

Tā mātou ahunga, ā mātou ratonga

Our direction and delivery



Te aronga ki tua - Horizon scan

The changes we are expecting across our Region

Our planning is underpinned by an understanding of the changes our Region may face in the future and their potential impacts. We have developed an evidence-based picture of what we could expect in the region over the next five to 30 years.

These projections are the best estimate we can make with the information available and can aid us in being better prepared for the future. We have applied them across our work and our assumptions are reasonably consistent with those being made by the territorial authorities in our Region.



We have identified the following areas of change as potentially having significant impact on our role, our services, and our finances.

Population and demographic change

The Wellington Region is likely to continue to experience steady population growth. 164,000 additional residents are estimated over the next 30-years. This figure has been revised downwards since our previous assumptions in the 2021-31 Long Term Plan. The complex nature of population and demographic change creates a significant amount of uncertainty and flexibility.

Population growth is not expected to be evenly distributed across the region. Wairarapa and Lower Hutt are expected to experience the biggest population increases in the Wellington Region.

Over the next 10 years, our Region is likely to become more culturally and ethnically diverse. Māori and Pacific populations are expected to grow, particularly in Porirua and Lower Hutt. The Māori population is projected to increase between 0.7 and 2.5 percent annually until 2043. About 60,000 Māori live in the region and make up 12 percent of the population. More than half (58 percent) are under 30 years of age compared to 38 percent of non – Māori and the number of young Māori is projected to rise over the next 20 years. The Pacific population is projected to grow to 2.5 percent between now and 2043. The population of people of Asian descent is also projected to grow in the region, with forecasts between 0.7 and 4.3 percent annually between now and 2043.

An increasingly aged demographic is expected, with rates of population growth being highest at age 50 and over. This continues a long-term trend. The share of the population aged over 70 is expected to rise from 10 percent to 15 percent over the next 30 years.

General growth, combined with an aging population, will likely place increased pressure on a wide range of services and resources. It also has the potential to put pressure on the natural environment and the health of our waterways.



Economic uncertainty, affordability challenges, and resource shortages

The New Zealand economy is facing multiple challenges that contribute to an increasingly uncertain outlook. Mixed performance across the economy is forecast, particularly in the short term.

High interest rates have reduced domestic demand, and a weaker global economy has slowed the growth of New Zealand's exports. Increases in the cost of living and the associated equity challenges are expected to continue. The period of lower growth drives further slowing in the labour market, with the unemployment rate expected to increase. Treasury forecasts the economic slowdown to persist through 2024.

From 2025, interest rates are expected to fall, and growth is expected to pick up, averaging 2.8 percent per year from 2026 onwards. Unemployment is also expected to trend downward from 2026. We have a level of certainty around the financial data for the next three years but less certainty beyond this point.

The region has a diverse economy made up of different industries. The most dominant are professional, scientific, and tech services, which make up 21.4 percent of the working population. Property operators, real estate services, and construction services are also strong in the region. Horticulture, agriculture, forestry, and fishing make up a smaller proportion of industry at 3.3 percent.

Partnerships with mana whenua and engagement with Māori

Working in partnership with mana whenua and engaging with Māori is important to Greater Wellington.

The Māori population in our Region is growing and its expectations are changing. A Māori medium education combined with greater social awareness is shaping a new generation of Māori. Tino rangatiratanga and mana motuhake are drivers for iwi Māori who expect to see this reflected in how we work with them, and also in the work that is delivered with and for them.

There are significant opportunities for us to partner meaningfully with mana whenua in our environmental management, policies and decision-making processes. Te Tiriti gives effect to authentic partnership, enabled by funding, resourcing and representation.

Mana whenua of the region are redressing their historical grievances against the Crown with four of the six having settlement deeds in place.

Increasing risk from environmental change, climate change and natural hazards

Our climate has already changed and will continue to change. Climate change will have adverse effects on our natural environment, agricultural productivity, and our communities.

The region will continue to experience more frequent and intense rainfall events, and longer duration and more frequent drought events. The number of hot days will increase, and the number of frosts will decrease. There will be permanent sea level rise and more frequent and intense coastal flooding and erosion. Inland we will see more intense river flooding, and increased slips and landslides. The annual average temperature will rise. The region will also continue to be at risk from adverse natural events including earthquakes, tsunami and, increasingly, wildfires – all pose threats to life, property and livelihoods. These impacts will present significant challenges for our Region.

