

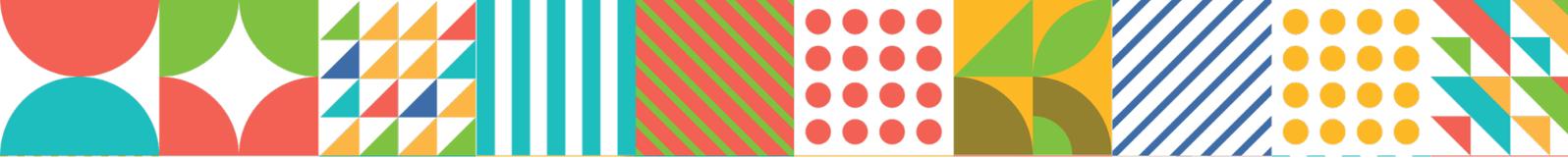


Welcoming Waimakariri 2026–2029

A Welcoming Communities Plan







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Acknowledgements

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The process of the stocktake and plan development benefited from the strong community partner relationships and established networks of the Council's Community Team.

The input from newcomers, various sectors and Council departments is the foundation of the Welcoming Waimakariri Plan and we acknowledge the community members for their willingness to share their experiences.

The Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group committed their time, providing oversight and ensuring an ongoing community voice in this project. The Council acknowledges the group for their insight, passion and being ambassadors for their respective sectors and communities.



He aha te mea nui o te ao

What is the most important thing in the world?

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata

It is the people, it is the people, it is the people

A word from the Mayor

Welcoming Communities is a programme led by Immigration New Zealand (INZ) in partnership with the Ministry of Ethnic Communities and the Human Rights Commission. It provides a framework to work towards healthier, happier and more productive communities by welcoming, supporting and empowering newcomers into the life of the district.

Over the past decade, the Waimakariri District has seen a 30% increase in population, with increasingly diverse ethnic demographics. It is wonderful to see our District grow and evolve, but change is not easy for some. It can take quite a while for migrant newcomers to feel a real sense of belonging, particularly where language difficulties or cultural differences lead to social isolation and disempowerment. Such barriers limit the opportunity for many of our migrant newcomers to be able to share and apply their skills in their local community or the local employment market. These barriers could mean that we don't really see the extent of the rich cultural tapestry within the District.

This intentional approach to creating Welcoming Communities will help bridge the gap between newcomers and long-term residents, celebrate diversity, and support our new migrants to apply their unique skills, talents and experience to creating more vibrant communities across the district.

I endorse this document as a strategic approach to Waimakariri District's local implementation of the Welcoming Communities Programme.



A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Dan Gordon'.

Dan Gordon
Mayor



Introduction



Our vision is to create a district where newcomers feel genuinely welcomed, valued, and empowered to participate fully in community life. A welcoming community is not just inclusive, it is stronger, more vibrant, and better connected.

The Welcoming Communities programme is a national initiative led by Immigration New Zealand (INZ), in partnership with the Ministry for Ethnic Communities and the Human Rights Commission. The Waimakariri District Council joined this programme in 2023 and secured funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to develop a welcoming plan tailored to the District.

The initiative promotes collaboration between newcomers and the receiving community, fostering inclusivity and connection. Successful settlement outcomes not only strengthen social cohesion but also deliver recognised economic benefits, one of the key drivers behind the programme.

Newcomers include individuals arriving from overseas such as recent migrants, former refugees, international students and returning citizens. It also includes anyone relocating from other parts of New Zealand.

As one of New Zealand's fastest-growing districts, Waimakariri is experiencing increasing population diversity. The Welcoming Communities programme provides an opportunity to build on the Council's existing social inclusion efforts.

Social inclusion is a key determinant of health and wellbeing, requiring particular attention in a semi-rural district. The Waimakariri District Council Community Team works in partnership with local groups and agencies to strengthen networks and deliver initiatives that promote social cohesion, including those aimed at newcomer and cultural inclusion. Key projects include the creation of Welcome Bags and resources, neighbourhood

connection events, and the establishment of the Migrants and Newcomers Group (now evolved into the Migrant Agency Group and Global Locals of Waimakariri (GLOW)).

The Community Team sits within the Community and Recreation Department, alongside Greenspace, Libraries, and Aquatics. These units play a pivotal role in building a connected, inclusive community and provide excellent scope for embedding a welcoming ethos into Council's ongoing work.

Participation in Welcoming Communities ensures cohesion across Council in supporting inclusive practice. It motivates continued support for initiatives (internal and community-led) and, through its structured framework, helps identify gaps and opportunities. The programme also offers access to a national peer support network, which has grown from an initial pilot of nine councils to 35 participating councils across the country.

Developing a local welcoming plan involves taking stock of existing welcoming practice and community aspirations, forming a community advisory group and producing a district-specific plan. The national Welcoming Communities framework provides a benchmark through a set of eight key elements with a total of 30 sub-outcomes that contribute to successful settlement for newcomers.

The following document outlines alignment with strategy, the district's local profile, the research methodology, and the process leading to the plan's outcomes. The overarching themes developed by the Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group (the community advisory group) and Council staff are presented in tables at the end of this document. Whilst aligned with the Welcoming Communities Standard, each district is encouraged to tailor its approach to reflect its unique characteristics and strategic priorities.



Snapshot of plan priorities

The themes that the Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group (WWWG) and Council staff decided on are purposefully broad in order to ensure the longevity of the plan. Each theme has one key outcome, goals, and proposed actions to achieve those goals.

The WWWG resonated with the use of Māori terms/values as they developed the themes. Values of Kotahitanga, Manaakitanga, and Kaihāpai informed the overarching themes that lead the plan journey.



Collective responsibility

Kotahitanga—oneness or unity and expresses the idea of collective action or responsibility.

Outcome

Commitment to fostering cultural awareness and inclusivity is a shared responsibility, with Council and community partners leading by example, developing skills and knowledge that enable meaningful change.

Goals

- 1.1 There are more opportunities to learn about mana whenua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi as New Zealand's founding document.
- 1.2 Council leads by example, embedding cultural understanding in its practices and ensuring services meet the needs of all Waimakariri residents.
- 1.3 Council is committed to the Welcoming Communities programme.

A welcoming Waimakariri

Manaakitanga—hospitality, kindness, generosity, support—the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others.

Outcome

The Waimakariri District is a welcoming place where it is easy for newcomers to connect, be supported and take part in the community.

Goals

- 2.1 The value of all newcomers, including those with diverse heritage, choosing to live and work in Waimakariri is understood and celebrated.
- 2.2 Newcomers are able to easily link with social, health and support services, recreational activities and feel socially connected.
- 2.3 Newcomers find Council communications easy to understand and Council services easy to access.

Being advocates and supporters

Kaihāpai—advocate, champion, promoter, supporter, upholder, backer, campaigner, proponent.

Outcome

Community and businesses are actively supported and enabled to lead welcoming and inclusive projects and programmes.

Goals

- 3.1 Community organisations are enabled to initiate and lead welcoming projects and programmes.
- 3.2 The business sector promotes and encourages local employers to provide welcoming and inclusive workplaces.
- 3.3 A strong youth focus is included in Welcoming Waimakariri activities.

