



WELCOMING COMMUNITIES ADVISORY GROUP PLAN

2025-2028



PAPAIOEA
PALMERSTON
NORTH
CITY

Rangitāne o Manawatū are the mana whenua for Palmerston North. They claim descent from the tupuna of the Kurahaupo Waka, which it is estimated, touched the shores of Aotearoa, New Zealand, in about 1200 AD from their homeland in Tawhitinui.

Through migration and settlement, Rangitāne were firmly established when the first Pākehā settlers came to this region in the mid-1800s. These settlers were warmly welcomed by the Rangitāne Iwi.

The sale of the “Te Ahu O Tūranga” Block, which includes Palmerston North was led by Te Hirawanui Kaimokopuna, a Rangitāne Chief of great renown in the local region. It was Te Hirawanui who pointed out to Stewart, the government surveyor, the Papaioea clearing upon which Palmerston North was established.

The Hokowhitu suburb was originally a tribal reserve set aside after the sale of the land upon which the city was built. The ancestors of the Karaitiana, Te Awe Awe, Te Pānau, Mātai, Te Rangi, Te Rangimauiora, Paewai, Wirihana, and Te Rā families were among those who welcomed the new arrivals to the region.

The Clocktower chimes memorialise Kerei Te Pānau, one of the Rangitāne Chiefs and aristocratic men of Rangitāne, who was the first Māori recorded to pay rates to the new Council. To Rangitāne the clock chimes symbolise Kerei Te Pānau calling out to all the people.

Te Peeti Te Awe Awe, another Rangitāne Chief of great mana, has a statue in Te Marae o Hine – The Square that memorialises the noble sentiments he extended to his Rangitāne people and all who settle in this region: Kua kaupapa i a au te aroha, Ma koutou e whakaoti – I have laid the foundation of peace and love for you to build on.

Te Marae o Hine has laid down a kaupapa of peace, love, cooperation and collaboration which sends a message to all about how we meet our challenges and our trials, and that is by working together for the common good of all.

In Te Marae o Hine, there is also a memorial to all those who gave their lives in two world wars, for the freedoms of democracy we enjoy today.

Atop the clocktower on Te Marae o Hine is the Christian symbol of the cross. Christianity has had a huge influence on Rangitāne. Leaders like Hoani Meihana Te Rangiotū, and others, invoked Christian teachings and values to resolve conflict and create solutions that accommodated both the collective aspirations of iwi and the settlers who moved to the region.



Nei rā taku mihi mahana kia koutou i tēnei wā o te tau. Ngā taumahatanga o koutou, o mātou, e noho tonu ana i te whakaaronui o tātou. Tātou ngā māhuetanga iho o rātou ake, tēnā tātou katoa. Kei ngā tai-tawhiti, tai-tata.

As a representative of Rangitāne, I support this plan as representing three core values of Kotahitanga (togetherness), Manaakitanga (hospitality) and whanaungatanga (family).

Rangitāne are committed to the continued success of this programme by ensuring that all newcomers who choose to call New Zealand, Palmerston North their home, are welcomed in accordance with Māori culture, tikanga and in the customary lore of Rangitāne.

Rangitāne's vision is to be a Treaty-led city, and I'm excited to see the implementation of new initiatives in the coming months and years, as we continue to build upon and strengthen this programme.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our partners – the officers, Elected Members and Mayor of the Palmerston North City Council, and the Multicultural Council. We are thankful for your continued efforts and commitment to making our city a great place to call home.

Nō reira, tēnā tātou katoa.

Mr Christopher Whaiapu

Chairman

Ngāti Hineaute Hapu Authority

Rangitāne o Manawatū



Kia ora, talofa, ni hao, bonjour, as-salaam-alaikum, namaste, kuzu zangpo la, konnichiwa, marhaban, hola , warm greetings to you all.

Palmerston North has always been a city of connection and inclusion, and in recent years we have deepened this commitment through the Welcoming Communities programme.

In December 2024, our city was recognised as an Advanced Welcoming Community - a milestone that reflects the commitment, effort, and partnerships we have built since joining the programme in 2017. This achievement acknowledges the work we have done to support our increasingly diverse population and, above all, is a testament to the strength of our community and the shared commitment to making Palmerston North a place where diversity is valued, celebrated, and embraced.

Our diversity is one of our greatest strengths. With over 160 ethnicities and 150 languages represented, Palmerston North is among the most culturally vibrant cities in Aotearoa. This richness is reflected in our schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods, and in the many festivals and events that bring us together.

This plan sets a clear pathway toward becoming an Excelling Welcoming Community within the next three years. It builds on what we have achieved and focuses on strengthening connections, celebrating diversity, and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

I am proud of how far we have come on our welcoming journey, and I look forward to the further progress we will make together in the years ahead.

Ngā mihi,

Grant Smith

Mayor of Palmerston North



This plan sets out the actions we will take to move from our current recognition as an Advanced Welcoming Community toward achieving Excelling status in the next three years. It provides a practical framework to strengthen inclusion, improve access, and deepen connections across Palmerston North.

Our Senior Leadership Team is proud of the outcomes that have been achieved so far through our participation in the Welcoming Communities programme, and we are committed to making further progress in this area. This commitment can be seen reflected in our strategic direction for the organisation, and across our goals and plans for development in the city.

Delivering on this plan requires strong partnerships. I acknowledge Rangitāne o Manawatū, the Advisory Group, and our community partners for their leadership and commitment. Together, we will ensure Palmerston North continues to set the standard as a welcoming, inclusive, and thriving city.