The state of biodiversity in New Zealand and our Region is in crisis. Pressures including introduced invasive species, changes in land, water and sea use, direct exploitation and harvesting, pollution as well as climate change are factors contributing to the worsening state of our environment.

Changes in government and legislation

It is important that we keep up to date with government proposals for reform and make sure we deliver on our vision and our existing commitments.

Local government has been facing the most significant period of legislative review and reform in 30 years. This significant programme of reform impacts governance structures, operational and financial capacity, roles, and responsibilities.

The policies agreed by the Government present further change and new directions. While timelines and processes are not yet clear, the Government's initial policy priorities include:

- The repeal of the Natural and Built Environment Act and Spatial Planning Act reverting the country to the Resource Management Act (RMA).
- The passage of the Fast Track Approvals Bill (introduced 2024) as a totally separate approval regime to the RMA (and other legislation), indicating its long-term goals include making it easier to gain approval for infrastructure and development projects, prioritising approval over the current regional planning framework.
- The repeal of all legislation relating to water services entities (contained in the Water Services Entities Act 2022, Water Services Entities Amendment Act 2023, and Water Services Legislation Act 2023) also known as Three Waters.
- A number of amendments to the existing RMA and secondary legislation including the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 which will be reviewed and replaced.

For local government this evolving direction carries significant levels of uncertainty which we must prepare to navigate and respond to in ways that are best for our Region.

Technological change, information, and future of work

Advances in technology will be ongoing, rapid, and unpredictable. This will likely change many aspects of the way we live and communicate. New technology may help Greater Wellington improve the delivery of its services. Advances in technology outpace the policies which guide its design and use.

An overabundance of information, some accurate and some not, may make it hard for communities to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it.

There is the expectation of increasing workforce diversity, and a wider and more inclusive perspective in decision-making. Widespread remote working may remain a permanent feature of the working environment. Research suggests many workers value working from home and are willing to change jobs or accept lower wages to continue in this way.

Tā mātou ahunga - Our direction

Represented by our whareniui, Greater Wellington's direction integrates key strategic drivers and frameworks that link us together and guide us toward success.

Our long term impact

Everything we do contributes towards improving the environmental, social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of our Region. We describe these long-term impacts through our Community Outcomes:

Nui te ora o te taiao

Thriving environment

Healthy waterways and coastal waters, clean and safe drinking water, unique landscapes, indigenous biodiversity, sustainable land use and a prosperous low emissions economy.

