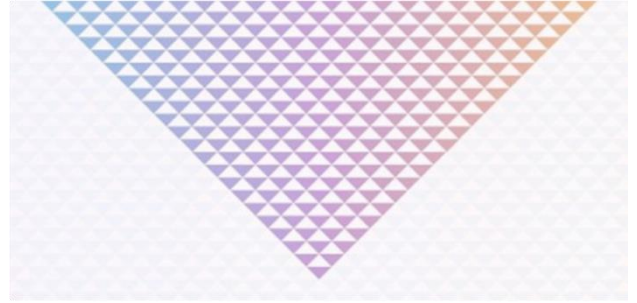




# POWERING UP COMMUNITIES TO DELIVER LOCAL WELLBEING

A Think Piece for Western Bay of Plenty District Council



## **CITATION**

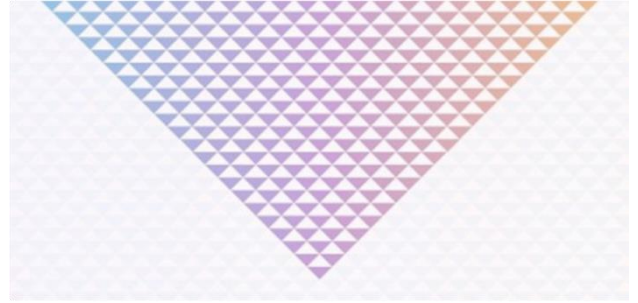
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## FOREWORD



This report was commissioned by Western Bay of Plenty District Council (WBOPDC). Its aim is to spark thinking about local structures and approaches that can enable and deliver on community-based outcomes. It also focuses on the kind of relationships and support that assists local structures to survive and thrive.

While this Think Piece has been written by Powerdigm, the consulting arm of Inspiring Communities, the inquiry approach underpinning it has been collaborative. Both WBOPDC and its strategic community sector partner SocialLink<sup>1</sup> have actively shaped the project to assist its potential application to a Western Bay of Plenty community context.

Our report is based on a collective belief that local places have insights, resources, know-how, and capacity to be active partners in generating and leading local solutions to local issues. But they can't do it alone. We hope that the insights and provocations in this report stimulate further thinking about collaborative community-led approaches and further experimentation of different ways to support and work with local communities, both in the Western Bay, and throughout Aotearoa. Thinking about what's possible is best done generatively and collectively so it speaks to local contexts and opportunities – there is no one size fits all community model that will work for all.

Megan Courtney and Moko Morris



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<sup>1</sup> SocialLink is the umbrella/peak body for the social and community sector in the Western Bay of Plenty. For more about their role and support functions see <https://sociallink.org.nz/>.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PURPOSE AND APPROACH

- Local communities have expertise and capacity to support and contribute to local wellbeing outcomes. This Think Piece aims to support WBOPDC exploration of community-led structures and approaches that support delivery of local outcomes and the roles councils can play to enable their effectiveness and sustainability.
- Community or local anchor organisations can be described as multipurpose, community-led and based organisations. They take on a range of roles and functions in, for and with their local community. Many organisations in communities across Aotearoa demonstrate characteristics of community anchors. This framing provides a useful lens to explore the topic of community-led structures to deliver on community outcomes.

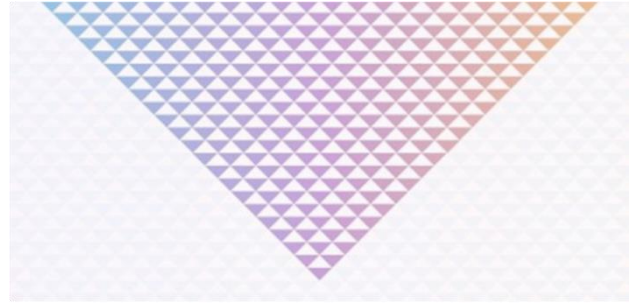
## KEY FINDINGS

- A case study approach was used to gather insights across six diverse 'local anchor organisations' to see what could be learnt from their journeys. Aspects in common included working relationally and collaboratively, working in valued based, culturally responsive ways and taking on a variety of roles and levers to respond to what was needed locally. It wasn't a particular model or structure that determined success, rather the combination of vision, high quality leadership, resourcing, collaborative support and community contribution.
- Other key factors that enable an effective local anchor organisation included: starting small and building from success, having self-belief, courage and self-determination, proactively inviting participation and contribution, communicating regularly and widely, having inspiring and collaborative local leadership, utilising mixed source funding approaches, being supported to scale and grow, and strategically leveraging community owned assets.

## FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Some of the things councils can do to better support local anchor organisations include: paying more attention to relationships and relationship handovers, looking for community-led energy and supporting this and, collaborating with communities rather than focusing on devolving aspects of council mahi (work). And where there is community capacity and desire to deliver, enable localisation of some Council contracts and services.
- Effective support for local anchor organisations will require councils to look inward to ensure that conditions are in place internally to support partnering approaches. A number of questions have been put forward to support council reflection and dialogue with local community partners. Key elements span the areas of authentic and trusted relationships, procurement and agreement frameworks, cultural contexts and responsiveness, readiness and scale, stakeholder communications, engagement and relationships, risks and rewards.
- WBOPDC will discuss potential applicability of Think Piece findings both internally, and with their hapū, iwi and community partners. Insights from this Think Piece are expected to be a valuable resource for wider local government and community sectors in Aotearoa.

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## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE OF THIS THINK PIECE



#### ***Mā te huruhuru ka rere te manu***

***Adorn a bird with feathers and it will take flight***

Western Bay of Plenty District Council (WBOPDC) approaches community development from a viewpoint that the knowledge of what makes a great community, sits within that community. From a WBOPDC perspective, place-based planning and decision making at the right level is important to leverage the expertise and resources that are held within each community, which are not available to institutions on their own. WBOPDC has commissioned this Think Piece to help:

- explore the kinds of structures needed within communities to ensure they are in the best position possible to leverage the expertise and resources they hold;
- identify support needed so that communities are in the best position for institutions such as councils and central government agencies to entrust decision making to them and devolve service delivery; and
- tease out how WBOPDC can help ensure effective local structures are both in place in their rohe and are sustainable into the long term.<sup>2</sup>

Through our work in supporting community-led change across Aotearoa, Inspiring Communities has observed many, many amazing and diverse examples of collaborative community-led action. Taking a case study approach to this Think Piece allows us to shine a light on six different locally-led models and initiatives that are enabling wellbeing in their places.

We have intentionally approached this inquiry from the bottom up. That is, rather than a start point that discusses how local community structures or organisations are or could more strongly support the democratic and wellbeing work of local and central government, we've focused instead on documenting local journeys. Asking how councils and others could support their local wellbeing aspirations and better strengthen community-led contributions to affect change. This process has generated some fantastic examples of locally-led innovation and potential. While we have curated summary themes across diverse local experiences, we recommend reading each community story as there are gold nuggets in them all - no two are the same.

We've added our own Inspiring Communities national and international learning, thinking and framing to the insights offered in these rich case studies. In doing so, we want to put forward a discussion around the function and role of **community anchor organisations** and key aspects that

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<sup>2</sup> This first section comes directly from the WBOPDC Project Brief.

both communities **and** councils<sup>3</sup> (and others) need to have in place for local anchors to do their best, with and for their local community.

## ENABLING GENERATIVE CONVERSATIONS

While this Think Piece has been commissioned to support WBOPDC's thinking about strengthening local place-based structures, a generative conversation with WBOPDC's hapū, iwi and community partners also forms part of the project mix.

This Think Piece is also a resource to help catalyse thinking and conversations beyond the Western Bay of Plenty. The recent Review into the Future for Local Government proposed a range of recommendations to strengthen participatory democracy and enable a greater role for hapū, iwi and community as local wellbeing partners, alongside central and local government. The Local First Framework<sup>4</sup> presented as part of the Review Team's Final Report, points to the key role and contributions that local people and places play in enabling local wellbeing. There is much that can and should be done to develop and strengthen local collaborative arrangements. In fact, the regions and districts which proactively do so, will be the best placed to respond to new opportunities and next challenges that come their way.



*Source: Review into the Future for Local Government Final Report, 2023*

<sup>3</sup> This advice also pertains to others engaging and partnering with communities such as central government agencies and funders.

<sup>4</sup> For the full Local-first Framework - see page 51

[https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Future-for-Local-Government/\\$file/Te-Arotake\\_Final-report.pdf](https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Future-for-Local-Government/$file/Te-Arotake_Final-report.pdf)

# DEVOLVING TO WHO? INTRODUCING COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATIONS



***E koekoe te tui, e kēte kēte te kaka, e kūkū te kereru,***  
*The tui chatters, the kaka gabbles, the kereru coos - it takes all kinds  
of people to make change*

One of the key drivers behind this Think Piece is a desire to explore potential devolution of some local government engagement, planning and service delivery functions to local communities. Practical success, however, will rely on robust locally-based entities or organisations with sufficient capacity, scale, and relational capital that have a mutual interest in collaborating and co-investing with local government and other partners.

There are many formal and informal community groups and organisations supporting and enabling wellbeing in local places but not all are organised, resourced, mandated or strategically positioned to take on overarching community organising and support roles. Though many organisations play key roles in their communities, not all can be considered anchors.

The notion of a community anchor organisation<sup>5</sup> is a term that emanates from Scotland, the UK and the US from the early 2000s.

While community anchor organisations come in many different shapes and sizes, the term is generally used to describe a multi-purpose, community-led and based organisation that takes on a range of roles and functions in, for and with their community as noted below:

Eight characteristics of a community anchor organisation:

1. A building: a physical space which is community controlled, owned or led.
2. A focus for services and activities meeting local need.
3. A vehicle for local voices to be heard, needs to be identified and for local leaders and community groups to be supported.
4. A platform for community development, promoting cohesion while respecting diversity.
5. A home for the community sector which is supportive of the growth and development of community groups.
6. A means of promoting community led enterprise, generating independent income while having a social, economic and environmental impact.
7. A forum for dialogue within communities, creating community led solutions.

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<sup>5</sup> This is not to be confused with the term anchor institution. The latter commonly refers to large scale public and private entities such as Councils, universities, hospitals and businesses, who are major employers, asset owners and wield significant purchasing power and influence on both the local economy and their locality's development.

8. A bridge between communities and the state which promotes and brings about social change.

[From Community Alliance – Transformation through Community Anchors](#)

Over the past 15 years, there's been growing international recognition of the key role that community anchor organisations play in place-based change<sup>6</sup>. While the phrase 'community anchor organisation'<sup>7</sup> is not in common use in Aotearoa New Zealand (and groups generally don't describe themselves such), many organisations are exhibiting key anchor organisation characteristics in their mahi.

We think community anchor organisation framing provides a really useful lens to explore the topic of community-led structures to deliver on community outcomes. While we did not overtly overlay local community anchor language in our interviews or local case study stories, we have applied this lens to our case study analysis and findings to help grow understanding and thinking around the anchor organisation concept in an Aotearoa context.



*Image sources: Focus Paihia (left), The Community Led Development Trust (right)*

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<sup>6</sup> For example see [What Works Scotland](#) and [New Local](#) from the UK.

<sup>7</sup> For more background reading on community anchor organisations see <https://scottishcommunityalliance.org.uk/about/anchor-orgs/> and <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/outliers-or-trendsetters-are-anchor-organisations-sticking-to-rural-communities>

## TAKING A CASE STUDY APPROACH

Through conversations with six very different community-based structures we sought to learn more about the principles, characteristics, supports, form and drivers that enable successful local anchor organisations. We wanted to draw out how they were working with others to support and enable local wellbeing aspirations, and gather their insights from working in responsive, innovative, collaborative and participatory ways.

With so much awesome locally-led mahi happening in Aotearoa, selecting only a few initiatives to talk with was challenging - the list of possibilities very long! To maximise learning from other communities, it was decided not to include Western Bay of Plenty based or connected organisations. With a desire to curate insights across a diverse range of initiatives at different lifecycle stages, we used the following criteria to guide community case study selection:

1. Community initiated or driven, partnering with others to get things done.
2. Of a scale that was rural and/or small-town town or provincial focused with culturally diverse demographic (i.e. similar to WBOPDC's community context<sup>8</sup>).
3. Delivering on local aspirations and needs, with locally-led decision making.
4. Either hapū/iwi/Māori-led or co-governed, or with strong, authentic involvement of local iwi, hapū, Māori.

After some desk top research, we invited a diverse selection of community organisations to share their journey and learning. Most, but not all, had funding and working relationships with their local council(s).

While we were worried about making yet another ask on already busy people, we were heartened by the very positive responses to our invitation. Everyone could see the need to build understanding and strengthen support for locally-led approaches right across Aotearoa.

Case Study Communities Who Shared their Journey and Learning	Location
Focus Paihia (FP)	Bay of Islands
McLaren Park Henderson South Community Trust (MPHS)	West Auckland
The Community Led Development Trust (TCLDT)	Whanganui
Environment Network Manawatū (ENM)	Palmerston North
Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki (TPOoŌ)	Ōtaki
Paekākāriki Housing Trust (PHT)	Paekākāriki, Kāpiti

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<sup>8</sup> One case study selected, the McLaren Park Henderson South Community Trust, was based in an urban Auckland rather than provincial setting. However their diverse cultural context, strong local delivery track record and successful community asset/enterprise approach, meant an exception was made to include them.

## COMMON APPROACHES ACROSS COMMUNITY ANCHORS

For the purposes of this Think Piece, we refer to community organisations that formed part of our case study cluster as ‘local anchor organisations.’ As noted earlier, we think this umbrella term usefully reflects the kinds of roles and approaches we saw evident in many of the communities we spoke with. We noticed that different groups in our cluster were:

- working relationally and collaboratively with others to strategically enhance wellbeing for their people and place – not just their organisation.
- building both connections and relationships with mana whenua and weaving cultural understandings and ways of working into their mahi.
- taking on a variety of roles and using different levers at different times to respond, support and catalyse collaborative local solutions to address local wellbeing challenges and outcomes (e.g. through convening, service delivery, brokering, fund holding, advocacy, co-investment, mentoring etc).
- working in locally-determined ways, with no single recipe or structural model that framed or shaped success.
- working with similar values, mindsets and practices (e.g. inclusion, participation, innovation, holistic, culturally responsive).
- intentionally working in ways that link social, environmental, economic and cultural wellbeing.
- succeeding because the quality of the people leading and involved - both in and alongside each anchor organisation. It is people, vision, resourcing and structures that combine to enable effectiveness and impact.

## ANCHOR STRENGTHS - BENEFITS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERS



### ***Ehara taku toa, i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini***

***Success comes from the strength of the collective and not of the lone individual***

All local anchors were quick to point out that an effective local anchor organisation that is suitably networked, connected, respected, governed and supported to deliver well locally brings significant benefits for public sector<sup>9</sup> partners. As well as enhanced delivery of local wellbeing outcomes, an effective local anchor organisation brings:

- ***access to relationships*** – trusted local anchors that are grounded in local relationships, some through whakapapa and all valuing their shared social space (place), can be fantastic conduits

<sup>9</sup> Public sector includes both local and central government.

for others wanting to engage, understand and support local needs and aspirations. Many anchors are quick to note that they are not the proxy for or voice of their community! However, with communities more likely to trust local organisations than external institutions, anchor organisations can be an efficient and cost effective conduit. A provider of engagement services and connections to on the ground insights. This aspect could be better leveraged by public sector agencies, while also providing additional revenue streams locally. This role and function does need to be valued. It needs to be resourced and paid for, rather than expected free of charge.

