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Safer Waitaki Summary

Waitaki District's commitment to improving community safety and contribution to community wellbeing began in 2012 with a series of two community meetings and the formation of a steering group, in collaboration with Waitaki District Council, to guide the development of a Safer Communities model for the delivery of Community Safety programmes in the district.

In 2013 Waitaki District was formally designated as a member of the International Safer Communities Network and celebrated this with a designation ceremony in March 2013. The network began with 17 member organisations and has grown to a membership of over 160 organisations of which 130 are actively participating.

Demographics

The Waitaki District is a territorial authority that is located in the Canterbury and Otago regions of the South Island of New Zealand. It straddles the traditional border between the two regions, the Waitaki River, and its seat is Oamaru.

- The Waitaki District had a population of 23,200 in 2019. This was a regional growth of 0.9% compared to a bigger national growth of 1.6% in New Zealand. Most of the growth in Waitaki was the result of net migration (106%) compared to natural increase (-6%).
- Waitaki has an ageing population: 58.5% is 15 to 64 years of age compared to 64.9% nationally and 23.3% is 65+ years of age compared to 15.6% in New Zealand.
- The employment rate is at par with the national employment figures (1.9% in 2019) while employment growth lacked behind the national figures: 1.14% for Waitaki compared to 2.6% nationally.
- Primary industries (agriculture, forestry and fishing) created the most jobs (dairy cattle farming, meat processing), followed by gold ore mining and accommodation.
- The self-employment rate is higher in Waitaki at 18% compared to the rest of New Zealand 16.2%.
- Economic growth of 1.8% lacked behind over 2009-2019 compared to 2.5% growth nationally with mining and primary industries being the biggest contributors to the growth.
- Waitaki has had a higher mean annual earnings growth of 3.3% during 2009-2019 than the rest of New Zealand (2.8%).
- In 2018 Waitaki had a higher European ethnicity representation (88%) and lower Maori representation (8.2%) compared New Zealand as a whole: 70.2% of the New Zealand population belonged to a European ethnic group and 16.5% to a Maori ethnic group.
- The Waitaki Pasifika population is significant, estimated to be 2000 plus.

Structure and Governance

Safer Waitaki is a coalition governed by an intersectoral governance group, <https://www.saferwaitaki.co.nz/about/governors> who meet quarterly or as required.

It has a Management Group that meets monthly and several working groups that are pivotal to community participation and engagement. They are:

Industry Link

A regular forum of local employers with a focus on health and safety in the workplace. The forum also provides a great opportunity for businesses to share opportunities for professional development, training, and wellbeing.

Family Whanau

A collaboration of service providers and local organisations working together to support family and whanau across the district.

Positive Ageing Working Group

A group of professionals and providers working together to know and understand what is impacting on older people in the community and collectively looking at ways to address issues. The group has wide representation from local provider groups and organisations and is currently focused on Age Friendly initiatives.

Waitaki Mental Health and Addictions

A group of mental health and addiction providers and consumers who have come together to form a locality network. This group provides critical networking, advocacy, service development and research opportunities to the sector at a local level. This group has proven particularly successful in identifying gaps and opportunities which has led to increase in service where need has been evidence.

Methamphetamine Community response Working Group

This group was set up in response to community demand, to coordinate a community response to the impacts and effects of methamphetamine on the Waitaki Community. The group has undertaken a stocktake of available resources, developed, and administered a survey and is working with families on setting up a support group for those who are impacted by having a family member affected by methamphetamine addiction.

Family Violence Provider Network and Family Violence Working Group

The goal of the Family Harm Provider Network is to build community capacity and capability to enable us to respond and contribute to the reduction of family harm in the Waitaki District. The group has formed effective strategic partnerships across the community and facilitates a range of initiatives to develop awareness and prevention of family harm.

Housing Taskforce

The Housing Taskforce is comprised of key stakeholders from across the housing spectrum including. It was set up in response to issues / difficulties around access to housing. The purpose of the task force is to provide recommendations that can guide the district's long-term housing needs and meet community outcomes related to housing. The group has

undertaken research and is in the process of developing a co designed housing strategy for the district in partnership with Waitaki District Council.

Economic Development Working Group

This working group was set up as a response to the impact of COVID-19. Membership is drawn from business, business advisory services, education and training, central government services, NGOs local government and community support services. The group is community led and has begun with a focus on small to medium business, micro credentialing, trades and transition from education into employment.

Sustainability

Coordination

Waitaki District Council Community Development Manager is supported by Council to undertake the coordination role ensuring sustainable governance and funding. The network operates as a coalition in a collective impact model, a structure that has proven its worth in terms of community buy-in and successful advocacy. Operating in a strong egalitarian environment where all members/participants feel equally valued as evidenced through participation levels, evaluation, and feedback.

Administration

In addition to the coordinator there is an administrator who ensures that all meetings are well coordinated, documented, and ensures consistency and quality in any meetings, workshops or conferences coordinated and facilitated by Safer Waitaki. This is a significant role and a critical success factor.

Resourcing

The success of the Safer Waitaki Coalition has built significant credibility with both Council and funders. It has grown from the Coordinator working 15 hours per week to a Community Development Team that consists of a coordinator, administrator, and a data/funding resource who is the key to measuring success. Also critical to the team are the many working group Chairpersons and network members who contribute on a daily basis to the ongoing sustainability of the coalition.

