



Choosing Futures Waikato

Whiriwhiria Te Waa Heke o Waikato

Working together for a better Waikato
August 2009

Regional community outcomes report back

Councils are required to monitor and report progress towards identified community outcomes on behalf of their local communities. In 2005, the 12 territorial authorities of the Waikato region, together with Environment Waikato, jointly coordinated a process to identify regional community outcomes.

The group, Choosing Futures Waikato, identified 38 community outcomes which were clustered together under five themes: sustainable environment, quality of life, sustainable economy, culture and identity, and participation and equity.

Once identified, the next step was to monitor and report on these community outcomes and the progress being made towards achieving them. About 75 core indicators were established to report against.

Since 2005, several reports have been published which summarise the data collected, highlight progress made towards achieving community outcomes and draw attention to areas where there are gaps in the data.

This regional community outcomes update summarises the most recent 2009 data analysis report and identifies current states and historical trends for the period up until March 2009.

The purpose of this update is to help inform and guide the setting of priorities by key decision makers in the Waikato region. It shows how we are progressing towards improving our region's wellbeing.

What's in this booklet:

- where we are at
- understanding the indicators
- participation and equity
- sustainable environment
- quality of life
- sustainable economy
- culture and identity
- information and contacts.

Where we are at

The indicators on pages 5 and 6 show areas where the Waikato region is doing well, and those where we may need to focus our attention.

At present, the region is doing well on several fronts:

- strong long term growth across a range of economic indicators, including low unemployment and increased weekly incomes
- increased recycling of waste and other environmental actions by Waikato regional communities
- sustained increases in life expectancy
- increased numbers of Māori language speakers
- relatively high levels of representation of Māori and women on local authorities
- apparent improvements in educational participation and attainment.

Areas in which we could do better as a region include:

- continuing to investigate ways to reduce the levels of phosphorus and nitrogen flowing into the region's rivers and streams
- fostering improved attitudes and actions towards the natural environment, including more energy conservation and further promotion of waste minimisation
- reducing the region's rate of road crashes and casualties to at least 2000/01 levels
- tackling poor urban air quality by promoting cleaner home heating
- better understanding and investigating ways of promoting cultural wellbeing in the region
- continuing to improve education rates, from early childhood education to tertiary learning
- considering ways to improve voter turnout at local authority and general elections.

Understanding the indicators

The indicators tell us about the current state and, where the information is available, long term trends (over the previous five or more years) for particular aspects of the region's environmental, economic, social and cultural wellbeing.

The symbols used to summarise the states and trends are:

Unique identifier (Code)	State	Trend
For example, 1.1.1	☺ Good/satisfactory	↑ Improving/favourable
	☹ Mixed/uncertain	↓ Declining/unfavourable
	☹ Unsatisfactory	⇒ No significant trend
		? Uncertain, for example, no trend data available

For example

Indicator	State	Trend
1.1.1 River water quality for ecological health	☹	↓

This means that the indicator 'river water quality for ecological health' (assessed using water quality guidelines and standards) is showing mixed or uncertain results throughout the region, and the long term trend shows a deterioration in water quality (specifically for the period 1997 to 2007).

The indicators have been sorted from favourable to adverse under each theme, in terms of their state and long term trend. Many states are shown as mixed or uncertain, which usually means that there was no comparative data available for these indicators. Where there was no historic information available from which to work out a trend, this is shown by a question mark.

There is more in-depth information about what the indicators tell us with respect to each of the five community outcomes themes on pages 7-23.

Full sets of data and metadata are available for each indicator (the base information that the indicators draws from). See page 25 for where you can get this information.

Looking at the trends

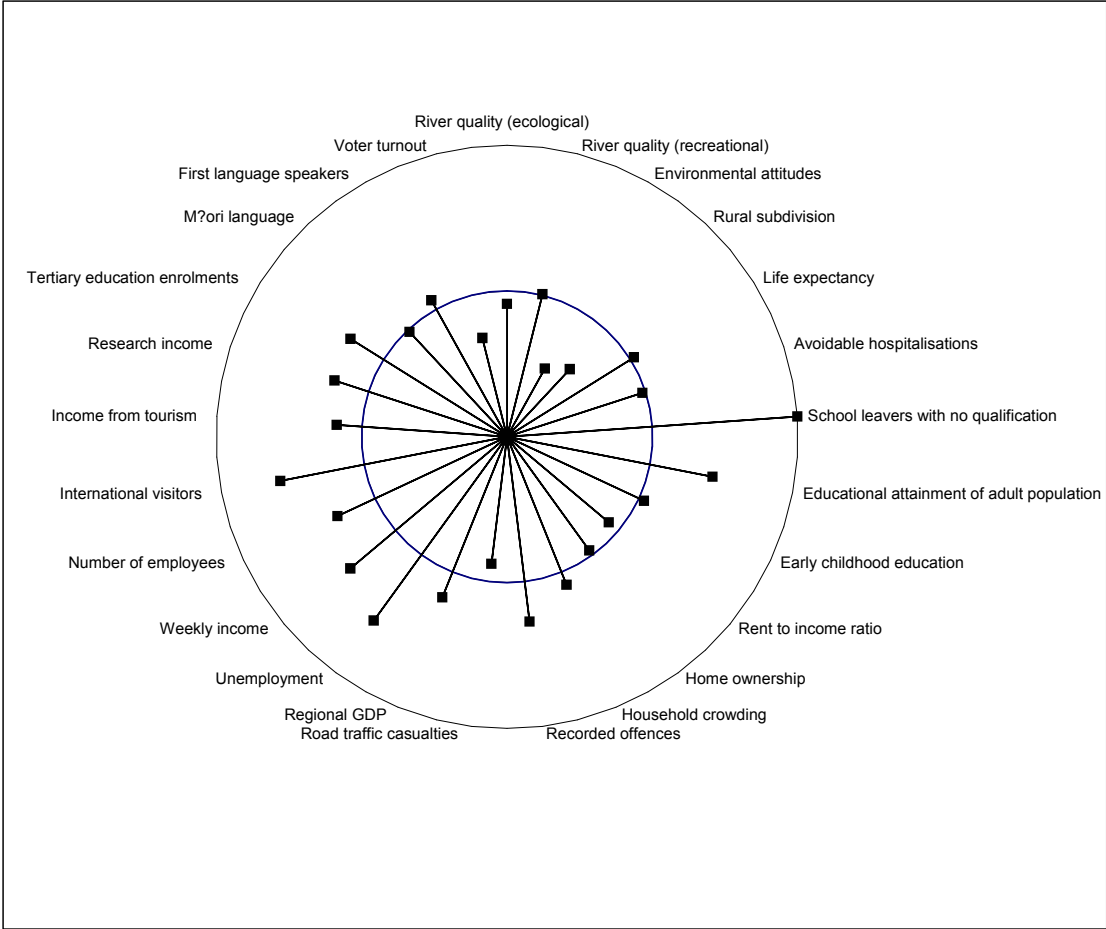
Key trends for the region over the past ten-year period are summarised in Figure 1. This shows only indicators for which suitable time series data is available.