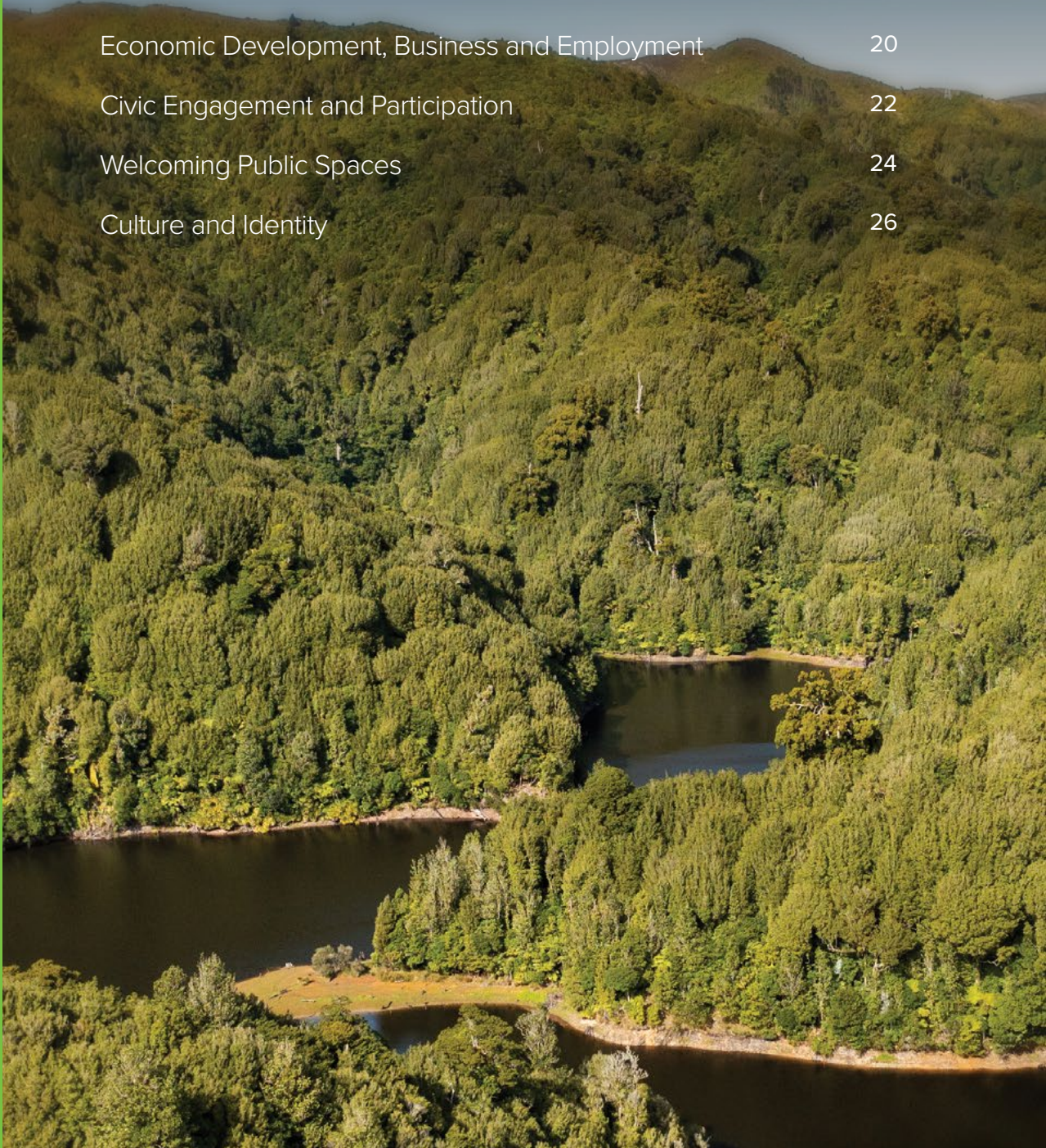
Ngā mihi,

Waid Crockett

Chief Executive

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Acknowledgements

The Palmerston North Welcoming Communities Advisory Group includes representatives from:

- Central Economic Development Agency
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Department of Internal Affairs
- English Language Partners
- Manawatū Chamber of Commerce
- Manawatū Multicultural Council
- Ministry of Education
- Network of Skilled Migrants Manawatū
- The New Zealand Police
- Palmerston North City Council
- Red Cross
- THINK Hauora
- Volunteer Central

The Advisory Group meets every six weeks to guide and coordinate the implementation of the Welcoming Communities programme in Palmerston North. Our appreciation also goes to the individuals in the community who have contributed to the Welcoming Communities programme, wider stakeholders, and to the staff within Palmerston North City Council who have provided their expertise.



Welcoming Communities background

The Welcoming Communities initiative brings together local government and communities to make the places we love more welcoming for everyone. The programme was introduced as a pilot by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) in 2017, with ten councils across five regions coming on board to develop and implement the programme together with their communities.