It was also noted that while some communities have local leaders skilled in managing complex conversations and challenging personalities, facilitation and conflict management are specialised skillsets that do need to be grown and supported within local anchors, rather than the assumption they latently exist.

- **context expertise** – local anchors have huge insights, knowledge, understandings about local people, local whenua and what’s happened, is happening and why. This can usefully inform ongoing planning, services and investment in that local area. When local aspirations, needs and solutions (context expertise) are brought together with content expertise from outside agencies such as councils and government agencies, significant improvements for places becomes more possible.
- **faster action on the ground** – the fast pace in which local anchor organisations can respond, make decisions and take action cannot be matched by public sector agencies. Local anchors have fewer hoops to jump and can make things happen in much shorter timeframes.
- **trust, relationship capital, kaitiakitanga (guardianship/care) and community goodwill** – when all these elements are in place and strong, resources, contributions and commitments can be activated or leveraged at a moment’s notice. A strong sense of community connection, generosity, responsibility, caring and belonging mean that local people will do what’s required to support each other and the wellbeing of their place.
- **appetite for risk and innovation** - generally speaking communities have a greater ability to freely dream, be creative and more adventurous in their responses. With trusted, courageous local leadership and a ‘can do’ spirit, out of the box solutions are easier to get off the ground.
- **local co-investment capacity** - with the right framing and invitation from a local anchor, communities can directly invest in the wellbeing of their community through contributions of time, money, land, access to capital, equipment and materials, networks, and knowledge led by kotahitanga (unity). When added with investment from public sector and philanthropic agencies, much more becomes possible than if agencies work alone.



# WHAT ENABLES EFFECTIVE LOCAL ANCHOR ORGANISATIONS TO DELIVER ON LOCAL WELLBEING OUTCOMES?

## KEY THEMES FROM CASE STUDY LEARNING

As discussed earlier, each case study that informed this Think Piece is unique – reflecting different start points, drivers, contexts, visions, and ways of organising that enable a local vision.

We strongly encourage you to read all the case studies (see Part 4) and consider their value individually – in this case, it's the gems, rather than the devil, that sits in the detail!

These are the key themes we have been able to distil across case studies.



### ***Whiria te tangata*** ***Weave the people together***

#### **1. STARTING SMALL AND BUILDING FROM EACH SUCCESS**

While all anchor organisations have big visions and aspirations, for most, their journeys started small, with first projects and practical actions that positively changed things their communities cared about. Visible changes and tangible results that communities could see helped build further engagement, trust and confidence of locals, funders and other stakeholders to take more ambitious next steps. E.g. Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki (TPOoŌ) was umbrellaed by another fund holder at first with a decision to form an independent legal entity coming much later. In Paihia, successful one day community working bees hosted by Focus Paihia (FP) built collective confidence that the town had what was required to tackle larger-scale, multi-day infrastructure redevelopment projects.

#### **2. WHAKAWHANAUNGATANGA – IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS**

One of the strongest themes across case studies is the importance of relationships and working in relational ways<sup>10</sup> with local people, groups, agencies, funders and stakeholders. Relationship is seen as the currency that enables effective wellbeing outcomes. Resourcing to enable relational approaches is often a struggle not just for smaller anchor organisations but for others they want to engage and work with – especially hapū and iwi.

#### **3. MAHI TAHI - COLLABORATION THE ONLY WAY**

Another common element across case studies is the clear and visible commitment to collaboration. All initiatives understood the value of collaborative approaches and are actively

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<sup>10</sup>For most this involves proactively making time to meet with people, being open and present in local networks and constantly asking what others see, think and how they might want to be involved or connect etc. It is also about bringing people together with kai (food) to celebrate local progress and success, and personally acknowledging contributions from multiple people and partners - making time for informal as well as formal connecting opportunities.

working with others who have similar interests and can contribute to enabling local outcomes. Importantly too is recognition of the unique eco system of local leadership and influence that exists in each place and the different strengths and ‘lanes’ different organisations are working in. A strong feature was the ability to comprehend and interpret community patterns. For example spotting emerging energy, bubbling issues, or underlying behaviours or beliefs that may be holding problems in place. Rather than compete or duplicate, effective anchors intentionally pay attention to enabling strategic connections, trust and respectful relationships to strengthen connections and activity across the community as a whole.

#### **4. EARLY AND ONGOING – INTENTIONALLY INVITING CONTRIBUTION AND PARTICIPATION**

Doing things with and within local communities to build connections and grow shared understandings of local issues, opportunities and solutions was recognised and reflected in the work of local anchor organisations. Early and frequent conversations with local people and groups came ahead of priority setting and decision making. Regular communication via social media, community newsletters, website updates, community working bees, coffee cart drop ins, community surveys, network hui, and annual community celebrations were some of the ways that anchor organisations intentionally reached out to inform, invite and welcome local people’s ideas and contributions.

#### **5. SELF-BELIEF AND SELF-DETERMINATION**

Frustration with waiting for local and central agencies to respond to or fix identified local issues is certainly a key driver of locally-led action in many case study communities. This saw communities come together to spark local solutions in areas frequently perceived as the responsibility of local and central government agencies e.g. Advancing affordable housing solutions in Pāekākāriki, championing a master town centre plan and upgrades to community infrastructure in Paihia, installing a bus shelter for whānau waiting for buses along the Whanganui River road and raising funds to co-invest in a youth focused community-centre in the McLaren Park Henderson South area of West Auckland.

A sense of community self-belief can’t always be assumed straight up however. One of the early challenges for The Community Led Development Trust (TCLDT) was changing local mindsets and instilling confidence that a different local future was possible. Taking time and finding ways to enable local people to dream again was one of their key first steps. Quickly delivering on some of those dreams was the second step - seeing change happen is one of the keys to believing it can.

The importance of being able to do things ‘our way’ was echoed by all anchor organisations we interviewed. Self-determined pathways and solutions are also seen as important to enabling local service and action responses that were grounded in authentic whānau and community voices and needs. For those working in Te Ao Māori contexts, rangatiratanga (self-determination) means working holistically with a wellbeing lens, and in strengths-based, whānau focused ways.

#### **6. INSPIRING AND COLLABORATIVE LOCAL LEADERSHIP**

While the organising models and aspirations underpinning each local anchor organisation are all very

different and have evolved to reflect their local context, outstanding local leadership<sup>11</sup> is something they shared in common. The role of highly skilled, connected, motivated, committed relationship-savvy individuals – who are sometimes at management level or governance level – was clearly a key factor of success. The kind of leadership ‘magic’ we heard about embraced:

- a strong passion for their community and an ability to articulate a future vision and plan that brought others on board.
- a commitment to ‘doing’ and leading from the front - personally putting in significant hours to things done while building a trusted brand and profile for the organisation.
- diversity, with an ability to create and hold space for other voices and perspectives, pushing through challenging times to enable new or better ways to emerge.
- spotting talent in their community and looking for those with energy and skills that can be grown, nurtured and supported, so others are visibly leading too.
- developing respectful relationships with both mana whenua and tangata whenua, ensuring that ongoing engagement, as well as deepening of cultural understandings, are built into local anchor approaches. Examples include Paekākāriki Housing Trust (PHT) exploring how they could also support hapū aspirations for a marae in their rohe, and McLaren Park Henderson South Community Trust (MPHS) providing dedicated cultural support for their board and staff teams.
- collaborative, relational and non-hierarchical approaches more broadly. These leaders are active listeners, who pay attention to recognising and celebrating others’ efforts and valuing teamwork. They also ensure engagement is regular and ongoing and constantly test the dominant narrative, making room to hear all views.
- responsibility for community impact – which can be seen as both a strength (strong ownership and focus on achieving results) and a personal burden (long hours, stress involved in holding and navigating community complexities, carrying the weight of others’ expectations).

## 7. PRACTICE GROUNDED IN VALUES

Across the case study initiatives, activities, programmes and leadership practice are clearly grounded in well-articulated organisational values. For example, for both Environment Network Manawātū (ENM) and MPHS, commitments to collaboration means that decisions on whether or not to take up new opportunities, are always preceded by first asking:

- who in the community is best placed to lead the project?
- how might collaboration be enabled?
- who wasn’t part of early conversations but needed to be?
- how aligned is the project with our organisation’s vision and mission?
- what does all the above mean for determining the most appropriate role our organisation should take?

For Focus Paihia, reconnecting to vision and values has meant looking at current community needs and what new social support is needed. This may lead to FP becoming more active in projects outside their traditional community infrastructure, village planning and support mix.

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<sup>11</sup> Often drivers were one or two key leaders or couples. This is not unusual.

## 8. MIXED SOURCE FUNDING MODELS

All local anchor organisations we spoke with had multiple sources of funding and resourcing for their projects, programmes and activities. Key funding sources include:

- grants from local and central government, philanthropic funders and targeted rates.
- contracts for service with local and central government agencies.
- donations; including money, goods and services and use of equipment, from local residents and businesses.
- income from a wide range of social enterprise activities e.g. programme fees or co-payments, running an op shop, generating rental income from community owned assets, managing resource recovery centres.
- volunteer time – collectively totalling many tens of thousands of hours each year.

Some local anchor organisations were themselves direct or indirect funders of other activities and organisations in their community or district. For example, as part of their strategic sector agreement and in acknowledgement of ENM's in-depth sector knowledge and relationships, Palmerston North City Council devolved its community-based environment funding to EMN to distribute locally. Focus Paihia also allocates \$10k each year to support other local community groups and also facilitates community directed donations to bespoke local projects as per donor wishes. For example in 2023, a local resident donated \$100k to support a community-led upgrade of a local waterfront reserve.

Leveraging community wealth has also been creatively exercised in Paekākāriki, where collaborative community investment processes have enabled purchases of residential property by PHT.

While social enterprise played a very successful part of the funding mix for both MPHS and Focus Paihia (and enabled other social and environmental outcomes<sup>12</sup>) others were quick to point out that social enterprise models are not a simple income generating panacea. For some anchors, different enterprises they are supporting are not likely to generate a substantial return but are still seen as valuable activities to support. Other local anchors found that they lack the right mix of business development skills and capacity within their team to enable more effective enterprise approaches.

## 9. CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

Across all case study communities, visible efforts are being made to hold and build relationships with mana whenua and to work in culturally supportive ways to bring a genuine and intentional Te Ao Māori lens to their work, understanding that this is ongoing and constant. Many expressed a desire to be of service to local hapū and iwi, as well as their wider community. As to be expected, commitments were exercised in different ways in different places and depend heavily upon capacity of local hapū and iwi to be in relationship with local anchor organisations. For Focus Paihia, iwi representation on the Trust is formally noted in their Trust constitution. This mechanism provides a valued way to enable relationship, a voice at the table, and guidance on community project

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<sup>12</sup> Including jobs for local people who faced employment barriers, increased social connections and carbon/waste reduction targets.

development. For many other anchors, relational approaches rather than formal structural arrangements inform their cultural practice.

In Ōtaki, kaupapa Māori organisation TPOoŌ meet regularly with hapū in their rohe (district) to keep communication lines open, effectively holding space for a time when hapū are ready to deliver services themselves. For MPHS, positive working relationships are in place with the local pan-tribal marae. Relationships with local iwi Te Kawerau ā Maki have strengthened because of new iwi staffing. MPHS has also invested in developing their own cultural competency to ensure they are supporting local rangatahi and whānau in ways that work for them. For ENM, Jobs for Nature funding for the Ruahine Kiwi Project has enabled a deeper, practical partnership with hapū through project delivery.

On the Whanganui River, TCLDT has worked with kaumatua to develop a local residential (or resident-led) approach that complements the roles and focus of marae, hapū and iwi led approaches.

## **10. SOLID FOUNDATIONS AHEAD OF GROWTH**

Sound governance, transparent financial systems and proactive communication processes with both local communities and stakeholders are seen as three foundational pillars that community anchor organisations need to have in place ahead of any scaled expansion or growth. A strong track record of delivery is another essential marker that councils, funders and other community partners looked for.

Anchors are clear that decisions on growth need to come from anchor organisations themselves rather than be driven by expectations or desires of external partners and funders.

## **11. SCALED GROWTH REQUIRES CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT**

For organisations keen to grow and take on more, it is recognised that additional specialised support, especially in the areas of HR, project management, organisational development, business development, contract management, negotiation, and communications is crucial. These skillsets are not typically available within small or developing anchor organisation teams or financially enabled through project based contract funding alone. Free or cost effective support options at key transition points for anchor organisations proactively need to be made and could be enabled through:

- short term secondments of skilled council staff or trusted council contractors.
- a regional community sector umbrella agency, resourced to directly provide specialist mentoring and support, as well as broker connections with other external experts able to support specific development needs in an NGO context.<sup>13</sup>
- one off development grants so each anchor can make its own organisational development decisions.

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<sup>13</sup> MPHS was engaged by the Henderson Massey Local Board to provide community governance training and mentoring for community groups across West Auckland. Support was provided by MPHS and other governance experts. ENM also provides capacity building support for local environmental groups, enabled by a grant from Environmental Hubs Aotearoa.

## 12. HAVING COURAGE TO TAKE RISKS

Many of the anchor organisations spoke about the importance of courage and being prepared to spot opportunities and take risks to enable local community aspirations. This was demonstrated in different ways. For example, MPHS now operates two resource recovery centres in different parts of Tāmaki Makaurau to generate extra revenue needed to support local projects and programmes. For TCLDT they bravely moved ahead with a new inclusive resident-led development approach to addressing wellbeing across multiple river settlements, which is different than traditional marae hapū-led approaches.

## 13. POTENTIAL TO STRATEGICALLY LEVERAGE COMMUNITY OWNED ASSETS

Many anchor organisations talked about the importance of owning local buildings and facilities. MPHS, Focus Paihia and PHT all owned or co-owned local property. Having a financial stake in a local building or facility, rather than just being a contract manager or tenant, is seen as having significant benefits at multiple levels, enabling:

- a shared sense of ownership and increased sense of care and responsibility for the asset's maintenance and upkeep.
- faster action, rather than having to wait for council or a landlord to respond. This meant maintenance issues could be more effectively addressed, and service levels quickly adjusted to meet changing or emerging community needs.
- leveraging further funding and finance for asset upgrades alongside further purchases and asset development.
- income generation through renting rooms.
- more control over the way the asset is presented and run – which enables greater vibrancy, a more personal and homely feel, and accelerated local connections and relationships.

