

2.0 Purpose of this Report

2.1 The Local Government Act: An Overview

Under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA), local authorities are required to carry out, not less than once every six years, a process to identify regional community outcomes for the intermediate and long-term future of its district or region.

Community outcomes are a community judgement and belong to the community not the Council. The purpose of the process is to enable the community as a whole to decide what is important to it. That is not just in terms of local authority functions, but also in terms of the functions and capabilities of other organisations and groups within the community. In performing its role, a local authority should take account of the diversity of the community and *“the interests of future as well as current communities”*¹. It should also *“collaborate and co-operate with other local authorities and bodies”* where that is appropriate *“to promote or achieve its priorities and desired outcomes”*².

The outcomes identified are intended to **guide** the planning processes of local authorities and other organisations, but are **not** binding on them. How each Council will contribute to the achievement of each outcome will be determined as part of each Council’s LTCCP process. Once community outcomes are identified, local authorities must report on progress made **by the community** in achieving those outcomes not less than once every three years.

In Northland the four local authorities, the Northland Regional Council and the Far North, Kaipara and Whangarei District Councils decided to undertake a joint process to identify regional community outcomes for the Northland region.

¹ Section 14(1)(c)

² Section 14(1)(e)

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2.2 How the Regional Community Outcomes will be Used

Understanding the purpose of the identification of regional community outcomes assists in understanding what a community outcome is and how it will be used. Section 91(2) LGAAct sets out the purposes as follows:

- “(a) to provide opportunities for communities to discuss their desired outcomes in terms of the present and future social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the community; and*
- (b) to allow communities to discuss the relative importance and priorities of identified outcomes to the present and future social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the community; and*
- (c) to provide scope to measure progress towards the achievement of regional community outcomes; and*
- (d) to promote the better co-ordination and application of community resources; and*
- (e) to inform and guide the setting of priorities in relation to the activities of the local authority and other organisations”.*

The local authorities do not have to adopt the outcomes, or necessarily even agree with them. The role of the local authorities in this process is to facilitate it and to assist the community to identify its own outcomes.

Other organisations that are capable of influencing the achievement of the regional community outcomes that have been identified will have to consider themselves how those outcomes will “inform and guide” their priorities and planning. In many cases, there will be opportunities for councils and other organisations to work together to achieve outcomes, where no one body or group is clearly responsible for a certain outcome.

2.3 The four “well-beings”

The role of local authorities is to give effect to the purpose of local government³, which is to “enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future”⁴. The LGA signals a strong commitment to the principles of sustainable development. Promotion of the four well-beings is essential if sustainable development is to be achieved and local authorities have a leading role to play in this promotion⁵. The four aspects of well-being are:

³ Section 11

⁴ Section 10

⁵ Local Government Know How Guide to Governance under the Local Government Act 2002, jointly produced by SOLGM, LGNZ and the Department of Internal Affairs, p.21.

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- **Social** – encompassing those factors that enable people, their families and communities to set goals and achieve them (eg. education, health, strength of community networks and associations, financial and personal security, rights and freedoms and levels of equity);
- **Economic** – encompassing factors relating to the capacity of the economy to generate the employment and wealth necessary to provide many of the pre-requisites for social well-being, such as health services;
- **Environmental** – encompassing factors that relate ultimately to the capacity of the natural environment to support, in a sustainable way, the activities that constitute community life; and
- **Cultural** – encompassing the shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours and identities reflected through language, stories, experiences, visual and performing arts, ceremonies and heritage⁶.

Not all outcomes fall clearly into each well-being area, as often an outcome will be applicable across a number of well-being areas.

2.4 This Report

The purpose of this report is to outline the regional community outcomes that the people of Northland have identified for the region and associated indicators or measures of progress. The three district councils and the Regional Council have worked together with ACNielsen and a range of Northland organisations and residents to identify the regional community outcomes contained in this report.

The outcomes have been identified using comprehensive “best practice” methods and care has been taken to ensure that they do reflect the views of the Northland community. **They are the community’s outcomes.**

Though not binding, these regional community outcomes are intended to **guide** the planning processes of the councils and other organisations.

How each council may contribute to the achievement of each community outcome will be determined as part of each council’s Long Term Council Community Plan process. Councils most likely will **not** directly contribute to **every** community outcome, but may offer a supporting role to other organisations or groups in the community active in a particular area.

The regional community outcomes project provides the councils of Northland and other organisations a common foundation to continue working together in a variety of ways for the benefit of all Northlanders.

Additional copies of this report are available on the Northland Regional Council’s website www.nrc.govt.nz.

⁶ The Know How Guide to Governance under the Local Government Act 2002, jointly produced by SOLGM, LGNZ and the Department of Internal Affairs, p.21-22