The central circle represents community wellbeing in the Waikato region in the mid to late 1990s, and the spokes show progress to the mid to late 2000s. Where a spoke extends outside the circle, it means community wellbeing has improved. Where a spoke falls within the circle, community wellbeing has declined.

In summary, figure 1 illustrates that there have been substantial improvements in educational participation and attainment, and improvements across a range of economic indicators, including increased median weekly incomes and reduced rates of unemployment.

Indicators that have deteriorated include an increase in rural subdivisions, reductions in surveyed environmental attitudes and in voter turnout, and an increase in road traffic casualties since 2000/01.

Figure 1: Waikato region wellbeing trends 1990s to 2000s

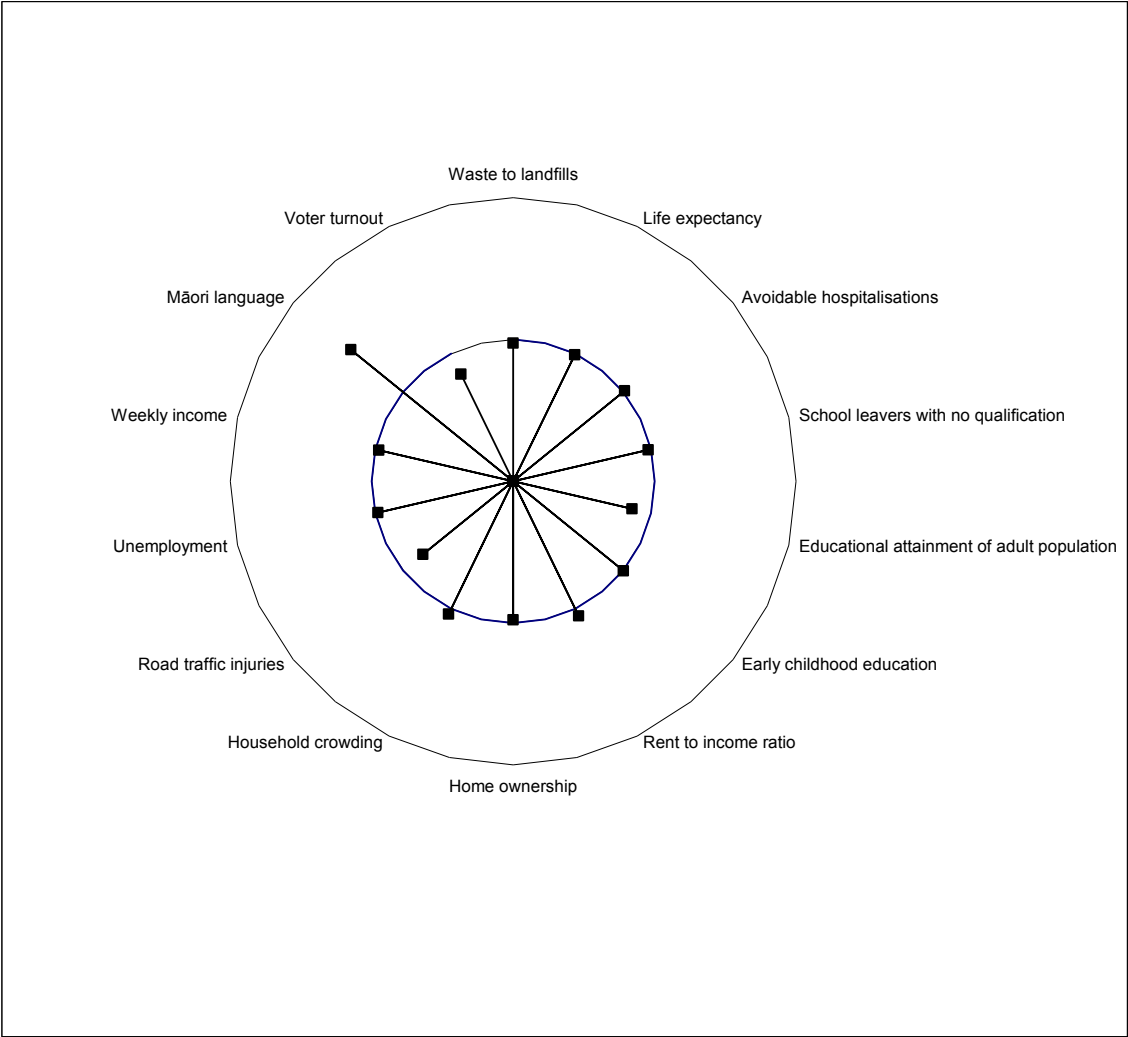


Source: Waikato regional community outcomes data.
 Note: Indicator selection was based on the availability of reliable Waikato region time series data from approximately the mid to late 1990s to approximately the mid 2000s, and availability of comparative data at the national level.

Comparisons of the Waikato region to New Zealand average figures for specific key indicators in the mid 2000s are shown in Figure 2. In this case, the circle in the middle represents national average wellbeing in the mid to late 2000s. Where a spoke extends outside the circle it means local community wellbeing is better than the national average, and where it falls within the circle, community wellbeing is worse than the national average.

In summary, figure 2 illustrates that the Waikato region is similar to the national average on many of the available indicators, with the exception of an above average rate of Māori language speakers within the regional population.

Figure 2: Waikato region compared to New Zealand, mid 2000s



Source: Waikato regional community outcomes data.
 Note: Indicator selection was based on the availability of comparative data at the national level.

