

MAKING OUR DISTRICT THRIVE

**RANGITIKEI PATH TO WELL-BEING CONFERENCE
2014**

**BULLS TOWN HALL
CONFERENCE REPORT**



CONFERENCE PARTNERS



Whanganui Community Foundation

Welcome

The fifth Rangitikei Path to Well-Being Conference was held at the Bulls Town Hall on Friday 12th December 2014. It was attended by 81 delegates from a range of agencies and businesses across the District. The day began with a whakatau by Pahia Turia to welcome the conference delegates.



Programme

The day was made up of four keynote speeches, two in the morning session and two in the afternoon session, and four workshop sessions each focusing on one of the topics covered by the keynote speeches. The keynote speeches and the workshops are reported upon in this feedback report. Keynote speakers also took part in a panel discussion in the afternoon, chaired by Ian McKelvie MP, along with HWTM, Andy Watson, Robert Gunn, Managing Director of Alf Downs Contracting Ltd and Richard Coxon, Managing Director of Gallagher Fuel Systems.

Key actions identified

- 1 Develop a central business hub that includes information on regulatory requirements, financial advice, leases, available resources in the District including a register of vacant business and facilities
- 2 Further development of the agriculture sectors by growing more of what we are good at and processing it locally
- 3 Irrigation opportunities through increased community understanding and engagement
- 4 Open up Māori land locked land
- 5 Develop strategies with the District's schools and employers to create employment opportunities.
- 6 Wider promotion of our quality of life, housing affordability, new tourism activities, ultra-fast broadband, river and outdoor activities and multi-sport opportunities.

Next steps

1 Economic Development Strategy

Council will draft a Rangitikei Growth Strategy and action plan incorporating as many of these ideas as possible. It will be a working document that will be subject to regular review and updating. It will look for outcomes in **5 KEY RESULT AREAS:**

- Economic development leadership
- Growth and development of the identified sectors, specifically agribusiness, education and Māori economic development
- High-class infrastructural, utilities and telecommunications network throughout the District
- Vibrant and attractive towns that entice growth
- Promotion of the District as a great place to visit and to live

A Rangitikei Growth Strategy will be available for comment as part of the 2015-25 Long Term Plan, currently planned to be adopted for consultation from early March 2015. Delegates will be circulated with this draft Strategy and comments sought prior to final adoption in the Council's Long-Term Plan.

2 Path to Well-Being partnership initiative

Council will use a partnership approach to implement the Rangitikei Growth Strategy through its Path to Well-Being partnership programme. We will look towards our key stakeholders in the District and within the region to support us. The key actions identified will be allocated to the most appropriate Path to Well-Being theme group.

The Buoyant District Economy theme group will be re-established to take forward the first three actions. Delegates will be invited to an inaugural meeting of this theme group in March 2015.

Council will work with its Iwi liaison komiti, Te Rōpu Ahi Kā, to progress the issue of Māori landlocked land.

The Lifelong Educational Opportunities theme group will be re-established to progress the fifth action and the District Promotion sub group of the Enjoying Life in the Rangitikei theme group will develop and implement a District Promotion Strategy and an Events Strategy.

CONFERENCE REPORT

MC: Michele A'Court



Winner of Comedian of the Decade (Female) at the 2010 NZ Comedy Guild Awards, Michele A'Court is a fulltime professional stand-up comedian and freelance writer. Her work turns up everywhere on stage, television, radio, newspapers and magazines and she is in demand as a comic, an event MC, and also as a social commentator across all media.

Michele kept the day moving with her personal observations on life, the universe and everything – or at least, economics, the Rangitikei and shopping. She ensured that all speakers got the “rock star” welcome that they deserved and that delegates moved smoothly from one fun-packed adventure to the next.



KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Sector Development – Pahia Turia



Pahia Turia is the Chairperson for Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Apa and the Chair of the Te Hou Board, which recently purchased the Flock House Farm near Bulls.

