



**Waitomo District  
Community Development  
Strategy  
2015-2018**

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# Background

Waitomo District Council recognises the importance of a proud and capable community being involved in Community Development, and the significant contribution organisations like community groups, voluntary groups, Maori, commercial operators and business owners make to the wellbeing of the District.

Groups such as these contribute in different ways and they help to build a strong district identity. Through a partnership approach both community and Council can achieve more together than they can alone.

The Local Government Act 2002 (the Act) requires local authorities to assist and promote opportunities for public participation in local decision-making and to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well being of communities in a sustainable manner.

The Act introduces an empowering framework to enable local authorities in collaboration with other organisations, including Central Government, Iwi and Community Organisations, to promote or achieve their desired outcomes and priorities and make efficient use of local resources to meet local needs.

The Community Development group provides a dedicated resource for collaborating with the community across the elements of wellbeing.

# Our Vision

Create a better future with vibrant communities and thriving business by further developing community engagement, community connectivity, assist with the creation of economic opportunities and support stakeholder relationships.

# Our Mission

Our mission is to be actively involved in 'helping the community to help itself'. Community Development activities represent a group of collaborative and partnership approaches and initiatives involving many agencies and organisations. These activities involve a common theme of promoting a better quality of life and a better living environment within the District.

# The Role of Community Development

Community Development values people first. It builds strong communities by utilising local skills, knowledge and experience in decision making to improve quality of life.

The strategy is a positioning document. It identifies the community's vision and expectations in relation to the relevant levels of services and provides a framework for Council to work within to schedule and prioritise this work.

This Community Development Strategy encompasses a wide range of activities that encourage Council and community involvement in initiatives that improve social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects of everyday life.

To identify the community's vision and expectations, in relation to the relevant levels of service and provides a framework for Council to work within to schedule and prioritise this work.

## Community Outcomes

### *Vibrant Communities*

**CO1** A place where the multicultural values of all its people and, in particular, Maori heritage and culture is recognised and valued.

**CO2** A place where all age groups have the opportunity to enjoy social, cultural and sporting activities within our District.

**CO3** A place where young people have access to education, training and work opportunities.

**CO4** A place where young people feel valued and have opportunities for input into the decisions for the District.

**CO5** A place where we preserve the natural environment for future generations, ensuring that natural resources are used in a sustainable manner.

### *Prosperous District or Thriving Business*

**CO6** A place that attracts more people who want to live, work and play, and raise a family.

**CO7** A place where wealth and employment are created through local businesses and tourism opportunities and facilities are developed, facilitated and encouraged.

### *Effective Leadership*

**CO8** A place where the development of partnerships for the delivery of programmes and services is encouraged and pursued.

**CO9** A place where the governance actively seeks to participate and take a leadership role in regional and national initiatives aimed at the development of the District.

### *Sustainable Infrastructure*

**CO10** A place that provides safe, reliable and well managed infrastructure which meets the District community needs and supports maintenance of public health, provision of good connectivity and development of the District.

# Community Support

Community Support seeks to improve social outcomes within the Waitomo District by working closely with the community.

The Community Support Goals are to:

- ***Create a better quality of life for our community.***
- ***Create a better living environment for our community through community safety and appropriate infrastructure.***
- ***Encourage active engagement by improving communication and trust between Council and our community.***
- ***Help local groups with local opportunities and solutions.***

In order to achieve these goals, the Community Development Team must engage proactively with the community on a number of initiatives.

## Community Development Fund

Assistance provided to the community through a fund supporting Community Development, targeted at supporting community groups who provide services and activities that benefit local residents.

- *Facilitate projects to create pride and self-image of residents.*
- *Provide funding assistance as per the Community Development Fund Policy.*



*Benneydale Community Mosaic Wall*

## Information Provider

Accurate information is critical to the development of community organisations and their activities. Information resources can support community groups and individuals that have a passion to make a difference in the district.

- *Use information as a tool to help develop community organisations and their activities.*
- *Provision of community information identifies the value and importance that Council sees in community cooperation and cohesion.*
- *Support local initiatives that address local needs and aspirations, by providing information and advice.*

## Community Events

Community events foster a positive community image. Council is currently involved in providing events that are interrelated with the District Promotion activity.

