



Waitakere Wellbeing Report 2004

Community - Local Government - Central Government

**Towards Wellbeing in Waitakere 2004 -
Te haerenga o te oranga kei Waitakere**

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Foreword



Mayor Bob Harvey

When Waitakere first adopted the principles of agenda 21, back in 1992, concepts like sustainability, collaboration, consultation and community well-being were, to be fair, considered a bit “not in a local Council range of issue and business”

Local Councils, central government, and certainly sectors of our communities, believed that we were simply here to provide water (and take away wastewater), roads, and the odd library if they were lucky.

I’m proud to say that Waitakere was the first City in New Zealand to look beyond the “3 r’s” of roads, rates and rubbish and begin to work in a more holistic way in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural growth.

The Council is not alone in being able to claim some credit for Waitakere’s recent progress. It was a huge partnership that brought it together. Government departments, social service agencies and of course our huge network of volunteer organisations must also be applauded for the way in which initiatives have been planned and introduced. Many of them are ground-breaking and what we proudly call the “Waitakere Way” of operating collaboratively has become a model for the rest of the country.

Even though you feel all is well, you have no idea of how well you’re doing unless every now and then you pause, and take time to review what has been done. That’s what our Wellbeing Reports and Community Summits are all about.

continued



Waitakere City Wards Map

It is an opportunity to reflect on our collective successes, identify more challenges, debate the issues that we have and are working on, and plan the next steps forward.

For me and my Council colleagues, one of the most pleasing aspects of this 2004 report back is that 86% of residents think that this City is a great place to live. That's a start. The test is the quality of life that we achieve here in the west.

I look forward to hearing the rest of our report and to meeting our Waitakere Community as we work towards an even better future.



Bob Harvey
MAYOR
Waitakere City



Introduction



The Waitakere Wellbeing Report 2004, is an update on two comprehensive Wellbeing Reports produced by Waitakere City Council in 1996 and 1998. The purpose of the report is to reflect some of the key wellbeing issues facing Waitakere City and, where possible, track changes over time. It aims to inform, highlight issues, celebrate successes, and provide a starting point for discussion and advocacy.

The 1996 and 1998 Wellbeing Reports were produced by Waitakere City Council. This update has been produced collaboratively with representatives from the community, local government and central government sectors.

Perspectives on producing this report

Community

Working collaboratively on the Wellbeing Report has not been without its learning curve for all involved.

This is the first time that Waitakere City Council has attempted production of this report with the involvement of representatives from the community and central government as part of the "Sponsor Group". The Sponsor Group's role was to come to agreement about what was put into this report.

The major factor impinging on developing the report collaboratively was the fact that we all came from such diverse perspectives. This meant extra time and care needed to be taken to find the "middle ground".

From a community viewpoint, it has added an extra layer of understanding regarding the strengths of each sector in the collaboration process. For example, community can celebrate its



ability to sometimes ask the hard questions. It is one of our greatest strengths that we can work at an “activist” level in order to elicit change.

The most important thing is that we learn from our journeys together. Sometimes it is not the outcome that is the biggest learning point, but how we get there.

Waitakere City Council

The collation of this kind of information provides a strong base for the Waitakere community to advocate for the kinds of services and activities that will address the issues highlighted. Waitakere City Council would like to thank the many people and organisations that have contributed to this update. The move from a “Council document” to a collaborative process allows the document to reflect Waitakere City’s many voices.

This information sits alongside reports such as the Quality of Life report (produced by the eight largest cities in New Zealand) and the State of the City report produced every five years by the Council. However, this report is unique, in that it seeks to work collaboratively in its production, which also continues Waitakere’s proud tradition of working together to find solutions. That said, finding ways to work effectively in partnership is a learning and incremental process for all concerned, and lessons learned in the development of this report will be carried forward to the next one.

What is also exciting is that the information and the community questions in this report are critical for thinking about and planning for the future – and this work will provide a basis for the development of the shared community vision which is at the heart of the Long Term Council Community Plan – next one due in 2006.