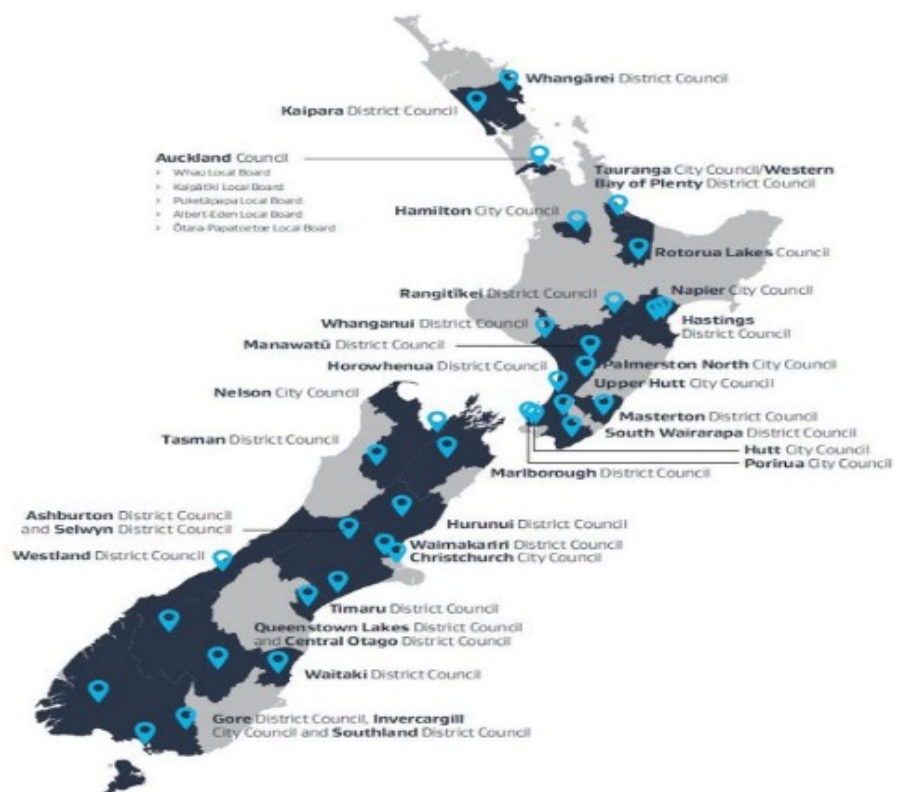
The programme is founded on the principle that communities that make newcomers feel welcome are likely to enjoy better social outcomes and stronger economic growth. In this environment, everyone can participate in the economic, civic, cultural and social life of the community. Nurturing the connections between locals and newcomers means everyone feels included and knows they belong.

Welcoming Communities participants are part of a global network known as Welcoming International; other programmes around the world include Welcoming America in the United States and Australia's Welcoming Cities.

Between 2017 and 2019 New Zealand's Welcoming Communities pilot was independently evaluated and, based on the success of the programme, the Government has approved the expansion of the programme to other regions in New Zealand.

As of March 2025, there are 35 local councils and 5 local boards working with their communities to implement Welcoming Communities programme:

Councils that are part of the Welcoming Communities Programme



Key components of the programme include

Knowledge sharing and Networking

Participating local councils and communities learn from each other and share resources.

The Welcoming Communities standard

Welcoming Communities Standard for New Zealand ('the Standard') provides a benchmark for practices and services in welcoming newcomers. It was developed by Immigration New Zealand in collaboration with experts, councils and the community in 2017. Participants in the programme develop and implement their own local Welcoming Plans around the outcomes included in the Standard.

Celebrating success

The programme is intentional in shining a light on activities that are successful in achieving the programme outcomes on an online platform run by Immigration New Zealand.

Accreditation framework

Accreditation builds a competitive advantage to attract, support and retain newcomers by:

- showing that a council values and welcomes newcomers
- providing a way to assess progress and to improve welcoming practices
- celebrating success and sharing pride in positive outcomes for the community
- showing that a council and community is part of an international welcoming network
- showcasing welcoming activities on the national and international stage
- providing councils with access to support, resources, knowledge sharing and networking in New Zealand and overseas.

There are four stages of accreditation, each with increasing levels of requirement and benefits:

Stage 1 — a Committed Welcoming Community

Stage 2 — an Established Welcoming Community

Stage 3 — an Advanced Welcoming Community

Stage 4 — an Excelling Welcoming Community.

At Stage 1 a council must commit to participating in the Welcoming Communities programme and complete an application. For Stages 2 to 4 a council, working with its community, completes an application and a self-assessment workbook. The Welcoming Communities External Accreditation Assessment Panel prepares a detailed report on each application.

Palmerston North gained accreditation as a Committed Welcoming Community in December 2019, Established Welcoming Community in June 2020 and Advanced Welcoming Community in December 2024. We plan to progress to an Excelling status within the next three years.

The local context

Partnership with mana whenua is a fundamental principle of the Welcoming Communities approach. In Palmerston North, Rangitāne o Manawatū have an important role in the programme, providing guidance, leadership and innovation in our welcoming activities. This relationship is underpinned by an acknowledgement of Rangitāne as the original ‘welcomers’ of this whenua on which Palmerston North now exists, and the central importance of weaving te ao Māori into our welcoming and inclusion work, in particular manaakitanga, or extending hospitality and caring for others, and whanaungatanga, or the importance of strong relationships and connection.

Palmerston North has an estimated resident population of 92,500 as of 30 June 2024, with an annual growth rate of 1.8%. It is considered one of the most culturally diverse cities in New Zealand. During the 2023 Census, our population identified with more than 160 ethnicities and spoke more than 150 languages. Overall, 73.8% of the city’s population identifies as European, followed by Māori at around 20.7%, 14.4% who identify as Asian, and approximately 5.9% who identify as Pasifika.

Since 2004, when the city became a resettlement location, Palmerston North has also become home to several groups of former refugees from around the world, including families from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Bhutan, Syria and Afghanistan.

Palmerston North also has a uniquely diverse community due to our prominent defence workforce, and large numbers of tertiary students. The city has a significant education sector offering tertiary opportunities for national and international students, with internationally renowned tertiary education providers, including Massey University, IPU New Zealand, the Universal College of Learning, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and English Teaching College.

Other migrants to the city include new workers and their families who come from all over the globe to provide specialist skills and expertise to strengthen our healthcare, agriculture, research and logistics sectors, amongst others.

The executive summary

Under Welcoming Communities, individual councils and groups of councils participating in the programme take a leadership role in encouraging their communities to be intentionally inclusive and welcoming of new residents, and in doing so support their region's growth.

