

“There is a list of, like, 40 community organisations that provide that wraparound support so that we can fulfil the right role ourselves.”

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

- Some believe that while Iwi providers have some highly effective connectors linking people to resources and services, there is concern over the significant reduction in the number of connectors in the district. This leaves only a few organisations to provide these services, potentially making it more challenging for residents to access the support they need.

“I understand that Ngāruahine has one of the only two contracts for connectors in South Taranaki, which is great.”

“A lot of the Iwi are really hands-on; they’ve got some really good social work connectors that are connecting with people and getting them into places that might be better suited for them.”

“SAFE Taranaki Trust and different organisations all had funding to support connectors to help within local communities, and that’s gone from 100 across the country... down to two.”

Barriers

- While some organisations are believed to be conscious of ‘stepping on the toes’ of others, there is still noticeable duplication and limited collaboration among some services. This is thought to stem from their aim to protect funding sources and maintain independence, which in turn hinders collaborative efforts.
- Some organisations trying to establish services in South Taranaki are perceived as encountering difficulties in forming partnerships with local entities, which often hesitate to engage due to concerns about jeopardising their existing connections within the district.

“There is absolutely an awareness of ‘oh, I don’t want to step on somebody else’s toes’.”

“But there are some strange kinds of propensities in how we do operate, perhaps collegially, and so much of that, tragically, just comes down to money, really, that makes people worried about collaborative working.”

“Sometimes things happen and people plan things but... you end up doing the same things at the same time, whereas we’re probably better off if we work together. That comes from people being independent.”

“It’s where they just don’t understand. I think they don’t understand. So, the challenges are that they might have an existing relationship with, for example, a foodbank, and they don’t want to damage that relationship.”

Opportunities

- Fostering collaboration and resource sharing among organisations to eliminate service duplication and siloed working. This approach may reduce inefficiencies and competition, as well as strengthen the support network available to the community.
- Connecting people to other support services, ensuring that if one organisation cannot assist, they are connected with others who can provide the necessary help.
- Ensuring external organisations entering the district engage collaboratively with the community, rather than imposing as ‘flash Larrys,’ to respect the mana (prestige) of existing organisations and build trust with the community.

“Organisations... [all] need to sit at a table firstly. We all need to get on the same page. We’re all doing the same job. How do we collectively work together while protecting confidentiality?”

“Service duplications were possibly one of the biggest opportunities that I’ve seen in the community services space. If someone could get all of the different offerings in the room and get them all aligned and doing things that are complementary and not duplicating, we would get some really good wins.”

“We totally hate siloed working; we don’t believe in it. We think it’s a waste, and people end up reinventing wheels, and trying to patch protect... It’s better for the whānau that organisations are working as collaboratively as possible.”

“So it’s about making sure we can lead them to the right place and sharing that information. So if we know that people are needing help.

“For someone to come and ask for help, if we can’t help them, then we need to be able to support them to find the right people that can help them. That’s how we’ve grown with different things.

“I know that local people are the ones that will be able to create that level of trust, rather than people coming from New Plymouth trying to be ‘flash Larrys’.

“Those are some of the reasons as to why it’s so important that we create those partnerships. So we can deliver to them, but the locals are out there doing it.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Social Services Strategy Meetings - facilitates collaboration between various organisations, District Council, and Regional Council to address community needs.
- Older Persons Health and Rehabilitation Services (OPHRS) - offers health and rehabilitation services for the elderly, addressing a range of medical issues.
- Taranaki Retreat - acts as a connector, collecting and distributing community resources to areas where they are most needed.

“They [Ngāti Ruanui Health Centre] have lots of things that happen there. They have meetings with social services in Hāwera, with the council and the Mayor, once every six weeks. At that meeting, you have Grey Power, Age Concern Disability; that’s where they hear a lot of this stuff. So, the hospital is hearing it, the council is hearing it. The council will go away and take notes. They will know what the issues are.

“There are some really high-profile people; you get the mayors and all that, who attend those meetings. Some members are just older people, who have a real concern for their fellow constituents and are raising their hand on their behalf.

“OPHRS, which is Older Persons Health and Rehabilitation Services, that’s our geriatricians... they are definitely more for the older persons, and they are not just about dementia. They also cover any medical issues for the older person. They have a bigger picture, a huge picture.

“The MDTs are a community meeting about anybody that might need help. It’s a quicker way to do referrals sometimes.

“So, our organisation’s concept is to be a connector. It’s to get a big bucket and fill it up with all the resources and the abundance that the community has, and then, out of the tap at the bottom of it, to pull that out into where there’s a deficit.

“So, what we aim to do is get together and fill up that bucket, and then direct it to where it’s needed.

Enabler 2

Many commend the South Taranaki District Council for its commitment to the district's rural communities. Despite persisting challenges, such as a mismatch between the Council's responsibilities and community expectations, the council is believed to demonstrate genuine care and commitment to community needs through the provision of facilities, including swimming pools and playgrounds, and a proactive approach to partnerships, especially with Iwi.

Strengths

- Some believe that the South Taranaki District Council 'really looks after its rural community' by providing various facilities, such as seven swimming pools and 36 playgrounds, as well as other services.
- Some council staff feel a strong sense of support and belonging within the South Taranaki District Council, viewing themselves as a family, rather than just an organisation. Despite occasional challenges, they are recognised for their genuine effort and care.
- Some perceive the South Taranaki District Council as having a strong sense of whanaungatanga (relationship) with the community, with staff who are open, caring and effectively advocating for community needs.
- Many perceive the South Taranaki District Council as successfully fostering authentic partnerships across the district, particularly evident in their proactive engagement with Iwi. This engagement, characterised by a deep commitment to understanding Iwi needs and aspirations through regular face-to-face conversations, is perceived by some as going beyond mere legislative obligations.

"This is no promotion, but I'm going to call it a promotion. We were the first council that worked with Māori without having to go through the legislative process. Our 12 councillors voted to have Māori councillors, Māori members, based on what the Iwi said."

- "I've just been so impressed with the facilities that we [council] provide. We really look after our rural communities."*
- "The overall feedback we get from that survey is positive about the services that we've done, the way we interact with our communities, the communication we have with our communities."*
- "From a fieldworker point of view, they seem genuine, open. I have attended social service meetings, and there'll be people from the local government sitting in those meetings. It may seem quite genuine about why they want to help."*
- "It's the whanaungatanga; it is really strong within our Council. They give huge support, guidance, leadership to do the best they can for their communities, so that is another level of this process."*
- "I appreciate that [the] staff will make the effort to keep engaged, [and] as fast as they can... because time is really precious for them. Half the time [they] will go back, four or five times just to do the same engagement. I just acknowledge that. That is the right thing to do."*
- "Whether it's in a group or whether it's one to one, we just foster the relationship by meeting more regularly for cups of tea. We try really hard to do that; we know that that's the way to make it work. We don't always get it right, but we really sincerely try to make it our normal."*
- "It's my whanau, not an organisation; I try not to use that word often. It's a natural progression in terms of this process, and the residence satisfaction survey just reinforces that."*

Barriers

- Some perceive a mismatch between community expectations and the actual responsibilities of South Taranaki District Council, noting a tendency for some people to assume the council should address a wide range of issues, including those that are beyond their scope.
- Despite some notable efforts and improvements in the District Council's community consultations, there is a perception among some that challenges may arise in translating these discussions into actionable outcomes.

"What I hear and what I feel, there seems to be a growing 'council should do that', but there is a lack of awareness of what the council should be doing."

- "We've had three community consults in the last 40 years... If they keep coming up with the same thing we need to have, and nothing is changing, isn't that a hint that someone should be doing something about something? Just a tad."*
- "Over the years, we've had community consultation... that gets researched again, and we get another conversation... and what I've seen, and I suppose that's the long-term thing about sitting in one place for a length of time, is that the doings are not happening."*

- "The council has some good staff, so they know what their community wants. One of the things they have done is the walkway down towards the sea, so they have made that, which is really good. They have done it all with very good consultation with the community."*
- "They've gotten better at community consultation. I will say that they can be closed with their questioning, because they've got to be so careful. They're walking a tight line all the time; they've got to be careful what can of worms they open."*

Good Mahi in the Community

- South Taranaki District Council, Partnership Strategy - a guiding framework adopted by the District Council and the four Iwi, outlining their commitment to working together.
- South Taranaki District Council - proactively established Māori wards, demonstrating its commitment to cultural representation and diversity in local governance.

Enabler 3

Iwi/Iwi providers of South Taranaki are widely recognised for their strong leadership and collaboration, consistently adopting a proactive approach to supporting people from all backgrounds. While their engagement is increasingly sought after, some suggest that capacity may be a challenge due to their numerous existing commitments. Nevertheless, many believe that Iwi/Iwi providers contribute significantly to the district, particularly through their health services.

THERE ARE FOUR IWI IN SOUTH TARANAKI, INCLUDING TE KĀHUI O RAURU, TE KOROWAI O NGĀRUAHINE, TE RŪNANGA O NGĀTI RUANUI AND TE KĀHUI O TARANAKI.

South Taranaki Council, 2023.

Strengths

- Some believe the district is fortunate to have intelligent and broad-thinking leaders within Iwi, who are deeply committed to their community.
- Many believe Iwi/Iwi-providers are instrumental in supporting the whole community, a belief reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic when they played a significant role in providing care, manaakitanga (generosity) and resources to those in need.
- Some believe that certain Iwi/Iwi providers are making a substantial contribution to health in the district, particularly through the establishment and operation of health clinics, services and programmes.
- Some perceive that the Iwi of South Taranaki collaborate effectively, often uniting under a shared vision.
- Some organisations within the district are believed to be actively engaging and forming robust partnerships with local Iwi/Iwi-providers.

