

WHANGANUI
RURAL
COMMUNITY
BOARD



Rural Directions

Whanganui Rural Community Board Strategic Plan 2020-2030

'For the Whanganui rural community to be prosperous, connected, safe and happy'





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Whanganui Rural Community Board 2020

The Whanganui Rural Community Board is made up of three subdivisions. The subdivisions, members representing them and contact details are listed below – turn to page 7 for a map of subdivisions.

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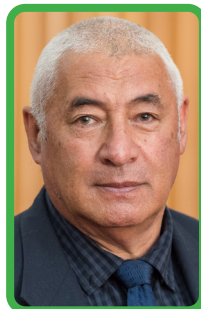
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**WHANGANUI DISTRICT
COUNCILLOR APPOINTEES
TO THE BOARD**

- **Cr Charlie Anderson**
- **Cr Brent Crossan**

Introduction to Rural Directions

In 2008-2009 the Whanganui 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 10-year plan for the board that covers the rural district and aligns with Whanganui District Council's planning processes.

Rural Directions 2020 was reviewed in 2013 when its name was changed to **Rural Directions**.

In 2017 and again in 2020 it was reviewed and updated to reflect the changing needs of rural communities and aims of the Whanganui Rural Community Board.

In this document the Whanganui Rural Community Board will be referred to as the "the board" while the Whanganui District Council will be referred to as "the council".

As a guiding document, the purpose of **Rural Directions** is to:

- Set out a vision for Whanganui's rural community.
- Set out a mission for the board.
- Set out six focus areas that will drive the board's projects.
- Provide a basis for the board's submissions on key documents including, but not limited to, Whanganui District Council and Horizons Regional Council's annual and long-term plans.

Context

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

The Whanganui Rural Community Board is a body established by statute. Its responsibilities and powers are delegated by the Whanganui District Council.

It advocates for the rural sector, but also represents the Whanganui community on wider issues that are not specifically rural.

The role of the 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 the council, or any matter of interest or concern to the community.

- Maintain an overview of services provided by the 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 the council.

Board successes

- The board won the 2019 Leadership Trophy at the New Zealand Community Boards Conference recognising its leadership in rural crime prevention. The board implemented a strategy to fund and install security cameras throughout Whanganui's rural roading network. To date, 13 cameras have been installed.
- Incorporating youth views by inviting two representatives of the council's Youth Committee to board meetings and giving them speaking rights.
- The board has gained speaking and voting rights at the council's main committee meetings, giving the rural community a stronger voice. The board now contribute to discussions and vote on matters at the highest level within the council.
- The Rural Broadband Initiative has resulted in improved internet coverage at Fordell, Mangamahu and areas of the Parapara Road (SH4). The Rural Broadband group continue to make good progress identifying new sites for improvement.

Representation across our diverse communities

Whanganui'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.

There is a growing community of lifestyle property owners in the Whanganui rural sector, lifestyle properties now make up about 27 percent of properties outside the urban boundary.

The number of lifestyle properties – based on property area between 0.5 hectares and 4ha – is about 1700 and the number of farms is 4575.



IMAGE: SHIV MARSHALL

In the rural general zone there are 772 lifestyle properties and 2376 farms, in the rural lifestyle zone 405 lifestyle properties and 1015 farms, and in the rural production zone 553 lifestyle properties and 1184 farms.

Rural properties contribute \$10.671 million of the total \$71.911M rates (incl GST) which is about 15 percent of the total district.

NB – For this definition, rural properties include any property outside of the city boundaries. This data is from the 2020-2021 rates database

Map of subdivisions

Populations

Whanganui Subdivision	1140
Kai Iwi Subdivision	2650
Kaitoke Subdivision	1940
Total population	5730



Whanganui District Council

– Leading Edge

The Leading Edge strategy acts as the council’s overarching strategic document that sets the vision for the district and outlines high-level aspirational objectives.

Given its district-wide focus, a collaborative approach is required in order for it to be successful.

This is driven by the following vision:

To be an energised, united and thriving district offering abundant opportunities for everyone.

The strategy is supported by these five strands:

- **COMMUNITY – A deeply united community:**
Working in partnership, shaping a district that celebrates and champions its cultural and social diversity as well as its community spirit.