Strategic alignment

Welcoming Communities' core values

1. We recognise Aotearoa New Zealand's history and Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi as the foundation for bringing all cultures together as one nation.
2. Tangata whenua play a vital role as leaders and partners in Welcoming Communities. The programme is guided by two Māori values: Whanaungatanga (building relationships) and Manaakitanga (hospitality and care).
3. Successful settlement happens when newcomers and local communities engage and share their voices.
4. Everyone brings unique skills, knowledge and experiences that help communities flourish. Welcoming Communities respects the cultural and social capital of members of the receiving communities and of newcomers.
5. We encourage locals to understand why newcomers are important and how welcoming initiatives benefit social, cultural and economic wellbeing.
6. Welcoming Communities builds on the ongoing work of councils and communities to promote diversity and inclusion.
7. Understanding our own culture and world view is an important step towards building a cohesive community.
8. Welcoming Communities incorporates the experience and input of newcomers and works with them to help them feel a part of communities in New Zealand and establish a sense of belonging.
9. Welcoming Communities gives locals the chance to experience and celebrate New Zealand's growing cultural diversity.

Waimakariri District Council

The Council has a statutory responsibility under the Local Government Act 2002 to identify strategic priorities and community outcomes that reflect the aspirations and needs of Waimakariri District residents. One of the current strategic priorities is to:

“Enhance community wellbeing, safety, inclusivity and connectedness.”

The value of this priority is stated as follows:

“Waimakariri District is a high growth area with an increasingly diverse population. We want to build a wellbeing centred community where all feel safe and welcome; are accepted and connected.”

The diagram below shows the Council's strategic framework that informs the delivery of a wide range of Council services, including infrastructure planning, business development, community services, and environmental stewardship. This work is underpinned by robust community engagement, evidence analysis, and alignment with national and regional planning.

The Waimakariri Community Development Strategy is one of the Council's key strategies as shown in figure 1 that supports this priority statement. It is the overarching strategy for the Welcoming Communities Plan.

Figure 1: Waimakariri District Council Strategic Framework



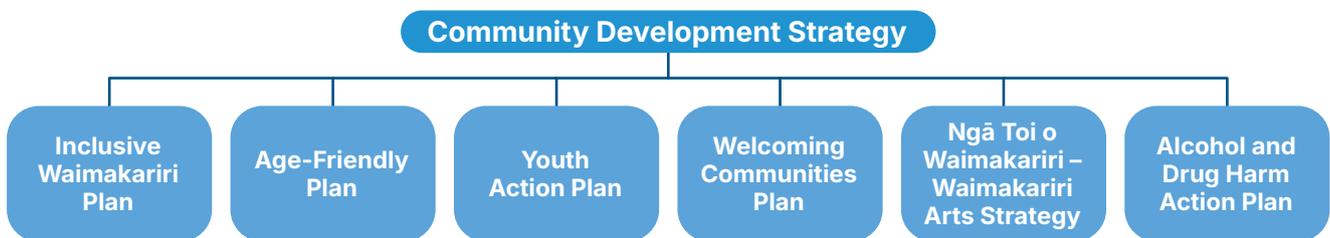
The Community Development Strategy

The objectives of the Community Development Strategy encompass all aspects of the Council's Community Outcomes. These objectives ensure that the Waimakariri is a District where people are:

- Safe and healthy; and able to access the determinants of good health and wellbeing
- Welcome and included, as part of our local communities—geographic and 'of interest'
- Informed and empowered to contribute to local decision making and achieve their aspirations
- Engaged and connected into the district's activities.

To address the broad range of community development activities and initiatives, several plans have been developed giving effect to specific priorities in both the Community Development Strategy and the Long-Term Plan as illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 2: Community Development Strategy and plans



Local context

District overview

The Waimakariri District lies to the north of Christchurch on the Canterbury Plains, extending from the Waimakariri River in the south, Pegasus Bay in the east and the Puketeraki Range in

the west. It is bounded to the north by Hurunui District. The District sits within the takiwā (territory) of Ngāi Tūāhuriri, which is one of 18 Ngāi Tahu regional papatipu rūnanga, to represent mana whenua interests.