The indicators

Results

Code	Indicator	State	Trend
1.	Sustainable environment		
1.6.2	Proportion of recycling	😊	↑
1.2.2	People's personal environmental actions	😊	↑
1.4.1	Rural subdivision	😊	↔
1.6.1	Waste to landfills	😊	↔
1.1.3	Lakes' water quality for ecological health	😊	↔
1.3.1	Coastal water quality for recreation	😊	↔
1.1.4	Lakes' water quality for contact recreation	😊	↔
1.4.2	Stock density	😊	↔
1.1.5	Land use	😊	?
1.1.7	Groundwater availability and use	😊	?
1.1.8	Surface water availability and use	😊	?
1.1.9	Protection of natural heritage and landscapes	😊	?
1.1.10	Extent of native vegetation	😊	?
1.1.11	Protected native vegetation areas	😊	?
1.2.1	People's environmental attitudes	😊	?
1.3.2	Public access to coast (coastline ownership)	😊	?
1.5.1	Total energy consumption	😊	?
1.5.3	Energy efficiency	😊	?
1.1.1	River water quality for ecological health	😊	↓
1.1.2	River water quality for recreation	😐	↔
1.1.6	Urban air quality	😐	↔
1.5.2	Greenhouse gas emissions	😐	?
2.	Quality of life		
2.1.1	Life expectancy at birth	😊	↑
2.2.3	Participation in early childhood education	😊	↑
2.3.4	Household crowding (Canadian Crowding Index)	😊	↑
2.2.1	School leavers with no formal qualification	😊	↑
2.1.2	Social deprivation index	😊	↔
2.1.3	Avoidable mortality and hospitalisation rates	😊	↔
2.4.1	Criminal victimisation rates	😊	↔
2.4.3	Road traffic crashes and casualties	😊	↔
2.6.1	Participation in sport and leisure activities	😊	↔
2.7.1	Participation in social networks and groups	😊	↔
2.5.1	Unpaid work	😊	↔
2.3.1	Rent to income ratio	😊	↓
2.3.3	Home ownership rate	😊	↓
2.1.4	Overall quality of life	😊	?
2.1.5	Barriers to accessing General Practitioners (GPs)	😊	?
2.2.4	Adult and community education	😊	?
2.2.5	Work opportunities matching skills	😊	?
2.3.2	Housing affordability	😊	?
2.3.5	Proximity to work, study and recreation	😊	?
2.7.2	Contact between young people and their parents	😊	?
2.8.1	Youth and older people's engagement in decision-making	😊	?
2.4.2	Perceptions of safety	😊	?

Code	Indicator	State	Trend
2.2.2	Educational attainment of the adult population	☹	↑
3.	Sustainable economy		
3.2.2	Unemployment rate	☺	⇒
3.2.3	Median weekly income	☺	↑
3.2.4	Number of businesses and employees by industry	☺	↑
3.6.2	International visitors	☺	↑
3.2.1	Regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	☺	⇒
3.7.2	Enrolments at tertiary education institutes	☺	⇒
3.5.1	Regional GDP contributed by primary industries	☺	⇒
3.6.1	Visitor nights in commercial accommodation	☺	⇒
3.6.3	Income from tourism (international and domestic)	☺	⇒
3.3.1	Drinking water quality	☺	?
3.4.1	Residents' confidence in councils' decision making	☺	?
3.4.2	Residents' satisfaction with councils' approach to planning and providing services	☺	?
3.6.4	Employment in the tourism industry	☺	?
3.2.5	Building consents	☺	↓
3.7.1	Total research funding	☹	↑
3.1.1	Genuine Progress Indicator (or ecological footprint)	☹	⇒
4.	Culture and identity		
4.1.1	Residents' rating of their sense of pride in the way their city/town looks and feels	☺	?
4.4.1	People employed in the cultural sector	☺	↑
4.3.3	Proportion of council's spending on cultural activities and events	☺	↑
4.1.2	Number of Māori speakers (in Māori and total population)	☺	⇒
4.2.1	Number of buildings and places listed on Historic Places Trust register	☺	⇒
4.2.2	Number and proportion of heritage buildings demolished or removed from heritage records	☺	⇒
4.2.3	Design of new developments	☺	?
4.3.1	Residents' satisfaction with cultural facilities provided	☺	?
4.3.2	Participation in cultural and arts activities	☺	?
4.1.3	Proportion of population that speak the 'first language' of their ethnic group	☹	?
5.	Participation and equity		
5.1.2	Degree of representation by tangata whenua and minority groups on governance and decision-making bodies	☺	⇒
5.1.1	Percentage of voter turnout at local and general elections	☺	↓
5.1.3	Residents' rating of satisfaction with council's provision of opportunities for community involvement in decision making	☺	?
5.2.1	Percentage of residents perceiving that cultural diversity makes their region/city/town a better place to live	☺	?

1. Participation and equity

The Waikato region builds strong informed communities and has a culture that encourages people and communities to play their part.

Community outcomes

A All our people and communities can participate in decision making. We are educated, informed and have the resources we need to take responsibility for our own futures.

B Iwi, hapū and Māori work together with central government, local government and community organisations in mutually beneficial partnerships.

C Our communities understand partnerships under the Treaty of Waitangi, and representation and processes for these partnerships have integrity.

D The unique status of tangata whenua is respected and reflected in community processes.

E Māori have the opportunity to participate in community development and decision making at marae, hapū and iwi levels.

F We are knowledgeable about and show respect for the many and diverse cultures of the people who live here.

How are we doing?

There is relatively little information available for monitoring participation and equity in the region, but future data collection should help fill this gap. A positive sign is that the Waikato region has a relatively high and growing level of representation by Māori and women in local authorities. Of possible concern is that the voter turnout rate has been declining in the region, as it has throughout New Zealand over much of the past two decades.

Civic participation

For almost all local authorities in New Zealand and the Waikato region, voter turnout in the 2007 local authority elections was the lowest since 1989. Local authority voter turnout tends to be generally higher for councils with a smaller constituency.

In the Waikato region in 2007, the highest voter turnouts were in the Thames-Coromandel, Taupo and Hauraki districts (49 – 53 per cent). Compared to the 2004 election results, voter turnout in 2007 dropped considerably for the Waitomo and Otorohanga districts (approximately 15 per cent each).

Survey results from 2007 show that a substantial number of residents throughout the region would like more of a say in what their councils do.

Cultural wellbeing

According to recent survey data, many respondents said they feel there are no cultural problems and people are accepted as part of the community. However, a relatively small proportion of respondents felt that different cultures were not welcomed by the community, while a few had issues with other races or chose not to mix.

Story...

Warm Homes Clean Air Tokoroa

The Tokoroa Warm Homes Clean Air (TWHCA) Project was set up in 2007 to reduce the town's air pollution problem and improve the health and wellbeing of the community by 2013. The project includes people from the Raukawa Trust Board, the South Waikato Pacific Islands Health Committee, Environment Waikato, the South Waikato District Council and the Waikato District Health Board. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) and the ministries of health and environment have been important funders, and many community groups in Tokoroa have helped local people understand the issues.

The main contributor to poor air quality in Tokoroa is older wood burners. The smoke from these wood burners carries small particles into the air which make their way into our respiratory system.

A comprehensive programme has been set up in Tokoroa to help people understand the issues and make changes to how they heat their homes. An incentives fund has been put in place to support low income people. Hui and fono have been held with the community to make sure the project is attuned to local needs and to help reduce any negative effects. The project has been independently evaluated, and a Health Impact Assessment was completed to make sure the project keeps improving.

Environment Waikato has already refined some points to its approach to air quality, in response to hui and fono recommendations. Work is continuing to refine the type of financial incentives that will be made available and how this will be funded.

2. Sustainable environment

The Waikato region values and protects its diverse, interconnected natural environments.

Community outcomes

A The iconic landscapes and natural features of our environment define and sustain us. We respect and celebrate them as taonga.

B Our natural environment is protected and respected. Its ecological balance is restored, its air, soil and water quality is improved, and its native biodiversity is enhanced.