## 14. THOUGHTFULLY APPROACHING OPPORTUNITIES

All anchor organisations were experiencing different challenges around capacity, with new ideas frequency bouncing, and juggling constant requests for support and engagement. This is challenging when resourcing and capacity to respond is often limited – with some anchors noting associated impacts on staff and volunteer wellbeing. Burnout risks need to be proactively managed. Different anchors also use different values based approaches to support decision making on new opportunities for action and investment, we especially liked the questions MPHS asked themselves:

- how does this align with our purpose and values?
- are we the right people to pick this up? If yes, do we have the right people and capacity?
- who else might we collaborate on this with?
- where would this project/service take us next?
- how would this additional work impact on our existing programmes/delivery capacity?
- are we prepared to invest in it too? What's our skin in the game?

# RISKS FOR LOCAL ANCHOR ORGANISATIONS IN PARTNERING WITH COUNCILS

While closer collaboration with councils was generally welcomed, anchor organisations are also upfront about some of the risks of partnering with councils. These include:

- slow speed of response, decision making and general internal bureaucracy.
- staff and relationship turn over that requires frequent rebuilding of collaborative approaches.
- project funding not covering the true costs of organisational overheads, relationship processes or development time.
- getting bogged down in sometimes excessive output focused data collection and paper based reporting which may meet council fiduciary requirements but does not always add value to the community anchor or support collaborative learning relationships.
- community context expertise not being valued or recompensed in the same way that other professional advice is.
- generic council rules and policies getting in the way of practical local responses
- loss of intellectual property – with one council taking a community's good idea and running it 'in house' with no attribution, recompense or involvement of the community.



*Image sources: Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki (left), McLaren Park Henderson South Community Trust (right)*

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNCILS TO BETTER SUPPORT LOCAL ANCHOR ORGANISATIONS

***Kaua e rangiruatia te ha o te hoe, e kore tō tātou waka e ū ki uta***

***Do not lift the paddle out of unison, or our waka will never reach the shore***

The local anchor organisations we interviewed all had different relationships with their local council. A formal partnership agreement (ENM), contract for service agreements (FP, MPHS), grants and targeted rates funding (TPOoŌ, FP), advocacy and submissions (PHT). Even those who had less direct council contact or received little or no funding support (PHT, TCLDT) valued the role of local government and saw a need to build and maintain relationships. While the focus of our interviews was firmly on local anchors and their journeys and insights, we noted some key messages that related to local government relationships and support.

### **PAY MORE ATTENTION TO RELATIONSHIPS AND HANDOVERS**

The impact of council restructuring processes and frustration of frequent changes in lead council contacts was commented on by many anchors. While acknowledgement was made of good people working in local government, community anchor organisations reflected that poor handovers and transitions of council relationship leads means that knowledge and trust is frequently and quickly lost, meaning anchor organisations have to ‘start over again and again’ to frame the nature, process and context of their partnering relationship to new council staff and elected members.

Where things worked best, reciprocity in relationships was acknowledged, with regular meetings held to proactively share information and emerging issues which then supported next step planning from both sides. At their worst, community anchors were overlooked or ignored, with council organising community meetings in local places with no notification or involvement of their local anchor partner.

### **COLLABORATION MORE THAN DEVOLUTION**

Many anchor organisations noted the significant professional (content) expertise within councils and the range of roles and levers that local government has at its disposal, that community doesn’t. While locally determined pathways are valued, it is recognised that wellbeing is more strongly enabled when the strengths of both communities and councils are brought together. There is a strong desire for ongoing and strengthened relationships with council rather than a simple contractual devolution of services or funding– reflecting dual aspirations for interdependence and independence.

### **LOCALISE FOR GREATER WELLBEING IMPACT, INCLUDING SOCIAL PROCUREMENT**

While on one hand, a one size fits all scaled delivery of local and central government contracts tends to be cost effective and more administratively efficient, generic corporate responses can preclude

the ability for local anchors and community-based enterprises to explore new local service provision opportunities and ways to enable multiple wellbeing outcomes.

Most local anchor organisations are keen to explore expanded service roles they might play in their communities. Aspects like rubbish removal, clean streetscapes and facilities, community engagement, parks maintenance, recycling and composting services, local service design and health and wellbeing hubs could be provided by or through local anchors – enabling greater ownership of local places, more tailored and holistic wellbeing responses, new local jobs and community income generation.

In the Far North, it is well recognised that community-based delivery of some traditional Council delivered services in Paihia has resulted in huge improvements to the look and feel of the town, with potential for Focus Paihia to take on additional maintenance service roles. In the Manawātū, ENM is keen to explore the benefits of community-based residential composting approaches that could enable creation of bespoke local compost hubs for local processing and return to community/local gardens. For MPHS, there's a strong desire for new health locality approaches to build from the bottom up, with local anchors like MPHS supported to take a lead in exploring what this could like – rather than this be driven by the health sector.

### ***DON'T EXPECT OF OTHERS WHAT YOU'RE NOT DOING YOURSELF***

Some noted council expectations of communities to engage and collaborate with mana whenua when councils are seen as not living up to these principles themselves. It is also recognised that council commitments to collaboration need to be actioned by the council organisation as a whole, not just with one or two individuals within it. This means greater internal communication within councils about strategic partnering arrangements and expectations of relationship – from the community's end, this isn't something that can be switched on or off at council's discretion.

### ***SPOT LOCAL COLLABORATIVE ENERGY AND SEE HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT IT***

Rather than set up council determined structures and processes to deliver on local wellbeing outcomes, see where there is energy/capacity in different local communities to do and take on more. Determine how this can be supported through advice, connections, information, mentoring, funding and relationship development over time. Starting small is fine, with collaboration assisting potential impact and mitigating risks for both sides.




## PARTNERING WITH LOCAL ANCHOR ORGANISATIONS – CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Participants in community case studies which have informed this Think Piece are all keen to build and strengthen relationships with local government. They see a future that brings together the unique strengths and expertise of both councils and local anchors to improve wellbeing outcomes in local places. They are not interested in devolution without relationship – which extends beyond contractual arrangements.

While it's easy to think about what community anchor organisations need to have sorted in order to partner effectively with councils, it's important to note that relationships are a two way street – with expectations of behaviours and ways of working applying to both parties. This means that councils (and other organisations) must carefully consider their own processes and ways of working - that they're flexible, sharing power, adding value - not burdening, appropriately resourcing, enabling - not gatekeeping and supporting self-determination for hapū, iwi and community.

What follows are some questions and considerations that will support WBOPDC, and local and central government more broadly, to reflect on what may be needed from them to support community anchor organisations and approaches. Relevant insights from local anchor case studies are also noted.



### To succeed community anchor organisations need:

- *permissive landscape in which to work*
- *long-term investment with supportive infrastructure.*
- *public service culture change.*

Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership 2022

# COMMUNITY-LED STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR COUNCIL REFLECTION - INFORMED BY CASE STUDY INSIGHTS

Key Element	Some Questions for Council Consideration	Some Case Study Insights
Local determined outcomes and solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what degree are local outcomes being driven or determined from the bottom up vs from the council down? Who's deciding or specifying the work, services and outcomes?</li> <li>How will you know if you've got the balance right? What will tell you?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wellbeing outcomes (e.g. locally responsive services, social capital<sup>14</sup> and local co-investment) are maximised when communities get to focus on the things they care most about and have most energy for.</li> <li>Council and community priorities for action and investment are not always the same. Room for real negotiation is required at the very least.</li> <li>The preferred start point is for council and other partners to actively listen and respond to community priorities and needs, rather than expecting communities to first fit into council agendas and plans.</li> <li>Self-determined local approaches will likely require different council supports and responses rather than a generic one size all council response.</li> </ul>
Authentic, respectful and trusted relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What kind of relationships<sup>15</sup> are in place with local anchors now? What enabling/disabling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See where or how council can practically support local energy. Doing small things together is the best way to</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> Social capital is enabled through high levels of community engagement and relational ways of working that enable community participation, shared responsibility for solution making and taking, opportunities for connection, contribution, collaboration, and proactive communication and celebration of local achievements and positive change.

<sup>15</sup> The [working together continuum](#) is a great way to explore the different kinds of relationships that are in place now and might be needed next.

Key Element	Some Questions for Council Consideration	Some Case Study Insights
	<p>barriers to effective working together have been observed so far?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of relationships and trust needs to be in place before local structures would want to partner and deliver on local outcomes for or with council and vice versa?</li> <li>• How connected are elected members with local anchors? What works best to involve and align community and local boards so a whole of council-community relationship is developed?</li> <li>• How can council link and leverage its relationships with other central government agencies, community funders, hapū/iwi etc to support local aspirations?</li> <li>• What does council have in place to support handover or transition of key relationships and continuity of collaborative approaches?</li> </ul>	<p>build trust, relationship and confidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While individuals may hold relationships, expectations and commitments bind the whole organisation. External collaboration with communities has to be supported by deliberate internal council communication and collaboration.</li> <li>• Be prepared to be challenged - it's a healthy thing in relationships! Understand that council systems will need to evolve in response to hapū, iwi, Māori and community partnering needs too.</li> <li>• Ensure local anchor relationships are effectively handed over to new council staff to smooth transition pathways and avoid constant starting again.</li> </ul>
Procurement/Agreement Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of partnering or contractual frameworks and agreements will best support local arrangements? How might standard council approaches and templates need to be adapted for partnering purposes?</li> <li>• How are relational, developmental and delivery aspects reflected in anchor partnering arrangements?</li> <li>• Is council paying the true cost of community-based insights, knowledge and service delivery?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In order to thrive and grow, local anchors need a range of different development support at different times. Councils need to invest in relationship and development needs alongside projects and deliverables.</li> <li>• Councils have connections with many other agencies and funders. They can add value locally by being a conduit to other external support, rather than a gatekeeper of their own relationships.</li> <li>• Community knowledge and expertise is often undervalued – the true costs of both relationships and enabling</li> </ul>

Key Element	Some Questions for Council Consideration	Some Case Study Insights
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of reporting will add value and robustness from both council and community perspectives?</li> <li>• How is the quality of relationships best assessed and reported on?</li> <li>• What kind of learning and other feedback loops will help strengthen relationships and next phase mahi?</li> </ul>	<p>outcomes need to be better understood – and not expected for free!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore how assessment, learning and reporting can add value for communities planning and development, as well as give council the information it needs to demonstrate impact and value of its investment.</li> </ul>
Cultural context and responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well are local hapū/iwi/Māori histories and aspirations understood across council?</li> <li>• Are local hapū and iwi/Māori being supported to focus on their priorities, as opposed to council's? How?</li> <li>• What kind of capacity and support do hapū/iwi first need in order to be in relationship with both council and community?</li> <li>• What's similar or different in the approach needed to support and enable different community anchors organisations vs hapū, iwi, kaupapa Māori anchors?</li> <li>• How will arrangements enable Tino Rangatiratanga for hapū, iwi and kaupapa Māori organisations vs. just local delivery of services and activities?</li> <li>• For community anchors - how are Te Tiriti o Waitangi intents being realised in local practice and approaches? What relationships are in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) for hapū, iwi and Māori means supporting and enabling them to do the things that matter most (projects, priorities) and in their own way.</li> <li>• Hapū, iwi, Māori dynamics and relationships in place are complex and contextual, with time needed for Māori to work things through and find ways forward.</li> <li>• Capacity to engage and be in relationship is a very practical constraint for hapū and iwi. Sometimes relationships are more easily enabled when there's funding to do things together on the ground.</li> <li>• Councils need to be doing themselves what they expect of others e.g. honouring Te Tiriti through their actions too.</li> <li>• Co-governance is just one of many different ways to honour Te Tiriti, share power, and enable participation and equity for Māori.</li> <li>• Te Ao Māori perspectives are sometimes more easily enabled through relationships with individuals than through formal organisational structures and</li> </ul>

Key Element	Some Questions for Council Consideration	Some Case Study Insights
	<p>place with hapū and iwi or kaupapa Māori organisations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of connections or development pathways would strengthen relationships and cultural responsiveness in the community?</li> <li>• How is equity for Māori and other vulnerable communities being reflected in council and local community work programmes and investment priorities?</li> </ul>	<p>representational arrangements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural support and guidance (for everyone) makes a real difference to working in culturally appropriate ways and enabling relationships and safety.</li> <li>• Relationships and relationship processes with Māori need to be at the right levels. E.g. kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) and rangatira ki te rangatira (leader to leader).</li> </ul>
Readiness <sup>16</sup> and Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the local anchor assessed their own readiness to partner and or grow? If yes, what did this show up? If no, how could this process be supported?</li> <li>• What demonstrates local capacity, capability and mandate to take on additional services and activities on behalf or with their hapū, iwi, community? What additional support might they need to do this and over what timeframe?</li> <li>• What does council readiness look like from a community anchor's point of view?</li> <li>• What is the anchor organisation looking for in a relationship with council? What factors demonstrate council's organisational readiness and ability to partner and/or devolve services to community anchors? What additional support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting small, doing things that are visible and meaningful for local people is the best place to start.</li> <li>• Ahead of any growth, a local anchor needs to have solid governance, transparent financial systems and regular communication processes in place. Decisions to grow and/or scale must come from them, not be expected of councils or other partners.</li> <li>• Understand what local anchors may need organisationally to grow and scale – ensure resourcing is in place to enable this.</li> <li>• Ensure that relationship expectations are able to be met on both sides. Honestly communicate any potential constraints up front so that both sides know what's possible and what's likely not.</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> For a wider discussion around community readiness see the Harwood Institute's [5 Stages of Community Life](#).

Key Element	Some Questions for Council Consideration	Some Case Study Insights
Stakeholder communications, engagement and relationships	<p>might council need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of connections, communication processes and relationships does the anchor organisation (s) have in place? How do others see them – what do they value and what are they saying? What tells you they are focused on wider community wellbeing and not just their own organisation?</li> <li>• What demonstrates that wider whānau/community and others are informed about, and can input into ongoing local activities and future planning? What convening mechanisms to support this are in place or will need to be better enabled?</li> <li>• How is the anchor connected to or supporting other local groups and organisations? What kinds of collaboration is happening now? What will be needed in the future?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are often multiple organisations in communities playing different and complementary wellbeing support roles – but not all will be local anchors. Enabling positive working relationships and collaboration across key local players is essential to maximising wellbeing impact and avoiding the worst of competition.</li> <li>• Regular communication via multiple channels in communities is essential so everyone knows what's happening, what's being achieved and how they can help inform, contribute to and support next step planning and action for their place.</li> <li>• Intentionally find ways for local communities (and other partners) to contribute and be part of local change processes via time or resources. With multiple contributions – much more becomes possible.</li> <li>• Local anchors provide key support for new groups or informal community projects, taking care of the back room, so local people can focus on doing things on the ground.</li> </ul>
Rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the different potential rewards for both anchor organisations and councils through deeper collaboration and devolution of delivery?</li> <li>• What short term costs and investments in anchor organisations might be required to enable longer term relational or outcome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community anchors respect and value the content expertise, relationship connections and resourcing that councils and other external agencies bring to enable local wellbeing outcomes.</li> <li>• Community anchors sometimes feel their knowledge and expertise is undervalued, under-resourced and underutilised.</li> </ul>

Key Element	Some Questions for Council Consideration	Some Case Study Insights
	<p>gains?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will success be claimed, celebrated, communicated? With whom?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community anchors can deliver real value for money when they are enabled and supported to own, manage and leverage local facilities in their ways and have the right capacity and supports in place to support local contract delivery.</li> </ul>
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the different potential risks for anchor organisations and councils moving into the partnering and devolution spaces? Have these been clearly and honestly communicated and potential mitigation plans explored?</li> <li>What red flags point to potential or emerging problems from closer working relationships or changing community or council contexts? How might these be mitigated?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnering with councils isn't always easy<sup>17</sup>. Things that get in the way include; slower pace of response, decisions and action, generic rules that limit flexibility, top down power imbalance and reporting requirements that add little value to community outcomes.</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> The same can also be said of communities! Personality conflicts, unresolved local issues, stretched resources and people/governance capacity, contested leadership and mandates, are some of the things that make working with hapū, iwi and communities difficult.



