



Evidence to inform funding strategy:

Wellington Community Trust

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Purpose and approach

Wellington Community Trust (WCT) is reviewing its funding strategy, including its funding priorities. In this report, evidence is presented to inform this review, including:

- A summary profile of the WCT region's communities
- A picture of community strengths, needs and inequities
- Demographic and other changes affecting the region's communities
- Regional funding opportunities, and potential non-funding roles and approaches.

The evidence was gathered via a demographic profile of the WCT region, plus an analysis of interviews with eight regional community leaders, as described below.

Community profile

The WCT region community profile is based on government statistical data, which provides:

- Current population trends (including total population, age and ethnicity) and projections
- Communities experiencing highest socio-economic deprivation
- Indicators supporting understanding of inequity in the region, including for example income, employment, education, child and youth risk factors and housing.

Note that summary findings only from the community profile are shared here, with the complete community profile provided separately.

Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted, face to face or online, with eight community leaders in the WCT region. These leaders were selected by WCT for their ability to think strategically, and to understand the complexities of the regional landscape and community needs, from a range of perspectives. They were asked for their views on:

- Community strengths and what makes the region special or different
- Priority communities and issues in the region, including COVID 19 implications
- Regional funding gaps and opportunities, with the greatest potential to advance equity in the region
- Priority funding approaches and non-funding roles, appropriate to WCT's purpose and scale.

The report shares summary findings from the community profile, followed by themes from community leader interviews. It concludes by presenting the combined implications for WCT's funding strategy.

Wellington Community Trust region – community profile

Population-based indicator data can help to provide a picture of population groups and/or geographic communities, who may experience greater risk and inequity relative to others in a given area.

For funders, this type of data analysis can inform thinking about where their funding might be invested, and which communities or population groups might be prioritised, to address the inequity picture.

Tracking data over time can also provide funders with an opportunity to re-prioritise or sharpen their focus, based on changing indicators of risk.

Indicator data does not always measure the things that people, families and whānau value about their wellbeing and communities. There are also many assumptions within the data – for example, that diverse people in a given community share similar experiences and opportunities on the basis of where they live.

Indicators are typically deficit-focused and involve the ‘absence’ of something in a community, rather than its strengths. As such, this data should be used with caution alongside other sources of information that explore community aspirations and priorities, to develop meaningful funding priorities.

Population and projections (2018 Census)

- **Population:** The WCT region is home to around 469,047 people, or 9.8% of New Zealand’s population. It has five territorial authority areas. Two thirds of the people in the WCT region reside in two of these five areas – Wellington City (45%) and Lower Hutt City (22%). Porirua has 12% of the WCT population, followed by 11% in Kapiti Coast District and 9% in Upper Hutt City.
- **Population projection:** The WCT region’s population will increase by 11% by 2038. Projected population growth in the region is lower than the projected New Zealand average (20%). This means that by 2038, the WCT region is projected to represent a slightly reduced 9.0% of New Zealand’s population.
- **Ethnicity:** Porirua (22%) and Lower Hutt (10%) have populations with the highest proportion of Pacific Peoples in the WCT region. Both areas also have the populations with the highest proportion of Māori (18% and 16% respectively). Population projections show that Māori and Pacific communities will grow further in proportion in these two areas by 2038. Wellington City has the highest proportion of Asian and MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American and African) communities in the WCT region, at 17% and 3% respectively. Wellington City also has the highest proportion of overseas-born population in the WCT region, at 32%.
- **Age:** The age profile across the WCT region varies considerably by area. A third or more of Porirua’s population (37%) and Lower Hutt’s population (33%) are children and young people aged 0–24 years. The majority of children and young people in Porirua identify as Māori or Pacific. Wellington City has the largest youth population aged 15–24 years. The age profile of all areas is projected to age. This trend is most noticeable in Kapiti Coast, which has the

highest median age. By 2038, the proportion of over 65's in the Kapiti Coast is expected to increase to over a third of the population (34%).