C We are aware of what we need to do to look after our environment. Our region is renowned for linking environmental awareness with community action.

D The traditional role of iwi and hapū as kaitiaki is acknowledged, respected and enabled.

E Our coastal and waterway environments are restored and preserved, and access to them is maintained.

F Our region's waterways have consistently high water quality.

G We use land management practices that protect and sustain our soil and land.

H. We reduce our reliance on non-renewable energy.

I. Waste reduction, recycling, energy conservation and energy efficiency are promoted and are part of how we all live.

How are we doing?

The Waikato region generally has a clean and green natural environment. However, there is room for improvement in terms of energy conservation, urban air quality (particulates) and river water quality for recreation (particularly in the Hauraki area and lower Waikato River catchment).

At present there is little historical information available on which to gauge the region's overall progress towards environmental wellbeing. It is also difficult to compare many environmental indicators for the Waikato region with equivalent data at the national level.

Air, land, water quality and biodiversity

River and stream water quality for contact recreation is poorer in the Hauraki area and lower Waikato River catchment. This largely reflects the greater intensity of land use in lowland parts of the region, with higher levels of faecal bacteria and fine silts from sources such as agricultural and urban runoff. Recent data show(s) a marked decline which may signal an underlying adverse trend. Future monitoring will help clarify the extent of the trend.

All nine monitored shallow lakes in the region are nutrient enriched, as assessed by Environment Waikato, resulting in a relatively high trophic state and low oxygen levels. The trophic state of most lakes remained unchanged or deteriorated between 1993 and 2001. Ecological water quality in Lake Taupo remains largely satisfactory to excellent. Water clarity has improved in Lake Taupo in recent years and nitrogen levels have improved, but levels of chlorophyll remain relatively high and oxygen depletion is only 'satisfactory', relative to Environment Waikato's standards.

Water quality for contact recreation, such as swimming, is satisfactory to excellent in Lake Taupo, although bacterial levels are sometimes high near urban areas (such as, Taupo's foreshore).

In the urban areas currently monitored, levels of fine particulate matter in the air, mostly from wood burners, exceed the regional guideline for a few days each year. Communities are required to comply with the new National Environmental Standard for air quality by 2013. Of the urban areas monitored, Tokoroa and Taupo exhibit the largest number of exceedances per annum.

Groundwater levels in most parts of the Waikato region are under low stress, with less than 10 per cent of available groundwater being used. There are 13 areas which have been investigated in the region that are under high stress, with more than 30 per cent of available groundwater being used. These include the far north of the region near Pukekohe, plus Tokoroa and the Waihi Basin.

An indicator of surface water availability and use is currently under development by Environment Waikato.

No data source has been identified yet at a regional or territorial authority level in relation to protection of natural heritage and landscapes.

Around 69 per cent of the Waikato region is planted in non-native vegetation. This is primarily due to the prevalence of pastoral farming and plantation forestry. The highest proportion of land in indigenous forest in the region is in the Thames-Coromandel district (65 per cent), and the lowest is in Hamilton city (three per cent).

An indicator of protected native vegetation areas is currently under development as part of the Government's Linked Indicators Project.

Environmental attitudes and behaviours

A 2004 survey by Environment Waikato, using the 'New Environmental Paradigm Scale' (NEP), showed that 19 per cent of people in the region had pro-ecological values while 23 per cent had anti-ecological values. Future monitoring should reveal whether or not people's values are changing with respect to the environment.

According to survey results the main actions that Waikato people undertake to protect the environment are recycling, planting trees and composting. A smaller number of people said they also saved electricity and reduced the numbers of plant and animal pests.

Coastal environment

Coastal water quality for contact recreation, such as swimming, is usually satisfactory or better. Occasionally some beaches have high bacteria levels.

Overall, 35 per cent of the region's harbours and open coast are in public ownership. A further nine per cent of the coastline is used for roads.

Rural environment

Between 2001 and 2006, 2,936 hectares of land changed from low-density rural land use to more intensive use in the Waikato region. Two-thirds of the land affected by subdivision has a 'high productive capability for pastoral use'. The greatest amount of subdivision is occurring on the land with the highest productive capabilities.

Rural subdivision is occurring most rapidly in Hamilton city and Thames-Coromandel, Franklin, Waikato, Taupo, Hauraki and Waipa districts. Lower rates of rural subdivision are occurring within South Waikato and Matamata-Piako districts. However, the overall rate of rural subdivision in the region appears to be decreasing.

Highest stock densities are in the Hauraki, Upper Waikato, Lower Waikato and Waipa River water catchment zones. Lowest stock densities are in the West Coast, Coromandel and Taupo water catchment zones.

Energy

Waikato regional communities consumed an estimated 109,043 terajoules (TJ) of energy during 2003, of which 73 per cent was for industrial purposes. Over half of the energy came from non-renewable sources. The main sources of energy in the region were gas (39 per cent) and coal (24 per cent).

Greenhouse gas emissions in the Waikato region are highest in the Taupo, Waikato, South Waikato and Franklin districts. Overall the 12 territorial authority areas in the region produce approximately 21 per cent of New Zealand's total greenhouse gas emissions. The main sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the region are natural (such as, geothermal activity), agricultural and industrial.

The region's ratio of energy use to GDP is approximately 12.1 megajoules (MJ) per dollar. Almost 30 per cent of the energy used in the region is for transport and domestic purposes.

Solid waste

There is a wide variation in the volume of waste to landfill throughout the region, with households in the Taupo district disposing of an estimated average of 3,562kg of waste to landfill during 2005, compared to 1,274kg in the Hauraki district. Note that there may be differences in methodology which partly explain this difference, for example, due to the impact of seasonal visitor patterns. There is also considerable variation in terms of waste disposal trends, with volumes per capita falling in the South Waikato district, rising in the Taupo district, and remaining relatively unchanged in Hamilton city and the Matamata-Piako district, over the period 2002 to 2004.

There is also a wide variation in the proportion of waste diverted from landfill (recycled) throughout the region, with Taupo diverting approximately 29 per cent of its waste stream, compared with approximately 9 per cent in Hamilton city and South Waikato district. There may be differences in methodology which partly explain this difference. Volumes per capita of recycling are generally increasing throughout the region. According to recent survey results from the Ministry for the Environment, recycling per capita is higher in the Waikato region than it is in other regions throughout New Zealand.

Story...

Enviroschools programme a national success story

From humble beginnings as a three-school pilot trial launched in Hamilton in 1993, the Enviroschools programme has become a national success story, with more than 600 schools now involved.

The Enviroschools programme encourages students to plan, design and create sustainable school communities. It was initiated by Hamilton City Council and is coordinated in the Waikato by Environment Waikato.

Students identify issues at their school, explore alternatives, take action and reflect on changes. Projects include growing sustainable gardens, planting native trees to increase biodiversity and offset carbon emissions, creating recycling systems, reducing waste and improving energy efficiency.