He hapori kotahi

Connected communities

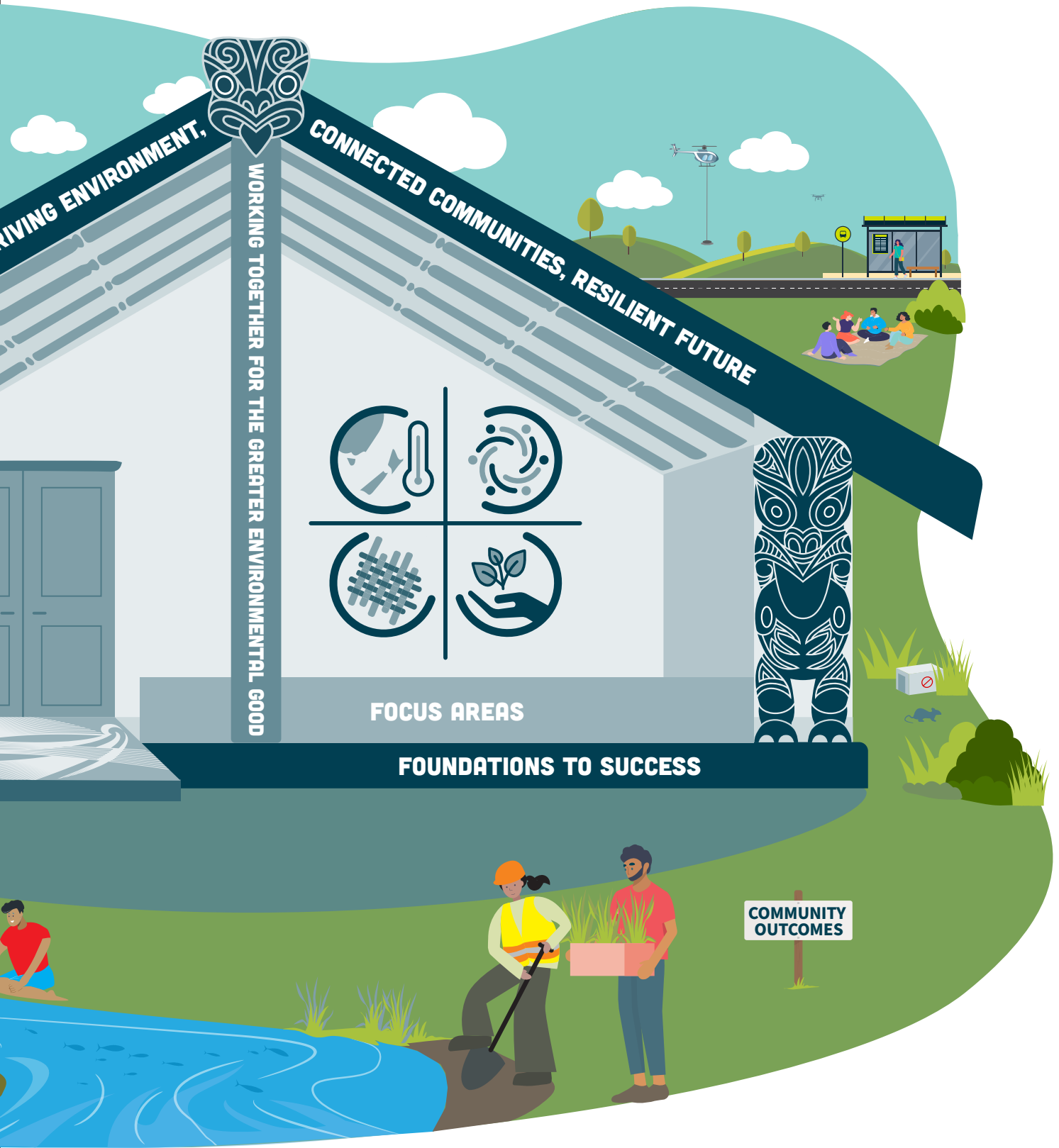
A vibrant and liveable region in which people can move around on safe, sustainable, and effective public transport, there is inclusive and equitable participation, and our sustainable rural and urban centres are connected to each other.

He manawaroa te āpōpō

Resilient Future

Safe and healthy communities, a strong and thriving regional economy, adapting to the effects of climate change and natural hazards, community preparedness and modern robust infrastructure.





Tā mātou ratonga - Our delivery

How we deliver

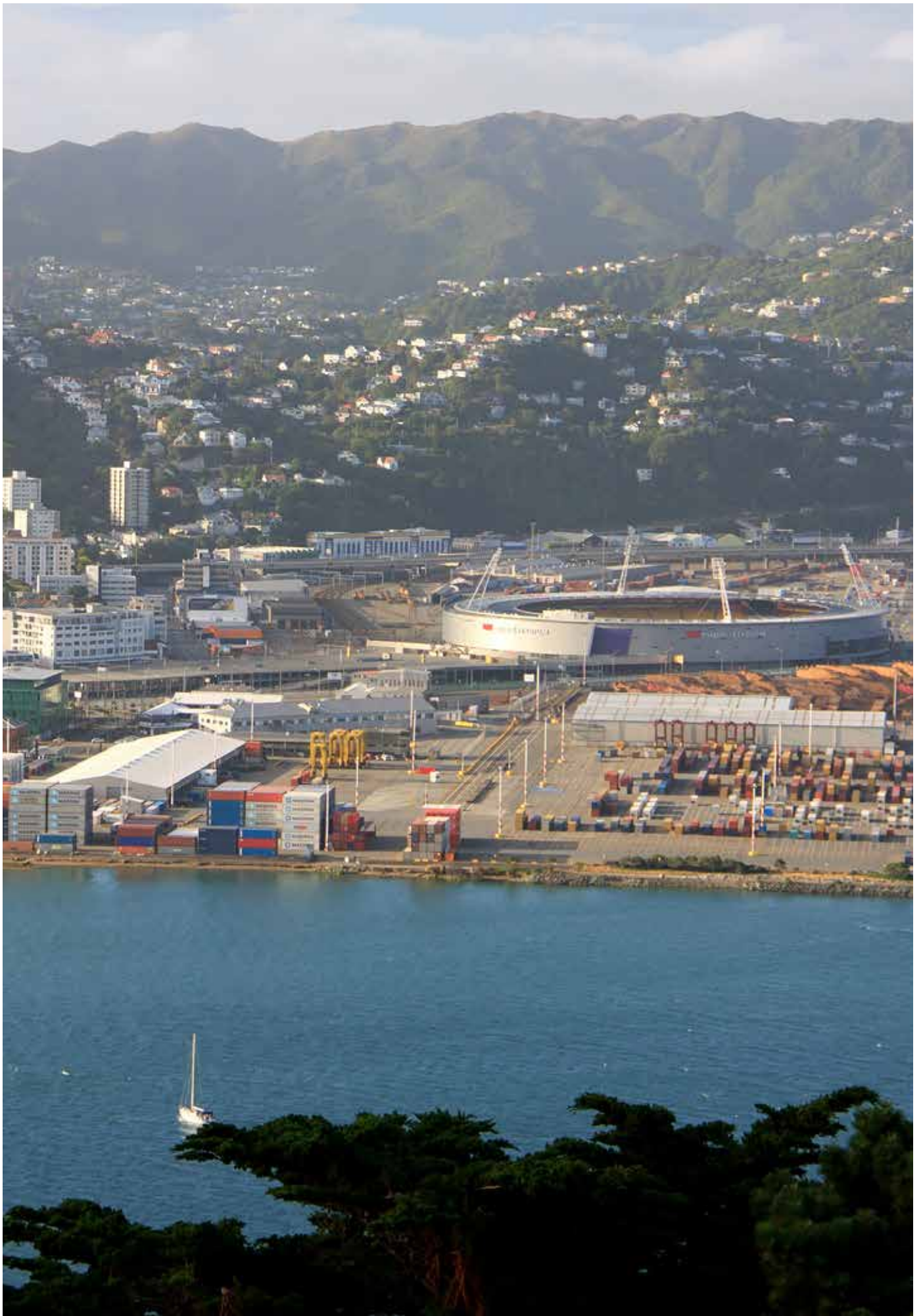
We deliver on our community outcomes through the work of our four key Activity Groups:

