

## *Cultural Well-Being from a Regional Council Perspective*

This document is a discussion paper issued by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, in conjunction with Local Government New Zealand. The paper explores how regional councils are approaching their obligations to cultural well-being and identifies further opportunities for regional connections with cultural well-being.

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage has been working with local government, including regional councils, in the last year to provide tools (such as brochures, workshops, and a website) to aid the understanding of a broad definition of cultural well-being and promote the integration of the four well-beings.

This paper is based on the Ministry's dialogue with regional councils about cultural well-being over the last year; a specific one-day workshop held at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (21 October 2005); and post-workshop peer-review by regional council attendees. The purpose of the *Regional Councils and Cultural Well-being Workshop*, as well as the pre- and post-workshop dialogue, was to explore how regional councils are approaching their obligations to cultural well-being and to identify further opportunities for regional connection with cultural well-being.

Some regional councils have said to the Ministry that they are struggling to make the connections between their predominantly environmental statutory functions (such as pest management, bio-security, flood protection and so on), and the promotion of cultural well-being through these functions. Other regional councils are already clear that their involvement in promoting cultural well-being comes about through:

- understanding the identity, values and diversity of their regions;
- heritage preservation and protection;
- recognition of Maori values and interests;
- administration of regional parks;
- regional sports and recreation initiatives;
- regional events; and
- the provision of public transport.

The purpose of this paper is to identify the key elements of cultural well-being as it might relate to regional councils. This paper does not necessarily represent either individual or organizational views. It is intended as a think-piece to inform policy-making and planning processes within regional councils. Comment on it is welcomed. Please email to: [culturalwell-being@mch.govt.nz](mailto:culturalwell-being@mch.govt.nz)

<p><b>What has cultural well-being got to do with regional councils?</b></p>	<p>The Local Government Act 2002 has led to a renewed focus on what cultural well-being is and the role which councils might have in promoting the cultural well-being of communities.</p> <p>Most councils have been involved with cultural well-being activities (even if these activities were not called by that term) long before the Local Government Act. This is partly a consequence of the Resource Management Act 1991, but also the practical implications of councils being a part of the communities that they serve.</p> <p>Regional councils play a significant role in managing our natural and physical resources, providing public facilities/services, and facilitating regional initiatives.</p> <p>At every turn, regional councils engage with issues related to cultural well-being, although maybe not consciously. Developing policies related to the management of natural resources, providing public transport, and providing for public access to the outdoors, for example, are each informed, in part, by understandings of cultural well-being.</p> <p>Cultural well-being is a term used in both the Local Government Act and the Resource Management Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Section 10(b) of the Local Government Act identifies the purpose of local government, including regional councils, as the “promotion of social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future...”</li> <li>● Section 5 of the Resource Management Act defines sustainable management, which is the purpose of the Act, as meaning the “use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being and for their health and safety...”</li> </ul> <p>Comment on this Resource Management Act provision has included a reflection that Maori cultural traditions have been protected and promoted under the Act, with less thought given to other aspects of culture in New Zealand and in regional communities.</p>
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<p><b>Defining cultural well-being</b></p>	<p>The Ministry for Culture and Heritage has defined cultural well-being as:</p> <p><i>the vitality that communities and individuals enjoy through:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>participation in recreation, creative and cultural activities; and</i></li> <li>▪ <i>the freedom to retain, interpret and express their arts, history, heritage and traditions.</i></li> </ul> <p>This definition is one that the Ministry has developed to suit Ministry requirements. While a number of councils, including regional councils, have engaged with, or adopted/ adapted the definition, councils and communities are coming to their own understandings of what cultural well-being might mean.</p> <p>Many regional councils are using the <i>identity</i> of their communities as the starting point in defining cultural well-being, based on ethnicity or history or sense of place. Different emphases depend on regional variations in values, beliefs, history, achievements, and celebrations of different cultures and diversity. This is far broader than just an analysis of demographics in the region, as shown in the “best practice” example below.</p> <hr/> <p><b><i>Best practice: Defining cultural well-being</i></b></p> <p><i>The Wellington Regional Strategy</i><sup>1</sup> is an example of regional planning which could be seen to be promoting cultural well-being definitions (implicitly rather than explicitly), through the recognition of:</p> <p><u>Issue 15 Projecting the region’s image</u>  <i>[“Campaigns such as “Absolutely Positively Wellington” ...have contributed to an improvement in the region’s image overall...”]</i></p> <p><u>Issue 19 Urban vitality and fizz – a sense of place</u>  <i>[“Strong communities have a sense of place or community buzz about them.... A strong sense of place will attract and retain people and businesses”]</i></p> <p><u>Issue 23 Social tolerance and integration</u>  <i>The role of retaining community “values” in order to maintain tolerance within an environment of economic growth and increasing population diversity.</i></p>
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<sup>1</sup> *Internationally Competitive Wellington. A Sustainable Economic Growth Framework for Our Region. Discussion Document* (nd. [2005]). Local government partners include Greater Wellington Regional Council.