The Enviroschools network has increased in popularity over time. There are now 14 regional Enviroschools coordinators, most from regional councils, helping to implement the programme, and 21 per cent of all New Zealand schools are involved.

Thirty-five per cent of Waikato schools – more than 110 – are involved.

The Enviroschools Foundation is largely funded by the Ministry of Education and is based in Hamilton, with the Enviroschools programme supported by regional, district and city councils.

If your school is interested in becoming an Enviroschool please contact Dean King on 0800 800 401.

3. Quality of life

The Waikato region is a great place to live, providing the services and opportunities we need to live well.

Community outcomes

A. We are healthy, with active lifestyles and enjoy a total sense of wellbeing. Everyone has access to affordable quality health services throughout the Waikato region.

B Education provides opportunities so we can reach our full potential as individuals and contribute to the wellbeing of the whole region.

C Māori enjoy the same quality of health, education, housing, employment and economic outcomes as non-Māori.

D We have a choice of healthy and affordable housing that we are happy to live in and that is close to places for work, study and recreation.

E Māori have the ability to live on ancestral land in quality, affordable housing.

F Our communities and government work together so that we are safe, feel safe, and crime is reduced.

G We can work and participate in the communities where we live, and there are quality work opportunities for people of all ages and skill levels.

H We can participate in recreation and leisure activities that meet our diverse needs, and we have opportunities to enjoy the Waikato region's natural places and open spaces in responsible ways.

I Families are strong and our communities are supportive of them.

J Older people are valued, and children are valued and protected. Young people have work, education and leisure opportunities and are included in making decisions that will affect their future.

How are we doing?

Waikato regional communities have an increasing life expectancy, recent growth in early childhood education rates, and reducing levels of household crowding. The region is also making advances in areas where it had fallen behind the national average, including the number of school leavers with formal qualifications and the educational attainment of the adult population. However, aspects of quality of life that require attention include declining levels of home ownership between 1991 and 2006, and increasing rental costs as a proportion of household income over a similar period. Future monitoring of Waikato region quality of life indicators will help reveal additional positive and negative trends.

Health

Life expectancy in the region is similar to the national average of 78 years for males and 82 years for females. Gains in life expectancy since the mid-1980s can be attributed to better living standards and improved health care. However, there remain marked differences in life expectancy between different ethnic groups, with the life expectancy for Māori at around 8.3 years less than non-Māori.

Much of the Waikato region scores relatively well on the NZDep socio-economic deprivation index; however, throughout the region there are pockets of deprived meshblocks. Based on population-weighted average, the overall NZDep2006 score for the Waikato region is

approximately 6 (for example, slightly more deprived than the national median), with territorial authorities scores ranging from approximately 4 (Franklin and Waipa) to 8 (south Waikato).

The overall number of avoidable hospitalisations has been decreasing in the Waikato region since the late 1990s, while the level of avoidable mortality has been increasing over the same period. Part of this increase may be due to population growth and ageing.

According to baseline results from the 2007 Waikato Community Outcomes Survey, the majority of regional residents (90 per cent) are happy with their quality of life. The 'Happiness Index' (a weighted score across the quality of life scale) was 82.6 points for the Waikato region overall, with some variation between territorial authority areas.

Respondents to the 2007 Waikato Community Outcomes Survey were asked 'has there been any time in the last 12 months when you, or a member of your household, wanted to go to a GP, but didn't?'. Almost a quarter of the sample (22.5 per cent) said there was a time in the last 12 months when they, or a member of their household, wanted to go to a GP, but didn't. Respondents most likely to report having barriers to health care were under 35 years of age, renting or boarding, on lower incomes, living in town rather than in the country, and of Māori descent. The main reported barriers were cost (9 per cent) and availability (4 per cent).

Education

The proportion of school leavers in the Waikato region with no formal qualification has fallen dramatically over the past few years, at both the regional and national level. In total, there were 5,516 school leavers in the region in 2007, of whom 275 (five per cent) left school with little or no formal attainment.

There is considerable variation between territorial authority areas throughout the region, which likely reflects differences in underlying socio-economic status. There are also persistent levels of poor formal academic attainment by Māori and Pacific Islands school leavers, although the disparity has reduced considerably over the past decade.

Over the period 1996 to 2006 there was a general increase in the proportion of the adult population in the Waikato region with tertiary academic qualifications, including vocational qualifications (up from 20.7 per cent to 24.8 per cent of adults), bachelor degrees (up from 4.8 per cent to 8.8 per cent) and higher degrees (up from 2.4 per cent to 3.5 per cent). However, the Waikato region still has a slightly below average proportion of adults with either a secondary school qualification or degree qualification. There is considerable variation throughout the region, with more people having higher qualifications in Hamilton city compared to surrounding rural and provincial areas.

There has been an increasing rate of participation by Waikato children in Early Childhood Education (ECE) services; however, the ECE participation rate of Māori children remains relatively low compared to other ethnic groups.

There is no administrative data currently available for monitoring Adult and Community Education. This data is scheduled to be collected in the future by the Tertiary Education Commission. Respondents to the 2007 Waikato Community Outcomes Survey were asked about their level of satisfaction with the 'availability of community or tertiary education in your area'. Results were highest for Hamilton and lower for more remote areas such as Thames-Coromandel.

Most respondents to the 2007 Waikato Community Outcomes Survey were satisfied that their jobs are making good use of their skills, training and experience.

Housing

The rent to income ratio in the Waikato region increased from 19.9 per cent in 1991 to 26.6 per cent in 2001, but remains approximately 1.5 percentage points below the national average. For comparison, the rent to income ratio for the Auckland region in 2001 was 30.8 per cent. The rent to income ratio throughout the Waikato region ranged from a low of 17.7 per cent in the Waitomo district to a high of 33 per cent in Hamilton city as at March 2001.

Approximately 23 per cent of households in the Waikato region pay one-third or more of their income towards housing costs, compared to the national average of 25 per cent and Auckland region average of 32 per cent. According to more recent 2008 survey data, households in the Auckland/upper North Island region spent on average 17 per cent of their income on housing costs.

Home ownership in the Waikato region fell by six percentage points in the Waikato region between 1991 and 2006, reflecting a wider national trend towards lower rates of home ownership. The trend away from home ownership has occurred to a greater or lesser extent in all territorial authority areas throughout the Waikato region. In Hamilton city, the home ownership rate fell from 70.7 per cent in 1991 to 60.7 per cent in 2006. Districts that have been least affected are Otorohanga, Franklin and the Waikato district.

The level of household crowding in the Waikato region has declined over the past two decades and is marginally below the national average rate of crowding. Average crowding levels vary throughout the region, but all districts have experienced some decline in crowding over the past 20-year period. Note that part of the reason for 'household crowding' in New Zealand may be due to cultural preferences for extended households by a proportion of Māori and Pacific Islands families, relative to other ethnic groups.

