What Matters Manawatū?

Getting to the heart of what makes this place home

Environmental Scan

April 2023

MANAWATU DISTRICT COUNCIL

Make your mark on MANAWATŪ

What Matters Manawatū?

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Executive Summary

This Environmental Scan document sets out key trends, and internal and external influences that will affect the Manawatū District Council's (MDC and "Council") Long-term Plan 2024-2034.

Local Government is in a period of significant legislative reform, including in relation to the delivery of three waters services, resource management, emergency management, building consent services and waste management. Council is required to make assumptions about the impacts of these reforms on the composition of Council, and the roles and responsibilities it performs.

New legislation increasingly requires local authorities to partner with tangata whenua and to provide improved opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government decision-making processes. Council is also increasingly required to think and plan regionally, including through regional spatial planning under the new resource management legislation.

The data and analysis contained in this report will help inform Council when setting its vision and aspirations, and in drafting the significant forecasting assumptions that will form the basis for the Long-term Plan 2024-2034. This Environmental Scan will help inform Council's pre-engagement. For example, Council may wish to engage with the community in relation to its role or response to issues such as housing affordability, community safety (including CBD security) and climate change.

The population of the Manawatū District is forecast to continue to grow, but at a slower rate than in previous years (approximately 1% growth per year to 2030, compared to 1.6% growth per annum between 2010 and 2020). Our population is ageing, with the 65+ age group as a total proportion of our Region's population projected to rise to 23% by 2033 and 25% by 2053.

Housing affordability remains an issue, with the Manawatū District statistics on percentage of income spent on a mortgage, percentage of annual income spent on rent, and the number of years taken to save a 20% deposit on a house all sitting close to par with the National average. Declining affordability of housing has led to a significant increase in the number of applicants on the social housing register.

The rural and village areas of the Manawatū do not currently have access to public transport. However, Council has provisionally agreed (through the 2023/24 Annual Plan) to a request from Neighbourhood Support Manawatū for a contribution towards the establishment costs for a rural transport service. Greater access to public transport will have the added benefit of reducing carbon emissions from transport.

The agriculture, forestry and fishing industry remains the largest sector of the Manawatū economy and the largest employer in the District, but its dominance as a proportion of the total economy is reducing (from 20.4% in 2015 to 18.2% in 2019 to 16.5% in 2022). Employment in Manawatū-Whanganui is forecast to grow slightly slower than the national average over 2023-2025, as the national economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

MDC is continuing to focus its growth planning on further intensification of Feilding, and growth at the edges of Feilding. Building consent and subdivision consent data shows a concentration of development within Feilding, and strong growth within the villages of Halcombe, Hiwinui, Rongotea, Sanson and Himatangi Beach. Review of the Feilding Framework Plan is required as MDC responds to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020.

Climate change is impacting the Manawatu District in several ways, including through extreme weather events, land slips and more frequent droughts. MDC is developing its Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan that will set clear strategic direction outlining how MDC will respond to climate change and national emissions reduction targets, and partner with the community to improve environmental outcomes for the district.

MDC adopted its new Waste Management and Minimisation Plan in June 2022. Operational expenditure and level of service changes resulting from the adoption of the WMMP will be included in Council's Annual Plan 2023-24 and 10 Year Plan 2024-2034 as appropriate.

MDC is required to respond to new national direction under the Resource Management Act 1991, including National Policy Statements and Environmental Standards for Freshwater Management, Highly Productive Land, Indigenous Biodiversity, Urban Development and Plantation and Exotic Carbon Farming. These NPSs impose new roles and responsibilities on MDC, the resourcing of which must be considered through the upcoming Long-term Plan 2024/34. NPSs (and their link to the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme and the pricing of agricultural emissions) are also expected to influence land use development and land use change in the District, including de-intensification of primary production, possible land conversions from primary production to forestry, and changes to changes to the rules relating to rural subdivision.

This Environmental Scan provides a snap-shot in time. Council will continue to evaluate new national legislation and strategies, regional projects and local issues and trends throughout the development of the Long-term Plan 2024-2034. Pre-engagement with the Manawatū Community will assist Council in refining its understanding of the key issues impacting on community wellbeing and in identifying options to address those issues.

Setting the Scene

An Environmental Scan looks at what changes are likely to affect the future internal and external operating environment for Manawatū District Council (Council). This Environmental Scan is designed to encourage thinking and discussion and will inform the development of the Manawatū District Council's 10 Year Plan for 2024-2034. It examines existing and emerging trends, key issues, policy and regulatory changes and other factors that may affect the Manawatū Community and council service delivery.

The Environmental Scan is intended as a starting point to guide the strategic planning process for the Long-Term Plan. It draws on knowledge and information from a wide variety of sources, which are referenced throughout the document. In some cases this data is historic trend data, sometimes it is current at the time the Environmental Scan was finalised, and in some cases Council has used data and trends to prepare future forecasts. Council does not intend to update the Environmental Scan over time, but the forecasting assumptions contained within Council's Ten Year Plan will be continually updated up until adoption.

The Manawatū District

The Manawatū District covers 256,693 hectares and stretches from Rangiwāhia in the north to Himatangi Beach in the south. It shares a boundary with Palmerston North City in the south-east. The western boundary of the District follows the Rangitikei River and the eastern boundary is the Ruahine Ranges. Within the Manawatū District are a range of natural features, including the Ruahine Ranges, Pohangina Valley and the West Coast beaches and sand dunes.

Partnering with tangata whenua

The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) requires Councils to maintain and improve opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government decision-making processes. Councils are also required to foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of a local authority. Further, whenever a Council is considering a significant decision in relation to land or a body of water, then it is required to take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.

Central government continues to release policies and legislation that is increasing, and strengthening, the requirement for its own ministries, and local government, to work with iwi Māori in policy development and specific decision making processes. The exposure draft for the Natural and Built Environments Act (the proposed replacement for the Resource Management Act) is an example that uses language and features that are similar to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020. In some respects it goes further with the formation of a Regional Planning Committee that includes mana whenua representatives. These are pleasant signs of a nation whose thinking and application is maturing with respect to the country's founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Iwi Māori generally welcome the strengthened application of Te Tiriti o Waitangi especially with having more say in environmental issues. However it has been said that it does challenge their capacity, and sometimes capability to respond appropriately; especially if the expectation is that participation will be via volunteer energy. Unpaid participation is an unrealistic expectation that will be reflected in the commitment to the activity.

After the 2021 changes to Local Electoral Act 2001, Council voted on whether to establish a Māori Ward. Council's original resolution to not establish a Māori Ward for the 2022 triennial election resulted in the dissolution of the marae consultative committee (Ngā Manu Tāiko). Although the decision was later overturned and the inaugural councillor elected into the Ngā Tapuae o Matangi Māori Ward, the tension remains. Council is working to rebuild relationships with iwi Māori and as yet there is no formal structure to replace the previous committee.
The reformation of a collective body of iwi Māori representatives will partly contribute to Council's compliance with the LGA and other current, and future central government legislation

and policies. Council staff are working slowly with marae and hapū members to regain some trust and co-develop a relationship structure with tikanga or protocols that will be acceptable to all. From early discussions it is clear to all that the previous consultative model is no longer acceptable, nor fit for use with central government policies. To avoid previous mistakes and further erosion of trust, the design will need to include a decision making process that ensures that any decisions made are carefully considered and effected by Council.

Engaging in a genuine and meaningful manner is an expectation that everyone shares whenever they are invited or required to work alongside another, and iwi Māori have a similar expectation when working alongside Council. The Council's policy, Te Kīwai o te kete, provides useful guidance for working with iwi Māori. Ongoing reference and adherence to the policy will keep the Council headed safely in the right direction until the co-developed model is finalised.

Meaningful engagement includes enabling iwi Māori, via resourcing, to be at the table making decisions. Resourcing for engagement and administrative support is included in Te Kīwai policy. Resourcing should be included within any new project that Council initiates as well as general engagement or support that may not be aligned to a specific project or output. The types of support that they may require to make decision making easier has yet to be confirmed, but early discussions raised that smaller sub-groups with relevant expertise could be initiated to explore any proposed policy development or works.

Clearly documented guidance and expectations from Council and Iwi Māori will ensure that everyone is safe, and working alongside each other in an open and transparent manner. Keeping each other accountable will ensure that the relationship grows and matures, while regular updating of the binding document that it remains fit for use.

Population Growth

StatsNZ estimated the population of the Manawatū District to be 33,900, as at 30 June 2022[1] . This estimate represents a population increase of 5.6% from the 30 June 2020 population estimate of 32,100.

In 2020 it was estimated that 55% of the District's population lives in Feilding, with the remaining 45% of the population living in the villages and rural areas. More information on the distribution of the District's population will be available after the March 2023 Census.

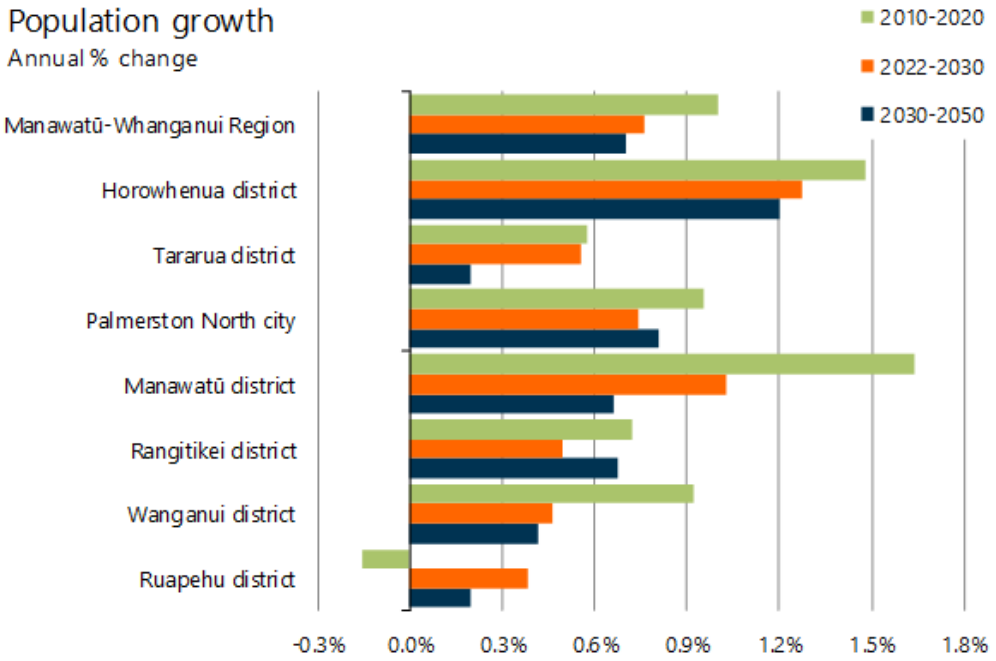
The Manawatū District had the highest population growth rate in the Region over the period from 2010 to 2020, growing at an average of 1.6% per year (Infometrics, January 2023).

Infometrics has prepared household and population projections for the Manawatū-Whanganui Region over the period from 2020 to 2054. Three projection scenarios (high, medium and low) have been developed based on different combinations of net migration, fertility and mortality (Infometrics, January 2023).

The key drivers for population growth in the past decade have been shifts in international net migration, the long-term ageing of New Zealand's population and relatively steady birth rates (with a growing population offsetting a declining fertility rate). Deaths are projected to outnumber births in New Zealand in the 2050's, at which point any increase in New Zealand's population will be entirely reliant on net migration.

Over the period from 2020 to 2030, Infometrics has forecast that the Manawatū District will grow at an average of 1.0% per year under the medium scenario, following the Horowhenua District's growth rate of 1.3% per year (refer to Figure 1). Over the period from 2030-2054, Infometrics forecasts a population growth rate for the Manawatū District of 0.7% per year under the medium scenario, behind the Horowhenua District (1.2% per year) and Palmerston North City (0.8% per year) (Infometrics, January 2023).

According to Infometrics' Senior Economist, the main driver for slowing population growth rates forecast for the Manawatū District are population dynamics at the national level, including a shift from high net migration to moderate net migration, and lower fertility rates. The relative decline in the population growth rate in the Manawatū District relative to Palmerston North City reflects a risk of reduced land supply in the Manawatū as a result of the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land, and an increased supply of land coming available in Palmerston North (N. Brunsdon, personal communication, January 30, 2023).



[1] The StatsNZ subnational population estimates are only provisional. Final 2022 The subnational population estimates at 30 June 2021 and 2022 are both provisional. Final 2021 and revised 2022 (provisional) estimates will be published with the 30 June 2023 (provisional) estimates in October 2023.

Population levels for the Manawatū District, based on Stats NZ population estimate in 2022, and Infometrics projections, under the three scenarios to 2054 are as follows:

Scenario	2022	2030	2040	2054
Low	33,900	35,551	36,149	36,027
Medium	33,900	36,782	39,076	41,972
High	33,900	38,021	42,041	48,191

Household Size and Household Growth

Infometrics have prepared theoretical household projections for the Manawatū-Whanganui Region over the period from 2022 to 2054. Estimates of household size are based on projected changes in the sex and age structure of the population and trends in household formation. The actual number of households is dependent on a sufficient number of dwellings being available (Infometrics, January 2023).

Average household size forecasts for the Manawatū District (under Infometrics' medium projection scenario) are as follows:

Year	2022	2030	2040	2054
Average household size	2.55	2.57	2.56	2.64

Annual average household growth forecasts for the Manawatū District (under Infometrics' medium projection scenario) are as follows:

Period	2022-2030	2030-2040	2040-2054
Annual Average household growth	124	92	46

Iwi and Māori context

The local Māori landscape comprises of a wide range of marae, pā, hapū, iwi and collectives who reside in, or express an interest in the Manawatū District; as listed in the following table:

Hapū	Iwi	Marae
Ngāti Tahuriwakanui	Ngāti Kauwhata	Aorangi
Ngāti Tūroa	Ngāti Kauwhata	Te Iwa Tekau mā Iwa
Ngāti Hinepare	Ngāti Kauwhata	Kauwhata
Ngāti Pikiahu	Ngāti Raukawa	Poupatatē
Ngāti Pikiahu Ngāti Waewae	Ngāti Raukawa	Te Tikanga
	Ngāti Tūwharetoa	
Ngāti Rangatahi Ngāti Matakore	Ngāti Maniapoto	Te Hiiri
	Ngāti Maniapoto	

Ngāti Manomano	Ngāti Raukawa	Taumata o te Rā
Ngāti Parewahawaha	Ngāti Raukawa	Parewahawaha
Ngāti Te Au	Ngāti Raukawa	
Ngāti Rangitepaia	Rangitāne	Te Rangimārie
	Ngāti Raukawa	Te Kōtuku

Organisation	Iwi
Te Rūnanga o Raukawa Incorporated, (Includes all hapū listed above, from the iwi shown on the right)	Ngāti Kauwhata
	Ngāti Maniapoto
	Ngāti Raukawa
	Ngāti Tūwharetoa
Te Roopū Hokowhitu Charitable Trust (Includes most of the hapū listed above, from the iwi shown on the right)	Ngāti Kauwhata
	Ngāti Raukawa
	Ngāti Tūwharetoa
	Ngāti Maniapoto
Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngāti Kauwhata	Ngāti Kauwhata
Rangitāne o Manawatū	Rangitāne
Te Rūnanga o Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa	Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa
Te Maru o Ruahine Trust	Ngāti Hauiti
Rauhuia Environmental Services	Ngāti Hauiti
Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Incorporated	Ngāti Toa
Muaūpoko Tribal Authority Incorporated	Muaūpoko

Treaty Settlements

The Treaty of Waitangi Settlement processes for hapū and iwi residing in the Manawatū District are ongoing. Rangitāne o Manawatu settled their Treaty claims in 2016. Ngāti Hauiti completed their hearings in 2021 and are now working through the negotiation process for settling their Treaty claims grievances. This is a complex process that can be completed within 3-5 years, but is often longer. The hearings for the iwi of Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Kauwhata, Ngāti Maniapoto and Ngāti Tūwharetoa located in the district started in 2020, with the wider iwi hearings due to be completed in 2023.

Papakāinga

In recent years there has been an increase in interest from hapū and iwi members for establishing papakāinga. As with many other people in our communities, affordability is a driver, with central government creating opportunities to increase the housing stock around the country. A common theme from interested parties is the desire to move back to traditional communal living where the extended whānau lives close and support each other; similar to the village raising a child concept. They want to live closer to others that share the same values and hopes for the future of their tamariki, whānau, marae, te reo, tikanga, kawa and other aspects of te ao Māori. Council advocated in its submission on the Natural and Built Environment Bill that care should be taken not to limit papakāinga housing options and that this topic be explored further with Māori.

Social and Cultural Profile

The Manawatū District Council is developing a data set that captures the "pulse" of the community. Topics covered include (but are not limited to) transport, crime, education, health, housing, technology, economic growth, community wellbeing, affordability, recreational activity, technology, and access. This data will highlight community and economic development opportunities so that Council can consider how it can partner, deliver or influence activities that help build strong, healthy and prosperous communities.