## ENVIRONMENT NETWORK MANAWATŪ CASE STUDY: COLLECTIVE IMPACT, TOGETHER

Name	Environment Network Manawātū (ENM)
Location	Palmerston North.
Community Context	Palmerston North is the largest city in Manawātū-Whanganui region with a population of around 92,000 people. The Manawātū River with its beautiful walkways and cycle ways flows through the city. Spanning 180km in length, the river flows from the Ruahine Ranges through the Manawātū Gorge and across the Manawātū Plains to the Tasman Sea at Foxton.
Legal Structure	Incorporated Society and registered charity with 65+ member groups.
Why ENM Exists	Connecting and inspiring communities for environmental action.
Vision	All life is part of a thriving, self-sustaining ecosystem. ENM's vision is that the ecological and human communities in the Manawātū River catchment are living in harmony.
What Motivates ENM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our responsibility to care for the earth and each other.</li> <li>• Becoming better Te Tiriti partners</li> <li>• Collaboration and inclusivity</li> <li>• A belief that small actions can have a big impact.</li> </ul>
Started	Legally incorporated in 2001.
Annual Turn over	\$800,000.
FTE	Five operational staff members (approx. three FTE) and numerous volunteers (2732 volunteer hours in year end June 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2023).
Relationship with local government	Core ENM funding is from Palmerston North City Council (PNCC) with a Sector Lead Partnership agreement with Council now in place. Smaller scale partnering and funding relationship in place with Horizons Regional Council, and evolving relationship with Manawātū District Council.
Interviewed for this case study	Madz BatachEl

## JOURNEY TO DATE

From small beginnings and the passion and drive of a select group of founders, ENM has evolved today into an environmental organisation that is unique for being led by the voices and shared input of its 65+member groups. A wide range of projects are undertaken by ENM member groups each year with ENM's key purpose focused on facilitating and enabling communication, co-operation and increasing collective action amongst its member groups and the wider community. Leadership is provided by underpinning, fostering, and encouraging environmental initiatives in the region. ENM member groups work across the Manawatū River catchment area and cover a wide range of interests that include:

- Freshwater quality
- Regeneration and biodiversity
- Food security and resilience
- Alternative energies
- Sustainable living
- Active transport

The network is organised into two collectives: *Manawatū Food Action Network* and *Manawatū River Source to Sea*, with both strands caring for and supporting environmental activities and connecting people.

ENM has been strategic in their approach - enabling a collective voice right from the start at a time when smaller groups did not have agency. Coming together to make a collective statement has given the environment a much stronger voice in the Manawatū. Their calculated collective approach has involved finding ways to make collaboration work for everyone.

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*"ENM are like a club, but members are the environmental organisations that have joined rather than individuals."*

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In 2015 workshops were held to consider what was needed to set up a 10-year plan for ENM. Through this process, a decision was made to align ENM goals to Palmerston North City Council's environmental goals, with the ENM plan articulating what ENM was going to do to make the City's goals happen. ENM's strategic plan is reviewed every 2 to 3 years by ENM governance, with membership consultation, and continues to provide a great platform for maximising potential collaboration.

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*"ENM brings together and makes sense of individual action. It makes individuals feel like part of a whole; working together for environment focused goals. It is great for mental health too."*

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## ORGANISATIONAL MODEL

Governed by its member groups, a management committee of up to 9 people from across the ENM membership is elected at the AGM each year. There is also room to co-opt to fill vacancies if required. ENM are active members of Environment Hubs Aotearoa who provide backbone support and connection to other environmental hubs nationwide.

With a strong sense of responsibility to the region, ENM relies on numerous volunteer hours, communicating an extensive list of opportunities volunteers can contribute to. Volunteers also support ENM via their participation on governance (management committee), some project delivery around public events, and advocacy. The contribution from the volunteers allows the organisation to be more flexible and responsive to the community, with over 2,700 volunteer hours clocked for the 2023 financial year.

Some diverse collaborative projects within the current ENM umbrella include:

- Ruahine Kiwi – partnering with Te Kāuru Eastern Manawatū River Hapū Collective (Te Kāuru) with the vision of returning North Island eastern brown kiwi to the southern Ruahine by 2026.
- Plastic Pollution Challenge – a collaborative initiative with Massey University’s Zero Waste Academy, Rangitāne o Manawatū, Te Kāuru in Dannevirke and RECAP in Ashhurst to deliver a range of initiatives to clean up local waterways.
- Manawatū Food Action Network – a collective of nearly 40 organisations and initiatives collaborating on food security, resilience, and localisation. Two key initiatives focus on the mitigation of food insecurity in the Palmerston North 4412 postcode area and supporting backyard gardens.
- Creative, tailored delivery of The Future Living Skills Programme, a nationwide, local government supported and funded programme encouraging lifestyles that generate less carbon to the air, less waste to landfills and less pollution to rivers.
- Palmerston North Repair Café, spearheaded and supported through ENM as well as helping to develop a repair cafe in Fielding.

ENM Coordinator Madz BatachEl describes their direction as “intentional and strategic as well as flying by the seat of our pants.”

With the ENM staff team experiencing ongoing high demand for connection and support, the stretched team is having to make some tough choices on where to prioritise their time across so many very worthy projects. Feeling pushed and pulled and wanting to deliver at the highest possible level, the team is mindful of looking after themselves and their colleagues’ mental wellbeing.

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

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*"When we take on projects, it is important for us to ensure they align with our constitutional aim of supporting our membership."*

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ENM work hard investing in key relationships across the network and with a broad range of environment partners and stakeholders. Their highly skilled team know and understand the regional eco system in which people are central to making change. ENM are not necessarily there to deliver special projects or to develop projects but to understand who is doing what and then co-ordinate across the range of activities happening. Describing themselves as holding the space and doing the boring bits so others can reach their dream, *"it is important to keep doing that, so they don't have to."*

ENM are able to provide guidance on strategic approaches to environmental issues and action. Rather than leaping in and finding solutions they pause and constantly consider *"what is our real role here?"* Madz reflects that *"in some ways we are leading and other times, we are participating, but we are always building community and connecting."* She notes that attracting resources to do this essential back room coordinating and gluing work is challenging.

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*"Co-ordinating, collaborating and communicating is not that sexy, it does not look like you are doing much. Funders are willing to pay for the outputs but it's more difficult to get funding for the process which enables the outputs, which includes brokering, negotiating and working through ideas and challenges to get better outcomes."*

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Reporting is largely driven by data, and Madz stresses it is important to tell stories and to inspire as it's the impact of their work that matters most. Often after workshops, events, trainings, engagements, hui (gatherings) or simple small interactions it is hard to know or see what the immediate impacts are. She notes that outputs focused data does not capture the other flow-on changes that may have occurred such as behaviour change, environmental change and the increase in knowledge and skills, which often has long lasting impacts across neighbourhoods, whānau and friends.

Some of ENM's own learnings have been to frame and negotiate contracts where they can be non-specific about what they'll count and build in ways to explore what really matters through impact stories, as projects progress. They are finding that combining data and stories helps paint a broader view.

With a strong track record of working with integrity toward great results which itself helps attract resources, there's a high level of trust and belief in what ENM does and can do. This leads to lots of approaches for ENM involvement. Rather than simply say "yes we will do that" - the team now

pauses to consider things asking:

- Do we have the capacity?
- What are we best to do here?
- Do we co-ordinate, lead, or bring in others?
- Who is missing from this conversation and how can we extend this project by collaborating with others?

At the heart of these decisions is making sure the intent and outcome is solid and viable. For example, an opportunity arose to manage one new garden but having the networks and shared resources to coordinate many more gardens in the area, ENM extended the project which has led to far greater impact. Over 100 backyard gardens have been installed since 2020, supported through volunteer time, resources and donations. This process has enabled much more as a result, with more open doors for the community to connect and learn about gardening. Initial success also led on to finding a project sponsor, and resourcing a local food growing champion, Beth Lew, whose tender approach inspires and empowers whānau. ENM are now able to employ someone for one day per week, build on existing previous strategies around food resilience, and accelerate them with other organisations who are bringing community voices to the food insecurity conversation.

ENM recognises that informal groups have great ideas and want to respond to a local need but they don't want the paperwork or meetings that goes with it. Being the underpinning support for groups is a key role that ENM plays, happily shouldering the backroom infrastructure so good work can get done.

## **FUNDING AND SUPPORT**

Funding is received from a range of grants and some donations. Key projects funding e.g. support for Ruahine Kiwi, has come through Department of Conservation's (DOC) Jobs for Nature programme. Other key kai resilience related programmes have been supported by Lottery Community funds. Core operational funding comes via PNCC's Sector Lead Partnership funding, Horizons Regional Council's Climate response fund, and a partnership with Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities. Environment Hubs Aotearoa resource ENM's capacity building activities and a range of smaller grants cover other operational and project expenses.

ENM also acts a fundholder and backbone for some of its 65+ member groups, enabling them to get on with doing and delivery. For example ENM take donations on behalf of one group (Whiowhio hut), sell jam for Timona Park Orchard Trust, sell books/calendars for Ruahine Whio Protectors and Awahuri Kitchener Park Trust, and umbrella the work of Growing Gardens and Communities by securing funding and employing a casual staff member to provide physical labour.

While constantly being drawn into the quest for funding, ENM acknowledge that they are well supported by PNCC. Twenty plus years of respected work means that ENM are now recognised as PNCC's sector lead partner for the environment, and there is an expectation to deliver on that partnership. Part of the partnership involves providing Environmental Initiatives Grants to the

community. For the last three years, an ENM Environmental Initiatives Fund Sub-Committee has made decisions on both small (up to \$1k) and large (up to \$12k) grants to support projects that deliver on PNCC's and ENM's environmental outcomes. In 2023, \$49k was allocated from the large grants to support the mahi of seven different organisations. Small grants are able to be distributed to individuals or informal groups as ENM hold the funds and can reimburse actual project expenses or pay invoices directly if the individual is not able to do so upfront.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH AT ENM**

Given difficulties in knowing what is going to happen during the year that might require pivoting or more funding, ENM would like to see more flexibility in contracts to allow them to do the work but be more able to renegotiate outputs and outcomes as required. Inclusion of support for ENM organisational capacity building would also be timely – with a need their end to develop more skills in business/commercial delivery models so that the organisation can more fully understand the value of their work and the time good work takes, so that this can be better built into contracts.

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*“Collaboration is highly needed and sought after. How this is resourced is key. Do we frame ourselves as community consultants? That is what we are offering right now – our community intelligence and connections.”*

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Like other community groups, Madz says ENM may not believe in themselves enough and while staff come into the organisation with passion and a reason for being here, being a small team without access to a HR manager, recruitment consultants, and adequate capacity for communications support puts constraints on people's time and stretches them across multiple roles. Solutions to these issues that EMN and others face could be secondments from Councils, or access to groups who offer specific project support pro bono. People resources are highly valued and supporting the contributions they are able to make is vitally important.

### **CHALLENGES:**

- Uncertainty and instability brought about by DOC's Jobs for Nature funding cuts, including little discussion with DOC around what this means for the 1800 new traps ENM and its hapū collective partners have put on the ground in the Ruahine Ranges. While Jobs for Nature funding has practically enabled new local skills and jobs and built on the ground knowledge and community connections, there is a real fear these assets could just disappear, which means considerable investments of time, energy and infrastructure might effectively be wasted.
- High volume of ongoing requests for knowledge and support. Currently ENM don't have the resources available to respond to every request.
- With demand and need for ENM services are growing, ENM are mindful of the balancing act required and not taking on too much. The priority is ensuring staff are looking after themselves and not reaching breaking point.
- Social enterprises are often seen as the answer to funding sustainability. There are some

good models such as Beautification Trust in South Auckland, however dedicated, funded time and resources are required to properly explore and test the benefits and viability of a social enterprise model.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Future development – opportunities are coming faster from great relationships that have been built and nurtured. Environment Hubs Aotearoa is working hard to see how ENM can upskill, move beyond project to project and enable greater funding stability to sustain and grow their staff team.
- Recognising and valuing the need for upskilling in community consultancy mechanisms for future contracting with Councils and others.

#### **ADVICE FOR COUNCILS AND OTHERS LOOKING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT DELIVERY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY OUTCOMES:**

- Hubs around the country could recover food waste for councils through local community collection or drop off points for food scraps. At present, most Council defaults are to generic household commercial collection models. Community-based solutions and models would provide additional opportunities for community members to bump into each other, and learn more about composting, gardening and more sustainable living.
- Communities provide a wealth of knowledge, local expertise, local relationships, and access to diverse views – tapping into this should be paid for, not expected for free.
- Communities trust community organisations and don't always engage with Councils. When they have had positive interactions with local community organisations, they open up to them in different, honest and raw ways. Often, community organisations are the conduit that can advocate, advise, and give a voice for others. Again, value the expertise brought to the table by paying community organisations in the same way you would pay other professional contractors for a specialised skill set.