Results from the 2007 Waikato Community Outcomes Survey showed that the majority of respondents (78 per cent) were satisfied with 'proximity to schools', but this dropped to only 49 per cent for 'proximity to other educational facilities'. Thames-Coromandel respondents were the least satisfied with 'proximity to other educational facilities'. Those who live in towns were more satisfied than those who are living in the country with all the proximity factors except 'proximity to where you work'.

Community safety

At the present time there is no criminal victimisation data available at the Waikato regional level. At the national level, approximately 39 per cent of New Zealand adults aged 15 and over experienced some form of victimisation in 2005. Comparisons with data from earlier surveys are difficult, owing to changes in the survey design. A conservative conclusion is that the risk of victimisation did not change much between 1995 and 2005 for personal offences (such as, theft of personal property), but increased slightly for household offences (such as, burglaries and vehicle theft). A rough proxy for victimisation rates, the number of recorded offences in the Waikato Police District, fell relative to the national trend over the period 1996 to 2001 and has since remained fairly stable. Of concern, the number of reported violence offences per annum in the Waikato area increased by 46 per cent over the period 1996 to 2008.

In 2005 approximately 40 per cent of New Zealanders said that fear of crime had a moderate or high impact on their quality of life. Respondents to the 2007 Waikato Community Outcomes Survey were asked: 'Thinking now about issues of crime and safety, please tell me how safe or unsafe you would feel in the following situations'. The majority of respondents felt safe in their community during the daytime but relatively less safe at night, particularly women. The results vary by location but it seems that Thames-Coromandel and Otorohanga are perceived as the safest places by residents. Generally speaking, those who live in the country feel safer in their community compared to those who live in town.

According to the 2008 Social Report, 423 New Zealanders died as a result of motor vehicle crashes during 2007, a rate of ten deaths per 100,000 population. The Waikato regional death rate per annum from motor vehicle crashes was 23.8 per 100,000 population during 2007. Deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes have declined substantially since 1986.

The number of motor vehicle injuries on Waikato region roads has risen slightly since 2001, reflecting the national trend. Sustained increases in injury crashes have been recorded, in particular, in the Thames-Coromandel, Otorohanga and Waitomo districts. In contrast, the number of motor vehicle deaths has been declining overall. Casualty rates remain relatively high in rural areas (particularly those with state highway corridors) compared to urban areas such as Hamilton city.

Community participation

The most frequent form of unpaid activity in New Zealand is household work, cooking, repairs, gardening (for example, for own household) followed by looking after a child who is a member of own household. As at the 2006 Census, rates of unpaid activity in the Waikato region were similar to the national average. There was no significant change in the pattern of unpaid activities in the Waikato region over the period 2001 to 2006.

Sport and leisure

According to the 2007 Social Report, 72 per cent of New Zealand adults aged 15 years and over were reported to be sufficiently active in 2006. This was similar to the figure in 2005 (71 per cent). In the Waikato, young people's overall levels of physical activity showed little change between 1997 and 2001. Boys tend to be more active, although not significantly so. The overall proportion of Waikato adults who were active also remained fairly constant between 1997 and 2001.

More recent baseline data for Waikato regional communities was collected through the 2007 Waikato Community Outcomes Survey, commissioned by MARCO and Choosing Futures Waikato. An average 88 per cent of respondents throughout the region reported having undertaken brisk walking, running, gardening or other physical activities at least once per week.

Family and community cohesion

Data on the groups or social networks that matter most to people is available for Hamilton city residents, but not for other parts of the Waikato region. Of the total number of Hamilton respondents during 2006, 24 per cent said they relate mostly to people with same interests, culture or beliefs, 18 per cent said they relate mostly to people living in the same area, and 52 per cent said it was a mixture. According to 2008 survey results, the most common social networks to which New Zealand residents belong are family (81.6 per cent), work or school (59.8 per cent) and hobby or interest groups (38.3 per cent). The profile for Hamilton city is similar to the national average.

An estimated 60 per cent of female secondary school students and 64 per cent of male secondary school students in the Waikato region in 2001 reported that most weeks they spent enough time with their parents. An updated Youth'07 survey took place between March and October 2007, however, results are not yet publicly available.

Youth and older people

Strong family relationships can help enhance personal development, including education and sense of belonging. No data source has yet been identified for this indicator.

Story...

Skills for you, skills for the Waikato

Career development and training events were held in May 2008 as part of the "Get a Life" initiative, organised by a group of central and local government representatives, along with Waikato community organisations.

Aimed at students, teachers, parents, employers, employees and career changers; the initiative focused on helping these people learn more about developing their skills, finding work and changing careers.

Events were hosted throughout the region by schools, businesses, universities, institutes of technology, private training providers, non-profit organisations, hospitals, training industry organisations and career guidance practitioners.

Department of Labour Knowledge Manager, Brendon Gardner, said 56 events during the month promoted the key messages:

"Create your own success; get the skills to get the life you need; grow your career, don't just choose it!"

Get a Life was developed at a Choosing Futures Waikato summit, which brought together a wide range of stakeholders to discuss potential areas for collaborative work focused on community outcomes.

The diversity within the group meant a wide range of networks throughout the Waikato were connected to the opportunity.

Funding from the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, the Katolyst Group, and the Department of Labour helped to resource some of the common threads required to underpin the initiative, including a website, and postcards which went to every secondary school student in the Waikato.

Councils sponsored Get a Life banners to hang across their main streets and calendars of events in their local newspapers. A number of Waikato mayors were involved in both regional and local initiatives. The Radio Network also sponsored advertising of the campaign.

Mr Gardner said the initiative demonstrated the value of regional relationships among central and local government along with the wider community.

The groups involved included:

- *Mayors Taskforce for Jobs – Mayor Dale Williams*
- *Career Practitioners Association of New Zealand – Megan Smith*
- *Career Services – Ross Jones*
- *Choosing Futures Waikato – Roxane Miller*
- *Department of Labour – Brendon Gardner*
- *Skillwise Katolyst – Mary Jensen*
- *Waikato Enterprise Agency – Kim Bredenbeck.*

4. Sustainable economy

The Waikato region balances a thriving economy with looking after its people, places and environment.

Community outcomes

A Our region has economic growth and development that is well-planned and balanced with environmental, cultural, and social needs and values.

B Our regional and local economies are robust and diverse, providing opportunities throughout the Waikato region.

C We have reliable, efficient and well-planned infrastructure and services, including transport that is safe, interconnected, and easy to get to and use.

D We take a practical and coordinated approach to planning and providing services, which works effectively across boundaries and sectors, and responds to our communities' needs.

E The growth, wealth and uniqueness of the Māori economy is acknowledged and supported.

F Our economy is built on land-based industries, and we encourage planning and practices that protect and sustain our productive resources.

G We have a tourism industry that recognises the region's cultural and environmental heritage and values, and supports economic growth.

