



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

Half Yearly Progress Report

October 2026





Wellbeing Waikato

Six-Month Performance Update

September 2026

1. Introduction

This is our first progress report since the Wellbeing Waikato Charitable Trust was constituted in March 2026. As with previous reports, this document provides a summary of progress over the past six months, as measured against the objectives set out in our 2026-27 Business Plan¹. As an interim report, we have focused on activities and outputs. Our Annual Progress² and State of the Region Reports are where we look at how outcomes and impacts have changed over the preceding 12 months, measured against our theory of change.

2. Wellbeing Waikato Charitable Trust

In 2025, a review of the Waikato Wellbeing Project's operating model³ determined that we needed to broaden our funding and operating model to ensure financial sustainability. This led to the Waikato Wellbeing Project becoming a Charitable Trust and being renamed Wellbeing Waikato in February 2026.

Building on the foundations of the Waikato Wellbeing Project, Wellbeing Waikato will strengthen our focus on what matters most to whānau across our rohe. Our refined operating model reflects this clearly: we work 'from the household to the system', illuminating the deeper stories of our regional wellbeing challenges, to awhi (embrace) the real-life initiatives, people and projects imagining, creating and leading positive alternatives to the status quo.

In 1969, Norm Kirk expressed in simple but powerful terms a basic truth about human wellbeing. More than 57 years later, his words remain as relevant as ever.

*"There are four things that matter to people: they have to have somewhere to live, they have to have food to eat, they have to have clothing to wear, and they have to have something to hope for."*⁴

Before people can pursue their aspirations and reach their potential, they need the foundations of wellbeing: somewhere safe to live, enough food to eat, financial security, and hope for the future. In our work on housing, food security and energy affordability we have summarised this with a model of household economic wellbeing, reflecting these hierarchies of need (**Figure 1**).

This model shows the significant impact housing affordability has on whānau wellbeing, and how it and other unavoidable costs, crowd out food security and health. Progress cannot be measured by economic growth or asset values alone, but by whether people and families can live with dignity, opportunity and a genuine sense of possibility.

² For example: [WWPSummaryProgressReportJanuary2026FINAL.1.pdf](#)

³ [WWPDeliverablesandFundingReview240225.3.1.pdf](#)

⁴ Former New Zealand Prime Minister, Norm Kirk

At Wellbeing Waikato, we believe true wellbeing is the ability of individuals and communities to live the lives they value – now and in the future. It asks not simply, “What do people have?”, but rather, “What are people actually able to do and to be?”

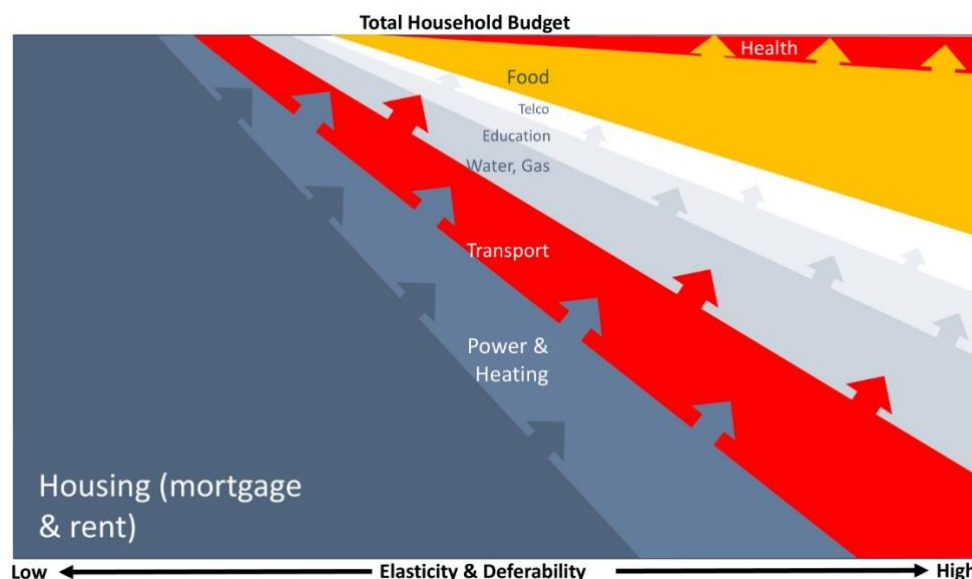


Figure 1. Household Affordability Model

This understanding shapes everything we do. Wellbeing Waikato exists to strengthen decision-making by grounding evidence in the lived realities of households and whanau voice. We focus on what it takes for people and families to live lives they value, beginning with whether essential needs are affordable, accessible and sustainable over time.

When households experience ongoing pressure meeting basic needs such as housing, food and energy, it often signals deeper challenges within the systems that shape everyday life. The paradox of the foundational elements of wellbeing being so abundant in the Waikato and yet so unaffordable and scarce is an issue we are committed to understanding through our work. And ultimately, help determine what can be done to address it.

How We Work

Wellbeing Waikato uncovers the deeper drivers of Waikato’s wellbeing challenges and supports the people and initiatives creating better alternatives. Sitting between communities and institutions, we ensure decisionmakers and funders are better informed, and communities more empowered. Wellbeing Waikato is a suite of integrated focus areas and projects across the region, with the common theme of listening deeply and facilitating impact, through:



Tuatahi: Poutoko

Research on the Waikato’s pressing social and environmental wellbeing challenges, their upstream causes and innovative ways ahead.



Tuarua: Te Ara Poutama

Wellbeing knowledge which brings together existing and new data at a range of scales and locations.



Tuatoru: He Pakipūmeka

Shining a light on lived experience and the invisible labour which leads to tangible grassroots change in our communities.



Tuawha: Waha

Sharing the knowledge and insights we have gained to drive positive change.