Website	<a href="http://www.enm.org.nz">www.enm.org.nz</a>
For more information contact	Madz BatachEl <a href="mailto:coordinator@enm.org.nz">coordinator@enm.org.nz</a>



## FOCUS PAIHIA CASE STUDY: CHAMPIONING COMMUNITY- DRIVEN ACTION

Name	Focus Paihia Community Trust
Location	Paihia, Bay of Islands
Community context	Coastal tourist town of 1800 people that swells to many tens of thousands in the summer. Pākehā comprise around 69% of the population and Māori a further 35%, with the latter a much younger demographic. A significant number of holiday homes in the area.
Legal Structure	Community Trust
Vision	To enable Paihia to reach its potential as an exceptional place to live, work and visit.
Mission	To ensure that the people and community of the Bay of Islands work together in unity and with love, to stand as leaders and as guardians of the environment. "Committed to better together."
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value and support 'local'.</li> <li>• Open, transparent and acting with integrity.</li> <li>• Inspirational and aspirational.</li> <li>• Fun, enjoyable and encouraging a healthy sense of wellbeing.</li> <li>• Acting with accountability and responsibility to and on behalf of the community.</li> <li>• Respectful and mindful of the people, the environment and its whakapapa.</li> </ul>
Started	Conversations started in 2009, with the Paihia Community Charitable Trust created in 2012, rebranding to Focus Paihia in 2015.
Annual Turn over	\$525,000 (2022)
Staff (Full time equivalent) and volunteers	0.25 paid coordinator who supports Trustees and key activities. Average 30+ volunteers each week, contributing more than 6000 volunteer hours per year. Some large scale make over projects have involved up to 9000 volunteer hours!
Relationship with local government	Longstanding relationships and connections with both Community Board and Far North District Council (FNDC) and their economic development arm, Far North District Holdings. A current Focus Paihia trustee is currently elected on the Northland Regional Council. A number of formal arrangements in place including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community-managed cleaning contracts (Town Custodians) to maintain the town centre and waterfront area</li> <li>• a targeted town centre rate that provides grants for Focus Paihia activities</li> <li>• negotiated co-funding of public infrastructure upgrades</li> <li>• permission for community markets to be held on Council owned reserve, the Village Green.</li> </ul>
Interviewed for this case study	Peter Robinson

## JOURNEY TO DATE

The start point for Focus Paihia was a realisation that it was time to stop waiting for someone else to fix the town's problems and for the town to work together and 'get their hands dirty' and make positive change happen. In 2009, the community came together to shape a plan of action which included creating an aspirational vision for the Paihia village centre. In the 15 months that followed, this vision was turned into a Council-mandated village master plan that continues to guide activities today.

Place making (community inspired improvements to public places) has provided a key vehicle for the community driven urban design and action that has helped transform Paihia over the last decade. The very first project saw around 100 volunteers renovate an unattractive public space next to the local I-Site, supported by a \$5,000 community board grant. The results were visible, generated a sense of local pride and helped foster next phase interest and momentum for further community - led action in the town. Over the last decade, Focus Paihia initiatives have included:

- Revitalising multiple public spaces, including the town's waterfront area, local reserves, playgrounds, walkways and public toilets.
- New water fountains, a swimming pontoon, and BBQs for community use.
- Painting murals to brighten the town that reflect the Paihia's history, flora and fauna.
- Purchasing and installing CCTV cameras to address safety concerns in the village centre.
- Employing Town Custodians – who, as part of a contract with the Council, are paid to take care of regular tasks to keep the town looking beautiful such as emptying rubbish bins, cleaning toilets and sweeping footpaths.
- Establishing a Village Green market to make the town more vibrant, attract people to stop in the town, and provide an additional activity for cruise ship visitors over the September – May period.
- Creating a new mountain bike park at Waitangi.
- Hosting annual volunteer of the year awards to celebrate outstanding local leaders.
- Establishing annual arts, cultural and sports small grants to support other local organisations doing good in Paihia.
- Making a \$150k donation to support Paihia 200 year heritage celebrations.
- Opening a volunteer-managed Op Shop to financially support Focus Paihia's community change efforts.

In 2015, Focus Paihia's efforts were nationally recognised when they were honoured as NZ Community of the Year. With continuity of strong local leadership and a business-like approach to its activities, Focus Paihia has continued to grow from strength to strength with a strong desire to keep doing things better and celebrate community project successes along the way.

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*"A 10 year track record of doing good things for Paihia means that Focus Paihia has mana both in our community, and in the Far North. We've proven the model has benefits for everyone. While we've done a lot of successful community infrastructure related mahi, in the next phase ahead I see the need for more social support."*

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Looking into the future, the mix of Focus Paihia activities is likely to stay the same, with more exploration of social support for the town on the horizon as noted above. There's also a bubbling interest in environmental sustainability, including community gardens, and local food generation. There's also recognition of the increasing importance of growing community connections through key national celebrations like Waitangi Day and Matariki.

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*"We invited local Matariki event organisers to come and talk with us after this year's events to find out about what's important to them and how Focus Paihia could help support next year."*

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## ORGANISATIONAL MODEL

Rather than a 'doer' of projects, Focus Paihia is clear in its role as facilitator, supporter and (often) co-funder of community projects. Focus Paihia projects are volunteer-led and driven by community champions, with local businesses, iwi, community groups (such as Rotary and Lions) and local residents collectively getting in behind to support with their time, equipment and resources. Community working bees are regularly called as needed to help build and/or spruce things up to keep the town looking good.

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*"Many people have literally given years of service to Paihia via working bees, they are the real champions. There's also lots of important little jobs that people put their hands up to do like tending flowerbeds. People don't want recognition or accolades, they do it because they love Paihia."*

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The Focus Paihia Trust Board that oversees Focus Paihia activities includes an intentional mix of local leadership from different parts of the community, with local Māori, business and young people formally represented on the Trust. In this way, Focus Paihia has been able to grow in ways that are cognisant of and connected to a wide range of aspirations, issues and opportunities seen for the town.

The Focus Paihia Trust board meets monthly, with the organisation's sole paid position a 10 hour a week coordinator role, focused on supporting trustees and their meetings, responding to general enquiries, and supporting communications with the wider town via regular community e-newsletters, and updates to the Focus Paihia Facebook page and website.

An annual community get together is a key mechanism through which the Focus Paihia team share back with the community what's been achieved over the year, this process is a way to celebrate collective success and enable local accountability for outcomes. The event also includes space to talk about community needs and what else would make a positive difference for people and place. Moving from ideas to action is contingent upon people putting their hands up to own and champion causes they care about and are prepared to put time into. Focus Paihia's role is to come alongside and support as needed. This might include approaching Council or other key stakeholders for support, making funding applications, providing resources, putting out the call for volunteers and/or other resources needed to help make things happen.

Invitations for community ideas are also encouraged throughout the year via the Focus Paihia website, with Focus Paihia also hosting community discussions, surveys and workshops as needed. For example a broader community call for ideas came ahead of a two day community design workshop in early 2023 and helped bring locals together to think about what could be done to rejuvenate the southern entrance to town and the waterfront area. Around 35 locals attended the hui, which was facilitated by Australian placemaking expert David Enwright, who has supported a number of successful community makeover projects in the town.

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*"Lots of amazing ideas were generated at the workshop. An anonymous donor offered \$100,000 to help make changes happen. This catalysed what became known as the \$100k project, an amazing upgrade of the reserve, playground and pathways at the far end of town, with Council contributing \$112k to upgrade the toilet block - along with time, equipment and expertise of so many local tradies and volunteers. People do it because they care, they love Paihia and want to give back."*

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While Focus Paihia relies significantly on volunteer leadership and contribution, there are limits to a purely volunteer-led model.

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*"To advance community-driven urban design improvements on Kings Road, we need to engage engineers and designers to progress plans. While there will be lots of helping hands to make physical changes to the streetscape down the track, there's specialist project management, fund raising and engineering skills that are needed upfront. Not everything can be left to or expected of volunteers."*

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## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Community engagement and collaboration lies at the heart of Focus Paihia, with the Trust Deed requiring "Focus Pahia to seek and recognise the views and expectations of both local residents and tangata whenua of the Paihia District" in their activities.

From the very early days, considerable effort has gone into building relationships with key

stakeholders such as the Far North District Council (FNDC) and The NZ Transport Agency/Waka Kotahi and local iwi upon whose land and jurisdiction Focus Paihia activities have been very closely connected.

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*“The early leaders of Focus Paihia had to navigate a lot of mahi with Council elected members, staff and the Community Board. There were lots of challenges but they have now truly been worked through. The FNDC accepts that the Focus Paihia model is a good approach that has demonstrated benefits for the community and Council over many years and they remain extremely supportive.”*

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While relationships with hapū and iwi are positive, both sides are committed to respectfully keep working through any issues as forward plans for the town are progressed.

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*“There is a willingness and openness from iwi to acknowledge Focus Paihia intents and they’ve been represented on Focus Paihia from the start. This means that guidance and advice happens in real time, history is shared and pathways are smoothed.”*

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Attention to relationships is important to current Focus Paihia Chair Peter Robinson who meets regularly with the Chairs of the Paihia Business Association and the Bay of Islands - Whangaroa Community Board. He notes the complementary roles each group plays in supporting the town’s development and the value in finding opportunities where the three organisations can work together, whilst also respecting each other’s differences.

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*“Seeing how you can support other’s aims is also important. It’s about everyone doing good for the town and supporting them too.”*

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## **FUNDING AND SUPPORT**

Resourcing of Focus Paihia activities comes from a variety of sources - contracts, grants, donations, enterprise earnings and volunteer contributions of time/resources.

In 2022, Focus Paihia’s flagship op shop generated a \$139k profit that was directed into community-led initiatives in the town. With the op shop entirely volunteer run, this income stream is a key component of Focus Paihia’s sustainable funding model. Being part of the op shop team also provides a valued way for passionate locals to connect and contribute to Focus Paihia efforts, with the dedicated team often working weekends to restock the shop and get ready for the following week’s trade. A TV screen with a rolling Focus Paihia slideshow is displayed at the op shop to help promote the group’s activities and let customers know what their shop purchases are supporting. A

forward thinking, entrepreneurial approach also led to Focus Paihia purchasing the op shop building.

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*“When an opportunity came up a few years ago to buy the op shop building at a good price, we took out a loan and made that happen. If we sold the building today it would generate a huge profit, but owning it gives us other options. We now rent out part of the floor space to another small local business.”*

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While huge community generosity and an enterprising approach have underpinned Focus Paihia’s model from the start, not everything is expected to generate a financial return. Activities such as the markets on the Village Green return relatively little to Focus Paihia, but provide other benefits such as vibrancy, bumping spaces for locals and visitors alike to meet and connect, as well as enabling business development opportunities for creative locals.

As noted earlier, Focus Paihia is also a mechanism through which Paihia passionate locals can direct donations and respond to community support requests. For example in 2019, a local resident donated \$10k to support something that benefited local and visiting children. Focus Paihia facilitated discussions which resulted in the donation supporting completion of shade sails over the local primary school playground which is used by local and visiting children alike.

While Focus Paihia contracts with FNDC annually to support a range of activities such as the Town Custodians, there’s recognition that as time progresses, there may be less financial support at Council’s end due to growing fiscal constraints. FNDC however is keen to see how the Focus Paihia model could be activated more widely in their district and is looking to open up their procurement process next year to increase opportunities for new community-led suppliers to provide services in their part of the rohe.

## **BARRIERS/ENABLERS OF SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH**

### **ENABLERS:**

- Working in business like ways with a clear vision and purpose.
- Finding ways to welcome contributions from everyone – noting that while you need lots of people to champion things, whatever goes ahead has to be what the community wants and needs, not just an individual’s pet project.
- Great communication – with multiple channels to proactively share information so that people know what you’re about, what’s coming up, how to get involved, and what’s being achieved through community collaboration and contribution.
- Partnerships with Council and others so that community accessed grant funds and contributions can be matched with ratepayer funds to achieve so much more in the town.

### **BARRIERS:**

- Volunteer time and capacity – impacts of cost of living increases are practically impacting on

volunteer time/resource contributions in the town.

- Relationship turnover in key partner agencies such as the FNDC, which then requires time to rebuild trust and knowledge about the collaborative Paihia way of doing things.
- Someone proactively dedicated to fundraising is needed so that new potential sources of funding are known in advance of needing them.
- Contract limits – Focus Paihia would love to be doing maintenance of civic facilities they're looking after, not just keeping things clean. But that also requires another layer of coordination and skillsets on hand to help fix things.

**ADVICE FOR COUNCILS AND OTHERS LOOKING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT DELIVERY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY OUTCOMES:**

- When there's a group of people who want to do things for their community, back and support them to get started. It's good to start small, do things that are visible so everyone can see. Building confidence and local pride as you go means each small success can be leveraged for the next project.
- Pay attention to relationships and collaborate wherever you can – success is about interdependence not independence.
- Ensure the basics are done well - financial systems, transparency and communications so that accountabilities are clear and everyone can see where money is coming in/going out.
- Enabling flexible place-based funding in long term Council plans, with priorities for co-investment determined in conversations with communities in real time to tap into local energy and contribution.

Website	<a href="https://www.focuspaihia.org.nz/">https://www.focuspaihia.org.nz/</a>	
For more information contact	Focus Paihia Chairperson, Peter Robinson <a href="mailto:chair@focuspaihia.org.nz">chair@focuspaihia.org.nz</a>	



## MCLAREN PARK HENDERSON SOUTH COMMUNITY TRUST CASE STUDY: MPHS – SO MUCH MORE THAN A HUB

Name	McLaren Park Henderson South Community Trust (MPHS)
Location	West Auckland
Community context	Youthful, ethnically diverse, lower-socio economic suburban community of 8,000 people living in a mixed residential/industrial area.
Legal Structure	Community Trust (Chair, Treasurer and Trustees with between four and eight trustees in total). Chief Executive employed by and reports directly to the Chair and Board.
Vision	Thriving Communities
Purpose	Enable Communities to connect and flourish . PEOPLE-PRIDE-PLACE  “Manaaki whenua, Manaaki tangata, Haere whakamua.” <i>Care for the land, care for the people, go forward.</i>
Values	Compassion, contribution and connection.
Started	2004, with the Hub West community facility opened in 2012
Annual Turn over	\$1.38m (30 June 2022)
Staff (Full time equivalent) and volunteers	18 FTE 679 volunteers contributing 4464 volunteer hours (2022)
Relationship with local government	Long term relationship with Auckland Council and the Massey Henderson Local Board, with multiple grant and service agreements in place, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and programmes contract for Hub West community facility.</li> <li>• Management contract for Tipping Point (resource recovery centre at the Council owned Waitākere Refuse Transfer Station in Henderson) and the new Waiōrea Community Recycling Centre and Education Hub in Western Springs.</li> <li>• Community governance training, mentoring and support contract with Henderson Massey Local Board.</li> <li>• Project Twin Steams: streamside restoration contract.</li> <li>• Shape Up Neighbourhoods contract (place making and street clean up events).</li> <li>• Civil Defence Evacuation Centre during the 2023 Auckland Anniversary Floods.</li> </ul>
Interviewed for this case study	Kathryn Lawlor

## JOURNEY TO DATE

MPHS is a responsive, community-led development organisation that over the last 20 years has gone from strength to strength, actively supporting the wellbeing needs of their local community through diverse initiatives, projects and programmes. While the focus of activities is their direct McLaren Park Henderson South community, in more recent times the organisation has expanded its community development and enterprise focus into wider western Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland. Starting from humble beginnings with the initial coordinator working from a broom cupboard at Bruce McLaren Intermediate, MPHS has been a proudly community-led initiative. Initially sparked by growing concerns about young people in the area having nothing to do and getting into trouble, local community leaders and the then Waitakere City Council got together to develop a community response – new afterschool and holiday programmes. These first initiatives were hugely successful, which in turn got people asking, “what else could we be doing to support our young people and our wider community?”

Extensive community engagement and door knocking by local volunteers followed, tipping out both local issues and opportunities the community saw for their place. With a range of committed and ambitious community leaders, schools and local Council support in behind, a collaborative approach helped develop community aspirations. With Council having provision in its budget for a much-needed community facility in the area, the MPHS community-Council partnership that followed enabled co-development of not just a new community building but a permanent base for MPHS to both scale its activities and deliver them in a relational way that is reflective of, and responsive to, ever changing community needs.