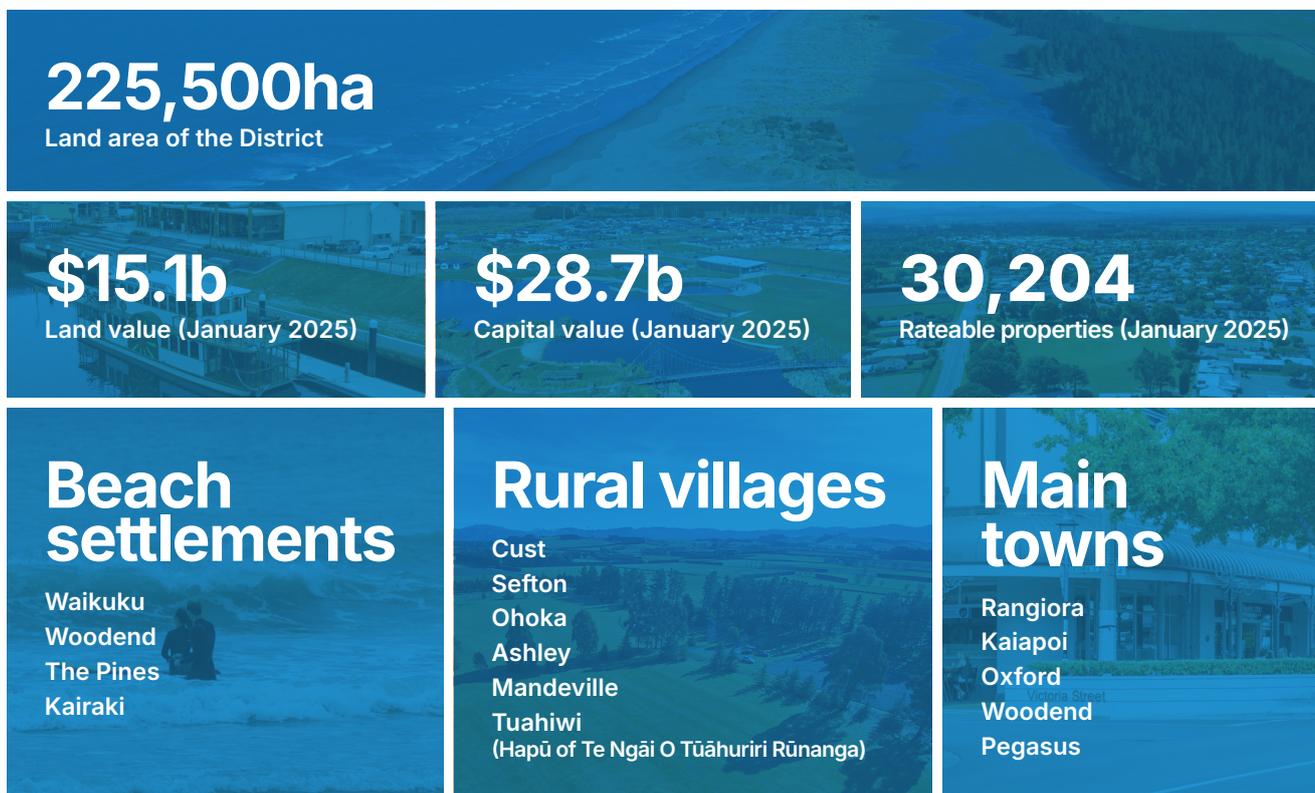


Figure 3: Extract from Waimakariri District Council Annual Plan 2025–2026

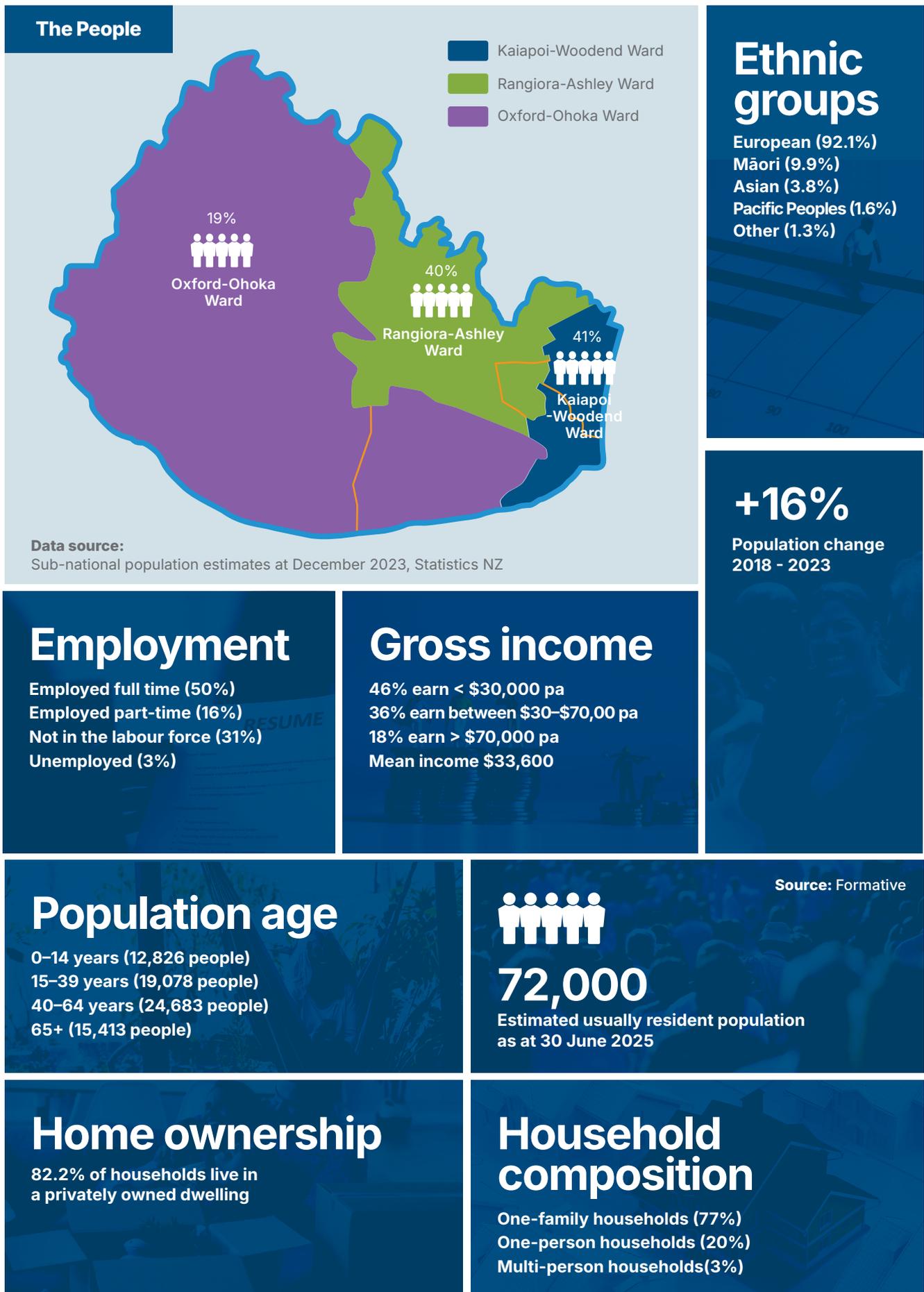


Figure 4: Extract from Waimakariri District Council Annual Plan 2025-2026

Growth

The Waimakariri District has seen an 11% increase in population in the 2023 census, compared to the last census in 2018. The district population is estimated at 72,000 for 2025 with mid-level projections estimating a population of 77,100 by 2033.

The District has a generally ageing population with a median age of 44.7 years, increasing on figures from 2013 (42.9) and 2018 (43.6).

*Stats NZ Census Data, 2023
Community Development Strategy 2025-2035*

New housing developments and proximity to Christchurch, as well as recreation and entertainment opportunities have resulted in an influx of younger couples and families looking to settle here.

Growth in the local hospitality, dairying, construction and retirement/aged care sectors has attracted an increasingly ethnically diverse workforce.

*Youth Strategy Review 2025
Community Development Strategy 2025-2035*



Ravenswood is one of Waimakariri's newest and fastest growing developments

Languages and places of birth

It is useful to have an idea of the statistics as an indication of the makeup of this district, but it is important to note that even though statistically the Waimakariri District may not “look” as diverse as some other parts of New Zealand, there are a range of residents who represent other languages and cultures.

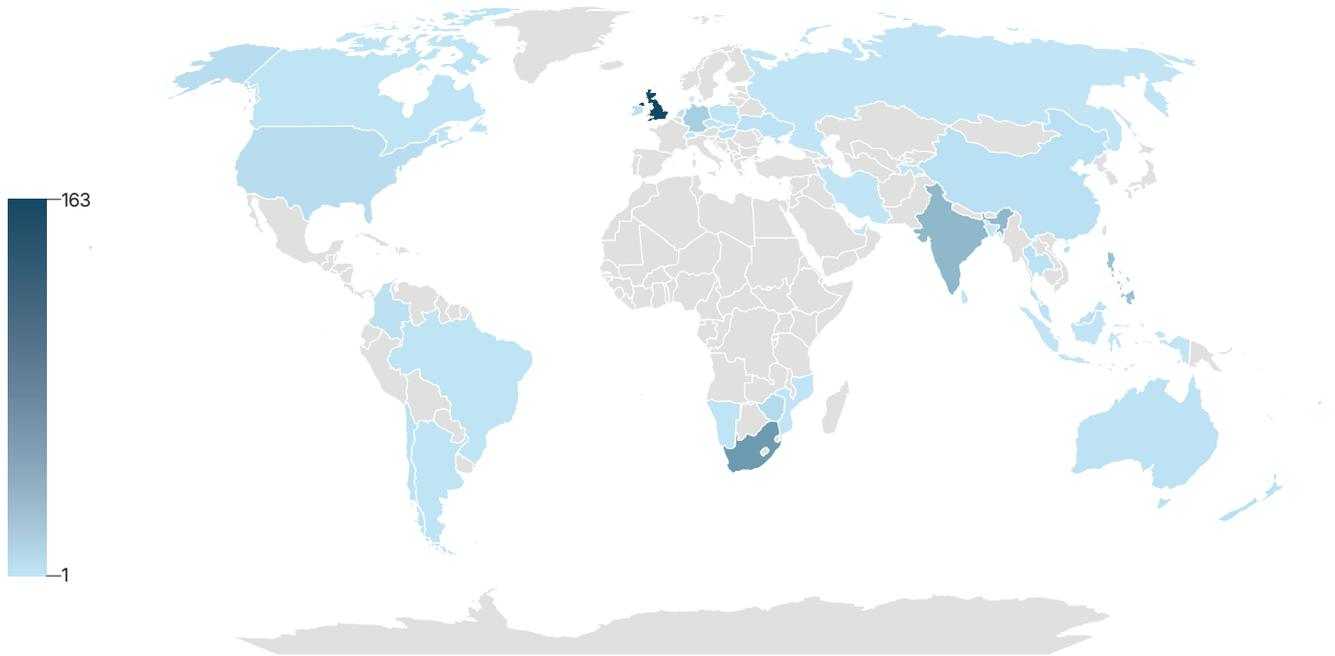
The top five spoken languages in the district (other than English) are Māori (1.8%), Afrikaans (0.9%), French and German (0.8%), Tagalog and New Zealand Sign Language (0.5%) and Spanish (0.4%). Other languages represented in the 2023 census include Hindi, Samoan, Northern Chinese, Punjabi, other forms of Chinese and Tongan.