This Welcoming Communities Advisory Group Plan 2025-2028 (the Welcoming Plan) is a key component of the Welcoming Communities programme in Palmerston North. This Plan sets out shared priorities and focus areas for the next three years, providing a roadmap for achieving accreditation as an Excelling Welcoming Community. This plan builds on the progress of the past three years and sets out clear priorities for deepening inclusion and strengthening the relationships that make our city a place where everyone can thrive.

For the purpose of this document, and the wider programme, 'newcomers' are defined as recent migrants, former refugees and international students. However, we acknowledge and anticipate that activities under this programme will also benefit those relocating from elsewhere in New Zealand.

This document is structured to align with the national Welcoming Communities Standard (the Standard), a framework with eight outcome areas: Inclusive Leadership; Welcoming Communications; Equitable Access; Connected & Inclusive Communities; Economic Development, Business and Employment; Civic Engagement & Participation; Welcoming Public Spaces; Culture & Identity. The Standard provides a benchmark for what a successful welcoming community looks like and has guided decisions on the activities included in this Welcoming Plan.

This work is already visible across our city—in City Welcome Sessions co-hosted with mana whenua, the Palmy Global Ambassadors programme supporting diverse youth leadership, and in community events like the Festival of Cultures and Diwali Mela that create space for connection, celebration, and understanding. Council strategies and policies increasingly reflect a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, and public spaces are becoming more reflective of the people who use them.

The plan also acknowledges the need for further development. It sets out actions that will strengthen cultural confidence across sectors, create more visible and accessible leadership pathways, and improve how we communicate with and understand the needs of newcomer communities. From supporting inclusive economic development and business engagement, to ensuring more people see themselves in civic life, the plan outlines a practical, locally grounded path forward.

Te Hautūtanga Whakauruuru

Ka mahi tahi te kāwanatanga ā-rohe rātou ko ngā tāngata whenua ko ērā atu kaiārahi ā-hapori hei hanga i te hapori tāwhiri, he mea whakauruuru hoki, hei hāpai ake, hei whakatipu haere tonu hoki i taua hapori. Ka ārahi rātou i tētahi mahere ngātahi hei whakapiki i ngā hononga i waenga i ngā tauhou me ngā kainoho o nāianei.

1

Inclusive Leadership

Local government, tangata whenua and other community leaders work together to create, advocate for and continue to foster a welcoming and inclusive community. They lead a shared plan to increase connections between newcomers and existing residents.

Framework from the Welcoming Communities Standard:

As the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori – represented by tangata whenua, mana whenua, iwi and hapū and/ or other hapori Māori – have a prominent role in Welcoming Plan activities.

- 1.1 Leaders – both designated and unofficial – reflect the diversity in the local community, as does the council workforce.
- 1.2 Leaders model the principles of inclusiveness, openness, tolerance, respect and acceptance of all cultures in the community.
- 1.3 There are clear roles, responsibilities and ownership within council and in the wider community for the Welcoming Communities programme.
- 1.4 Council internal and external policies, services, programmes and activities recognise and address cultural diversity.
- 1.5 A range of leadership opportunities in the council and the wider community are available to and taken up by newcomers.

Where we are now

Palmerston North City Council has a strong relationship with our Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner and mana whenua, Rangitāne o Manawatū. This relationship is founded in Rangitānenuirawa and is essential to the long-term future and wellbeing of Palmy people. A partnership agreement was signed in 2019, formally acknowledging Rangitāne o Manawatū as mana whenua, and ensures that Rangitāne values and perspectives have significant weight in decision making, as Council works towards becoming a Te Tiriti-led city. The Welcoming Communities programme gained early support from mana whenua and this partnership continues to grow with a particular strength found in the relationship with Rangitāne o Manawatū and co-hosting City Welcome Sessions since 2019.

Palmerston North has made a clear commitment to the Welcoming Communities programme, with defined roles and ownership within Council and in the wider community as well as adopting it in Council's Long-Term Plan. Our city leaders have a strong understanding of the various benefits of inclusivity, and regularly model acceptance, openness, and celebrate our multiculturalism.

Many of the Council's strategies and plans acknowledge/recognise and address cultural diversity, making commitments to inclusivity. There is progress to be made internally in realising these commitments, in terms of their implementation into organisational processes and culture. The Council internally intends to have a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and a framework that outlines actions to follow these commitments. Council as an organisation has started



to reflect intentional inclusivity as standard practice across its services, processes, policies and plans. While, internally, we do have diverse representation and strive to develop policies and procedures from a perspective of inclusivity, we do not assume we currently represent or advocate for all cultures and worldviews.

There are leadership opportunities available to newcomers and one of these opportunities offered through Council is the Global Ambassadors programme. This programme offers young people, aged 18 to 24, a unique opportunity to engage in leadership roles while representing the city on a global stage. By volunteering, ambassadors showcase Palmerston North to international visitors, share the city's story, and promote its diverse cultural landscape. Participants gain valuable work experience and skills relevant to the global marketplace, while also fostering connections between domestic and international students. The programme aligns with the city's goal of becoming more inclusive and vibrant, encouraging young people to take part in community initiatives and events. Through this programme, ambassadors not only enhance their professional networks by collaborating with local leaders and officials but also play a key role in supporting Palmerston North's international relations activities and community development objectives.

Where we want to be

Relationships established with mana whenua are maintained and strengthened, with closer alignment between Rangitāne o Manawatū aspirations and implementing various welcoming activities.

While we have made progress in diversifying and increasing the number of leadership opportunities available to newcomers and other culturally and linguistically diverse community members, particularly in terms of governance roles, with improved access, support and education provided to both potential leaders and leadership bodies, there is potential for growth and expansion.

Newcomers who hold leadership roles or achieve in leadership spaces are acknowledged and celebrated in civic ceremonies.