With the community fund raising \$1 million for a youth studio to complement Council’s \$3m community centre - the Hub West campus, which opened in 2012, is a jointly owned facility that remains community-led and managed.

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*“Hub West has been key in our journey. It’s given us organisation stability and a platform that’s enabled our growth – it’s a home, an income stream, a go-to space for our community and place for connections and relationships.”*

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The MPHS journey over the last two decades has been a mix of planned and responsive action. A core of multiyear partnerships and contracts helped create some anchor activities that have in turn enabled a pipeline of intergenerational connection and local leadership development. Key MPHS anchor activities have included youth programmes (including high tech/creative classes, leadership camp, youth club etc), Project Twin Streams (community-based streamside restoration), HIPPY (a home-based programme to help parents get their 2-5-year-old child ready for success in education), Joy Club (activities for older adults), playgroups and exercise classes for new Mums.

For MPHS Chief Executive Kathryn Lawlor, key enablers of MPHS in its journey so far are:

1. Being place based – it grounds the MPHS vision, mission and purpose.
2. Local ownership and loyalty – built through 20 years of continually engaging, doing, supporting, and having a visible, hub space to operate out of.
3. Strong, consistent governance – underpinned by a mix of long term/newer members with an intentional mix of required skillsets (e.g. HR, Strategy) and community knowledge and relationships within the Board team.
4. Rangatahi focus – which continues to galvanise local energy and support.
5. Trusted to deliver – MPHS has built a quality delivery reputation amongst funders, with belief in the community too that MPHS will do what it says it will, and in an authentic MPHS way.

## ORGANISATIONAL MODEL

While the MPHS Community Trust has gone through a couple of iterations of name and objectives over the last 20 years, the organisational model underpinning it has remained largely unchanged. The Chief Executive currently has ten direct reports, with an inhouse financial manager also part of the team.

The last strategic refresh in 2017 confirmed the MPHS People-Pride-Place focus (caring for people and the environment) still made sense at community, MPHS team and board level, with strong support for what was happening in and for the wider Henderson south community.

The MPHS Board meets monthly to consider progress, challenges and new opportunities, with the Board Chair and Chief Executive generally connecting two to four times in between Board hui. Each year an annual report provides a snapshot of the year's achievements, with different MPHS activities, team and board members also profiled to provide a fuller picture of what, how and who is involved in MPHS. The MPHS annual report is shared at a fun community celebration held in November each year at Hub West. This hui brings together MPHS supporters to share kai, celebrate successes and gather ideas for what next. Around 60-80 people generally attend this event – which also usefully doubles as an AGM.

In more recent times, it's become financially clear that MPHS needs to keep growing if it wants to achieve its purpose. This prompted an exploration of income generation opportunities that could leverage existing MPHS capacity and expertise.

Having developed considerable environmental expertise through Project Twin Stream contracts, MPHS took up an opportunity to run the resource recovery centre (Tipping Point) at the Council owned Waitākere Transfer Station. This new seven day a week enterprise has also enabled wider social goals with 50-75% of staff local and/or had previously faced barriers to employment. 25% of annual Tipping Point profits are now being fed back into the MPHS Youth Studio, which has proven to be one of the hardest programmes to find ongoing operational funding to sustain.

Similarly, MPHS community development and capacity building expertise has been leveraged to provide community governance training and mentoring for community groups across West Auckland. A multiyear programme, funded through the Henderson Massey Local Board, has been designed by MPHS to also enable tailored follow-on support for community organisations wanting support to implement governance changes. Some of this support is provided by the MPHS team, other aspects by other external community governance specialists.

Expanding activities beyond MPHS borders has been done with great care. The MPHS team are clear they won't compete with other good local organisations/services. They proactively meet with other organisations to talk about expansion plans and opportunities for possible collaboration ahead of decision making on potential new activities.

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*"We regularly meet with Community Waitakere to share what both our organisations are doing and have planned. We're clear that there can be room for all and that it doesn't have to be competitive if we each work to our strengths."*

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As new opportunities pop up through the year that aren't in the MPHS Annual Plan, there's collective discussion across staff and board teams to get agreement on which way to go. Some key questions that guide discussion and decision making include:

- How does this align with our purpose and values?
- Are we the right people to pick this up? If yes, do we have the right people/capacity?
- Who else might we collaborate on this with?
- Where would this project/service take us to next?
- How would this additional work impact on our existing programmes/delivery capacity?
- Are we prepared to invest in it too? What's our skin in the game?

While new MPHS team member roles generally arise from new contracts/funding, MPHS has also created roles to do better for the community they serve. For example a new kaitakawaenga (cultural support) role came about after intentionally considering the high numbers of Māori and Pasifika people who call McLaren Park Henderson South home and how responsive MPHS was to their cultural needs.

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*"While we knew there was a high percentage of Māori and Pasifika rangatahi in our youth programmes, we wanted to be sure MPHS was doing things in ways that work best for them. We also wanted our staff, many who are Māori and Pasifika and live locally, to also have appropriate cultural support. Just because you're Māori doesn't always mean you have all the tikanga know-how in behind you. Some Māori are on the same learning pathway as Pākehā, so cultural support for them is important too."*

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The kaitakawaenga role also provides strategic support at management and board levels and has been hugely impactful for MPHS. Relationships and connections within and across the Māori community have strengthened and with MPHS cultural competence attested, new doors have opened up, with plans to create a similar role to support Pasifika communities and cultural competency.

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*"I've seen that iwi and Te Tiriti relationships and aspirations are enabled when there are practical things that both sides have capacity to do together - doing tangible things builds trust, especially when benefits and connections are two way. For example, MPHS has been taking local rangatahi to Hoani Waititi Marae, enabling them connection to the Marae and Te Ao Māori. We've been a bridge, helping broker relationships that might not otherwise have happened."*

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In terms of iwi relationships, MPHS notes that positive relationships with local iwi Te Kawerau a Maki have strengthened now that the iwi has more staff capacity to engage and work with community partners.

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

For MPHS community and engagement and input to planning happens iteratively through the year through programmes and informal pop ups like sausage sizzles and coffee carts taken to different neighbourhoods. The MPHS team has grown a team culture of learning, with team hui always asking:

- How is the community responding to what we're doing?
- What are the emerging needs we're seeing?
- What are the community asking us to do or wanting to do themselves?
- What are people talking about – what's exciting or concerning them?
- What are we noticing about where people are at now?

Working relationally is important to MPHS, with extra effort in recent years to rebuild and strengthen local connections that had fallen away. Hub West also provides a critical space for relationship building, with Hub West Coordinator Agnes personally taking bookings and returning phone calls.

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*"With an online booking system you miss the chance for relationship and connecting others with MPHS and vice versa. We want to know about the kaupapa people are meeting around, what connection that might have with other things happening in our community and/or what MPHS is working on."*

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Post Covid, the MPHS team have also noticed a change in what local people need from their Hub too. With more people now sleeping in cars, there's a need for somewhere to charge a phone, have some weetbix, a hot drink and a chat.

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*“Running a real community hub requires responding to whoever walks through the door in ways that aren’t a programme. We really want people to come in, for Hub West to be a place to come to get support. That’s not a traditional community centre role. We’ve had to train our team on how to respond, how to manage working with young people who are more anxious and stressed and how to report upward when things are disclosed. We’re seeing more of a cross over between youth, community and social work roles than ever before.”*

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While collaboration is resource intensive, MPHS is at a scale now where they can participate in collective city-wide forums like West Auckland Together, unlike many other smaller local hubs who simply don’t have capacity to participate. There are many benefits from relationships and others knowing a lot about your mahi.

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*“The West Auckland Together process brings together the large anchor organisations across West Auckland to share what we’re doing and to avoid duplication and lane crossing. Having strong relationships meant that during Covid and recent Anniversary weekend floods – we could quickly connect and support each other and our communities with what was needed.”*

*“When MSD threatened to cut our rangatahi holiday programme funding because we weren’t a kaupapa Māori organisation, again everyone rallied in behind us. There were 30 support letters including from Hoani Waititi Marae and other West Auckland organisations backing how well we were delivering for the young people in our holiday programmes who were Māori. We’re proud that many of our programme leaders were previous programme participants.”*

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MPHS’s collaborative approach also extends to supporting other small local groups and initiatives in their rohe. Sometimes the request is to hold funds or provide back office support. At other times, it’s to assist people with ideas to move into a doing it phase. For MPHS the benefits of umbrellaing include new connections, relationships and supporting small scale local action. However, in reality the role generally involves much more than being a bank account and is time consuming.

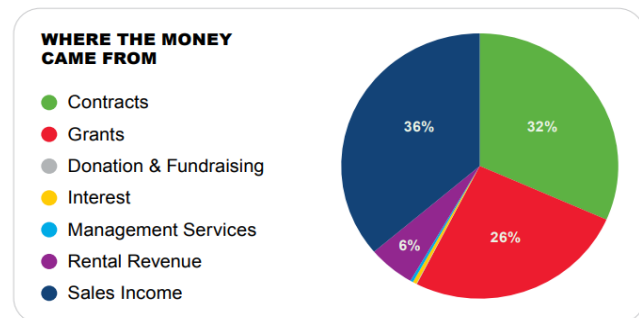
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*“What you give you don’t get back in terms of covering costs. The technical bits like a bank account are easy but it’s the strategy and development support that’s much harder. But sometimes it’s important to do for non-financial reasons when it’s your local community.”*

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## FUNDING AND SUPPORT

MPHS continues to be funded through a mix of grants, contracts and enterprise income with the revenue splits for the 2022-year end noted in the adjoining table. With no cost of living increases in recent Council grants or contracts, funding has got tighter. MPHS notes however they are more fortunate than some NGOs in Tāmaki Makaurau who have had funding cuts. Much of this they attribute to a positive working relationship with their local Board and a strong track record of effective community-led delivery and support.



**Source:** MPHS 2021-22 Annual Report

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*"We proactively meet with the Henderson Massey Local Board to share what MPHS is doing and what local members need to know about. Similarly we find out what Local Board members are being contacted about and what they see bubbling – it's a two-way street."*

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With increasing pressure to self-generate more funding and diversify income streams, MPHS notes the importance of being clear about just where additional income will be targeted.

In 2015, MPHS established social enterprise the Tipping Point, a community recycling centre. For the 2021-22 year, 334 tonnes of waste (123 elephants!) were diverted from landfill, with the enterprise clearly supporting the organisation's social and environmental goals.

CE Kathryn Lawlor is quick to point out that while financially beneficial, running large scale social enterprises puts an additional strain on the organisation's management resource and requires the Board to be comfortable with taking greater financial risk. MPHS is clear on bottom lines however: the new Waiōrea Community Recycling Centre will need to be sustainable to support similar wider community outcomes like what is achieved at Tipping Point.

When it comes to reporting and accountabilities, MPHS acknowledges the importance of stories and gathering participant feedback, with value not just for funders but also for staff so they know how they and their work is valued. The MPHS team would also prefer to do more face to face reporting and/or have funders come and spend time in the hub and see their work in action.

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*“When the Perpetual Guardian funding manager came and based herself at the Hub for 2 days, she learnt more about our approach and impact than any report could have shared.”*

*“At its best, funding and relationships with our funders is about more than money – it’s about them being connectors and brokers to others who need to know about or could add value to our mahi and vice versa.”*

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With most funder-driven templated reporting providing limited value to MPHS, having the time and head space to do more solid thinking on what information MPHS would like to collect and report back on is something that remains on the MPHS wish list. As Kathyryn notes “it’s one of those important things we never have time or capacity to properly do.”

## **BARRIERS/ENABLERS OF SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH**

### **ENABLERS:**

- Investment in organisational development and capacity building, alongside programme delivery. It’s important that financial, governance and people systems are all strong too.
- Time/putting for relationships, connecting, collaborating, and gathering insights and intel across everything happening in the community.
- Regular hui and information sharing across key partners so relationships and trust is maintained.
- Having the right skillsets and capacities in place when taking on community engagement and facilitation roles. Working in and with your community to progress challenging local issues and solutions is nuanced work, not a technical exercise.

### **BARRIERS:**

- People – collaboration is good in theory but it’s really people dependent. So much depends on individuals, their mindsets and who’s in what roles.
- Ongoing restructuring/people turn over in Councils. Having to continually restart relationships impacts on momentum and impact.
- Government departments generically cancelling programmes/contracts, even when effective locally-led services are in place e.g. When the Ministry of Education cancelled MPHS’s 10-year HIPPO contract in 2022 they were supporting 50 local families and had a waiting list. MPHS long term success was built from supporting whānau well, and going door to door to engage and enrol vulnerable families because they knew who they were.

**ADVICE FOR COUNCILS AND OTHERS LOOKING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT DELIVERY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY OUTCOMES:**

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*"When you start by bringing local people and those with close community connections to look at what's at the heart of an issue and what could be done there are more opportunities for integration and multisolving. It's so frustrating when agencies lead and issues stay in silos."*

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- Local community facilities are a key lever for local development, community connections and wellbeing collaboration. Community-led (as opposed to Council run) hubs are more vibrant, active and cost-effective spaces. When a local community has skin in the game, they care and co-invest and can be responsive to what's needed, holding community-led values.
- While ownership should be in the community, Council needs to be connected and enabling things too. It's about collaboration not devolution. There's a huge opportunity to bring the technical skills/resources of Councils and others together with the community development/relational/social process skills of community anchor organisations. Most complex issues have both technical and community elements so you need to have both working together to make real progress.
- Ensure capacity building support (e.g. professional and organisational development) is included above and beyond service delivery contracts, along with resource to enable ongoing community listening, engagement and relationship mahi.
- In health there are huge opportunities to partner with grass roots organisations and community hubs like MPHS who have local relationships and support bases to build new local wellbeing approaches. With the right support, community hubs could become new wellbeing hubs.
- Ensure local anchor organisations have really solid foundations in place before setting expectations that they grow to take on lots more. Provide HR support when and as they grow and assist them to build their communications and storytelling capacity so that everyone knows what's happening - locally and externally too.

Website	<a href="https://www.mphscommunity.org">https://www.mphscommunity.org</a>
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## PAEKĀKĀRIKI HOUSING TRUST CASE STUDY: HOMEGROWN HOUSING SOLUTIONS IN PAEKĀKĀRIKI

Name	Paekākāriki Housing Trust
Location	Paekākāriki, Kāpiti Coast.
Community Context	<p>Paekākāriki is a coastal village of 1,800 people with a strong, proactive community whose members look out for each other. Increasingly experiencing gentrification, it was a largely working-class town with a small bohemian population consisting of a high population working for the railways, which also provided a significant amount of housing. Now it is more of a mixed, but middle-class/high-income town, still with a small bohemian population.</p> <p>More recently a new escarpment walking track has seen more visitors to the area and has led to an increase in eateries along the main road.</p>
Legal Structure	Community Trust with nine trustees.
Started	2016, became legal entity in 2018.
Vision	Help ensure a strong, diverse and connected community by assisting those people in need to access affordable and appropriate housing in Paekākāriki.
Mission	Homegrown housing solutions, community created by many people giving what they can. Recognising and supporting the special connection that Mana Whenua, Ngāti Haumia ki Paekākāriki have to this land.
Values	Local solutions for local people
FTE	One paid co-ordinator working one day per week and one administrator for one day per month.
Turnover	\$29,000
Relationship with local government	Core work does not cross over with Council, however, loads of potential in future directions and networking for similar goals.
Interviewed for this case study	Sam Buchanan and Helen Burch

## JOURNEY TO DATE

With a shared passion for retaining diversity and by looking at opportunities and challenges through a lens of social equity, the Paekākāriki Housing Trust (PHT) are active facilitators, strategists and advocates who work alongside their community to imagine and realise practical win-win solutions for those experiencing housing difficulties in Paekākāriki.