“There are some really smart cookies down there. In the Iwi groups, they are really broad thinkers, and they work very hard for their people, and take those opportunities for them.”

- “As a region, we couldn’t be luckier, I think, in terms of the people in [Iwi] leadership that goes on here.”*
- “We’re fortunate and lucky that generally ngā Iwi of Taranaki get together and have a shared vision.”*
- “[Our relationship with Iwi] is a bit boring because we actually do get on really well.”*
- “Ngāti Ruanui seem to do quite a lot in the health space down in Hāwera. They’ve got health clinics, they are huge. They have a lot of health workers, they look after the holistic wellbeing of somebody. So, for that kaumatua or kuia it’s shopping, it’s appointments, it’s their medical. It’s everything really. They are very good.”*
- “We saw our Iwi helping the people, and in COVID-19 they brought me a package. It didn’t matter. We all got help.”*
- “Iwi came into their own, then they mustered mammoth corralling of their community, knocked on doors, and just had the resources, the care and the manakitanga to do that. It was pretty powerful evidence, and to hear reports about that later.”*
- “We’ve worked really hard to work alongside the local Iwi providers, Ngāti Ruanui and Ngāruahine, to work with their workers and that seems to be taking ground.”*
- “We made connections first through the health and social services that both of the Iwi provide, connecting with their social workers and inviting the social workers out to come and meet us and see the resources for themselves.”*

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

- While the desire to engage with Iwi/Iwi providers is increasing, there’s a perception that some Iwi/Iwi providers, already busy with many of their own commitments, may lack the capacity to meet the growing desire for engagement.

“It’s finally been in recent years, varying depending on who the representative of Ngati Tu Paia is that we’ve been dealing with. It’s a massive capacity issue for them, and they’ve got so many other kaupapa that they are having to attend to.”

“Like what you said too, about the capacity of Iwi and Hapū... because there is a huge shift in education, and there are a lot of demands, with many people coming to them wanting to connect. Now they’re saying, ‘we can’t be there for all of you, all the time’.”

“You want to have that constant connection; you can take as much as you need, but it’s about what they can give, and when they can give their time and knowledge.”

Barriers

- Some observe that in the decision-making processes of certain Iwi, there is a potential misalignment between their aspirational goals and the immediate needs of the community.
- Some members (uri) of certain Iwi experience dissatisfaction with the progress made by their Iwi, noting that despite settlements occurring many years ago in some cases, progress has not been fully realised.

“So they set up at their level where they can exhaust the funding, exhaust that stuff...but actually, some of those aspirational decisions are not the reality of the need.”

“So that’s why it’s really hard as an operations entity of the Iwi to have to be the third wheel down, because what they’re actually going for is not the reality of the need.”

“People are just hōhā. We’ve been settled for nearly 20 years... But in 20 years we’ve made a lot of mistakes, and I don’t think as an organisation, we’ve made a lot of progress for our people.”

“I look at what everyone else is doing and think we’re just not getting it right. What do we need to do to turn that around?”

Barrier 1

In South Taranaki, despite the presence of many supportive organisations, many believe that the district is significantly disadvantaged by the lack of locally available services. With many services focusing on and increasingly centralising in New Plymouth, coupled with infrequent visits from external agencies, some believe the district is often 'left out'. This situation is pushing more residents towards digital services or travelling to access what they need.

Strengths

- Some believe that South Taranaki is home to a multitude of organisations offering diverse support, which are widely regarded for their broad range of skills and resources that they provide to the community.
- Some observe that merging council services with libraries within the district has successfully created a one-stop-shop for residents to access what they need and fosters more positive customer experiences, due to the libraries' trusted reputation.

"There's something exceptional about Taranaki's ability to get on and provide, if you have a look through the services directory it's amazing how many organisations there are across the community with all different skill bases and resources.

"In 2002, we combined those Council offices with the library service as a way of providing more of a one-stop shop. The reason behind that was, the libraries are seen as a trusted space, so we were likely to get better customer behaviour.

Barriers

- Many observe a diminishing presence of government services in the district, with offices increasingly centralised in urban centres like New Plymouth or beyond. This has led to a greater reliance on libraries for access to some of these essential services, especially for those lacking transportation, internet access, or the confidence to navigate online platforms.
- Some perceive that South Taranaki is often overlooked, resulting in fewer services and increased difficulty in accessing necessary support, as services are often concentrated in New Plymouth or Stratford. This is believed to leave the district under-resourced and reliant on infrequent and declining visits from external services.
- Some believe that some services, intended to serve the entire Taranaki region, disproportionately focus on New Plymouth, a challenge which according to some, remains unchanged, or has worsened over time.
- Some believe that residents are disadvantaged by the lack of local services, as they are required to travel significant distances to access essential services, a situation that is not feasible for everyone.
- Some are concerned that the closure of local banks could significantly limit or entirely eliminate access to physical banking services within the district.

"We used to have, for example, Inland Revenue staff who would come down to Hāwera a couple of days a week. They've stopped now, and for most agencies, there isn't an office here; and in a lot of cases, they aren't in New Plymouth either.

"Is that predominantly because South Taranaki is the 'poor cousin' of New Plymouth? So, your big agencies that are [based] in New Plymouth, they'll be down here, say, one day a week, if that.

"There's not a presence here like there used to be. So, if you live in the South, you're disadvantaged in so many ways. Because you have to travel, and you have to think about travel costs and things like that.

"So many government agencies don't have an office, or even [presence] in Taranaki in some instances, so they will send them into the library to do applications, print out forms, [and] scan things back in. So that access is vital.

"Decrease in government support in places like this [South Taranaki]. There either isn't an office, or people, for whatever reason, feel like [they] can't go into a government agency and get help, so they'll come to us [at the library] instead.

"Taranaki services should be looking at the whole of Taranaki, but it tends to look at New Plymouth. It has been like this for many, many years, and I have seen no improvement whatsoever. I think [that], if anything, that has probably deteriorated from 25 years ago.

"We can't help but cry for the South Taranaki region, as it gets a bit left out.

"If you forecast 5 or 10 years, we've got one amazing banking hub. What's to say that every library can't have a banking hub for the community as banks, [with] physical bank locations, might not exist in the region anymore.

"The TSB Bank has pulled out of services in a couple of rural areas as well. They've closed Ōpunake and Eltham.

Opportunities

- Creating a 'one-stop shop' in the district for diverse services, from banking to social support, to significantly reduce travel and increase efficiency by enabling people to access services locally.
- Creating a banking hub to significantly improve convenience and financial accessibility for local residents.

"If people could do all their accounts and services... sit and have a chat, have a cup of coffee, and do their banking... all in one location, we're cutting down on the amount of fuel we use, the wear and tear on the roads, you know, all that is going to matter.

"It's also about how many people roll up to your door for different services, and could that be done better? Maybe one person going as opposed to five people from different services, and how would you do that? Like a one-stop shop.

"Some of the towns, like where I live in Pātea, haven't had a bank for quite some time. The bank closed almost 20 years ago... and people adjusted quite quickly. But that banking hub would really ease the situation for people.

Good Mahi in the Community

- South Taranaki District Council, LibraryPlus - operate as multi-functional 'LibraryPlus' centres, offering a range of council and government services, including passport applications, rate payments, and dog registration. These libraries have also adapted to include banking hubs with smart ATMs and concierge support, particularly aiding in the transition to online banking for those affected by the closure of banks.

"You will see that our libraries are branded library plus, because there are more than just a library. You can pay your rates across the counter. We still have people paying their rates in cash. You can pay your dog registrations over the counter. And some of our libraries... we have a banking hub where they provide access to all of the banking services.

"There's not a presence here like there used to be. So, if you live in the South, you're disadvantaged in so many ways. Because you have to travel, and you have to think about travel costs and things like that.

Workshop participant

Barrier 2

While some organisations in South Taranaki are recognised for operating with greater independence, enabling them to provide prompt, consistent, and holistic support, many others encounter systemic challenges that limit their ability to offer adequate assistance. These challenges encompass bureaucratic red tape, unclear accountability, ambiguous service boundaries, and inadequate preventative strategies, all contributing to the complexity of the overall support landscape.

Strengths

- Some believe that the consistent and prompt service provided by certain community organisations in the district contributes significantly to building trust and confidence among the people they support.
- Some perceive that community organisations, operating independently from government entities, have more flexibility to ‘think outside the box’ and autonomy to provide holistic support when serving people, offering a distinct advantage over traditional government agencies.
- Some organisations within the district are perceived as proactively adapting to community needs through continuous reflection and innovation of the services they provide.

“The fact that they can say to the client, ‘go home, we’ll send an email, and then tomorrow you’re going to have a package of clothes on your doorstep’, goes a long way to building that trust.

“I think one of the real advantages of being able to do this away from government agencies, really, is that we’re able to look at the whole person.

“We have more freedom and flexibility to be able to help and to think outside the box.

“Then it’s [about] being consistent with what we do. When people ring up and ask for help, when support workers ring up and ask for help, we are consistent and provide quick services.

“That [being consistent] has been really helpful because when they [support workers] are meeting with a family, it’s really good for them to be able to say, ‘I’m going to give [them] a call’, and then the next day, there’s clothing on that doorstep. That builds [trust and] goes a long way to building that trust.

“Every team meeting, we start off by saying the old [saying of] Henry Ford, ‘If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got’, and every week we review what is the need? What is the community telling us? How can we flex?

“We try and meet the needs based on what they’re indicating, to ensure that they get what they need from these sessions.

Barriers

- Some perceive that certain organisations are under immense pressure to meet the community’s immediate needs, as they are often seen as the last resort for many vulnerable people who have exhausted all other options. This situation raises concerns about their ability to adequately support every person seeking help, given their limited capacity.
- Some feel that strict organisational structures and ‘boxes’ imposed by larger government entities can hinder some services from considering the ‘whole picture’ and providing holistic support, as they are often required to adhere to set guidelines.

