

**Whanganui District Council**

# **Welcoming Communities Plan 2023-2027**



**WHANGANUI  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui



**Welcoming  
Communities**  
TE WAHAROA KI NGĀ HAPORI



Diwali  
Photo: Courtesy of Lotus Women's Group





Filipino Singkil Ensemble  
Photo: Ler La Madrid, courtesy of River City Filipino Club

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## Acknowledgements

A special thank you to members of the Welcoming Communities Advisory Group for their continuing support of Whanganui newcomers, and their commitment to the advisory group and the development of this plan.

The Welcoming Communities Advisory Group meet bimonthly to guide and co-ordinate the implementation of the Welcoming Communities programme in Whanganui.



# Foreword from the Mayor / Welcome Message

## Tēnā koutou katoa

We are one of 31 councils across New Zealand who are part of the Welcoming Communities programme and it brings me great joy that Whanganui is becoming an even more inclusive and inviting community for our newcomers. We move towards becoming more of an inviting place by deepening our relationship with mana whenua and by celebrating the diversity that newcomers offer.

Diversity enriches the wellbeing and vitality of our entire community. Each year, Whanganui welcomes new residents from every corner of the globe. I see this reflected in the individuals and families who attend Whanganui District Council's regular New Zealand citizenship ceremonies and the diverse gatherings I've had the privilege to be present at including Multicultural Council and River City Filipino Club events, and Whanganui Diwali.

With our goal of a more diverse society, it is important to recognise and address the obstacles that may hinder newcomers from fully embracing their new home. As we become an increasingly multicultural district, we'll work to break down these barriers and strive to make everyone safe and happy in a place we can all call home, Whanganui.

Nau mai rā – glad you're here!

**Andrew Tripe**

Mayor of Whanganui District



Citizenship Ceremony





Puanga Rising in Majestic Square

# Welcoming Communities - background

Welcoming Communities is a programme led by Immigration New Zealand in partnership with the Ministry of Ethnic Communities and the Human Rights Commission. Welcoming Communities works towards healthier, happier and more productive communities by welcoming newcomers into the local community. Currently there are 31 councils across 14 regions working with their communities to implement Welcoming Communities. Whanganui District Council was invited to be part of the programme in January 2017.

At the heart of the Welcoming Communities programme is the outcome-based Welcoming Communities Standard for New Zealand. This national standard provides councils and communities with a benchmark for a successful welcoming and inclusive community. The first Whanganui Welcoming Communities Plan was approved by Whanganui District Council in May 2018 following an extensive community engagement process. The plan details local actions that will be undertaken to achieve the eight outcomes specified in the Welcoming Communities Standard.

In 2021 a review of our Welcoming Communities Plan was initiated with the aim of creating an updated, relevant action plan and direction for our district for the next five years. Having been part of the Welcoming Communities programme since 2017, the review provided an important opportunity to take stock of where we have got to, and identify where we need to go next to ensure Whanganui continues to progress as a welcoming community.

The updated Welcoming Communities Plan (2023-2027) was endorsed by Whanganui District Council Strategy and Policy Committee in March 2023. Our new plan builds on the foundations laid in the initial plan – to continue and improve the many existing activities, and to introduce new activities to help Whanganui progress as a welcoming city.

Welcoming Communities is part of a global network known as Welcoming International – other programmes around the world include Welcoming America in the United States and Australia's Welcoming Cities.

# The Welcoming Communities Standard

The Welcoming Communities Standard provides a benchmark for practices and services in welcoming newcomers. It was developed by Immigration New Zealand in collaboration with experts, councils and local communities in 2017.

## The eight elements of the standard and their outcomes are:

1. » Inclusive leadership
2. » Welcoming communications
3. » Equitable access
4. » Connected and inclusive communities
5. » Economic development, business and employment
6. » Civic engagement and participation
7. » Welcoming public spaces
8. » Culture and identity.

## Accreditation framework

Councils who have signed up to the Welcoming Communities programme can apply for accreditation that assesses a council and community's efforts to include and welcome newcomers, according to the Welcoming Communities Standard.

**There are four stages of accreditation, each with increasing levels of requirement and benefits:**



Whanganui gained accreditation as a Committed Welcoming Community in 2018, then successfully achieved accreditation as an Established Welcoming Community in 2021. We plan to progress to Advanced status within the next three years.







