

2024 - 2025 South Wairarapa Welcoming Plan



Welcome from the Chief Executive

Nau mai, haere mai – Welcome to South Wairarapa. We are so glad you have chosen our community as your new home.

As a Council we are committed to making our district welcoming and inclusive for all people who choose to move and live here. It matters to us that you feel safe, included, and represented. New residents contribute a lot to our communities, industries, and economies – from our seasonal workers in Martinborough to our young families moving from “over the hill” – we are a small community, and each person brings something unique to the table.

I understand what it’s like to be new here and it can take a while to settle and feel a part of the local community. At first it can be difficult to know what services and supports are available, so through this Plan we hope you will have the information, support, and connections you need to thrive in the amazing place that is the South Wairarapa.

I encourage you to experience all South Wairarapa has to offer with its rich history and wonderful people. If you need any help settling in, please get in touch and speak to our Welcoming Communities office.



Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the helpful and welcoming people of South Wairarapa. We would like to recognise every individual and group that goes out of their way to greet new people, asks how they are settling in, shares local knowledge and invites them to be a part of things.

It is our hope that through this Welcoming Plan, our Council will be able to support and strengthen the efforts that are already underway, and to have a more structured, organised approach so that feeling welcome and included is just the norm in South Wairarapa.

Thank you for choosing to call South Wairarapa ‘home’.

Becoming a Welcoming Community

As a district, South Wairarapa has some qualities that make it welcoming and inclusive for new people. We have spoken to newcomers, community members, groups and organisations to hear what settling in here is like, and how we can improve. The findings suggest that settlement experiences of those who move here varies widely. Many newcomers have extremely positive experiences moving here and find a great sense of community and home in South Wairarapa. Many newcomers, however, struggle to feel like they belong; finding it difficult to make friends, access services and have the information they need to feel like they belong here.

Our findings suggest that welcoming is generally done on the individual-level, with neighbours, “locals” and service providers playing the main role in being helpful, informative and making new people feel welcome. Of the new community members surveyed, 43% said they felt welcomed, with 14% saying they did not. Additionally 40% of newcomers believed South Wairarapa is inclusive and accepting of people from different cultures, and 11% believed that it was not. The full findings of the Stock-take Report can be found [here](#).

There is an opportunity for South Wairarapa District Council (SWDC or ‘Council’) to be intentional, structured and committed to how we welcome and include new residents so we are a Welcoming Community.



Why South Wairarapa?

SWDC has received funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to lead the Welcoming Communities programme locally and employ a Welcoming Communities Coordinator for three years to create and implement our Welcoming Plan.

South Wairarapa has a lot to gain by helping newcomers settle into, and feel a part of, our communities. If new residents have positive experiences settling in South Wairarapa and feel like they belong, they are more likely to stay, contribute, fuel local industries and economies, and become a valued member of the community, which benefits the whole of South Wairarapa.

Wairarapa-wide there are skills shortages in many industries and professions. Wairarapa also has an ageing population and it is expected that 1 in 3 residents will be over 65 by 2050. To support an ageing population and continue to bolster local economies, industries and communities it is vital South Wairarapa is able to attract and retain newcomers so our communities can thrive.



South Wairarapa has a strong population growth of 2.2% each year. [Statistical forecasting](#) anticipated 985 New Zealand citizens and 62 international migrants would be moving to South Wairarapa in 2023 alone (with 907 citizens and 57 migrants departing).

At present there has not been a specific focus on welcoming, settling and including new residents into our communities. As a rural district without the extensive services, supports and amenities one may find in a larger city, integration doesn't necessarily happen automatically.

It's estimated that in 2028 there will be around 186 international newcomers, indicating that South Wairarapa may become increasingly multi-cultural over time. Now could be an opportune time to make a concerted effort so our communities benefit from the increasing migration.

Local Alignment

Welcoming Communities aligns with, and supports the delivery of, important local and regional strategies and plans.