- It is perceived by some that bureaucratic processes and lengthy administrative barriers significantly delay the ability of some organisations to access funding to provide timely assistance for immediate needs. This not only causes frustration and affects efficiency but also leads to missed opportunities and impacts the capacity of some organisations to build trust with the people they support.
- Some note that interventions for social issues often resemble an ‘ambulance at the bottom of the cliff,’ focusing more on managing crises and symptoms rather than addressing deeper issues through preventative measures.
- Some perceive that certain agencies deflect responsibility for providing support to those in need, occasionally dismissing certain cases as ‘not their problem.’ Meanwhile, vulnerable people continue to struggle without essential support.
- Some in the community express concerns about a perceived lack of accountability and honesty among certain government agencies, highlighting apprehension in referring vulnerable people to services that are promised but may not be reliably available.

“If we’re holding them to our heart as if they are our own, we’re not just going to pass them on to another agency that’s not going to love them or care for them.

“For any number of those who get in touch today, we are potentially the last resort, so they may have tried everything else, and they’re going to give this thing a try and maybe this will help.

“We will always try and stretch ourselves to meet that need, but there’s only so much we can do and it really concerns me that we are letting down the most vulnerable people.

“Putting people on programmes is not necessarily addressing the deeper symptoms that need addressing. Not just obesity, it’s smoking, drunk driving, all of those symptomatic problems go back to the things we spoke about before around housing, income, belonging. All that stuff.

“What’s happened a lot in our society is so much money goes into the ambulance at the end of the cliff rather than paying more money upfront for the preventative work, preventing these things from happening so that we don’t have to do a lot of the stuff at the end.

“I couldn’t work in government, that’s one thing I’ve always said. I sit on the protection panel for Oranga Tamariki, and I couldn’t work for that organisation because I couldn’t stay within a box. I’m not a box person.

“You’re mandated to do this. You can’t go outside of this. I really, really struggle with it because I’m a person that, like I said, you’ve got to look at the whole picture.

“You want to do it right... but it’s just not conducive to the type of work that we do and the flow that we need to get. You know, [building] trust with our people.

“So once you go through that whole process. It could be a week or two, and depending on the amounts, it could be months. So...if somebody needs and has a job interview tomorrow. We need to get that stuff today.

“People just make it too difficult. I worked at Work and Income for 16 years, you just make it happen... It seems like people just make it too difficult. We act like gatekeepers rather than gate openers, you know?

“Our workers had tried to access the help, sometimes immediate help, to get some provision, some care for them. It comes up as ‘well, it’s not our problem’.

“It just seems to be a spiral of, someone needs to take responsibility, but someone else [should] do it. Meanwhile, the person who requires the help, continues to flounder.

“I’ve been asking MSD over and over, for those agencies that they’re funding, to sit around the table, and look each other in the eye. Let’s get some honesty. There’s no honesty.

“Accountability is a huge thing. From our organisation’s point of view. People are provided money to actually provide a service, but we know that they’re not being provided. We believe in accountability but to get other people to be accountable as well is very difficult.

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

- Some feel the boundaries between Taranaki and Whanganui are unclear, creating confusion about where residents can access support and where services can operate due to established service boundaries and funding constraints. Despite this, some organisations are seen to collaborate and coordinate their efforts to work around these boundaries.

“Services get a little blurry, but they know it. Services will say they only go to Stratford... Some are only in the South, some will stay central, and some will do the whole region.

“When we had the floods down the Waitotara Valley... There was a real issue, because when a farmer was in trouble or needed something, it was, ‘Well, does Taranaki Rural Support go, or does the Whanganui Rural Support go?’

“It’d be really hard to have that conversation with someone in Whanganui, to say, ‘Could you service this particular family?’ They would say no, you need to because they are within your boundaries. It’s attached to funding and funding regions.

“We liaise with each other [north and south]... depending on what it is, we’ll work it out together.

Opportunities

- Investing in proactive, preventative measures across various sectors to reduce reliance on reactive, ‘bottom of the cliff’ interventions.
- Delivering more meaningful and transformative support by adopting a ‘whole person’ approach that considers all aspects of a person’s life, including relationships, culture, and wellbeing.
- Increasing organisations’ flexibility to deliver quick and effective solutions to keep up with and adequately address the rapidly changing needs of the community.
- Improving accountability in government agencies to ensure they are responsive and responsible to the people they support, while also providing community organisations with confidence that people will receive support with care, especially when referred to their services.
- Ensuring that government entities and institutions, such as Oranga Tamariki, are viewed as actively working for the community, not against it.
- Exploring alternative methods of delivering services in South Taranaki to ensure they effectively meet the community’s needs and prevent people from falling through the cracks in accessing essential services.

“If we could put the money we put into the services at the end and to the preventative measures, we wouldn’t be needing all this stuff at the end. And that’s not just in health and education, it’s everything.

“At the moment, we’re very reactive, and I’m a big fan of being proactive... The health system is very reactive; it’s there if you’re in need at the bottom of the cliff. Whereas we need to be doing more at the top of the cliff.

“Words like ‘holistic’ are often used in terms of understanding a whole person and their connections, their relationships, their culture, everything. If you’re going to have any sort of meaningful relationship with them, you will be able to provide meaningful support.

“If we say we’re offering a service, we have to offer it, because people believe that there’s something available.

“We need to know, if this is not something we offer, can we send that person with some surety, they’re not gonna let them fall.

“Our accountability needs to be high, not only as agencies but as government.

“I would love to know that the police, that mental health, that OT [Oranga Tamariki] are seen by the community as working for them, not against them.

“We need to be able to walk around in this town with our head held high. We need to be able to see our clients in the supermarket and not have to dodge because we’re not doing the right thing.

“That’s why it’s so important for people like MTFJ to have the ability to deliver solutions quicker than what council sometimes has, [in terms of] the capacity of the infrastructure to be able to make it happen.

“The difficulty is, that we have to deliver what we have to deliver, you have to think outside the box, you have to have more flexibility; it’s got to work quicker and faster and have a better flow.

“We really need to brainstorm around how we deliver services in South Taranaki. I think we really need to think outside the square to provide services in a way that actually really makes a difference for the people themselves. Considering all those factors, the status quo is not enough.

“They can’t access services, they fall through the cracks. They wait too long. They don’t bother to access and find ways to deal with it themselves or don’t deal with it. You also have to think about intergenerational trauma as well. There needs to be different ways of doing things down there.

Good Mahi in the Community

- Salvation Army, Foodbank - aim to not only provide food but also to transform lives by fostering meaningful relationships and offering comprehensive support, addressing the overall needs of those they serve.

“That’s what the new model Foodbank is looking at doing. We do a lot of it at the Salvation Army already, to the [food] community foodbanks. But we want to go even deeper and really get a great relationship, so that when we see them, we’re really intentionally making things change.

“Transforming lives and reforming society. It’s part of the transformation that we’re looking for in people. That’s why we’re looking to keep developing each of our models and changing so that we are really holistically looking at the whole person or the whole family, rather than just providing food.

“There’s a lot of people out there that can just give food. But we’re working on the need.

Barrier 3

For many community organisations and initiatives in South Taranaki, a challenging funding environment is observed, characterised by limited resources, funding losses, and difficulties in obtaining certain funds. While some are perceived as heavily reliant on financial support, caught in a relentless cycle of paperwork, others are navigating this landscape by creatively adapting their offerings and opting for a more self-sustainable approach.

Strengths

- The South Taranaki District Council is perceived by some as very supportive of community projects, offering advice and guidance on potential funding avenues.
- Some believe that shifting from a competitive funding model to a leadership-based funding model has significantly reduced competition and enhanced collaboration among organisations, streamlining the funding process and focusing more on collective goals rather than individual success.
- Some believe that avoiding external funding helps maintain the core essence of their organisation, preferring to be self-sustainable due to the potential disadvantages of external funding.

“I’m kind of glad in the end we did miss out on that funding, because it would have changed the essence of what we are. One of us would have been sentenced to an office job finding funding all the time, and none of us wants to do that.”

“The council are really supportive, and they will direct us to where you need to go to get the funding for specific projects.”

“Instead of people spending a week to fill out a form, sending it in, to then get declined. The leadership base goes, ‘There is this much money, these are the numbers of employees, it’s based around what you’ve already told us you want to do, here’s the funding form, fill it out, and we’ll help you with that.’”

“As a region, that collaboration piece made a big difference and it knocked off a whole lot of that competitive behaviour that we’d seen so much of.”

“We got together and said there’s no requirement to have a competitive funding round; a competitive funding model is undesirable, it drives competition, and it doesn’t support collaboration.”

“It’s a choice; you can go for the funding if you like, but I do see disadvantages in that.”

Barriers

- Some believe some community organisations within the district are under-resourced, with some even facing challenges in paying their staff.
- Some observe that funding within the district is often limited and insufficient, with a noticeable gap between available resources and the community’s actual needs.
- Some perceive that accessing funding as a community organisation can be challenging when funders do not share the same vision.
- Many observe that obtaining funding for ongoing operational costs, such as salaries and maintenance, can be challenging, as funders are perceived to prefer supporting projects with tangible outcomes, rather than ‘business as usual.’
- Some believe there’s a funding paradox for some community organisations, where they struggle to obtain grants for fundraising equipment but without such equipment, they can’t raise funds independently, leading to ongoing dependence on external funding.
- It is believed by some that various organisations are caught in a relentless cycle of seeking and managing funding, leading to significant stress and ‘endless paperwork,’ which shifts their focus away from activities they enjoy, like fieldwork.