Demographic Profile

The 65-years-and-older age group has been Manawatū-Whanganui's Regions (the Region) fastest growing in the past two decades, growing 42% between 2003 and 2018.

Infometrics predicts the 65+ age group to continue to be the fastest growing, increasing by 2.7% per annum between 2018 and 2033 as the last of the baby boomer generation transitions into the age group (Infometrics, January 2023).

The 65-years-and-older age group accounted for 18% of the Region's population in 2018. The 65-years and older age group is projected to rise to 23% of the Region's total population by 2033, and 25% by 2053. Disproportionately fast growth in the 65-years and older age group means that younger age groups are expected to decline as a share of the population, despite growing in number. The 30-64-year old population in the Region is projected to grow gently over the next 30 years, from 42% in 2018 to 41% in 2053 (Infometrics, January 2023).

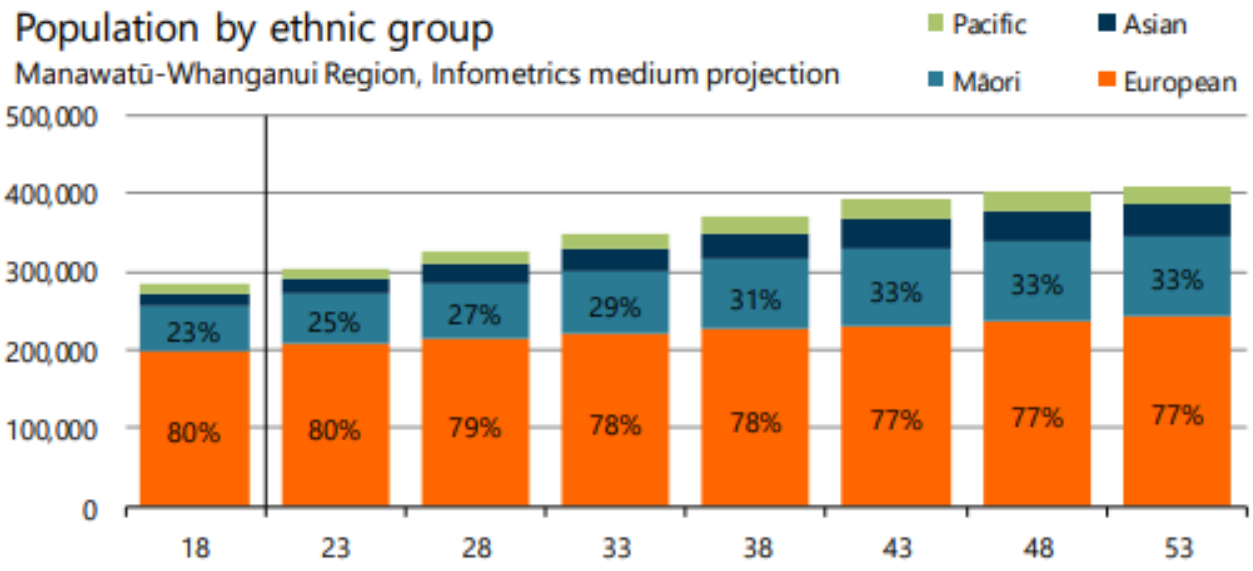
Ethnicity

The Manawatu District is multicultural and ethnic diversity is projected to continue growing in Manawatū-Whanganui, and nationally.

This reflects that non-European populations tend to be younger and have higher fertility, the increasing diversity of migrants, and the expected strength of net migration. People can identify with more than one ethnicity, so ethnic shares of the population add up to more than 100% (Infometrics, January 2023).

People identifying with European ethnicity accounted for 197,900 (80%) of the region's population in 2018, and are projected to grow modestly to 242,200 (77%). Māori make up the second largest ethnic group, and are projected to grow strongly from 57,400 (23%) in 2018 to 102,700 (33%) in 2053.

The population identifying with Asian ethnicity is relatively small in Manawatū-Whanganui, but is projected to grow the fastest from 16,700 (6.8%) to 40,200 (12.8%). There is also a small proportion of other ethnicities represented within the District.



The benefits of diversity in terms of social and cultural wellbeing is enhanced when inequality is low and there are strong formal and informal connections across diverse groups. However, where increased diversity is coupled with inequality of income or opportunity between people of different ethnicities, it can create de facto segregation and have a detrimental impact on trust, participation, community cohesion, social capital and inter-ethnic relations (Taituara, 2021).

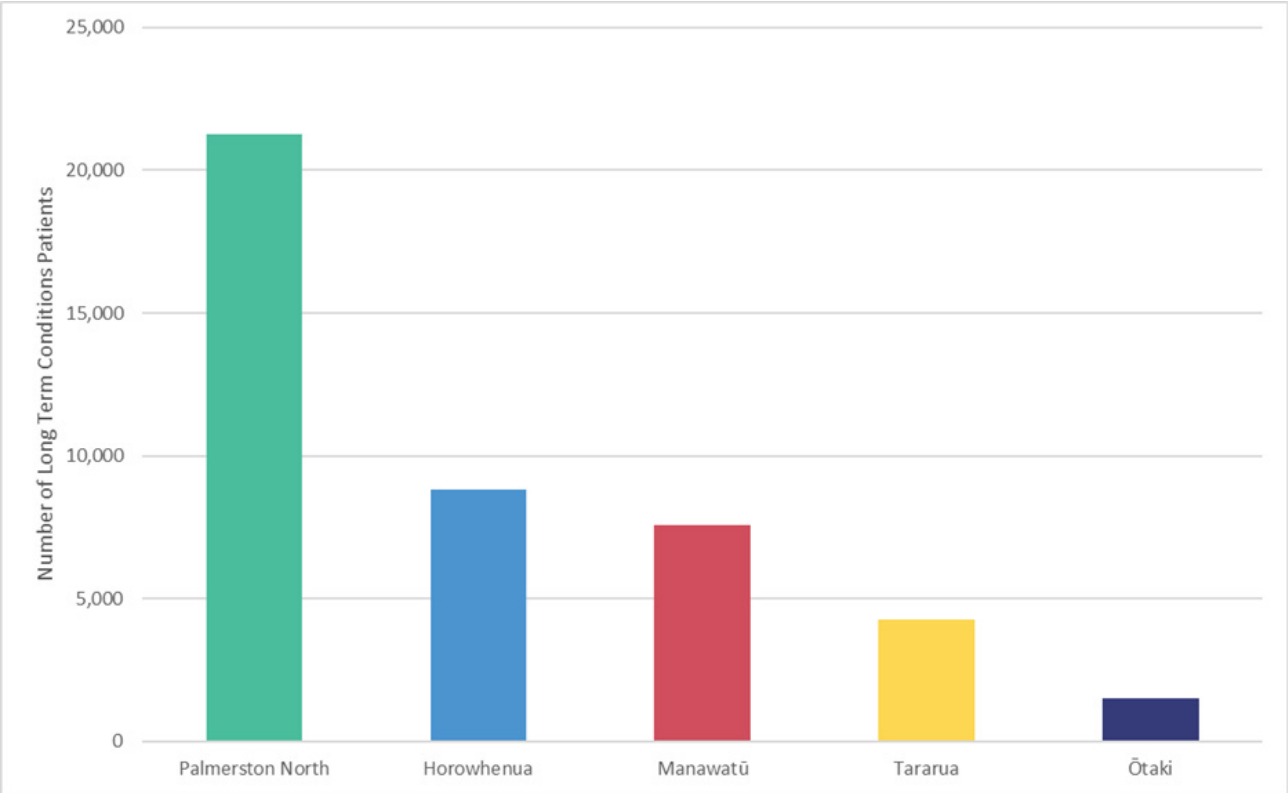
Communities are also facing unprecedented change in the external context, including in relation to resource use, environmental change and extreme weather events, the nature of work, and media and technology (Taituara, 2021). Strengthening connections within and across communities is vital to increase trust, enhance equity and increase well-being for all (Taituara, 2021).

Health

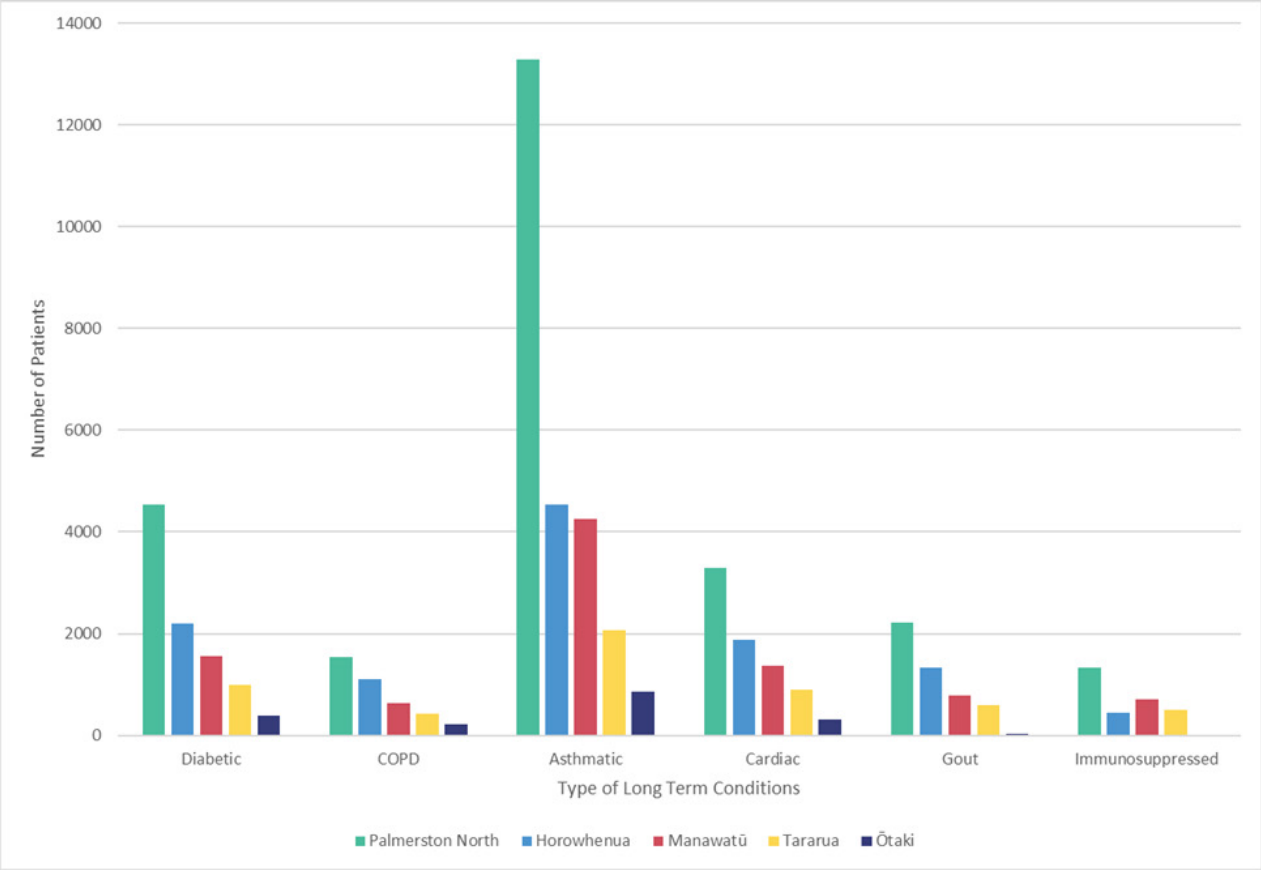
When looking at health in the district there are many factors that contribute to this. In the 2018 Census there were questions asked around mould and damp homes. 13% of households have mould over an A4 size sometimes or always. 2% of households are always damp and a further 15% are sometimes damp.

As at the 2018 Census, 14% of the Manawatū residents (15 years and over) answered that they were regular smokers, this has reduced from 21% in the 2006 Census. 26% have said they are ex-smoker which is an increase of 5% since 2006. 60% say they never smoked regularly, which is an increase of 9% since 2006. The Census does not currently ask any questions around vaping and does not plan to for Census 2023. The long-term statistics and health implications are currently known.

THINK Hauora provided some data on patients with long-term conditions across their region. When looking at the THINK Hauora region as a whole (Figure 3) there are 45,000 patients with long term conditions, the majority of these are between the ages on 50 and 79. With a small spike also at the 10-19-year-olds. Of the total people with long term conditions 9,089 identify as Māori across the whole of the THINK Hauora region. The number patients with long-term conditions in Manawatū are 7,565.



Each illness below is classified as a long term conditions. COPD is Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, this is an illness that affects the lungs such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis.



Pandemics and other Major Events

COVID-19 demonstrated how disruptive global pandemics can impact the ability of societies to function. As of 03 April 2023, there have been 2.27 million cases reported in New Zealand, of which 1,694 have resulted in deaths that are directly attributable to COVID-19 (Ministry of Health, 2023a). Data shows that the severity of the virus increases with age, with those aged over 60 being much more likely to suffer serious health complications. There are also a small number of individuals who suffer "long-COVID" – health impacts that affect an individuals ability to return to normal levels of functioning.

The government's response to the presence of the virus has had wide-scale economic impacts, and has contributed to a reduction in building (due to difficulties in sourcing construction materials and high costs), a restricted labour market (due to a reduction in migration) and rising inflation (Treasury, 2023). These issues continue to be felt despite the relaxation of social restrictions, partly due to the pandemic's continued effects overseas. The shortage in the labour market is contributing to low unemployment across the country, and this has a disproportionate impact on the ability of small rural districts to attract skilled labour.

International trade has also been negatively impacted. Of note, China's social restrictions put in place in 2022 restricted the volume of products that they could import, which had an adverse effect on dairy prices – an issue of particular concern to the Manawatu District where the local economy relies heavily on farming. However, the District's reliance on farming has the positive outcome of reducing its reliance on visitors for economic movement.

The efficiency and resilience of supply chains are put under stress during major events, and this subsequently affects the ability of businesses to operate. The New Zealand Productivity Commission (2023) noted that it is the concurrence of multiple international events that are the main threat to New Zealand's supply chains. The last year has seen COVID-19, major weather events and the war in Ukraine all occuring simultaneously, creating a lot of complexity for industries and sectors and impacting their ability to rely on established supply chains.

In response to COVID-19, the Government implemented restrictions across the country, including several lockdowns that prohibited the movement of people and affected the ability to trade. The country now has an increased resilience to the virus, with practices that circumnavigate social restrictions (e.g. remote work, online trade) now being more widespread and accepted than they were prior to 2019. The likelihood of social restrictions being reimposed (to a similar degree as previously done) is declining due to increased vaccination rates and improvements in the Government's contact tracing capability. Over 89% of those aged 12 and over have now received the primary course (first and second dose) of the vaccine (Ministry of Health, 2023).

MDC could mitigate the impacts of future social restrictions by adjusting the funding split between rates and user pays for Council facilities in the 2024/34 Long-Term Plan. In the event of wide-scale restrictions that force council facilities to temporarily close, costs associated with operating the Makino Aquatic Centre would be reduced as energy and causal/seasonal costs would be avoided. This would offset some of the loss in revenue associated with closure of the pool.

Other pandemics in the future will have the capacity to severly disrupt the health of people and the economy, although they are obviously difficult to predict. A study by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found that the likelihood of an event in similar scale to COVID-19 occuring in any given year is around 2% (Marani, Katul, Pan, & Parolari, 2021).

Food Insecurity

Global food insecurity is increasingly rising and the climate phenomena contributes partly to it. Scientists have warned that global warming is influencing weather patterns, causing heat waves, heavy rainfall, and droughts. These impact food production and supply. According to the World Bank rising food prices since 2021 have been a major factor in pushing approximately 30 million additional people in low-income countries toward food insecurity (The World Bank, 2022).
The way food is produced also has an impact on the environment and may potentially trigger food insecurity. The World Bank estimates that the global food system is responsible for about a third of greenhouse gas emissions—second only to the energy sector; it is the number one source of methane and biodiversity loss (The World Bank, 2022). It is imperative to create a balance between reducing emissions from food production and ensuring that that the agricultural sector is adequately equipped to utilise novel processes, tools and methodologies in food production and processing.

Recently, Cyclone Gabrielle devastated crops in regions considered the country's food baskets with experts predicting that it could take years to return to normality. Consequently, there are serious concerns about food supply within New Zealand arising from the huge destruction of food of crops within those regions.
New Zealand's Centre for Climate Action on Agricultural Emissions in its 2022 budget allocated $338.7 million over 4 years to strengthen the role of research and development in getting new tools and technology to reduce on-farm emissions to farmers quicker. MDC will continue to explore avenues to support primary industries and small businesses to increase food security by advocating for government policies and funding to drive food waste reduction and supporting food rescue initiatives.