Welcoming Communities aligns with the outcomes intended through SWDC's 2021 - 2031 Long Term Plan. Specifically the strategic drivers to:

- ✔ Strengthen social connections within the community
- ✔ Encourage civic pride and participation
- ✔ Provide universally accessible, safe and diverse spaces to strengthen connection between people and place
- ✔ Encourage economic diversity and local vibrancy
- ✔ Work in partnership with mana whenua and iwi, respecting tikanga (customs), kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and taha Māori (heritage)
- ✔ Take opportunities to embrace and celebrate diversity, and
- ✔ Take opportunities to advance and showcase arts, culture & heritage

This Welcoming Plan can support SWDC to meaningfully achieve some of those outcomes.

Our Culture



The communities of South Wairarapa still strongly represent the indigenous and colonial history of this whenua/land, but greater diversity is flourishing more with each passing year. The largest ethnic groups outside of NZ European/ Pākeha and Māori as of 2018, in order, are Dutch, Chinese, Indian, Filipino, German, Japanese, Thai, South African European, French and Polish.

Furthermore, 17.4% of the community were born overseas, 9.5% of our residents have arrived in the country within 5 to 9 years, and 1.7% have lived overseas within a year.

South Wairarapa has a large seasonal workforce that supports local vineyards and orchards; many of whom return year after year. These seasonal workers usually come from Pacific Islands, such as Vanuatu, Cook Islands and Solomon Islands, and are significant to the district as they enable South Wairarapa to be renowned nation-wide for its wine village and as a tourist destination. For more information on our local communities, refer to the full findings of our Stock-take Report.

Our Newcomer's Experiences

Newcomer's experiences of what it is like to live in South Wairarapa varied widely. Those who had positive experiences tended to experience welcoming, helpful and friendly neighbours and/or local residents; or they had the time, ability and extraversion to "put themselves out there" consistently. For instance, joining local groups or clubs, volunteering, attending local events etc. For many newcomers making friendships, beyond surface-level interactions or greetings, was the biggest challenge of settling here and feeling like they belonged. As one newcomer put it, "I don't see any visible or vocal welcoming."

Many newcomers could not easily find the information they needed about events, groups, services, local opportunities or "who's who". As a rural community a lot of information is 'word-of-mouth' or shared through methods such as Facebook, which not everyone uses or knows to look in. For newcomers who moved from larger towns and cities there was often a mismatch between their expectations and the services and amenities available in a rural district; such as public transport and social opportunities. A full summary of newcomers experiences can be found in the [Stock-take Report](#).

The experiences of our new residents highlight the importance of having an intentional approach to welcoming and including newcomers, and not simply relying on the kindness of individuals in the community.

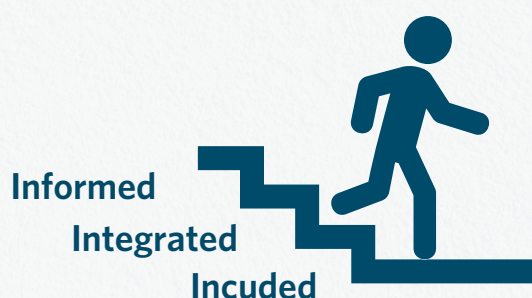
The Path to Being a Welcoming Community

We want our new residents to have the information, connections and support they need to thrive in South Wairarapa. We want our people, from all cultures and backgrounds, to feel welcomed, settled and safe to express themselves and their culture here.

To get there we will focus on:



We want new residents to feel:



Welcoming Plan priorities:

1. Information

If we want new residents to say: "I am welcomed into and informed about my community", we must ensure:

- New residents have timely and accessible information that informs them about Council and their community.
- Council is proactive in welcoming and effectively communicating with newcomers through a variety of channels.

2. Integration

If we want new residents to say: "I am connected with and settled into my community", we must ensure:

- Newcomers can access support to help them settle into their new community.
- Council listens to the community and continues to assess how we can better support new residents integrating into the local community.
- Council partners with, promotes and supports, local service providers that help residents integrate into the community.



3. Inclusion

If we want new residents to say: "I am included and represented in my community", we must ensure:

- Council celebrates culture, promotes inclusion and diverse representation across the district.
- Newcomers are invited to participate in local events, groups, services and civic processes.
- Council supports and empowers community and cultural events, groups and services.
- Council ensures an inclusive approach to any event or programme it funds.

