

On the Council website you highlight that '*...gourmet treats abound in Greytown*'. And in the Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy,

- Under the Comparative Advantage heading, it states '*There are areas where it [Wairarapa] has shown promise, such as wine, artisan and tourism, and there are opportunities to grow and harness these businesses*' and
- Under the Productivity heading, it states, '*By cutting out the middleman cost Wairarapa producers can produce bespoke products at a lower cost, making them more competitive*'.

As South Wairarapa District Council, it is within your control to achieve exactly that and make businesses in your District more competitive by:

- Reviewing the charges your local food businesses are having to pay for National Programme verification and your charges for Food Plan certification to help local artisan producers be more competitive;
- Removing the unnecessary South Wairarapa food stall permit charges as part of the current Annual Plan process; and
- Implementing a shared service arrangement across the Wairarapa Councils to reduce the cost of National Programme verification, or insist external providers have a Wairarapa based verifier as a minimum.

These are all actions that are within your remit and I ask that you consider implementing them to deliver on your economic strategy and allow businesses like mine to be more competitive.

In closing, I'd like to emphasise that this is not a criticism of Council staff administering the system, who have always been helpful and responsive for us, but more the system and charging regime they have to operate in and apply to businesses in the South Wairarapa.

Thank you again for your time.

Costs for Food Businesses Registered with SWDC

	SWDC	MDC	WCC
Registration (every 2 years) *	\$155	\$300	\$155
Verification (every 3 years) **	***\$750	\$350	\$310
Bylaw food stall permit fee per market	\$21.50	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total:	\$905 + fees per stall	\$650	\$465

* The fee shown is first time registration costs - renewal of registration costs varies.

** Each verifier allows 3 hours to complete the verification, if it takes longer than this the business is charged at an hourly rate over and above the amount shown.

*** This was the base cost charged by Assure Quality, which was the cheapest verifier available to our region at the time. Due to the Covid pandemic I was verified remotely and therefore saved on travel costs. **Businesses being verified now in South Wairarapa will have significant travel costs added to this fee as the verifier is based in Upper Hutt.** Other SW businesses are being verified by Palmerston North based verifiers so will be incurring even more in travel costs.

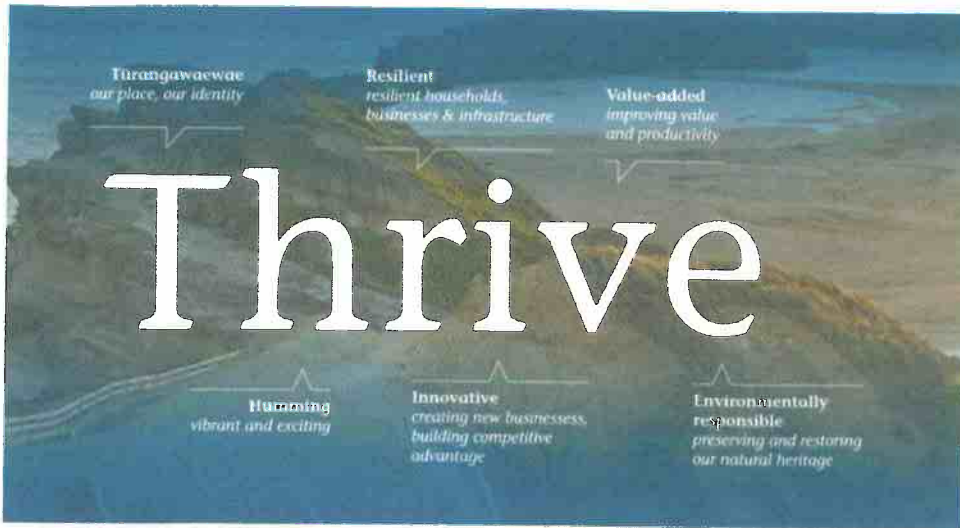
Key Issues Driving Higher Costs for Local Food Businesses

- Having no National Programme verifiers within the Council and so food businesses need to source an external verifier;
- Those outsourced companies having no local representatives or presence; and
- Council charging a food stall permit for every market in the South Wairarapa, even though the food businesses are already registered with the Council, and verification details have been provided to the Council.

Requested Actions to be Implemented by Council

- Reviewing the charges your local food businesses are having to pay for externally sourced National Programme verification and your charges for Food Plan certification to help local artisan producers be more competitive;
- Removing the unnecessary South Wairarapa food stall permit charges as part of the current Annual Plan process; and
- Implementing a shared service arrangement across the Wairarapa Councils to reduce the cost of National Programme verification, or insist external providers have a Wairarapa based verifier as a minimum.

These are all actions that are within your remit and I ask that you consider implementing them to deliver on your economic strategy and allow businesses like mine to be more competitive.



What we are trying to achieve

A close study of the Wairarapa economy and community illustrates a number of key characteristics of the region which help define the direction of the refreshed Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy (WEDS). The most important of these characteristics are listed below.



Comparative Advantage



Successful regions generally have two or three areas in which they excel. Examples are Marlborough in wine, Southland in dairying, Waikato in agri-business, Taranaki in energy and Bay of Plenty and Hawke's Bay in horticulture. Wairarapa lacks decisive areas of comparative advantage. There are areas where it has shown promise such as wine, artisan and tourism, and there are opportunities to grow and harness these sectors.

Clusters of comparative advantage can bring economies of scale to an economy, with shared infrastructure and logistics helping create a more cost-effective foundation for enterprises.



Productivity



While there has been an improvement in productivity in recent years, the Wairarapa is at best on the national productivity average. This is the result of many things, but in particular, the small scale of businesses, skill deficits and the lower level of technology enablement of businesses. Technology enablement is particularly important because it can facilitate the production of small volume and short run products marketed directly to the end user. By cutting out the middleman cost Wairarapa producers can produce bespoke products at a lower cost making them more competitive.

Presented by Lauren-Beth Stitt
The Lost Plot

Email: find-us@thelostplot.nz

Phone: 021586186