Access

Across the Manawatū there is limited access to high-speed internet. Fiber internet is currently only available in some towns across the region such as Feilding and parts of Sanson, Kimbolton, and Rongotea. There is fiber planned for Himatangi Beach. The majority of rural Manawatū only have access to wireless or in some cases ADSL which are significantly slower and less reliable.

The following data is based on questions asked in the 2018 Census, once 2023 Census data is available this data can be updated and compared.

Across the whole Manawatū region 96% of the population has access to a vehicle as at the March 2018 Census. People living in central Feilding are less likely to have access to a vehicle and in Central Feilding this reduces to 86%.

The following shows access to other basic amenities for the Manawatū population:

97%
have access to water

99%
have access to electricity

99%
have access to heating

The following is about travel times in our district.

4 mins
drive time on average to a primary school, varying from 1 mins to 20 mins

10 mins
drive time on average to a secondary school, varying from 1 min to 47 mins

23 mins
drive time on average to a to a public hospital, varying from 13 mins to 53 mins

10 mins
drive time on average to a supermarket, varying from 1min to 47 mins

Considering a significant portion of Manawatū is rural the varying travel times are not unexpected.

When looking at the 2018 Census 1% of the total Manawatū District households don't have access to any kind of telecommunications, this includes internet, a cell phone or a telephone.

87%
have access to a cell phone/mobile

67%
have access to a telephone/landline

80%
have access to the internet

Education

We have 22 Early Childhood Education faculties and 25 Schools across the Manawatū District.

Across the Manawatū region we have some schools that are at or near capacity, most of these schools have enrolment scheme to manage their growth. The Ministry of Education will consider in zone growth as well as the capacities of adjacent schools when considering options for any growth in our community.

The majority of our schools are within the Feilding Catchment which consider a steady and stable catchment in the Ministry of Education Network Plans.

From the Network plan we know that as of 2020 roughly 33% of secondary students are leaving the catchment to attend secondary schools in Palmerston North as they have different options to what are in Manawatū. Around 7% attend secondary schools outside the Manawatū and Palmerston North districts. Conversely a significant number of students from outside the catchment attend high school in Feilding approximately 32%.

In September of 2022 Associate Minister of Education Kelvin Davis announced that Te Kura o Kauwhata will be established in 2023, previously this kura has been operating as a satellite of an established Kura in Ōtaki. There are two other kura/schools in the region that offer a Māori medium provision.

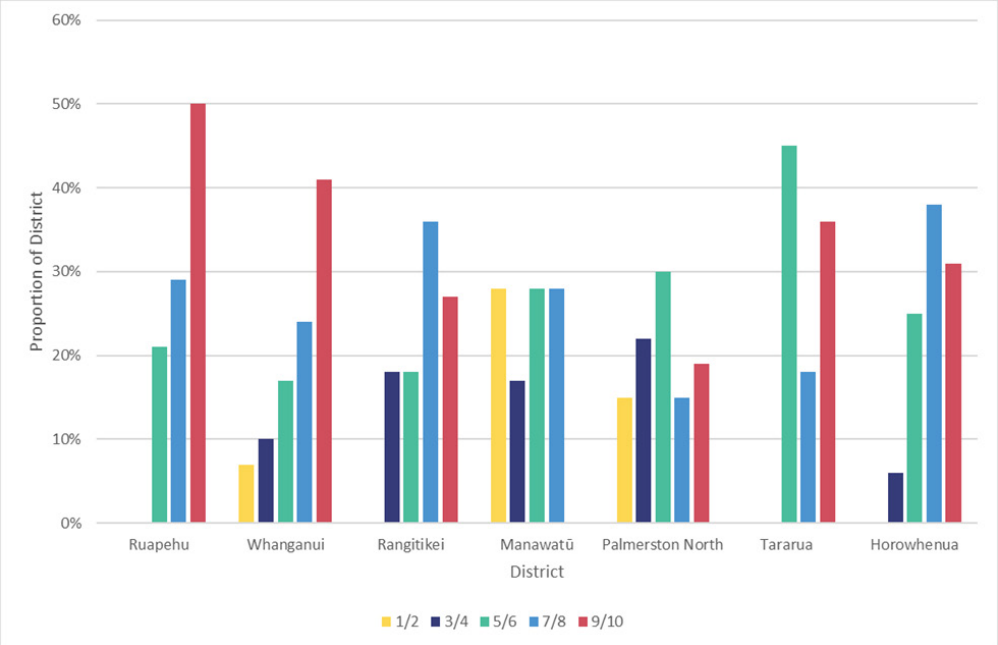
Deprivation

The graph below shows the deprivation index grouped this is calculated from Dot loves Data's Dynamic deprivation index dashboard. 1/2 is a community with the least deprivation and 9/10 is a community with the most deprivation.

The Manawatū District deprivation index has been reducing steadily since 2013. There is still a significant gap between those that have the highest deprivation and those with the lowest.

While the Manawatū District has an even variation compared to other regions, we do see the areas with high deprivation have less home ownership and a higher rate of households with no internet access across all regions looked at.

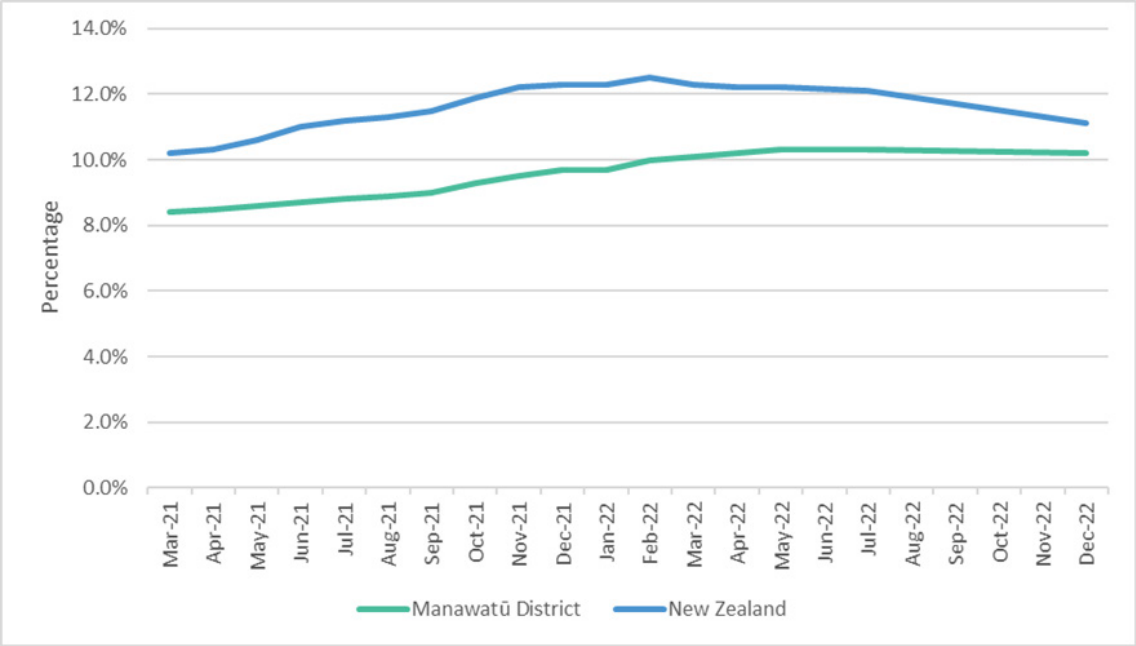
When looking at New Zealand as a whole the median net worth for household as disproportionately grown. Although the distribution of wealth has remained unchanged since Stats NZ began its net worth survey in the year ended June 2015, wealthy households continue to see greater increases in the value of their wealth. While the median net worth of the wealthiest 20 percent of New Zealand households (quintile 5) increased by $313,000 in the last three years to $2.02 million for the year ended June 2021, median net worth of the bottom 20 percent of households (quintile 1) increased by $3,000 during the same period to $11,000. (Statistics New Zealand, March 2022)



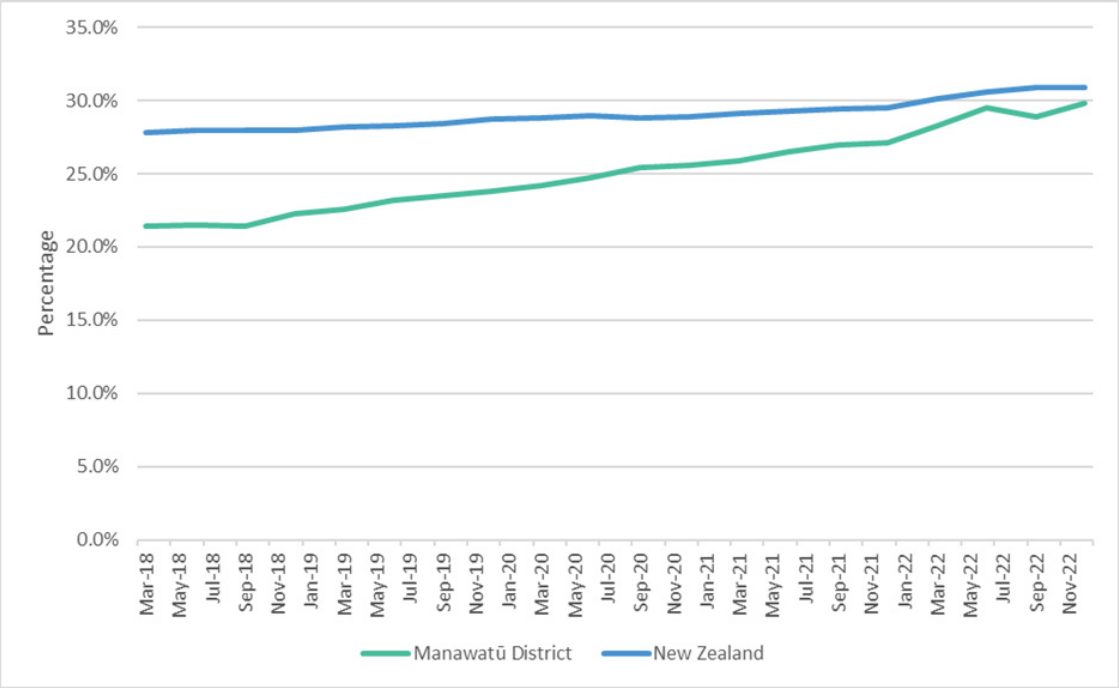
Housing Affordability

Based on the 2018 Census the community of Feilding Central has the lowest home ownership at 35%. The community of Mt Taylor has the highest home ownership at 62%.

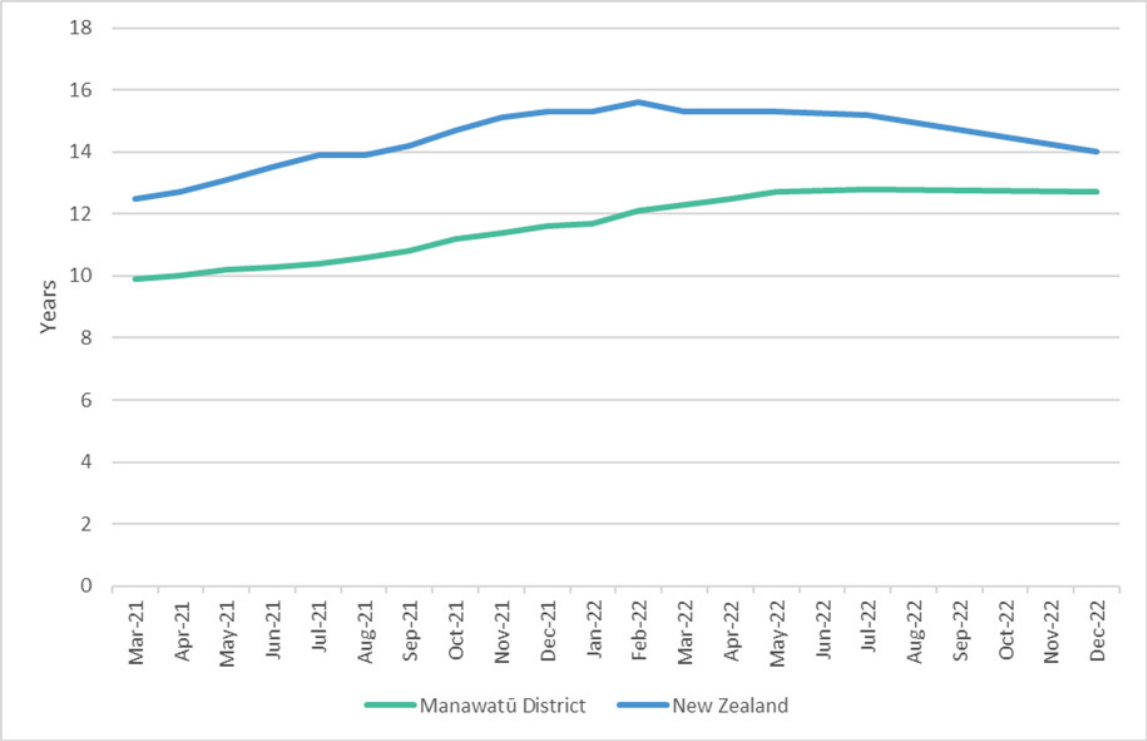
The Manawatū District has a home ownership rate of 50%. Between 2013 and 2018 Censuses this has reduced by 8%. Compared with the national average of 40.8% the Manawatū District has a higher rate of home ownership. These percentages are based on people who stated they owned or partially owned their home; this does not include people whose homes are in a trust. For homeowners the percentage of their annual income they spend of their mortgage has risen by close to 2% since 2021, the majority of this growth was seen throughout 2021 with a stabilisation in 2022. This is based on an assumption of purchasing a median house price with a 20% deposit with a mortgage over 30 years with a fixed interest rate of 4% (Dot Loves Data). Based on the current higher interest rate of between 6-7% we would anticipate that this would be significantly higher.



For renters the percentage of their annual income spent on rent has seen its highest point since 2018 and we are now close to being on par with the national average and sit at the same percentage as Palmerston North City.

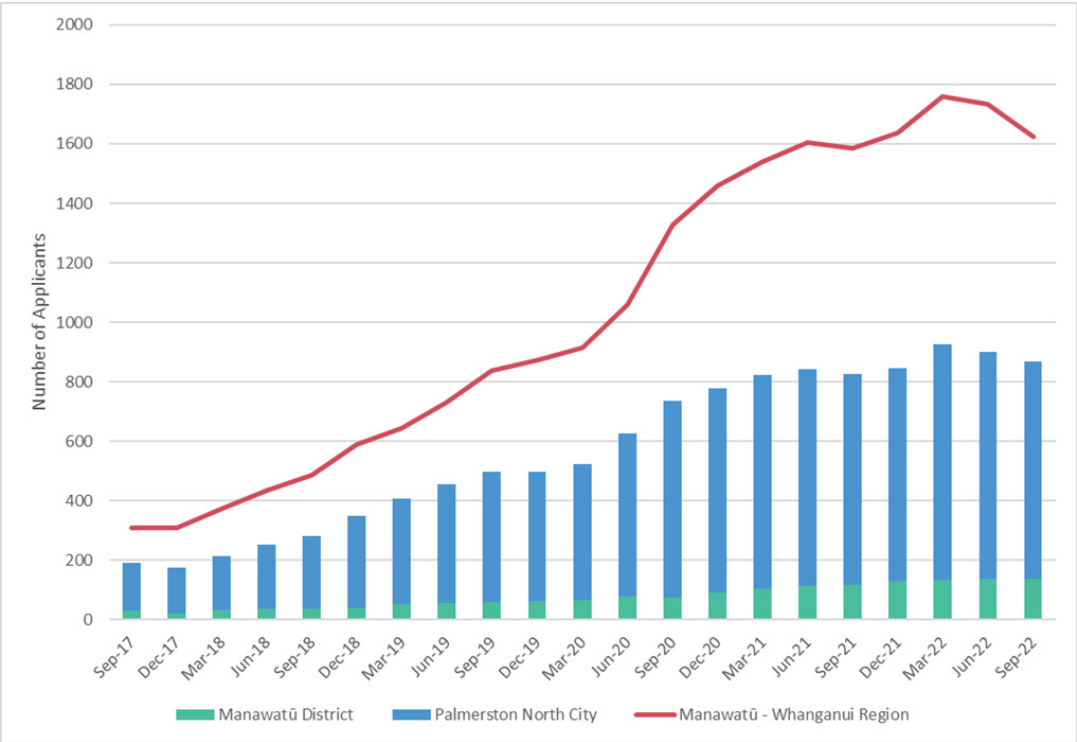


The following shows the number of years it would take to save a 20% deposit on a house in the Manawatū District based on the median house price. There has been a stabilisation of this rate across most of 2022, we currently are sitting close to par with the National average and on par with Palmerston North City Council which is also at 12 Years.



The number of years to save for a 20% deposit.

As seen in the previous environmental scan, the declining affordability of housing has led to a significant increase in the number of applicants on the social housing register. There was a high seen in mid-2022. Since December 2019 we have seen an increase of over double going from 63 to 138. Across the region there has been a decline between March – September 2022, the Manawatū District did not see this decline but did see a stabilisation between June -September 2022. In December 2019 the Manawatū District had 7% of the applicants from across the region in September 2022 that has increased to 9%.