Indicators of inequity

- **Socio-economic deprivation is highest in Porirua and Lower Hutt, and lowest in Upper Hutt, Wellington City and Kapiti Coast.**

The 2018 NZ Deprivation Index (NZDep18) describes the areas of New Zealand living in areas of highest (decile 10) and lowest (decile 1) deprivation. Lower Hutt has the highest average NZDep18 score in the WCT region of 5.8; with 21% (21,549) of the population in that area living in deciles 9–10. However, 44% of people in Porirua live in deciles 9–10. This equates to 24,891 people and is over twice the national average (10% of the population live in each decile). No one in Upper Hutt, and only 1% of people in Wellington City live in deciles 9–10.

There are 20 Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) areas within the WCT region that have a decile rating of nine or 10, showing small pockets of high deprivation. Nine of the 20 areas are in Porirua (Ascot Park, Cannons Creek East, Cannons Creek North, Cannons Creek South, Elsdon-Takapuwahia, Porirua Central, Porirua East, Titahi Bay South and Waitangirua); and eight of the 20 areas are in Lower Hutt (Avalon East, Delaney, Moera, Naenae Central, Naenae North, Naenae South, Taita North and Taita South).

- **People who identify as Māori and/or Pacific Peoples are over-represented in areas of highest deprivation. In Porirua, Pacific Peoples are more than three times as likely as NZ Europeans to live in deciles 9–10, and Māori are more than twice as likely.**

Although 44% of people overall in Porirua live in deciles 9–10, people who identify as Pacific, Māori or MELAA are significantly over-represented in areas of highest deprivation; with 83% of Pacific Peoples living in deciles 9–10, 63% of Māori and 60% of MELAA communities, compared with only 26% of NZ Europeans.

A similar trend can be observed in Lower Hutt, where 43% of Pacific Peoples and 30% of Māori live in deciles 9–10, compared with 16% of NZ Europeans.

- **Overall, more children and young people live in areas of highest deprivation than other age groups – particularly in Porirua and Lower Hutt.**

In Porirua, children and young people aged 0–24 years are over-represented in areas of highest deprivation – over half of all children and young people live in deciles 9–10.

This trend is also apparent in Lower Hutt, where a quarter or more of children and young people live in deciles 9–10. Children aged 5–14 years in Lower Hutt are particularly over-represented in areas of highest deprivation (37%).

- **Other indicators point to inequities experienced by children and young people in the WCT region – particularly Māori, Pacific and MELAA children and young people, and those living in Porirua and Lower Hutt.**

Māori and Pacific children have the lowest rates of participation in ECE. Pacific and MELAA children in Porirua have the lowest rates of participation in the WCT region.

Asian and NZ European young people in the WCT region have higher rates of NCEA level 2 achievement than Māori and Pacific young people. NCEA achievement inequities can also be observed for MELAA young people in Wellington City and Upper Hutt.

National data shows that higher numbers of Māori and Pacific children and young people across all age groups between 0–24 years old experience risk factors. Regional risk factor data shows that the highest proportions of children aged 0–14 with two or more risk factors are in Porirua and Lower Hutt. Porirua and Lower Hutt also have the highest proportion of young people aged 15–24 with one or more risk factors. Both areas have the highest proportion of Māori and Pacific children and youth populations in the WCT region.

NEET rates (not in employment, education or training) for young people aged 20–24 years in the WCT are a significant concern. Over a fifth of people in this age group are NEET in Porirua (24%), Kapiti Coast (23%), Lower Hutt (21%) and Upper Hutt (20%).

Porirua has a high proportion of sole-parent households – 19%, compared with 11% in Wellington City.

- **The WCT region has employment and income inequities – with all other ethnic groups having lower rates of employment and lower median personal incomes than NZ Europeans. The greatest inequities are experienced by MELAA communities.**

Median personal incomes are highest for people in Wellington City (\$40,550) and lowest for people in Kapiti Coast (\$30,500).

Employment rates and median incomes are much higher for NZ Europeans than for other ethnic groups in the region.

