

Rural Directions

Wanganui Rural Community Board Strategic Plan
2014-2023



Clockwise from left: Children at Patiarero marae; surveying the land during a Community Board farm visit; a repeater on a Parapara farm, which brings ultrafast broadband to the rural community



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Wanganui Rural Community Board 2014-2023

The Wanganui Rural Community Board is made up of three subdivisions. The subdivisions, members representing them and contact details are listed below. For a map of the subdivisions, please turn to page 6.



Chair Alan Taylor

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Westmere
Kai-Iwi subdivision



Deputy Chair David Matthews

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Parapara Road
Wanganui subdivision



Bill Ashworth

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Fordell
Kaitoke subdivision



Andy Collins

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Mangamahu
Wanganui subdivision



Matthew Collins

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Fordell
Kaitoke subdivision



Darrell Monk

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Mowhanau
Kai-Iwi subdivision



Erin Reeve

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Westmere
Kai-Iwi subdivision



Cr Jenny Duncan

021 669 847 / jenny.duncan@wanganui.govt.nz
Elected Member appointed to Board
Wanganui



Cr Hamish McDouall

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Elected Member appointed to Board
Wanganui

- Wanganui District Council Youth Committee Rural Community Board members: Youth Cr Ella Dickison and Youth Cr Macy Duxfield
- Tamaupoko Rural Community Board member: Daryn Te Umairangi

Introduction

In 2008/09 the Wanganui Rural Community Board held a series of meetings to identify the needs and priorities of the rural community. As a result, the Board developed *Rural Directions 2020*, a Ten Year Plan for the Board that covers the rural district and aligns with Wanganui District Council's planning processes. *Rural Directions 2020* was reviewed in 2012 and again in 2013 where its name was changed to *Rural Directions*. In this document the Wanganui Rural Community Board will be referred to as the 'Board' while the Wanganui District Council will be referred to as the 'Council'.

Rural Directions:

- Sets out a vision for Wanganui's rural community
- Sets out a mission for the Board
- Sets out six focus areas that will drive the Board's projects
- Provides a basis for the Board's submissions on key documents including, but not limited to, Wanganui District Council's and Horizons Regional Council's Ten Year Plans and Annual Plans

Rural Directions is a living document which is monitored and reviewed regularly.

Context

The Wanganui Rural Community Board is a body established by statute. Its responsibilities and powers are delegated by the Wanganui District Council. It advocates for the rural sector, but also represents the Wanganui community on wider issues that are not specifically rural. The role of the Wanganui Rural Community Board is to:

- Represent and act as an advocate for the interest of the community
- Consider and report on all matters referred to it by Council, or any matter of interest or concern to the community
- Maintain an overview of services provided by Council within the community
- Prepare an annual submission to both the Regional and District Councils for expenditure and levels of service within the community
- Prepare submissions on central government legislation where there are implications for the rural community
- Communicate with community organisations and special interest groups within the community
- Exercise delegated authority to determine rural road closure applications
- Undertake any other responsibilities that are delegated to it by Council

Successes

The Board punches well above its weight and has enjoyed a number of recent successes. These include:

- Award winning at the New Zealand Community Board's national biennial conference in May 2013. The recognition included:
 - Supreme Award for 'best practice' across all categories for the Board's work on rural broadband
 - Taking out the top award for the 'Leadership' category for the Board's work on rural broadband extension
 - A nomination for the 'Engaging Communities' category for the work and consultation that went in to the investigation of the effects of forestry on rural roads. The Board was also nominated for the 'Enhancing Communities' category for the work it did on its Ten Year Strategic Plan (this document)
 - The *Rural Directions 2020* workshop, held by Chair Alan Taylor, which was the most preferred workshop, attracting a significant number of conference attendees
- Gaining speaking and voting rights at Council's main Committee meetings, which has given the rural community a stronger voice. Council gave the Board's representatives voting rights in 2012, and the new Council, elected in 2013, has continued this. The Board's representative at Council meetings has speaking rights.
- Incorporating the views of youth by inviting two representatives of Council's Youth Committee to Board meetings and giving them speaking rights.
- Incorporating the views of Iwi by inviting a representative of Tamaupoko to Board meetings and giving them speaking rights
- Meeting with all rural communities in 2012 to update them on key issues from the Board's perspective and listening to issues raised by each community. A separate consultation round was undertaken specifically for the District Plan review.
- Board Chair, Alan Taylor named as Local Government New Zealand Zone 3 Deputy Representative to the New Zealand Community Board Executive Committee (a national organisation).