Our Logo

As part of creating a new organisation, we revised our name, branding and logo. Our name is a continuation of our previous name- Waikato Wellbeing Project | Hinonga Toiora o Waikato, without the word ' hinonga | project' to signify we are now a permanent, valued and enduring part of the Waikato wellbeing landscape.

A new logo was developed to signify the next stage of our evolution, and to acknowledge our role as a Waikato based initiative. The logo was developed by Norm Hill and Tyla Hill-Moana. Using the Vision and Mission of Wellbeing Waikato, the logo incorporates our vision of mokopuna thriving with the koru / puuhoro design.



It also introduces the idea of te awa Waikato to ground it in the place which the entity is focused on. The manaia design parallel to the koru koowhaiwhai with niho taniwha represents the three kupu, research, knowledge and storytelling.

Our Trustees

Our Trust Deed⁵ sets out the governance and operating parameters for Wellbeing Waikato. The deed sets out the framework for our governance, including the number of trustees the board can have. We currently have three Trustees and are currently seeking 1-2 additional trustees to join us.

Delwyn Abraham (Chair / Trustee): Delwyn Abraham is Chair of Wellbeing Waikato and brings extensive senior experience in Treaty partnerships, public sector leadership, and Māori development. She is currently Head of Treaty Partnerships within the Crown Response Unit, with a long career spanning Māori health, Crown-iwi engagement, and system-level transformation roles across ACC, MBIE, Te Aka Whai Ora, and Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.

Delwyn's whakapapa is grounded in Waikato and wider tribal affiliations including Waikato, Raukawa, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Pātupō, Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Whātua, and she was endorsed by Waikato-Tainui into earlier governance roles within the Waikato Wellbeing kaupapa. Her governance practice is strongly shaped by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori economic development, and intergenerational wellbeing for mokopuna. She also contributes governance expertise through roles including Waikato Endowment College Trust, Te Pātū Pōo Iwi Trust, Korowai o Māta Trust, and Waka Ora Limited.

Mike Rolton (Trustee): Mike Rolton is a Trustee of Wellbeing Waikato and brings deep experience across community services, social enterprise, and systems supporting vulnerable communities. He is General Manager of St Vincent de Paul (Vinnies Hamilton), where his work spans housing support, food security, financial wellbeing services, and community-based hardship response.

Mike's whakapapa includes strong connections to Ngāti Hauā, which informs his grounding in whānau-centred approaches and community wellbeing. His governance experience extends to trusteeship with Nau Mai Rā and The Whānau Fund Trust, alongside long-standing involvement in collaborative regional wellbeing initiatives. His perspective bridges operational delivery and

⁵ [Our Team Waikato | Waikato Wellbeing Project | Wellbeing Waikato](#)

systems thinking, particularly in areas of energy hardship, housing need, and community resilience.

Don Scarlet (Trustee): Don Scarlet brings extensive governance and environmental leadership across conservation, energy, and regional collaboration. He holds senior advisory and trustee roles including Strategic Advisor – Key Relationships at Mercury, Co-Chair of the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust, Trustee of the National Wetland Trust, Advisory Trustee with Waikato RiverCare, Trustee of Predator Free Hauraki Coromandel, and membership of the Waikato Conservation Board. He is also a member of the Institute of Directors and a Business Mentors NZ mentor, with deep experience in cross-sector partnership and ecological restoration leadership.

Our Funding

Wellbeing Waikato (and previously the Waikato Wellbeing Project) is funded by some of the Waikato's lead philanthropic and community organisations. Our current key funder is Trust Waikato. In the past 12 months we have also received funding from Futureproof and have used resources previously provided by the WEL Energy Trust. We are currently working to secure future funding so that we will continue beyond mid-2027.

3. Performance: General Summary

Overall, our first six months as Wellbeing Waikato have progressed positively. When measured against timeframes and deliverables in the Business Plan⁶, by September 2026 we had achieved 91.7% of the activity targets we had set, and 80% of output targets. A detailed assessment of progress by activity and output is provided in **Attachment 1**. The overall levels of achievement can be seen in **Figure 2** below.

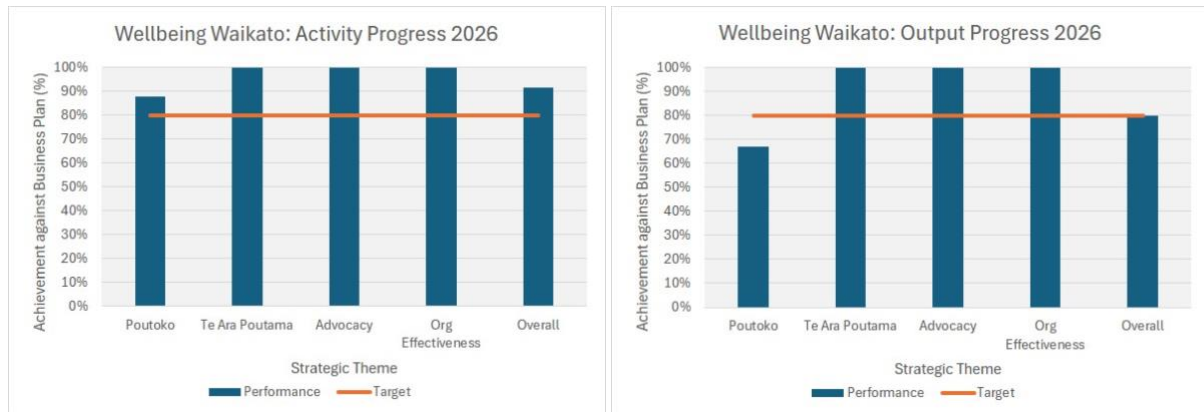


Figure 2. Business Plan Activity and Output Progress March-September 2026

4. Performance Highlights by Programme

The activities and outputs for each of our major programme areas are set out in the Business Plan. Outcomes and impacts are reported at the end of the year. Highlights include:

4.1 Poutoko

Our 2026-27 Business Plan activity and outputs for Poutoko are shown in **Attachment 1** and are described below in more detail.