While Aotearoa is undeniably in the grips of a housing crisis and Paekākāriki village is by no means the most affected place in the country, locals felt moved to take on the responsibility of engaging with the housing issues members from their community were facing. Knowing they can't fix the market forces that are driving the crisis, the village has a culture of connectedness and care and felt it could respond with innovation and community-led housing solutions. Through each project being taken on, PHT are learning how to better support their community and become better Treaty partners along the way.

PHT was sparked by a collective frustration felt when a valued local resident and teacher aide and her whānau were being forced to leave her rental property of 16 years, due to it being up for sale. The Trust set themselves up in 2016, at a time when there were only 49 untenanted rental properties advertised and available for a population of around 50,000 across the wider Kāpiti district.

To engage the community and gather a sense of local support for community-led housing solutions, a survey was circulated to local residents asking if anyone could contribute to the collective purchase of local houses or in other ways. Alongside this a Give a Little page was set up to start building up a community housing fund. The Trust managed to convince the owners of the house noted above to sell the house to the Trust at a reasonable price (\$450,000). After commercial banks refused to lend to PHT, a new community housing provider, funding to complete the house purchase was enabled through contributions from 30 generous local investors, who were offered a 4% interest rate over a 5 year period. This enabled time for the Trust to set itself up and has enabled the valued local family to buy back their house over a five-year period, at the same price. Local investors were also given the opportunity to donate their interest back to the Housing Trust – which some of them did.

Sam Buchanan, PHT co-ordinator speaks of the massive amount of goodwill in the village and how this harnessed the urgency to do something in response to a very local situation. He has seen many whānau leave the village because of housing related issues and got involved with PHT in response. He and others shared concerns that housing issues were threatening the whole personality of the village. He firmly believes that communities have far greater capacity to make change than they think they do.

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*"It is our great hope that our housing models will shine a light for other communities."*

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Formed in 2016 by a small group of locals, PHT purchased their first house through 100% funding

from their community and more recently has worked in a unique way to partner with local iwi Ngāti Toa Rangatira's social housing arm to purchase a further property from Kāpiti Coast District Council. Through the Covid-19 lockdown, the Trust worked tirelessly as an emergency housing provider and as a payoff, now manage a small clutch of rental properties in the village. They continue to commission environmental work to understand the housing capacity of the whenua (land) and awa (river); explore housing funding models and design principles; and continue to build relationships with central and local government.

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*"What gives us opportunity now is that we have a track record, are reasonably well regarded and can point to a few positive outcomes. Strengths give you opportunities."*

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Success from the first two properties saw the pattern of wanting to achieve more for locals in housing spaces. The Trust now offers property management services for local landlords and see this as good business.

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*"The Trust has not tried to see the negative in our great diversity and see we can benefit if we can swing people the right way. There is a lot of wealth, and we can do something similar again and people will be behind us."*

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## ORGANISATIONAL MODEL

The Trust meets regularly and also schedules hui with the community to keep bouncing new housing ideas, and to keep in contact with those interested in housing issues. PHT also recently hosted a community hui to look at options and proposals for denser housing to further determine what Paekākāriki might look like in the future.

A paid PHT co-ordinator works one day per week and an administrator around one day per month.

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*"We are locals, taking care of locals, generating profit to solve our housing issues, working to keep our community vibrant and diverse."*

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## FUNDING AND SUPPORT

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*"We kind of limp on thinking we have 6 months funding, but we keep on going."*

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Funds from PHT's tenancy management service are used to fund the Trust's co-ordinator. However, funding often fluctuates, for example while earlier there were seven local rental properties being managed, now there are four. A large part of the role, says Helen Burch, PHT's administrator and rental property manager, "is talking to landlords about what we do and showing them how the fees

go back into the community.” PHT is able to manage all the logistics of a rental property with the bonus of having locals at hand to address issues that arise, and ensure tenants are cared for in a more holistic way as part of the village.

With holiday homes now popular as Air BnB rental properties, the Trust also tries to encourage local people to rent their properties rather than having them vacant for long periods of time as holiday rentals. While the return is often lower, PHT can help both the landlord by having the property managed locally and funds generated can go back into the community. This also ensures locals have access to a home to live in.

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*“It feels like a drop in the ocean, but lots of drops make an ocean.”*

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PHT recognises the increased need for affordable housing, for example those who are downsizing and do not want to leave the village, those whose requirements have changed and now only need a small space, and others who want to be independent and do not require care but also don’t have a lot of money to rent houses. Demand has grown for 1-2 bedroom, self-contained flats which are not available in the village.

A resource kete has been developed for property owners to help navigate the challenges of adding secondary dwellings onto existing properties. The kete includes examples from residents who have been through the development process and includes their interactions with builders, architects and how to manage both building and consenting processes. This is another great example of Paekākāriki taking a local problem and finding local solutions, while also developing resources to assist others along the way.

Exploring different models for funding and financing and how to support locals who are thinking of adding a dwelling are new areas the Trust is looking into, all with the broader aim of supporting diverse housing situations and needs in Paekākāriki.

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*“It is our ambition that that the more we engage in these issues and stitch up the fabric of our community, the more resilient we will be to the shocks and bumps ahead.”*

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### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- There are so many ways to tell stories, using art and creativity to connect with people and provide multiple responses to similar situations to advance objectives and ensure everyone has a seat at the table.
- Paekākāriki Housing Trust recognises mana whenua’s unique connection to the land and there could be opportunities to assist in bringing mana whenua back to their land through the Trust’s aims. This is especially important to PHT and much work has been done to understand

and support local mana whenua, Ngāti Haumia ki Paekākāriki, and their aspirations, such as the idea of building a Marae in Paekākāriki and bringing their whānau home to Paekākāriki to live.

- The biggest opportunity to collaborate and grow local housing solutions could be with Ngāti Toa Rangatira. PHT is looking for potential funders and investors to support this, keeping the conversation going and active.
- Different models for funding and financing, including seeing what else is available and happening across the motu and seeing how PHT can leverage this.

#### CHALLENGES:

- What the Trust really wants to do is to continue to purchase houses, but this has become harder and harder as house prices soar – median house prices in the village have doubled in recent years.
- Banks were very difficult to work with, with PHT having to jump through many hoops before desired loan finance outcomes were achieved. Residents had offered to put their own houses up for collateral to relieve financial pressure on PHT.
- The traditional housing purchase model focused on individuals raising deposits and taking out a mortgage does not allow for innovative community-led alternatives. Banks need to be challenged to play their part in addressing Aotearoa's housing crisis by being open to alternative purchasing models and arrangements.

#### ADVICE FOR COUNCILS AND OTHERS LOOKING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT DELIVERY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY OUTCOMES:

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*"How do we resource this community and keep jobs here, Council have no thinking on how you resource communities, it's often outsourced, excluding locals."*

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- Acknowledge the local intelligence that sits within communities and can get things done faster and more efficiently simply because vital relationships are already in place in small communities. Fostering local relationships and connections needs to be ongoing and is essential for community wellbeing and development, especially in times of emergency. Talk to local communities first and take note of local strengths.
- Community pride and sense of ownership is evident in the local facilities which are key gathering places and often the heart of the community. Community-led and managed facilities like the local community hall in Paekākāriki are often in a better state and better used than council managed ones.

Website	<a href="http://www.paekakarikihousingtrust.org">www.paekakarikihousingtrust.org</a>
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## THE COMMUNITY LED DEVELOPMENT TRUST CASE STUDY: OUR PROJECTS, OUR WAY

Name	TCLD (The Community Led Development) Trust <i>Governance</i> Trading as TCLT (The Community Led Team) <i>Operations</i>
Location	Whanganui
Community Context	The 64km long Whanganui River Road is made up of eight settlement communities which are spread alongside the lower reaches of the Whanganui River.
Legal Structure	Charitable Trust
Vision	Our projects, our way. Community-led development for residents of the Whanganui River Road settlements with a focus on improved social and economic wellbeing.
Started	2017
Purpose	The TCLD Trust will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engage in community-led development with the eight settlement communities along the Whanganui River Road</li> <li>seek to create improved standards of wellness and wellbeing</li> <li>take a balanced long-term versus immediate approach</li> <li>provide other support and assistance consistent with their vision.</li> </ul>
Annual Turn over	\$600,000.
FTE	Eight
Relationship with local government	Strong through developed and invested time in aligned mutual returns.
Interviewed for this case study	Daryn Te Uamairangi Selina Percy Nihi Houia

### JOURNEY TO DATE

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There is an improved sense of communal spirit, which keeps driving those living at home wanting to realise their dreams and aspirations. Lack of employment prospects has been a significant challenge along the Whanganui River Road for many years and even with a resurgence of whānau returning home, having to travel into town for work is still a concern. Fortunately, the road has been upgraded and maintained, primarily though, to grow the region's economy by increasing the tourist market.

The Community-led Development Programme (CLDP) offered by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) in 2017 was timely and opportune. The Community Led Development Trust (TCLD Trust) as the governance authority and The Community Led Team (TCLT) as the operational arm were established for legal and independent purposes to allow capability and capacity to deliver on the ground community desired projects and programmes.

### *WHĀNAU, STAY INVOLVED, KEEP EVOLVING*

Community-led development is about working together to create and achieve locally owned visions and goals. The TCLT journey has had its ups and downs; sometimes taking one step forward and landing two back especially at the beginning and acknowledging that change was never going to be easy.

There have been many interesting moments, from the delight of being selected for the programme, to the excitement of actually getting started, to sharing the concept amongst our people, to gaining their buy in and trust, to dealing with misunderstandings and miscommunications, to completing projects within their communities and to then celebrating the successes of collaborative actions and outcomes.

It has been a steep learning curve for all involved, understanding and undertaking duties of responsibility and service. These lessons have helped set a solid foundation to operate over the coming years.

TCLT now has its structure (governance, financial and accounting systems, policies and procedures, operational experience, employment capability, etc) in place, after an experiential time of early programme provision and successful implementation of projects such as:

- Hunt Nation Festival (Pipiriki)
- Recycling bins and bags for whānau (Pipiriki, Jerusalem, Rānana and Matahiwi)
- A purpose-built recycling trailer (Rānana)
- A bus shelter (Matahiwi)
- Security solar lamps (Matahiwi and Rānana)
- Road safety mirrors on dangerous corners (various sites)
- Zumba on the AWA (Jerusalem, Rānana and Matahiwi).

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*"Having an idea-based philosophy approach means very little if you don't win the*

*hearts and minds of the people.”*

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There’s no place like home and many whānau leave early in life to pursue education or work opportunities. In 2011 after many years away, Daryn and his wife Ramari came back to Whanganui equipped with a unique capability aligned to the teachings of te kauae runga (celestial knowledge). To many who know them, they’re viewed as wairua-based people able to employ physical attributes, qualities and experience to link with whānau and deliver practical-based solutions.

Ramari’s heart and Daryn’s career experience placed them alongside family, hapū and iwi championing initiatives that promoted people and place. Roles at the marae led to service within the rūnanga and soon after Daryn was mandated as an Iwi Chair, filling the seat vacated by respected Kaumātua, Bernard Haami. He reflects that, *“Uncle Barn gave his blessing with a directive, do what you’re good at boy and we’ll (Kaumātua) support you in the rest.”*

In the seven years that followed, Daryn held numerous Māori governance roles learning about and studying the political iwi landscape. In parallel with this work, which was done ‘in-kind’, he designed the Aumangea Programme, an Army leadership initiative, testing resilience of mind and body beyond self-perceived limitations.

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*“I designed a program that encapsulated the warrior ethos and using those same building blocks of resilient thinking, a methodology was developed that would meet the unique needs of our home people.”*

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The findings also pointed toward a residential-led approach rather than a marae or hapū-led approach. This aligned perfectly to the intent and principles of the newly piloted CLDP. All activities would be decided by those living in the community. This paradigm shift would clearly require a new way of thinking and doing.

Around this time, Community Strategic Enabler (CSE) Nihi Houia, recalls Daryn visiting him and sharing his vision of wanting to assist his people along the Whanganui River Road.

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*“Our people being rural, remote and isolated have been very reticent in working with*

*government agency representatives because of past policies of inequity and disadvantage. We needed to show that their projects could be delivered to their satisfaction, if the chance was taken."*

*"It was their voices and their decisions to allow us to do things with them and alongside them. Rather than as has been the usual practice of having a few people decide and then having it done to them."*

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TCLT deliberately stayed out of environmental and cultural issues to circumvent perceived cross-over concerns, leaving them to marae and hapū delegates to address.

The role of the CSE is to find funding and resourcing to enable agreed community projects to be successfully completed and then reported against expected outcomes.

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*"Our first bit of funding received we thought we were the richest trust on earth. It was as if we had won Lotto."*

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TCLT's approach involves forward planning guided by its strategic plan, researching and applying to project relevant funding sources and then crossing their fingers and toes that applications upon submission are successful. If they are, then TCLT tap into their network to invite like-minded groups and organisations who may wish to collaborate and contribute (not always financially) to particular project outcomes for mutual investment return by enhanced intrinsic and extrinsic impact in the community impact.

Doing business this way has enabled TCLT to grow its credibility with its stakeholders. Their ability to leverage and negotiate to get multiple community projects completed, is a critical performance factor. Underpinning this is the key understanding of relational value and multi-partnering advantage.

Operations Manager, Selina Percy became involved through Daryn meeting her and sensing her potential to add value to TCLT. Fast forward a year later and she has managed the rigorous application process to gaining Level Three Social Services Accreditation as a Ministry of Social Development (MSD) service provider.

Selina speaks of her desire to inspire people to be the best they can be through employment, providing opportunities where they live, work and play so they don't have to leave the awa/river. When asked what TCLT would do with a blank cheque, Daryn responded:

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*"I don't need a blank cheque; I need blank minds so that people can see what is truly possible without any hindrances."*

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Daryn is keen to support marae and hapū development when they are ready. Selina feels that there are a number of agencies and organisations looking for ways to connect and engage with communities such as those along the Whanganui River Road.

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*“With us they have a connection and TCLT can facilitate that possibility through opening discussions with our settlement whānau along the awa.”*

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Daryn talks about needing to have the moral courage to lead, create and support change. It requires a team effort and team approach knowing that at times, a person may have to make the hard and final decision.