Representation across diverse communities

Wanganui's rural sector is not a single community of interest. Geographically, the District's rural area is significant and communities are diverse in terms of farming practice, lifestyle, access, culture, employment, education, opportunities, and other issues such as levels of crime. One part of the community could have significant differences and desires from another. For example, Mowhanau is significantly different from Mangamahu. It is important the Board takes into account the multiple communities of interest and the various issues associated with each, so that each is adequately represented.



A family from Jerusalem/ Hiruharama enjoy a walk

Map of subdivisions



Wanganui District Council – Family Friendly

As at 2011, Council's vision statement is: *Family Friendly Wanganui: the best place to live in New Zealand.*
Our community is:

- Enjoyed for its lifestyle and sense of community
- Celebrated for its liveability
- Shaped by our river and environment
- On the path of sustainability and prosperity
- Loved by those who live here

The Council's vision is supported by five themes:

- Economic prosperity
- Community partnerships
- A safe and healthy community
- Active and culturally rich community
- Environmental sustainability

Rural Directions – Vision

The Board supports Council's Family Friendly vision. In addition, the Board also supports being 'business friendly'. The Board's vision is for the Wanganui community to be prosperous, connected and happy.

Purpose

To promote sustainable economic growth and community wellbeing in rural Wanganui.

Focus areas

1. Community Partnerships
2. Rural Economic Growth
3. Infrastructure
4. Community Wellbeing
5. Representation
6. Communication



The Wanganui River as seen from Wanganui East. The river is fundamental to the Council's Family Friendly Strategy

Focus Area 1: Community Partnerships

Partnering with community groups and agencies ensures the rural sector develops and maintains strong relationships and is connected to growth opportunities, industry changes and social wellbeing.

Objective

To promote strong and meaningful relationships within and beyond the Wanganui District.

Projects

Identify key community partnerships. These include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Iwi
- 2) Wanganui District Council
- 3) Horizons Regional Council
- 4) Selected advocacy groups
- 5) Rural village communities
- 6) Territorial authorities within the Manawatu-Wanganui region
- 7) Zone 3 Community Boards
- 8) Government departments

The Board acknowledges that all key partners have varying needs and determines how best to build and/or maintain a positive relationship. This includes who, how, when, why.

Examples of 'how' include, but are not limited to:

- Inviting community organisations to Board meetings
- Presenting at partners' Board/agency meetings
- Being issues driven
- Identifying areas for mutual support and help



People gather at Patiarero marae, Hiruharama, on the Whanganui River, after the opening of the Whanganui River Road in March 2014

Focus Area 2: Rural Economic Growth

The rural sector is a significant contributor to the Wanganui economy, providing primary produce that supports major Wanganui industry and ancillary services. Important value added products and associated cutting-edge technology advancements in Wanganui are heavily associated with the rural sector. It is vital that the rural sector adapts to changing community expectations, environmental constraints, markets, and economic times. Essentially, Wanganui's economy is rural-based.

Objective

To promote economic growth for Wanganui's rural sector.

Projects

Identify economic trends, research and development projects and obstacles and opportunities in the rural sector and monitor industry changes and potential developments. Also:

- Examine value-added opportunities for local products
- Support tourism as a key aspect of rural economic development
- Examine irrigation issues and opportunities
- Continue to advocate for ultrafast broadband throughout rural Wanganui
- Support projects and initiatives such as the Rural Enterprise Project
- Provide input into key Council strategies and policies

Focus Area 3: Infrastructure

Reliable and efficient infrastructure is vital to the economy, safety and connectedness of the rural sector. Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to:

- Roads
- Digital
- Power
- Water
- Phones
- Other community facilities e.g. rural halls

Key issues facing rural roads include

- Network vehicle volume - low volume roads considered 'uneconomic'; impacts of increasing levels of heavy traffic, e.g. forestry; increases in heavy vehicle weight capacity
- Localised roading conditions – drainage; speed; safety and maintenance concerns regarding impacts of increased heavy traffic on marginal and narrow pavement width; aggregate quality marginal - high cost to import quality aggregate in remote areas; weak geological structure; slip prone
- Financial - increase in emergency works (e.g. flood damage); higher expectations from stakeholders/road users; increasing operational costs and fluctuating raw material costs; decreasing subsidies from New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) and the Funding Assistance Rates (FAR) review

Objective

To promote the importance of reliable and efficient infrastructure to rural Wanganui and ensure quality infrastructure systems are developed and maintained in a manner that reflects their inherent value to the wider district.