- **CONNECTED – A dynamic, broadly connected district:** Accessible, linked-in and known for it.

- **CREATIVITY – Innovative and creative:**
A knowledge economy driven by innovation and humming with cultural personality.

- **ENVIRONMENT – Safeguarding our place:**
A district that safeguards its natural resources and provides an environment with a sense of place, identity and vitality.

- **ECONOMY – Works for everyone:** An easy-living place of choice for all, flourishing with employment and development opportunities.

The Whanganui Rural Community Board’s vision and purpose

The board supports the council’s Leading Edge vision. In addition, the board also supports being “business friendly”.

The board’s vision is: For the Whanganui rural community to be prosperous, connected, safe and happy.

The board’s purpose is: To promote sustainable economic growth and community wellbeing in rural Whanganui.

The board has identified six focus areas to achieve its vision and fulfill its purpose:

Focus areas

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Community partnerships | 4. Community wellbeing |
| 2. Rural economic growth | 5. Representation |
| 3. Infrastructure | 6. Communication |

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 Whanganui District.

Actions

Identify and engage regularly with key community partnerships. These include, but are not limited to:

- Iwi representatives
- Whanganui District Council including the council's economic development agency, Whanganui & Partners
- Horizons Regional Council
- Federated Farmers
- Selected advocacy groups
- Rural village communities
- Territorial authorities within the Manawatu-Whanganui region
- Zone 3 community boards
- Government departments
- Rural schools / New Zealand Young Farmers.

The board acknowledges that every key partner has 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
- Having a presence at rural events with visible branding.



IMAGE: SHIV MARSHALL

Focus area 2 – Rural economic growth

The rural sector is a significant contributor to the Whanganui economy, providing primary produce that supports major Whanganui industry and ancillary services.

Important value-added products and associated cutting-edge technology advancements in Whanganui 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, Whanganui's economy is rural based.

This is particularly so in the export area with the largest sector being meat and meat-product manufacturing.

NB – The table below sets out the top rural-related activities and their contribution to Whanganui District's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019.

Industry	GDP 2019 (\$ millions)	Share of total GDP 2019
Horticulture and fruit growing	\$7.5	0.4%
Sheep, beef cattle and grain farming	\$42.1	2.3%
Dairy cattle farming	\$18.4	1.0%
Poultry, deer and other livestock farming	\$7.2	0.4%
Forestry and logging	\$40.8	2.2%
Fishing and aquaculture	\$1.5	0.1%
Meat and meat-product manufacturing	\$44.5	2.4%
Dairy product manufacturing	\$27.8	1.5%
Fruit, cereal and other food-product manufacturing	\$24.4	1.3%
Textile, leather, clothing, footwear manufacturing	\$20.6	1.1%
Wood-product manufacturing	\$13.6	0.7%

Objective

To work alongside Whanganui & Partners to promote economic growth in Whanganui's rural sector.

Actions

Identify economic trends, R&D 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 Whanganui.
- 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. The contribution towards roading rates by the Whanganui rural community is \$3.251 million of the total \$9.274M (including GST), which is about 35 percent of the total roading rate.

Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to:

- Roads including bridges and culverts
- Digital
- Power
- Water
- Communication infrastructure
- Security cameras
- Other community facilities such as rural halls.

Key issues facing rural roads include:

- **Network vehicle volume** – low-volume roads considered “uneconomic”; impacts of increasing levels of heavy traffic, eg: forestry; increases in heavy vehicle weight capacity.

- **Localised roading conditions** – drainage; speed; safety and maintenance concerns regarding effects of increased heavy traffic on marginal and narrow pavement width; aggregate quality is marginal with a high cost to import quality aggregate to remote areas; weak geological structure; slip prone.
- **Financial** – increase in emergency works (eg: flood damage); higher expectations from stakeholders/road users; increasing operational costs and fluctuating raw material costs; decreasing subsidies from Waka Kotahi NZTA and the Funding Assistance Rates review.
- **Bridges and culverts.**

Objective

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

Actions

- Assist with developing, monitoring and reviewing the council’s Rural Road Strategy.
- Continue working with other territorial authorities (local government) and forestry owners to determine a solution for managing the costs and options associated with the effects of forestry harvesting on rural roads.
- Advocate for maintaining acceptable levels of service levels on rural roads.
- Continue to advocate for ultrafast broadband throughout rural Whanganui.
- Lobby central government on various issues that relate to the provision of quality infrastructure.