We know from the range of nationalities at local citizenship ceremonies that there are possibly more languages spoken than indicated in the 2023 Census.

Residents who are part of nationalities and language groups that represent a smaller percentage could be more vulnerable—feel more isolated, less able to access information and less likely to participate in the community. Creating a plan with the most vulnerable in mind sets up the infrastructure for growth and serves the whole District.

Waimakariri has a higher comparative percentage of people born in the United Kingdom and Ireland than the New Zealand average (8.5% vs 5.4%) but is on par for those born in Australia (1.8% vs 1.7%), Europe (1.7% vs 1.8%) and North America (0.7% vs 0.9%). There is a lower percentage of those born in Asia (2.6% vs 11.6%) and the Pacific islands (0.5% vs 3.8%) in comparison with the New Zealand average.

Figure 5: Country of Birth - Waimakariri Citizenship Ceremonies May 2024 to June 2025 reflect a range of nationalities (40), represented by the 475 new citizens.



Ethnicity in the District

Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel they belong to.

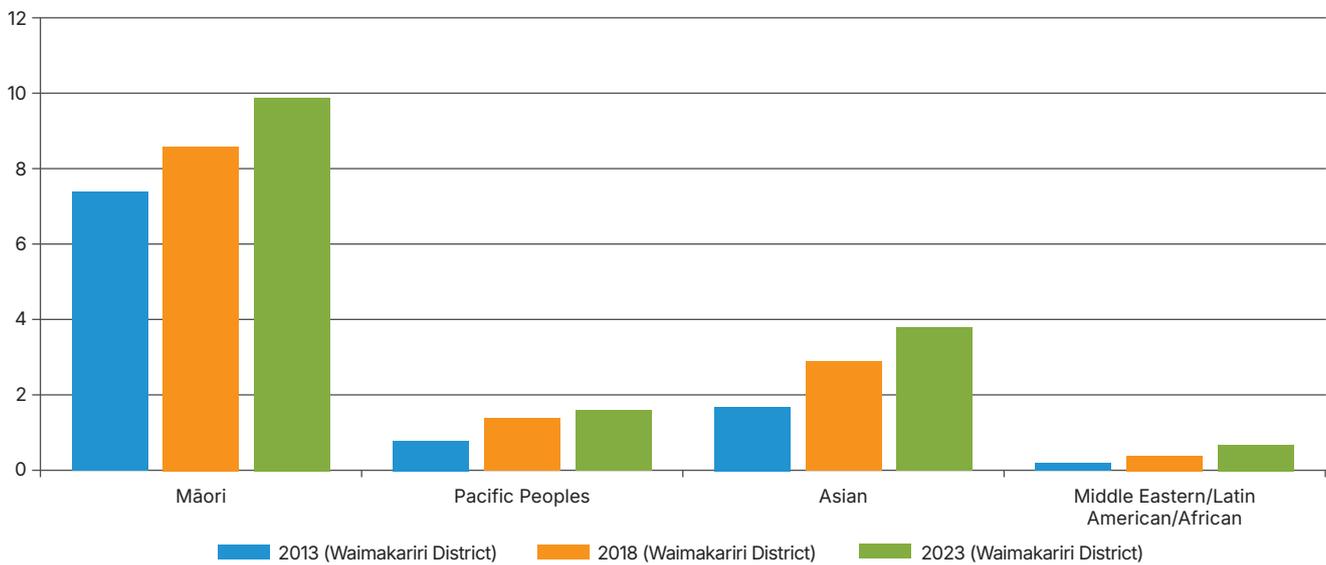
Ethnicity is self-perceived, and people can affiliate with more than one ethnic group.

As a result, the total of all categories may be more than 100 percent.

Table 1: Percentage of population that identify with each ethnic group, Waimakariri District and New Zealand, 2023 Census

2023 Census	Waimakariri District	New Zealand
Māori	9.9	17.8
European	7.4	7.2
Asian	3.9	17.4
Pacific Peoples	1.8	10
Other Ethnicity	1.3	1.1
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	0.7	1.9
New Zealand European	86.2	62.1

Figure 6: Percentage of population that identify with Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asian or MEELA (Middle Eastern, Latin American and African) ethnic group (level 1), Waimakariri District, 2013–2023 Censuses illustrating steady growth



Plan development



Research

To understand the local context and experiences of newcomers, a stocktake was undertaken. This included an exploratory mixed method design to identify experiences, existing support for newcomers and any opportunities for new initiatives.

Qualitative data collection

Internal engagement with Council units provided understanding of the district across a broad scope. It was also an opportunity to engage with units that may have responsibilities related to the elements of the Welcoming Communities Standard—Greenspace, Service Centres, Libraries, Governance, Communications and Engagement and Strategy and Policy.

External engagement with community partners and individual sectors:

- Waimakariri Access Group
- Waimakariri Health Advisory Group
- Citizens Advice Bureau North Canterbury
- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Migrant Agency Group
- The North Canterbury Sport and Recreation Trust
- Social Services Waimakariri
- Age-Friendly Waimakariri Advisory Group.

In addition, outreach was conducted across individual sectors such as:

- Health
- Farm support
- Education
- Faith-based organisations
- Business sector.

To gather community input, a survey was conducted with 81 responses, and two focus groups were held to gain deeper qualitative insights.

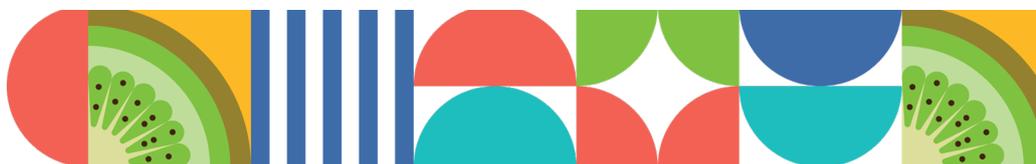
Quantitative data collection

- Review of Council policies and strategies
- Community survey: 81 responses
- Community Development Strategy survey 2024
- Migrant employers and stakeholders survey 2022
- Migrant experiences
- Inclusive Waimakariri Plan-Accessibility Plan 2025-2028 evidence
- Stats NZ Census results

Mana whenua involvement

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri expressed a preference to be kept informed but were unable to participate in the initial design of the Welcoming Waimakariri Plan due to resourcing and competing priorities.

Acknowledging the importance of consultation protocols, the Council has lodged a request to provide updates on the plan's progress and to invite future collaboration through Whitiōra, the established conduit for Ngāi Tūāhuriri.



What the community told us

The quantitative results provided insight into the region's pull factors, the elements that helped individuals feel supported, and the demographic composition of the district.

Thematic analysis of the survey results, focus groups and sector meetings was plotted against the Welcoming Communities Standard to show gaps, opportunities and existing work that support being welcoming.

Themes:

- 1. Newcomers:** Challenge finding newcomers, waves of ethnic groups and pull factors.

"The main issue I see is the lack of information regarding newcomers in the area. If we had information, we could locate newcomers and invite/encourage them to come to these meetings."

Survey respondent

- 2. Challenges of integration and inclusion:**

Some respondents talked about feeling welcomed initially but having difficulty making deeper connections. They expressed experiences of loneliness. Some mentioned difficulties in understanding and communication, cultural differences or "us and them" mentality, racism and xenophobia. There was a desire for more events to promote connection and celebrate diverse culture and foods.