The Waikato Kai Challenge

Wellbeing Waikato (and Waikato Wellbeing Project) has had food security as a major focus from 2022. We have produced overall reports on the state of food security in the region⁷, completed the region's first foodshed assessment⁸ and undertook research on the lived experience of kai Motuhake and its relationship with whanau wellbeing with Ngati Maniapoto, focused on Te Kuiti⁹. To support this work, we committed resource to contract a Kai Champion, initially Dr Amber Hammill, and then Hera Denton. Amber was 100% funded by WWP/Wellbeing Waikato, and Hera was co-funded by Wellbeing Waikato and GoEco as part of a Partnership Agreement.

⁶ [1. WW Business Plan 2026-2027 Final for Website\(1\).1.pdf](#)

⁷ [WWPFramingFoodInsecurityReport.4.1.pdf](#)

⁸ [Foodshed Info - 12'3 - Whole Document LR.3.1.pdf](#)

⁹ This work was developed under a Māori data sovereignty agreement with Ngati Maniapoto Marae Pact Trust

In 2025 with GoEco, we convened an initial mini kai summit at the Waikato-Tainui College for Research and Development. The mini summit tested the appetite for a more significant Waikato Kai summit, which was subsequently held in Hamilton in May this year.

The full summit was attended by at least 150 people. GoEco are now continuing the Kai Challenge using their own funding and it is a permanent part of their overall work programme.



Go Eco have produced a summary of the insights and learnings gained through the Kai Challenge and the partnership with Wellbeing Waikato. The full summary report for this can be seen on our website¹⁰, and the key summary points include:

- The Waikato Kai Challenge shows that kai motuhake already exists across Waikato in the everyday practice of whānau, hapū, growers and hāpori — and that meaningful progress comes from trust-based, relationship-led engagement, not traditional output-driven contracts.
- Go Eco’s role as a place-based, Tiriti-centred connector enabled the region to surface existing strengths, build capability, and shift the regional conversation from charitable food redistribution toward localised, whānau-led kai systems.
- The work demonstrates that macro food security indicators miss lived “enoughness”, where whānau maintain food dignity through māra, mahinga kai and reciprocity.
- Over eighteen months, Go Eco convened growers, hapū, funders and councils through hui, wānanga and two Kai Symposiums, validating lived experience as evidence and strengthening regional networks.
- The mahi continues through philanthropic funding, showing confidence in Go Eco’s trusted relationships and its ability to carry systems-level change forward beyond the contract period.

For more information:

- Wellbeing Waikato kai Challenge Page: [Kai | Food Waikato | Waikato Wellbeing Project](#)
- Kai Challenge GoEco progress report: [Kai Challenge Regional Report](#)
- GoEco: [Kai + Wai | Go Eco](#)

Social Investment

Our Business Plan proposed that Wellbeing Waikato could support the development of a place-based, integrated social investment approach for the Hamilton city centre, both in its own right and as a possible model for other localities in the Waikato. Drawing on New Zealand’s social investment principles—targeting resources to those with the highest needs, using data and

¹⁰ [Kai Challenge Regional Report](#)

evidence to guide investment, collapsing resource competition and duplication and focusing on long-term wellbeing outcomes.

Our role is to bring funders, iwi, providers and local government together around a shared understanding of need, informed by both data and lived experience, and to support the development of a collective outcomes framework, for a defined population cohort. This would shift the system incrementally from fragmented, provider-led activity toward more coordinated, person-centred support.

Following on from the Social Investment Summit in late 2025, and initial discussions in early 2026, Wellbeing Waikato offered to develop an agreed foundation document to make sure all stakeholders were equally informed about Social Investment- what it is, where it comes from, its strengths, weaknesses and current operating model in New Zealand. We have continued to work alongside Trust Waikato and a small project team to develop a way forward for Social Investment.

In August we released our report **“Social Investment in New Zealand, A Summary”** The report concludes that Social Investment in New Zealand is increasingly understood not just as a funding model, but as a shift in how the system organises itself around outcomes, evidence and prevention. The paradox of this is that the government, via the Social Investment Agency seems to be turning Social Investment back into a model which funds existing organisations.

The report traces its evolution and clarifies its core intent: to move from reactive, fragmented spending toward earlier, more coordinated investment that improves long-term wellbeing.

The report emphasises that while national frameworks (including the Social Investment Agency) set direction, the real test is whether the approach can be made operational at a regional level. In the Waikato context, this means moving beyond concept to practice: shared outcomes across agencies and funders, stronger alignment between central and local government, and a much clearer role for iwi, philanthropy and community providers in shaping and delivering investment decisions.

In August, we produced and shared a 6-part blog series on Social Investment. The series reinforces that Social Investment will only become real in the Waikato if four conditions are met.

- First, a shared regional outcomes framework that is meaningful to communities, not just government reporting.
- Second, genuine data integration that connects lived experience with administrative and service data in ways that support action, not just measurement.
- Third, long-term, place-based commissioning that reduces short-term contracting cycles and enables continuity of relationships and interventions; and
- Fourth, distributed leadership across the region—so councils, iwi, funders and community organisations jointly steward outcomes rather than operate in parallel systems.



A consistent theme from the previous research captured in the paper, and feedback to the LinkedIn series, is that Social Investment is not a technical fix; it is an organising framework for collective action. Its value depends on whether it can shift behaviour—earlier intervention, better coordination, and sustained investment in what works—while still recognising structural drivers of disadvantage such as housing, income, energy and social connection.

As was set out in the first paper, the next stage is to explore what people and community centred Social Investment in the Waikato could mean in practice. A project plan is currently under development and has been shared with the Trust Waikato-led reference group.