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*“Everyone is a leader in their own right, a CEO doesn’t know everything, if an issue is to progress then all staff’s input and their various experiences are acknowledged and welcomed.”*

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Alongside this is the importance of capturing the intangible and tangible outcomes of the journey. Using monitoring and assessment tools such as video stories and social media help celebrate and archive what was and is possible.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD FOR TCLT:**

- Bringing hopes and dreams to life for community people cannot be underestimated
- Being available to support community-led development is a privilege
- To date, projects have been based on mainly community requested social development projects and programmes
- Next year, and beyond, the focus will be on wealth and economic development at home

**ADVICE FOR COUNCILS AND OTHERS LOOKING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS  
DELIVERING LOCAL COMMUNITY OUTCOMES:**

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*“Trusted relationships are paramount – if you have the connection and understanding then you have a chance to prove your worth.”*

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- The purpose to connect and engage should be respectful
- Relationships and decision-making levels must be acknowledged and honoured
- Information should be communicated clearly and in a timely fashion
- Any opportunity to partner must be cooperative and mutually beneficial
- The right people and resources need to be in place for successful outcomes
- How will future projects be strategically planned for and implemented?
- How will the relationships be maintained and elevated?

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## TE PUNA ORANGA O ŌTAKI CASE STUDY: A WELLSPRING OF ABUNDANCE

Name	Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki Charitable Trust
Location	Ōtaki
Community Context	Ōtaki is a small coastal village on the Kāpiti Coast with a population of 9,000 and is referred to as one of the country's most well-known bilingual towns with a very high Māori population. It's home to Te Wananga o Raukawa, a Māori centre of higher learning.
Legal structure	Charitable Trust, with four trustees, registered 2022.
Focus	Raising the health and wellbeing of the Ōtaki community.
Vision	Kia angitū ai te hauora o te iwi, mā te mahi tahi, te ako tahi, kia mauri ora te hāpori whanui tonu. <i>A thriving community, built on collaboration and ongoing development to ensure equitable wellbeing outcomes for all.</i>
Mission	To be a centralised source of wellbeing for Ōtaki, working collectively to increase our community capacity to support the health and wellbeing of our people and whānau.  Mā te huruhuru, ka rere te manu. <i>Adorn the bird with feathers so it can fly.</i>
Values	Whakapapa (reinforcing the connections between people, kinship ties) Kotahitanga (unity and commitment to shared goals) Rangatiratanga (responsibility, generosity, and the ability to lead others) Manaakitanga (inspiring generosity to others) Pūkengatanga (striving to be bold) Kaitiakitanga (protection of people and place).
Started	In 2012 as Ōtaki Integrated Family Health Centre under the umbrella of the Central Public Health Organisation (PHO). Named Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki when a separate legal entity was created in 2021.
Annual Turn over	\$2.1m
FTE	Nine full time, six part time kaimahi (staff).
Relationship with local government	Established relationship with Kāpiti Coast District Council, currently contracted to deliver social investment projects that reconnect communities in Ōtaki, funded through yearly contestable funding. This includes activities with kaumatua, rangatahi-led social gatherings and activities, and whānau days in partnership with Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki to deliver these.
Interviewed for this case study	Kiwa Raureti, CEO Ōtaki Integrated Family Health Centre, October 2023

## JOURNEY TO DATE

Having sought guidance from local kaumatua, the Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki (TPOoŌ) logo depicts the many divergent springs that run from the source of the Ōtaki River. Like the logo, TPOoŌ embodies the wider Ōtaki community, connected through their locality and meeting both needs and community aspirations. They are a Kaupapa Māori organisation, not an iwi or hapū provider.

Originally funded as the Ōtaki Integrated Family Health Centre when it started in 2012, TPOoŌ began its journey slowly, navigating its way with one part time project manager that sought to build relationships in health service provision across local providers. Funds initially were held and managed by the Central PHO, which suited the small group finding their way. In 2021 after grappling with their place in the community, and after considering the need and relevance, the TPOoŌ board decided that yes, they have a place and took the leap, invested in their future, and become a legal Charitable Trust.

At that time, they had no physical location to base themselves and were a third party in a significant Regional Development (He Poutama Rangatahi) funding contract, with minimal staffing. Despite this, the board saw this as an opportunity to become independent and seek further funding to start building their mission, which at that time was to raise the health and wellbeing of the Ōtaki community. Ōtaki Integrated Family Health Centre CEO and Chairperson for TPOoŌ, Kiwa Raureti says this change of circumstance gave them the confidence to back themselves and pointed out the nature in which Ōtaki organisations do things a *bit differently* through rangatiratanga – a sense of self determination.

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*“There is a long line of both Māori and community examples such as Te Wananga o Raukawa, Whakatupuranga rua mano, Māoriland Film Festival, and Energise Ōtaki - all thriving in a small coastal town developed from a need but really just getting on and getting things done.”*

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As a community-led resource, Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki sees its role and function to ensure this occurs across Ōtaki and aim to do this by:

- Facilitating inclusive community leadership and direction
- Communicating with and being accountable to stakeholders
- Supporting aspirational wellbeing initiatives across Ōtaki
- Advocating for Ōtaki, to grow and develop its capacity towards self-determined autonomy.

Understanding what the community wanted and thought, saw some brave initial engagements where the TPOoŌ Board and Ōtaki Medical Centre owner encouraged people to come along and have their say in public forums regarding health services, and current access to medical care. While parts of the community were initially angry and frustrated at the state of current services, eventually the public perception changed as they began to empathise with the realities of the situation health service providers were in and they understood the difficulty in finding doctors to service the town, a

common theme in the lower North Island at the time. This strengthened the vision for the organisation and saw them focus on health provision.

TPOoŌ had an original goal to purchase half the medical centre and find ways to ensure people had access to services. As a result of their holistic Covid 19 response, they now have a stand-alone clinic offering basic services to whānau including wellbeing checks and immunisations and a more recent addition of a mobile health unit to offer direct services to whānau in neighbourhoods where they live. It is also taken to community events. This has been a game changer for a small town, in particular for those who are not able to get appointments or are unable to travel.

Services currently include:

- Hauora clinic – clinical health services
- Te Hunga Rangatahi - youth employment programme
- Community Connector – supporting whānau navigating challenging times.
- Ka ako Ka ora – lunches in schools programme
- Healthy homes project – ensuring homes are healthy for all.

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*“Iwi and community voices are important because we don’t want to be another organisation that is deciding what is good for you.”*

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## ORGANISATIONAL MODEL

Identifying that the TPOoŌ project manager needed additional support and authority, a change process was instigated which reflected the growing nature of the organisation and desire from the board to move into a governance role. Prior to this they were assisting with management functions due to the stretched staffing, absence of sound infrastructure and an increase in demand for services.

The rapid upscale in funding through the Covid health response put a different strain on the organisation. It increased human resources needed, along with compliance requirements and demands for a physical space for TPOoŌ, as well as the crucial role of ensuring their community was looked after. The lack of office space had challenges and at one point the organisation was spread across four different locations.

Reviewing the TPOoŌ strategic plan post Covid 19 gave the board time to reassess lessons learnt, understand what the priorities were and finally pause from frantic Covid related activities. While community governance boards are an essential legal requirement, and have a large amount of goodwill, they cannot do it all. Time was taken to look at realistic appraisals of future opportunities and expansion and seeing if the governance documents were going to have longevity for what was needed. Shoulder tapping a general manager to lead the organisation through its next phase and further solidifying its role in the community has seen the organisation grow and build on relationships nurtured during Covid. Updated governance policies have made it clear the only one

involved across both operational and governance spaces is the Chair, who meets with the general manager regularly, and reminds the governance team of their role and place.

Kiwa notes the substantial number of community organisations across the country, and how the process of setting up a legal structure, policies and people resources is time consuming and often puts groups in competition for funds. In a small town, collaborative ways of doing things brings greater impact and less stress on people's time as the shared social space is small. An example is a newly formed group Te Tahuaora o Aumenga, who are aiming to work with groups of individuals, sports teams, other groups, teachers, and rangatahi in the mental wellbeing and capacity building space. They do not have funding for that, most of the work is voluntary but they now come under the umbrella of TPOoŌ. It is not unusual for emerging groups to approach TPOoŌ to be fund holder or backbone to assist with infrastructure support, basic administration and venue sharing. It is a better approach than going it alone to set up a whole new legal entity says Kiwa.

Like the many wellsprings that diverge from the source of the Ōtaki River, TPOoŌ know that it is the united strength and resilience found within the Ōtaki community that will bring positive change and propel them into the future.

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki are a kaupapa based Māori organisation, not an iwi or hapū mandated one. There is a distinct difference. Nga hapū o Ōtaki serve the whānau of the five hapū of Ōtaki and the three marae in the rohe of Ōtaki, which consist of:

- Ngāti Maiotaki
- Ngāti Pare
- Ngāti Koroki
- Ngāti Huia
- Ngāti Kapumanawawhiti
- Te pou o Tainui
- Raukawa Marae
- Katihiku Marae

Regular meetings with the Chairperson of the hapū are essential to keep the lines of communication open says Kiwa, and TPOoŌ wants to be of service to the hapū, an added value not a burden. Although the majority of the Board members have whakapapa (kinship ties) connections to the hapū, there is a formal hapū rep, nominated by the hapū on the board and this ensures a hapū voice is present, as well as transparent communications back to the hapū. TPOoŌ always saw themselves as a place holder, holding the space until, and if, the hapū were ready to step in and take things over.

Mandated by the hapū to manage and lead the local Covid-19 response, hapū representatives were invited to be part of panels when interviewing key TPOoŌ staff, so they had some visibility, ownership of the roles, and some input into the people being hired. As the health sector locality conversations start to develop further down the track, collaboration and communication will grow

with individual hapū to determine individual hapū needs, rather than with TPOoŌ.

Another key relationship is the Ōtaki networking group which has been running informally for over 30 years and provides an effective way for interested community groups to quickly network, collaborate, and keep informed about Ōtaki issues - as well as share good stories that celebrate local success. Meeting monthly, the networking group also provides a sounding board for new providers to the area, offering direction, challenging duplications, access to key people and is an integral way to have visibility over various roles and responsibilities.

Often goals change and priorities diminish, seeking community feedback and understanding identifies that there are lots of different solutions to the same problem. Finding groups who share a common problem, coordinating efforts and bringing different funding streams together to address the issue, helps achieve far greater impact than individual groups working alone.

## **FUNDING AND SUPPORT**

Initial funding was slow, and project based, with the organisation in a relationship building phase rather than leading big projects. It took some time to work out best ways to develop solid infrastructure and be in the right place to take on personnel to enable to direct delivery to whānau. Multiple funders were involved supporting diverse community needs. Funders also started to challenge their own way of thinking and began to work together; a good example was Department of Internal Affairs who could not fully fund an essential service, who collaborated with Wellington Community Trust to co-fund alongside them. Rather than TPOoŌ having to extend resources to find extra funding or reduce services to partly fund a project, the funder decided to take a creative approach and collaborate which ensured the service could be fully funded.

TPOoŌ would like to see more of this funder behaviour as it allows groups to get on with the business of doing. Where once TPOoŌ was once involved but not leading, they are now fund holders determining the direction of the services and shaping them to best fit the needs of the Ōtaki community bringing on essential expertise as and when needed. Relationships formed, nurtured, and strengthened during Covid have paid off with TPOoŌ focusing its efforts on building and mobilising key outside resources to achieve goals for the community.

## ENABLERS OF SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH

From the perspective of TPOoŌ, wellbeing is not only founded upon presenting individual health factors, but also includes an *oranga* or a holistic wellbeing approach. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Te Whānau, family-centred wellbeing and self-management
- Te Kainga, improved living environments and capacity
- Te Hāpori, knowledge and access to appropriate community resources
- Te Taiao, participation in and advocacy for wider environmental impacts.

While these are broad, it means largely that whānau can determine what this looks like for them, without being boxed into western understandings. TPOoŌ are committed to looking after the *mauri ora* or total wellbeing which makes all the difference and is the key enabler when talking with whānau.

### CHALLENGES:

- Relationships that enable TPOoŌ to carry on. The biggest challenge is collaboration rather than being in competition for the same funds and for the same work. This means that groups will over promise and under deliver.
- Transport for local rangatahi to get to places is key, with a desire to encourage them to venture out and seek employment or recreational activities. This is challenging when the public transport system has barriers to access.

### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Being recognised by funding agencies and having a track record means TPOoŌ can present themselves as a reputable provider that delivers.
- A more recent aspiration is to have a startup *Sport Kāpiti*. The strength of Ōtaki typically is on the performance field. This is untapped as Kāpiti is producing athletes for the world stage at early ages - how do we invest in this?
- Further collaboration and investment are essential for small communities and the right for Māori to self-determine their own destination should see them leading this as Māori.
- Identifying good paying jobs that are needed in Ōtaki and providing pathways towards these. This will further develop the capacity of local people so they can work, live, and thrive in their hometown.

**ADVICE FOR COUNCILS AND OTHERS LOOKING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT DELIVERY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY OUTCOMES:**

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*"We just want people to stay in their lanes and let's collaborate to understand our lanes."*

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- Often meetings are called with urgency - get the right people in the room at the right time, not after the fact. Identify the expertise required before gathering everyone. Communities are busy and often stretched for time and resources, so decisions are more easily made when the right people are there to progress and find solutions.
- Community organisations have a wealth of on the ground knowledge, but often competing views and conflicting solutions. Organisations like TPOoŌ understand this and work with this, listening to what people (communities) are saying and then (Council and other agencies) can assist the community to get on with it.
- Often groups claiming they represent communities are not the ones the community want to represent them. There are communities within communities, TPOoŌ recognises that they only represent a part of the community, yet councils often prefer to work with one organisation who is making the biggest noise, or who council already have an easy relationship with, but may not be doing the bulk of the work. Investing in community knowledge and taking the time to find out who is on the ground is helpful in the long term and removes many frustrations for everyone along the way.
- Community organisations know how to engage with Māori, some do it respectfully and with intent. Often councils have these expectations of their community but not of themselves when wanting to consult on their urgent multiple workstreams.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is built on generously shared insights and learning from six outstanding community organisations. Their diverse stories and journeys all stem from a deep love of and commitment to local people and place. We would like to thank the following people who shared their stories with us:

**Daryn Te Uamairangi**

The Community Led Development Trust

**Helen Burch**

Paekākāriki Housing Trust

**Kathryn Lawlor**

McLaren Park Henderson South Community Trust

**Kiwa Raureti**

Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki

**Madz BatachEl**

Environment Network Manawatū

**Nihi Houia**

The Community Led Development Trust

**Peter Robinson**

Focus Paihia

**Sam Buchanan**

Paekākāriki Housing Trust

**Selina Percy**

The Community Led Development Trust

## ABOUT POWERDIGM

Powerdigm is the consulting arm of Inspiring Communities. We are a collective of associates and organisations grounded by proven practice in active citizenship, community innovation and locally-led change. We weave connections and collaborations across sectors and communities to create the successful, sustainable outcomes you want to achieve.