

2020

WELCOME TO

# WAIKATO

The beating heart of New Zealand

INTRODUCTION  
/ OUR WAIKATO



## Introduction

### *He tangata, he tangata, he tangata*

This is the second time that Waikato Vital Signs® has ‘taken the pulse’ of our region’s communities, and it happened just as the COVID-19 crisis was raising the whole world’s blood pressure.

The original intent was to hold community engagement workshops across the Waikato during March and April – one in each council district plus an extra session for iwi.

The goal, as with Vital Signs® missions around the world, was local people discussing local data and providing local collective responses. The pandemic largely derailed that plan, with only two workshops going ahead.

The engagement therefore switched to an online survey run over late April. Why press on? Because the very issues Waikato Vital Signs® seeks to define and address are clearly ‘front of mind’ for many people at this time. The pandemic is a very particular moment in history, one making more people recognise we all need to actively work together if we are to realise ‘A Better Waikato for Everyone, Forever’.

The result is an excellent report in the following pages, but a different one than would have come out of a workshop-only program. The mostly individual responses, rather than group brainstorming, means views and concerns have tended to be more strongly expressed, often with more specific detail and suggested solutions, but possibly without some of the insights that would have hatched from the synergy of conversation.

Inevitably there are also gaps, so Momentum Waikato will seek to fill them with supplementary reports over the next couple of years. In 2016, Waikato Vital Signs® only covered Hamilton City

and the Waikato and Matamata-Piako districts. In 2020 the whole region has been contacted, but too few survey responses were received to provide firm conclusions about the Hauraki, Matamata-Piako and South Waikato districts, although a few thoughtful submissions from well-connected people were received from those areas.

A major gap is the absence of an ‘Iwi Voices’ section – the voice of Māori is present here, but the lack of a dedicated face-to-face hui for mana whenua is acknowledged as a shortfall that will need to be rectified in the follow-up activity.

Nevertheless, this Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 Report provides a detailed and thought-provoking snapshot of the current facts and priorities of the Waikato community, one that goes further in many respects than was possible in the 2016 edition. We thank everyone involved in putting it together.

**As you read these pages, consider your place in the story. What do you love, and what do you want to change, about your patch? Remember, when we work together, anything is possible.**



Neil Richardson  
Chair



Kelvyn Eglinton  
Chief Executive



About Vital Signs®

Vital Signs® is a community check-up conducted by foundations around the world that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs® is coordinated internationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

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Disclaimers

- In the previous 2016 Vital Signs® report, the Waikato Vital Signs® region included three council areas – Waikato District, Hamilton City and Matamata-Piako District. Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 includes nine districts, and for some indicators there have been changes in the data source or methodology, therefore, overall findings for some indicators are not directly comparable between the 2016 and 2020 reports.  
This direct comparability issue also holds true for some indicators where there have been changes in the data source or a change in the methodology of calculating rates or conducting surveys.
- People may identify with, and therefore be counted in, more than one ethnic group, so overall percentage totals on relevant measures can add up to more than 100.
- Some quotes from survey respondents or workshop participants have been paraphrased for brevity and clarity, but retain their original meaning.
- While all reasonable care has been taken to ensure that information contained in this document is true and accurate at the time of publication/release, changed circumstances after publication may impact on the accuracy of that information. Momentum Waikato and the Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 partners shall not be liable for any loss suffered through the use, directly or indirectly, of any information contained in this report.
- Momentum Waikato uses Waikato-Tainui spellings of te reo, so double vowels rather than macrons, e.g. ‘Maaori’, except where macrons are used by the owner of the title and term or writer of the text, e.g. Pūniu River Care.

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YOUR REPORT



YOUR  
REPORT



Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 is a community check-up that reports on the social, environmental, cultural and economic wellbeing of our communities by joining the dots between statistical information and the aspirations and priorities of the people living in our region.

The project is coordinated by Momentum Waikato using the Vital Signs® strategy and narrative developed by Community Foundations of Canada and deployed by community foundations around the world. First run in 2016, this second outing of the report in 2020 also partners with the Waikato Wellbeing Project, with both projects using the measure of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Waikato Wellbeing Targets and SDGs have been highlighted throughout the report wherever they relate to the Vital Signs® 'Impact Areas' (see list to the right). Not all Impact Areas covered by this report have a link to the SDGs.

The 2020 project started with the Waikato Vital Signs® Consultancy Report (January 2020), produced by the National Institute of Demographic and Economic Analysis (NIDEA) at the University of Waikato. Community workshops were planned for every district but most had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. Community responses and local stories were instead gathered via the Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 online survey, as well as from two community engagement workshops that were able to take place in Otorohanga and Te Kuiti in March before restrictions started.

By combining quantitative data with local conversations, this report is intended to build a picture of what the challenges, priorities and opportunities are in our region over the eight different Impact Areas.

For more information see [www.momentumwaikato.nz/vital-signs](http://www.momentumwaikato.nz/vital-signs).