People who identify as MELAA have the lowest median personal incomes – particularly in Upper Hutt (\$18,050), Lower Hutt (\$18,900) and Porirua (\$20,350).

In Porirua, Pacific median incomes are significantly lower than the area's overall median. In the Kapiti Coast, Asian median incomes are lowest compared to the area's overall median.

- **Inequities in relative housing affordability show that more residents spend over the median income on housing in Porirua and Kapiti Coast, particularly compared to residents of Wellington City. Damp and mould are a significant issue for households in Porirua; and for Pacific and Māori households across the region.**

Community leader interview themes

The perspectives of the eight people interviewed for this evidence review inevitably reflect their own lenses, experiences and areas of interest. Their combined views provide diverse perspectives for WCT to draw from, but do not represent the full range of views on these issues.

Regional and community strengths

Community leaders were asked what they felt was special, unique or different about the WCT region, and what they considered to be its main community strengths. A common theme was that the small scale of the region supports **connection, networking and collaboration**, which in turn builds **empathy, collegiality and a strong social sector**:

“The level of collaboration between groups is special in Wellington, very enmeshed and keen to support each other, less patch protection, more idea sharing”.

“There is a deeper sense of empathy here, the social service sector is strong. In Wellington nobody should be hungry, so many places to get food and support”.

One person felt that while collaboration can be strong in certain places and on certain issues, that regional collaboration is less strong:

“In the greater Wellington region collaboration is not so good; anything that encourages better regional collaboration would be good”.

With its smaller scale, **good work and creativity** are relatively **easy to spot**:

“Wellington is basically four cities, Hutt, Porirua, Wellington and Kapiti, but it doesn’t take a lot of networking to have good social antenna, to see the creative sparks or bright spots, sometimes it’s an individual, sometimes an organisation. Look for the cool stuff. A function is to have eyes and ears and notice”.

Proximity to government supports the ability to influence policy and decision makers:

“We have the ear of government in Wellington, our local MP is Grant Robertson, we have a strong direct line to government, real asset for us, we can go straight to Ministers”.

Community-led change efforts are considered a community strength, including those led by or involving those directly affected:

“Community-led initiatives, neighbourhoods getting a fruit and vege co-op together, sometimes a few key organisations, sometimes local government, a marae, look out for ground up. Often two or three catalytic people are behind it”.

“Bright spots I see are more movements than organisations, initiatives where the people experiencing the problem or want the change are active and leading, often women are leading this, it is a cluster of activity. There may be some stability or support by those who don’t want to colonise or take credit for their work”.

Other perceived areas of strength in the region were:

- **Resilient and diverse communities**, including a large number of **iwi and hapū** who are from outside the region, and diverse **Pacific communities**: *“Porirua is home to the second biggest Tuvalu population, and the biggest Tokelau population in the world”*
- **Marae based support** in the region that is responsive to changing community need
- Wellington being a home of **arts and innovation**, with a strong pool of artists *“developing, creating and delivering”*.

Priority communities and issues

“WCT should focus its support in the space of those doing it toughest”.

Geographical communities noted as needing more support were **Porirua, the Hutt Valley and Wainuiomata**. Population groups noted as experiencing greater inequity and needing support were:

1. Māori, including whānau who whakapapa outside of the region: *“They [often] can’t afford to go home. Many are dislocated from their own iwi – have not had the opportunity to get to know who they are”*
2. Pacific communities, and in particular equitable resourcing and support for Pacific language and culture
3. Young people
4. People needing sustainable employment, including artists and creatives.

In terms of priority issues, several people noted the need to **get ‘the basics’ right - adequate income, housing and food**. Three ‘movements’ noted as needing support were **social justice, food sovereignty and social housing**. Several people noted a desire to **“equip the community to care for itself (not do for)”**.

Access to ‘the basics’ will be compromised for some in the short to medium term by the effects of COVID19:

“I am cautiously nervous about the effects of COVID, we saw extremes of demand, food is a great test of economic wellness in the community, you only seek food if you’re desperate. We saw a whole different clientele over lockdown, we will see more of that. Food access is the acid test of the economy and how people are going”.

