

Cultural Well-being

What Is It?

Linking local and central government
to promote cultural well-being



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Cultural well-being can broadly encompass values, shared beliefs, customs, behaviours and identity.

These sometimes intangible qualities help shape and define who we are as New Zealanders, and make our country the diverse place that it is.

The Local Government Act does not define cultural well-being. Councils will need to come to their own understandings of what cultural well-being means.

Councils will need to work with their communities to identify their values and shared beliefs, including hapu and iwi values and beliefs.

Councils may need to seek out particular groups, such as ethnic groups, youth and older people, to get a good cross section of views, as a means of more accurately reflecting upon the cultural diversity of their areas.

The important thing is that councils give serious thought to what cultural well-being is and how it is reflected in their planning and practice.

For its purposes, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage defines cultural well-being as:

The vitality that communities and individuals enjoy through

- participation in recreation, creative and cultural activities
- the freedom to retain, interpret and express their arts, history, heritage and traditions.

It's about Arts, Creative and Cultural Activities

Arts and creative and cultural activities are very evident means by which groups express and maintain their cultures.

Councils already support creative and cultural activities and events, but may want to assess whether current approaches efficiently and effectively reflect community outcomes.

It may also be time to consider

- closer partnerships in support of arts and culture
- ways in which arts and culture can become a more integral part of other council activities such as infrastructure development
- promoting the arts and culture sector as a key part of the local economy with initiatives such as arts clusters, national cultural events, cultural tourism.

It's about Languages, Film and Broadcasting

Languages are an intangible part of culture. Through film and broadcasting we experience and showcase ourselves and others.

Regional and community radio and TV are important vehicles for sharing and sometimes cultivating a local sense of identity.

Councils may wish to consider how they can act to promote languages, especially te reo Māori, and work with the film and broadcasting sectors to encourage filming in, and promotion of, their areas.



It's about History and Heritage

Cultural well-being is about protecting and interpreting our past, linking us to who we are today and to our future.

It is about providing our communities with an ability to access a wide range of media such as libraries, archives and museums for information, learning and pleasure.

Challenges to councils could include

- recognising investment in history and heritage as an investment in a community's future
- making history and heritage accessible
- taking a proactive stance on heritage protection, including the protection of wahi tapu
- identifying opportunities to make history and heritage a key part of tourism and economic development.

It's about Sport and Recreation

Sport and recreation are a strong part of our national identity.

Local authorities are already heavily involved in the provision of facilities and co-ordinating recreation and sports activities.

Councils may wish to consider ways in which their investment in, and support of, sport and recreation can also promote cultural well-being. This could include events with an historic connection and sports that reflect different cultural influences such as waka ama, dragon boating and kirikiti, and recreational events which are part of wider community activities.

It's about a Sense of Place

Cultural well-being is also closely related to our natural and physical environment.

For example

- the character of an urban space and its ability to connect with people and provide a space for expression, spaces like Christchurch's Cathedral Square
- landscapes like Mt Taranaki and the Waitemata Harbour
- the design, location and construction of infrastructure.

The promotion of cultural well-being also means having due regard to the management of natural resources, such as water and air, for cultural outcomes, for example respecting the life force of water bodies.

Balancing, Integrating and Innovating

Innovation and experimentation will be key to councils finding ways to promote cultural well-being.

In some cases councils will need to balance cultural well-being against other interests.

In many cases, councils should be able to find ways by which they can efficiently and effectively integrate cultural well-being into the broad range of council activities and initiatives.



The Local Government Act 2002 and cultural well-being



Under the Local Government Act 2002, councils have new responsibilities to promote the cultural well-being of their communities.

Cultural well-being is one of four well-beings which councils are challenged to integrate and balance in planning and practice.

Councils will need to work with communities to identify what is important and how they give expression to community outcomes.

Consultation processes should throw up strong themes and are likely to lead to councils having to balance different values and beliefs. Indeed, they may result in councils challenging themselves and their communities about existing values and identity.

The long-term council community planning (LTCCP) process is the principal means by which councils will establish the activities aimed at the achievement of community outcomes, along with other statutory requirements, over a ten-year period.

More Information

For more information on cultural well-being and related resources please refer to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage's website www.mch.govt.nz/cwb or phone (04) 499 4229.