#### Children and Youth



#### Community



#### Culture and Arts



#### Economy



#### Education



#### Environment



#### Health



#### Recreation



## WAIKATO WELLBEING TARGETS



About one in six children live below the poverty line, by 2030 less than 1% will.



By 2030, reduce rates of non-communicable diseases and mental illness and improve associated health equity outcomes for target groups.



Reduce the number of young people (aged 15-24) in the Waikato who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) from 12.6% in 2019 to less than 5% by 2030.



Increase the number of swimmable rivers and lakes in the Waikato from 30% (rivers) and 73% (lakes) in 2019 to both waterbody types achieving more than 80% by 2030.



Reduce the number of people experiencing energy hardship in the Waikato from 18,000 in 2019 to zero by 2030.



Reduce the housing shortfall in the region from approximately 7,500 homes in November 2019 to a point where all our people are well housed by 2030.



Increase the number of households, schools, businesses and farms who reduce their waste leading to a 50% reduction of waste to landfill by 2030.



Reduce carbon emissions by a minimum of 25% by 2030 (from 13.8 mega tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e to 10.3 mega tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e), on the path to net carbon zero by 2050.



Maintain or enhance the mauri of our coastal and marine waters to ensure healthy ecosystems so that we can also enjoy mahinga kai and swimming.



To prevent loss of existing indigenous vegetation and increase indigenous habitat in biodiversity depleted environments to a minimum of 10% land cover by 2030.



**Waikato wellbeing project** | Hinonga toiora o Waikato

[www.waikatowellbeingproject.co.nz](http://www.waikatowellbeingproject.co.nz)



## The purpose of this report

Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 will be used to inform funding decisions by the region's non-profit organisations, charities, government agencies, impact investors, grant makers and philanthropists. Through the Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 project and final report we aim to:

- strengthen our collective understanding of, and connections with, Waikato communities
- inform and support local funding and impact investment decision-making by identifying and communicating the key priorities and aspirations of Waikato communities
- connect philanthropic individuals and organisations with the social enterprises and change-makers that can address key community needs and opportunities.

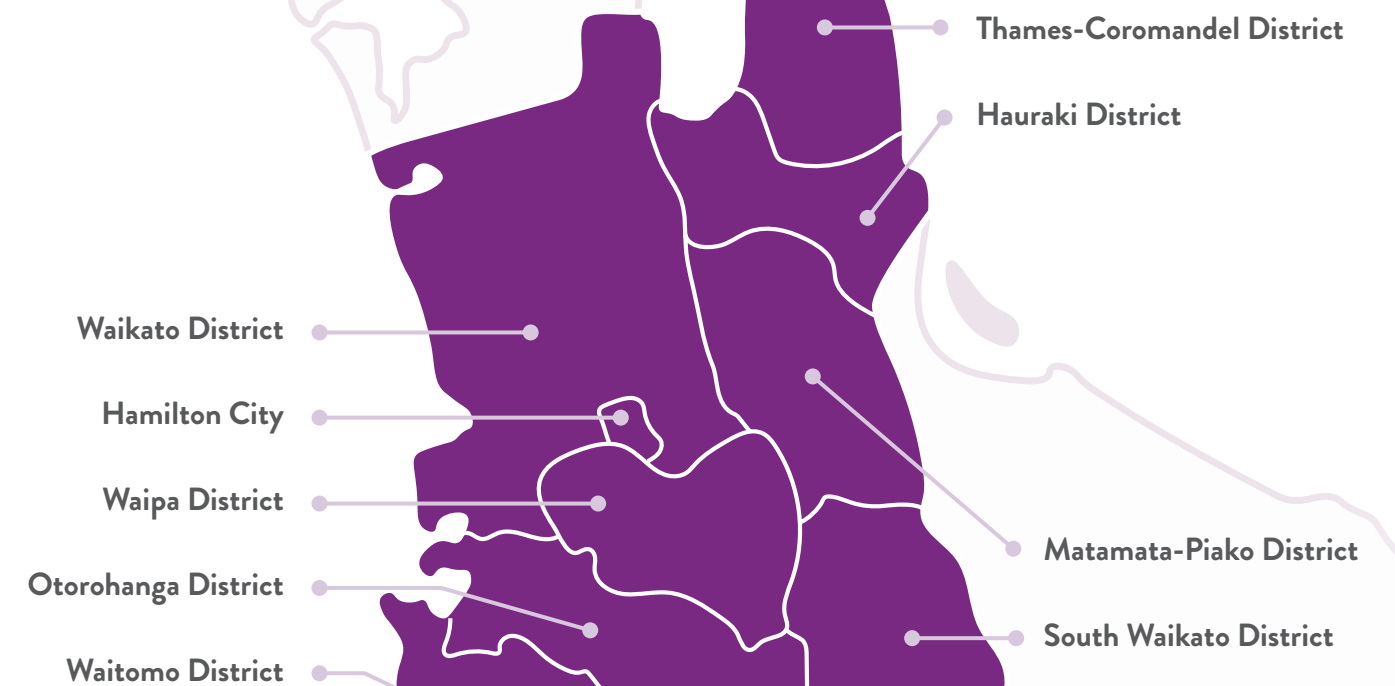
## Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 region

The 2016 Waikato Vital Signs® report used a pilot region that included three districts. In 2020 the project has been expanded to include nine districts: Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki, Waikato, Matamata-Piako, Hamilton, Waipa, Otorohanga, South Waikato and Waitomo.