- Some believe that the growing reliance on funding for initiatives like conservation is creating a sense of helplessness in some community organisations. This highlights a shift from the traditional attitude of volunteerism and collaboration, characterised by a ‘get on with it’ approach, to a dependency on financial support for taking action.
- Some perceive that foodbanks within the district have exhausted their COVID-19 response funding, limiting their ability to buy essential items, a situation that is further exacerbated by a notable lack of community foodbank donations.
- There is a perception that obtaining funding from the South Taranaki District Council for social services and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is challenging, as these initiatives are often seen as government responsibilities rather than local issues, leading to a tug of war between government and local perspectives on funding responsibilities.

“Some days, [she] has had to ring me and say there will be no wages for you next month, so I just had to suck it up.”

“A lot of the charities are a little bit under-resourced as well.”

“Without that funding, we just have to get it from somewhere. Otherwise, we can’t keep providing services. It’s an ongoing thing.”

“The amount of funding that’s available in South Taranaki. So even today, I did a funding application and I just got an email saying there’s insufficient funds in our area to support our funding application, so we’ve been declined.”

“The funding resources, that is still significant. There is a big gap between what is provided and what is needed.”

“I had a conversation with MSD that the government funding is soon to run out on them [foodbanks], as that was left over COVID-19 money. So they’ll have to go back to totally relying on [the] community.”

“If the people holding that pūtea [funds] don’t hold that vision, it could be very difficult to get that money.”

“When the pūtea [funds] is held by people that don’t have that same vision or think outside the box, it takes another skill to be able to negotiate that.”

“It can be a bit harder to fund people... so I think most of our roles are usually covered by somebody, like one thing in particular... not many people want to fund the person; they want to fund a project.”

“Being able to see a tangible outcome as a result of your investment is important for people. So having a project is a very direct and creative thing that we put this money in, and see what was achieved.”

“We’d love to have a grant that will fund us to set ourselves up for doing casino nights... but you can’t get funding if it’s going to be used to purchase fundraising equipment. It’s the chicken or the egg. What comes first.”

“We can’t fundraise because we haven’t got equipment to fundraise with, and we can’t get a grant for fundraising equipment.”

“I’ve seen the others and what they’re doing, you know, it’s just endless paperwork, endless stress for them.”

“I see these other groups. The people are stressed [about getting funding] to the max; the people that do fundraising and office work for these places, they don’t even get out to the bush.”

Barrier 3 (continued)

“We’re going to breed into New Zealanders this useless helplessness. We can’t do anything without money when we can.

“It’s a bit of a tug of war. They see it as a government issue, and for us on the ground, we can see that it’s a government issue, but it’s also a local issue.

“They support some things, don’t get me wrong, but it’s very seldom that it’s a social service NGO because they see that it’s a government issue.

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

- While some organisations and initiatives struggle with a limited pool of community funding, others have tactically aligned their activities with trending concerns, such as environmental issues, in an effort to improve their chances of accessing greater funding.

“When you’re applying as a charity to some of the charity or community funding from council, you’re in a pool with 50 other people trying for a set amount of money, so the amount of money you end up getting is relatively small.

“So, this year we’ve tried tilting ourselves in an environmental light, therefore going after zero waste funding from councils. We were competing against 12 other organisations... So that has been quite a bit more profitable from getting council funding.

Opportunities

- Ensuring the use of funding is straightforward, so that funds can ‘flow like an awa (river)’, unimpeded and directed towards achieving desired outcomes.
- Being innovative (thinking outside the box) and reimagining projects to unlock new funding opportunities.
- Building strong relationships with funders through regular engagement and communication to maintain or increase funding support.

“That’s how I see this job and how you honour the pūtia that you’ve been given; you make it flow. It’s like an awa. You dam an awa, and you don’t have any flow.

“From being a chairperson and sitting at national boards, I know that you have to think outside the square when it comes to funding.

“I know the importance of being seen and connecting with our funders. I have met with people, and they can’t work out ‘why has our funding dropped off?’ and I’m like, ‘yeah, but when was the last time you connected with your funders?’

Good Mahi in the Community

- Friends of Te Ara Pae - a fund where businesses and community members can donate to and support Te Ara Pae Trust.
- South Taranaki District Council - supports projects that contribute to environmental restoration and conservation efforts through its Natural Area Fund.
- Some marae within South Taranaki have reportedly been successful in securing funding. Aotea Marae, for example, is believed to have successfully obtained funding from the Toi Foundation for various initiatives.

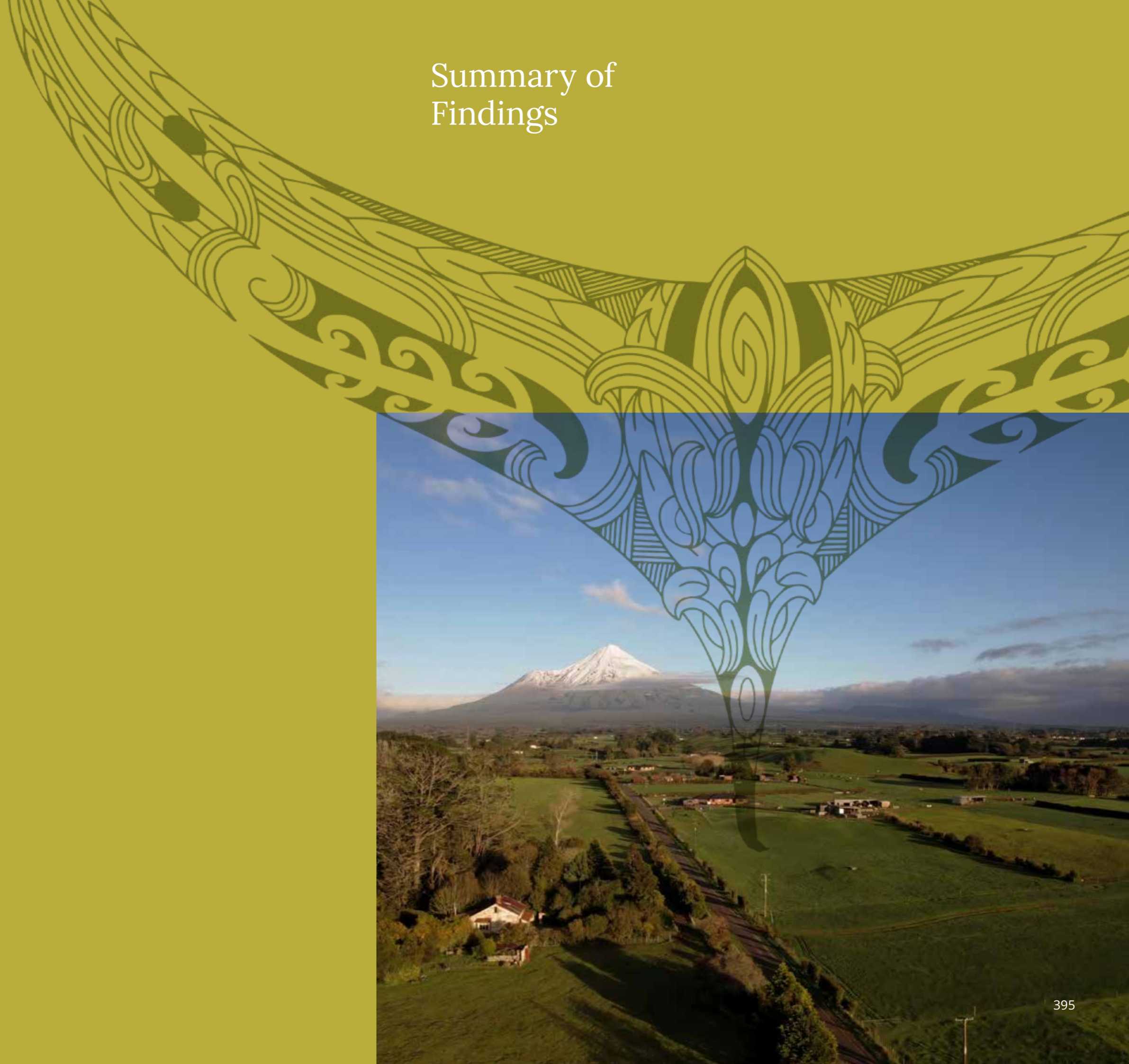
“Council has a significant natural area fund, so we’ve supported various projects around our district that support bringing it back.

“We’ve got a fund called Friends of Te Ara Pae. Bailey’s, for instance, every time they sell a house, they give us \$50, and members of the community will often come in and make a donation.

“We will draw into those funds to support the community where they need it.

“What I’ve seen, with our marae and other marae and Hapū, is that there is really good use of funding and successful funding applications.

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 South Taranaki community (see figure 21), the second to highlight the elements of the map that are barriers in the South Taranaki community (see figure 22).



Figure 21 – Impact Collective Equity and Wellbeing Framework – South Taranaki Strengths.



Figure 22 – Impact Collective Equity and Wellbeing Framework – South Taranaki Barriers.

Strengths

This section summarises all of the current strengths in the South Taranaki 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 South Taranaki community.

Barriers

This section summarises all of the current barriers in the South Taranaki 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 South Taranaki 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 21 – Impact Collective Equity and Wellbeing Framework – South Taranaki Strengths.



Youth

- Many believe that there is an abundance of facilities and natural resources in South Taranaki for youth.

Elderly

- Many perceive South Taranaki as an increasingly popular retirement destination, attracting a growing elderly population drawn to its high-quality, relaxed lifestyle, rich with social opportunities.
- It is believed that many elderly own their homes in South Taranaki.
- In South Taranaki, some people have observed the expansion of rest homes.