# Local Context

## Whanganui District at a glance (2018 Census)

### Ethnic diversity<sup>1,2,3</sup>

	1991 (%)	1996 (%)	2001 (%)	2006 (%)	2013 (%)	2018 (%)
European	85.0	86.0	84.3	74.2	81.8	79.2
Māori	16.7	19.3	20.7	22.0	23.0	26.3
Pacific peoples	1.4	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.8	3.6
Asian	1.1	1.6	1.7	2.4	2.9	4.1
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5
Other ethnicity <sup>4</sup>	0.0	0.0	0.1	10.6	2.0	1.2

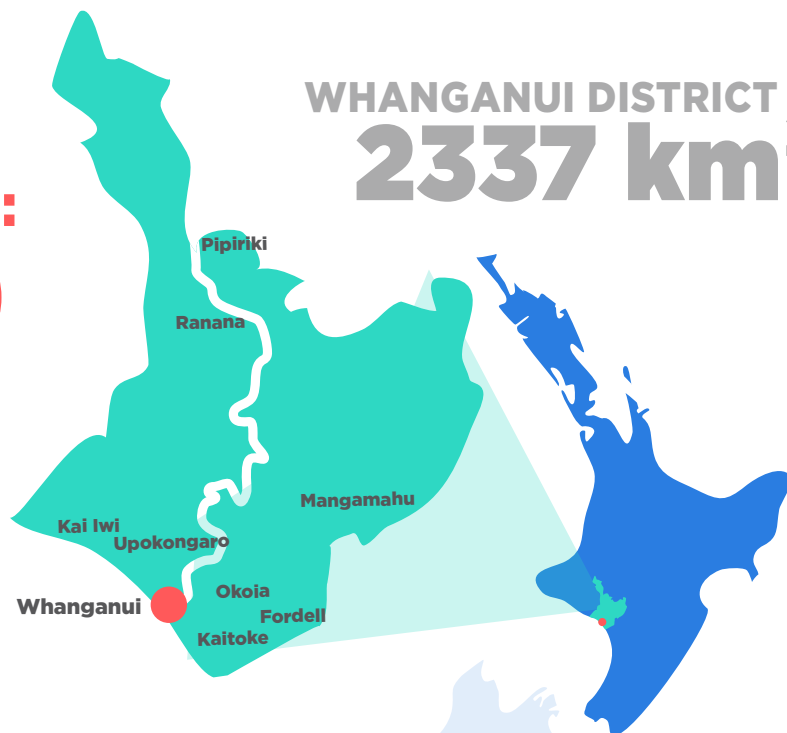


BIRTHPLACE<sup>5</sup> **12.5%** OF US WERE BORN OVERSEAS.

DISTRICT  
POPULATION<sup>6</sup>:  
**45,309**

MEDIAN AGE:  
**43 YEARS**

WHANGANUI DISTRICT  
**2337 km<sup>2</sup>**



1 Ethnic groups for people in the Whanganui District, 2006-18 censuses. Statistics New Zealand.

2 Due to the use of administrative enumeration to replace missing responses in the 2018 Census, the ethnicity counts in the 2018 Census are generally higher than in the 2013 Census, including for Māori and Pacific ethnic groups.

3 Where a person reported more than one ethnic group, they have been counted in each applicable group. As a result percentages do not add up to 100.

4 'Other Ethnicity' includes responses for a number of small ethnic groups and for 'New Zealander'. For 2006, 'New Zealander' responses made the largest contribution towards the Other Ethnicity category. For 2001, and previous censuses, New Zealander was counted in the 'European' category.

5 Birthplace for people in the Whanganui District, 2018 Census

6 Census 2018 Statistics New Zealand



Waimarie  
Photo: Whanganui & Partners

# Executive Summary

The Welcoming Communities initiative brings together local government and communities to make the places we love more welcoming for everyone. Communities that make newcomers feel welcome are likely to enjoy better social outcomes and stronger economic growth.




The Whanganui Welcoming Communities Plan sets our strategic direction for welcoming newcomers to our district over the next five years, as we work towards our vision that:

**All newcomers to Whanganui feel welcome and have a sense of belonging, enabling them to thrive in and contribute to the Whanganui community.**

For the purpose of this document and the wider programme, “newcomers” are defined as recent migrants, former refugees and international students. However, we acknowledge and anticipate that activities under this programme will also benefit those relocating from elsewhere in New Zealand.