- *Focus the community on key community projects.*
- *Facilitate community projects to create pride and self-image of residents.*
- *Support community events managed by local organisations.*
- *Support and participate in World War One Centenary Commemorations to be held 2014-2018*

## Community Health

Council involvement in community groups, committees, and working parties that participate in finding solutions to issues that impact on the well-being and health of the local community is important. Staff and elected representatives can offer expertise by actively participating in groups that address health issues.

- *Advocate that health services meet the needs of the community.*
- *Ensure a minimum range of health provider services remain available inside the District.*
- *Promote and support public health education programmes.*
- *Recognise the importance of Maori health networks within the community.*

## Education Liaison

An educated community widens life's options and increases a communities' capacity to earn and enjoy life. Through the adoption of a facilitative approach, Council has the opportunity to ensure that community education skill and capability objectives are achieved through local education providers.

- *Support education initiatives through building relationships with key education providers.*
- *Ensure skills and education objectives are achieved within the community.*
- *Promote public commitment to education.*

## Maori Liaison

By strengthening relationships and establishing formal partnerships with local Iwi, Council can actively support Maori contribution to the Local Government decision-making processes. Through the utilisation of tangata whenua knowledge of sustainability and protocol, Council will enhance its opportunity to foster the four areas of wellbeing within the community.

- *Provide regular consultation with Maori on community issues through local Iwi.*
- *Actively fostering positive working relationships with Maniapoto and supporting Maori well-being initiatives with whanau, hapu and Iwi in the Waitomo District.*

## Central Government Agency Liaison

Communities depend on the activities of Government both politically and administratively. To maintain equity with the rest of New Zealand our community requires the opportunity to access government services locally. Many Council's approach this by advocating on a communities behalf over services and service issues, and in some cases operating agency services.

- *Services that the community requires are accessible.*
- *Provide access on behalf of Central Government agencies.*
- *Assess any other community needs as they arise.*

## Safer Communities

Communities depend on networking groups that are well supported and focused on supporting community safety initiatives targeting crime reduction and improving the co-ordination of services.

- *Ensure community safety issues are addressed in a collaborative manner.*
- *Promote, provide and protect individual and community safety.*
- *Liaise with Police and other key organisations on an as required basis (e.g. working parties, or working forums with community members).*
- *Continue the ongoing provision and maintenance of the CCTV system.*

## Youth Liaison and Participation

Youth Development and Liaison is about supporting and encouraging the healthy development of young people within our community and assisting them in the development of the skills and attitudes they need to take a positive part in society, now and in the future. This can be achieved through working with organisations and individuals to ensure they have the skills to work alongside young people.

- *Enhancing and encouraging youth participation in all aspects of community life.*
- *Continued provision and support of the Waitomo District Youth Council.*
- *Establish youth liaison and participation avenues.*
- *Provide on going support and liaison with youth service providers (e.g. Te Kuiti Youth Action Plan) within the district.*
- *Work with training providers to ensure relevant training opportunities are available.*



Skate Park Youth Event 2014

## Participation in Recreational Sport

Council has the ability to foster and support participation in sports and active living. Through financial support Council can contribute to increasing the number of people taking part in sport, help strengthen the infrastructure of sport.

- *Support programmes based on healthy active living.*
- *Collaboration with key stakeholders.*

## Care for the Elderly

New Zealand has an increasing ageing population. Over the next 50 years, the rate of population growth within New Zealand will gradually slow. Currently 13.5% of Te Kuiti's population is over 65 years of age. With the population of older people set to increase, the demand for accessible, affordable and appropriate services will increase.

- *Continue to work with key stakeholders to promote, provide or invest in care of the elderly.*
- *Investigate opportunities to ensure there are sufficient facilities to cater for the needs of the elderly.*

## Culture and Heritage

Museums, galleries, libraries and other heritage centres are the "front porch" of the community. Welcoming visitors, giving them an overview of what's special and unique about a place. They display aspects of the history of a place, person, and cultural tradition and encourage people to think differently about their relationship to others, or to the world.

- *Support and promote the provision of local museums and galleries.*
- *Provide a District Library service to Waitomo Residents.*



Historical Society Railway Cottage

## Sister City Relations

Council's Sister-City relationship is with Tatsuno, in the Nagano Province, Japan.

The concept of Sister Cities is to increase global co-operation at a local level. The aim is to foster international understanding and friendship, to encourage community exchange of education, culture and sport, and to promote, where possible, tourism and trade.