Central Government

This is the first time Waitakere City has attempted a collaborative process for the development of the Wellbeing Report. Our three way

relationship – Central Government, Local Government and community is reflected in this report. It highlights how we can work together even though we have different roles to achieve greater understanding and increase wellbeing in our communities.

Ministry of Social Development fully supports the three way relationship for the wellbeing of families within their respective communities.

Project Coordinator

Coordinating the 2004 Wellbeing Report has provided a number of challenges. The greatest has been working with three sectors which have had, in some cases, very disparate and passionate views.

The structure of the 2004 Wellbeing Report, the indicators collected and the measures of wellbeing reflect the outcome of these debates.

There is a wealth of information and data which can be used to highlight wellbeing in Waitakere City. There are also gaps. For example, data is not collected on literacy levels in Waitakere City, we do not know how many people need emergency accommodation each week, we do not have information on household debt or whether people feel they are struggling financially or doing ok.

Some indicators on our wish list could not be collected as the organisations which collect the data simply did not have the capacity to take time away from their core work to produce it. Other indicators could not be collected as there was insufficient budget to do so.

The Waitakere Wellbeing Report 2004 is not intended to be an Encyclopaedia of Wellbeing in Waitakere City. We hope, however, that it will provide useful information that can be used to measure progress, draw attention to some of the issues that need to be addressed, and of course, celebrate some of the many successes that have contributed to the overall wellbeing of people in Waitakere City.

Key Points from the 2004 Wellbeing Report

- Population growth in Waitakere, New Zealand's fifth largest City, has continued to grow at higher than expected rates. The estimated population in mid 2003 was 185,600 and this is expected to grow to 237,100 by 2021. Growth will need to be carefully planned and monitored to ensure that necessary services, facilities and infrastructure are in place and pressures on the environment reduced where possible.
- Waitakere is still a relatively young city with the median age of Maori, Asian and Pacific peoples much lower than that of Pakeha. Just under half of all new migrants are under the age of 25.
- The kinds of households in Waitakere are changing with one parent families, blended families and multi family/extended family households becoming more common.
- Waitakere continues to be recognised as a good/very good place to live with resident satisfaction increasing from 78% in 1993 to 86% in 2003.
- A large number of new local leisure and recreational facilities (libraries, community centres, sporting venues etc) have been developed by Council in the last 5 years, increasing access to local leisure opportunities.
- Ethnic diversity in Waitakere continues to grow. Nearly 40% of residents felt that cultural diversity made Waitakere a better place to live, citing broader outlooks, new ideas and the opportunity to learn about other cultures as positive contributing factors.
- However, increasing ethnic diversity is placing new and growing demands on existing social services and supports. Isolation among new migrant groups can be compounded by language issues, unemployment or underemployment.
- Waitakere now hosts a much wider range of arts, cultural and sporting events than five years ago.
- Perceptions that Waitakere works together and that people support each other have increased from 47% to 56% over the 2000-2002 period.
- Around 80% of Waitakere residents report positive contact with people in their neighbourhood and never or hardly ever feel lonely or isolated.
- A range of holistic, Maori specific-wellbeing indicators will need to be developed to give a more rounded picture of Maori wellbeing in Waitakere.
- Waitakere has a low unemployment rate (2.6% for the Sept 2003 quarter) when compared both regionally and nationally.
- Waitakere is home to 15% of the region's population but only 8% of the region's jobs.
- Waitakere is a city of small to medium businesses with 93% employing fewer than 10 people. The manufacturing sector makes up 20% of local employment. Construction and retail are the next largest employment sectors.
 - Film, boat building and organics are specific business clusters currently being targeted for growth.