All

- South Taranaki is believed to be increasingly attracting residents, drawn by its free-from-hustle-and-bustle lifestyle and great climate. The district's proximity to diverse natural resources like coastlines and reserves also adds to its charm.
- According to some, rentals appear more affordable in South Taranaki than in urban areas.
- In South Taranaki, many believe that purchasing property has historically been more affordable, which has attracted numerous new residents to the district.

All (continued)

- Many believe the district has an inclusive and close-knit community, where everyone knows everyone, with many schools, libraries, and community events that foster connections.
- Many people passionately serve the communities that once supported them through volunteering, thus completing the 'circle of appreciation.'
- Hāwera is believed to have undergone significant rejuvenation as a township.
- Eltham, celebrated as a 'town of firsts,' is well-known for its strong community spirit and distinctive lifestyle, enhanced by its affordability and proximity to New Plymouth and natural surroundings.
- Some believe that Ōpunake is widely known for its picturesque coastline and recreational amenities.
- The Ōpunake community is believed to have fostered a unique sense of independence and resilience, emphasised by a proactive 'get on with it' attitude. These traits, along with a deep sense of community, are notable characteristics associated with the township.
- Hāwera is perceived by some as a friendly community, featuring flourishing community gardens and substantial recreation facilities.
- Hāwera is seen as having significant upside potential, driven by the presence of major employers and the development of new industrial areas and subdivisions.

All (continued)

- Pātea is regarded as a beautiful town that is becoming increasingly attractive to newcomers due to its affordability.
- It is believed that vegetable gardens are common in the district.



Good Health and Wellbeing

Infant

- A perceived shift in parenting dynamics is evident, with more parents now prioritising their own wellbeing.

Youth

- South Taranaki is well noted for its strong emphasis on sports, which is reflected in the abundance of facilities, clubs, and the community's active involvement.
- Many local clubs are seen to be making deliberate efforts to ensure affordable participation costs for youth.

Adult

- Some perceive a decline in stigma and an increase in awareness surrounding mental health.
- Many observe a decline in cigarette smoking, attributed to both high costs and changing societal perceptions that are believed to increasingly 'outcast' smokers.
- In South Taranaki, many organisations are seen offering non-judgmental and confidential support.

Elderly

- Some believe there is a growing awareness and early detection of memory conditions in the district, particularly as the ageing population increases.

All

- It's believed that peer-led support, especially from those with experiences similar to the people they support, provides deep empathy and validation.
- Many commend Iwi/Iwi providers for stepping up by providing affordable medical services in the district.
- It is believed that district health board boundaries have become more flexible.
- Some believe mental wellbeing has improved for South Taranaki farmers.
- It is believed that vegetable gardens are common in the district.



Decent Work and Economic Growth

Youth to Adult

- Many note that there are numerous employment opportunities in farming, trades, and industry in South Taranaki, offering good salaries without requiring tertiary qualifications.
- It is believed that many in South Taranaki choose to stay in the district, opting for immediate employment after school.

Adult

- Many note there are numerous jobs available across various industries in the district.
- Some believe that some employers have raised wages to address worker shortages.
- Some have observed that remote working is on the rise in the district.
- In South Taranaki, some observe an increasing number of men entering the care industry.

All

- In South Taranaki, farming is acknowledged as a key industry offering diverse and well-paying career opportunities.
- Some notice an increasing number of new businesses emerging, alongside a flourishing arts community, both of which are positively contributing to the district's economic landscape.
- Some believe that tourism in South Taranaki has shown signs of growth.
- Although cultural opportunities exist for the tourism sector, there are strong reservations about commercialising the district's deep Māori traditions and history, with many advocating for their protection rather than promotion.



Reduced Inequalities

Youth

- It is believed that there are signs of a growing LGBTQ+ community in the district.
- Some observe that an increasing number of schools in South Taranaki are offering breakfasts and lunches, with notable improvements in student achievement and behaviour as a result.

Elderly

- Many believe some elderly in South Taranaki have set themselves up well for retirement.

All

- Many perceive that progress has been made in the disability sector, notably through the introduction of Enabling Good Lives principles, individualised funding, and efforts from the Council.
- Some believe that improvements in carer support, such as increased remuneration, have helped alleviate carer stress.
- It is observed that an increasing number of women are seen to be stepping into leadership, managerial, and traditionally male-dominated roles, such as farming. This shift, driven by many women setting strong examples, is thought to encourage others to pursue similar success.

All (continued)

- In South Taranaki, a noticeable generational divide is observed in attitudes toward gender diversity, with younger people appearing more open and receptive to change.
- Many, particularly younger generations, are believed to be embracing Māori culture. This is evident in the community's growing cultural awareness and inclusivity, as well as in the integration of Māori culture into school curriculums and organisational practices.



Quality Education

Infant

- Many believe that South Taranaki offers a diverse range of early childhood education (ECE) options.

Youth

- Many believe that rural schooling offers a unique learning experience for students, primarily due to its small class sizes.
- Some recognise the dedication of some teachers in the district.
- Some are optimistic about the local amalgamated school and its non-traditional approach to education and emphasis on Māori culture.
- In South Taranaki, particularly in coastal areas, there is notable growth in Māori schools, many of which are commended for their smaller class sizes, tailored teaching approaches, and unapologetic cultural connections. These strengths, alongside robust support from Iwi/Iwi providers, highlight a growing commitment to Māori education in the district.

Youth-Adult

- Although there are concerns that those who leave the district for tertiary education and employment won't return, many eventually do, bringing with them their newfound skills and experiences.



Life on Land

All

- South Taranaki is renowned for its strong commitment to environmental restoration, which many credit to the significant efforts of local conservation groups and farmers actively working to restore the land, primarily through riparian planting and wetland rejuvenation.
- Some argue that New Zealand currently boasts low emissions intensity, with many South Taranaki farmers committed to caring for their land.
- Some have noted the growing acceptance of pest management in the district.
- In South Taranaki, a rising passion for conservation and enhanced pest control efforts is leading to a noticeable resurgence of rare and native species, especially within pest-free zones.



Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

Adult

- While some observe an increase in crime, the small-town nature of South Taranaki is believed to make it easier for the police to identify frequent offenders.
- Although the presence of gangs is noted, they are seen to generally keep to themselves and do not overtly display affiliations in public spaces.



Affordable & Clean Energy

All

- In South Taranaki, there is noticeable interest in renewable energy initiatives, ranging from large-scale offshore wind farming to smaller projects like solar-powered farms. Many believe the offshore wind farming industry offers significant opportunities for the district, including reducing emissions and increasing employment.
- It is believed that some are turning to wood burners as a more accessible and cost-effective alternative for heating.

Barriers



Figure 22 – Impact Collective Equity and Wellbeing Framework – South Taranaki Barriers.



Youth

- Some are concerned about the use and limited expansion of existing sports facilities.
- Some are concerned about the quality, repetitiveness, and freshness of food for school lunches, especially from commercial providers, leading to significant issues of food waste.

Elderly

- Some elderly, initially drawn by historically low rents, may be struggling with rising rental prices. The high costs of retirement villages and properties further limit their options, leading many to live in poor housing conditions or turn to multi-generational living arrangements.
- Some homeowners looking to downsize, face challenges due to the scarcity of suitable, affordable and available housing options.
- It's believed that long waitlists for residential care and unreliable in-home services are contributing factors leading many elderly, particularly those with financial means, to relocate outside the district upon retirement. This trend is primarily driven by the challenges of rural living and the limited healthcare options available in the district.

All

- There's a perception that the district may be less appealing to newcomers, primarily due to its limited social and recreational options, which fall short compared to those in New Plymouth.
- In South Taranaki, although travel is considered 'normal', it poses significant challenges for many. The district's geographical spread and the costs associated with travelling impose a considerable financial burden, especially on low-income families. For residents without cars or licences, the limited options and inconvenient schedules of public transport increase the issue. Consequently, some residents resort to extensive planning and consolidating trips to minimise travel expenses.
- Some observe that many, particularly single individuals, find accessing stable and quality emergency and social housing challenging.
- It's believed that those who do secure emergency and social housing risk displacement from their established communities, as limited availability within the district often necessitates relocation to nearby townships.
- Many note a growing housing crisis, characterised by a severe shortage of rentals and escalating costs, making rentals increasingly unaffordable and unattainable for many. The impacts of this crisis are believed to ripple throughout the community, with many resorting to overcrowding, temporary accommodation, or subpar conditions, clinging tightly to what they have due to limited alternatives.

All (continued)

- It is believed that due to limited availability, escalating prices, strict mortgage requirements, and rising living costs, the feasibility of owning a home is becoming increasingly out of reach for many. As a result, some are believed to be opting for multi-generational living as a means to share housing costs.
- Challenges such as high housing development costs, constrained infrastructure, and restrictive new land-use policies, although seen as environmentally beneficial, are believed to hinder potential housing expansion.
- Some believe that high land and succession planning costs, and the younger generation's increasing preference for urban jobs, heightens succession uncertainty for many farmers nearing retirement.
- Some believe that the close bond between residents can present challenges, especially for newcomers who may encounter a sense of 'cliqueness' among residents.
- There are growing concerns about the increasing sense of isolation and loneliness in the district, as social interactions appear to be declining.



Good Health
and Wellbeing

All (continued)

- Recruiting and retaining volunteers is seen as an ongoing challenge for many, due to increasing work demands and an ageing volunteer base. This has led some to believe that a large proportion of the responsibility falls on a small pool of devoted volunteers, which in turn, raises concerns about volunteer burnout and succession.
- Some townships struggle with earthquake legislation, which is seen to have impacted numerous buildings. High maintenance and strengthening costs have led many commercial property owners to 'watch the clock tick', posing a risk to the district's iconic buildings as buildings fall into disrepair. This issue is exacerbated by the trend of people living in former commercial buildings, further straining building upkeep and complicating efforts to maintain the district's appearance.
- Eltham is believed to still face challenges, such as an understated township, housing shortages, and significant unemployment.
- Some believe Ōpunake is an 'in-between' location, situated between Hāwera and New Plymouth, which is seen to present some challenges related to accessing services.
- There are concerns about the lack of entertainment options outside business hours for those living in Hāwera.