The development of this updated plan involved meetings with community members, organisations and council teams involved with activities in the initial plan, workshops with the Welcoming Communities Advisory Group, and an audit of all current plan activities. It was also informed by the report received from our Stage 2 accreditation application, which provided feedback on our achievements in the programme to date and suggested areas of focus to help us progress towards the next stage of accreditation.

Overall, the process highlighted the high quality of our original plan and the large amount of work achieved to date across the council and our community. As such, our new plan consolidates many activities successfully implemented since 2018, as well as incorporating new opportunities to pursue. The action plan detailed on the following pages classifies activities accordingly, using the following key:

-  **= continued activity**
-  **= enhanced activity**
-  **= new activity**

The plan is structured around the eight outcome areas of the Welcoming Communities Standard, each of which has several objectives and actions that contribute to it. The outcomes and objectives are pre-determined according to the standard, while the 47 actions are locally-defined welcoming activities that meet the unique needs and characteristics of our district and the standard's outcomes. Each action has a time frame for completion, ranging from being ongoing activities to short- or long-term delivery timelines. It also specifies who will lead the welcoming activity, with actions ranging from being council-led, community-led or collaborative.











# Inclusive Leadership



Local government, tangata whenua and other community leaders work together to create, advocate for and continue to foster a welcoming and inclusive community. They lead a shared plan to increase connections between newcomers and existing residents.

Outcome	Activity	Groups involved	Time frame
<b>1.1</b>	<b>As indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori - represented by tangata whenua, mana whenua, iwi and hapū and/ or other hapori Māori - have a prominent role in Welcoming Plan activities</b>		
1.1.1	Grow partnerships between Whanganui District Council, tangata whenua, mana whenua and community leaders through the implementation and monitoring of the Whanganui Welcoming Communities Plan	Whanganui District Council, tangata whenua, community leaders	<b>C</b> Ongoing
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Leaders - both designated and unofficial - reflect the diversity in the local community, as does the council workforce</b>		
1.2.1	Improve the council's employee cultural diversity data collection methods	Human Resources team	<b>C</b> Year 2
1.2.2	The council to initiate a diversity and inclusion programme that supports its Equal Employment Opportunities Policy	Human Resources team	<b>E</b> Year 2
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Leaders model the principles of inclusiveness, openness, tolerance, respect and acceptance of all cultures in the community</b>		
1.3.1	Continue delivering cultural competency education for council employees, elected representatives and interested community leaders and groups	Community Wellbeing and Human Resources teams	<b>C</b> Ongoing
1.3.2	Continue the council's active leadership and participation in citizenship ceremonies, sister city activities and cultural celebration events	Community Wellbeing and Democracy Teams, Mayoral Office	<b>C</b> Ongoing
<b>1.4</b>	<b>There are clear roles, responsibilities and ownership within the council and the wider community for the Welcoming Communities programme</b>		
1.4.1	The Welcoming Communities Advisory Group continue to support and monitor the implementation of the Whanganui Welcoming Plan	Community Wellbeing team	<b>E</b> Ongoing
1.4.2	Build and maintain mutually beneficial Welcoming Communities relationships locally, regionally and nationally	Community Wellbeing team	<b>C</b> Ongoing
1.4.3	Convene regular meetings with staff and organisations who have responsibility for actions in the Welcoming Communities Plan	Community Wellbeing team	<b>N</b> Ongoing
<b>1.5</b>	<b>The council's internal and external policies, services, programmes and activities recognise and address cultural diversity</b>		
1.5.1	As council policies, services, programmes and activities reach renewal, review through a cultural diversity lens and update where appropriate	Policy and Community Wellbeing teams	<b>C</b> Ongoing
<b>1.6</b>	<b>A range of leadership opportunities in the council and the wider community are available to newcomers</b>		
1.6.1	Actively support and promote groups, programmes and training within the council and the wider community that provide leadership opportunities for newcomers, eg: Global Ambassadors programme, Youth Council and training opportunities	The council, Whanganui & Partners, community groups	<b>E</b> Ongoing

# Welcoming Communications



People of all cultures and backgrounds feel included, listened to and well-informed through a range of ways that take into account their different communication needs.