For more information:

- Wellbeing Waikato Social Investment Report: [SocialInvestmentinNewZealand-ASummary\(July2026\)\[42\].pdf](#)

Household Energy Affordability in the Waikato

The Waikato Affordable Energy Webinar Series was established to build a shared, evidence-based understanding of New Zealand’s electricity system as affordability pressures intensify. The aim is not consensus, but clarity—identifying where views align, where they differ, and what this means for practical pathways forward. A consistent message has emerged: New Zealand’s challenge is not energy scarcity, but system design—how generation, networks, markets, and risks are coordinated and paid for over time.



System reality- abundance within complexity

There is broad agreement that New Zealand has a strong and diverse generation base, with the Waikato at its centre through hydro and geothermal resources. However, this sits within a system that is becoming more complex and less centralised, with greater variability in supply and demand, more distributed generation, and tighter interdependencies across the system.

The result is a system that is technically capable, but increasingly difficult to coordinate efficiently. Affordability pressures are therefore less about supply constraints and more about structure, investment signals, and governance.

Areas of convergence. Across speakers, several points of alignment are clear:

- Affordability is systemic, not simply a pricing issue.
- Prices reflect long-term investment, risk allocation, and market design.
- Stable policy and regulatory settings are critical to managing costs over time.
- Electrification of transport and heat is accelerating, with improving long-term economics.
- Greater system flexibility—through demand response, storage, and smarter pricing—is essential.

Key tensions. Differences remain around:

- Whether current market settings are broadly fit-for-purpose or require structural reform.
- The balance between centralised infrastructure and decentralised energy solutions.

- How costs and benefits are distributed across households, businesses, and the system as a whole.
- The extent to which electricity should be considered in isolation or as part of a wider energy system.

An emerging pathway. Despite these differences, a broad direction is taking shape:

- Expanding low-cost, locally appropriate generation, including geothermal, hydro optimisation, wind, and distributed solar.
- Enabling more active participation by households and businesses through flexible demand and new technologies.
- Improving coordination across policy, regulation, networks, and generation to reduce inefficiencies and uncertainty.
- Affordability is increasingly understood as a wellbeing issue, closely linked to housing, resilience, and regional economic performance.

Five interim conclusions currently stand out:

- The core challenge is system design and coordination, not resource scarcity.
- Affordability cannot be addressed through short-term price interventions alone.
- Electrification and decentralisation are underway and need to be actively shaped.
- No single solution exists—progress requires coordinated action across the system.
- Energy policy is a foundational determinant of wellbeing.

For the Waikato, the opportunity is to translate national debate into practical regional action—testing integrated solutions that balance affordability, reliability, and sustainability, while enabling greater participation from households and communities.

The series is approximately halfway complete, with further contributors from industry, community energy, policy, and regional leadership still to come. The next phase will consolidate insights into a synthesis report, bringing together webinar findings and recent national work to provide a clear, evidence-based view of system direction, trade-offs, and practical options for improving affordability.

For more information:

- Wellbeing Waikato Social Investment Report: [SocialInvestmentinNewZealand-ASummary\(July2026\)\[42\].pdf](#)



4.2 Te Ara Poutama

Our 2026-27 Business Plan activity and outputs for Te Ara Poutama are shown in **Attachment 1** and are described below in more detail.

Affordable Housing

In September 2025, the WWP deployed funding provided by Trust Waikato and FutureProof¹¹ to commission work on housing affordability in the Waikato region. This built on work the WWP had recently completed on the state of housing affordability¹², following on from our co-funding of research and data collection for the Waikato Housing Initiative (WHI¹³). The paper and evidence accumulated made clear that even with the recent moderations in house prices and rents, housing in the Waikato is severely unaffordable for many.

Our more recent State of the Region Report¹⁴ further reinforces the role of affordable housing in well-being and family prosperity. With WHI and others, we asked the question: ***“what would it really take to make housing affordable in the Waikato”***. We commissioned Veros Ltd. to:

- Identify and advance real-world solutions on what it would take to improve housing affordability in the Waikato region.
- Develop a practical, data-driven Investment Model that identifies commercially feasible pathways for delivering affordable rental and ownership housing to middle-income households (earning \$60,000–\$150,000 annually) in the Waikato region.
- Develop actions grounded in what is commercially feasible for the private, community/for purpose and iwi development sectors.
- Be actionable, understandable, and relevant to the development community, adaptable across a range of settings and be focused on land that is development ready.

The work highlights three binding constraints within the current system:

- **Regulatory and delivery friction** — complex, inconsistent, and risk-laden development processes increase costs and suppress supply.
- **Mismatch between product and affordability** — current delivery models are not producing smaller, lower-cost homes at scale, despite clear demand.
- **Demand-side limitations** — buyer capability, preferences, and confidence (particularly for smaller or off-plan homes) are constraining effective demand and limiting developer response.

What is “Affordable”?

Most definitions of affordability compare household income with house prices or rents. Common measures—such as median income to median house price ratios—are based on international benchmarks (e.g. Demographia¹⁵). Another useful metric is the time required to save a deposit, which highlights the relative accessibility of new-build homes that typically require lower deposits.

¹¹ [Home | Future Proof](#)

¹² [WaikatoHousingAffordabilityCompleteBriefingV8.pdf](#)

¹³ [Home | Waikato Housing Initiative](#)

¹⁴ [waikatowellbeingproject.co.nz/site_files/36997/upload_files/StateoftheRegion20253December.pdf?dl=1](#)

¹⁵ [Demographia International Housing Affordability, 2025 Edition](#)

While higher household incomes can improve affordability, this relationship does not hold where housing supply is constrained. In such cases, increased purchasing power tends to be capitalised into higher prices.

Strategic Response: Targeted, System-Level Interventions

Six integrated initiatives have been developed to address these constraints (**Figure 3** and **4**). A summary booklet, webinar video and 6 detailed reports can all be viewed at the Wellbeing Waikato housing webpage here: [Kāinga | Waikato Wellbeing Project](#).

Several initiatives can be progressed quickly and at low cost by local government—particularly the Affordable Housing Handbook and Feasibility Calculator, which provide immediate decision-support and system alignment benefits.