- Innovative local programmes are also being developed to match employee skills and local employment opportunities - especially for young people
- Housing costs are cheaper in Waitakere than elsewhere in the Auckland Region making Waitakere a comparatively more affordable place to live – especially for lower income households and new migrants/refugees. However, the percentage of income spent on housing in Waitakere (28%) is higher than both regional and national averages, with expenditure on housing costs having doubled between 1998 and 2001.
- Median house prices in Waitakere increased by 25% between 2001-2003, with increased house prices being a key contributor to the fall in home ownership rates from 72% in 1996 to 65% in 2001. Of New Zealand's 8 largest cities, the greatest change in renting and ownership patterns occurred in Waitakere City.
- The average rent paid in Waitakere City increased by 45% during the 1991-2001 period. However for Housing NZ tenants, the reversal of the previous market rent policy saw their average rental fall from \$217 in 2000 to \$96 in 2003.
- Despite a 17% increase in Housing New Zealand (HNZ) properties in Waitakere from 1999-2003, there continues to be a serious shortfall of state rental properties. Two thirds of those on local HNZ waiting lists were families with children.
- Those in emergency housing need must now go elsewhere in the Region for assistance as there are now **no** emergency houses in Waitakere City.
- Levels of household crowding in Waitakere fell during the 1996-2001 period, however they are still higher than national average levels.
- Life expectancy for Waitakere residents has continued to increase over the last decade.
- The number of dentists and doctors (GPs) in Waitakere are much lower than national averages.
- The number of GPs per capita in Waitakere (and nationally) has also continued to decrease from 68 per 100,000 people in 1997 to 60 per 100,000 people in 2001.
- Funding for adult community mental health services in Waitakere is only half of what it should be under the national blueprint for mental health services. This continues to place huge pressure on existing staff and services and reduces the ability to assist people in need early and effectively.
- Nearly 20% of residents indicated they had wanted to go to a doctor in the last year but felt unable to. Cost and time were the key reasons for not going.
- Child mortality rates (0-14 years) in Waitakere are higher than national levels. Around 60-70% of deaths are still potentially avoidable.
- Around 1/3 of hospitalisations for attempted suicide in the 1997-99 period were those in the 10-24 year age group.
- There is growing concern about the local production and use of methamphetamine ("P") and its impact on mental health, domestic violence and violent crime.
- Smoking rates in Waitakere are highest of the 8 largest cities in NZ.

- The number of gambling machines in Waitakere is comparatively low. However, they are likely to be located in low income areas and areas with high Maori and Pacific populations. 68% of local residents said they had gambled in the last 7 days.
- Teenage pregnancy rates in Waitakere are higher than national rates.
- Most (91%) Waitakere City residents felt safe in their home during the day, but less so at night (82%). In 2002 dangerous driving and car thefts were identified as the key city safety concerns.
- The Waitakere office of Child Youth and Family is one of the busiest in NZ. The number of notifications relating to the care and safety of Waitakere children increased by 30% each year between 1998-2002, compared to a 3.4% annual increase nationally.
 - Notifications considered critical (needing a 24-hour response) increased by 14% over the period, but those considered low urgency (needing a 28-day response) increased by 457%.
- The overall crime rate in Waitakere City increased by 2.7% between 2002-03, however, Waitakere's crime rate is much lower than the national rate. Around 52% of local crimes are resolved compared with 44% nationally.
- The rate of violent crime in Waitakere is higher (134.1 per 10,000 people) than rates for either the local police district (North Shore/Waitakere/Rodney combined 105.4 per 10,000) or nationally (113.8 per 10,000).
- Though unintentional child injury rates in Waitakere increased in the 2002 year, the overall trend from 1998-2002 is downward.
- Just over half (55%) of Waitakere's under-5 population attended a state funded preschool compared to 64% nationally.
- The proportion of residents with a school qualification or a degree increased between 1996-2001. Similarly, the proportion of residents with no formal qualifications decreased from 33-23% over the same period. However, the rate of young people in Waitakere leaving school without qualifications still remains higher than the national average.
- Suspensions and stand downs from Waitakere schools are similar to national rates.
- Some local schools are finding it increasingly difficult to run their schools within existing allocated budgets.

How to use this report

This is a collection of statistics collected for a variety of purposes. It's role is to generally inform and highlight issues. As with all statistics care should be taken in their use. How it was gathered, when and who for are important factors to consider. We have as much possible given source documents to enable further investigation. This report is a starting point for dialogue and we hope it will add to our knowledge of our City.