Outcome	Activity	Groups involved	Time frame
<b>2.1</b>	<b>The community is well-informed about the local benefits of immigration and the Welcoming Communities programme, including success stories</b>		
2.1.1	Showcase positive newcomer stories through positive media articles in local newspapers and other communication channels	Community Wellbeing and Communications teams	<b>C</b> Ongoing
<b>2.2</b>	<b>The council is well-informed about newcomers to our region and proactively seeks data about newcomers from relevant sources</b>		
2.2.1	Continue to gather insights from a range of sources on the demographics of the Whanganui community and the experiences of newcomers – use these insights to inform council and community projects and strategies	Community Wellbeing and Communications teams	<b>C</b> Ongoing
2.2.2	Maintain a directory of key multicultural contacts to improve council communication and the dissemination of information to our community	Community Wellbeing team	<b>N</b> Ongoing
<b>2.3</b>	<b>The council's engagement with all residents is two-way, culturally appropriate and fit for purpose</b>		
2.3.1	Develop a language and translation register of council employees and use these skills where appropriate	Human Resources team	<b>C</b> Year 2
2.3.2	Source useful translated resources or relevant information (eg: Civil Defence and Emergency Management material) and distribute to newcomers	Community Wellbeing team	<b>C</b> Ongoing
2.3.3	Arrange for the translation of important council and newcomer messages into different languages	Community Wellbeing and Communications teams	<b>N</b> Year 1
2.3.4	The council to develop a cultural diversity communications plan to support effective engagement with migrant communities	Community Wellbeing and Communications teams	<b>N</b> Year 1
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Council communication materials and messages are inclusive and reflect the diversity of the local community – the council encourages other agencies, businesses and organisations to follow this model</b>		
2.4.1	The council develops an image bank of culturally diverse images for use in council communications	Community Wellbeing and Communications teams	<b>E</b> Year 1



# Equitable Access

# 3

Opportunities to access services and activities and to participate in the community are available to all, including newcomers.

Outcome	Activity	Groups involved	Time frame
<b>3.1</b>	<b>The council partners with local businesses, organisations and sectors to identify and address barriers for newcomers to accessing services and participating in the community</b>		
3.1.1	Investigate newcomer information stands at key newcomer sites such as the council's contact centre, district libraries and the Whanganui isite Visitor Information Centre	Community Wellbeing team	<b>E</b> Year 2
3.1.2	Partner with government agencies and community services, including education and health, to identify and respond to challenges faced by newcomers in accessing services	Community Wellbeing team	<b>N</b> Ongoing
<b>3.2</b>	<b>The council and other organisations in the community will research, design and deliver services that take account of the different circumstances (eg: rural / urban) and cultural backgrounds of all service users, including newcomers</b>		
3.2.1	Investigate a sustainable Newcomers Network model or similar activity	Welcoming Communities stakeholders	<b>E</b> Year 1
<b>3.3</b>	<b>All community members are well-informed about the services available in the community. Newcomers are made aware of and are using these services</b>		
3.3.1	Introduce, through a variety of methods, newcomers to existing local social, recreational, sporting, cultural, arts and other groups and networks operating in the Whanganui community	Welcoming Communities stakeholders	<b>E</b> Ongoing

**C** = continued activity    **E** = enhanced activity    **N** = new activity



Filipino Basketball and Volleyball Winter League  
Photo: River City Filipino Club

# Connected and Inclusive Communities



People feel safe in their identity and that they are connected with and belong in the community. There are high levels of trust and understanding between members of the receiving community and newcomers.

Outcome	Activity	Groups involved	Time frame
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Co-ordinated, comprehensive and appropriate initial welcoming support services are available from the council, other agencies and community organisations</b>		
4.1.1	Improve and regularly update the <a href="https://www.whanganui.govt.nz/About-Whanganui/A-Whanganui-Welcome">https://www.whanganui.govt.nz/About-Whanganui/A-Whanganui-Welcome</a> : Whanganui Welcome page on the council's website, Welcome to Whanganui booklet, and other newcomer resources so that they are useful and accessible for newcomers	Community Wellbeing and Communications teams	<b>E</b> Ongoing
4.1.2	Ensure the needs of diverse communities are taken into consideration in local emergency planning and response	Defence & Emergency Management and Community Wellbeing teams	<b>N</b> Ongoing
<b>4.2</b>	<b>The receiving community is well-equipped and supported to welcome and interact with newcomers</b>		
4.2.1	Invite locals to suggest ways to be involved in welcoming activities	Community Wellbeing team, community groups	<b>C</b> Ongoing
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Members of the receiving community and newcomers build relationships and are at ease with connecting and learning about and from each other</b>		
4.3.1	Continue to grow relationships with community groups and services and find ways to better target activities to newcomers – this includes environmental matters, volunteering and community safety	Community Wellbeing team	<b>E</b> Ongoing
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Different cultures are celebrated and people supported to express their cultural beliefs and customs, including language and religious practices</b>		
4.4.1	Continue to update and share a Whanganui Cultural Calendar, including on the council's website, to assist with event planning and observing dates of significance	Community Wellbeing team	<b>E</b> Ongoing