"People born and raised here tend to have their own group of friends and though happy to chat at functions or sport events, don't offer invitations to their homes for a cuppa/meal or include you in their group gatherings or outings. Therefore, you remain an outsider, which makes it lonely if living on your own."

Survey respondent

- 3. The importance of community-led initiatives and support:** The value of Council and community collaborations, volunteering and community support services.

"We bought here because of better housing choices but appreciate the Waimakariri community more than anything else. From our first transactions with Council staff while buying, through the genuine welcome to the total Pegasus experience, to the volunteering opportunities we have taken advantage of, to my newfound discovery of Silver Fitness offered by the North Canterbury Sport & Recreation Trust, it's hard to fault the welcome we have received."

Survey respondent

- 4. Accessible infrastructure and services:**

Access to public transport and the value of community facilities, such as libraries and sports centres, that provide essential spaces for connection and deliver vital services to residents.

"Oxford connecting to other areas is tough, no regular bus or transport or cycle ways etc. Improving public transport. e.g. from Rangiora to Christchurch Hospital will help both staff working there and patients."

Survey respondent

The natural environment was a main pull factor for newcomers in the public survey but there was a desire expressed for public spaces to be featured more in information about the district. Food gardens, possible use of parks for events and the range of outdoor activities on offer was pointed out as attractive. Having safe spaces in which to engage in recreation was also seen as important.

"Garden, garden, garden—community garden :). Local events get together, movie in the park, family park, food culture, kids game."

Survey respondent

5. Healthcare accessibility: Language, transport, and costs were listed as barriers, as were lack of knowledge about health navigators, systems and translation services. Retaining general practitioners and health professionals was seen as another point about being welcoming in the district.

"It (lack of appointment) may be due to perceived language difficulties the appointments are deferred as being "full" as the practices know the appointment will take longer."

Interview respondent

6. The role of Council: Some respondents noted support services and resources as important. They also mentioned the value of being more pro-active to reach newcomers and break down barriers with those wary of government. Others mentioned the need for further work on exemplifying biculturalism and cultural competency training.

"Welcome Nights" or information evenings where the council sponsors a meeting of newcomers and invites CAB, library, local MPs, INZ representative to talk about topics of interest for people new to the community."

Survey respondent

7. Need for accessible information: There was an encouragement to continue what is currently supported (Welcome Bags, services offered by Waimakariri Libraries, Visit Waimakariri, Next Steps website), and improve accessibility in formats and translations. It was also suggested that Council might help streamline information about the district—events, hobbies and points of connection.

It was suggested that a "How to Kiwi" series or resource might support cultural inclusion.

"Accessible information (is needed) in multiple formats and translatable."

Survey respondent

8. Greater reflection and involvement of mana whenua: There was a general desire expressed for the reflection of mana whenua in the narrative of the district—the special unique local history. It was also felt that it would be useful to offer education about what biculturalism means in New Zealand, for new to New Zealand nationals, as this can cause misunderstanding in a multicultural context.

"When the church celebrated Matariki a person from (overseas) viewed it as "woke" and was resistant. See this as a scope for doing more cultural induction and workshops around te Tiriti and biculturalism."

Interview respondent



Waimakariri Libraries hosts kapa haka performances from school groups during Te Wiki o te Reo Māori - Māori Language Week.

Drafting the plan

The research findings were mapped against the 30 sub-outcomes of the Welcoming Communities Standard to identify potential alignments and inform the stocktake report. This report was reviewed by an internal Project Control Group comprising representatives from various Council departments. The wide range of opportunities and suggestions identified were then consolidated into key themes, which formed the basis for developing a draft concept plan.

The Welcoming Communities Standard

Welcoming Communities provides a framework for plan development that includes guidance on how to plot and measure what "welcoming" is through the Welcoming Communities Standard. The Standard offers councils and communities a benchmark for what a successful welcoming community looks like and guides the activities they undertake through their welcoming plans. The aspects covered in the Standard are those that could be reasonably planned for and delivered at a local level.



The Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group

In May 2025 the Council approved the establishment of the Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group (WWWG) to ensure a community lens in the finalisation of the plan.

Group vision

"To foster a connected and inclusive Waimakariri, where everyone feels welcomed, safe, valued, informed and empowered to participate fully in their communities."

As community representatives, the group's role is to help frame the final draft of the Waimakariri Welcoming Community Plan document and then progress the implementation of the plan.

The group is comprised of members representing a variety of sectors including:

- Newcomers
- Health
- Education
- Business
- Youth
- Cultural groups
- Council staff
- Elected representative

The group worked through the initial draft plan from the stocktake, grouping the proposed opportunities and actions into broader themes.

Shifting South to the Regions

Rosalie Rapana

Rosalie Rapana and her family of five moved down to Waimakariri from Auckland—something she was very nervous about.

“I was born in Auckland, grew up in Whangārei and then moved back to Auckland when I was 23. My husband and I had established our careers and raised our three kids in Auckland, so this was a huge move for us. But now that we’re here, we wouldn’t go back.”

Rosalie and her husband enjoy the shorter commute to work, and as a big sporting family, have found it easy to get everyone into local sports teams. They’ve been impressed by the District’s schooling options for their kids.

“As much as they’ve done really well in Auckland, I feel they’re getting even more down here than ever before. They learn different things here—they’re growing vegetables and learning how to cook them, they go on amazing school camps and they are learning so much more te reo and Māori culture.

“For our family it’s been a great move in every sense: schooling, employment, house buying and life goals—everything.”

Rosalie Rapana and her family at Northbrook Wetlands.



Priorities and outcomes

1

Collective responsibility - Kotahitanga

Context

By embedding inclusive practices and through its community development function, the Council, in collaboration with established community partners and networks, can inspire the wider community to continue/instigate their own inclusive practices.

Feedback from the stocktake highlighted the importance of leading, promoting and normalising cultural competency, deepening newcomers' understanding of New Zealand's historical bicultural context, particularly within a multicultural society. It also highlighted the value placed on the use of te reo Māori and respectful recognition of shared values contributed to fostering a sense of belonging.

"When I hear people having a go at trying to correctly pronounce te reo Māori like "Rangiora", "Ohoka", it's awesome. Inviting newcomers into the historical stories (Māori and Pakeha stories) of this beautiful area can help newcomers to connect to their new home."

Survey respondent, from elsewhere in New Zealand, 2–5 years in the District.

Outcome - Commitment to fostering cultural awareness and inclusivity is a shared responsibility, with Council and community partners leading by example, developing skills and knowledge that enable meaningful change.

Goals

- 1.1. There are more opportunities to learn about Te Tiriti o Waitangi as New Zealand's founding document.
- 1.2. Council leads by example, embedding cultural understanding in its practices and ensuring services meet the needs of all Waimakariri residents.
- 1.3. Council is committed to the Welcoming Communities programme.

2

A welcoming Waimakariri - Manaakitanga

Context

As Waimakariri grows, so does its cultural diversity and need to foster connection and inclusion. Newcomers generally reported feeling welcomed in the District; however, there is potential to enhance their experience further. Themes from the stocktake highlighted feelings of isolation and a keenness for more community events where there would be opportunities to connect and celebrate culture. Reducing social isolation is a key element of the Community Development Strategy. The Council's Community Team work with community partners to increase social inclusion by sharing community stories, and ensuring newcomers find it easy to settle in the district, through access to information, skills and social connection.