There are around 430,000 people living in the Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 Region, about 9% of Aotearoa New Zealand's total population.

The information in this report generally refers to the Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 region, unless otherwise specified. There may also be references to the Waikato Region as defined by census boundaries, or the Waikato DHB area.

Data from the NIDEA report, including socio-demographic information for each local government district, is available as an easy-to-use online data map on the Momentum Waikato website: [www.momentumwaikato.nz/data](http://www.momentumwaikato.nz/data).





## OUR WAIKATO IS HUMMING

**It's a special place, home to a diverse range of people who are proud of our communities, our opportunities and our potential.**

From our stunning natural landscapes to our vibrant rural and urban communities, we have big aspirations for our region. We want to be resilient, creative, caring and connected, giving everyone a place to stand and be heard.

Our Waikato is the fourth largest region in terms of land area, population size and contribution to New Zealand's economy. Making sure growth is managed well is a priority, to protect our environment and provide benefits for future generations.

Many of us have what we need to live well: access to education, employment, suitable housing, safety, health and wellbeing. At the same time, a complex web of factors means some of us are living in high deprivation, struggling to meet basic needs. We want to work together to change this, making the Waikato a great place to live for everyone.

We believe in our region, our people, the positive changes we can make and the aroha we share. Our Waikato is full of possibility.



## Top things we love about our place

- Our community connectedness.
- Our environment.
- Our kindness and friendliness.
- Our cultural vibrancy.
- Our diversity and inclusivity.
- Our central location.
- Our neighbourhood safety.
- Our creativity.
- Our sense of identity and pride.
- Our readily available services.

## Top community priorities for action

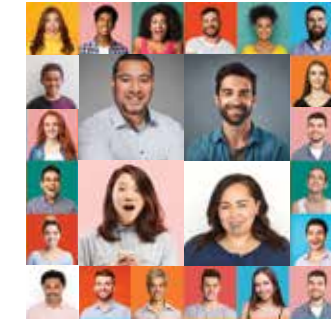
- Provide support and realise opportunities during COVID-19 recovery.
- Build on our local identity and community cohesiveness.
- Eliminate inequality and poverty.
- Make sure everyone has safe, healthy and affordable housing.
- Reduce unemployment.
- Make sure economic and population growth is well-managed.
- Improve the listening of councils and our engagement in local democratic and civic processes.
- Give children and youth a voice.
- Focus on the wellbeing of our young people to create a better future for everyone.
- Educate and support more people to speak te reo Maaori.
- Implement more sustainable transport choices.
- Retain and attract young people and families in our smaller centres.

# IF WE WERE 100 PEOPLE



51  
females

49  
males



74 European  
23 Maori  
10 Asian  
5 Pasifika  
1 Middle East Latin American African  
1 Other Ethnicity

People may identify with, and therefore be counted in, more than one ethnic group, so overall totals add up to more than 100.



WHĀNAU  
KIA ORA  
MŌRENA  
MANA

6 speak te reo Maaori



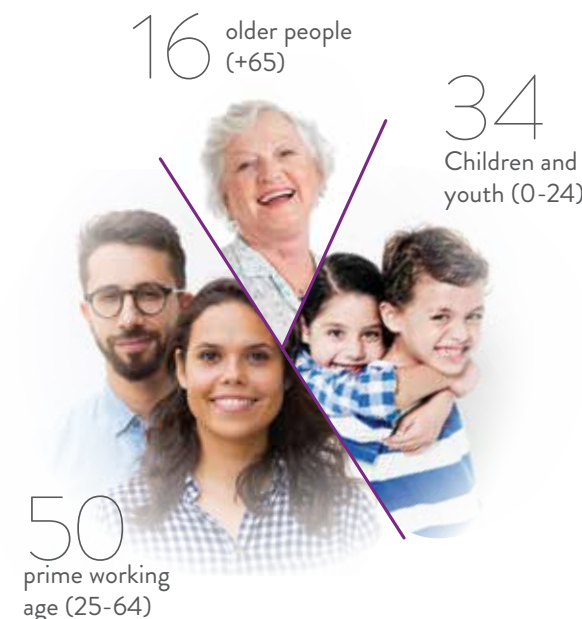
20  
born overseas



26 live in high deprivation



52 own their own home



64 employed  
32 not in the labour force  
4 unemployed



39 live in Hamilton City  
61 live elsewhere in the Waikato



**Waikato Vital Signs®**  
Momentum Waikato Community Foundation

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WAIKATO  
*Te Puaawaitanga o Waikato*

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### Our partners

