

2020

WELCOME TO

WAIKATO

The beating heart of New Zealand

CHILDREN
AND YOUTH



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Children and youth are a high priority, they hold our hopes for the future. They are also one of the most vulnerable groups in our society.

In order for children and young people to flourish, they need to be safe, healthy, respected, accepted and have opportunities to learn and grow. The wellbeing of whaanau, friends and communities has an impact on how young people live.

We know that our statistics for child abuse, youth suicide, teen fertility and youth engagement in education, employment and training need to improve. It's important we connect with young people and involve them in developing solutions. Children and youth want to participate in and contribute to decisions that affect them and the world around them, they have valuable ideas and unique insights that need to be heard.

“We crave real connections and the chance to grow so that we can contribute.”

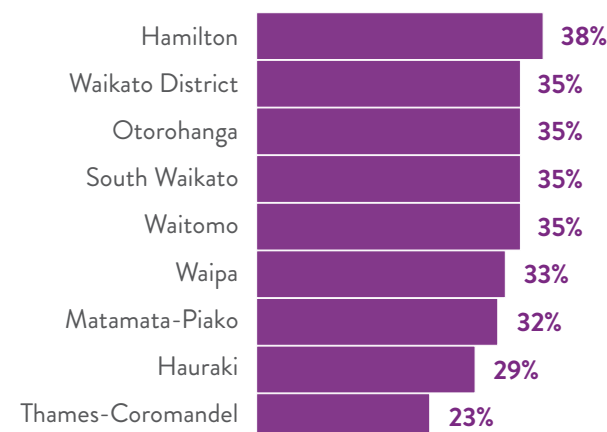
– Hamilton survey respondent

“How are we engaging and targeting youth and children and capturing their views? Changes made today will definitely impact them in the future so we need to ensure we are capturing their voice in the decision - making process.”

– South Waikato survey respondent

1 in 3 are under 25

34% of our population is under 25 years old*. Hamilton has the highest population under 25 years old. Thames-Coromandel has the lowest.



* Age distribution of the usually resident population, Census 2018.

“The children of today will be the leaders in the future. We need to think about how we are focusing on their needs. Attention and investment at an earlier stage influences positive outcomes later on in life.”

– Survey respondent

More than half of Maaori and Pasifika are under 25

Over half of the region’s Maaori and Pasifika population is under 25 years, compared to around one-third for the Asian and European/other population groups. This means that over the next two decades, these groups will make

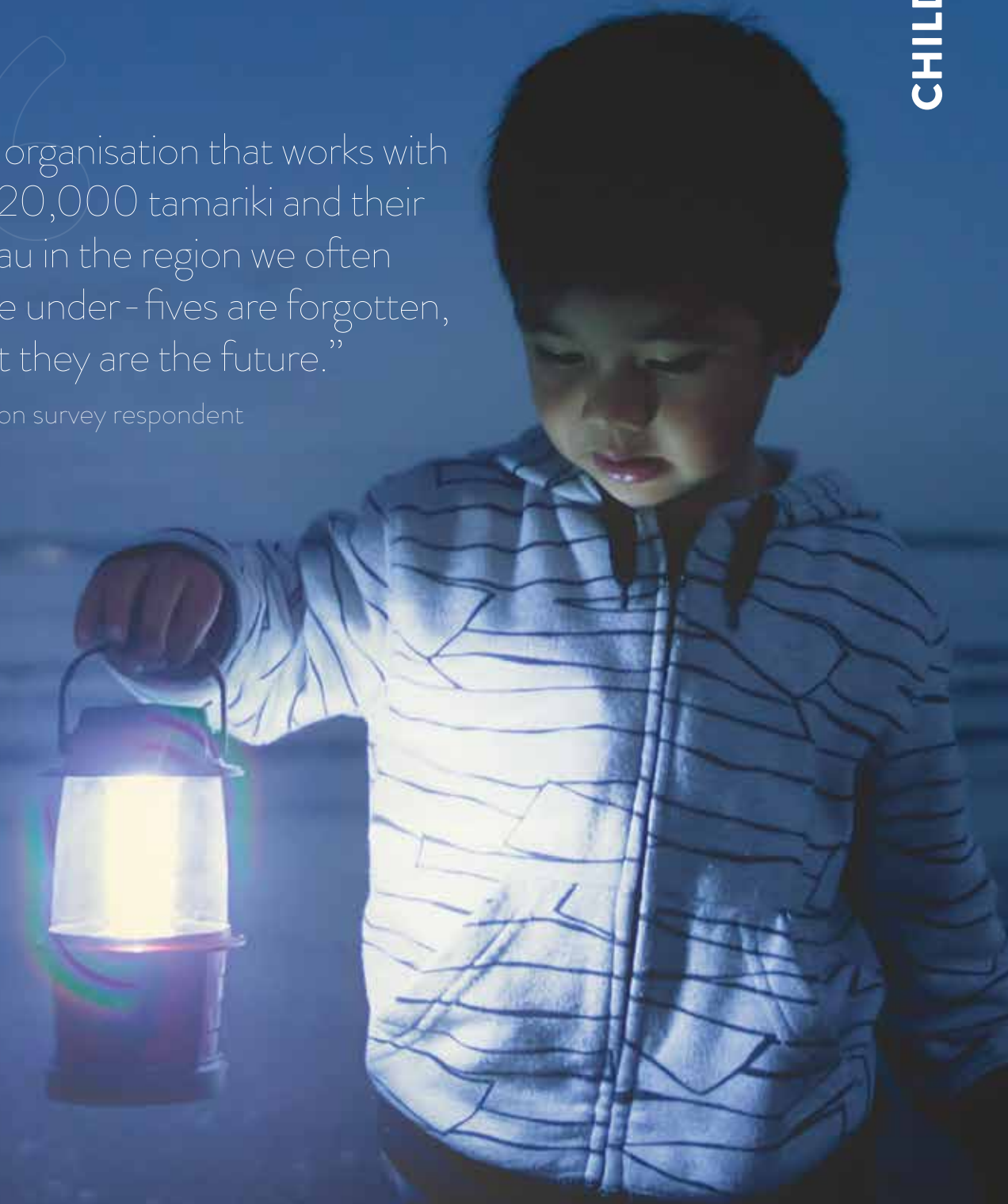
up a much higher proportion of the region’s workforce. Increasing access to education for Maaori and Pasifika youth will contribute to building social capital and wellbeing for the whole region.