- *Council will foster and promote its Sister City relationship.*



*Waitomo Delegation Visit – Tatsuno 2013*



*Tatsuno Visit 2014*

## Encourage Community Exchange

Education, Culture and Sport

Promote Tourism and Trade

# Tourism Development and District Promotion

Tourism is a partnership between central government, local government and the visitor industry.

The Tourism Development and District Promotion Goals that underpin Waitomo District Councils Community Development activity are to:

- ***Recognise that economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes must be mutually reinforcing.***
- ***Maintain a high quality environment***
- ***Recognise the District's dependence on tourism, primary production and utilisation of the landscape and culture, as visitor attractions***
- ***Provide an excellent visitor experience to those travelling to our district***
- ***Make smart strategic decisions to support Regional Tourism outcomes within our District***
- ***Grow the economy through visitor spend in our District***

In order to achieve these goals we must engage proactively with the community, our strategic partners and key stakeholders to support local initiatives that promote the Waitomo District as a place to live, work and play.

## Cultural and Environmental Tourism

2014 saw the release of Tourism 2025 which provides a strategic framework to significantly grow New Zealand's visitor economy over the next ten years. To achieve this goal it is recognised there will be a need to work collaboratively to improve New Zealand's competitiveness and grow value together.

Council has committed to a strategic partnership with six neighbouring Councils for the provision of regional tourism services via the Hamilton and Waikato Regional Tourism Organisation.

The role of Hamilton and Waikato Tourism (HWT) is to provide leadership and coordination for the region's visitor sector across multiple territorial local authority boundaries. HWT is also responsible for the region's visitor attraction strategies, targeting domestic and business tourism markets, and to provide information to assist product development and destination management opportunities.

Cultural and environmental tourism denotes many different types of experiences.

It involves learning about different cultures and includes such things as; natural wonders, physical outdoor activities, wildlife activities, learning about the way of life of people from a different culture, experiencing a country's local cuisine, sites that are important to a country's history, sites that are important to a country's indigenous people, historic buildings, local art trails and exhibitions of national history.

- *Through partnership with the Hamilton and Waikato RTO, promote sustainable visitation to the District.*
- *Partner with major stakeholders of the district to promote the Waitomo District.*
- *Partner with major stakeholders of the region to promote the Waitomo District.*
- *Encourage and support collaboration, networking and joint development initiatives.*
- *At a local level, work closely with key stakeholders to assist in the ongoing management and development of the Pureora Timber Trail.*

## Regional Tourism

Tourism at a regional level is about promotion of a "region" as a tourism destination and not as specific districts or specific areas within that region.

Promotion at a regional level targets growth of the domestic and international visitor expenditure in the region.

- *Continue to support and undertake regional tourism activity via the Hamilton and Waikato RTO.*
- *Support implementation of the ten year Visitor Strategy for the Hamilton and Waikato Region.*



*Pureora Timber Trail*

## District Promotion

Waitomo has a major tourist attraction in its district, the Waitomo Caves area. While the potential of the Caves and surrounding activities continue to develop, there are many unique activities and experiences for tourists throughout the District.

The Timber Trail located in the Pureora Forest Park follows old tramlines and specially designed tracks to provide a unique bike ride through 83km of ancient forests.

Further attractions such as Hairy Feet in Piopio where the troll and campfire scenes in 'The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey' were filmed help to showcase the beauty and diversity of the Districts product offering.

District promotion is often about branding and the promotion of that brand to the target audiences. It also includes a range of promotional material such as brochures, signage, and website information, and ensuring wide distribution of this material.

- *Through partnership with the Hamilton and Waikato RTO promote and inform visitors to the District.*

- *Work closely with key stakeholders on joint initiatives and promotional programmes.*
- *In conjunction with the Hamilton and Waikato RTO and key stakeholders develop a local promotion plan to determine and define effective methods of promoting the District and its communities.*

## Events

Events are often used as a marketing tool to create additional awareness of a destination. Events, when successful, also generate significant economic benefits for a town/city.

Policies and objectives for events are essential to ensure the most cost effective use of ratepayer funds. Event Management Plans and Safety Plans are also essential planning documents that support the provision of a successful event.