	<p><i>These issues have been reflected in the outcomes developed, such as 'Lifestyle', 'Sense of Place' and 'Strong and Tolerant Communities'. A copy of the document can be obtained at <a href="http://www.wrs.govt.nz">www.wrs.govt.nz</a></i></p>
<p><b>Understanding cultural well-being</b></p>	<p>Some regional councils are using a variety of methods to understand what cultural well-being in their region could comprise, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing statistics and indicators that have traditionally been used to report annually against regional goals;</li> <li>• Community, stakeholder and focus group meetings/workshops;</li> <li>• Perceptions/attitudes surveys; and</li> <li>• Questionnaires.</li> </ul> <p>One approach that has been used by some regional councils is to present an initial understanding of cultural well-being for the region, as the council perceives it, in order to trigger responses. The use of terms such as “identify”, “values”, “beliefs” and “traditions” often elicit a more informed and useful response from community members. Use of descriptors like “vibrancy” are often ones which elicit a stronger and broader community response than, say, “cultural”.</p> <p>Cultural well-being can be considered from a range of different perspectives, such as those of young people, the aged, recreation groups, ethnic groups, the creative sector, and different hapu and iwi. What does cultural well-being mean to these groups? What are the common themes? What are the differences?</p> <hr/> <p><b><i>Best practice: Processes to achieve understanding of cultural well-being and outcomes</i></b></p> <p><i>The Auckland Regional Council has developed a background paper on “The role of Auckland Regional Council in funding cultural well-being”. This paper was brought about by specific concerns about the sustainability of funding for the Auckland Philharmonia, although it moves from that specific funding issue to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>examine definitions of cultural well-being (starting from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage’s definition);</i></li> <li>• <i>explore the overlaps between culture and recreation; and</i></li> <li>• <i>analyse what regional cultural events and organisations are funded by which Auckland territorial authorities and how this impacts on Auckland Regional Council funding/support rationales.</i></li> </ul>

	<p><i>This paper, which is a model for other regional councils to consider applying in their contexts, was developed for Auckland Regional Council internal use, but will be issued publicly in late December 2005 as a discussion paper. It is available by contacting Alan Johnson (alan.johnson@arc.govt.nz)</i></p>
<p><b>Where do we start?</b></p>	<p>Many regional councils are actively taking cultural well-being into account when developing their long-term council community plans, regional policy statements, and regional plans. In each case, there is an opportunity for the regional council to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. analyse community outcomes for reflections of cultural well-being (such as those included in the Wellington Regional Strategy “best practice” example);</li> <li>2. understand what cultural well-being means for the region;</li> <li>3. identify existing and potential ways to promote the cultural well-being of communities within existing functions and duties; and</li> <li>4. put in place means for measuring and monitoring the promotion of cultural well-being in the region.</li> </ol> <p>It can mean delving more deeply into concepts that have been identified in community outcomes – e.g. what does “rural lifestyle” mean? What does “regional identity” encompass?</p>
<p><b>Identify existing and potential ways for promotion of the cultural well-being of communities</b></p>	<p>Many regional councils already consciously recognise and actively promote the cultural well-being of their communities.</p> <p>Many have come to a closer understanding of this by considering the detail of their core functions and duties. Some examples are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public transport provision, through routes and timetables which are sympathetic to the way in which we conduct our lives.</li> <li>● The provision of facilities (such as regional parks, stadia).</li> <li>● Flood protection works to enhance cultural well-being through the planting of river banks with flax (harakeke) and toe toe. These can have iwi/hapu involvement in planting and harvesting.</li> <li>● The provision of services (such as harbour wardens).</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Best practice: Linking cultural well-being outcomes with activities</i></b></p> <p><i>Taranaki Regional Council has developed a suite of indicators that will be used to report on progress towards the achievement of Taranaki community outcomes. These indicators have been approved by the Future Taranaki Facilitation Group.</i></p>