The proposed Pattern Housing Blueprint aligns closely with central government direction, positioning the Waikato to act as an early regional leader in standardised, scalable affordable housing typologies. Other initiatives—such as the proposed Housing Equity / Impact Fund—are more complex and will require further development but have the potential for significant impact. Comparable approaches in Tauranga and Taranaki, as well as local exemplars such as Bridge Housing Trust, demonstrate their value.

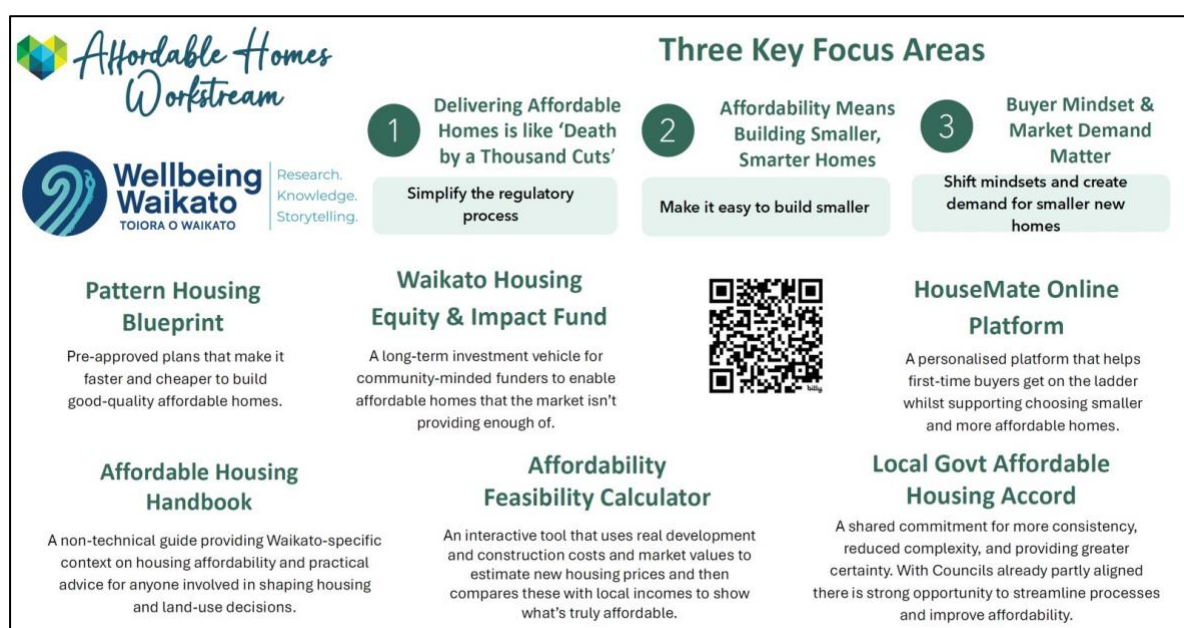


Figure 3. Summary of Waikato Affordable Housing Project (as shared at the Property Council National Conference, April 2026).

Stakeholder Interest and Support

Our work on housing affordability has been co-funded by Futureproof and has been backed by strong support from the executive of that agency and its governance. We have presented papers and presentations on 4 occasions to FutureProof meetings since mid-2025, and our final report was strongly supported.

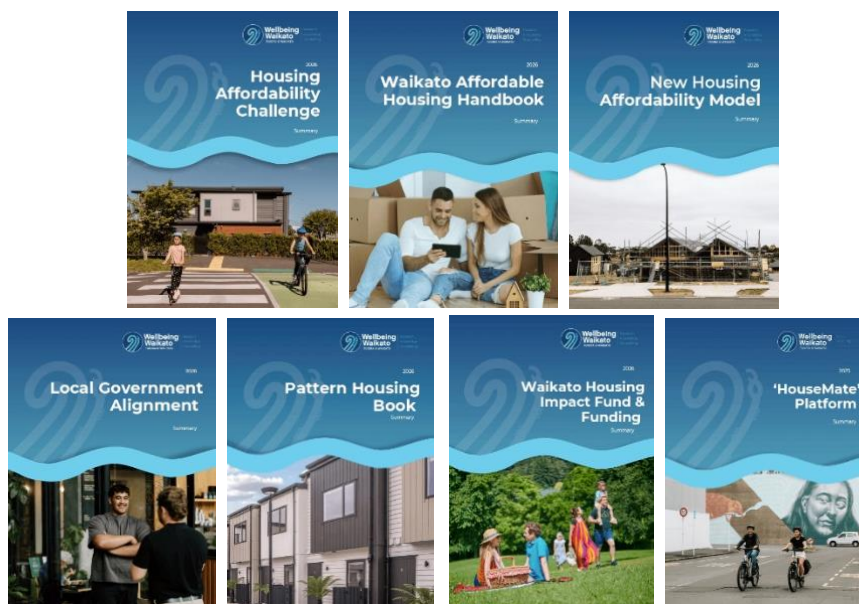


Figure 4. Affordable Housing Project- Proposed Actions Booklets

In June, we presented our work on affordable housing to the FutureProof Implementation Committee¹⁶, which is the peak governance body for FutureProof, and includes local mayors, government and iwi representatives. The work was fully supported. Following this, a webinar was held to share the results of our work, and a letter was sent to all regional Mayors and Council CEOs briefing them on the work and how it could be applied.