Environment, Metlink Public Transport, Regional Strategy and Partnerships, and Water Supply.

Activity Groups respond to our strategic direction through the work they do. We set expectations by describing levels of service the community can expect. We use performance measures and targets to help us report on our progress.

Examples of how we deliver on our community outcomes:

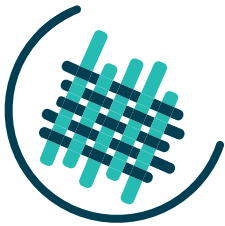
		Ko ngā hua mō te hapori - Community Outcomes		
		Nui te ora o te taiao - Thriving environment	He hapori kotahi - Connected communities.	He manawaroa te āpōpō - Resilient Future.
Activity Groups	Environment	We support and protect te taiao in the region to help it thrive.	We work with our communities to connect people with the environment in which they live.	We are looking to nature to help us respond to the causes and effects of climate change so that future generations can thrive.
	Metlink Public Transport	We contribute to a low emissions region by lowering the carbon emissions of our transport network.	We make sure our public transport network is accessible and efficient so people can get to the places they want to go.	We are future proofing our public transport network to ensure people can continue to move around the region.
	Regional Strategy and Partnerships	We lead by example to put the environment front and centre.	We actively work with our mana whenua partners. We support people to engage with us on the decisions that affect them.	We plan for the big issues by connecting the dots and ensuring the future is resilient.
	Water Supply	Water supply is respectful to the environment we live in.	Our water supply is safe.	Our water supply is resilient and sustainable as our Region evolves.



Our focus

We know the long term outcomes we want to achieve, and we want to make sure we are moving in the right direction over the next 10 years.

We have weighed up the challenges on the horizon, to come up with four strategic focus areas. These focus areas are Greater Wellington-wide priorities that guide our decisions and support us to focus our delivery in ways that contribute toward our vision of an extraordinary region – thriving environment, connected communities and resilient future.



Active mana whenua partnerships and participation for improved outcomes for Māori

This focus area is about recognising our Te Tiriti obligations to our mana whenua partners and Māori living in our region and ensuring our work gives effect to their rangatiratanga and mana motuhake as we work together. It is also about acknowledging mana ōrite mō te mātauranga Māori, which put simply means we are working with our mana whenua partners to give equity to traditional knowledge systems in our design, decision making, implementation and evaluation.



