Welcoming Communities Welcome Plan

HURUNUI District Council

Welcoming Communities
TE WAHAROA KI NGĀ HAPORI

February 2026

Introduction

This is Hurunui District Council's commitment to lead collaborative efforts to develop and implement a Welcome Plan. This Plan is intended to be community-owned. It follows the Welcoming Communities Standard and ensure that our district is more open and accepting, building on existing efforts to embrace cultural diversity and inclusion.

The Welcoming Communities programme is coordinated by Immigration New Zealand (INZ), in collaboration with the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, Department of Internal Affairs, and the Human Rights Commission. The programme is delivered at a local level, as local councils and community groups have the best understanding of the complexity of their communities and can implement solutions that best reflect the local context. The initiative is aimed at supporting positive outcomes for recent migrants, former refugees and international students, as well as the local communities they join. In the Hurunui we have also included New Zealand residents who have recently moved to the district as newcomers.

The programme was piloted between 2017-2019 in five regions across Aotearoa New Zealand. In September 2020 INZ opened for Expressions of Interest from other Councils, and in 2022 Hurunui District Council (HDC) applied to join. This application was successful, and the HDC Welcoming Communities facilitator began work in October 2022.

Latest statistics show that Hurunui is a diverse place, with more than 21 different ethnicities identified. According to the 2023 census approximately 17.7% of the population of Hurunui was born outside of New Zealand.

The Hurunui is a growing district, and newcomers fill important roles as employees, business owners, and community members. Attracting and retaining new residents contributes to improving social, cultural, and economic outcomes for the whole community. While different parts of the district may have differing resources and the newcomers to each may have different needs, the goal of this programme is to ensure that all of the Hurunui feels like home for anyone who chooses to live here.

Welcoming Communities Hurunui has set up an Advisory Group, conducted a stock take and consulted with partners and stakeholders to develop this Welcome Plan. This is the first version of the Welcome Plan and will continue to grow and develop and be adapted annually. It is in plain speak written for the community. If your organisation would like to contribute, please contact the Welcoming Communities Officer at welcomingcommunities@hurunui.govt.nz.

Developing the Welcoming Plan

The Process

Information gathering was undertaken in a variety of ways throughout 2023-25, including:

· Interviews with employers of newcomers
· Interviews with newcomer community leaders & service providers
· Surveys of newcomers or former newcomers
· Surveys of schools
· Community engagement events both in person and online
· Independent research
· Workshops with high school students
· Workshops with stakeholder representatives