Wellbeing Data and Knowledge

We are on schedule to produce our annual State of the Region report in late 2026/early 2027. This will follow a similar format to the 2025 report¹⁷. The 2025 report covered a wide range of wellbeing topics including:

- Māori Economic Development, Culture & Voice
- Putting Kai on the Table: Food Security, Income and Work
- Employment Trends and Workforce Participation
- Economic Resilience and Diversification
- A Place to Call Home: Housing and Urban Pressure
- Keeping the Lights On: Energy and Wellbeing in Waikato
- Learning for Life: Education, Skills and Human Potential
- Health, Community, and Quality of Life
- Environment and Climate
- Getting Around: Transport and Accessibility
- Demography, Destiny and the Future



¹⁶ <https://www.futureproof.org.nz/assets/WRC/Item-6.5-Waikato-BOPHEF-Presentation-Jun-26.pdf>

¹⁷ [State of the Region 2026 Final.1.pdf](#)

Wellbeing Waikato has a partnership with Dot Loves Data Ltd, which allows us to publish their quarterly Community Compass reports. These reports provide a high-quality district-by-district snapshot of social and economic wellbeing, and cover topics including housing, education, deprivation, employment, crime, tourism and economic activity. While a significant source of information for councils, regional tourism and economic agencies, NGOs and funding organisations, we had noticed that the reports were gaining limited traction. In September/October we ran a LinkedIn campaign to profile each district's Community Compass report and ensure that as many stakeholders as possible were made aware of the reports. The response has been very positive.



For more information:

[Te Ara Poutama Waikato](#) | [Waikato Wellbeing Project](#) | [Wellbeing Waikato](#)



4.3 Waha | Advocacy

Our 2026-27 Business Plan activity and outputs for Waha | Advocacy are shown in **Attachment 1** and are described below in more detail.

Advocacy is the primary tool we use to amplify the work we and other wellbeing champions have done, to influence the policies, decisions and funding choices of others in the Waikato region. Advocacy takes several forms:

- Formal submissions to statutory and other agencies
- Commentary and opinion pieces on Wellbeing Waikato platforms- website, LinkedIn etc
- Commentary and opinion pieces on third party platforms- for example Waikato Times
- Engagement via other media- for example local radio

In the reporting period we made 3 formal submissions to:

- Central government on the Head Start reform programme:
[WellbeingWaikatoSubmissiononLocalGovernmentReformJune2026.pdf](#)
- Verbal submission to Hamilton City Council regarding homelessness in Hamilton:
[Presentation to Hamilton City Council Community Committee | Wellbeing Waikato](#)
- Submission to Waikato Regional Council regarding their draft Regional Economic Development Strategy: [DraftWaikatoRegionalEconomicDevelopmentStrategy.pdf](#)

This is slightly below the half year target of 5, however we have instead focused our efforts on other advocacy channels where we are able to reach a far wider audience, especially via LinkedIn.

Over the past 6 months, key indicators of our wider communications and engagement include:

- Stories published in the Waikato Times and local newspapers (for example: [Local government reform: Are we fixing the problem or just redrawing the map? | Waikato Times](#) and [Keep doing what you're doing, Hamilton | Waikato Times](#))
- 30 news stories published on our Wellbeing Waikato website ([Blog | Wellbeing Waikato](#))
- 15 Webinars and associated slide decks hosted and published on housing and energy (see [Kāinga | Waikato Wellbeing Project](#) and [Kai | Food Waikato | Waikato Wellbeing Project | Wellbeing Waikato](#))
- 10 new reports and publications on kai security, housing, social investment and Wellbeing Waikato business planning.
- Over the past six months, our LinkedIn presence has grown rapidly, with impressions increasing more than seventeen-fold, engagement twelve-fold, and followers five-fold—well above typical for-purpose sector benchmarks. This indicates we are establishing a strong and expanding platform for regional thought leadership and stakeholder influence.
 - 70 unique posts on LinkedIn
 - Impressions from 3,028 to 52,322
 - Engagement from 104 to 1,276; and
 - Followers from 65 to 330
- Monthly interview slots on Free FM's Connect with Community Waikato Radio programme (see: [Connect With Community Waikato](#)).



Key newsletter and social media statistics for March-September 2026 are:

Business Plan Targets	Result
Maintain Newsletter Open Rate of 40%+ (Target 50%+)	45%
Maintain Newsletter CTR Rate of 7%+ (Target 8%+)	9%
Maintain Website traffic of 2,000+ visitors per quarter	6,000
Maintain average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%)	2.44%

Our engagement rate has reduced significantly since Lots of Little Fires was transferred to Seed Waikato in December 2025. However, it is still above the average for nonprofit organisations across all the social media platforms we use (2.26%). The drop has been substantially offset by much larger volumes of visits to our website than expected, showing that our audience type has shifted to a more web-based demographic

For more information:

- [Advocacy | Waikato Wellbeing Project](#)
- [Reports | Wellbeing Waikato](#)
- [Blog | Wellbeing Waikato](#)

2.4 Organisational Effectiveness

The 2026-27 Business Plan was developed between January and March 2026 and was published on our website (see: [1. WW Business Plan 2026-2027 Final for Website\(1\).1.pdf](#))

The Wellbeing Waikato programme has been undertaken within budget. Expenditure is as planned, with no unexpected variances. The programme was grateful to receive additional funding from Trust Waikato in April 2026, which has allowed us to continue our work as per the Business Plan.

Based on current funds, Wellbeing Waikato has sufficient funds to continue until mid-calendar year 2027. We are currently working with existing, past and prospective funders and partners to ensure we can continue to deliver value for people, organisations and communities in the Waikato region. This work is being supported by The Giving Architects, who are experts in funding and fund raising.