Public Transport Provision

Public transport plays a key role in community wellbeing, particularly for the transport disadvantaged, and in getting people from A to B. A highly functioning public transport network is also critical to achieving emissions reduction goals. Horizons Regional Council is responsible for providing public transport services for the Manawatū District. Currently there are two bus services operating within Feilding – the commuter service between Feilding and Palmerston North and the Feilding Orbiter that operates within the urban area of Feilding. Services do not operate on a Sunday. Public holiday services run to the Saturday timetable, except that there are no services on Good Friday, Christmas Day or Anzac Day (Horizons Regional Council, 2023).

The primary commuter route (Feilding to Palmerston North via the Airport) operates weekdays and on Saturdays between Manchester Square in Feilding and the Main Street Terminal in Palmerston North, with stops at Manchester Street School, Feilding High School, Countdown, the Feilding Railway Station, Bunnythorpe, the Palmerston North Airport, and the Palmerston North Hospital. During term times there are two additional routes that operate – Feilding to Palmerston North Girls High School, and Feilding to Palmerston North Boys High School. There is one service to each school in the morning and back from each school in the afternoon (Horizons Regional Council, 2023).

The Feilding Orbiter service commenced in late January 2022. While the service is operating well, MDC is continuing to work with Horizons to refine this service and make it even more successful, including by exploring ways to personalise the orbiter service to better differentiate it from the commuter service. MDC has been exploring funding options for this.

There are currently no public transport services for the rural villages of the Manawatū. MDC is concerned that high house prices in Feilding mean that more people are choosing to live rurally or in the villages, even when they can no longer drive. The provision of public transport services in the rural and village areas of the Manawatū would help to address transport inequality and contribute to the wellbeing of these communities.

Council provided funding through its Community Development Fund to the Manawatū Rural Transport Initiative Steering Committee for the preparation of a business case on the provision of a regular public transport service for rural communities within the Manawatū District. Using this funding, the Manawatū Rural Transport Initiative Steering Committee prepared their "Manawatū rural community transport service proposal" that was presented to Horizons as part of their consultation on the Regional Public Transport Plan. MDC submitted in support of the proposal and advocated to Horizons to increase the priority placed on the provision of rural transport services.

Council has provisionally agreed to a request from Neighbourhood Support Manawatū for funding to contribute to establishment costs of a rural community transport service to be launched on 1 July 2023. Council's support, along with that of Horizons Regional Council and other regional partners and funders will enable this much needed service to become operational.

Feilding Town Centre Vision and Concept Plan

A Feilding Town Centre Concept Plan (Town Centre "Refresh") was developed in 2020 as a vision to vitalise the town centre in Feilding. The Refresh was developed using feedback from community consultation and aimed to make open spaces more accessible and inviting, consider safer and easier ways for pedestrians and vehicles to move around, and placed value on retaining some of our heritage buildings. Activity that has occurred as a result of the Refresh includes some street furniture being replaced, trees planted, working with businesses to enhance the street scape, and a fee rebate offered to earthquake prone buildings owners.

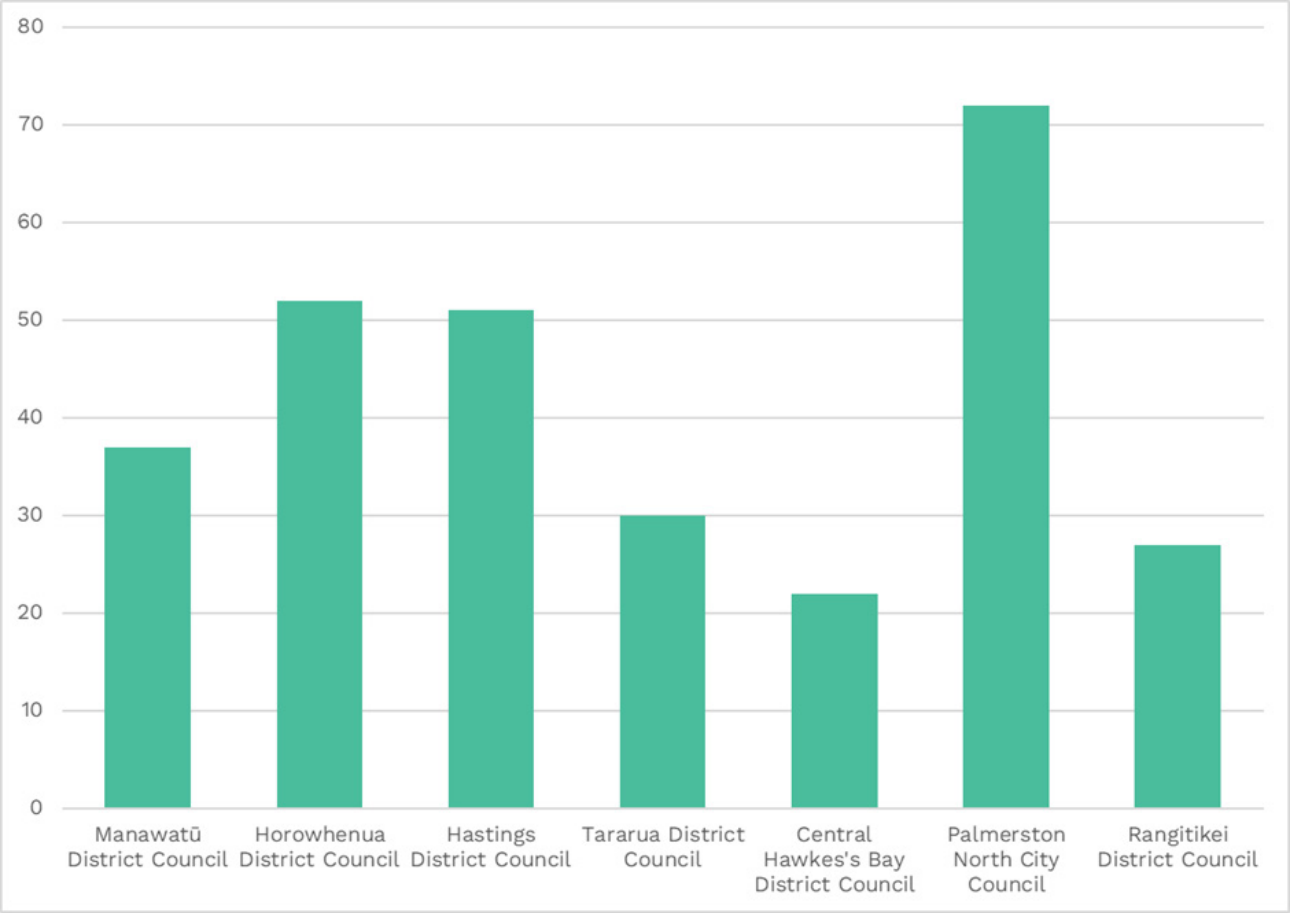
The next phase of the Refresh will consider zoning boundaries, and how the community wants the town centre to look and feel in the medium to longer term. The Refresh did not address car parking and security in the CBD area. While there is an overnight security guard that services the CBD area, security concerns are increasing. A group of business owners in the CBD are working together to consider how to improve security and a further working group is considering options for car parking solutions. Future Town Centre activity will need to be considerate of the outcomes determined by these working groups.

High Maintenance
High Maintenance

Crime Rate

The crime rate is based on the number of crimes reported in the last year per 10,000 population. Reporting crime in this way enables us to compare the Manawatū District with neighbouring Councils. The higher the crime rate, the higher the amount of reported crime.

The Manawatū district has a crime rate of 37. Figure 10 compares the crime rate for the Manawatū District with nearby councils.



Councils in New Zealand are ranked from one to 67 based on their crime rate, with a ranking of one being the council area with the highest crime rate. As shown in Table 5, the Manawatū District Council area ranks 30th out of 67 councils (District, City and Unitary Councils), placing it in about the middle. Table 5 shows the ranking for other districts nearby.

Council Area	National Ranking
Palmerston North City Council	5
Horowhenua District Council	12
Hastings District Council	14
Manawatū District Council	30
Tararua District Council	37
Rangitikei District Council	43
Central Hawkes's Bay District Council	52

Crime is classified into eight types, as follows:

- Abduction
- Assault
- Motor Vehicle Theft & Related Offences
- Robbery/ Extortion & Related Offences
- Sexual Assault
- Theft (Except Motor Vehicles and Retail) & Illegal Use of Property
- Theft from Retail Premises
- Unlawful Entry/ Burglary/ Breaking & Entering.

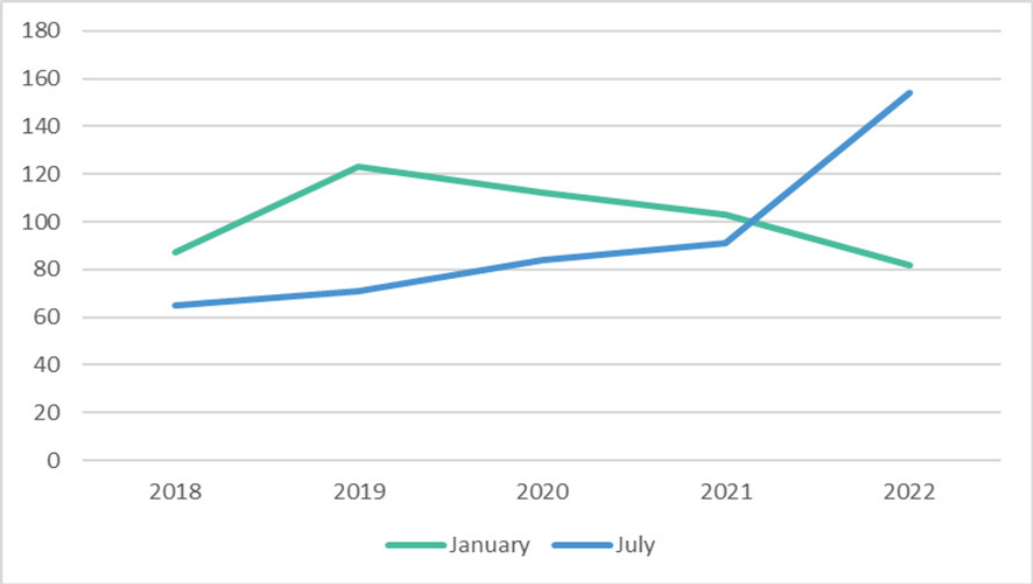
Table 2 shows the crime types that have the three highest crime rates for each district. For the Manawatū District, the type of crime with the highest rate is Motor Vehicle Theft & Related Offences with a crime rate of 10.46, this sits 2.76 below the national crime rate.

Council Area	Highest type of crime	Second highest type of crime	Third highest type of crime
Manawatū District	Motor Vehicle Theft and Related Offences	Unlawful Entry/ Burglary/ Breaking and Entering	Theft from Retail Premises
Horowhenua District	Unlawful Entry/ Burglary/ Breaking and Entering	Motor Vehicle Theft and Related Offences	Theft from Retail Premises
Hastings District	Unlawful Entry/ Burglary/ Breaking and Entering	Theft from Retail Premises	Motor Vehicle Theft and Related Offences
Tararua District	Unlawful Entry/ Burglary/ Breaking and Entering	Theft (Except Motor Vehicle/ Retail) & Illegal Use of Property	Theft from Retail Premises
Central Hawkes's Bay District	Unlawful Entry/ Burglary/ Breaking and Entering	Theft (Except Motor Vehicle/ Retail) & Illegal Use of Property	Assault
Palmerston North City	Motor Vehicle Theft and Related Offences	Theft from Retail Premises	Unlawful Entry/ Burglary/ Breaking and Entering
Rangitīkei District	Unlawful Entry/ Burglary/ Breaking and Entering	Theft (Except Motor Vehicle/ Retail) & Illegal Use of Property	Motor Vehicle Theft and Related Offences

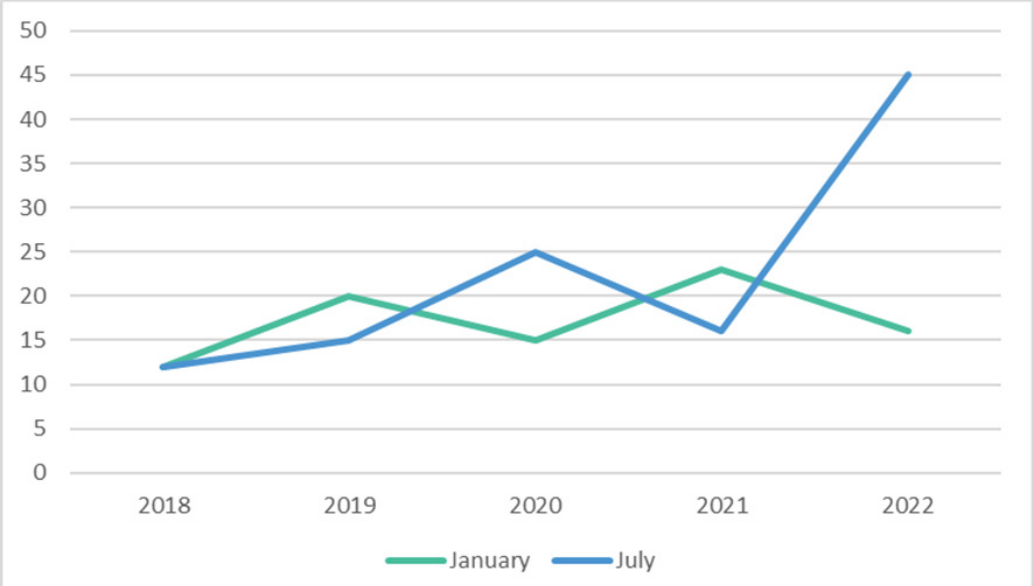
Reported Crime Trends

The following data for the Manawatū District Council area relates to the number of crimes reported for the months of January and July each year for the years from 2018 to 2022.

As shown in figures 11 to 13, there has been a significant increase in the number of crimes reported between January/July 2021 and January/July 2022 for each of the three crime types identified in Table 6 above. Motor Vehicle Theft and Related Offenses saw the biggest one year increase going from 16 reported in 2021 to 45 reported in 2022. Theft from retail premises has seen a long term increase since 2019, increasing by 32 reported crimes.



Number of reported crimes across Manawatū District



Number of motor vehicle theft and related offenses reported

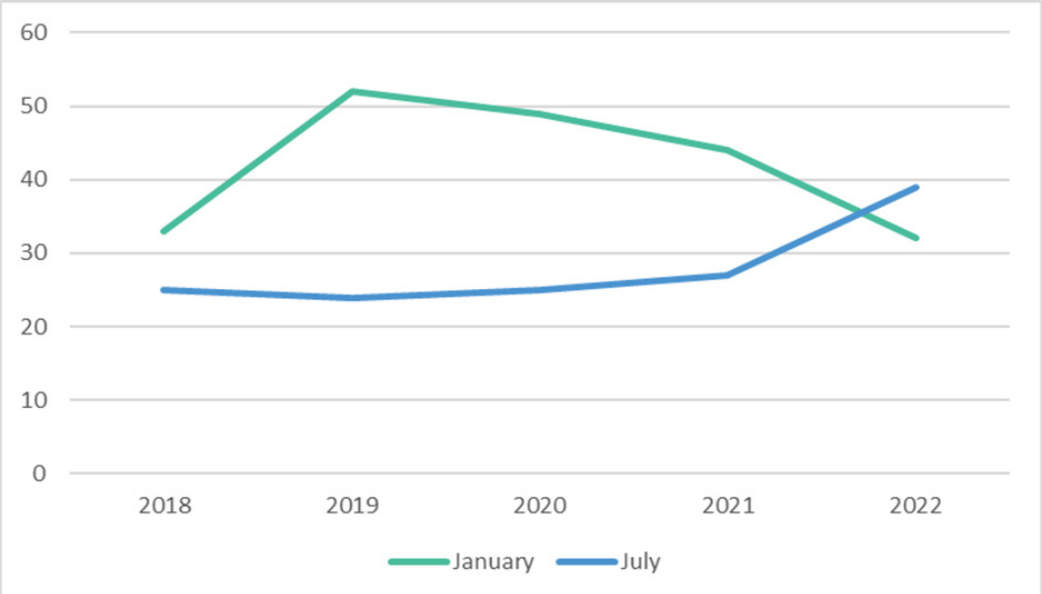


Figure 13: Number of unlawful entry/ burglary/ breaking and entering offenses reported.