All (continued)

- Pātea is perceived by many as facing numerous challenges, including economic hardship and generational unemployment. These challenges are largely attributed to the closure of the freezing works, which once played a vital role in the town's economy.
- Pātea is believed to lack essential services, such as youth facilities and transportation options.
- Waverley and Waitōtara are have challenges limited employment and recreational facilities.
- Being situated between regions, Waverley and Waitōtara can feel 'left in between,' overlooked, and not fully integrated into the South Taranaki district, with many residents preferring to travel to Whanganui for goods and services.

Infant

- Some believe there's a prevailing stigma around parents, especially rural fathers, seeking help.
- Some believe that parents are finding it challenging to access parenting support programmes locally, which may be leading to a growing preference for online platforms as a source of parenting support.

Youth

- Many believe today's youth face increasingly complex challenges, such as societal pressures, escalating anxiety, intergenerational trauma, and low resilience and self-esteem, all of which significantly affect their mental health. These issues are worsened by an often inadequate or 'non-existent' youth mental health system, characterised by clinician shortages, high youth worker turnover, stringent criteria, long waitlists, and insufficient crisis response, hindering many youth from accessing the help they desperately need.
- There's a growing sentiment that today's youth, increasingly dependent on technology and often preferring online interactions to traditional outdoor activities, are becoming more disengaged and inactive. This shift raises concerns about the broader impact of technology, particularly as online bullying and mental health issues, often linked to extensive social media use, are seen to be on the rise.

Youth (continued)

- Some have observed an increase in vaping and drug use among youth in South Taranaki, with some using marijuana at increasingly younger ages and 'getting caught up in' harder drugs, such as methamphetamine and MDMA, due to their perceived accessibility. This trend is partly linked to drug use within the home and limited activities for youth, potentially leading to substance use out of boredom.
- Some have observed an increase in vaping and drug use among youth in South Taranaki, with some using marijuana at increasingly younger ages and 'getting caught up in' harder drugs, such as methamphetamine and MDMA, due to their perceived accessibility. This trend is partly linked to drug use within the home and limited activities for youth, potentially leading to substance use out of boredom.

Adult

- It is believed that a significant number of people still grapple with conditions such as depression and anxiety. As more people experience trauma and changes in societal and family dynamics, many conditions are seen as becoming more severe and complex. Additionally, some argue that current economic hardships exacerbate these issues and intensify feelings of distress.

Adult (continued)

- Some believe that men struggle with a pervasive male culture that discourages expressing emotions, leaving many ill-equipped to handle emotional struggles and often resorting to isolation and substance use as coping mechanisms. Despite the potential benefits of male-to-male support, many men are believed to face substantial hurdles, including the fear of judgement, when seeking the help they need.
- There's a noticeable rise in vaping. Although the expense drives some to quit or transition to vaping, others continue to smoke, especially when facing challenges or feeling 'in a negative frame of mind'.
- In South Taranaki, various challenges, including a lack of awareness, prevalent 'suck it up' attitudes, and feelings of anxiety, shame, and embarrassment, create barriers to accessing help. These challenges are further compounded by the distrust in, and the daunting and disempowering processes within some organisations.

Elderly

- Some elderly feel 'forgotten' and experience loneliness during their retirement years. This sense of isolation is amplified by difficulties in adapting to technology as many are seen to be increasingly 'left behind' with technology advancements.

Elderly (continued)

- Some observe that despite a lingering stigma hindering full understanding and support for dementia.
- Some believe that a gap remains in adequately recognising and addressing mental health challenges in the elderly.

All

- In South Taranaki, many perceive the mental health system as 'broken,' characterised by limited local providers, extensive wait-lists, slow response times, growing caseloads, and inadequate follow-up care, making timely crisis support significantly challenging.
- Additionally, there is a belief that the system's predominantly clinical, one-size-fits-all approach and heavy reliance on 'quick fix' solutions like medication and CBT may not effectively address diverse and deeper mental health concerns.
- It is believed that there are some reservations and concerns about peer-led support.
- In South Taranaki, many believe the GP system is under significant strain. With limited practices, massive wait times, rising costs, and staffing issues, coupled with a growing reliance on telehealth, people are increasingly turning to online platforms like Healthline and the Emergency Department, or delaying care altogether.

Decent Work and Economic Growth

All (continued)

- Many perceive ongoing challenges in accessing specialist and hospital care due to the shortage of local specialist services, extended wait times, and declining services at Hāwera Hospital. These issues often lead many residents to seek care outside the district or turn to private options.
- Some believe that challenges still persist around accessing healthcare in neighbouring regions.
- Some believe that South Taranaki farmers still confront significant challenges, such as unfair criticism, declining milk prices, tough working conditions, and profound isolation and loneliness. These pressures lead some farmers to grapple with feelings of failure, and in the absence of traditional community gathering spots like pubs, some may turn to harmful coping mechanisms to alleviate distress.
- In South Taranaki, many are believed to lack foundational cooking knowledge, including skills in meal planning and budget cooking. With this limited understanding, it's believed that people may assume that cooking is complex and time-consuming, causing some to choose quicker, more processed foods instead of home-cooked meals. Additionally, it is believed that many residents lack both the knowledge and the time for gardening.

Youth to Adult

- A generational shift in work ethics is observed, with some young people favouring more work-life balance over traditional factory roles. This shift, combined with a perceived lack of motivation, confidence, and essential life skills, makes securing employment in the district increasingly difficult for many young people.

Adult

- Many observe a significant local labour shortage, particularly for skilled workers, leading to increased reliance on out-of-town and immigrant staff.
- Some believe that some local employers continue to offer low pay, despite having high expectations for their workers.
- Some believe that securing well-paying jobs outside of traditional industries remains challenging.
- In South Taranaki, many perceive the district grapples with significant unemployment where factors such as mandatory drug testing, criminal records, mental health challenges, and benefit dependency hinder many from securing employment. This struggle is believed to contribute to a cycle of intergenerational unemployment for some, making the transition from unemployment to consistent work particularly challenging.

Adult (continued)

- In South Taranaki, many believe that the social sector grapples with high turnover and significant staff shortages, especially of qualified workers.
- Some believe that the social sector largely remains predominantly female-dominated, a situation some attribute to societal biases and historically low pay in non-government social services. As a result, employees, regardless of gender, tend to gravitate towards higher-paying positions, despite ongoing efforts to achieve greater pay equity.

All

- Some believe that there is a perception that farming primarily involves 'milking cows' and requires newcomers to start from the bottom, which is deterring some from entering the industry.
- In South Taranaki, the business landscape is perceived as facing challenges, including a significant number of closed shops, competition with chain stores and online shopping, impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, and a limited diversity of businesses.
- It is believed by many that the district largely remains 'undiscovered' and under-promoted as a destination.

Reduced Inequalities

Youth

- In South Taranaki, LGBTQ+ youth are perceived to experience varying degrees of societal acceptance, partly influenced by persistent and outdated attitudes from older generations. This situation is compounded by increasing incidents of bullying, which is believed to be significantly contributing identity-related trauma and mental health concerns among these youth.

All

- In South Taranaki, many note that the district suffers from inconsistent or at times, 'nonexistent' internet and cell phone connectivity, particularly in rural areas. This combined with the high cost of internet connectivity often forces families to forgo these services or prioritise other essential expenses. This is believed to substantially disadvantage people, affecting their access to education, employment, essential services, and communication, notably in emergency situations.
- It is believed that ongoing challenges, including limited disability awareness and underrepresentation in employment, as well as barriers in infrastructure, housing, and transportation, continue to affect those with disabilities.
- In South Taranaki, a generational divide in attitudes toward gender diversity is observed, with older generations appearing less receptive to change.

All (continued)

- In South Taranaki, it is believed that older generations may show more resistance to embracing Māori culture.
- Some believe that challenges around racism, socio-economic disparities, and that the impact of colonial history still exists, and suggests that further progress is needed.

Quality Education

Infant

- Challenges surrounding ECE are noted, including limited spaces, long waiting lists, restricted hours, and high costs, even with government subsidies, making access difficult for many families.
- Some note an increasing trend of dual-working households, leading some families to increasingly rely on grandparents for childcare support.

Youth

- Some are concerned about the limited secondary school options in the district, prompting some families to consider boarding outside the district. However, boarding isn't financially feasible for all, which raises concerns among families who 'must make the most of' what is available locally.
- In South Taranaki, many view the education system as 'failing' youth, with significant issues such as bullying, mental health and behavioural challenges, and disruptions like COVID-19 and teacher strikes severely impacting learning. This situation, combined with an academically-focused curriculum, is leading to increased student disengagement, truancy, and early school leaving.
- Some believe that issues, such as staff shortages and teacher departures, raise concerns about the education workforce.
- Some express concerns about the impact the amalgamation of the local school will have on students' experiences, particularly given the school's 'chequered past.'



Youth (continued)

- While some acknowledge that the amalgamation is still in its early stages, there's a general feeling of uncertainty as the community navigates this change.
- Some observe challenges in ensuring equitable opportunities and broader educational integration for Māori students in the district.

Youth to Adult

- For those aspiring to tertiary education in the district, it is believed that they face limited and uncertain local options, which, combined with a desire for broader experiences, encourages many to pursue education outside the district.

Youth

- Many believe that there is a significant shortage of low-cost, engaging spaces for youth, contributing to widespread boredom and mischief. It's perceived that this, along with gang influences and social media, is increasing instances of youth-related crime. Additionally, the belief that young offenders are 'untouchable' and face minimal consequences is thought to further exacerbate these issues.

