

2. Standing tall together

Cultural Wellbeing

Why is this important?

South Waikato is a bicultural District made up of diverse, multicultural communities. Cultural heritage, diversity and wellbeing have been identified as both strengths and issues for the District. Increased cultural wellbeing is integral to improved overall community wellbeing.



How are we doing?

There is relatively little monitoring information available for gauging the quality of cultural wellbeing in the District. Future work will hopefully help to fill these gaps.

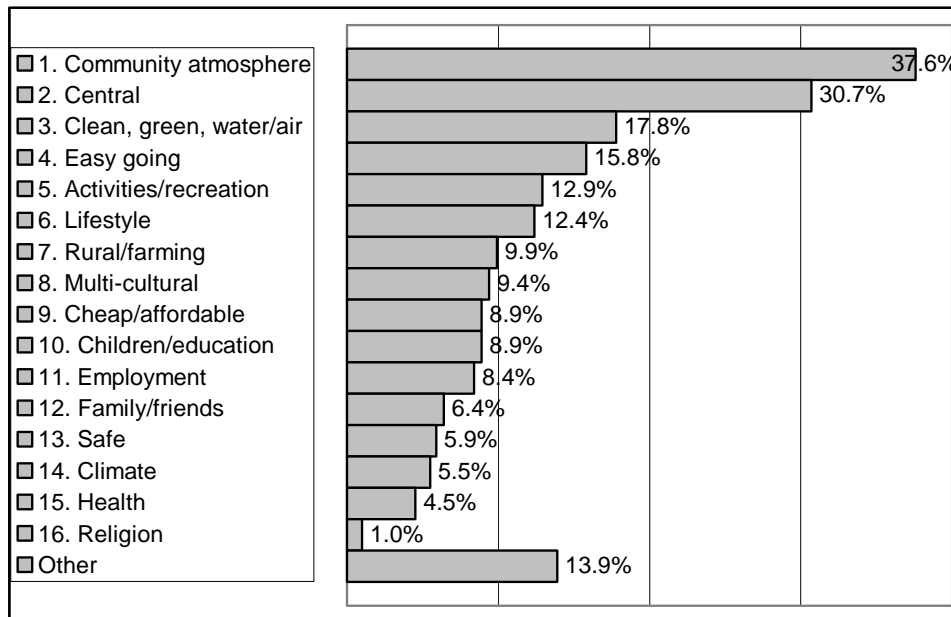
Community pride and District image

Community pride is an important element of overall quality of life. It affects the way we perceive our local environment and how we interact with others. Community pride and social connection can also impact on how non-residents perceive the District. A negative image can take many years to overcome, regardless of whether or not it reflects the day-to-day reality for South Waikato residents and visitors.

A 2003 South Waikato Telephone Survey asked: "Thinking about the range of facilities and activities in the District now, how would you rate the District as a place to live, on a scale of 0 being very poor to 10 being very good". Two thirds of respondents (67.8%) rated the District as being a good or excellent place to live including 7.9% who gave it a score of 10. Only 4.5% of respondents rated the District poorly (score of 0-3). The main things people like about the District include its facilities and resources, community spirit, central location, quiet relaxed atmosphere and affordability. The main reasons for people to not like the District include not a lot for teenagers, not much to do generally, and lack of shops and employment opportunities. The Survey also asked "what are the three most important aspects about the way of life in the South Waikato". The top 10 reasons cited by people were community atmosphere, central location, clean and green, easy going, lots of activities, lifestyle, rural, multi-cultural, affordable, and good for raising a family.

South Waikato is in the process of re-branding itself to ensure greater alignment between the positive perceptions of residents and the District's image to visitors and potential investors. In 2005 Council trademarked the tag line "The South Waikato... discover it... live it... love it..." for use on District promotional material including refreshed billboards at the District's entranceways. Tirau's business community had previously defined the village's tag line as "... Take a Break, Take in Tirau...", which was further endorsed during the Tirau Concept Plan process in 2005/06. Arapuni residents are currently in the process of developing a brand for their village through the Arapuni Concept Plan process.

Most important aspects of life in the South Waikato



Source: South Waikato Community Outcomes Survey 2003

Cultural understanding and celebration

Cultural identity is important for people’s sense of identity, how they relate to others and their overall wellbeing. Raukawa Trust Board has a stated commitment to retaining and enhancing the culture of its people. Its strategic vision, “the total achievement and development of Raukawa” aims to uphold and enhance the tikanga, kawa and mana of the whānau and hapū of Raukawa. South Waikato’s Pacific Island communities also have a commitment to preserving and enhancing their culture through language, arts and other activities.