Holistic approaches to deliver improved outcomes for te taiao

This area of focus represents constructive relationships between Greater Wellington and mana whenua as we work together to restore and uphold the wellbeing of te taiao and its interconnected components, people, land and waterways. We will ensure there are clear plans to restore natural environments on land, in our waterways and in our Region's blue belt coastal marine environment. It is about delivering joined-up solutions that maximise investment and support us to deliver shared outcomes across our region. We are working to drive more nature-based solutions that help reduce risk and improve the wellbeing of our people and places over the long term.

This Long Term Plan will continue to support the Kaipupuri taonga ki te ao whanui framework¹ (a framework for restoring te taiao that was developed by and for the community) which provides a protecting cloak to surround the decisions we make for te taiao. The framework was developed by Mauri Tūhono ki te Upoko o te Ika a Māui, known as Mauri Tūhono, an independent working group made up of project partners and mana whenua from Te Rūnanga O Toa Rangatira, the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Charitable Trust, and Ātiawa ki Whakarongota Charitable Trust Department of Conservation and Greater Wellington, as well as community members.

¹ The framework can be read at <https://maurituono.org.nz>



Leading action for climate resilience and emissions reduction

Greater Wellington declared a climate emergency in 2019 and through the 2021-31 Long Term Plan, set in motion a programme to be climate positive (absorbing more carbon dioxide than the equivalent greenhouse gases we emit) by 2035². We are focused on being a low-emissions economy, supporting sustainable urban and rural development, and driving critical behaviour changes. Together with mana whenua, territorial authorities in our region, central government and a range of other organisations we will prepare, for and adapt to, the effects of climate change and natural hazards. This includes ongoing work to reduce organisational greenhouse gas emissions and build on our climate risk preparedness.



Improving access to services and equity of outcomes through participation with communities

We have a diverse range of communities in our region: whanau, hapū and iwi communities as well as many others. This new area of focus spans everything we do and supports us to deliver better results for our communities. As well as strengthening our knowledge and insights, we make information and opportunities accessible to enable public participation. Supporting meaningful behaviour change is important to meeting our climate goals, a key part of which is looking at access needs and how we provide public transport services that are accessible and serve our growing populations.

² In August 2019, Greater Wellington joined a growing community of local governments around the world by declaring a climate emergency. This declaration signalled a step change in how Greater Wellington addresses its response to the climate crisis. Our leadership is crucial, and the closing window of opportunity to prevent the worst effects of climate change demands an extraordinary response. As part of this response, Greater Wellington set ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets for itself. The ultimate goal of the organisation is that by 2035 we will remove more GHG emissions from the atmosphere than we emit (also known as being 'climate positive'), with an interim goal of being 'carbon neutral' from 2030. Carbon neutrality is reached when GHG emissions and the uptake of carbon dioxide by trees or other means (known as 'offsetting' or 'insetting') cancel each other out. All Greater Wellington activities, and the activities of our Council Controlled Organisations, are included in our GHG emissions targets, using an 'equity share' approach. By 'equity share' we mean for example: we own 76.9 percent of CentrePort Limited, so we account for 76.9 percent of their GHG emissions.

What we will deliver

The following section outlines what each of our activity groups plans to do over the next 10 years. We describe what's on the horizon for each and what we're keeping an eye on. We also describe any significant negative effects that delivering that activity may have on community wellbeing.

For each activity group we:

- Describe what they do.
- Provide a snapshot of expenditure, funding sources and rates contribution.
- Describe each of the key activities in three sections:
 - On the horizon – covers the assumptions we have made based on our horizon scan
 - Our response – responds to our assumptions and gives our key projects for the next 10 years to the assumptions
- Things we will be keeping an eye on – notes changes and any significant negative effects of delivering our activities
- Key projects - what we have planned for the next 10 years
- Use an icon to indicate which focus area they support.
- Provide performance measures – our list of performance measures and annual targets to monitor and assess the levels of service.
- Provide funding impact statements – identifies the levels and sources of funding and how they will be applied.

Our Activity Groups and activities

Environment	Metlink Public Transport	Regional Strategy and Partnerships	Water Supply
Environmental restoration, recreation and harbour safety	Public transport strategy and planning	Regional spatial planning	Bulk water supply
Planning and prioritising integrated work at a catchment scale	Public transport service delivery	Regional transport planning and programmes	
Environmental strategy, policy and protection	Public transport assets and infrastructure management	Regional economic development	
Environmental knowledge and insights		Democratic services	
Flood resilience		Regional partnerships with mana whenua and Māori	
		Emergency management	
		Climate change	