Attachment 1. Wellbeing Waikato: Business Plan 2026-27. Half Yearly Progress

Resources	2026/27 Activities	Progress	Outputs	Progress	Comments
Poutoko Research 	Waikato Kai Challenge				
	1. Research and Listening • Complete and share lived Experience research, with a focus on kai opportunities in the Maniapoto and Raukawa rohe • Highlight successful kai Motuhake initiatives, identify systemic gaps, and set the foundation for long-term solutions.		4. Insights & Awareness • Wai and kai- ongoing food security work with Maniapoto Marae Pact Trust • Work with SWDC, Waitomo DC, Maniapoto and Raukawa on Kai Hubs in Tokoroa and Te Kuiti • Matariki ki Waikato 2026 Programme • He Mana to te Kai – in partnership with Para Kore and Raukawa • Kai ready mare		Programme with GoEco largely completed- Maniapoto lived experience completed and shared with MMPT. GoEco now continuing the programme with Maniapoto and also Raukawa and the Tokoroa community. A full progress report has been provided by GoEco and reported to Trustees. Work with GoEco and The Serve has contributed to The Serve now securing permanent facilities in Hamilton. GO Eco led Matariki and led the 2026 Kai Summit at Hamilton Lake- very well attended and received.
	2. Stakeholder & Systems Engagement • Facilitate regular hui with key organisations, including iwi/hapū, councils, food networks, and community groups. • Strengthen partnerships with existing food security initiatives to align efforts. • Engage policymakers to advocate systemic changes in food policy and funding. • Integrate findings from food security research into discussions to inform collaborative action		5. Communications • Kai summit May 2026 • Kai Challenge receives 300 views per quarter • Maintain average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%)		Kai summit successful held in May 2026. Follow up with Auckland City Mission with Vinnies on opportunities to scale up community wellbeing services in Hamilton. Kai Challenge received 539 views Average engagement rate on social media has been 2.44%
	Policy & Advocacy • Develop and present policy recommendations based on local food security data and insights. • Advocate for sustainable funding models and legislative support for food security initiatives.				

Resources	2026/27 Activities	Progress	Outputs	Progress	Comments
Social Investment in Hamilton					
	1. Research and Listening A structured scoping and design phase to build shared evidence base and identify opportunities for integrated action: • System mapping: Map the current service landscape, funding flows, and points of duplication and unmet need within the Hamilton city centre. • Cohort identification: Identify shared community, age, cultural and lived-experience cohorts interacting with multiple services, with a focus on those with the highest and most complex needs. • Lived experience insights: Capture real-world experiences to understand system barriers, service gaps, and opportunities for more effective support. • Stakeholder co-design: Convene key stakeholders—including iwi, integrated service providers, funders and Hamilton City Council—to co-design a practical prototype (e.g. shared referral pathways, coordinated case management, or a light-touch backbone function). • Future focus: Identify opportunities for larger-scale, upstream interventions that can reduce long-term demand on crisis services.		4. Insights & Awareness • City centre insights programme: Generate and share clear, accessible insights on wellbeing challenges in the Hamilton CBD, including homelessness, food insecurity, safety and service access, with a focus on the lived reality of a defined cohort • Lived experience voice: Elevate the voices of people navigating multiple services to highlight system barriers, duplication, and opportunities for more coordinated support • System visibility: Build a shared understanding among funders, providers and stakeholders of how the current system operates in practice—where it works, where it fragments, and where integration would deliver greater impact • Evidence for change: Translate insights into compelling narratives and data that support a shift toward integrated, outcomes-focused social investment • Momentum and alignment: Use communications, hui and targeted engagement to build a shared mandate for change across the sector, reinforcing the case for coordinated action in the city centre		Project has been split into two parts- Part 1 is a summary of Social investment in New Zealand to get all participants on the same page. This was fully completed in July and has been very well received both in the Waikato, New Zealand and internationally. A project plan is now under development for Part 2 - A Social Investment Model for the Waikato (may not be limited to Hamilton as initially envisaged). Progress has not been as quick as was initially anticipated in terms of the deliverables in the Business Plan. This is mainly due to a lower rate of engagement with key partners.
	2. Stakeholder & Systems Engagement • Facilitate regular hui to build trust, alignment and shared ownership across providers, iwi/hapū, local government and funders		5. Communications • Central Hamilton social investment workshops through 2026 and wider scale summit late 2026 • An agreed and resource social investment work		These actions are delayed while the approach for Part 2 is agreed and implemented. • Central Hamilton social investment received 102 views

Resources	2026/27 Activities	Progress	Outputs	Progress	Comments
	- Strengthen partnerships with organisations already delivering integrated, whānau-centred services, supporting them to connect and scale impact - Act as a neutral connector across the system to shift behaviours from competition toward collaboration - Engage with central and local government to align this work with broader social investment and wellbeing priorities.		programme for central Hamilton - Central Hamilton social investment receives 300 views per quarter - Maintain average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%)		Average engagement rate on social media has been 2.44%
Household Energy Affordability in the Waikato (new)					
	1. Research and Listening - Bring together lived experience and household energy expenditure data to understand the impacts of energy costs for households - Undertake structured synthesis to identify how regulatory settings, infrastructure investment, pricing structures, and transition pathways interact to shape household outcomes.		4. Insights & Awareness Research which clarifies where system settings are amplifying or relieving affordability pressures at the household/lived experience level and articulate practical leverage points for funders, social wellbeing agencies and decisionmakers.		A decision was made to take a different approach for this initiative- a webinar series was developed to include as many different voices and perspectives as possible, with 4 common questions put to all presenters. As at late September, 11 webinars have been held. These have been co-hosted with Ernie Newman, a nationally regarded expert in competition and affordability. As well as providing a synthesis for each webinar, Ernie is authoring a synopsis paper on competition and affordability in the energy, supermarket and banking sectors. An application has been made to WEL Energy Trust to support this work and the development of a synthesis report summarising all webinars in the energy series.
	2. Stakeholder & Systems Engagement - Facilitate regular hui with key organisations, including iwi/hapū, councils, energy security networks, and community groups. - Strengthen partnerships with existing affordable energy initiatives to align efforts.		5. Communications - Webinar to share insights in late 2026 - Energy Affordability Challenge receives 300 views per quarter - Maintain average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%)		Webinar series has been a very positive alternative to a traditional report based approach to insight with strong live and post recording engagement. Energy Affordability Challenge received 877 views

Resources	2026/27 Activities	Progress	Outputs	Progress	Comments
	• Engage policymakers to advocate systemic changes in energy policy and practice. • Integrate findings from energy affordability research into discussions to inform collaborative action.				Average engagement rate on social media has been 2.44%
	Policy & Advocacy • Develop and present policy recommendations based on energy (electricity) security data and insights. • Advocate for abundant energy models and legislative support for energy affordability initiatives.				