To achieve this, we will commit to the following activities:

Welcoming Plan Activities

Category	ACTIVITY	WHEN	WHO	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQ.
Information	Online Welcome Guide created for Council website.	2024	Welcoming Communities Coordinator (WCC) & Communication Team (Comms)	Nil (provided design assistance is available from Comms Team).
	Welcome Guide created and distributed to local service providers; including schools, libraries, medical centres and real estate agents.	2024	WCC & Comms Team	\$2500 - \$3600 for 2000 copies pending final design. Advertising revenue could be sought if required.
	Council website is optimised to include welcoming and community info.	2024	WCC & Comms Team	Nil.
	Welcome letters and Guide sent to new ratepayers.	2023 onwards	WCC & Mayoral office	Nil.
	Council Communication & Engagement Strategy considers the needs of newcomers and addresses cultural barriers.	2024	WCC & Comms Team.	Nil.
	Council promotes Welcoming Communities and the importance of newcomers and cultural inclusion.	2024 onwards	WCC, Comms Team & Elected Members (EMs).	Nil.
	Newcomers receive one-to-one support by Welcoming Communities Coordinator and/or local champions.	2023 onwards	WCC.	Nil (funding from MBIE received until October 2025).
Integration	Partner with, promote or support local service providers and groups that help newcomers settle in South Wairarapa.	2024/2025 onwards	WCC, Libraries, Featherston Community Centre, Heartlands.	Nil.
	On-going surveying and gathering feedback from newcomers so accessibility can be improved in an on-going basis.	2024 onwards	WCC & Comms Team.	Survey Monkey access from Comms Team.
	Partner with, or support, local marae to interact with newcomers and share local culture, tikanga and mātauranga Māori with newcomers and the wider community.	2024 onwards	WCC, Māori Standing Committee, local marae, Tāngata & Māna Whenua.	A koha may have to be explored for marae services.
	Newcomers are invited to participate in, and learn about local culture, through Māori events, such as Matariki, Waitangi day and Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori events.	2024 onwards	WCC.	Nil.
	Collaborate with CDEM to promote resilience and help newcomers be informed of how to safe in the case of an emergency (i.e. as part of the Welcome Guide).	2024	WCC, Health & Safety Advisor, WREMO.	Nil.

Welcoming Plan Activities

Category

Inclusion



ACTIVITY

Partner with, empower and support local groups and community members to create events that promote inclusion and community building. For instance, community potlucks, community Christmas and/or mid-winter Christmas, on-going local get-togethers etc.

Partner with, empower and support local groups and community members to create events that celebrate culture and cultural learning. For instance, Matariki, Waitangi Day, and international cultural festivals or days.

Newcomers are invited to participate in events, groups and initiative by Welcoming Communities and the local community.

Council celebrates culture and promotes cultural inclusion in messaging, including use of other languages where appropriate and a diverse representation of images used.

SWDC encourages diverse representation in the next Local Government elections

Welcoming Communities advocates for, and enables, expressions of culture in local places; such as, applying for funding to commission cultural art in public spaces.

SWDC supports the formation of the Wairarapa Multicultural Council, and collaborates on events and initiatives as they arise.

WHEN

2024 onwards

2024 onwards

2024 onwards

2024 onwards

2025

2024/2025

2024 onwards

WHO

WCC, local community groups & individuals, Community Boards.

WCC, local marae, Pasifika o Wairarapa Trust, Wairarapa Filipino Society, Wairarapa Indian Association etc.

WCC.

WCC, Comms Team & EMs.

Communication & Engagement Team.

WCC.

WCC, Wairarapa Multicultural Council, EMs and SWDC Strategic Leadership Team (SLT).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQ.

Nil, though securing external funding or a Welcoming Communities operational budget could support this.

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Nil.

Nil,

Nil.

Will require securing external funding.

Nil at this stage.



**SOUTH WAIRARAPA
DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Kia Reretahi Tātau



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