I LOVE THE COOKING CLASSES! It is not easy to find friends in my age group. It is easier if you are a parent with kids, you are automatically in contact with parents/preschool friends. For elderly there are morning teas/coffees, but nothing in between.

Survey respondent, Germany, 10 years in the District

With national support, and by investing in systems and initiatives that meet the needs of a diverse population, the District can strengthen its social infrastructure and uphold manaakitanga, ensuring everyone feels at home.

Outcome - The Waimakariri District is a welcoming place where it is easy for newcomers to connect, be supported and take part in the community.

Goals

- 2.1. The value of newcomers, including those with diverse heritage choosing to live and work in Waimakariri is understood and celebrated.
- 2.2. Newcomers are able to easily link with social, health and support services, recreational activities and feel socially connected.
- 2.3. Newcomers find Council communications easy to understand and Council services easy to access.

3

Being an advocate and supporter - Kaihāpai

Context

The Council, with its well-networked community development function, is well-positioned to facilitate community-led projects that contribute to more welcoming and inclusive communities across the District.

"If community services can collect temp jobs and pass it on to the newcomers to begin somewhere. Also giving them an orientation on how to get into the community to recover from the shock of migration."

Survey respondent from India in the region 1-2 years

The Waimakariri District is home to industries that hold accredited status for supporting work visas. It has dairy farms that bring in migrant workers. It is also well served with aged care and hospitality businesses whose employment base is largely migrant based. In encouraging and facilitating cultural competency across local workspaces, particularly through its connection to Enterprise North Canterbury (ENC), Council can help local employers increase their productivity, efficiency, staff retention and workplace culture.

Feedback in the stocktake suggested that there was a need to support new-to-New Zealand youth by fostering connection, addressing racism, and providing pastoral care for both domestic-international and international students. Through its Cultural Inclusion, Youth Development and Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, Council has developed relationships across the youth support sector. These will be most valuable in working to address the challenges for local migrant/immigrant and diverse rangatahi.

Outcome - Community and businesses are actively supported and enabled to lead welcoming and inclusive projects and programmes.

Goals

- 3.1. Community organisations are enabled to initiate and lead welcoming projects.
- 3.2. The business sector promotes and encourages local employers to promote more welcoming and inclusive workplaces.
- 3.3. A strong youth focus is included in Welcoming Waimakariri activities.

In 1979, Hillie and Ina moved to New Zealand from Holland, not knowing a word of English. The first few years were a struggle, but eventually they settled into the Kiwi way of life, which they love!

The sisters have been hosting annual Dutch cooking classes as part of the popular Global Locals of Waimakariri Multicultural Cooking class series.



Moving North of the Bridge

Sam Meni

Sam Meni moved to Waimakariri with his wife in 2023 and chose to settle in Ravenswood.

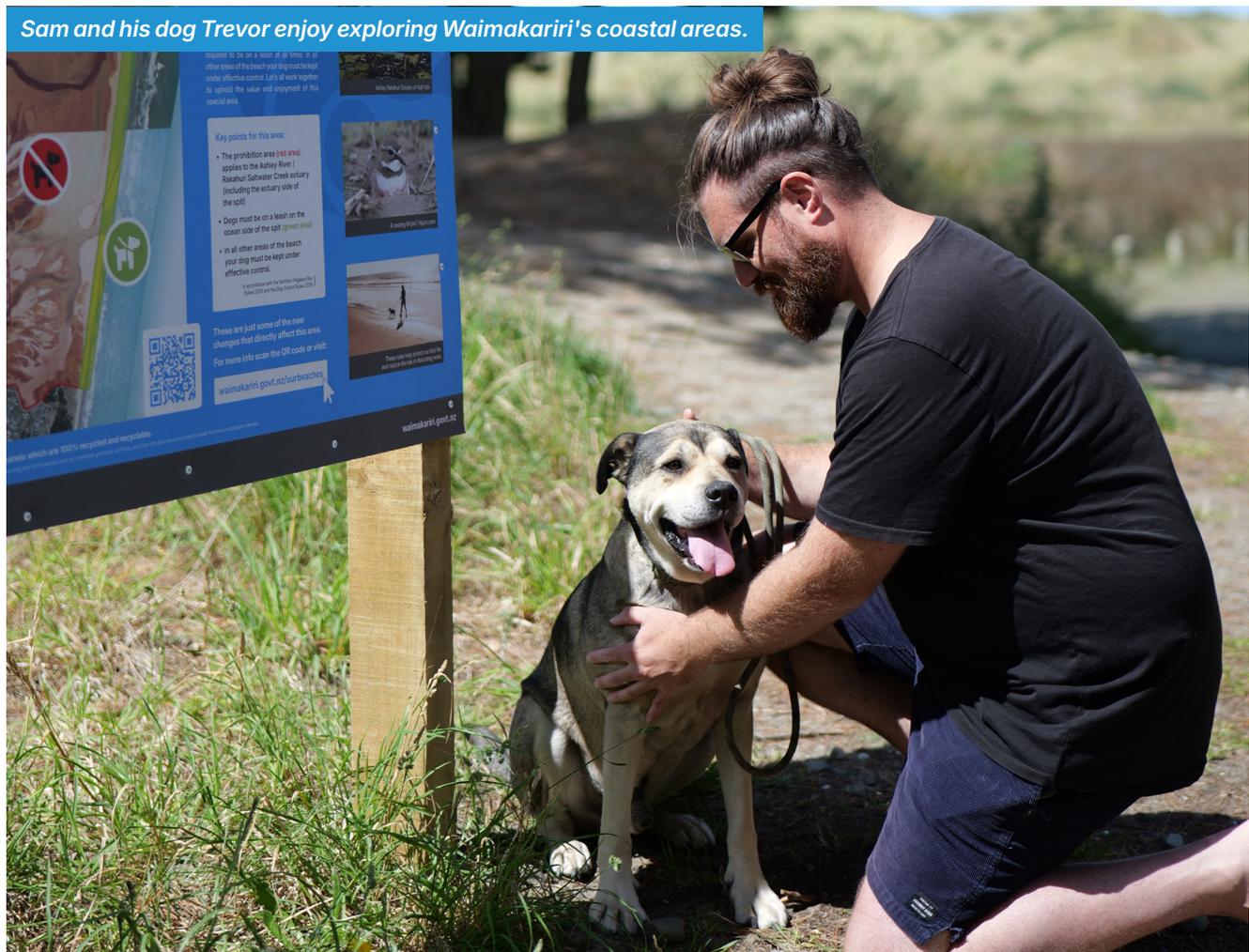
Christchurch born and bred, Sam looked at options outside of the city to build their first home.

“We knew Christchurch was unaffordable for us, so at the time the options were go out to Selwyn or come out to Waimakariri.”

He and his wife both have full-time jobs in Waimakariri and are now raising their first-born daughter together. Sam enjoys the short drive to work and being able to get to the beach in less than 10 minutes—a favourite spot for walking his dog.

Sam says moving north across the bridge from Christchurch feels like coming home.

“My Grandmother was born and raised here and since she has passed it’s been really rewarding learning more about the place she once called home.”



The Welcoming Waimakariri Action Plan

The following tables outline the three themes, the related outcomes, main goals and actions. Each table identifies the lead, potential collaborators, an estimated timeframe and measures of success. Some actions build on existing practice, while others introduce new initiatives. To show alignment with the

Welcoming Communities programme, each action is linked to the relevant Standard element, demonstrating the plan's comprehensive approach to creating a welcoming community.

Different cultures come together to share good food and stories at the annual Global Locals of Waimakariri Christmas Dinner.