Resources	2026/27 Activities	Progress	Output	Progress	Comments
Te Ara Poutama Knowledge 	1. Affordable Housing				
	1. Waikato Housing Initiative • Complete and publish the research primer on interventions needed to achieve housing affordability in the Waikato region. • Share the primer with all stakeholders in the region and seek feedback on the most effective options to pursue across the housing continuum • Use the primer to contribute towards an updated Waikato Housing Strategy, Regional Spatial Plan and City/Regional Deals. • Complete and publish the research primer on interventions needed to achieve housing affordability in the Waikato region. • Share the primer with all stakeholders in the region and seek feedback on the most effective options to pursue across the housing continuum • Use the primer to contribute towards an updated Waikato Housing Strategy, Regional Spatial Plan and City/Regional Deals.		2. Accessible and Relevant Knowledge • A primer document on improved housing affordability in the Waikato region by May 2026 • At least one public webinar to share the results of research into housing affordability • Presentation of the results of the primer to Futureproof, WHI and stakeholders mid-2026		Veros reports completed and published. Shared on WW website and LinkedIn platforms, and also via webinar. Presented to Futureproof officers, CEO and leaders groups in June/July. Further engagement with councils, NGOs (e.g. Bridge Housing) and others now underway.
	2. Annual State of the Region Report (ongoing)				
	State of the Region Report • Complete and publish a report summarising wellbeing progress in the Waikato region by December 2026.		2. Accessible and Relevant Knowledge • Waikato State of the Region Report completed and published by December 2026.		N/A- not scheduled until December

3. Wellbeing Data and Knowledge (ongoing)					
	1. Wellbeing Knowledge - Produce regular quarterly “deep dive” topical and place-specific updates on key wellbeing issues - Publish Quarterly Community Compass reports from Doy Loves Data - Integrate and align with other wellbeing data agencies such as WRC, MSD, Social Investment Agency via knowledge partnership agreements.		2. Communications - At least 4 wellbeing knowledge webinars held by 1 December 2026 - Progress reports to Trust Waikato as per the accountability agreement - Te Ara Poutama website page receives over 150 views per quarter Maintain an average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%)		Quarterly Compass reports from Dot Loves Data published on website, and re-shared via individual LinkedIn stories for each district. To date, 14 webinars have been hosted and held as at 26 Sept. 11 so far on Energy (with another 6-8 to go), three on housing (Quanita's affordability report, Alan Johnson and Veros on housing research). Plus Free FM monthly and weekly series on DLD facts sheets per district. Te Ara Poutama website page received 123 views Average engagement rate on social media has been 2.44%

Resources	2026/27 Activities	Progress	Output	Progress	Comments
Waha Advocacy 	Scaling up our Impact - Continue to scale up of the Wellbeing Waikato's insights through greater advocacy and partnerships with organisations mandated to deliver community wellbeing and prosperity (Figure 1). - Scale up advocacy for systems change initiatives in key areas of kai food security, housing and energy affordability and social investment in central Hamilton - Wellbeing Waikato newsletter - 5 yearly - Submissions lodged - at least 10 yearly, including at least 3 joint submissions on a local, national or international scale which align with our priority areas.		Greater collaboration - At least 20 joint initiatives between the Wellbeing Waikato and other for purpose organisations by 1 March 2027 - Submissions published on Wellbeing Waikato Website to receive 100 views per quarter - Maintain average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%) - Broker opportunities with Social Investment Agency, local authorities, iwi and community funders for a Waikato specific approach to social investment and wellbeing knowledge		Joint initiatives- energy series is a collaboration with 20 partners, Kai Challenge work has been undertaken with GoEco, MAS and MMPT, Social Investment with Trust Waikato, Waikato Tainui, Te Runanga o Kirikiriroa, University of Waikato and Central Kids. Housing with Veros, WHI, Alan Johnson, Futureproof, Waipa DC. Significant advocacy on local government reform proposals (Head Start), regional economic development, regional energy strategy, future of The Serve. Two formal submissions- Head Start and Waikato EDS, followed up with 2 articles in Waikato Times on housing affordability and Head Start. Submissions published on Wellbeing Waikato Website received 153 views Average engagement rate on social media has been 2.44%

Resources	2026/27 Activities	Progress	Output	Comments
Org. Effectiveness	- Accountability reports and presentations to Trustees, Funders and Stakeholders May and September 2026 - Annual presentations to Waikato Mayoral Forum as requested		- Actual expenditures per initiative - Wellbeing Waikato Business Plan published on Wellbeing Waikato website by 1 May 2026 - Wellbeing Waikato managed and delivered within Business Plan budget - Maintain Newsletter Open Rate of 40%+ (Target 50%+) - Maintain Newsletter CTR Rate of 7%+ (Target 8%+) - Maintain Website traffic of 2,000+ visitors per quarter - Maintain average engagement rate on social media of 9% (target of 12%)	On track- no reporting yet to Mayoral Forum, have presented to Futureproof (3 separate presentations) on housing and to WRC Economic Growth Committee on food security as it relates to economic development. - Newsletter Open Rate of 45% - Newsletter CTR Rate of 9% - Website traffic of 6,000 visitors - Average engagement rate on social media has been 2.44%

Traffic Light Guide	
	Either fully completed per plan, on track or only minor slippage. No issues anticipated. Progress > 80%
	Not fully completed as per plan, some slippage or delay, but will still be generally completed. Progress 50-80% of plan
	Either not commenced or very little likelihood of progress or completion as per plan. Major issues or unforeseen complications. Progress 0-50%.
	Initiative/project is not yet scheduled to commence.



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.