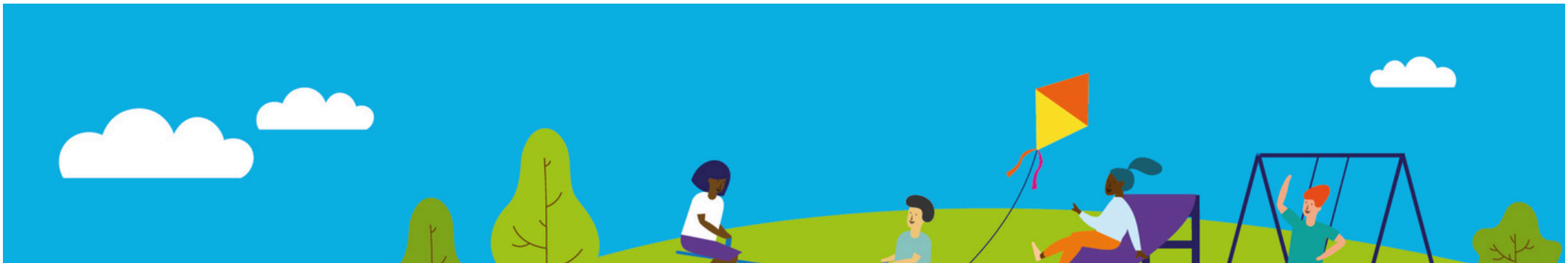
Key Feedback themes

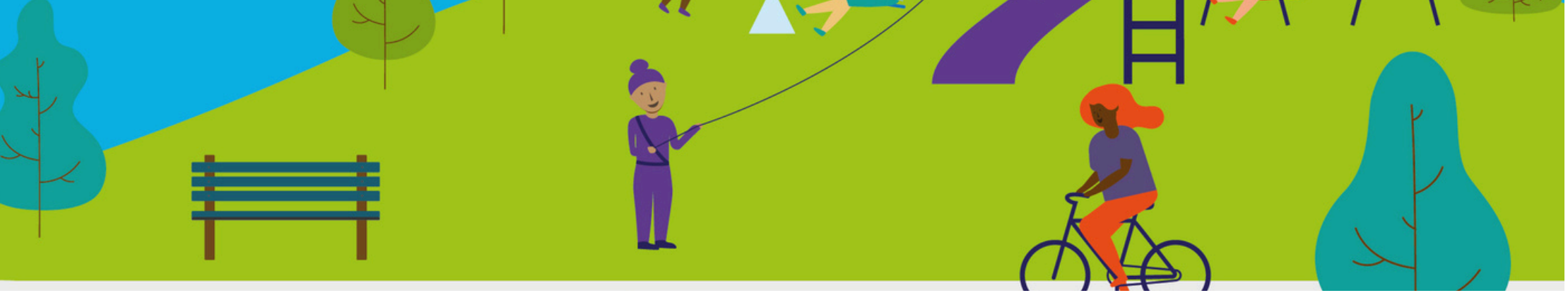
While a broad range of information and ideas were gathered, five broad themes were identified:

1. **Identifying Newcomers.** It can be difficult to identify newcomers. This impacts how easy it is to connect them to support and to the broader community.

2. **Information Sharing.** Knowing where to get useful information when settling in the district can be a challange. This applies to new residents from around New Zealand and those from overseas.

3. **Community Connections.** Many newcomers connect personally with their neighbours when they arrive and go to them for advice. It would be great to expand these types of connections.





4. **Programmes & Events.** Events are a great way to share and celebrate cultures in the community. Many members of the receiving community enjoy experiencing diverse cultural activities.

5. **Rural Benefits and Challenges.** Many newcomers love the community and pace of rural living. For some, important services such as medical care, cultural events, and English language instruction can only be accessed by travelling to larger centres such as Rangiora or Christchurch.

6. **Future evaluation.** This Welcome Plan will be re-evaluated and refreshed every 3 years. This will involve repeating the 2023 Stocktake Survey to compare responses, as well as repeating the information gathering process throughout the community. Progress will also be assessed by the Welcoming Communities Advisory Group and the Welcoming Communities Facilitator to adapt the plan as needed.

What success looks like-

- There is an increase in positive responses regarding access to information and community connection.
- Cultural diversity is more prominently showcased throughout the district.
- Employers report higher rates of attraction and retention of employees who move into the district.
- Current community members report feeling connected to newcomers and vice versa.

Welcoming Communities Standard

What it Means for Us?

Inclusive Leadership

Local leaders, including tangata whenua, work together to build a welcoming, inclusive community where newcomers feel connected and valued.

Welcoming Communications

People from all backgrounds feel informed, respected, and included through communication that meets diverse needs.

Equitable Access

Everyone- especially newcomers - can easily access services, join activities, and feel part of the Hurunui community

Connected & Inclusive Communities

Newcomers feel safe, valued, and part of the Hurunui community. Everyone builds trust, understanding, and lasting connections.

Economic Development, Business & Employment

Newcomers help grow the local economy. Hurunui District and businesses support their success and celebrate their contributions.

Civic Engagement & Participation

Newcomers feel welcome to take part in community life and are active in civic and local government activities.

Welcoming Public Spaces

Newcomers and locals feel welcome, safe, and included in public spaces.

Culture & Identity

Everyone feels proud of their culture and part of a vibrant, respectful community. People learn from and celebrate each other's traditions.

The Action Plan

The Welcoming Communities advisory group developed the action plan in collaboration with communities. It is a living document that is dynamic and changes with the needs. The currant version of the action plan can be found here- https://www.hurunui.govt.nz/community/welcoming-communities

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