“If our youth population is mobilised and supported, that could make a massive economic and social impact, so we can call the Waikato the most exciting place to live and work. Fund capability development in and with young people.”

– Hamilton survey respondent

“As an organisation that works with nearly 20,000 tamariki and their whaanau in the region we often find the under-fives are forgotten, and yet they are the future.”

– Hamilton survey respondent



Child abuse

It's hard to hear about child abuse. We want the tamariki in our region to be safe, happy and well cared for.

Abused children come from all parts of society, although most abused children who are reported to authorities are from families where there are the following factors.



High mobility



Lack of education



Loneliness



Social isolation



Unemployment



Inadequate housing



Poverty.

“Peace begins early in life and at home, break the cycle of violence and give children and youth an understanding of a calm environment to grow up in.”

– Waitomo workshop participant

CHILD ABUSE STATISTICS

355 per 10,000 children/young people (0-17 years) in the Waikato Region had a concern of abuse or neglect reported that required further action in the year ending June 2019. The New Zealand average is 307 per 10,000.



Maaori tamariki have a much higher rate of reports of concern requiring further action. In the year ending June 2018, 658 per 10,000 Maaori tamariki had a concern of abuse or neglect that required further action, compared to 189 per 10,000 for non-Maaori.



DID YOU KNOW? NOT ALL CASES OF CHILD ABUSE ARE REPORTED. UNDER-REPORTING MEANS THE ACTUAL RATES OF CHILD ABUSE ARE HIGHER THAN THOSE REPORTED.

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of youth suicide in the world

Youth suicide rates* in New Zealand decreased between 1996 and 2016.



“We have a high youth population, and high mental distress within this population.”

– Hamilton survey respondent

Between 1996 and 2016, New Zealand youth generally had the highest rate of suicide compared to other life-stage groups. 2 in 5 male deaths and 1 in 3 female deaths in the 15-24 age group was by suicide.

In 2016 the suicide rate for Maaori youth was almost three times that for non-Maaori youth. 1 in 2 male Maaori deaths in the youth age group was by suicide.

* Number of youths (15-24 years) committing suicide per 100,000 population.

“How might we strengthen the resilience and mental wellbeing of young people?”

– Hamilton survey respondent

Teen fertility

The number of teenage births* in the Waikato DHB area has declined. It continues to be higher than the total New Zealand rate of 15 per 1,000 women.



* Number of live births per 1,000 women aged under 20 years.

“We have to start with all our people as babies and support them and their families – it’s got to be a lifelong, multi-generational effort – that’s what a community is.”

– Waipa survey respondent



Not in education, employment or training

12% of youth aged 15-24 years in the Waikato Region are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET). NEET rates have declined for both the Waikato Region and New Zealand between 2010 and 2019. Rates are highest among Māori and Pasifika youth.

“Transition from education to employment/life for rangatahi is huge. They need support for transport, training, tech – across all things. How do they know what work looks like, how do they know what the opportunities are?”

– Otorohanga workshop participant

“What is most important to me about our community are the number and range of opportunities for young people. This includes economic, social, educational and spiritual. It is important that young people, no matter their background, have a fair opportunity to access services and support that those in more affluent communities have access to.”

– Waikato District survey respondent

Waikato Wellbeing targets



In February 2019 the Office of the Children's Commissioner and Oranga Tamariki released *What makes a good life? Children and young people's views on wellbeing*. The booklet highlights a number of things that need to be considered if we want to improve the wellbeing of all children and young people in New Zealand.