Advisory Group Action Plan 2025 - 2028

Ongoing work:

- 1a. Continue to strengthen partnership with Rangitāne and other hāpori Māori in Palmerston North to align with their aspirations in the implementation of welcoming activities.
- 1b. Continue to deliver the Palmy Global Ambassadors programme.
- 1c. Work alongside arts and sports sector organisations, including Creative Communities funding committee and Sport Manawatū, to encourage inclusivity in leadership.
- 1d. Ensure the community groups/organisations who regularly receive and resettle newcomers are aware of support available to their groups and organisations, for example: governance, sustainable funding, etc.
- 1e. Council to continue to develop its diversity, equity and inclusion framework and activities to support it.
- 1f. Continue to offer bi-cultural confidence training to all Welcoming Communities Advisory Group members as needed.
- 1g. Continue to promote award opportunities throughout the Welcoming Communities Advisory Group networks to newcomers to develop more diverse entries and nominations.

Further Development:

- 1h. Promote benefits of diversity and inclusion, amongst local boards and governance groups.
- 1i. Explore opportunities to introduce additional positions on boards, as an education pathway for newcomers to gain governance experience.

2

Ngā Whakawhitinga Kōrero Tāwhiri

Ki ngā whakaaro o ngā tāngata nō ngā ahurea katoa, nō ngā ao katoa ka whai wāhi mai rātou, ka rangona rātou, he pai hoki tā rātou whai mōhio mā ngā ara maha ka arohia ai ngā hiahia whakawhitinga kōrero o tēnā, o tēnā.

Welcoming Communications

People of all cultures and backgrounds feel included, listened to and well informed through a range of ways that take into account their different communication needs.

Framework from The Welcoming Communities Standard:

- 2.1 The community is well informed about the local benefits of immigration and the Welcoming Communities programme, including success stories.
- 2.2 The council is well informed about newcomers to their region and pro-actively seeks data about newcomers from relevant sources.
- 2.3 The council's engagement with all residents is two-way, culturally appropriate and fit for purpose.
- 2.4 Council communication materials and messages are inclusive and reflect the diversity of the local community. Council encourages other agencies, businesses and organisations to follow this model.



Where we are now

Palmerston North residents have access to information about the local benefits of immigration and the Welcoming Communities programme and have positively engaged in several media (social and traditional) campaigns around these topics, including the #PalmyWelcomes and #PeopleofPalmy campaign for Welcoming Week. Success stories are often highlighted in Council's free community magazine Palmy Proud, community radio, local newspapers and on the social media channels of Council and in the community.

Council, the Advisory Group and community partners are proactive in exploring a variety of methods to ensure communications are inclusive, culturally appropriate and fit for purpose. We have made some progress, an example is the creation of a Welcome video in several languages and showing it during our City Welcome Sessions; however, embedding these practices as standard remains a work in progress and there is room to grow.

We have access to data around the demographics of the city and have good channels of information for qualitative and anecdotal information about the experiences of newcomers. This presents an opportunity to adopt a more strategic approach to collecting and sharing comprehensive data, which can be used to identify gaps, address barriers, and enhance the lives of newcomers.

Where we want to be

Palmerston North residents recognise and embrace migration, and the benefits of being a diverse community.

Palmerston North City Council has a range of rich local quantitative data sources with multiple data points, to better understand the experiences of newcomers and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. We are actively exploring opportunities to gain further insights through already existing data, such as forums that capture the lived experiences of these communities to identify gaps, address barriers and enhance the lives of newcomers.

Advisory Group Action Plan 2025 - 2028

Ongoing work:

- 2a. Continue to promote the Welcoming Communities programme through various informative communications campaigns to highlight the benefits of diversity and migration for our city.
- 2b. Continue to provide Welcome Packs and City Welcome Sessions for newcomers. Review content and design of Welcome Packs for relevance in 2025.

Further Development:

- 2c. Update our infographics based on the 2023 census data, as a tool for Council and the community to be better aware of the demographics of our city.
- 2d. Explore a best practice guide for data collection to support partner organisations in establishing a common language. This will help generate higher-quality insights on service use.
- 2e. Ensure the customer-facing Council staff are aware of translation/interpreting services/resources available to be utilised when needed.
- 2f. Actively explore ways to source translated resources and - key information, such as the Election information flyer, Civil Defence and Emergency Management materials, to distribute them effectively to newcomers.

Te Urunga Mana Ōrite

3

E wātea mai ana ki te katoa, tae atu ki ngā tauhou ngā āheinga ki te uru atu ki ngā ratonga, ki ngā mahi hoki, ā, ki te whai wāhi mai ki te hāpori.

Equitable Access

Opportunities to access services and activities and to participate in the community are available to all, including newcomers.

Framework from the Welcoming Communities Standard:

- 3.1 Council partners with local businesses, organisations and sectors to identify and address barriers for newcomers to accessing services and participating in the community.
- 3.2 Council and other organisations in the community research, design and deliver services that take account of the different circumstances (for example rural/urban) and cultural backgrounds of all service users, including newcomers.
- 3.3 All community members are well informed about the services available in the community. Newcomers are made aware of and are using these services.



Where we are now

Newcomers to Palmerston North have opportunities to learn about and access services and activities within the region, through the City Welcome Sessions, Welcome Packs, orientation events via education providers for international students and Red Cross for new arrivals.

Welcome videos in refugee background languages to support the Red Cross' orientation sessions for new arrivals have been developed and are currently in use.

Where we want to be

Initiatives to reduce barriers to learning about and accessing services are well supported and promoted; these are evaluated and refined over time to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Culturally and linguistically diverse groups are encouraged and supported to develop/initiate their own solutions to address challenges, and direct connections exist between community groups, businesses and organisations.