Over a number of years Waitomo District Council has developed two key events, the Great NZ Muster and the Waitomo District Christmas Parade. Each year these events develop and the Great NZ Muster is now an iconic kiwi event.

- *Continue to hold regular events to promote our District.*
- *Investigate opportunities for increased partnership.*
- *Build community moral, promote involvement and maximise the impact of events.*



*The Great NZ Muster*

# Te Kuiti i-SITE Visitor Information Centre

There are over 140 Visitor Centres in New Zealand, of which 79 operate under the i-SITE branded network.

The Te Kuiti i-SITE is a member of the New Zealand i-SITE network. The i-SITE prides itself on providing a free, friendly and objective information service to visitors and the local Waitomo District community. Information covers attractions, accommodation, upcoming events, sightseeing and transport options available in the Waitomo District and beyond.

The i-SITE also plays a key role in the promotion of Te Kuiti, the community and the Waitomo District.

The goals of the Te Kuiti i-SITE Visitor Information Centre are to provide:

- ***A vibrant and customer focused information service that welcomes, informs and entertains the resident of, and visitors to the Waitomo District***
- ***Skilled staff, trained to answer questions, give impartial advice and share information about what makes the District special with visitors and locals alike***
- ***Flexibility and choice by also providing a range of WDC Customer Services***
- ***Promoting the Waitomo District as a place to live, work and play***

## The Role of the i-SITE

Successful tourism is heavily dependant on readily accessible information.

i-SITE Visitor Centres are the front door to New Zealand's unique offerings and experiences, for all visitors need to know about what to see, where to go and how to get there.

Visitors may browse and study brochures and maps in their own time. They can plan a day's activities or a whole holiday.

Many centres also have Wi-Fi and some have cafes inside or nearby so visitors can sit and relax, digesting the information they've obtained, or email friends and family back home.

Visitors place great importance on face to face communication, and value the ability to chat directly with visitor centre staff who can offer a wealth of local knowledge.

With numerous activities to do and sights to see, i-SITE Visitor Centres provide a welcome environment.



Te Kuiti i-SITE

i-SITE's also offer a platform for local operators and service providers to promote and sell their businesses and for communities and regions to promote local events and public amenities.

## Challenges

The following are considered to be the key issues and challenges presently facing the Te Kuiti i-SITE Visitor Information Centre:

- *Emerging technologies*
- *Decline in visitor and commission bookings*
- *The global economy*
- *Changes in tourist and travel behaviours*
- *Funding capacity*

These challenges are kept front of mind when identifying key initiatives for the ongoing delivery of the i-SITE services.

## Information Services

Visitor Centres are the first point of reference for visitors arriving at a destination. There sense of welcome and visual presentation helps to develop their sense of affinity to a destination.

A visit to an i-SITE should always deliver things you require, including excellent service by a knowledgeable and friendly team, but an increasing number of people look to i-SITE staff for recommendations and information about "local secrets" or "hidden treasures".

Visitors want to be surprised or exposed to things they did not expect and make the place they are visiting unique.

- *Promote the range of activities and attractions within the Waitomo District.*
- *Provide high quality information about the District and its tourism amenities, products and services.*
- *Support local business with local knowledge*
- *Promote the Waitomo District as a place to live, work and play.*

## Booking Facilities

i-SITE's provide a range of booking services for visitors and the local community including accommodation, attractions and activity bookings.

Most visitor centres also act as a booking agent for public transport operators. This service is primarily used by the local community especially those that do not want to, or are unable to use internet or phone booking services.

Today's traveller is relying on formal travel bookings processes less and less. Travellers are more technologically aware and confident in researching and booking travel options online.

To remain relevant, i-SITE's need to adapt to accommodate this type of service delivery, ensuring that the information they provide online is relevant and current as that displayed within the i-SITE.

- *Position the i-SITE as a primary source of knowledge and booking assistance.*
- *Enhance visitor satisfaction and spend*



Awakino Heads

## Staff Capacity and Capability

The skill-set required over the next 10 years is different to the last 10 years which tended to rely on people who simply responded passively to information requests.

i-SITE staff will increasingly need excellent sales skills and ability to use fast changing desktop and mobile systems and social media tools. This has to be balanced with maturity, the ability to engage with people of various cultures and superior local knowledge.