H Our region has a reputation for entrepreneurship, innovation, research and education, attracting investment and people to work, study and visit.

How are we doing?

Over the long term, economic growth has been generally improving in the Waikato region, relative to national economic development. Until recently, most economic indicators were improving steadily. However, unemployment has risen since late 2006, and there has been a decline in building consents issued since mid 2007. The rate of economic growth recently slowed, following a relatively lengthy period of sustained growth, and has begun to enter a recessionary period.

As at December 2008, annual average percentage of growth in regional economic activity was estimated at negative 1.3 per cent for the Waikato region and negative 0.7 per cent at the national level. Prospects for the region's research and innovation sector have been mixed – tertiary student enrolment numbers declined between 2005 and 2007, but research income for the University of Waikato increased by more than 40 per cent in nominal terms over the period 2002 to 2007. On the downside, the average Waikato resident's ecological footprint is five to ten times larger than those of people living in India or China, and larger than those of people in Japan and many European nations.

Sustainable development

A Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) for New Zealand on a district or regional level has not yet been completed. In the interim, results are shown for the proxy indicator, 'ecological footprint'. This measures how much productive land it takes to support the lifestyle of an individual, a city, region or country in today's economy. This is calculated as the land use required for production and consumption of goods and services. Based on data from 2003-2004, the ecological footprint of an average Waikato region resident is 5.8 ha, which is slightly smaller than the national average. However compared to most other countries, New Zealanders have a large ecological footprint – five to ten times larger than people living in India or China, and larger than Japan and many European nations.

Economic prosperity

Based on recent estimates by Statistics New Zealand, the Waikato region contributed approximately \$10.6 billion or 8.1 per cent of national GDP in 2003. Based on the National Bank's Regional Economic Activity Index, the Waikato region has consistently outperformed national average economic growth over much of the period since the late 1980s. However, the rate of economic growth recently slowed, following a relatively lengthy period of sustained growth, and has begun to enter a recessionary period. As at March 2009, annual average percentage of growth in regional economic activity was estimated at negative 2.8 per cent for the Waikato region and negative 1.4 per cent at the national level.

Until recently, unemployment had been falling in the Waikato region as it had been for the country as a whole. Estimates from the quarterly Household Labour Force Survey indicate that the Waikato regional unemployment rate reached a long-term low of 2.6 per cent in December 2006, but rebounded up to 5.8 per cent in the March 2009 quarter. By comparison, the national unemployment rate estimate as at March 2009 was 5.6 per cent. These latest figures reflect a general economic slow-down. There remains considerable variation between different territorial authority areas in the region, as well as disparities between Māori and non-Māori unemployment rates throughout the region.

The median weekly income in the Waikato region is similar to the national average, with a value of \$506 as at June 2007. After adjusting for inflation, median weekly income in the Waikato region has increased by more than 40 per cent since 1998. The median weekly income for males, as at June 2007, was \$686 and for females \$384. The disparity between male and female median weekly incomes increased significantly over the period 1998 to 2007. There are also disparities between ethnic groups, with Māori and other ethnic groups earning a lower median weekly income than the European/Pākehā ethnic group.

The number of businesses in the Waikato region increased from 43,384 in 2000 to 52,314 in 2008. The number of employees in the region increased from 132,690 in 2000 to 170,710 in 2008. For the Waikato region, the employee count grew slightly more quickly than the number of businesses over this period. The Waikato region employee profile is concentrated more heavily towards primary and secondary industries than in many other regions. Primary industries and manufacturing are strongly prevalent in provincial areas, while more service orientated industries are focused around Hamilton city.

Since June 2007, there has been a decline in the number of new housing units. According to Statistics New Zealand figures, 3,314 building consents were issued in the year to March 2008 in the Waikato region, slipping to 2,079 in the year to March 2009.

Transport, infrastructure and services

Many community drinking water supplies are listed as having a Public Health Grading of 'U', or 'un-graded'. There is a push for grading to happen annually (driven by the Ministry of Health), but this has not yet occurred.

The number of motor vehicle crashes and injuries on Waikato region roads has risen slightly since 2001, reflecting a national trend.

Regional planning

Survey data shows that Waikato regional communities have a reasonably high level of confidence in their councils' decision making. This indicator varies between territorial authority areas.

No data source has yet been identified for monitoring residents' satisfaction with councils' approach to planning and providing services.

Land-based industries

The Waikato region contributes approximately \$10.6 billion or 8.1 per cent of national GDP. Of this, approximately 12.7 per cent (\$1.3 billion) is agricultural production. Future monitoring will help determine whether or not there is a long-term trend.

Tourism

An estimated 4.6 million guest nights were recorded in commercial accommodation in the Waikato region in the year to December 2008, including guest nights in Rotorua. The Waikato region contributes approximately eight per cent of New Zealand's overall guest nights in commercial accommodation (excluding the Rotorua area).

In the year ended December 2008, New Zealand hosted a total of 2.2 million international visitors aged 15 years and over. This represents a similar level of activity compared with the year ended December 2007. For the Waikato region, international visitor numbers and nights steadily increased between 1998 and 2006, but dipped slightly in 2007. The average length of stay for international visitors has increased substantially since the 1990s.

An estimated \$1.52 billion was spent by international and domestic visitors in the Waikato region during 2006, down from \$1.58 billion in 2002. Despite recent declines in regional visitor expenditure, the Ministry of Tourism is projecting that by 2013 total visitor expenditure in the region will rise to an estimated \$1.98 billion. However, significant changes to the global economy over the past year mean that the Ministry of Tourism's forecasts need to be treated with caution.

At the national level, an estimated 5.8 per cent of full-time equivalent employees were directly engaged in producing goods and services purchased by tourists in 2007. No known data is available at the regional level for this indicator.

Research and innovation

Total research and development expenditure in New Zealand for 2008 was estimated at \$2.14 billion. This compares with \$1.11 billion in 1998, an increase of 52 per cent over a ten year period (inflation-adjusted). Research and development expenditure increased as a percentage of overall national GDP over the period 1996 to 2008, but remains below the OECD average.

Research income by the University of Waikato increased by more than 40 per cent in nominal terms over the period 2002 to 2007. Research income contributed approximately 12.7 per cent of total revenues for the University of Waikato in 2007.

The total number of Effective Full-Time Equivalent Students (EFTS) increased at both the Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec) and the University of Waikato over the period 2000 to 2005, but subsequently declined. In 2007, there were approximately 27,000 students enrolled at both institutes combined.

Story...

Waikato doing its bit to get cracking on regional roading projects

The Regional Transport Committee has been working hard to progress a number of key transport projects over the past year, in order to help improve the regional and national economies by developing freight and passenger flows.

The committee includes Environment Waikato councillors, local mayors and representatives from other key organisations.