Across sectors, strategic leadership groups are incorporating inclusivity of newcomers and diverse communities as a standard practice within their work programmes.

Advisory Group Action Plan 2025 - 2028

Ongoing work:

- 3a. Continue to support forums and discussion groups which are focused on strengthening community connectedness and inclusivity. The findings would enhance our understanding of where the gaps, opportunities and successes currently exist, and further inform and improve the implementation of welcoming activities.
- 3b. Continue to provide Welcome Packs and City Welcome Sessions for newcomers. Review content and design of Welcome Packs for relevance in 2025.
- 3c. Continue to support, promote and connect local programmes and groups which have a focus on equitable access and reducing barriers.

Further Development:

- 3d. Actively promote and facilitate opportunities for newcomers to participate in consultations and making submissions to Council. While this is ongoing, there is room for improvement. We aim to continue working closely with those designing these consultations to ensure they address the varied needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- 3e. Work with funders to ensure culturally and linguistically diverse community groups have access to appropriate information and support around local and national funding opportunities. While this is an ongoing effort, there are opportunities to enhance and expand this support.
- 3f. Explore strategies to inform newcomers about support resources available.

4

Ngā Hapori Whakauruuru e Honoa ana Tētahi ki Tētahi

Ki ngā whakaaro o ngā tāngata he haumarū rātou i roto i ō rātou tuakiri, e honoa ana rātou ki tō rātou hāpori, ā, e whai wāhi mai ana ki taua hāpori hoki. He nui te whakawhirinaki me te māramatanga i waenga i ngā tauhou me ngā tāngata o te hāpori e tae mai ai rātou.

Connected and Inclusive Communities

People feel safe in their identity and that they are connected with and belong in the community. There are high levels of trust and understanding between members of the receiving community and newcomers.

Framework from the Welcoming Communities Standard:

- 4.1 Coordinated, comprehensive and appropriate initial welcoming support services are available from council, other agencies and community organisations.
- 4.2 The receiving community is well equipped and supported to welcome and interact with newcomers.
- 4.3 Members of the receiving community and newcomers build relationships and are at ease with connecting and learning about and from each other.
- 4.4 Different cultures are celebrated and people are supported to express their cultural beliefs and customs, including language and religious practices

Where we are now

Palmerston North City Council and the community have an established range of opportunities which foster connected and inclusive communities. Large public cultural celebrations, including but not limited to the Festival of Cultures, Lunar New Year, Diwali Mela and Welcoming Week, have become part of the city's events calendar. These events provide ample opportunities for communities to connect and appreciate each other's cultures.

For smaller scale celebrations, the Council supports cultural activities and community-led events through dedicated community funding. The Council's commitment to building community capability by funding organisations delivering locally is evident, and over time, this has strengthened the relationships and built trust between the Council and the community.



The Welcoming Schools Programme was an initiative created to foster and strengthen cultural inclusion and a sense of belonging through collaborative programmes and initiatives within school spaces in Palmerston North. The programme has been co-funded by Immigration New Zealand, Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Education and Council, supported by Ministry for Ethnic Communities and Global Parents Support, and is being delivered by the Manawātū Multicultural Council (MMC).

A key milestone of the Welcoming School programme in 2023 was the launch of the Inclusivity Strength Analysis Report. The report is the culmination of the efforts of many schools and parents who have shared their insights to foster a more inclusive school environment. The report highlighted key findings and proposed solutions to enhance the inclusion of newcomer students and families, including:

- The value of a structured onboarding process for successful integration.
- The importance of culturally inclusive school spaces.

Other key steps for the Welcoming Schools programme have included: parent workshops to improve understanding and communication between newcomer families and school staff; cultural competence and capability workshops for school staff; expansion to the early childhood education sector; promotion of MMC's language assistance services into schools; and development of an online information hub for newcomer families starting school in Palmerston North.

Where we want to be

Communities are well aware of the support and funding available for smaller community-level celebrations.

Numerous opportunities exist for community groups and networks across sectors to connect and collaborate.

Events and activities are regularly evaluated for their effectiveness and efficiency in fostering connections and building trust amongst community members.

Advisory Group Action Plan 2025 - 2028

Ongoing work:

- 4a. Continue fostering and promoting professional and community collaborations that strengthen connections between local resident groups and newcomer communities.
- 4b. Maintain an active promotion and support of the existing events and cultural celebrations, as well as resources and initiatives that celebrate and promote diversity, with an acknowledgement of the power of fun activities for achieving positive outcomes.
- 4c. Continue to support Welcoming Schools Programme.
- 4d. Continue to engage with neighbourhood level community groups and services, to better tailor activities for specific newcomer communities, such as encouraging more cultural events in public spaces outside of the CBD.
- 4e. Continue with the activities and events that are happening in our Central Library, including but not limited to the First Voice Programme, the expansion of Community Languages collections and the Multicultural Summer Reading programme.

Further Development:

- 4f. Explore initiatives which would encourage the newcomer communities to share their history, ideas and knowledge with the receiving community, for example host multicultural poetry reading sessions within the Central Library.

5

Te Whanaketanga ā-Ōhanga, te Pakihi me te Whiwhi Mahi

Ka tino kai ngā hapori i ngā āheinga whanaketanga ka tukuna mai e ngā tauhou, ā, ka mau i a rātou aua āheinga. Ka mahi tahi ngā kaunihera ki ngā rōpū pakihī hei whakatairanga i te tautoko ki te ōhanga o te takiwā a ngā ran.

Economic Development, Business and Employment

Communities maximise and harness the economic development opportunities that newcomers can offer. Councils work with business associations to promote the contribution that newcomer business owners and skilled migrants make to the region's economy.