Raukawa Trust Board undertook a survey in 2005 as part of the development of its Reo (Māori language) Strategy which found that 38% of participants had very little or no knowledge of local stories, marae and history of the rohe, 45% knew some Raukawa kupu (words or statements), and 41% had very little or no knowledge of any Raukawa kupu. According to the Reo Strategy there are now less than 20 native Raukawa speakers (people who grew up with the language in the home) living in the Raukawa takiwa, and there are currently no informal domains where te reo is spoken more than 50% of the time (not even on the marae). According to Census results, between 1996 and 2001 there was a slight increase in the proportion of younger aged Māori people who could speak te reo. The Raukawa Reo Strategy has significant potential to raise Māori language usage and literacy over the coming years. A related partnership initiative of Raukawa Trust Board and South Waikato District Council, to macronise and correct misspelled street signs in Tokoroa, was selected as the Supreme Winner of the 2006 Māori Language Week Awards.

Arts and culture

People participate in arts and cultural activities for a wide variety of reasons including enjoyment, personal growth and development, as a means of expression, to meet new people or to pass on cultural traditions. Data on participation in arts and cultural activities are not currently collected at the South Waikato District level but will be monitored in the future. A calendar of regular

key cultural events in the District is currently being compiled (refer to the Draft Reference Report for details – www.southwaikato.govt.nz/communityoutcomes).

The 2005 South Waikato Community Outcomes Household Survey asked respondents to rate the strength of their town or area across a range of sectors, including the strength of cultural activities/clubs/events. The results show that 51% of South Waikato residents rated cultural activities/clubs/events as good or excellent. A further 28% scored cultural activities/clubs/events as average, while 11% scored it weak or poor. Respondents from Tokoroa were most likely to rate the strength of cultural activities/clubs/events as good or excellent.

Heritage

South Waikato's history is a fundamental aspect of its image and identity. It is important to know where one has come from in order to go forward, and the same is true for the District as a whole. Heritage is important not only for people's sense of identity, but also as a potential tourism drawcard in the future.

As at May 2005 there were 25 buildings and sites in the South Waikato District listed on the Historic Places Trust Register, including buildings and sites in Arapuni, Lichfield, Okoroire, Putaruru, Tirau, Waotu and Piarere. The South Waikato District contains many locations that are identified as having archaeological significance, including pa sites, terraces, ovens and pits, marae, papakainga, urupa, rock drawings, sacred trees, pou (carved poles), and sites relating to early European settlement. For a map of known sites on Council's Heritage and Ecological Register refer to the Draft Reference Report – www.southwaikato.govt.nz/communityoutcomes.

The Putaruru Timber Museum site contains historic buildings, machinery exhibits and an archives room containing local community history, photographs and documents. Several additional heritage and cultural proposals are currently under investigation or development in the District, including a proposed Raukawa Iwi Cultural Centre and a Vaka Village Pacific Island Arts Tourism Pilot.

Buildings and sites registered on Historic Places Trust Register

Name	Location
Arapuni Dam	Arapuni Road, ARAPUNI
Arapuni Powerhouse	Arapuni Road, ARAPUNI
Arapuni Suspension Bridge	ARAPUNI
Assembly of God Church (Methodist Church)	95 Tirau Street, PUTARURU
Bakehouse	Kinloch Road, LICHFIELD
Borough Council Office (former School)	Overdale St, PUTARURU
Courthouse	93 Tirau St, PUTARURU
House	83 Tirau St, PUTARURU
House	85 Tirau St, PUTARURU
House	87 Tirau St, PUTARURU
House	74 Kensington St, PUTARURU
House	56 Arapuni St, PUTARURU
House (Formerly Hotel)	Corner, Wiltsdown Road and Stringer Road, WAOTU
Main Estate Stables	Tirau - Okoroire Road, OKOROIRE
Main Estate Woolshed	167 Tirau - Okoroire Rd, OKOROIRE
Okoroire Hot Springs Golf Club Shelter/Pavillion	Sommervilles Rd, OKOROIRE

Name	Location
Okoroire Hot Springs Hotel	Sommervilles Rd, OKOROIRE
Okoroire Hot Springs Hotel Staff Accommodation	Sommervilles Road, OKOROIRE
Post Office	Power Station Village, ARAPUNI
Skimming Factory (Former)	831 Kinloch Rd, LICHFIELD
Stone Kitchen (Former)	Horahora Road, PIARERE
Stone Store (Former)	Corner, Pepperill Road and Vospers Road, LICHFIELD
Waotu-Puketurua Playcentre Building	1262 Waotu Rd, WAOTU
Water Tower	State Highway 1, LICHFIELD
Watertower	Prospect Ave, TIRAU

Source: NZ Historic Places Trust Online Register

Note: Registered wahi tapu and wahi tapu areas are not yet available on the Online Register - contact your nearest NZHPT office for information about these sites.