IMAGE: ANGUS MURRAY

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.

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Constraints include reduced access to:

- Healthcare services including mental health and wellbeing support

- Education
- Welfare
- Fast, affordable broadband
- Entertainment and events
- Postal delivery
- Other issues related to community wellbeing include emergency management and community facilities.

Objective

To promote and support rural community wellbeing in the Whanganui District.

Actions

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

- Security and Police including security cameras.
- Council services such as library, animal control and so on
- Postal services

- Good-neighbour awareness
- Family events such as rural children's initiatives and school events
- Continued liaison with the Fire and Emergency New Zealand, with a particular focus on Enlarged Rural Fire Districts

- Active participation in the Manawatu-Whanganui (Horizons Region) Rural Co-ordination Group for a co-ordinated emergency management response to an emergency event
- Representation at the Safer Whanganui forum.



IMAGE: ANGUS MURRAY

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. Also, to increase the social media presence of the board.

Actions

- Consider the look and feel of *Hotwire*; also consider distribution channels for extended reach. Copies of *Hotwire* published to the council's website and the board's Facebook page
- Distribute *Hotwire* every six months
- Board Chair and members to contribute to the *Whanganui Chronicle* supplement, *The Country*
- Use *The Country* to promote upcoming *Hotwire* publications
- Organise media releases and good news stories for key rural issues.
- Include selected rural issues in *Community Link*, the council's weekly public newsletter that appears in the *Midweek* community newspaper
- Ensure rural issues are included on the council's website
- Hold public meetings with Whanganui rural communities, as and when appropriate
- Make submissions to relevant organisations on key rural issues
- Collate information on funding opportunities – including possible new funding opportunities post COVID-19 – and publish in the board's bi-annual *Hotwire* newsletter
- Website coverage on the council and Local Government New Zealand's websites
- Introduce board members to council staff through Pātai
- Use social media to highlight and promote rural issues, as well as to promote and grow the board's Facebook page.



IMAGE: GINNIE MATTHEWS KINDER

Focus area 6 – Representation

The Whanganui 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 these areas:

- **Kai Iwi subdivision** – three members
- **Kaitoke subdivision** – two members
- **Whanganui subdivision** – two members.

Whanganui District Council also appoints two Councillors to the board to increase the cohesion between the two bodies.

The young people of Whanganui are also represented through the appointment of two members of the council's Youth Committee. Federated Farmers, Tamaūpoko Community-Led Trust, Horizons Regional Council and the New Zealand Police are invited to provide updates on a regular basis.

Objective

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

Actions

- Submit to the council's Representation Review.
- Consider the council's draft annual and long-term plans and make a submission.
- Consider Horizons' draft annual and long-term 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 through the council's Iwi Working Party meetings.
- Continue to strengthen ties with the council's Youth Committee.
- Attend relevant "know-how" courses through Local Government New Zealand.
- Strengthen ties with other community boards within Zone 3.
- Consider projects for best-practice awards.



IMAGE SUPPLIED

Keeping on track

Successful engagement with the community is critical to the effectiveness of the board. Council staff will table quarterly reporting at Whanganui Rural Community Board meetings, providing an update on the progress of the board.

APPENDIX 1 – Whanganui Rural Community Board membership

Board members attend a range of council-related meetings to represent rural views:

Committee	Members responsible
Council meetings	Grant Skilton
Property and Community Services	Sandra Falkner (full committee member)
Strategy and Finance	David Wells (full committee member)
Infrastructure, Climate Change and Emergency Management	Michael Dick (full committee member)
Tamaūpoko Link	David Wells
Youth Committee	Alistair Duff
Whanganui District Rural Community Halls Trust	Bill Ashworth, Michael Dick and David Wells



IMAGE: GINNIE MATTHEWS KINDER

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