Framework from the Welcoming Communities Standard:

- 5.1 Newcomers, including international students, are supported to access local employment information, services and networks.
- 5.2 Newcomers, including international students, are supported with the local knowledge and skills to ensure they can operate successfully in the New Zealand work environment, either as a business owner or an employee.
- 5.3 The receiving community recognises the value of diversity in the workplace, of newcomers' contribution to the region's growth and of the resulting wider economic benefits.
- 5.4 Local employers and workforces develop their intercultural competency.
- 5.5 Mutually beneficial connections and initiatives are set up with migrant business people by local business community and professional networks.



Where we are now

In Palmerston North, there is a growing recognition of the importance of supporting newcomers, including international students, in accessing employment information, services and networks. It is encouraging to see the Network of Skilled Migrants Manawātū expanding and supporting newcomer communities to build professional networks and improve their employment skills.

While there have been networking events and activities that offer opportunities of increased connections and understanding between newcomers and employers, there is further room for the sector and sector bodies to take a leadership role in harnessing the opportunities presented by developing stronger intercultural competency, exploring the value of diversity to organisational culture, and being intentionally inclusive of newcomers. Additionally, there is untapped potential in establishing mutually beneficial connections and initiatives within the local business community to support migrant businesspeople.

We have sponsored the Inclusive Business Award as a category at the Manawātū Business Awards. This award recognises businesses that actively embrace and promote diversity within their operations and management. The aim of the award is to highlight businesses that are taking steps to create more inclusive work environments, likely through policies, practices, and initiatives that value and integrate diverse perspectives and experiences. This award emphasises the importance of inclusivity as a key component of business excellence. Sponsoring, judging and presenting this award provides a critical opportunity to highlight the value of intentional inclusivity to the business community.

Where we want to be

Strong relationships between the Manawātū Business Chamber, the Network of Skilled Migrants Manawātū, Central Economic Development Agency (CEDA) and other employment and business-focused organisations enhance economic development prospects for newcomers. There are ample opportunities for newcomer communities to network and access information. Businesses that excel in their cultural confidence and inclusivity are celebrated and showcased through the Inclusive Business Award- Welcoming Communities and other social media platforms.

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Ongoing work:

- 5a. Continue to work together with existing local groups, such as the Network of Skilled Migrants Manawātū, CEDA and Manawātū Business Chamber to find new ways to strengthen connections and understanding between newcomers and employers.
- 5b. Continue to sponsor Inclusive Business Award category at the Manawātū Business Awards to formally recognise organisations and workplaces which are intentionally welcoming and inclusive.

Further Development:

- 5c. Advisory Group are well informed of business sector/ CEDA's:
 - Skilled employee retention strategies,
 - Training opportunities & funding available,
 - Business support opportunities available to the newcomer communities
- 5d. Investigate ways to enhance existing tools/resources to have better focus towards cultural competency and ensure local employers and their workforce are aware of the opportunities available.
- 5e. Explore ways to conduct a review of the experience of newcomers who have started businesses in the city to identify where more support is needed, and then trial initiatives as appropriate.

6

Te Tūhononga me te Whai Wāhitanga Raraupori

Ka rongo ngā tauhou i te tāwhiri kia whai wāhi katoa mai ki te hapori. Ka tū mai ngā tauhou ki ngā āhuatanga katoa o te whai wāhitanga raraupori.

Civic Engagement and Participation

Newcomers feel welcome to fully participate in the community. Newcomers are active in all forms of civic participation.

Framework from the Welcoming Communities Standard:

- 6.1 The council's elected members and staff effectively communicate with newcomers to promote their engagement in local government processes.
- 6.2 Newcomers are encouraged and enabled to get involved in local government and civil society.
- 6.3 Newcomers' efforts and achievements in civic participation and community life are acknowledged and celebrated.



Where we are now

Palmerston North has opportunities for newcomers and culturally and linguistically diverse communities to engage with and experience civic participation. The City Welcome Sessions, Welcome Packs and Welcome videos are ways in which information about civil society is currently shared.

Free internet and computers in libraries encourage participation in civic processes, such as the 2023 Census. There was a considered effort for the 2022 Local Government Elections to be intentionally inclusive with the production of informational flyers translated in 14 languages and distributed through community networks. We also supported the Manawātū Multicultural Council to host a candidate meeting for the multicultural community, where questions centred around inclusion, opportunities and community safety. Additionally, we provided election information to former refugee families.

Where we want to be

While there has been progress in promoting active citizenship within culturally and linguistically diverse communities, there are opportunities for further improvement.

Newcomers increasingly feel confident and comfortable engaging with local government processes, regularly share their views with Council's elected members and staff and, importantly, feel heard when doing so.

There is good data available around civic engagement of newcomers, and success stories are celebrated.

Advisory Group Action Plan 2025 - 2028

Ongoing work:

- 6a. Continue to facilitate access to information about, and reduce barriers to participation in, formal civic processes, such as the General Election, the Local Government Elections, and the Council's Long-Term Plan consultation.
- 6b. Continue to deliver City Welcome Sessions, Welcome Packs and Welcome videos as ways in which information about civil society is currently shared.

Further Development:

- 6c. Encourage and facilitate newcomer groups to present to Council committees. These engagements can be used to provide Council with advice and information on changes that the community would like to see to reduce service use barriers fostering wider engagement and enhancing the overall settlement experience for newcomers. While this practice is ongoing, there is still room for improvement to ensure more effective collaboration and impact.
- 6d. Work with the organisers of civic and community awards, to ensure newcomer achievements are acknowledged and celebrated, with a focus on increasing the accessibility to and thus the diversity of nominations.
- 6e. Establish relationship with Electoral Commission and explore initiatives/plans to increase civic participation of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Palmerston North.