Priority Setting

Data is the key to setting priorities and in Waitaki we have struggled to source wellbeing data that is up to date. We began by undertaking our own local research augmented by available data. Below are some examples of research Safer Waitaki initiated.

2012: As part of priority setting the steering group undertook baseline research and in 2013 developed a Strategic Plan. This strategic plan was reviewed with the local Runaka in 2019 and guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. All activities relate to the priority areas and the Sustainable Development Goals. This keeps the Coalition focused on the agreed goals and outcomes.

2015: As part of continuous improvement the network secured external funding to commission an independent Organisational Capability Report. The outcome was better consideration and engagement with Iwi and the disability sector.

2015: The Waitaki District Council Youth Council developed and administered a Waitaki District Youth Survey. The outcome was a baseline and indicators of what young people prioritised in the Waitaki District. Better access to mental health services was one area highlighted and this has been actioned by the Safer Waitaki Mental Health & Addictions network resulting in additional youth services including virtual options.

2017: Developed and administered a Senior's Survey. Outcome was Council support and in 2019 we successfully sourced Community Connects funding to support Waitaki enabling the employment of a resource to undertake community consultation and actions towards an Age Friendly Community.

2020: Developed and administered Waitaki Housing Survey. The outcome is the development of a codesigned Housing Strategy and influence into the Waitaki District Planning review. This work is being undertaken with the participation and support of a research team (Nick Taylor and Associates, University of Canterbury and AgResearch) as part of the National Science Challenge Building Better Homes and Cities, In order to address the data gaps Council has provided a resource to build a community wellbeing profile. This involves collecting and analysing data from numerous sources including the NGO sector. The Safer Waitaki Network high trust environment has meant that current, and in some cases, previously unavailable, data is being made available. This is supported by the provision of data templates to ensure consistency and to support and encourage organisations that may not have collected data to do so. This is key to us evolving and being agile in responding to 'actual' changing community needs and priorities.

Ongoing Safer Waitaki Coalition Data Collection Process

- Ongoing research is done to identify, compare and analyse wellbeing indicators that are relevant to the Waitaki District. Indicators are sought and linked to the NZ national 4 well beings (Social, Economic, Environmental, Cultural) areas.
- Existing reports on wellbeing are compared such as those from the Ministry of Social Development, independent research organisations (e.g. biennial Quality of Life survey among 8 cities in NZ), Stats NZ (Quarterly Wellbeing Report) and others.
- Reports are filtered/examined for relevant wellbeing indicators for the district.
- Data from district reports such as Waitaki District Council Annual Residents' Survey and other task force surveys such as on housing and the elderly are used to compare and filter findings to create an overall wellbeing profile for the district.
- Safer Waitaki Coalition Working Groups (developed from the Coalition's 160+ members organisations) are consulted to learn about community priorities via regular working group meetings including individual service provider meetings and e-mail correspondence.
- Requests are sent for current data on services provided, number of clients and their issues/support needed which is supplied by the Safer Waitaki network groups to the Community Development Manager and Community Recovery Coordinator.
- Data supplied by the Safer Waitaki network is processed into an overview to filter best wellbeing data indicators and to create a template for data collection.
- For example data was received from the district's police on reported family harm incidents; from various social services on counselling issues and support needed;

from the multicultural network on enquiries made by the migrant community; from the elderly representation groups on types of support needed by the elderly post-COVID.

- By continuing to collect this well being related data, the data can then be compared in the future to inform all stakeholders and to monitor the Waitaki district's wellbeing and safety.

In addition to data provision, as a strategic response to the impact of COVID on the Not for Profit Sector we have provided an updated stocktake of available funding and this link is kept current and freely available on the Safer Waitaki and Council websites. <https://www.saferwaitaki.co.nz/funding>

Key Opportunities

Safer Waitaki is increasingly recognised for the key role it plays in bringing the community together to address shared priorities. It has become an important mechanism for delivering quality training and development and is seen as a best practice model by other Territorial Local Authorities and Government Departments. This has led to significant contracting and funding opportunities including SKIP (Strategies with Kids Information for Parents) which includes an innovative Corrections 'Thinking About Parenting' programme. Safer Waitaki has received invitations from other Councils to present and workshop the Safer Waitaki, Safer Communities Model, and supports access to information and engagement on a range of community safety and wellbeing issues. i.e. the Ripple Effect Conferences which were duplicated in Bay of Plenty, Tauranga, the Tane Hui and the Famili Fiefia. The collective impact approach fits well with Local Government responsibilities to deliver on the four Wellbeings which are Social, Economic, Cultural and Environmental. Safer Waitaki is looking to the future with vigour and optimism. In times where the Government is thinking about doing things differently we are thinking about what Localism may look like in the Waitaki District and how we can maximise the platform we have built to enhance and further influence community safety and wellbeing across all sectors of our community.

Safer Waitaki has changed and developed over time but the fundamental principles that governed our original application to be a member of the International Safer Communities Network remain steadfast and strong. We are different and stronger but essentially, we are the same as we were. Here for our communities by our communities.

Waitaki District Council is hugely supportive of the Safer Waitaki model and has played an integral role in enabling the model to work effectively making Waitaki a great place to be.

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