Work undertaken by the Committee includes research to help secure government funding for projects such as the Waikato Expressway and Kopu Bridge, as well as advancing the development of rail freight and passenger services in the region.

A key project in the past year was the connection of Crawford Street to the new Rotokauri roundabout at the northern end of the State Highway 1 Avalon Drive Bypass in Hamilton. Truck access to the rail terminal has improved significantly which has created better traffic flow for the area.

New legislation has given regions more powers to set the priorities for the way government funding is spent on transport infrastructure, particularly state highways.

Part of the work done by the committee has been to secure more central government funding for its priorities, such as the expressway. For example, Environment Waikato and Hamilton, Waikato and Waipa councils are jointly carrying out the Futureproof sub-regional growth strategy project. Surveys are being carried out as part of developing a new regional transport model, and studies are starting on inter-regional transport and freight.

5. Culture and identity

The Waikato region identifies with – and values – its land, air, rivers and waterways, mountains, flora, fauna and its people.

Community outcomes

A We are proud of our region's distinctive identity, its strong Māoritanga, and its rich and diverse natural and cultural heritage.

B Heritage sites and landscapes of significance to whanau, hapū and iwi are preserved and valued.

C Our historic buildings and places are retained and cared for. New developments are designed to be sensitive to people, places and the environment.

D All our communities have cultural and recreational events and facilities. We identify with and take part in our communities, building good community spirit.

E Art, culture and creativity can be a part of everyone's life. We all have opportunities for creative expression and our creative industries are supported and promoted.

How are we doing?

There is relatively little information available for monitoring cultural wellbeing and strength of identity in the region, but future data collection should help fill this gap. There are some positive indicators: for example, the number of Māori language speakers has been steadily increasing, there are signs that more people are employed in the cultural sector, and councils are spending more on cultural activities and events.

Regional identity and pride

Survey results show that most Waikato residents feel a sense of pride in their district or city.

The proportion of Waikato region residents who spoke Te Reo Māori at the time of the 2006 Census was above the national average (6.2 per cent compared to 4.2 per cent). This is, at least, partly due to the above average proportion of Māori residents in the Waikato regional population. Within a number of territorial authority areas in the region, the proportion of Māori language speakers increased between 1996 and 2001, but then fell again between 2001 and 2006. The highest proportions of Māori language speakers in the region are in the Rotorua district (12.6 per cent), Waitomo district (12.1 per cent) and Waikato district (9.3 per cent). The Waikato region has the fourth-highest proportion of Māori residents who speak Te Reo Māori (25.4 per cent) out of all regions in New Zealand, behind Gisborne, Bay of Plenty and Northland. The proportion of Māori who speak Te Reo Māori is substantially higher for older age groups; however, the proportion of Māori aged 50 and over who speak Te Reo decreased over the period 1996 to 2006.

The proportion of people who can hold everyday conversations in the first language of their ethnic groups varies widely between ethnic groups, from 16 per cent of Cook Islands Māori to 84 per cent of Koreans. The Waikato region average was 51.7 per cent in 2006, up slightly from 48.3 per cent in 2001.

Within the region, the proportion of first language speakers ranges from around 30 per cent in the Waitomo and South Waikato districts to a high of 60 per cent in Hamilton city. These differences may be for a range of factors, including the length of time families from specific ethnic groups have been established in New Zealand.

Historic buildings and places

There were 475 buildings and places listed on Historic Places Trust Register in the Waikato region territorial authority areas as at April 2009 (excluding wāhi tapu sites). As at April 2009, approximately 60 category 2 buildings and/or sites had been removed from the Historic

Places Trust Register. Category 2 places are 'of historical or cultural heritage significance or value'. Details on buildings removed, as opposed to sites, is not available. There is also no readily available information on why a record is removed, for example due to demolition or another reason.

According to survey results, more than half of the region's residents agree that new developments and subdivisions are sustainably designed, but a substantial proportion of other residents disagree.

Culture and recreation

Survey results from 2006 show that an estimated 41 per cent of regional residents were satisfied with the cultural facilities and opportunities provided in their area. This reflects in a Satisfaction Index (weighted average score) of 61.5 points for 'cultural facilities and opportunities provided in your area'. The scores vary only a small amount by location within the region.

At present, there is only national-level data available on people's participation in cultural and arts activities; however, there are plans at the local and regional level to collect similar survey data. At the national level, the most frequently cited cultural activities in the four weeks prior to the survey were purchasing books, visiting public libraries and purchasing music. The most frequently cited cultural activities in the 12 months prior to the survey were visiting art galleries/museums, popular live music and purchasing handmade craft.

Indicative national data compiled from territorial authority annual reports show that council spending on cultural activities has generally increased in recent years, particularly in relation to the provision of library services. Robust local and regional data is not currently available.

Creativity

Indicative data at the national level shows that more than 100,000 people in New Zealand are engaged in cultural employment. Cultural employment appears to be growing faster than overall employment. Local and regional data sets are not currently available, but are likely to reflect the national trend.

Story...

“Blueprint” project

The Coromandel Peninsula Blueprint Project brings together communities and authorities to look forwards to 2050, and build an integrated plan for protecting and enhancing the special character of the place now and for the future.

Led by the Thames-Coromandel District Council, Environment Waikato, Hauraki Whaanui and the Department of Conservation, the project looks at how the land and coastal environment will be used in the future.

The collaborative approach aims to ensure consistency in local and regional decision making, integrating land, harbours and the open coast in the planning process. Such an approach has never been done for the Coromandel Peninsula.

The Coromandel Peninsula Blueprint project will provide the opportunity to integrate a review of the councils’ relevant plans and rules such as the district, community and long term council community plans.

In particular, it will be strongly interconnected with the current review of the Regional Policy Statement, and will also incorporate the Department of Conservation’s Conservation Management Strategy. The Blueprint project will address our obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.

In April 2008, using key information from a variety of planning documents, an issues and options paper was put out, and stakeholder and community feedback was sought on possible future scenarios, key issues and trade-offs. Based on the feedback results and technical information, a ‘Preferred Future’ is now being developed. This includes what the community would like the Peninsula to look like in 50-years time.

Once this is identified, the project partners will feed back to community and stakeholders the final Coromandel Peninsula Blueprint and Implementation Plan in 2009, before looking at local Blueprint plans for your communities.

Information and contacts

The information in this booklet draws on the work of Marco, a group of people from Waikato councils and other organisations who have been working to identify and collect data about the core indicators.

You can find out more about monitoring and reporting on community outcomes – including the Marco Benchmark Indicator Data Analysis Report 2009 update on the Choosing Futures Waikato website www.choosingfutures.co.nz.

This Community Outcomes update has been prepared by Choosing Futures Waikato, a group of councils and central government agencies who are working together to make progress on the Waikato regional community outcomes.

The focus of Choosing Futures Waikato is on working collaboratively to improve the region's environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing. By sharing information, insights and resources we can better provide for the communities needs.