Pahia's presentation gave an overview of the history of Ngā Wairiki - Ngāti Apa and their connections as tangata whenua in the southern Rangitikei over the past 1,000 years. Pahia outlined the historical loss of land for his people to the Crown but underlined their commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and partnership with non-Māori in the District. The Runanga is determined to continue in the spirit of partnership following the Treaty Settlement in 2011 which saw assets of \$13.2 million transferred back to the iwi from the Crown.

To put this in perspective, the Treaty Settlement of \$13.2m was not sufficient to purchase the former Flock House Farm which was valued at \$17.5m. The area of Flock House Farm represents less than 1% of the total area of land that the iwi had lost since land transactions in the rohe commenced in 1849.

Since settlement, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Apa has focussed on transforming its assets base, from one which was 55% cash and 40% forestry land rights to one which is 6% cash, 40% forestry, 30% investment properties and 18% agribusiness. The assets are now worth \$42 million.

The Rūnanga and Ngati Apa Developments Ltd successfully negotiated purchase of the 1,100 hectare Flock House Farm, and Te Hou Farms is now owned by a partnership of Ngāti Apa Developments Limited, Āti hau Whanganui Incorporation and Waitatapia Station Limited. The property is undergoing extensive development to introduce irrigation and increase production. This growth will contribute directly to Rangitikei's GDP.

Finally, Pahia confirmed the iwi's commitment to a quadruple bottom line; an economic base that provides for the social, cultural and environmental aspirations of his people. The wealth of the iwi can only be measured by the well-being of its people.



Regional Growth Study – Shamubeel Eaquad



Shamubeel Eaquad is Principal Economist at the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research. He is involved with the Regional Growth Study, commissioned by Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to investigate opportunities to grow the Whanganui-Manawatu regional economy.

Shamubeel's presentation focused on the "burning platform for change" created by divergent regional economic prosperity. This was being brought about by the unstoppable forces of technology, globalisation, urbanisation and ageing. For example, there have been no new jobs created in primary production for the past 100 years; all job growth has been in other sectors and predominantly in the urban areas.

Shamubeel suggested that a response to these unstoppable forces was for place-based policies that "build on existing capabilities by leveraging local strengths and expertise" and for interventions only if "these would resolve market failures, and [only if] a community has a credible chance to building a self-sustaining cluster." This involves unshackling fast growing places, catalysing those caught in a trap and managing graceful decline elsewhere.

Future Proofing our Community – Annette Kendall



Annette Kendall is part of the Sirolli Institute: a global group of people providing thought leadership in new approaches to regional economic development. Annette believes that it doesn't matter how fast or free your internet is in a rural community, without an entrepreneurial supportive culture our provinces will die.

Annette is passionate about encouraging and supporting rural entrepreneurial thought yet she feels that rural people are killing rural towns. This is because people with good ideas are told by others in rural communities, in no uncertain terms, that their ideas are stupid, unviable and simply won't work. The response is flight (to the cities or a more supportive environment) or acceptance of the status quo. Annette sees the need for small towns and communities to establish an attitude that embraces entrepreneurs and provides a network of local resources and business people that can assist in growing the entrepreneurial dream. This is particularly true for young people – who bring innovation and freshness yet need to be nurtured by their community. Another key factor in supporting entrepreneurial enterprises is celebrating the success of new businesses as they reach each milestone.

Town Centre Regeneration – David Engwicht



David Engwicht is a passionate designer, artist, author, communicator and social inventor, with more than 25 years' experience in place making. As the director of Creative Communities, David spends his time working with communities to breathe new life into dead spaces.

David's presentation outlined the place making philosophy (Just as a home maker turns a house into a home, a place maker turns a space into a place) and how it is being applied to the Rangitikei District. Over the past 12 months, David has worked with the communities in Taihape, Hunterville, Marton and Bulls to develop their own Town Centre Plans and implement some small place making projects. Illustrated examples included the makeover of the toilet block in Marton and the replacement of seating arrangements on Bulls High Street.