Ngā Wāhi Tūmatanui Tāwhiri

7

Ka rongo ngā tauhou, ka rongo hoki ngā hapori e tae mai ai rātou i te tāwhiri ki ngā wāhi tūmatanui, ā, e āhuru ana rātou ki te whakamahi i aua wāhi.

Welcoming Public Spaces

Newcomers and receiving communities feel welcome in and comfortable using public spaces.

Framework from the Welcoming Communities Standard:

- 7.1 The design and operation of public spaces and facilities are culturally appropriate and reflect the diversity of the community.
- 7.2 Welcoming public spaces provide opportunities to build trust and relationships between newcomers.
- 7.3 Public spaces and buildings create a sense of community ownership and inclusion for all, including newcomers.



Where we are now

Palmerston North has started implementing ways to make public spaces more welcoming and reflective of the diversity of the community. Several initiatives have contributed towards achieving positive outcomes in this area, such as Te Arapiki a Tāne | The stairway of Tāne (Proverb Pathways), Welcome Flags, Welcome Decals distributed to local businesses (that says Welcome in 68 different languages), the annual Race Relations Day Chalk Mural in Te Marae o Hine - The Square, and placemaking activities that have supported public cultural celebrations.

Indoor public spaces such as libraries, Youth Space and Te Manawa Museum are places where staff are committed to creating community ownership and connections. Though there has been some good work in this area there remains an abundance of opportunity in terms of designing and operating public spaces that reflect our cultural diversity and create a sense of inclusion.

Where we want to be

Inclusive public space creation including diverse placemaking activities is standard practice. Public spaces in the city, both indoor and outdoor, clearly reflect the cultural diversity of the community. Newcomers have access to appropriate information about engaging with public spaces and thus feel comfortable doing so. The Advisory Group is abreast of public space development activities, and influences these as the opportunity arises.

Advisory Group Action Plan 2025 - 2028

Ongoing work:

- 7a. Continue to find ways to make public spaces more visually welcoming, for example by using existing platforms for communicating messages to newcomers (such as the airport, screens and signage within the city).
- 7b. Continue to support artists from newcomer communities to put up exhibitions in the public spaces such as Central Library.

Further Development:

- 7c. Increase the number of artworks, installations and monuments in public spaces that reflect the cultural diversity of the city, for example via the Proverb Pathways project. Ensure community groups are included, if not leading, the design and installation processes.
- 7d. Increase local education on 'public space' land and land history. For example, make appropriate resources available to inform newcomers of the ways which public parks can be used, and ensure any historical context on signage at parks is provided in plain English.

8

Te Ahurea me te Tuakiri

Ka tū mai te wairua ngātahi o te poho kererū mō te whai wāhi mai ki tētahi hapori he haumako ā-ahurea, he taurikura hoki. Ki ngā whakaaro o ngā tāngata e whakautehia ana tō rātou hapori, e kaingākaitia ana hoki e ērā atu tāngata o te hapori. Ka tū mai ngā āheinga hei ako e pā ana ki te ahurea o tēnā, o tēnā.

Culture and Identity

There is a shared sense of pride in being part of a culturally rich and vibrant community. People feel their culture is respected and valued by members of the community. There are opportunities to learn about each other's cultures.

Framework from the Welcoming Communities Standard:

- 8.1 Receiving communities and newcomers share and celebrate their cultures with each other, facilitated by the council and others in the community.
- 8.2 Newcomers and the receiving community understand what values they each hold dear.



Where we are now

The Welcoming Communities programme provides an essential link between event organisers and ethnic communities. Strong relationships built over time between Council and communities, and facilitated among the communities themselves, enable greater community outcomes to be achieved through the medium of events. By embracing cultural festivities, newcomers find reassurance in their identity and establish a sense of connection and acceptance within the receiving community. Sharing their cultural heritage with the mainstream community fosters a feeling of belonging, and in turn, the host community gains understanding and appreciation of the newcomers' culture and values, enabling them to better support and welcome them.

A wide range of activities and events in Palmerston North promotes and encourages cultural exchange and learning. Festival of Cultures, Diwali Mela, Lunar New Year, Festival of Colours and Palmy Play Festival - Taiopenga ā-Rēhia, are all good examples of celebrations and cultural activities planned and implemented within the city. Ethkick is a long-established event that provides the opportunity to celebrate cultures through a sporting setting.

This outcome area also focuses on opportunities for people to learn and understand the values of others within their community. Regular activities currently provide these opportunities, such as the trial of a multicultural poetry session at the Central Library and the long-running First Voice programme.

Where we want to be

Through a well-established and expanding range of cultural festivals and activities, Palmerston North will become a place where cultural celebrations not only thrive but also serve as key platforms for fostering mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation among all residents. Newcomers will feel empowered and accepted as valued members of the community, while the host community will actively engage in learning and embracing diverse cultural identities.

Regular evaluation of events and activities will enable the Council and its partners to better understand how the community considers their cultures are valued and respected. Additionally, outcomes will be further strengthened by evidence showing how these activities create the types of experiences that generate a sense of pride in a rich and culturally diverse community.

Advisory Group Action Plan 2025 - 2028

Ongoing work:

- 8a. Continue to promote, support and grow the many existing events and initiatives in the city that share and celebrate diversity.
- 8b. Continue to work with the diverse ethnic and cultural groups of Palmerston North, in alignment with their goals and ideas, to deliver programmes and activities which increase awareness and understanding of the various cultures that exist in the city.

Further Development:

- 8c. Work to ensure funding for large cultural events is increasingly secure and sustainable.



New Zealand Government



Welcoming Communities New Zealand is a government initiative led by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, in partnership with the Department of Internal Affairs (including the Office of Ethnic Communities) and the New Zealand Human Rights Commission.

Palmerston North City Council

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