Adult

- Some people have expressed concerns about the dwindling police presence and 'half-manned' stations within the district.
- Many believe that drug and alcohol use, particularly of methamphetamine and MDMA, is 'rife' in South Taranaki, leading to devastating downstream issues such as family harm. When intervention is necessary, some believe accessing addiction support is challenging due to limited resources, overstretched services, and a referral system that hinders immediate care. This is believed to result in insufficient support during critical times and recurring substance use.
- Many believe that in South Taranaki, family harm, assault, and abuse, especially in emotional and psychological forms, are prevalent. These challenges, transcending socio-economic backgrounds and genders, are often seen to be linked to substance abuse and intergenerational cycles of violence. Despite their frequency, many incidents still go unreported.



Adult

- Many believe that South Taranaki has grappled with long-standing socioeconomic challenges, marked by low incomes, high deprivation, and greater inequality among households. A lack of financial literacy, often attributed to inadequate early education, along with debt, is believed to further exacerbate these issues. These accumulating challenges can foster a deep sense of hopelessness, leaving some feeling constrained by their financial circumstances and unable to see a way forward.

- As the cost of living rises and incomes stagnate, an increasing number of people are believed to be experiencing food insecurity, with some barely 'keeping their heads above water'. This financial strain is perceived to be leading many to adopt stricter spending habits, rely on foodbanks, and turn to more affordable but lower-quality food options. For those without transportation, these challenges are further exacerbated, as local store options are limited.

Elderly

- It is believed that a significant portion of elderly in South Taranaki are living 'week to week' with minimal finances.
- Some observe that there is a reluctance among elderly to accept help, stemming from a lifetime of managing on their own.



All

- It is believed that South Taranaki has experienced significant environmental changes due to past farming and factory practices.
- Some believe there are challenges around managing low emissions intensity, such as increasing regulatory demands, complex documentation, conflicting messages, and a perceived technology 'tunnel vision' is seen to create uncertainty and stress among farmers. This is believed to leave many hesitant to adopt even minor changes due to concerns about potential financial setbacks.
- Some have noticed that certain methods, such as feral cat control and the use of 1080, continue to spark debates around pest management. Consequently, many are seen to persist in using labour-intensive techniques, which often yield minimal results despite immense effort.



All

- Some believe that there are concerns about the potential impact renewable energy may have on marine ecosystems.
- In South Taranaki, many believe that power prices have doubled, placing financial strain on numerous families. These increases, coupled with colder conditions and homes often lacking adequate insulation, have led to a rise in 'power poverty.' As a result, residents are increasingly combining rooms or using extra blankets instead of heating to reduce expenses.

Opportunities



Youth

- Improving food management in schools by considering daily attendance and specific needs, in order to reduce wastage.

Elderly

- Providing housing solutions that alleviate financial burdens for the elderly with limited income, potentially through shared land arrangements or co-living with family.
- Enabling elderly individuals to live independently in their homes for as long as possible due to the limited availability of hospital beds and retirement homes.

All

- Encouraging people to work remotely in South Taranaki so that they can benefit from lower living costs and a desirable lifestyle, while still accessing employment opportunities in larger cities.
- Prioritising recruitment and succession planning as volunteers age and become less capable, to ensure initiatives continue.
- Collaborating with organisations to enhance transportation options like using vans for community transport.
- Encouraging more people to use scooters and bike tracks in flat towns like Hāwera.

All (continued)

- Increasing the availability of safe, affordable, and accessible housing within the district.
- Repurposing vacant buildings for short-term housing to provide immediate shelter solutions, effectively addressing the community's urgent housing needs.
- Integrating employment support with housing services to effectively address homelessness and provide comprehensive support.
- Increasing rent-to-buy housing schemes to increase homeownership opportunities for those who may otherwise not be able to afford it.
- Expanding housing developments in the district to enhance local economic growth and provide a steady workflow for contractors and businesses.
- Updating district plans to include stricter building regulations in coastal and flood-prone areas, ensuring safer and more sustainable land use.
- Developing community response plans to ensure local communities are prepared and self-reliant in civil emergencies.
- Improving emergency preparedness through the identification of hazardous areas and incorporating this data into district planning to ensure the community is better informed.
- Developing an independent youth group in Waverley that offers youth activities and support.

Infant

- Breaking down the stigma associated with asking for and receiving assistance as a parent.
- Creating a safe space where parents can confidently seek professional support and ask questions without fear of judgement.
- Providing spaces for parents to come together to talk and establish connections with other parents without feeling pressured.
- Strengthening the connections between parents, their children, and other parents, as well as with supportive organisations, so that parents are both confident and connected.
- Supporting parents holistically by addressing their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs to enhance family wellness and foster a thriving environment.
- Establishing an immunisation and vaccination centre to support under-five and pregnancy vaccines, while also offering essential health services alongside educational support to families who currently face long waits at hospitals or doctors' clinics.

Youth

- Creating accessible and safe spaces for youth to discuss mental health issues so that they receive the necessary support and quality counselling.
- Equipping parents and schools with the tools and skills to adapt to and meet the complex needs of children living with autism and ADHD.
- Enhancing real-life engagement, beyond online interactions, to foster a tangible connection among people, the land, and the broader world.
- Exploring strategies to enhance engagement and attract the next generation to the use of the TSB Hub.

Adult

- Supporting people to be the 'ambulance at the top of their own cliff,' by undertaking simple steps to enhance their mental health and wellbeing.
- Increasing access to male support networks and counselling to address the long-standing need for male-to-male support within the community.
- Ensuring parents allow children to express their emotions freely and be 'whatever they want to be' without the constraints of traditional gender roles.
- Enhancing awareness and education about existing support services, especially for those not well connected to the community, to ensure that people are informed and can benefit from the locally available resources.

Adult (continued)

- Providing a 'one-stop shop' that offers comprehensive wrap-around support to streamline assistance for families and reduce the need for engaging with multiple organisations.
- Offering genuine care and providing a welcoming and non-judgmental space for people to off-load, so that they feel supported and heard.
- Maintaining strict confidentiality in support services to build trust and provide a stigma-free environment for people in need.

Elderly

- Creating opportunities for the elderly to share their skills and experiences so that they feel a sense of purpose and increases their mental health, while also offering learning experiences for others.

All

- Ensuring wider community responsibility in supporting the wellbeing of people, by recognising that clinical support is crucial, yet only one part of a broader collective effort.
- Promoting the training and recruitment of local support workers to ensure effective and prompt support for those requiring help.
- Providing free mental health services to enable greater community engagement, especially for those unable to afford private practice clinicians.

All (continued)

- Offering face-to-face mental health support to provide more supportive and reassuring care that encourages openness. This is believed to surpass the level of connection possible over the phone, especially in vulnerable times.
- Creating environments where people feel safe and secure, which is seen as essential for trauma recovery, so that they can heal rather than perpetuate their state of 'fight, flight or freeze.'
- Connecting people and families with lived experiences of mental health issues together, enabling them to support, listen to each other, and exchange insights on navigating personal and systemic challenges.
- Enabling carers to preserve their mana (prestige) by offering opportunities for consultations and discussions in private, ensuring they can seek advice confidentially.
- Ensuring peer support organisations have more than 'just good intentions,' which includes having clear policies, service specifications, and responsible models to ensure genuine and safe assistance for those in need.
- Using personal experiences and challenges to guide and inspire others, including family members, towards 'a better way of life.'
- Expanding pharmacies' consultation services to alleviate the strain on healthcare systems.



Decent Work and Economic Growth

All (continued)

- Promoting the use of telehealth services like Healthline, which offer free advice and quick answers to health-related questions, to increase accessibility and reduce wait times for families seeking simple medical guidance.
- Increasing Hāwera Hospital's range of services due to its central location between Whanganui and New Plymouth, in order to distribute physical health services more evenly across the region.
- Encouraging regular check-ins and communication among farmers to ensure everyone's connected and supported, especially during challenging economic times.
- Helping people break through misconceptions about time constraints and challenges associated with home cooking, thus making it more approachable and feasible.
- Ensuring people maintain a consistent routine and engage in social activities to counter the tendency to self-isolate and promote a healthier lifestyle.
- Creating drop-in centres in smaller towns such as Pātea and Waverley to offer spaces where the community can connect with one another.

Youth

- Introducing youth to the diverse range of career opportunities in the rural sector, highlighting the potential for lucrative and fulfilling jobs that go beyond traditional farming roles, such as agricultural science and biology.

Youth To Adult

- Engaging and preparing young people from an early age, e.g., as early as primary school, about their future aspirations and monitoring that throughout school, into adulthood.
- Introducing youth to work at an earlier age offers them a 'golden opportunity' to foster a sense of pride in earning and contributing, positively shape their mentality around work, and alleviate boredom.
- Promoting apprenticeships and hands-on work as valuable career paths, especially in light of their essential role during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Providing gateway programmes and practical training opportunities for students, allowing them to explore and determine their interest in trades.
- Instilling confidence in young people to enable them to believe in their capabilities, and with the right support, achieve their aspirations.

Youth to Adult (continued)

- Empowering young people to overcome personal barriers, believe in themselves and feel confident to undertake employment opportunities that are available.
- Providing young people with pastoral care and ongoing support so that they receive the necessary guidance and support before and after transitioning to employment.
- Introducing a 'minimum youth wage' for those aged 14 to 17 to help engage young people in employment and foster work ethics.
- Changing work structures, like shift patterns and long hours, to ensure employees have greater work-life balance and ample time off.

Adult

- Ensuring a smooth transition period into employment to prevent long-term unemployed people from feeling overwhelmed and discontinuing work.
- Prioritising early employment intervention to prevent issues before they arise, focusing not only on placing people into employment but also on preventing them from becoming statistics of unemployment.
- Providing comprehensive pastoral and wrap-around care to help people become work-ready by improving their personal appearance, boosting their confidence and ensuring they have the essential resources and skills needed for employment success.