Māori and Pacific Island consultation

Government agencies and Council have specific legal obligations to consult with Māori on matters that are important to them, and Council is also committed to recognising and consulting with the substantial Pacific Island populations in the District. This means exploring new ways of consultation and engagement that are appropriate to different cultural settings.

Council acknowledges Raukawa Trust Board as the mandated iwi representative for the District and surrounding area. Raukawa Trust Board and Council are currently in discussions towards a refreshed Memorandum of Understanding or Relationship Agreement. Council is also on an ongoing path of relationship building with Pacific Island communities and will continue this commitment into the future, through liaison by both Elected members and Council staff. Feedback on perceptions of Council consultation with Māori and Pacific Island communities will be monitored over the coming years.

Youth events and participation

It is important for young people's development and wellbeing that they be provided with opportunities to be involved in organising events and participating in decisions that affect them.

A stock-take of events that are planned by, for and with young people is currently being compiled. This will incorporate information from the South Waikato Safer Community Council, Tokoroa Council of Social Services, Putaruru Youth Matters and other sources. Tokoroa young people recently received a community gift in the form of a Youth Park complete with playground and soundshell, which was built over a 72 hour period as part of a television reality series. The launch event in early October 2006 included a mix of national and local performers.

Council is also planning towards the establishment of a Youth Council, and a Steering Group was formed in late 2006 to drive the development of a South Waikato Youth Strategy. The Steering Group currently includes representatives from Council, Raukawa Trust Board, South Waikato Safer Community Council and the Ministry of Youth Development, and will shortly include several young people nominated through a Youth Forum. The Steering Group will plan and oversee an inclusive process of consultation during 2006/07 to develop the Youth Strategy and ensure broad buy-in from young people as well as stakeholders including schools and social services.

What is being done?

Key initiatives to improve cultural wellbeing in the District include:

- Refresh of Relationship Agreement between Raukawa Trust Board and South Waikato District Council (SWDC)
- Development of a Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and SWDC
- Development of a proposed Arts Space
- Development of South Waikato's Arts sector and The Plaza (Putaruru)
- Development of signature events that showcase Tokoroa's and Putaruru's heritage and culture
- District Branding Strategy
- District Library service
- Festivals and events
- Heritage Trails
- Local Area Concept Plans (Arapuni, Putaruru, Tirau, Tokoroa)
- NZ Urban Design Protocol
- Pacific Arts Tourism Pilot
- Project K
- Proposed development of a Raukawa Iwi Cultural Centre
- South Waikato Arts and Culture Strategy (forthcoming)
- South Waikato District Plan
- South Waikato Economic Strategy
- South Waikato Physical Activity (Leisure) Strategy (forthcoming)
- South Waikato Youth Strategy (forthcoming)
- SWDC Heritage and Ecological Register
- Tokoroa Talking Poles
- Transport Corridor Strategy (forthcoming)
- Visitor Information Centres

Lead Partners

- Arapuni Residents' Association
- Churches and youth groups
- Fast Forward Tokoroa contractor (TANGS)
- Historic Places Trust
- Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
- Pacific Island churches and communities
- Putaruru Community Arts Council
- Putaruru Residents' and Ratepayers' Association
- Raukawa Trust Board
- Schools
- South Waikato Arts Trust
- South Waikato Youth Forum (forthcoming)
- South Waikato District Council (SWDC)
- South Waikato Economic Development Trust (SWEDT)
- South Waikato Residents' and Ratepayers' Association
- Talking Poles Working Party
- Tirau Business Association
- Timber Museum NZ Trust (Putaruru Timber Museum)
- Tirau Community Board
- Tokoroa Community Arts Council
- Vibrant Putaruru contractor (PIP)
- Visitor Information Centres (Tokoroa, Putaruru, Tirau)