CHANGE
IS NEEDED

CHILDREN
AND YOUNG
PEOPLE HAVE
VALUABLE
INSIGHTS

FAMILY
AND WHAANAU
ARE CRUCIAL

PROVIDING
THE BASICS
IS IMPORTANT
BUT NOT ENOUGH
ON ITS OWN



What do you mean 'A Better Waikato for Everyone, Forever'?

Momentum Waikato's guiding vision is 'For a Better Waikato for Everyone, Forever', an aspiration that is both simple and grand.

The obvious question to ask therefore in the Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 survey and workshops was 'What would 'A Better Waikato for Everyone, Forever' look like for your community?'.

The same screen also asked 'In a letter to your great great grandchild, what would you tell them about your hopes and dreams for the place you call home?'.

Respondents' hopes for the future usually mirrored the concerns they expressed elsewhere in their submissions.

In Hamilton, the dreams were of things like better inter and intra-city public transport, neighbourhoods safe from crime and traffic, and greater cultural inclusion. In the smaller towns, locals hope their sense of community connection will survive and be strengthened, ideally by youngsters returning home.

Across the board, submissions characterised a better future as healthier environment and a prosperous economy, where the latter supports rather than compromises the former.

A number of people took up the suggestion to write to their grandchildren – following are some of these heartfelt missives.

From a Thames-Coromandel survey respondent.

Kia Ora Moko.

How is the song of the tui as you catch the reflection of the beautiful sunrise on our moana?

Do those cheeky piwakawaka still follow you when you walk through our ngahere to collect berries and rongoaa Maaori?

I remember living on our Maaori land in Whangamata and taking my kayak across the other side to ancient rocks that look like a pearl clam shell from the movie 'Little Mermaid'.

Is this rock still there? Did you know this was an ancient area of your great great

great great ancestors, who used that rock to catch kaimoana. Not far from there is an ancient urupa named Te Whauwhau, where our people were buried before Hikutaia.

How is your Te Reo? I hope the waiata of our people are still sung and hopefully Te Reo is compulsory in schools.

Please know, that I love you with all my heart and ensure you hold on to our cultural heritage, as we are the people of the land, therefore we are the land and the land is us.

Ma te Atua hei tiaki i a tatou katoa.

Na, to kuia.

From a Waipa survey respondent.

To my loved one.

I hope that the Waikato River is a clean and safe water resource and that you enjoy the wonderful native wildlife.

That you know what it is to run, walk, bike and play safely in the outdoors and you can explore this beautiful place of ours.

That your opportunities and learning are only limited by those that you put on yourself and to that end, remember, you can!

That you know what happiness is and at the same time appreciate that at times we will all need courage.

That we have given you the tools to learn from your forefathers' errors and take the great things we have put in place to continue improving to make them better.

That you understand the importance of community and participation in that community - together we can and we will.

To show gratitude.

That you have equal opportunity, be that in education, career or life choices

That conversations of gender, ethics and equalities are perhaps topics for study, as opposed to living and striving for.

That you know where you are from and your place and role to ensure its future for your children and grandchildren.

Remember to look to the future and plan for the long game. Health, Safety, Education, Economic Security. Understand you cannot do any of these on your own, you are part of an eco-system, a community.



From a Hauraki survey respondent.

We are sorry. We didn't get it right in this generation. We should have cared more about our impacts on the environment and cared less about technology that separated us from each other.

We did try, we invested in cycle-trails to get communities moving again and we noticed inter-generational groups get together like they haven't done in years.

We noticed the advent of positive technologies such as e-bikes gave life back to those who had thought that the great outdoors was beyond them.

We gave them back an active social circle.

What we would like to see you do is 'be that change that we all need'. Be active, be healthy. Care about the community around you, and those who are less fortunate than yourselves. Get educated, get fit, take up art, laugh often and loudly.

From a Hamilton survey respondent.

Dear moko,

May you still hear the call of the tui in the morning as the golden sunrise kisses the sky, may the air you breath be clean and give sustenance to your soul,

may you swim in the rivers of Aotearoa without fear of contamination,

may our seas provide a bounty for your generation to sustainably nurture,

may you encourage our future generations to look to improve our earth and living conditions,

may you eat the fruit from the trees, the veggies from the ground and may they be organic,

may you children's grandchildren grow to see a world better that the one you have inherited,

may you not forget your past, where you have come from and those that came before you, so you look to improve the future and do not repeat the same mistakes.

From a Hamilton survey respondent.

Kia ora John (I'm hoping the name endures, lol).

I hope that you, as a young member of the Hamilton, Waikato and NZ community have had the opportunity to meet your full potential.

I hope that you live in a warm and healthy home, have access to good nutritional food and have all the educational opportunities you need.

I hope that these lead to you participating in a vibrant local and national economy and that you are an active, positive participant in your local community (like your parents and their parents before them).

Love you, Pop.



Waikato Vital Signs®
Momentum Waikato Community Foundation

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