# Economic Development, Business and Employment

Communities maximise and harness the economic development opportunities that newcomers can offer. Councils work with business associations to promote the contribution that newcomer business owners and skilled migrants make to the region's economy.

Outcome	Activity	Groups involved	Time frame
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Newcomers, including international students, are supported to access local information, services, networks and assets required to help them into business and employment</b>		
5.1.1	Encourage connections between international students and the Whanganui community, and support students to access local information, services and networks	Whanganui & Partners, Community groups, international student providers	<b>E</b> Ongoing
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Newcomers, including international students, are supported with local knowledge and skills to ensure they can operate successfully in the New Zealand work environment, either as a business owner or an employee</b>		
5.2.1	Promote events, activities and business support initiatives to newcomers and the wider community	Whanganui & Partners	<b>C</b> Ongoing
<b>5.3</b>	<b>The community recognises the value of diversity in the workplace, of newcomers' contribution to the region's growth and of the resulting wider economic benefits</b>		
5.3.1	Investigate the inclusion of a new category at local business awards to formally recognise organisations and workplaces that are intentionally welcoming and inclusive	Whanganui & Partners	<b>N</b> Year 1
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Local employers and workforces develop their intercultural competency</b>		
5.4.1	Support and promote cultural competency training and newcomer welcoming activities for local employers and their workforces	Community Wellbeing and Human Resources teams, Whanganui & Partners	<b>E</b> Ongoing
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Mutually beneficial connections and initiatives are set up with migrant business people by local business community and professional networks</b>		
5.5.1	Information relevant to migrant businesses included in Whanganui Multicultural Forum and other information sessions	Community Wellbeing team, Whanganui & Partners	<b>E</b> Year 2
5.5.2	Encourage connections between local migrant business owners and local business networks, Business Whanganui, Te Manu Atatū and Whanganui & Partners	Community Wellbeing team, Whanganui & Partners	<b>E</b> Ongoing

**C** = continued activity    **E** = enhanced activity    **N** = new activity



# Civic Engagement and Participation

# 6

Newcomers feel welcome to fully participate in the community. Newcomers are active in all forms of civic participation.

Outcome	Activity	Groups involved	Time frame
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Council staff effectively communicate with newcomers to promote their engagement in local government processes</b>		
6.1.1	Work with communities to provide submissions to central government reviews and enquiries on the needs of diverse communities	Community Wellbeing and Democracy teams	<b>N</b> Ongoing
6.1.2	Research, develop and implement innovative approaches to engage with newcomers that foster participation in local decision-making and other democratic processes	Policy, Community Wellbeing, Democracy and Communications teams	<b>E</b> Ongoing
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Newcomers are encouraged and enabled to get involved in local government and civil society</b>		
6.2.1	Commence regular Whanganui Multicultural Forum	Welcoming Communities stakeholders	<b>N</b> Year 1
6.2.2	Continue to support the delivery of mayoral welcomes, citizenship ceremonies and other events held in the Council Chamber and other civic venues to create a sense of ease and connection with civic spaces	Community Wellbeing team, Mayoral Office	<b>C</b> Ongoing
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Newcomers' efforts and achievements in civic participation and community life are acknowledged and celebrated</b>		
6.3.1	Identify newcomers and associated groups who may be eligible for local and national awards and recognition. Work with organisers of awards to ensure newcomer achievements are acknowledged and celebrated	Welcoming Communities stakeholders	<b>E</b> Ongoing



# Welcoming Public Spaces



Newcomers and receiving communities feel welcome and comfortable in using public spaces.