Theme 1: Collective responsibility - Kotahitanga

Outcome	Commitment to fostering cultural awareness and inclusivity is a shared responsibility, with Council and community partners leading by example, developing skills and knowledge that enable meaningful change.		
Goal	1.1. There are more opportunities to learn about mana whenua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi as New Zealand's founding document		
Actions	Time frame	Welcoming Communities Standard	
1.1.1	Ensure regular communication with Ngāi Tūāhuriri to create opportunities for Welcoming Waimakariri partnership. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Ngāi Tūāhuriri, Whitiōra, Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group (WWWG)	Year 1-3	1. Inclusive Leadership
1.1.2	Encourage opportunities for te reo Māori to become increasingly visible as a cultural taonga (treasure) that enriches New Zealand's national identity by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Libraries Heritage team to further communicate the District's place names and history through a media campaign • Advocating for more opportunities for te reo Māori to be included in public signage • Include common te reo Māori terms in a "How to Kiwi" guide for new to New Zealand newcomers e.g. <i>kia ora, hui, mahi, kapahaka, Karakia, Tamariki, motu.</i> Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Whitiōra	Year 1-3	1. Inclusive Leadership 8. Culture and Identity
1.1.3	Promote opportunities to learn about the District's unique history and the continuing story of Waimakariri settlement, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation in public places, e.g. art installations • The Libraries' Māori and New Zealand collections • Further learning e.g. Tuahiwi Education workshops • Local museums and historical societies Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Whitiōra, Waimakariri Public Arts Trust	Year 1	1. Inclusive Leadership 7. Welcoming Public Spaces 8. Culture and Identity
Measures of success: Feedback from newcomers on how easy it was to find out more about the District's history and Aotearoa/New Zealand's bicultural heritage.			

Goal	1.2. Council leads by example, embedding cultural understanding in its practices and ensuring services meet the needs of all Waimakariri residents.		
Actions	Time frame	Welcoming Communities Standard	
1.2.1	Provide cultural awareness training for Council leaders and staff. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group (WWWG)	Year 1-2	1. Inclusive Leadership 4. Connected and Inclusive Communities
1.2.2	Provide community focused cultural inclusion facilitation to ensure support continues for the Migrant Agency Group, Global Locals of Waimakariri (GLOW), and WWWG, and programmes such as English Language Classes, race unity awareness, and the migrant drivers programme. Lead: Waimakariri District Council	Existing	1. Inclusive Leadership
1.2.3	Encourage community groups and the business sector to undertake cultural awareness training. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Enterprise North Canterbury, WWWG	Year 3	3. Equitable Access 4. Connected and Inclusive Communities 5. Economic Development, Business and Employment 8. Culture and Identity
1.2.4	Regular review of Council services to ensure they meet diverse cultural needs e.g. burial practices. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: WWWG	Year 2	1. Inclusive Leadership 3. Equitable Access 8. Culture and Identity

Measures of success: Provision of cultural awareness workshops, number of Council staff participating in training, number of community and businesses hosting cultural awareness workshops.

Goal	1.3. Council is committed to the Welcoming Communities programme.		
Actions	Time frame	Welcoming Communities Standard	
1.3.1	Ensure sufficient resourcing for ongoing facilitation and support of the Welcoming Waimakariri initiative. Lead: Waimakariri District Council	Year 1-3	1. Inclusive Leadership
1.3.2	Continue to participate and contribute to the National Welcoming Communities programme, including engaging in regional and national networks. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group (WWWG)	Year 1-3	1. Inclusive Leadership

Measures of success: Acquiring sufficient project funding through philanthropic sources. Council continues to provide facilitation for Welcoming Waimakariri projects and the Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group. Completing stage one Welcoming Communities accreditation.

Theme 2: A welcoming Waimakariri - Manaakitanga

Outcome	The Waimakariri District is a welcoming place where it is easy for newcomers to connect, be supported and take part in the community.		
Goal	2.1. The value of all newcomers, including those with diverse heritage, choosing to live and work in Waimakariri is understood and celebrated.		
Actions	Time frame	Welcoming Communities Standard	
2.1.1 Gather and share stories of newcomers and local initiatives that foster connection and inclusivity. Lead: Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group (WWWG) Collaborate: Waimakariri District Council	Year 1-3	2. Welcoming Communications 4. Connected and Inclusive Communities 8. Culture and Identity	
2.1.2 Encourage local art groups to feature art/artists in public spaces that celebrate cultural diversity. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Waimakariri Public Arts Trust, WWWG	Year 1	4. Connected and Inclusive Communities 7. Welcoming Public Spaces 8. Culture and Identity	
2.1.3 Encourage the provision of opportunities that connect the receiving community and newcomers through shared cultural experiences and significant celebrations and events. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Cultural groups, event/promotions agencies, Global Locals of Waimakariri (GLOW), WWWG	Year 1-3	4. Connected and Inclusive Communities	
2.1.4 Create a Welcoming Toolkit to provide guidance on culturally responsive best practice for receiving community organisations (e.g. sports clubs, businesses). Lead: WWWG Collaborate: Waimakariri District Council	Year 2	1. Inclusive Leadership 2. Welcoming Communications 4. Connected and Inclusive Communities	
Measures of success: Number of stories shared and level of engagement across media. Number of exhibitions/collaborations/events showcasing art that celebrates cultural diversity. Number of events and attendance numbers. Development of a Welcoming Toolkit.			

Goal	2.2. Newcomers are able to easily link with social and health support services, recreational activities and feel socially connected.		
Actions	Time frame	Welcoming Communities Standard	
2.2.1 Encouraging newcomers to feel part of the community and socially connected through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of volunteering opportunities, newcomer groups, sports and recreational clubs • The creation of opportunities to connect with Council to increase civic participation. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group (WWWG), Citizens Advice Bureau North Canterbury (CABNC), Volunteer coordinators, Global Locals of Waimakariri (GLOW), Libraries, English Language Classes, Rural Support Trust, Dairy Women's Network.	Year 1	2. Welcoming Communications 4. Connected and Inclusive Communities 6. Civic Engagement and Participation	
2.2.2 Work with likely existing points of contact to link newcomers with community information and local services e.g. Welcome Bags. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: schools, healthcare centres, Tuahiwi Marae, retirement villages, faith groups, Libraries.	Year 1	2. Welcoming Communications	
2.2.3 Advisory groups advocate to health and social services providers to consider and adapt services to meet newcomer needs e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking down barriers to healthcare access • Targeted communication. Lead: WWWG Collaborate: Waimakariri Access Group (WAG), Waimakariri Health Advisory Group (WHAG), Social Services Waimakariri (SSW).	Year 1	1. Inclusive Leadership 3. Equitable Access	

Measures of success: Observed increase of newcomer participation in community organisations and groups, number of Welcome Bags distributed, reported advocacy statements from advisory group meetings.

Goal	2.3. Newcomers find Council communications easy to understand and Council services easy to access.		
Actions	Time frame	Welcoming Communities Standard	
2.3.1 Ensure communications are easy to understand, so that newcomers know what Council does and what services are available to them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlining the information on the "Living Here" webpages with links to other useful sites • Include visuals and pictorial signage • Promote accessibility to translation services • Advocate adhering to the Whaikaha Ministry for Disabled Persons guidelines on accessible information. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: WWWG, WAG	Year 1-2	2. Welcoming Communications 3. Equitable Access	
2.3.2 Collate a resource pool of locals and Council staff with language fluency and/or cultural knowledge to support public communication, especially in emergencies. Lead: Waimakariri District Council	Year 1	2. Welcoming Communications 3. Equitable Access 4. Connected and Inclusive Communities	

Measures of success: User testing shows that information is easy to find and access. Increase use of pictorial signage. Register of persons with language fluency and/or cultural knowledge produced.