The key to successful place-making was for great leadership from the community for community-led regeneration initiatives and from public bodies such as Councils to encourage and support these community leaders. In the three main towns in Rangitikei, a catalyst for regeneration will be the development or redevelopment of civic facilities to enhance the opportunities for community-led place-making. However, in all three towns, the community was being given permission to undertake a range of community-driven place-making initiatives which would assist in regenerating of the central districts independently of any Council action (or inaction).

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

The **morning workshops** focussed on economic and sector development.

What realistic opportunities exist in the District for:

- developing our key sectors of primary production (agricultural, horticultural, cropping, forestry)?
- specific initiatives from the Strategic Water Assessment and working with Ministry for Primary Industries further on co-funded programmes to ensure water availability for production purposes?
- developing skills/training in the District, specifically initiatives such as Te Hou Farms, Otiwhiti and Westoe to meet future labour force skills shortages?
- supporting and developing inclusion of Māori/iwi interests, including working with Iwi to open up Māori landlocked land, particularly in the north of the District?

The **afternoon workshops** focussed on making our District work for the people who live here and for visitors to leave with the impression of a place that has a great lifestyle.

How can we:

- create the great people-places envisaged in our Town Centre Plans?
- support local schools to continue their improvements in outcomes for students?
- develop events and activities that showcase the District lifestyle and attract residents and visitors to the District?
- promote the District within a regional context, leveraging off Destination Manawatu, Visit Ruapehu and Visit Whanganui's programmes and initiatives?

SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Agribusiness

- Support for local producers so they can be retained in the District, this could be achieved through knowledge clusters and expertise of our aging population
- Facilitate skill clusters around processing of regional products
- Food branding with a focus on local produce and specialization existing in the District
- Grow more of what we are good at and process it locally
- Become the grain hub of the region
- Role for science and tech agencies
- Value added products
- Food processing – opportunities for asparagus and potatoes
- Explore the possibility of developing a craft beer industry in the town (link into our malting plant: Malteurop)
- Look into establishing farming cooperatives within the District
- Horticulture - scale of operation – costs/economies of scale
- Crop diversification: explore alternative crops suitable for the area (organic, honey, medicinal, nuts and olive groves)



Irrigation and water supply

- Know what the resources are, how much you have so it can be allocated appropriately to be sustainable for 100+ years
- Understand the risk – salt water, decline in the water quality
- Water source excellent: small scale water storage/dams in northern Rangitikei, bores in the south
- Smaller scale water security for stock water
- Irrigating the sand country: issues of quality and cost
- Make regulation easy
- Community understanding , engagement and group discussions

Forestry

- Forestry 70% off shore: very little domestic processing
- Develop secondary wood manufacturing industry that can value add to our local produced timber milling
- Develop a central hub for the collection and distribution of our forestry products

Education/Young people

- Educational opportunities with a focus on trades and specific needs of local business
- Set up youth development training to open up job opportunities for youth Matching young people with jobs, value agriculture as a sector, high tech and skilled sector
- Provide youth scholarships which encourage youth to stay and work in the District, look at bonding recipients to a commitment to the District post degree or trade qualification
- Develop partnerships with Massey University and UCOL
- Council to liaise between business and schools, to targeting presentations of our skill shortfalls with the schools
- Support of entrepreneurs and junior innovators in our local schools.
- Encourage volunteerism (work experience) and apprentice training opportunities in the District
- Unemployed school leavers supported through local training and then into jobs



Māori land locked land

- Policy support through Te Roopu Ahi Kaa; conference delegates agree that our local iwi are supported with rate payer funding
- Educate the wider community about the issue
- Encourage partnership discussions
- Scoping exercise of potential land use benefits (employment, prosperity)
- Focus on it as a local issue
- Lobbying central Government
- Use the local media to get the message out that high rates are an issue; the more opportunities we create for business and employers the better it is for all ratepayers.
- Council needs to lead in open forums