Outcome	Activity	Groups involved	Time frame
<b>7.1</b>	<b>The design and operation of public spaces and facilities are culturally appropriate and reflect the diversity of the community</b>		
7.1.1	Continue to find ways to make public spaces more visually welcoming, including the use of existing platforms for communicating messages to newcomers, eg: screens and signage	Community Wellbeing team	<b>E</b> Ongoing
7.1.2	Improve access to different means of transportation in the district for newcomers, including active and public transport opportunities and obtaining driver's licences. Investigate newcomer bike riding and swimming lessons	Community Wellbeing and Active Transport teams	<b>E</b> Ongoing
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Welcoming public spaces provide opportunities to build trust and relationships between newcomers and members of the receiving community</b>		
7.2.1	Increase the number of artworks, installations and monuments in public spaces that reflect the cultural diversity of the city. Ensure community groups are included, if not leading, the design and installation processes	Community Wellbeing team	<b>N</b> Ongoing
<b>7.3</b>	<b>Public spaces and buildings create a sense of community ownership and inclusion for all, including newcomers</b>		
7.3.1	Increase the range of cultural diversity activities and programmes initiated by council facilities such as Whanganui District Library, Whanganui Regional Museum, Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui and the Splash Centre	Council-funded facilities	<b>E</b> Ongoing
7.3.2	Co-ordinate Whanganui tours and activities that showcase public spaces, facilities and history to newcomers as requested	Community Wellbeing team	<b>E</b> Ongoing

**C** = continued activity   **E** = enhanced activity   **N** = new activity



# Culture and Identity

# 8

There is a shared sense of pride in being part of a culturally rich and vibrant community. People feel their culture is respected and valued by other members of the community, and there are opportunities to learn about each other's cultures.

Outcome	Activity	Groups involved	Time frame
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Receiving communities and newcomers share and celebrate their cultures with each other, facilitated by the council and others in the community</b>		
8.1.1	Support opportunities for newcomers to learn about and experience New Zealand history, culture and languages, eg: building knowledge of te reo Māori, tikanga Māori, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Awa Tupua and local marae.	Community Wellbeing team, tangata whenua	<b>E</b> Ongoing
8.1.2	Maintain and promote the council's Welcoming Activities Grant to reach diverse communities	Community Wellbeing team	<b>N</b> Ongoing
8.1.3	Capture, preserve and display the stories and history of diverse communities in Whanganui through heritage and art projects	Welcoming Communities stakeholders	<b>N</b> Ongoing
<b>8.2</b>	<b>Newcomers and the receiving community understand the values that each cherish</b>		
8.2.1	Promote, support and grow existing and new events and initiatives in Whanganui that share and celebrate diversity	Welcoming Communities stakeholders	<b>E</b> Ongoing

**C** = continued activity    **E** = enhanced activity    **N** = new activity



Chinese National Costume Day  
Photo: Whanganui Chinese Association



# Monitoring and Review

The Whanganui Welcoming Communities Advisory Group (the advisory group) will continue to meet regularly to guide and co-ordinate the implementation of the Welcoming Communities Plan. A key role of the advisory group will be to champion the Welcoming Communities programme and advocate for newcomers. The advisory group will work with the council to ensure the actions of the plan are undertaken to best practice to ensure the needs of newcomers are effectively represented. The plan will be reviewed mid-way through its five year period in 2025. The purpose of this review is to take stock of what has been achieved to date and identify priorities for the remaining years (2025-27).



Cook Island music and dance workshop  
Photo: Courtesy Hula on the Awa




# Glossary of Terms

<b>Community</b>	Refers to everyone living and working in our community.
<b>Council</b>	Whanganui District Council.
<b>Hapū</b>	Group or subtribe of the iwi.
<b>Human Rights Commission</b>	The national human rights institution for NZ.
<b>Immigration New Zealand</b>	The agency responsible for border control, issuing travel visas and managing immigration.
<b>Iwi</b>	Extended kinship group or tribe.
<b>Mana whenua</b>	Whānau, hapū and iwi with ancestry and occupation sourced in whakapapa.
<b>Ministry of Ethnic Communities</b>	The government's main advisor on ethnic diversity and inclusion in society.
<b>Newcomers</b>	Refers to recent migrants (up to five years in New Zealand), former refugees and international students. However, we expect the programme to have positive benefits for existing residents as well as for New Zealanders who may have recently moved to our district.
<b>Tangata whenua</b>	The people of the land.
<b>Welcoming Community</b>	An accredited council earns the right to promote itself as a Welcoming Community, ie a community that proactively fosters a welcoming and inclusive environment for newcomers and local residents.







Whanganui Awa  
Photo: Whanganui & Partners

Whanganui District Council

# **Welcoming Communities Plan**

**2023-2027**