“For funders and individuals, we need to see a move from nice to haves to need to haves, there will be some real hardship coming up, focus on necessities – housing, food, income and clothing... for equitable societies. Those are things the Trust should get behind”.

Where there is inadequate income, housing and food, **mental health issues, addictions and family violence** can follow.

“There will be a lot of psychosocial trauma that comes with not having jobs and having enough money. Stresses, spirals down from loss and COVID. Like to see things put in place to deal

with that as well, as people deal with the aftermath of losing jobs, houses, savings. Housing is such a massive issue; we need to act on the trauma”.

Understanding the impact of COVID across the entire WCT will be important, along with shared responsibility for meeting social need and a willingness to try different approaches:

“If government isn’t funding the basics, then others need to assist. First argument is to meet need. If government should be doing it, lobby them; until that time, it remains the responsibility of anyone who cares enough about the outcomes”.

“In a recession, which will impact on people – old poor and new poor, the pool of needy people will be bigger, look for deeper solutions than the charity model. Have x amount for charity and x amount for more developmental work. Be upfront about it”.

COVID was disruptive and illuminating for many in the community sector, prompting people and organisations to adapt and think differently. The Whānau Ora Commissioning response to COVID was noted as a promising approach. Deeper issues around colonising structures and the need to develop Treaty-based thinking and practice remain.

Regional funding opportunities to advance equity

Areas considered to be funding gaps and opportunities to advance equity in the WCT region are presented below. These opportunities are underpinned by several common principles relating to how best to improve equity in the region, which may inform WCT funding principles:

Focus support on those doing it toughest in the region – on those bearing the brunt of inequities

Enable those supporting people doing it toughest to innovate, collaborate and advocate for deeper change

Support grassroots, community-led change and self-determination

In relation to the principles above, a range of population groups and issues or sectors were identified by those interviewed as requiring support and investment in the region.

Regional priority groups: Māori, Pacific, young people

Regional priority issues/sectors: housing, food sovereignty, adequate income, family violence/healthy relationships, arts and sports as enablers of wellbeing and collaborative effort

Community leaders noted the central role of structural inequities to perpetuating inequity in the region, including government policy, legislation and funding inequity. Comments relating to how best to support priority groups were as follows.

Māori

The key message here was to invest in kaupapa Māori organisations, by forming relationships with them and trusting them to do what is needed for their community.

“If you want to apply equity – take a step and say, I have this amount of money, put it towards Māori organisations – and let them decide – and get out of the way”.

“Marae like ours play an important role and have intergenerational impact – we have staff who were raised on the kohanga reo and are now in service as staff or volunteers at the marae”.

Pacific

As for Māori, getting to know Pacific communities, their strengths, needs, aspirations and support requirements, is the key to assisting Pacific peoples to lead their own solutions.

A core message to support Pacific communities is to invest in language regeneration and cultural engagement, particularly via places where Pacific people gather and social media: *“Our people are social media active”.*

Recognising and resourcing cultural competency is also important. The connectedness of Pacific communities is a strength but can mask Pacific community struggles and result in less resources and support:

“Just because we are connected and related and love to give, does not mean we should receive less resources. It’s not right that community-led efforts are under resourced”.

Young people

“Thinking about the money being poured into society now is huge; money going into the wellbeing of young people is minimal. That is an equity issue”.

Several people interviewed noted that some young people are struggling across the region and getting into trouble, with a lack of youth support noted in the Hutt Valley, Porirua and Wainuiomata.

“No youth workers in Porirua, youthful community, money targeted for youth called suicide prevention or tagged to a problem, very little social connectedness, community development, where has that gone, this is a space they [WCT] could look at”.

Key needs identified were to support transitions, prevent young people dropping out of education, support things that prevent young people from getting to a critical state (e.g. mental health, whānau support), and safe places for young people to go:

“More support is needed for young people dropping out of education, especially with COVID, a large number haven’t returned to school”.