	<p><i>The wider Future Taranaki Partners Group will use the agreed indicators as a basis for identifying and deciding on priorities for regional, city and district action. The process of agreeing on the indicators has been, in itself, an important way of building regional collaboration between councils around meeting the responsibilities and opportunities of the outcomes process. Further details on this process can be obtained from <a href="mailto:gray.severinsen@trc.govt.nz">gray.severinsen@trc.govt.nz</a></i></p>
<p><b>Identify and put in place means for measuring and monitoring the promotion of cultural well-being</b></p>	<p>Councils are required to report on progress made in their communities towards the four well-beings and the key outcomes identified by their communities.</p> <p>A number of regions, such as Taranaki, Canterbury, Bay of Plenty, Wellington and the Waikato are collaborating and taking a regional approach to gathering information across all of the well-beings. This will include use of new and existing survey data (such as the <i>Framework for Cultural Statistics</i> and <i>The Social Report</i>).</p> <p>Local Government New Zealand and central government departments and agencies such as the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and Statistics New Zealand, are, in different ways, contributing to the backdrop of statistical and indicator information from which councils can obtain ideas for their statutory reporting on measuring and monitoring. There is a strong atmosphere of positive collaboration and understanding between central and local government in relation to making data sets available and relevant to regional councils.</p> <hr/> <p><b><i>Best practice: Measuring and monitoring cultural well-being</i></b></p> <p><i>The Canterbury Region Community Plans Group, consisting of a number of district councils and the Canterbury Regional Council, has been working with Statistics New Zealand to develop a core set of measures that will assist local authorities to monitor common community well-beings. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage is providing comment on the indicators being developed for measuring cultural well-being at local and regional levels.</i></p> <p><i>Background document, updates and further information are available at: <a href="http://www.stats.govt.nz/statistics-by-area/regional-statistics/approaches-to-monitoring-comm-outcomes.htm">http://www.stats.govt.nz/statistics-by-area/regional-statistics/approaches-to-monitoring-comm-outcomes.htm</a></i></p>

<p><b>An integrated approach</b></p> 	<p>An integrated approach to the well-beings is a pragmatic way to confront reality – this after all is how we live our daily lives. For example, when a regional council considers particular policies to manage water quality there are often cultural, environmental, social and economic factors at play.</p> <p>Regional councils are recognising that their functions and duties commonly relate to two or more of the well-beings. They are describing these relationships in a holistic sense rather than simply identifying activities as commitments to a single well-being, or ticking boxes with little indication of how a well-being will be affected.</p>
<p><b>A community-wide approach</b></p>	<p>Regional councils are not alone when it comes to promoting the cultural well-being of their communities. Territorial authorities also have a statutory obligation to do so. In some cases, territorial authorities within regions will expect support for regional cultural well-being activity from their regional council. This support can range from co-funding to levels of support with fewer fiscal, policy or resource implications.</p> <p>Many of the contributions to cultural well-being come from the wider community. Sports clubs, societies, church groups, voluntary groups, businesses and local marae play a hugely important role in promoting cultural well-being. Increasingly, regional councils are recognising the place of wider community initiatives (like investments in festivals or stadia), and where possible working alongside or in support of them.</p> <p>Central government also has a role in contributing to the cultural well-being of communities. There have been suggestions that the best way for central government to engage with local authorities is at a regional level and through the regional councils. The direction of Cabinet enables departments to engage with councils at a regional, or sub-regional, or local level, as they consider appropriate (Cabinet Minute (04) 12/15).</p> <hr/> <p><b><i>Best practice: A community-wide approach</i></b></p> <p><i>The Tararua District Council is facilitating a “key stakeholder” approach to achieving its community well-being goals, including the involvement of community representatives, other relevant regional and local players, and central government representatives. This group of key stakeholders will contribute to the development of an achievable action plan relating to the community outcomes relevant to cultural well-being. Different groups of key stakeholders are being brought together for each of the well-being areas.</i></p>

	<p><i>Although a territorial authority, the regional process adopted by the Tararua District Council may be of interest to regional councils and to other regions. The outcomes developed through this process facilitated by the Tararua District Council will also be used by the Horizons Regional Council.</i></p>
<p><b>Linking cultural well-being through LTCCP and RMA planning processes</b></p>	<p>The commitments to cultural well-being in long-term council community plans do not live in a vacuum. Regional councils demonstrate these commitments as part of their core functions and duties.</p> <p>As the time comes to review regional policy statements, regional plans and approaches to other functions and duties, councils are taking into account the stated outcomes and commitments given in their long-term council community plans. Where a regional council professes a commitment to “protect the identity and character of its region”, for example, that commitment is then reflected as appropriate in the regional policy statement and other regional plans.</p> <p>This alignment of commitments across key regional council documents may enable councils to reconsider what cultural well-being means with respect to, for example, sustainable management, air quality, water quality, managing hazardous substances, and protecting landscapes.</p>
<p><b>Further Information and how can I comment on this paper?</b></p>	<p>Further information and resources related to cultural well-being are available from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage at the website <a href="http://www.mch.govt.nz/cwb">www.mch.govt.nz/cwb</a> or contact us by email on <a href="mailto:culturalwell-being@mch.govt.nz">culturalwell-being@mch.govt.nz</a>.</p>
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	<p>Wellington Regional Council)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members of the MCH Cultural Well-being Oversight Group (Peter Tennent, Alick Shaw, Roger Blakeley)</li></ul>
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