Adult (continued)

- Transitioning from a train-then-place approach to placing people into employment first and then providing training to get them into paid roles as quickly as possible and enhance their overall quality of life.
- Promoting the idea of second chances by encouraging employers to overlook past criminal records and mental health issues.
- Overcoming gender biases in support and care industries where male support staff are rare.
- Mitigating risks when males support females in the care industry to ensure men are not placed in positions where inaccurate allegations can arise.

All

- Shifting away from the stigma associated with starting from the bottom in farming, to encourage more people to enter the industry.
- Providing opportunities for farmers and farm owners to develop their people and leadership skills.
- Ensuring local stores maintain high standards to attract customers and encourage shoppers to support local businesses.
- Encouraging job seekers to volunteer for a few hours weekly to provide them with valuable skills and contribute positively to their local communities.

All (continued)

- Promoting the Taranaki Arts Trail to provide local artists more opportunity to enhance their visibility and earn income while tapping into its growing momentum.
- Increasing Māori and Iwi capacity and engagement within the business community to ensure they have equal business opportunities.
- Promoting the district as a tourism destination by marketing its 'untapped' attractions.
- Increasing historical tourism through heightened awareness of the wealth of both known and unknown historic sites across the district, while maintaining respect for cultural knowledge.
- Respecting that Iwi and Hapū knowledge is based on trust and not freely available for use, and acknowledging that its sharing should be led by those who hold it.
- Enhancing and promoting Eltham's historical township to attract more film companies and boost tourism.
- Increasing transportation and infrastructure in South Taranaki to maximise the economic and tourism opportunities presented by the arrival of cruise ships.



Good Health and Wellbeing

Youth

- Enhancing awareness and inclusivity of diverse identities and experiences in schools to ensure education environments are 'more with the times.'
- Increasing community and school efforts to address bullying towards LGBTQ+ youth to promote greater acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Ensuring that models of care adapt to the evolving experiences of youth, especially regarding gender identities, so that they remain relevant and effective for each new generation.
- Ensuring Eltham youth are included in South Taranaki initiatives like EmpowerYouth, to guarantee they benefit from the opportunities and support the district offers.
- Promoting opportunities for youth, such as in the school newsletter weekly, so that they are aware and able to pursue them.

All

- Raising awareness of the substantial population living with both visible and invisible disabilities to ensure inclusivity across organisations and the community.
- Growing networks for people with disabilities and their families so that they can have a supportive space to share their lived experiences and coping strategies with others on similar paths with similar experiences.



Quality Education

All (continued)

- Strengthening natural networks and community connections to create robust support systems for people with disabilities, especially those without family within the district.
- Ensuring the creation of an accessible community is a shared responsibility where government and community members collaborate to ensure services empower rather than disempower people with disabilities.
- Fostering broader community awareness and adoption of the 'Enabling Good Lives' principles, beyond the disability sector, to enhance the lives of people with disabilities across services throughout the district.
- Ensuring people with disabilities lead and design systems based on their lived experiences to ensure solutions are effective and relevant to their needs.
- Equipping people with disabilities with skills through mentoring and modelling so that they can independently manage life's tasks and challenges.
- Adapting policies within government agencies to ensure genuine accessibility for people with disabilities and moving beyond token gestures.
- Ensuring accessibility in buildings and facilities, including utilising universal design features such as standard doorways, accessible showers, and ramps, to create more inclusive environments for people with disabilities.

All (continued)

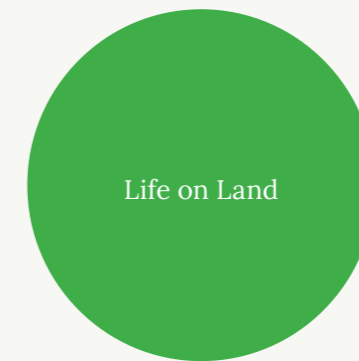
- Enhancing street infrastructure to make townships more accessible and mobility-friendly for all residents, such as creating drop-offs from pathway gutters, so that people can navigate through towns more easily and safely.
- Increasing the representation of people with disabilities in the workforce, especially in leadership roles, so that future generations are empowered and inspired to achieve similar success.
- Challenging and changing traditional stereotypes to enable women to pursue leadership roles in sectors like farming and business.
- Encouraging existing leaders to create opportunities for more female leadership and representation.
- Increasing diversity within community and industry boards so that they reflect a broader range of perspectives and experiences.
- Incorporating Māori culture and language into daily activities 'little by little' to foster comfort and familiarity among people.

Youth

- Providing alternative spaces for youth to engage in education that isn't a traditional educational setting, one that is more holistic, such as combining education with physical activity, social engagement, employment opportunities, and trauma support.
- Adapting educational approaches to accommodate diverse learning needs, including those with ADHD and dyslexia, by providing holistic and tactile learning options that extend beyond conventional methods.
- Recognising that NCEA isn't for everyone and providing alternative opportunities for youth, such as work placements or polytechnic studies.
- Ensuring parental and whānau involvement in education to help youth gain academic achievements, as their absence can foster an 'I don't care' attitude towards education.
- Providing a supportive environment, free from bullying, for disengaged youth to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Youth to Adult

- Offering incentives to retain graduates with tertiary education so that their skills and knowledge remain local.



Life on Land

All

- Educating people on preparing cost-effective meals using common household ingredients, like pasta and potatoes, to enhance their ability to utilise existing pantry items.
- Educating and up-skilling people to enable them to grow their own vegetable gardens and become more self-sufficient.

All

- Adapting regulations to accommodate the unique and diverse farm systems across South Taranaki to ensure that practices are fit for purpose rather than applying a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.
- Enhancing farm practices to lower emissions while remaining profitable and sustainable, ensuring the approach 'financially stacks up' for farmers.
- Adopting practices that simultaneously lower total emissions and emissions intensity to ensure agriculture is sustainable, while working towards zero emission goals.
- Providing guidance and information alongside or through a farmer's trusted circle of advisers—such as bank managers, vets, and accountants—to enhance the likelihood of farmers listening and to boost their confidence in adopting new practices.
- Ensuring that those who recommend best practices, scientific approaches and improvements are themselves successful farmers to establish trust and credibility among the farming community.
- Equipping people with the knowledge and tools to monitor their own waterways so that they can make informed and independent decisions for the welfare of their environment.

All (continued)

- Some believe that the ratification of the mountain will bring about specific protections for the National Park area, thereby safeguarding the local plants and wildlife, and providing local Iwi with a stronger voice in decision-making about industrial developments near the mountain.
- Promoting a shift in public mindset to embrace the registration and monitoring of domestic cats, similar to the management of dogs to help mitigate pest issues.
- 'Keeping on top of' pest and predator control efforts to protect and support local wildlife.
- Empowering people to take action regarding pest control by 'getting stuck in,' rather than depending on external funding and support.
- Inspiring district-wide engagement in environmental care and collective conservation efforts to create interconnected ecosystems that enable wildlife from reserves to expand and thrive.
- Engaging youth in the maintenance and appreciation of community spaces to foster a long-term commitment to looking after the environment.
- Enhancing community engagement, particularly among youth, with pest-free reserves to cultivate a closer connection with the environment and foster a greater understanding of rare and native species.



Youth

- Providing more opportunities, such as activities and events, for youth to help keep them engaged and reduce the likelihood of negative behaviours, such as theft, occurring.
- Establishing supervised youth spaces to provide safe, engaging environments for youth, helping them grow their interests.
- Providing early intervention for at-risk youth, particularly during kindergarten and primary years, to prevent potential offending and ensure timely support for them and their families, rather than addressing issues after they offend.
- Repurposing vacant buildings for recreational uses to keep youth engaged and off the streets.

Adult

- Recognising gang members as part of the community, much like everyone else, to promote understanding and unity within the community.
- Offering walk-in support services for those dealing with addiction to provide immediate, localised assistance.
- Enhancing the drug and alcohol addiction referral process to prevent inefficiencies, time wastage and reliance on the GP system.
- Breaking the cycle of intergenerational family harm by fostering awareness of 'how we interact,' so that people create better outcomes for children.

Adult (continued)

- Offering continuous and consistent support for trauma recovery to people impacted by family harm.
- Building the self-confidence of people impacted by family harm and ensuring they understand they are not at fault for what has occurred.
- Offering long-term support to ensure people impacted by family harm receive care tailored to their personal journey, so they are not rushed through the system.
- Ensuring that everyone, including those involved in causing family harm, receives a second chance without shame or blame for past wrongs.



Infant

- Expanding the availability of essential items like car seats, cots, and prams through a lending system, allowing families to borrow and return items as needed.

Youth

- Offering subsidies for recreational facilities and sports activities to lower costs and enhance accessibility for youth.

Adult

- Equipping people with better money management skills and financial literacy skills through education and workshops to improve their understanding of income, expenditures, and savings.
- Raising the confidence and self-esteem of foodbank recipients through a choice-based foodbank model, which gives them control, empowers them to make informed decisions and effect positive changes in their lives.
- Increasing education around budget management.



All

- Introducing offshore wind farming is seen as a significant long-term opportunity that may increase renewable energy and industrial growth, bringing both economic and environmental benefits to the district.
- Establishing offshore wind farming to increase local employment opportunities for the district, particularly for townships like Patea and Waverley.
- Transitioning existing industry workers in oil and gas to roles in renewable energy and offshore wind farms, once these industries are established, to utilise their expertise and support these emerging industries.
- Some note that there may be an opportunity for Iwi to partner with energy developers to help reduce energy bills for Iwi members throughout New Zealand.

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