One person noted that half the refugee population coming to the region is under 24, and that “*There are programmes and support for [refugee] families, but next to nothing for young people, children and teenagers*”.

Other identified needs for young people were:

- Relationship-based mentoring over 2-3 years
- Access to services relating to identity and mental health
- Youth work support in and out of school
- Models for addressing social, emotional needs in schools
- Support around youth and community workers around crisis intervention
- Alternatives to excluding young people from the school community
- Involving young people and their voice in planning, design and decisions
- Respite care for families and young people
- Positive youth work through social media, and social media as a positive tool for development of young people.

Issues or sectors requiring greater funding support and investment identified were:

Housing – the development of effective approaches to support people into secure, healthy housing

Food sovereignty – moving from reliance on others for food, to creating food security and sovereignty in communities:

“Teaching people to grow, prepare and cook food is essential and a way of advancing equity swiftly. Then our communities can stand on their own. Not rely on supermarkets for kai”.

“Greatest potential [to advance equity] is that we work alongside our communities to do for themselves. It is hard to do that in the social and health provision space, but easier in the pataka kai space”.

“Support kai sovereignty as a vehicle to community wellbeing and tino rangatiratanga”.

Family violence prevention and reduction, especially targeting perpetrators:

“Stress can manifest in violence, how do we ensure that the perpetrators are supported, the priority is that mum and kids are ok but stop the cycles”.

Arts, sports and culture as enablers of wellbeing – the power of arts, creativity, culture and sport as connecting, healing and healthy forces was highlighted. The need for investment into arts infrastructure and spaces for arts to thrive was noted.

“We need grassroots art and to open art up, as a restorative, therapeutic, connecting force. Bring arts and social change together. Huge power of art”.

“Support for the emergence of alternative sport and rec opportunities. Something to combat the downturn of kids playing sport, from intermediate and secondary school”.

Supporting grassroots leaders and ‘heart people’ – all communities contain people seeking to create positive change for their whānau, neighbourhood and community. These people tend to have no legal structure or funding, but would benefit from the right kinds of flexible support:

“We need to get behind people like that, those heart people who do their thing. A government contract would kill them, how do you enable that kind of movement, create the right containers to hold those initiatives? Money would create a whole lot of challenges for them, they need some support, koha, support for volunteers, stepping stones. Try some different things to support those grassroots people”.

“WCT funded our work with Black Power, was brave of them. Be good for them to reflect on what they learned from that. That is the hardest work and least resourced”.

One person suggested bringing together a light-touch network of people working in that sort of grassroots space, and asking them what would be useful, to amplify and spread that good work.

“Start with noticing what’s happening, and asking what 2-3 things that would most help you to do this cool stuff”.

Collaboration and collective effort - the small scale and connected nature of the region is considered to lend itself to collaboration and collective impact approaches.

“WCT could look at community organisations connecting differently, could fund collective activity and support mergers, incentivise that”.

Non-funding roles and funding approaches

“Big roles are learning and noticing, do that collaboratively, with other trusts/funders, people in the community, with a different slice of people. Expose yourselves to different perspectives and people. Amazing organisations and groups out there, dealing with so many different issues”.

Community leaders were asked about non-funding roles and approaches that would be helpful. In terms of perceptions of current WCT practice, people praised and wanted to see the following continue:

- Building good, high-trust relationships and trusting organisations to get on with the work
- Being approachable and flexible
- Ease of the application process and a quick turnaround (though generally small amounts given)
- Less administration and bureaucracy rather than more
- Engaged staff and Board

- Supporting regional awards, to honour those working in communities
- Taking time to understand their region through processes such as this research
- Introducing new funding streams such as the Boost Fund and funding for professional development (both were highly valued)
- Multi-year funding is rare and highly valued.

“WCT has a high trust model, the levels of accountability aren’t arduous, that’s a great thing. Trust us to do with the work, let us get on with it. Continue that approach”.