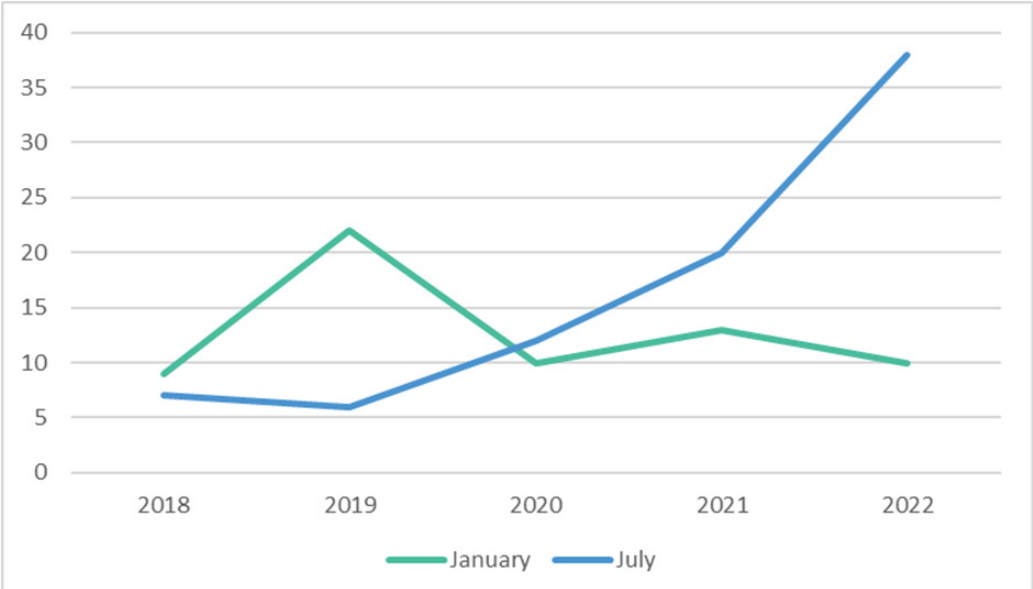


Figure 14: Number of theft from retail premises offenses reported.

Gambling

Manawatū District has the lowest proceeds per capita from gaming machines compared to the surrounding regions (Figure 15). The national average of gaming proceeds per capita is $65.

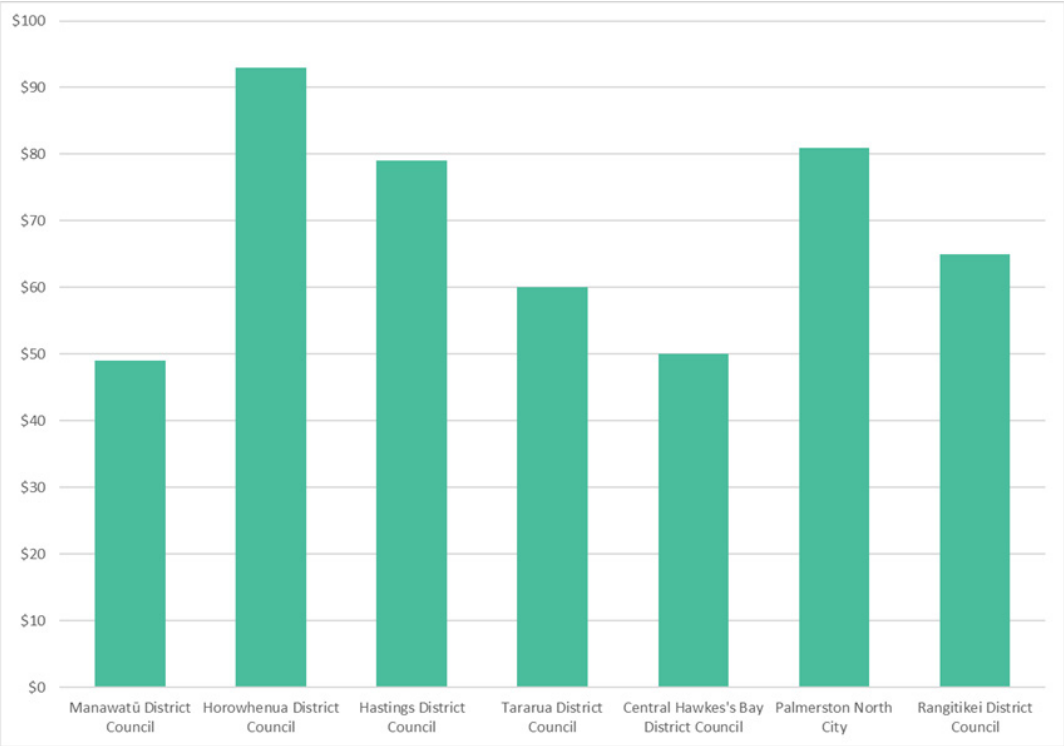


Figure 15: Gaming machine proceeds per capita.

In the Manawatū district there are 31 electronic gaming machines per 10,000 adults. With the national average sitting at 37 electronic gaming machines.

Based on the ranking of 53 out of 67, the Manawatū district is sitting at the lower end of proceeds per capita. A ranking of one would be the area with the highest gaming machine proceeds per capita.

Council Area	National Ranking
Horowhenua District Council	10
Palmerston North City	20
Hastings District Council	24
Rangitikei District Council	32
Tararua District Council	39
Central Hawkes's Bay District Council	49
Manawatū District Council	53

Economic Profile

Economic growth

The Manawatū District economy grew by 6.1% to a total level of $1.50b to the year ending December 2022. The rate of growth for Manawatū was larger than New Zealand at 5.0% and the Manawatū – Wanganui Region at 5.3%. Since 2020 it has seen a significant increase in growth going from 1.5% to 6.1%.

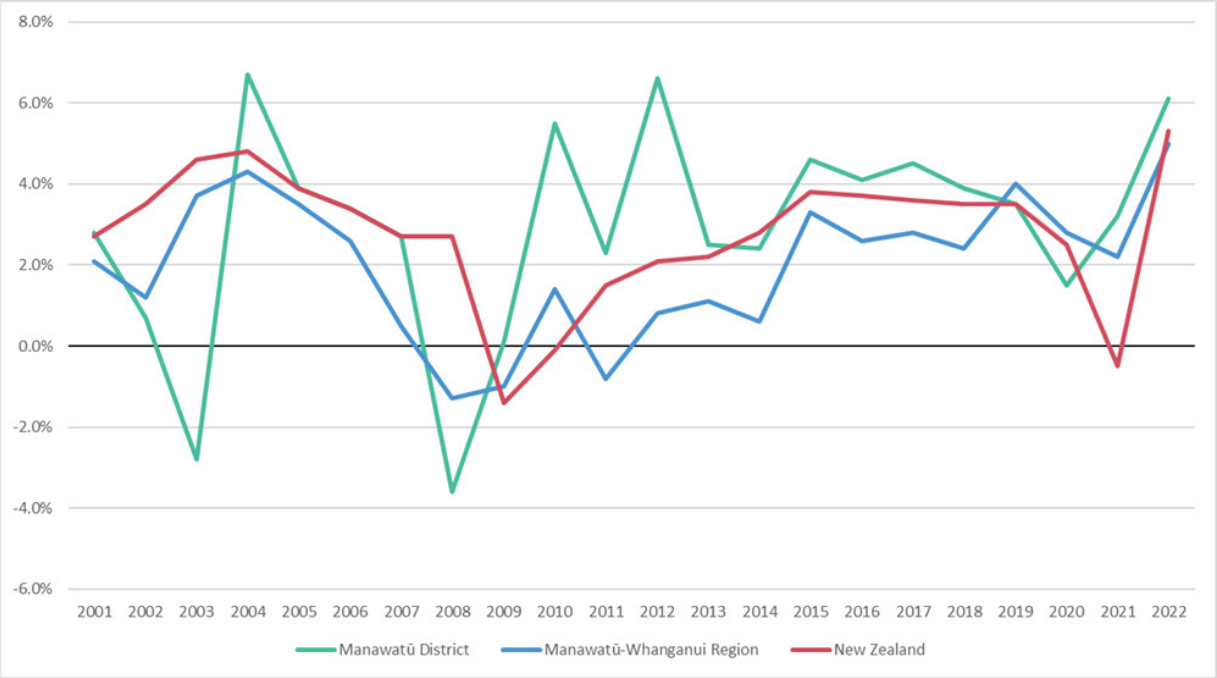


Figure 16: Annual GDP average percentage change

The average GDP growth over the last 10 years is 3.6%. This is higher than the Manawatū – Whanganui average of 2.7% and the New Zealand average of 3%.

When looking at growth industries calculated by Infometrics based on their size and contribution to the GDP growth. The Manawatū District largest contributors are Professional, Scientific, and Technical services at 1.19% and construction at 0.91%. The professional, scientific and technical

services industry is compiled of scientists, accountants, advertising and marketing specialists, lawyers and solicitors, vets, management, photographs, architects, engineers and computer system designers. This industry would include organisations such as AgResearch.

Structure of the economy

The following shows the makeup of the Manawatū District economy as at the year ending 2022. As a district we rely on the agriculture, forestry and fishing, manufacturing, and construction industries.

The proportion of the economy that is the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry has reduced from 20.4% in 2015 to 18.2% in 2019 to 16.5% in 2022. The main industries that have seen an increase are construction by 2.5%, retail trade by 0.5% and professional, Scientific and Technical Services by 1.3% between 2015 and 2022.

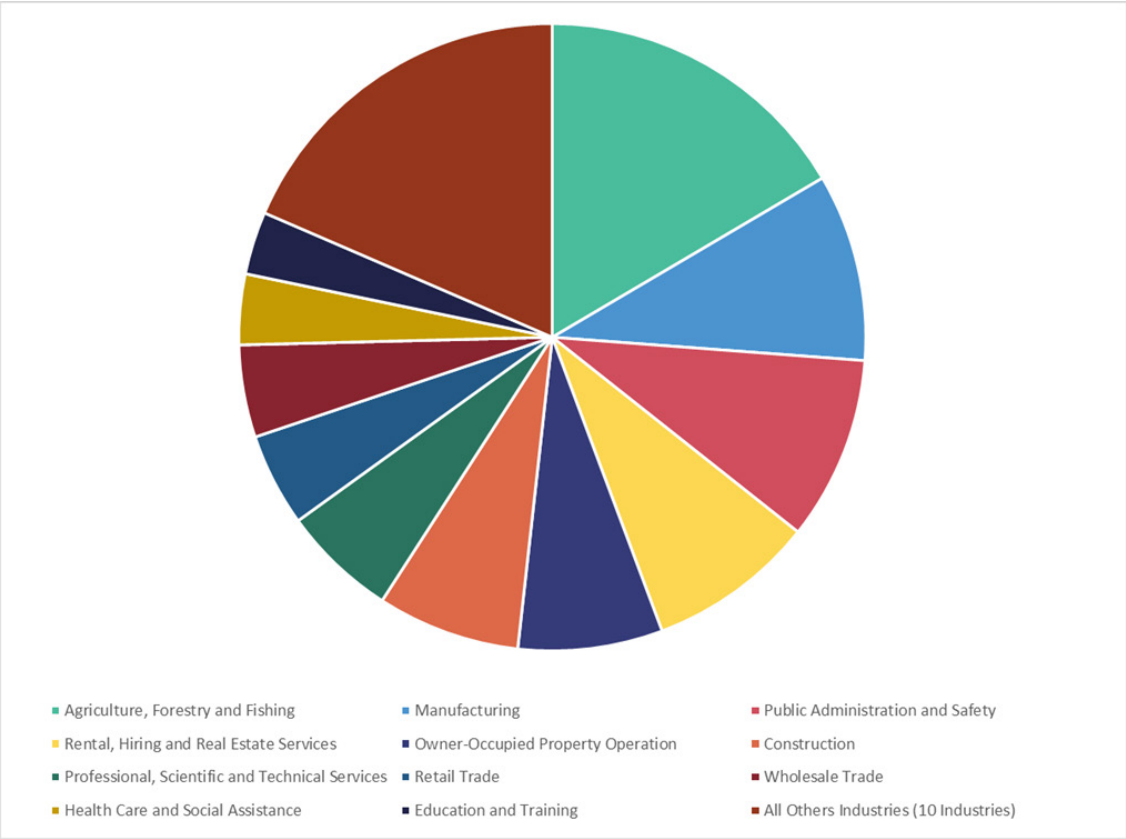


Figure 17: Structure of Economy by Industry

The proportion of the economy that is the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry has reduced from 20.4% in 2015 to 18.2% in 2019 to 16.5% in 2022. The main industries that have seen an increase are construction by 2.5%, retail trade by 0.5% and professional, Scientific and Technical Services by 1.3% between 2015 and 2022.

Looking at specific industries within the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry the biggest contributor is dairy cattle farming, contributing $109.5m to the Districts GDP and employing 706 people. The agriculture, forestry and fishing industry is the largest employer in the District with 2,086 filled jobs which is 15.9% of the total. The manufacturing industry employs a further 1,678 staff.

Resilience of the Manawatū Economy to the impacts of COVID-19

The region's economy weathered COVID-19 quite well. While some businesses have suffered, especially those in the tourism, hospitality, and retail sectors, the region is less exposed than many other parts of New Zealand and well positioned to recover (Martin, Jenkins & Associates Ltd, 2020).

The diversity of the regional economy is a key strength that support resilience and is an enabler of recovery and growth, described in the "Talent and Skills in Manawatū" report prepared by Martin, Jenkins & Associates Ltd on behalf of CEDA (Central Economic Development Agency), as follows:

Manawatū has strengths in farming, food production and agribusiness and this sector is one of the least affected by COVID-19.

It is home to FoodHQ, a world-class food science and innovation hub – which has the potential to drive high value product creation across the primary sector. The services of FoodHQ are likely to increase in demand as the world adapts to COVID-19, and New Zealand seeks to strengthen its position as a primary producer. There is real potential to leverage this to be the destination of choice for highly skilled primary sector workers, researchers, and scientists

Its central location means the logistics and distribution sector has been a growth sector and this will likely continue as New Zealanders further embrace working and shopping from home

The immediate impact of COVID-19 has been buffered through the presence of a strong public sector. Palmerston North city and Manawatū region is home to a significant cluster of government sector organisations, with 255 central and local government institutions recorded by Statistics New Zealand in the region in February 2019 and a total workforce of 16,980 employees, the fifth highest number of central Government

Compared to other regions, Manawatū has limited exposure to impacts on the tourism impacts, partly due the diversity of the regional economy, and partly due to a lack of reliance on international visitors as opposed to domestic

Spending in our Region

The number of transactions across the Manawatū District increased by 3.1% between 2021 and 2022. These transactions were $278m in spending across the region. The majority of this (71%) come from customers who live in the District, with a further 16% coming from customers living in Palmerston North and Rangitikei.

