

Foreword - South Waikato Economic Development Trust

It is with pleasure that I write this foreword to the refreshed South Waikato Economic Strategy. It has been three years since the initial strategy work was completed for this District, as part of an initiative by the South Waikato District Council. This led to the "Securing our Future" Strategy 2002, which gave rise to the formation of the SWEDT – a dedicated organisation to facilitate and promote economic development in the South Waikato. The "Securing our Future" document gave guidance to the initial work plan that has driven our last three years of activities.

As a Trust, we now have capabilities that we could only have dreamed of three years ago. We thank South Waikato District Council for its foresight in providing core funding for SWEDT. I acknowledge that it is not easy for small territorial authorities to simultaneously meet immediate needs and pressures and invest in the future.

This strategy refresh document will assist in prioritising our energies and resources, to best influence the economic development of the South Waikato District for the next three years.

As Chairman of SWEDT, I am very mindful of the fact that this District will need to perform economically to at least the national average to maintain and grow the population base. Other considerations include the social aspects of South Waikato that will ensure it is seen as a place where people can both live and work and have a desirable standard of living.

SWEDT is aware that this District is heavily dependent on two primary industries – dairying and forestry. These are also our core strengths. Their fortunes are governed by commodity prices and exchange rates

and are also vulnerable to biosecurity risks. The Trust must build on the outcomes of these industries. Small increases in their performance can create big benefits for our economy.

We also need to diversify, to give us a competitive advantage, nationally and internationally. There are a multitude of secondary and service industries employing significant numbers of our community. These need continued support to enable them to grow and prosper.

Like Council, I look forward to implementing recommendations in this document and working with Council to make this District a better place where our young people wish to stay. A District that is attractive to non residents because of the opportunities and lifestyle offered. A place where retired people can capitalise on their central location and the services provided. In short – we want the South Waikato to be the place to be, and we want South Waikato people to have a standard of living, at least comparable to the rest of the nation.



George Moss

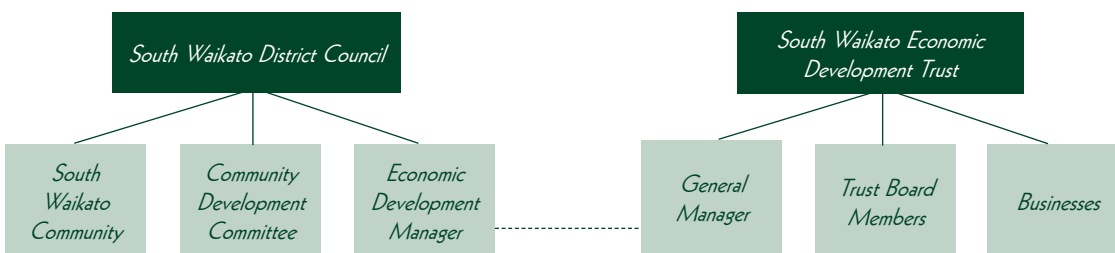
George Moss

CHAIR: SOUTH WAIKATO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRUST



“This strategy refresh document will assist in prioritising our energies and resources, to best influence the economic development of the South Waikato District for the next three years.”

The Partners



Message from the Mayor

4

“... we invite you to discover the benefits of making South Waikato your place of business.”

South Waikato has the competitive advantage of being centrally located in the North Island, within 200 km of half the population of New Zealand. All our main towns are on State Highway 1 and there is a rail link to Auckland and Tauranga ports. This is a place for affordability, location and lifestyle and we invite you to discover the benefits of making South Waikato your place of business.

This updated economic strategy document is markedly different from the previous “Securing the Future” Strategy of 2002. The Economic Spirit has developed indicators for evaluating and monitoring progress of initiatives taken by Council, industry and businesses. It also links to Community Outcomes identified through consultation with the residents of South Waikato.

It is a natural evolution from the initial strategy document, where we focused on ideas and a vision, to recognising and identifying the factors that contribute to economic growth and sustainability. Industry and business development in any modern economy is reliant upon a clear, effective strategy that generates strong business and community confidence.

The focus is on competitiveness for emerging industries, creating opportunities for significant investments, infrastructure investment as described in Council’s Long Term Council Community Plan (Long Term Plan 2006/16) and the branding of South Waikato as an affordable, centrally located and friendly place to do business. All major initiatives need to support the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the District. Council is in the business of providing economic development support because:

- Economic Development has many properties of a public good, with no individual agency responsible for its promotion. The aim is for local businesses to prosper through “flying in formation”.
- Community consultation has identified Economic Development and District Promotion as top priorities for the District and for Council.

Council’s Long Term Plan 2006-16 is linked to The Economic Spirit. Although the timing of The Economic

Spirit has meant that the implementation programme cannot be built into Long Term Plan budgets, the Plan references The Economic Spirit as providing priorities for future Council resourcing.

Council directly delivers a number of activities such as District Branding and provides support for economic development through funding of the SWEDT. The Trust is committed to the economic development partnership with Council and provides business support and training through the South Waikato Economic Development Group (Tokoroa). Council has signalled continued support for the Trust through its Long Term Plan 2006-16. District and Business Promotion is also delivered to the community through Council’s Fast Forward Tokoroa and Vibrant Putaruru community contracts. In addition, Council provides District Promotion support through funding of promotional pamphlets. All of Council’s community contracts contain economic development and promotional objectives, as Council seeks to align promotional efforts and channels to encouraging people to choose to live and invest in the District.

Council seeks to secure significant new investment by working closely with industry sectors to realise their potential. This includes ensuring that necessary infrastructure is in place for growth and investment to occur. A new initiative of business-friendly protocols is also being developed that will aim to identify and eliminate unnecessary regulations.

South Waikato is a great place to live, work and play – come and join us.



Neil A Sinclair MNZM JP BDS

MAYOR



Neil Sinclair MNZM JP BDS

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide clear, prioritised and measurable economic directions for the South Waikato District. The Economic Spirit defines a shared vision and priorities for the District and provides a clear and achievable pathway to long-term sustainable economic growth.

The Economic Spirit 2006-2016 and Action Plan 2006-2009 is a refresh of the previous “Securing our Future” Strategy 2002. It was developed through a partnership of the SWEDT and South Waikato District Council, with funding support from New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. Steps involved in developing this strategy are shown in the table below

Date	Step
September 2002	“Securing our Future” – Economic Strategy 2002
December 2002	Formation of SWEDT
September 2005	Strategy refresh process starts
October 2005 – April 2006	Industry and stakeholder consultation contributions and draft evaluation
April 2006	Working Document prepared
27 April 2006	Strategic Workshops – SWEDT and Council
30 June 2006	Draft Economic Strategy released for feedback
2009	Evaluation and review

A large part of the working document comprised a comprehensive study by Waikato University on Economic Output and Employment Projections for the South Waikato District. On the basis of employment opportunities identified in the working document, seven sectors have been selected as significant contributors to the District.

- Farming
- Engineering
- Water
- Renewable
- Transit Hub
- Tourism
- Forestry

Initiatives identified in the Economic Spirit 2006-2016 and Action Plan 2006-2009 aim to have a maximum positive impact on the economic outcomes that local communities are seeking. Some actions will be achieved in the short term (one to three years) and others will take a full ten years or longer to implement. The initiatives will facilitate local people and businesses to enhance skills, capacity and economic wellbeing.



Lichfield Cheese Factory (SWDC)