“Feel we can go and talk to people at all levels in the organisation. I know all their Trustees, the entire Board turned up for a launch, very engaged in the community, they have strong connections. Doing things like this (interviews) is good”.

“[WCT] are the only organisation which offers professional development funding, so beneficial for small organisations, it’s a brilliant grant, to develop your staff, we told them to trust us to know what we need, and they did that”.

In terms of non-funding roles and approaches, there were two clear messages:

1. Get to know your communities

“Whatever we do in the social change area, having core relationships to build trust and respect is the foundation. Funders are all in the same big ecosystem, we all wear multiple hats, linking and spanning all of those is the relational savviness. We can hide behind organisational plans and strategies, [but this is] not a proxy for relationships”.

Taking the time and effort to get to know and understand communities in the region is considered to be critical for WCT. This means connecting and communicating with people on the ground, networking and being visible in the community.

“We are expected to walk through non-Māori gates all the time. Come and see what is going on – do not rely on reading about what is going on in our community. We invite funders to come in for a cuppa!”

2. Collaborate and connect

WCT was asked to collaborate with other funders and relevant organisations, to support groups to connect, collaborate and access resources.

“Funders should speak with one another – and collaborate. We are expected to collaborate – but funders won’t. Contribute through dialogue and consistent distribution. Work together at every level”.

“Help communities connect with other funders and philanthropic organisations”.

Other suggested non-funding roles for WCT were to:

- Help unlock community giving: *“There is plenty of money out there, sitting in people’s pockets, people who want to give they just aren’t asked”*

- Support and celebrate volunteerism
- Support, connect and create community among the providers supported by WCT: *“Support and awahi them, like an accountants social event, a dinner, be a catalyst for creating community amongst the providers they support, help people and organisations breathe out”*
- Support learning and sharing of learning about social change and impact:

“WCT and others don’t fund community infrastructure, spaces for conversations, bumping places, measurement, communities of practice, mentoring, learning, sharing. People have been screwed down so tightly [to delivering programmes and initiatives]”.

“Be great to have a collaborative network around social impact, we need to grow that community of practice, it can be located in different organisations, local government, iwi”.

One person cautioned about WCT spreading its funding too thin, recommending instead to focus on organisations and communities who are making a difference (the ‘bright spots’), and funding those things. They also suggested funding a mix of local and larger initiatives.

Finally, another community leader suggested that WCT asks itself what its risk profile is, and apportions some funding to more developmental, higher risk activity.

Implications for WCT’s funding strategy

“Get to know your community, fund groups you trust and let them get on with the work”.

“Be prepared to partner well. Invest in people prepared to work together. No value in competition in our spaces, identify what people do well and support that”.

From the community profile and people interviewed, there are some clear directions to guide WCT’s funding strategy, as follows.

Where and who to support

Porirua, Lower Hutt (including Wainuiomata), Ōtaki

Māori, Pacific, former refugees and MELAA migrants (Middle Eastern, Latin American and African)

Children and young people, particularly in the locations and populations above

What to support

Māori and Pacific-led initiatives, especially those supporting children and young people

Grassroots leaders/community-led action (providing flexible support tailored to need)

Food sovereignty

Secure housing for those most in need, and effective and innovative housing approaches

Youth identity, transitions, mental health, addressing NEET, connectedness (focusing support on struggling youth and youth-centred, strengths-based approaches)

Arts, sports and cultural identity/language, for priority communities, to support connectedness and wellbeing

Collaborative action on priority issues

Connecting and awahi (care and support) of change makers

Non-funding roles and approaches

Continue WCT's relational, approachable, user friendly, flexible, responsive funding approaches identified by community leaders in this report

Get alongside the people working in the spaces above, and fund what they need via relationships of trust

Focus on strengths and bright spots

Connect groups with other funding

Collaborate more with other funders

Help unlock community giving, generosity and volunteerism

Regional/community awards and celebration

Sharing learning for impact and influence

Some multi-year funding

Some funding for developmental work