Projects

- Assist with developing, monitoring and reviewing Council's Rural Road Strategy
- Continue working with other territorial authorities (local government) to determine a solution for managing the costs and options associated with the effects of forestry harvesting on rural roads
- In consultation with the wider region, redefine 'uneconomic roads'
- Continue to advocate for ultrafast broadband throughout rural Wanganui
- Lobby central government on various issues which relate to the provision of quality infrastructure



*Wyley's Bridge, Mangamahu.
Mangamahu rate payers donated \$200,000 from a special fund toward the cost of building a new bridge after the existing bridge reached the end of its life*

Focus Area 4: Community Wellbeing

Rural areas are geographically isolated from services, which means rural residents and businesses have restricted access to the support they need to ensure community wellbeing. Constraints include reduced access to:

- Healthcare services
- Education
- Welfare
- Fast, affordable broadband
- Entertainment and events
- Postal delivery

Other issues related to community wellbeing include:

- Emergency management
- Community facilities

Objective

To promote rural community wellbeing

Projects

Consider rural services and initiatives including, but not limited to:

- Security and Police
- Council services such as library, animal control etc
- Postal services
- Good neighbour awareness
- Family events such as rural children's initiatives
- Continued liaison with the Fire Service and Wanganui's Rural Fire Authority, with a particular focus on Enlarged Rural Fire Districts
- Active participation in the Manawatu-Wanganui's Rural Co-ordination Group for a co-ordinated emergency management response to an emergency event
- Representation at the Safer Whanganui forum



Children from Te Kura Kaupapa Maori O Te Atihaunui-A-Paparangi plant native species around Putiki's Awarua Stream as part of the Healthy Streams Whanganui initiative

Focus Area 5: Communication

Successful engagement with the community is critical to the effectiveness of the Board. Effective two-way communication between the Board and its stakeholders will contribute to effective rural representation and advocacy.

Objective

To raise the profile of the Board, both locally and nationally; and to increase the public's understanding of the Board's purpose.

Projects

- Consider the look and feel of *Hotwire*; also consider distribution channels for extended reach
- Distribute newsletter every six months
- Chair and members to contribute to the Wanganui Chronicle's On the Land feature
- Use On the Land to promote upcoming *Hotwire* publications
- Organise media releases and good news stories for key rural issues
- Include rural issues in *Community Link* (Midweek Wanganui)
- Ensure rural issues are included on the Council's website
- Hold public meetings with Wanganui rural communities, as and when appropriate
- Make submissions to relevant organisations on key rural issues
- Collate information on funding opportunities and publish in *Hotwire*
- Website coverage on the Council and Local Government NZ's websites
- Introduce Board members to Council staff through Tatou Hui

The Rural Community Board's page on the website is www.wanganui.govt.nz/communityboard



Some examples of the Board's media coverage and communications:
The Wanganui Chronicle's monthly column *On the Land* and *Hotwire*, published twice yearly

Focus Area 6: Representation

Wanganui Rural Community Board is elected by the rural community to represent and act as an advocate for that community. Seven Board members are elected in the following areas:

- Kai-Iwi subdivision - three members
- Kaitoke subdivision - two members
- Wanganui subdivision - two members

Wanganui District Council also appoints two Councillors to the Board as voting Board members. Their Board role is independent from their position as Councillors so that they consider matters from a Board perspective. The young people of Wanganui are further represented through the appointment of two (non-voting) members of Wanganui District Council's Youth Committee. Rural Maori are further represented through the appointment of a (non-voting) member from Tamaupoko.

Objectives

To represent the Wanganui community on issues of significance, and to advocate for Wanganui's rural community on a wide range of matters.

Projects

- Consider Council's Draft Annual Plans and Ten Year Plans and make a submission
- Consider Horizons Draft Annual Plans and Ten Year Plans and make a submission
- Keep a watch on Government legislation and make submissions on issues of importance
- Build a process that ensures the Board has input into relevant policy and strategy decisions
- Strengthen ties with Whanganui iwi
- Continue to strengthen ties with the Wanganui Youth Committee
- Attend relevant 'Know>How' courses through LGNZ
- Strengthen ties with other Community Boards within Zone 3
- Consider projects for 2015 Best Practice awards



Members of the Board, Wanganui District Council and Horizons Councillors and staff, as well as journalists visit farms in the Wanganui District to hear about the issues which matter to rural people

Appendix 1

Wanganui Rural Community Board portfolios

PORTFOLIO	MEMBERS RESPONSIBLE
Council	Alan Taylor
Audit, Risk and Finance	Erin Reeve
Strategy and Policy	David Matthews
Operations and Reporting	Darrell Monk
Tamaupoko Link	Alan Taylor
Community partnerships	Alan Taylor
Rural economic growth	Andy Collins
Rural economic growth	Cr Jenny Duncan
Infrastructure	David Matthews
Community wellbeing	Matthew Collins
Community wellbeing	Darrell Monk
Community wellbeing	Cr Hamish McDouall
Representation	Darrell Monk
Communication	Bill Ashworth
District Plan working party	Alan Taylor