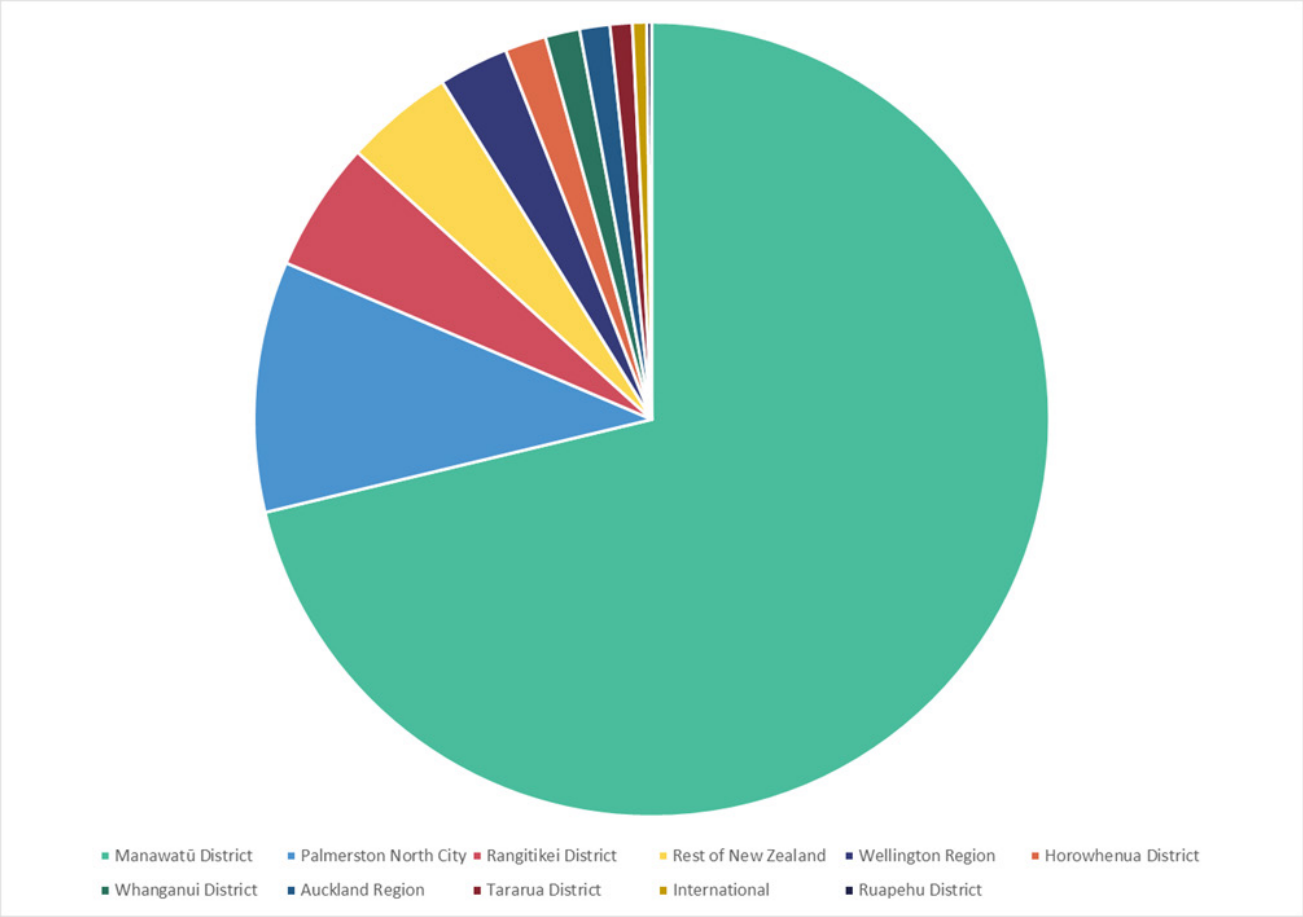


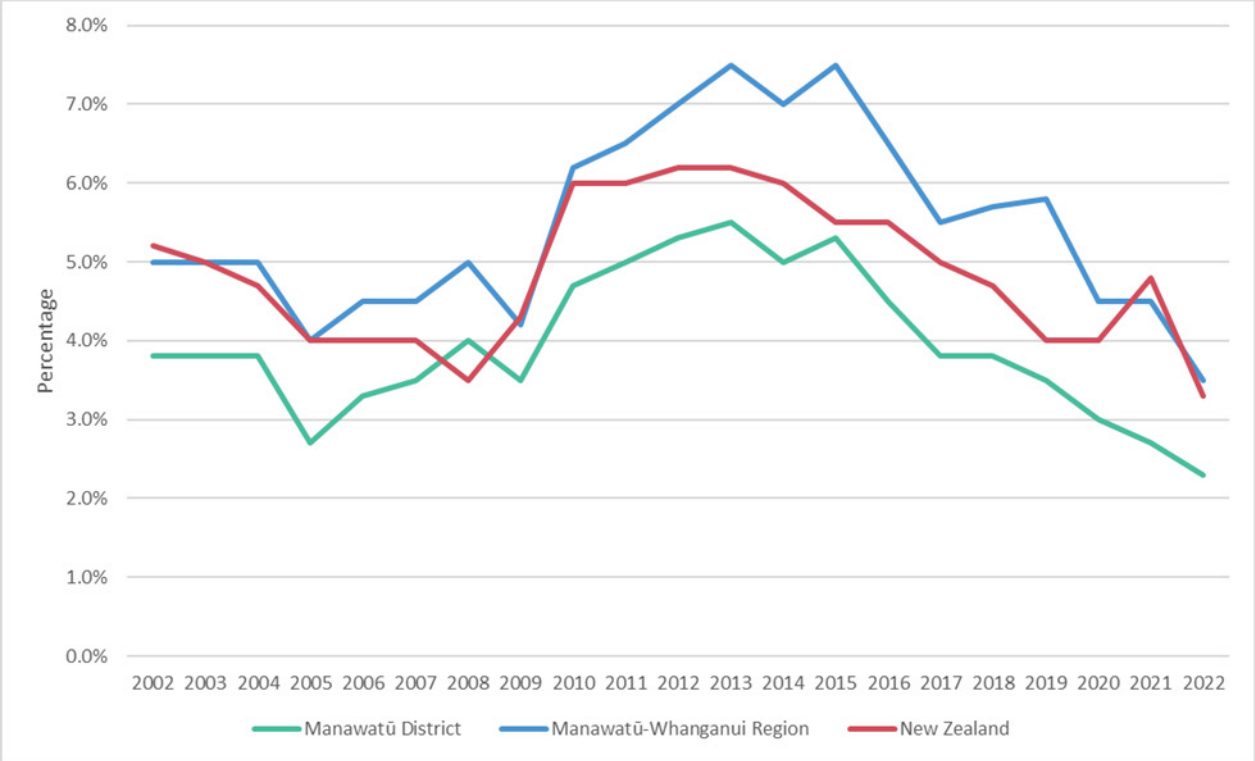
Figure 18: Structure of Economy by Industry

While the portion of spending coming from international customers is 0.6% of the total yearly transactions, this has increased by 163.4% between 2021 and 2022 with a total spending of $1.85m.

Labour market

The average unemployment rate for the Manawatū District is lower than both the National and the Manawatū-Whanganui District average.

Figure 19: Average Annual Unemployment Rate



In 2021 there was a peak in the number of people on the job seeker benefit in the Manawatū District. This has since reduced by 99 to 829 people in 2022. This is still significantly higher than what was seen before 2021. This significant increase has been seen at the national level also.

The biggest challenge to businesses in the region and across the country presently, is the inability to secure labour in addition to the rising cost of labour and materials across all industries (Business Central, 2022). The unemployment rate for the Manawatū-Whanganui Region in the December quarter was 3%, well beneath the national unemployment rate of 3.3%. For the Manawatū District, the unemployment rate was just 2.0%, indicating an unsustainable undersupply of available workers (Bell, S. Pers. Comm 4/4/2023).

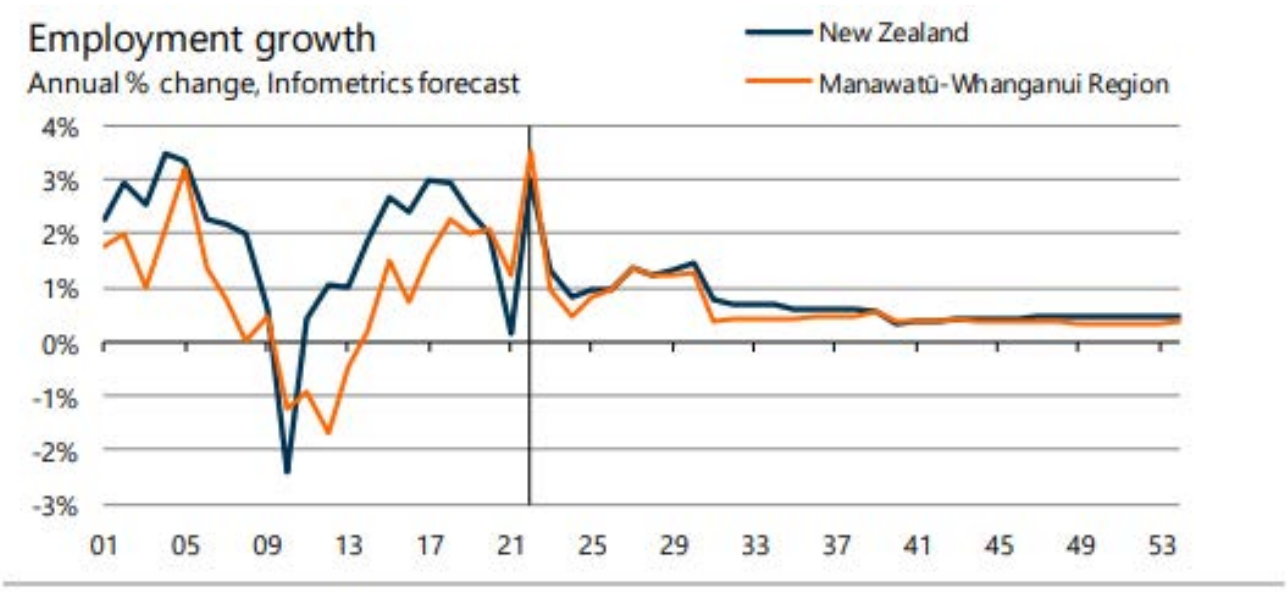
Labour market shortages, particularly in the agriculture and tourism industries (including retail) have been exacerbated by immigration policy restrictions imposed in response to COVID-19. While policy settings are easing and more workers are entering New Zealand, there are not enough yet to ease the pressures. Agriculture and tourism-related sectors struggle to pay the higher wages necessary to secure workers. The struggle to pay higher wages is being exacerbated by high material costs and lower returns for dairy and red meat as Northern Hemisphere production increases, alongside falling global demand. Weather events will also increase demand for labour as the recovery gains pace (Bell, S. Pers. Comm 4/4/2023).

The Reserve Bank is forecasting a sharp rise in unemployment to 4.8% by the end of this year. We are seeing some easing of peak pressures, but for now labour market pressures remain extreme. If a fall in spending across the rest of the economy does result in substantial job losses, then we would see a release of labour to the agriculture sector (Bell, S. Pers. Comm 4/4/2023).

Regional Employment

Employment in Manawatū-Whanganui Region tended to grow slower than New Zealand overall in the past 20 years, although the region was notably more resilient through the COVID-19 pandemic, growing by 1.2%, while national employment slowed to 0.1% (Infometrics, January 2023).

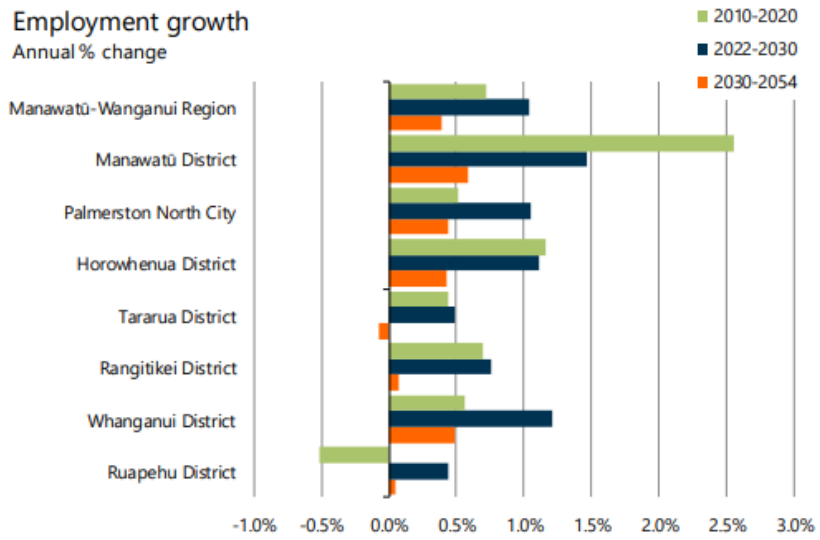
Employment in Manawatū-Whanganui is forecast to grow slightly slower than the national average over 2023-2025, as the national economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2022 to 2030, employment in Manawatū-Whanganui is forecast to grow 1.0% per year on average, compared to 1.2% nationally. From 2030 to 2054, employment in Manawatū-Whanganui is forecast to grow 0.4% per year, just behind the national average of 0.5% (figure 11) (Infometrics, January 2023).



Manawatū District Employment

Over the 2022-2030 period, employment growth for the Manawatū is forecast to be in excess of 1% per year (Infometrics, January 2023).

Employment growth for the District is forecast to slow to around 0.5% per annum over the period of 2030-2050 (figure 12), predominantly as a result of weakening agricultural employment (Infometrics, January 2023).



Funding of the Central Economic Development Agency

MDC provides financial support (along with the Palmerston North City Council) to the Central Economic Development Agency (CEDA).

Their Vision for the Manawatū is: Manawatū 2025; New Zealand's most progressive region (Central Economic Development Agency, 2022). The three big goals that contribute to this vision are:

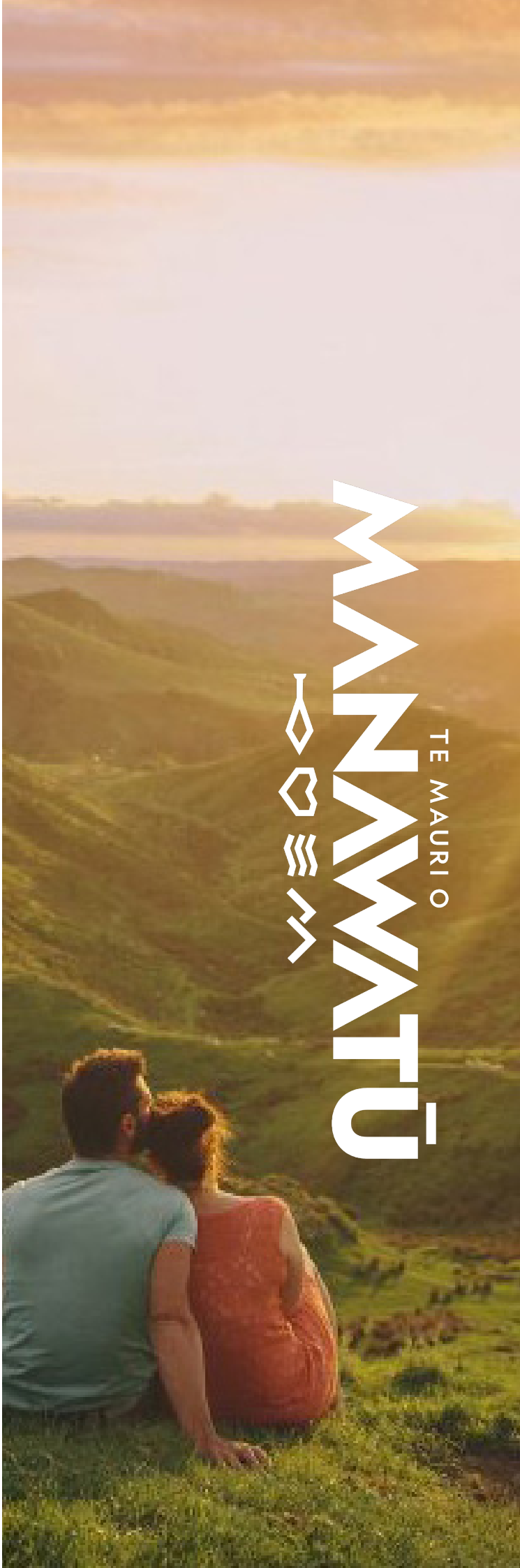
1. Manawatū is recognised as one of the top three agrifood hubs in the world
2. Manawatū is a leading distribution hub, and leverages off its role in central New Zealand
3. Manawatū is renowned for its exceptional lifestyle, competitive advantages, and is a magnet for investment, business and talent

The Manawatū Talent and Skills Framework provides a basis for collective action to optimise opportunities for the residents and businesses of the Manawatū. The framework is based on three key moves, as follows (Martin, Jenkins & Associates Ltd, 2020):

Delivering an authentic Manawatū brand and identity – promoting the region's value proposition and positive attributes, as well as addressing any negative external perceptions of the region and its key centres.

Maximising opportunities for Manawatū's workforce – ensuring that current workers are supported to access employment opportunities and develop their careers in Manawatū.

Growing a competitive and resilient workforce for Manawatū's future – focusing not only on current skills needs but also on the skills needed for Manawatū's economy to be competitive and resilient over the longer-term.



Through data and research, CEDA has developed a talent pipeline for the region that includes the attraction of those with the skills and experience businesses need, the training and development of current staff, the recruitment of students to the region, and understanding the future needs of sectors and businesses that are key to the region (Central Economic Development Agency, 2022).

CEDA works with secondary schools and employers to support transitions and pathways into employment. CEDA has also developed a Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion Strategy with input from key stakeholders and the business community. CEDA also has key partnerships with The Factory and Sprout Agritech, providing funding and mentoring support to the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs (Central Economic Development Agency, 2022).

CEDA works collaboratively with regional iwi through our strategic projects including the Te Utanganui Central New Zealand Distribution Hub, Manawatū Food Strategy, Manawatū Destination Management Develop strategic partner relationships, leveraging opportunities Plan, and Rangitāne o Manawatū Māori Tourism Strategy, to increase business and employment opportunities for Māori, and ongoing profile and use of the Regional Identity and Te Urungi – Innovate Aotearoa to provide a platform to tell the stories of Rangitāne o Manawatū (Central Economic Development Agency, 2022)

Retention of Skills and Talent

Post COVID-19, many businesses have struggled to attract and retain skills and talent, and certainty around access to talent is a key barrier to investment into the region (Martin, Jenkins & Associates Ltd, 2020).

The growing regional economy creates significant demand for skills in most sectors. This has been driven by the presence of large public sector employers, including in health and education, creating demand for higher or specialist skillsets; and perceived skills and labour shortages are also apparent at the entry level and in construction, distribution, agriculture and horticulture sectors. Employers often rely on immigration to address skills and labour shortages due to difficulties finding people locally (Martin, Jenkins & Associates Ltd, 2020).

In their report titled Talent and Skills in Manawatū, Martin, Jenkins & Associates advise:

"It is not clear yet what the long-term impacts of COVID-19 will be on New Zealand's immigration policy. However, in the short term at least, New Zealand has limited access to international workers – both high skilled migrants, and temporary workers filling lower skilled shortages. It will also reduce the ability for tertiary institutes to attract international students.