Theme 3: Being advocates and supporters - Kaihāpai

Outcome	Community and businesses are actively supported and enabled to lead welcoming and inclusive projects and programmes..		
Goal	3.1. Community organisations are enabled to initiate and lead welcoming projects and programmes.		
Actions	Time frame	Welcoming Communities Standard	
3.1.1 Support collaborative community led cultural inclusion and connection activities and projects by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging use of community facilities and parks (e.g. help with choosing appropriate spaces, booking process, health and safety planning) • Providing support and guidance to groups leading community initiatives (e.g. event planning workshops, funding applications). Lead: Waimakariri District Council	Year 1–3	1. Inclusive Leadership 4. Connected and Inclusive Communities 7. Welcoming Public Spaces	
3.1.2 Support new and existing cultural groups and networks that focus on welcoming newcomers. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Welcoming Waimakariri working Group (WWWG), Global Locals of Waimakariri (GLOW), Migrants Agency Group.	Year 1–3	4. Connected and Inclusive Communities	
3.1.3 Encourage use of the Welcoming Toolkit by community groups, clubs and organisations. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: WWWG, regional associations.	Year 3	3. Equitable Access 4. Connected and Inclusive Communities	
Measures of success: Number of community cultural activities and projects. Increase in membership of existing cultural groups and newcomer networks. Distribution and uptake of the Welcoming Toolkit			
Goal	3.2. The business sector promotes and encourages local employers to provide welcoming and inclusive workplaces.		
Actions	Time frame	Welcoming Communities Standard	
3.2.1 Identify opportunities to collaborate with and support businesses to share welcoming workplace practices and promote inclusivity by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging use of the Welcoming Toolkit by employers • Supporting the sharing of resources for staff who are new to the District. • Supporting cultural training for business owners. Lead: Enterprise North Canterbury Collaborate: Waimakariri District Council, WWWG and business associations.	Year 2	3. Equitable Access 4. Connected and Inclusive Communities 5. Economic Development, Business and Employment	
3.2.2 Connect entrepreneurs new to the District to local business networks and support. Lead: Enterprise North Canterbury	Year 1–3	5. Economic Development, Business and Employment	
Measures of success: Increasing membership to current business networks. Distribution and uptake of the Welcoming Toolkit.			

Goal		
3.3. A strong youth focus is included in Welcoming Waimakariri activities.		
Actions	Time frame	Welcoming Communities Standard
3.3.1 Partner with Youth Council and schools to enhance and extend cultural and social support opportunities for all young newcomers by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting establishment of youth multicultural/newcomer groups • Linking with Waiyouth events in the District • Aligning with the pending Youth Action Plan for the District • Connecting international students to local youth focused initiatives. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Youth Council, Waiyouth, Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group (WWWG), Schools.	Year 1-3	3. Equitable Access 4. Connected and Inclusive Communities 8. Culture and Identity
3.3.2 Engage and respond to the experience and challenges of dual nationality young people who may be second-generation (or more), living in the Waimakariri District. Lead: WWWG Collaborate: Schools, Waimakariri Youth Council, youth groups.	Year 2	4. Connected and Inclusive Communities 8. Culture and Identity
3.3.3 Respond to opportunities to collaborate with schools to further support their culturally diverse students and whānau. Lead: Waimakariri District Council Collaborate: Schools, WWWG, Waimakariri Youth Council.	Year 1-3	3. Equitable Access 4. Connected and Inclusive Communities 8. Culture and Identity
Measures of success: Engagement level in youth focused events. Increased support for culturally diverse young people including second or more generations. Number of collaborations with schools.		



How we fund Welcoming Communities projects

Welcoming Communities is all about working together. In line with our community-led development approach, funding for each project is decided collaboratively by stakeholder working groups during planning. This ensures activities are well-resourced, sustainable, and reflect best practice.

When planning, we look at what each partner can contribute, whether that's time, skills, spaces, or financial support. We also explore opportunities for philanthropic funding, central government grants, and sponsorship to make projects happen.

Council plays its part too, usually through in-kind support. This includes helping with community development facilitation, providing meeting spaces, promoting activities, and assisting with planning, delivery, and evaluation.

Every activity in this plan has been shaped using this collaborative and resource-conscious approach because together, we make Welcoming Communities thrive.



Waikuku Beach in summer. One of the main pull factors to the Waimakariri District is the natural environment, with opportunity to enjoy various outdoor pursuits.

From the Philippines to Pegasus

Bob and Rica Bolanos

When they decided to migrate, Bob and Rica Bolanos explored options in the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Ultimately, they landed on New Zealand for its unique blend of a small, agriculturally based country with a modern, first-world feel.

The move began with their three children in 2006 when Bob landed a role on a dairy farm in Rotherham, a small town in Hurunui. With a degree in Agribusiness Management and a passion for dairy farming, the transition felt natural.

Over 12 years working across Canterbury farms, Bob built a strong reputation for improving dairy efficiency and farm management, often overcoming

resistance and prejudice from traditional farmers. He later became a vocal advocate for Filipino workers, and at the time he retired from dairy farming in 2017, there were 5,000 Filipinos working on farms across Canterbury.

Bob and Rica now live in Pegasus and are both actively involved in groups and activities that support newcomers settling in Waimakariri.

Bob helped establish the Waimakariri Migrants and Newcomers Group, which aims to support migrants, refugees and newcomers in the District. Bob and Rica also host a Filipino cooking class as part of the annual Global Locals of Waimakariri (GLOW) Multicultural Cooking class series.



Rica and Bob.



Rica at the GLOW Filipino cooking class.

Bob with participants at the Filipino cooking class, part of the GLOW Multicultural Cooking classes series.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Welcoming Waimakariri Plan is a living document. As community needs priorities change over time, regular reviews will be necessary to maintain relevance and effectiveness.

While the plan provides a high-level framework, its actions can be updated to ensure continued progress toward the intended outcomes.

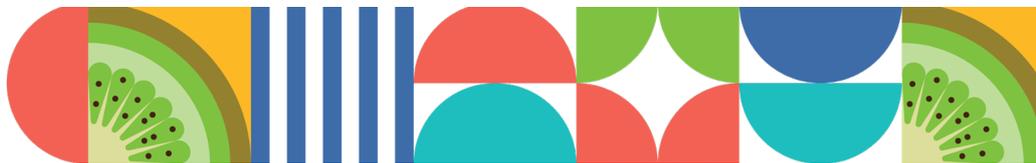
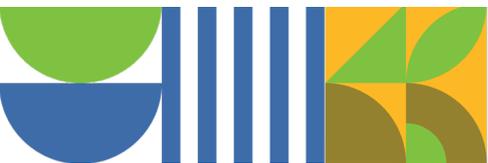
To ensure its success it is important that Council continues to support the Welcoming Communities programme.

Ongoing evaluation of the Waimakariri Welcoming Plan will ensure the sustainability of welcoming initiatives through:

- Ensuring effective evaluation and measuring outcomes is part of all welcoming initiatives.
- Ensuring participant and community partner feedback is collected at Welcoming Waimakariri promotions and events.
- Tailoring a platform for hearing newcomer needs and experiences.
- Reviewing the Welcoming Waimakariri Plan in three years.



Children exploring the playground at Owen Stalker Park, Woodend. There are many reserves and parks in Waimakariri for young families to enjoy.





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