District Promotion

- Tourism and promotion within the District and neighbouring towns.
- Encourage better marketing of housing and business opportunities in the District to potential buyers outside of the District, this should include the benefits of buying and living in the Rangitikei
- Develop a strategy for encouraging new business to the District that includes marketing our strengths including cheap housing, good educational opportunities, cheaper cost of living, availability of land, labour skills and labour force etc.
- Make rangitikei.com available to all potential promoters/users in the District not just member groups
- Create a District-wide narrative that promotes tourism and historic sites in the District
- Expand existing/ and develop new tourism activities
- Develop a cycle tour destination through the District that can be marketed across the District and nationally

Town Centre Development

- Use community halls as potential Pop up shops
- Contact owners of empty business about offering peppercorn rentals for pop up shops and new business start ups
- Develop a cooperative market of local producers and source a suitable venue for selling those products/ pop up shop
- Get some quick wins:
 - Hunterville: paint the chairs and dog bowls at Queen's Park
 - Taihape: "furnish the deck for a month" where clubs volunteer to furnish the Library deck
 - Marton: mural art competition winner gets to paint a mural on a Marton building.

LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

RDC leadership role

- Facilitate and advocate for investment in education and training, coordinating a concerted effort, continue with opening up land locked land, promotion of the District's desirability as a living and learning destination, look at and promote reduction in red tape
- Council as an advisory service for consents, rates offsets, incentives for new businesses, control competing firms, market information
- Develop a quick guide to the rules and regulations for business development and keep it simple and easy to understand
- Maximise use of local contractors for Council contracts
- Council to support through facilitation, public meetings and forums that share information and knowledge
- Advocacy for:
 - Improvement in our regional transport services, i.e. rail, and bus services
 - Ultra-fast broad band
 - Open up Ohakea airbase to civilian services and freight
 - Encourage centrally located internet based Government services to provide better local based services (combined hub)

Focus for a multi-agency/business partnership group

- Small business training for innovation and excellence, including business plan advice and go-to services
- Create a data base of local business mentors
- Identify labour/skill shortages in the District
- Other services e.g. encourage and develop mobile rural banking services vs traditional banks
- Identify industries that are having trouble; getting trainees and employees
- Develop a lion's den of local business and investors that can assist in business incubation and offer a business development unit that understands the needs, strengths, weakness threats and opportunities that exist in the District and surrounds
- Celebrate our success
- Identify our weakness in skill development and education and target these for improvement
- Develop an online training facility /and video conferences space
- Adequate support services for new technologies

GENERAL COMMENTS

- Develop sports / music and film skills
- Lift our community's expectations of success, we are more than just great rugby players and shearers
- Improve communication / relationships in the community including key stakeholders such as fed farmers
- Community engagement especially through school early on
- Develop a community drop in centre and community garden that can support and teach cooking craft and life skills etc.
- Encourage language and cultural understanding particularly Māori but also the languages of our emerging trade partners and migrant groups
- Provide better aged care facilities
- Continue to strengthen our linkages between our neighbouring Councils in Manawatu, Ruapehu and Whanganui
- Look at ways to encourage our migrant workforce to locate to the area permanently and not head back offshore
- Provide greater support for our community organisations
- Develop stronger ties between our community and service groups so we are working towards and achieving maximum impact on community projects
- Access to e.g. libraries, mother and baby support
- Education begins at early childhood or primary school
- Positive influences, through mentoring and guiding

Extract from evaluation feedback

	Great	Good	OK	Poor	Very Poor
Overall how well do you think the day went?	69%	27%	4%		
How would you rate the pre-conference organisation?	58%	27%	15%		
Overall how would you rate the venue?	8%	50%	38%	4%	
How would you rate the food and refreshments?	68%	23%	5%	5%	
Presentations	74%	17%	7%	1%	1%
Workshop session 1 (morning)	52%	30%	17%		
Workshop session 2 (afternoon)	43%	38%	14%	5%	
Youth workshop session (afternoon)	100%				





*Many thanks to all those who gave their time and/or
resources to make this such a great conference*

Photos by:

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Photography & Publicity

Celebrating Life

Laura Richards
Marton, Rangitikei
06 327 8535
027 3 451 451