This is likely to increase inter-regional competition for talent and skills, particularly in construction, infrastructure, agriculture and horticulture. The significant investments in infrastructure both in Manawatū and around New Zealand will increase demand for construction and infrastructure skills, which are already in short supply and where there is already competition across regions (Martin, Jenkins & Associates Ltd, 2020).

It will be essential that Manawatū is able to attract people from other regions, but also retain existing workers wherever possible, especially those displaced locally. Manawatū will be competing with its neighbours for a limited pool of key skills and labour. It will need to grow and develop local workers, as well as demonstrate the benefits and quality of life the region offers to bring new people into the region."

Earthquake prone buildings

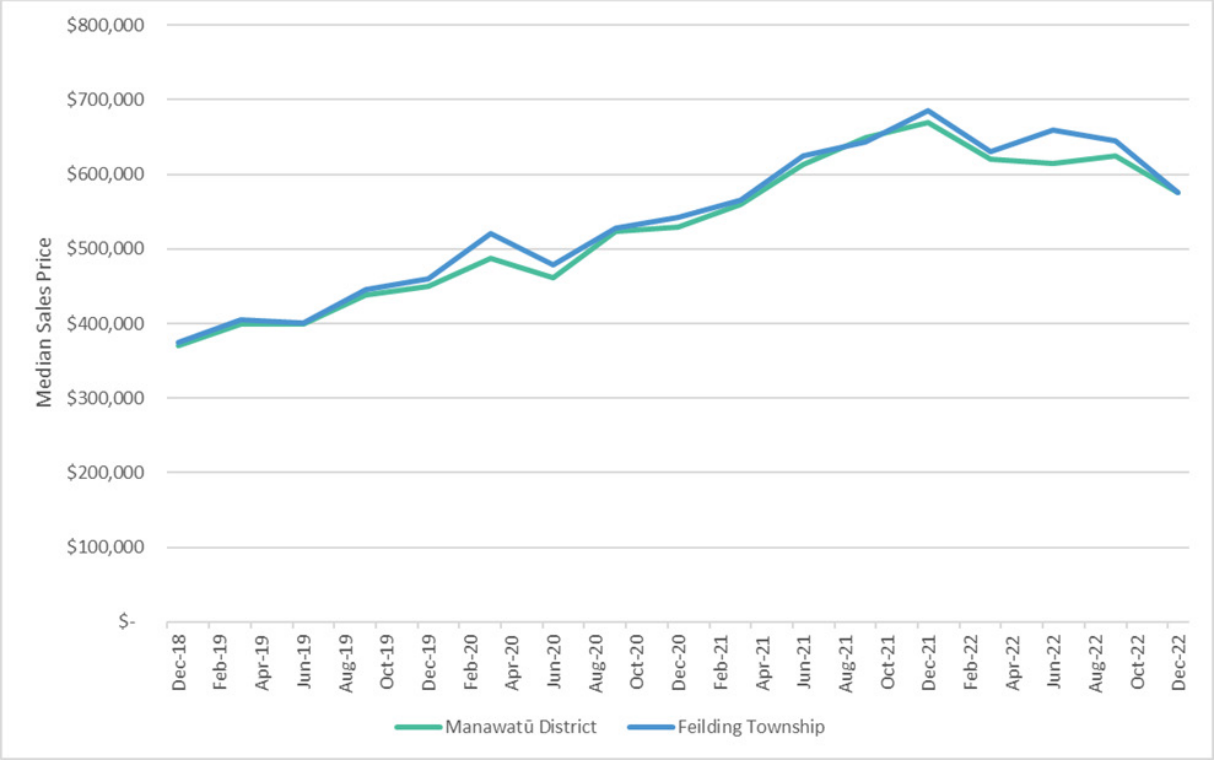
In the previous Long Term Plan Council agreed to provide a discount on consenting fees for owners of earthquake-prone buildings in the Feilding CBD who choose to strengthen their building. Three businesses/people have applied for and received this consenting fee discount.

Cr Colleen Sheldon

House sales

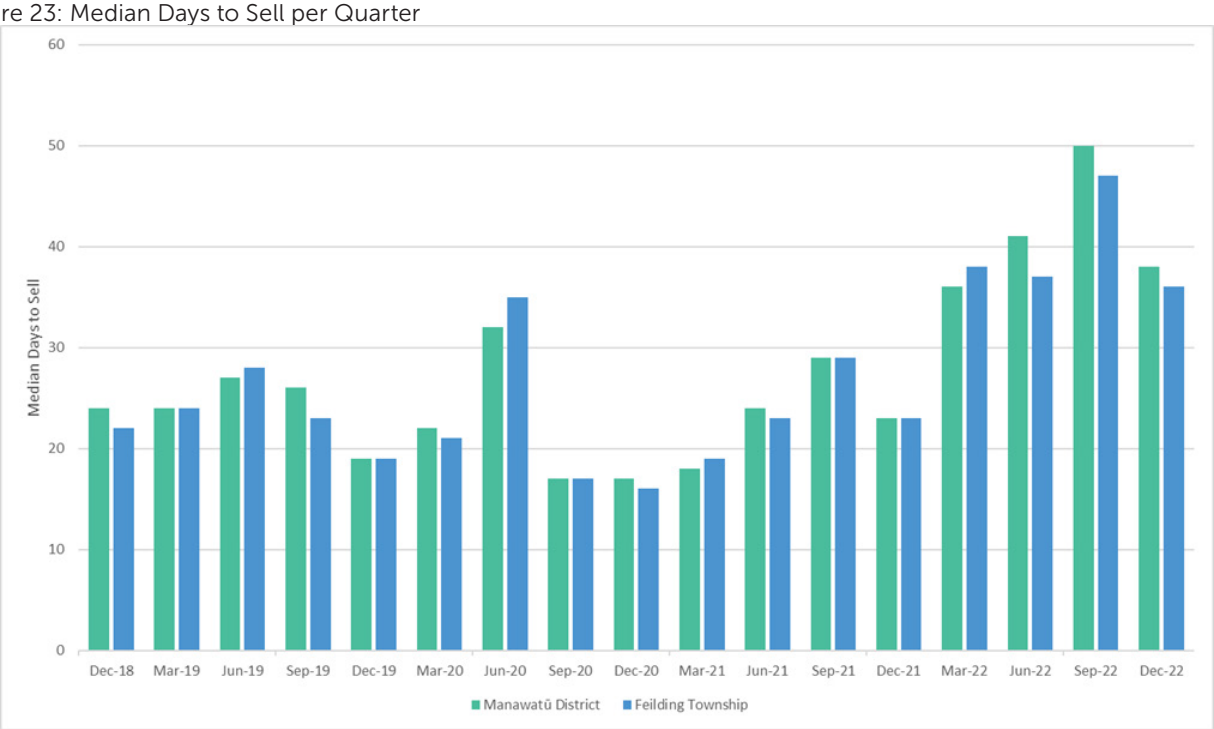
The median sale price for the Manawatū District is $575,000 for Oct-Dec 2022. Looking at the median sales price over a three month period gives a better picture of the true price due to the amount of sales we see in the Manawatū District. There has been a peak in sales price in Oct-Dec 2021 of $669,000, this has then overall declined by 14%.

Figure 22: Median Estimated Property Value



There was a significant increase in the number of days to sell over the Jul-Sep 2022 period with a slight reduction in the Oct-Dec time period to 38 for the Manawatū District as a whole.

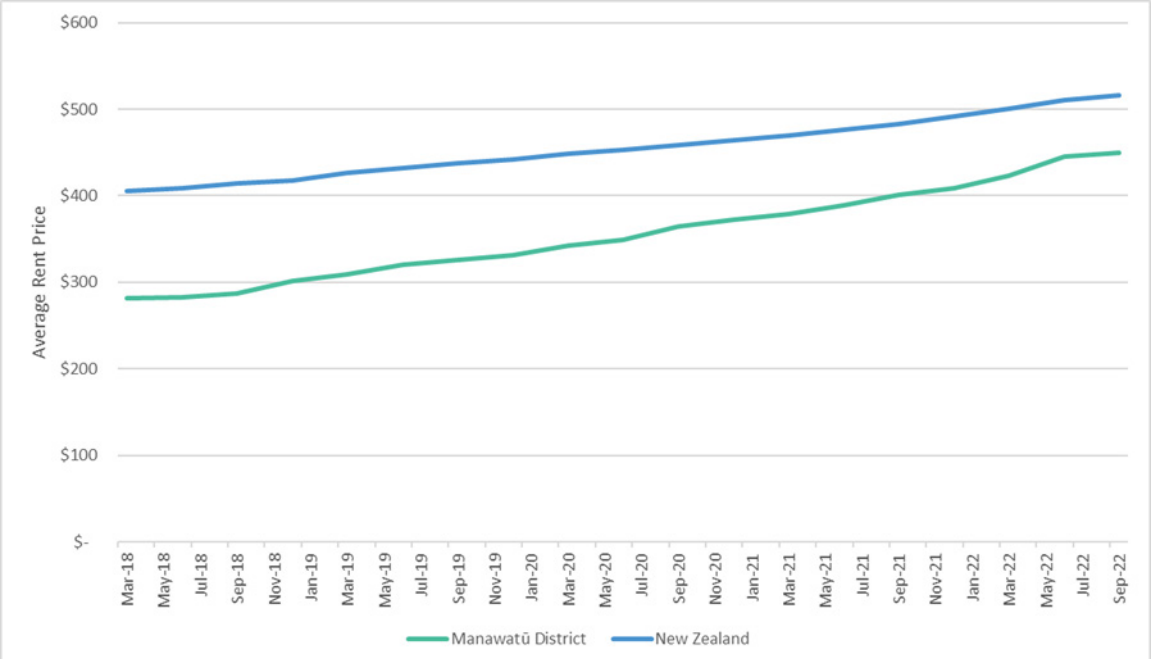
Figure 23: Median Days to Sell per Quarter



Average weekly rent

Average rent in the Manawatū District is $450 a week. This is currently sitting higher than the Palmerston North average of $437. The cost of rent has not seen any kind of drop. It is generally becoming more expensive to live in the District whether renting or purchasing a house.

Figure 24: Weekly average rent price



Growth Planning

The Feilding Framework Plan (2013) is the basis for growth planning programme in the Manawatū. The strategic direction is for:

- Intensification of Feilding
- Growth at the edges of Feilding.

Twenty design principles describe the aspirations for residential and industrial growth over time. This Framework Plan identifies a number of growth precincts in the medium and long term.

Location	Type	Status	Notes
Precinct 1-3 Feilding	Residential	Design	Technical reporting, infrastructure design and updated structure plan required ahead of land rezoning. Stormwater design was identified as key design constraint by Horizons in prior plan change.
Precinct 4 Feilding	Residential	Build	Construction work is underway on Council roads and design is currently being undertaken on the detention ponds and Roots Street.
Precinct 5 Feilding	Industrial	Build	Work is underway on the infrastructure design for Turners Road. Land acquisition has been completed.

In addition to delivering on the Growth Precincts, there are a number of planning and infrastructure projects underway to support growth:

Council	Feilding Infill / Intensification	District Plan Review to include options for greater range of housing density development and mixed-use activity. Stormwater modelling underway to identify areas for intensification. Likely to identify areas where housing should be avoided without further stormwater investment.
Council	Village Growth & Intensification	Council's Wastewater Centralisation Project provides for future intensification and expansion of the following villages: Halcombe, Sanson, Rongotea, Awahuri, Cheltenham and Kimbolton
Council	District Liquefaction Assessment	Assessment of areas within the District subject to Liquefaction Risk.
Private Developer	Rongotea South Residential Growth Area	A private plan change to rezone rural land next to Rongotea Village and enable residential expansion of the Village

Review of the Feilding Framework Plan is required as Council responds to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020. The Precinct 4 Residential Area provides for the majority of Feilding's residential growth over the next 20 years. In total the projection is that Precinct 4 will be fully developed by 2043 with 1,788 additional lots (2,058 households in total, including those already built as of 2021).

Growth Precincts 1–3 have Deferred Residential Zone status. No infrastructure investment is budgeted for these precincts in the short-medium term and therefore the developer must pay for all necessary infrastructure extensions to connect to Council's roading, stormwater, wastewater and water supply network.

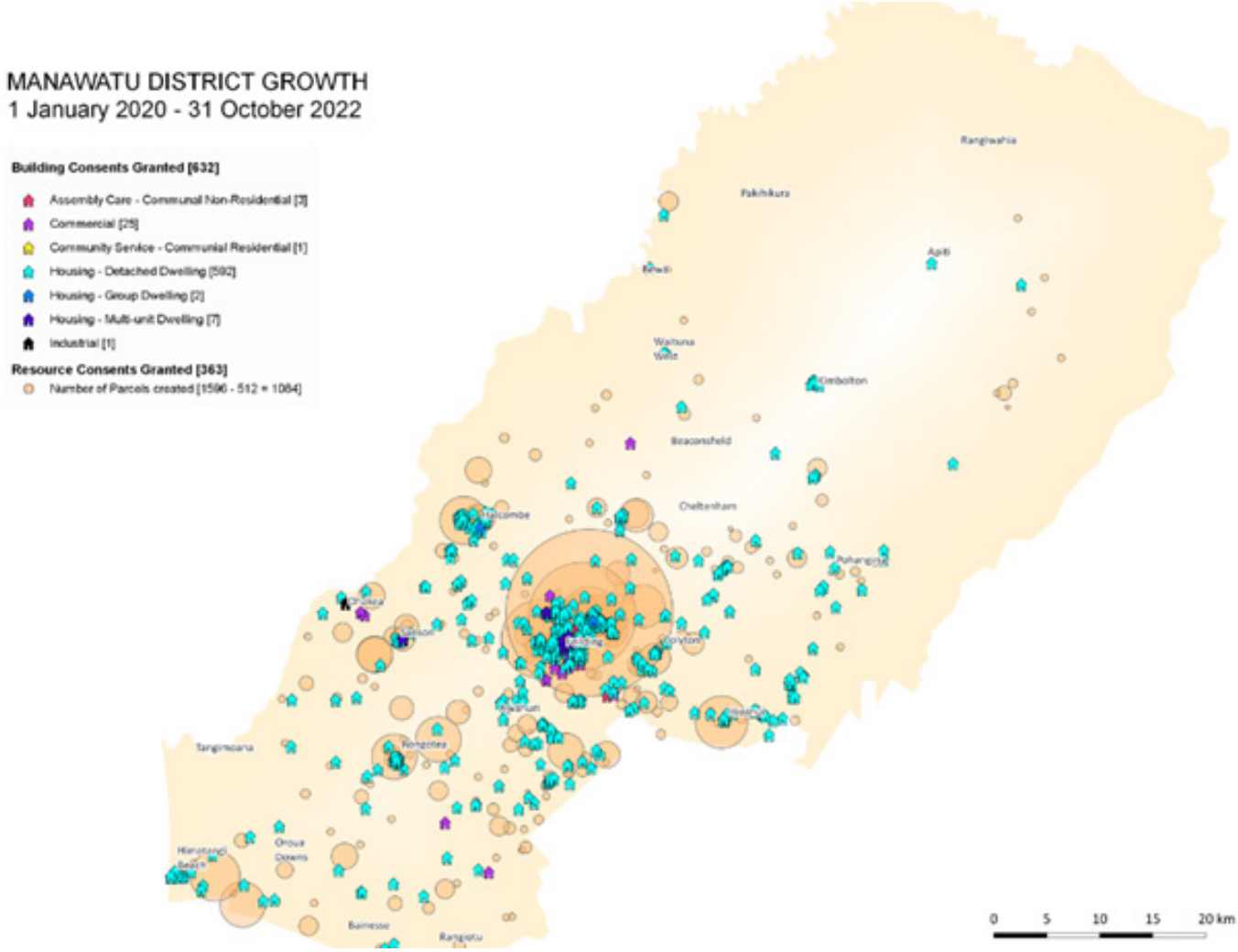
This approach aligns well with the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (2020), which requires that Council is open to out-of-sequence development. This means that although Precinct 4 remains the focus of residential development for the foreseeable future, Council will work constructively with private developers who wish to progress proposals ahead of any Council infrastructure roll-out.

Precinct 5 was re-zoned as an Industrial Zone in 2015. The development of the industrial growth precinct at Kawakawa Road will provide an estimated 97 hectares of land for future industrial land use, with 24 hectares initially accessible from the planned Turners Road extension.

Precincts 6 and 7 were identified in the Feilding Framework Plan as possible future residential growth areas. These will be re-evaluated as part of the next future development strategy.

Land Use Change and Development Trends

Figure 25 plots building consent and subdivision consent data for the Manawatū District over the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 October 2022. Over this time there has been a total of 632 building consents granted, 592 of which were for detached dwellings and 7 for multi-unit dwellings. A total of 363 subdivision consents have been granted, creating a total of 1,084 new lots. Figure 25 shows a concentration of development within Feilding, and strong growth within the villages of Halcombe, Hiwinui, Rongotea, Sanson and Himatangi Beach.