- *Ongoing staff training and development*
- *Customer focused, Customer aware*

## Community Engagement

The Te Kuiti i-SITE assists community groups and organisations by displaying pamphlets and maintaining a community database. The i-SITE also helps with promoting and selling tickets for fundraising events or programmes these organisations run.

- *Continue to promote community events via a range of media (notice boards and social media posts)*



Te Kuiti i-SITE Facebook Page

## Collaboration

With a small rating base the effective use of limited resources is not an option for the Te Kuiti Visitor Information Centre, it is a necessity.

Working with, and extending the networks that the Te Kuiti i-SITE forms part of, will assist staff with streamlining and improving services to our community and its visitors.

- *Develop partnerships with key stakeholders and community organisations*
- *Share common resources with Waitomo i-SITE and neighbouring i-SITES*
- *Support the principles of the Hamilton & Waikato RTO Visitor Centre Charter of Engagement*

## Location Advantage

Waitomo has an iconic NZ tourist destination being the Waitomo Caves. Traditionally, tourists have visited the Caves as part of a day-trip, and then moved onto their next destination.

The development of the Timber Trail has introduced a new product offering for visitors and the local community.

The Te Kuiti i-SITE is strategically located between these two major tourist attractions. Opportunities exist for the Te Kuiti i-SITE to be the gateway of information and booking services for visitors experiencing the District Attractions.

- *Investigate opportunities to realise the potential of gateway services.*
- *Through partnership with Hamilton and Waikato RTO promote and inform visitors to the District.*

## Promotion

The i-SITE plays a key role in promoting the Waitomo District to visitors and the local community.

Successful promotion of our District to a variety of audiences is key to ensuring long term prosperity.

Outside perceptions have a significant influence on people considering coming to the District, be it to work, live or play.

The i-SITE works with operators to promote the District as a unique destination that offers a unforgettable experience.

- *Partnership with HWT and the Waitomo Caves i-SITE to promote the Waitomo District/*
- *Work closely with businesses and tourism operators on promotional programmes and initiatives.*
- *Continue to promote the District via a range of media.*



The Lost World, Waitomo

## The 'Hub' Concept

The Te Kuiti i-SITE fulfils an important function in the town, supporting both visitors and the local community with a range of products and services, information and advice.

From both a Council and community perspective, it is desirable for i-SITE services to be multi purpose. By delivering this type of facility to the community Council provides visitors and the community an excellent source of information, emphasising the synergies between i-SITE services and community services.

Council is revitalising the Te Kuiti Railway buildings to create a vibrant Hub in the centre of Te Kuiti. Council considers that the central hub will promote the culture and history of the community and instil a sense of pride for the township and district as a whole.

The core theme is to have a central space where the community can connect in various ways. It is envisaged that the 'Community

Spaces' will be multi-purpose / multi-function facilities catering to a variety of users. The facilities will provide for a range of activities including - meeting rooms, local exhibitions, a workshop environment, educational opportunities, arts and crafts, etc. The scope will be defined within community use, community benefit and community well-being.

The creation of this space will provide a shared facility and resources for community groups and organisations within the Waitomo District. It is proposed the management and oversight of the 'Community Space' will be provided by i-SITE staff.

- *A modern and welcoming customer environment*
- *Technology solutions that meet the needs of today's customer*
- *Multi-function / multi-purpose facility providing i-SITE and WDC customer service functions*
- *Review effectiveness of multi-function / multi purpose facility to inform ongoing service delivery.*



# Waitomo District: Key Facts

**Name** **Waitomo** 'Wai' which translates as water and 'tomo' which means entrance or hole. Waitomo can be translated as the 'stream which flows into the hole in the ground'.

**Area** 336,357 hectares

<b>Population</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2013</b>
Census	9,441	8,907
Maori Population	35%	41.8%

<b>Age Statistics</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2013</b>
Median Age	35	38
Median Age of Maori	25	26
15 years and under	26%	24%
Maori aged 15 years and under	34%	33%
65 years and over	11%	14%
Maori aged 65 years and over	6%	7%

<b>Household</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2013</b>
Occupied (usually resident)	3,471	3,423
Unoccupied (holiday homes)	729	840
Access to internet	43%	60%
Access to Cell Phone	62%	70%

<b>Workforce</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2013</b>
Unemployment (15 years and over)	3.1%	6%
Unemployment (Maori)	10.1%	11.8
Median Income	\$23,000	\$25,700