Impacts of Forestry

Damage to roading infrastructure from forestry is ramping up. The most intensive logging period will be between 2021 and 2030 (Manawatū District Council, 2019a). The quality of the road will rely on proactive road maintenance schedules and effective communication between roading engineers, forest managers and public users (Manawatū District Council, 2019a).

The largest continuous forest woodlots are in coastal areas close to Himatangi and Tangimoana (Manawatū District Council, 2019a). Small holdings are frequent in more fertile farmland and river terraces. Extensive stands exist closer to steeper hill country in the north east of the Region in proximity to Rangiwahia and Rewa (Jones, J. Pers. Comm. 21/10/19).

Forestry harvest is currently centred on Waipuru, Mangapapa and Lower Pakihikura Roads, exiting onto SH54. Harvest in that area is expected to last 8 years.

Disruptive Technology

The New Zealand Productivity Commission (the Commission) undertook an inquiry into technological change and the future of work in March 2020. This inquiry considered how technology affects jobs and employment, whether and how technological forces are shaping work, and how New Zealand and New Zealanders should best prepare for change in the future (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2020).

Technological change can cause disruption to jobs and business models, including the replacement or transformation of some jobs by automation. The role of government in technological disruption includes using policy and regulation to promote the innovative and beneficial use of technology across the public, business and not-for-profit sector (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2020). There is no evidence that technology adoption is currently leading to widespread unemployment or broad economic disruption (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2020).

The Commission recommends that rather than treating technology as a threat, the Government needs to remove barriers to firms adopting technology and to assist New Zealanders to both gain the most from innovation and adapt effectively to change. New technologies can expand employment options, raise productivity and incomes, lower costs to households, and overcome barriers to participation in work. Steps recommended by the Commission include more flexible and accessible training, a high performing and more equitable schooling system, greater income smoothing, better careers advice and retention of a flexible labour market (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2020).

Regional Projects

The following projects occurring within the Manawatū-Whanganui Region are expected to generate employment and economic benefits for the Manawatū District.

KiwiRail Multi-Modal Freight Hub

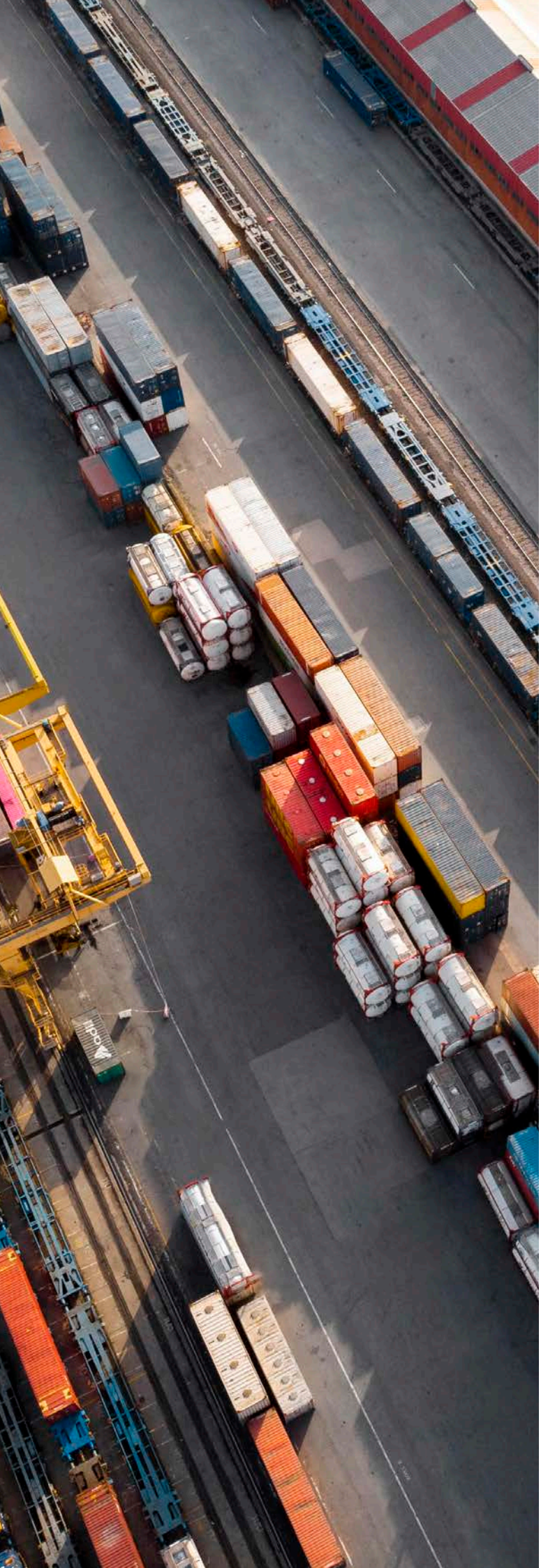
KiwiRail is progressing plans for a high-tech, intermodal freight hub located between Palmerston North and Bunnythorpe. This freight hub will help grow Palmerston North's role as a critical freight distribution centre for the lower North Island. The hub project is aligned with Horizons' and Palmerston North City Council growth plans and will tie in with other freight transport projects in the Region (KiwiRail, 2022).

The project should generate a significant increase in employment during the construction phase. KiwiRail staffing levels are not expected to be affected, but there is potential for more jobs once the hub is in operation.

The Freight Hub will also encourage more distribution companies to move into the area, which should grow employment (KiwiRail, 2019b).

The Manawatū District Council submitted in support of the Notice of Requirement (NoR) application for the Freight Hub in March 2021, recognising the significant economic and employment benefits the development will bring to the wider Manawatū Region. Representatives of MDC spoke in support of Council's submission at the public hearing on 16 August 2021.

On 2 March 2022, the Independent Panel of Commissioners announced its decision on the NoR for the Regional Freight Hub. The Panel's recommended that the NoR be confirmed, subject to conditions (KiwiRail, 2022). These conditions include requirements around KiwiRail submitting draft Road Network Integration Plans, traffic management plans, Level Crossing Safety Impact Assessments and Operational Traffic Management Plans to the Manawatū District Council (along with Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Horizons Regional Council and the Palmerston North City Council) for feedback prior to the plans being finalised (KiwiRail Holdings Limited, 2022).



Four appeals were lodged with the Environment Court. The Environment Court was scheduled to consider these appeals on 29 September 2022 (Palmerston North City Council, 2022).

After the designation Is complete and the land has been purchased, the next stage will be to begin planning to build the Regional Freight Hub, including any necessary resource consents, building consents and other third-party approvals (KiwiRail, 2022).

RNZAF (Royal New Zealand Air Force) Base Ōhakea Expansion

RNZAF Base Ōhakea is one of three military air bases in New Zealand. It is located in Ōhakea, 22km north-west of Palmerston North and 17km west of Feilding. The base has around 1000 personnel, both military and civilian.

The RNZAF Base Ōhakea is currently home to No 3 Squadron, No 14 Squadron and No 42 Squadron. In 2023 No 5 Squadron (approximately 230 personnel) will be relocated from Whenuapai to Ōhakea and will provide airborne surveillance and maritime patrol using four P-8 Poseidon aircraft. In preparation for the arrival of the new aircraft, new facilities are being constructed at RNZAF Base Ōhakea, including a hangar fire suppression tank, Airfield changes, military dog facilities, Waka Kotahi's development of the new roundabout at the main gate entrance, and upgrades to the wastewater reticulation and treatment plant in partnership with MDC (New Zealand Defence Force, 2022). Some of the relocated families are expected to settle in the Manawatū District.

Environmental Profile

Climate change is impacting the Manawatu District in several ways. Some of the impacts include sea level rise, coastal erosion, higher temperatures, extreme weather events, inland flooding, river erosion and increased fire risk. These adverse impacts affect the natural and built environment and the wellbeing of the community. Some rural communities are already experiencing water scarcity during prolonged periods of drought, which are anticipated to increase in frequency as a result of climate change. During periods of intense rainfall, Feilding, Rongotea, Kairanga/Bainesse and Tangimoana are prone to flooding. In the rural hinterlands, mudslides, debris flows and rock slides are frequent occurrences.

Māori owned land is also disproportionately impacted by climate change. Although the percentage of Māori land within the Manawatū District is around 1%. Unfortunately, 84% of this land is next to waterways such as the Manawatū, Rangitīkei and Ōroua Rivers and their tributaries that have a long history of flooding. Approximately 18% of Māori land in the Manawatū District is within a "Flood Channel Zone" in the Manawatū District Plan.

Overview of Climate Risks for the Manawatu District

There is a risk to residential buildings due to sea level rise, coastal erosion, inland and coastal flooding, extreme weather events and fire weather. There are currently 7,850 residential buildings exposed to inland flooding in the Manawatu District. There is also a risk to freshwater ecosystems due to higher temperatures, change in rainfall, drought, inland flooding, river erosion, sea level rise and salinity stress. Low vegetative areas such as streams and rivers through the Manawatu Plains are more highly exposed to higher temperatures.

Extreme weather events and inland flooding pose a risk to flood management schemes. An example is the Makino flood gates which is a major component of the lower Manawatu Scheme. Finally, there is a risk to commercial buildings and manufacturing due to extreme weather events. Commercial buildings located on the Manawatu plains face particularly high exposure. Manufacturing businesses, as a major employer, accounting for 13.7% of employment in the Manawatu District, are susceptible to this risk. Over the past six years MDC has spent a total of $9,285,041 (an average of $1,547,507 per annum) on emergency works over the period of 2016/17 to 2021/22 (Jones, 2022).

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Managing the impacts of climate change requires mitigation and adaptation efforts. Mitigation refers to efforts to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases using new technologies and renewable energies, making older equipment more energy efficient, or changing management practices or consumer behaviour. Adaptation on the other hand means taking action to prepare for and adjust to both the current effects of climate change the predicted impacts in the future.

The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5o found that limiting global warming to 1.50C will require "rapid and far reaching" transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities (The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2018). Global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050.

The New Zealand Government has set into law a target for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (other than for biogenic methane). The Climate Change Response Act 2002 requires the Government to set emissions budgets, following recommendations from the Climate Change Commission. The Emissions Reduction Plan was published in May 2022and set out policies and strategies for meeting the first emissions budget period. It also sets a direction for emissions reductions in second and third budget. The Emissions Reduction Plan is the key mechanism government is using to focus collective efforts toward transitioning to a more resilient, low emissions economy. The

emissions budgets will act as stepping-stones, or interim targets, to reaching our 2050 emissions reduction targets. The legislated 2050 emissions reduction targets are net zero greenhouse gas emissions (except biogenic methane) and a 24-47% reduction in biogenic methane.

The first three emissions budgets are as follows:

Budget period	2022-25	2026-30	2031-35
All gases, net (ARS)	290 Mt CO_2e	305 Mt CO_2e	240 Mt CO_2e
Annual average	72.5 Mt CO_2e	61 Mt CO_2e	48 Mt CO_2e

The total of the emissions budgets for the first three budget periods is 20 Mt CO2e (2.3 per cent).

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), 2022).

How MDC is tracking with climate change mitigation efforts

MDC is currently developing its Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan that will set clear strategic direction outlining how MDC will address environmental issues affecting the District. An environment stocktake was prepared that sets the context for the two parts of the environment strategy. The first part, referred to as the Corporate Strategic Action Plan focuses on how council will measure and reduce its own emissions at an operational level and the second part focuses on how MDC will partner with the community to improve environmental outcomes for the district.

In 2022, MDC contracted the services of an energy management company to calculate greenhouse gas emissions from all corporate activities within MDC's control for the 2020 financial year. The emissions inventory includes all sources associated with activities Manawatū District Council had operational control over in the period of 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2020. In some cases, this includes operations carried out by contractors at the instruct of MDC, on behalf of ratepayers. The final report produced estimated that the organizational GHG emissions for MDC for the 2019/20 reporting period was 9,370 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e).

MDC will continue measuring, monitoring and reporting on our emissions which will enable us to manage and reduce emissions more effectively over time as well as prepare us for the likely future introduction of mandatory reporting. The next step for MDC is to set a corporate GHG emissions reduction target. This target will be set with due consideration for New Zealand's emissions budget from 2022-2025.

MDC is also developing an action plan to address identified areas for emissions reduction. This plan will include actions to incorporate best practices and any necessary changes to progress MDC's climate response journey in future Annual Plans, Long-Term Plans and other policy planning processes. The action plan will include actions to incorporate carbon emissions considerations in procurement policies and contracts. This action plan will feed into the development of a district-wide environmental action plan in partnership with the community.

Emissions from the Transport Sector

Transport is one of our largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions and is responsible for 17 per cent of Aotearoa New Zealand's gross emissions. The Emissions Reduction Plan outlines some key actions to enable New Zealand decarbonise the transport system, deliver better transport for everyone New Zealand and contribute to more vibrant, resilient and prosperous places to live, work and visit. The key actions are:

- Reduce reliance on cars and support people to walk, cycle and use public transport
- Rapidly adopt low-emissions vehicles
- Begin decarbonising heavy transport and freight

The Emissions Reduction Plan also sets out four targets for the decarbonisation of the transport sector. They are:

Target 1	Reduce total kilometres travelled by the light fleet by 20 per cent by 2035 through improved urban form and providing better travel options, particularly in our largest cities.
Target 2	Increase zero-emissions vehicles to 30 per cent of the light fleet by 2035.
Target 3	Reduce emissions from freight transport by 35 per cent by 2035.
Target 4	Reduce the emissions intensity of transport fuel by 10 per cent by 2035

Central government has committed to about $1.2 billion dollars to fund the transport sector initiatives in the Emissions Reduction Plan.

As a rural district, transport makes up a substantial proportion of per capita greenhouse gas emissions. The District would need to tap into central government support towards public transport provisions, including more travel options for rural and provincial towns. This may assist in reducing inequality and assist the transport disadvantaged to "age in place." Currently, Council has introduced the new Orbiter Service last year in Feilding, advocates for new public transport services in the villages and continues to encourage more active transport within Feilding.

There is a need to shift from petrol/diesel to electric or hybrid vehicles and substantial investment in charging infrastructure will be required to support a transition to electric vehicles. Rural residents of the Manawatū District may be disadvantaged until such time as there are affordable utility EVs (Electric Vehicle) or alternative fuels (such as biofuels) available for use. There is currently only one EV charging station in Feilding, located at the New World supermarket. Council is considering establishing a policy position on electric vehicles and electric charging infrastructure to inform future investment for the 10 Year Plan 2024-2034.

Agricultural Emissions

To tackle agricultural emissions, the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry for Primary Industries published a consultation document proposing emissions reductions in the agricultural sector through the pricing of agricultural emissions in October 2022 which MDC responded to. For context, agricultural emissions make up 50% of New Zealand's gross emissions and methane constitutes 19.6% of these emissions. New Zealand government has committed to a 10 per cent reduction below 2017 in biogenic methane emissions by 2030 and 24-47 per cent reduction below 2017 biogenic methane emissions by 2050 and net-zero emissions for long lived gases.

The Manawatū is recognised as the hub for the region in terms of intensive agriculture, agribusiness technology, agricultural servicing, innovation, precision agriculture and primary sector processing and is consequently impacted by central government direction on pricing agricultural emissions. The primary industries sector which includes agriculture, forestry, horticulture, and fishing is the largest contributor to the Manawatū District's economy. According to 2020 estimates, primary industries accounted for 16.8% of Manawatū District's GDP which is almost three times the contribution primary industries made to the national economy (6.2%). Farming and related processing are large employers in sheep, beef and dairy farming and agricultural services.

In MDC's submission to MfE (Ministry for the Environment), MDC highlighted the need for the agricultural pricing system to be structured in a way that makes it beneficial for New Zealand farmers while ensuring that farming methods are more efficient. There is a need for clarity and detail to ensure that the levy prices are not only equitable but effective in emissions reductions in the sector and also whether the proposed models that will use a combination of livestock and fertiliser information, scientific data on biogenic methane emissions per unit of feed intake, and nitrous oxide or carbon dioxide emissions per unit of nitrogen application to soils, are adequate to determine on farm emissions

and whether they will be on track to meet the national targets. MDC also recommended that the government utilise the best available science to determine the pricing mechanism needed to achieve the 2050 target and it should be set at a rate that does not result in reductions in food production, avoids negative economic impacts on rural communities and supports the uptake of new mitigation technologies.

The Climate Change and Agriculture Ministers have now published a report in December 2022 on the Government's proposed system which is a legislated requirement of the Climate Change Response Act (CCRA). The proposed pricing system has the following key features:

- A farm-level split-gas levy for agricultural emissions that would price emissions from biogenic methane and nitrous oxide (including from fertiliser) separately.
- The legal point of responsibility for reporting and paying for emissions would be GST-registered business owners who meet the emissions thresholds (equivalent to ~200 tonnes CO2-e per year). Reporting could be done at either the individual farm level or via a collective.
- It is proposed that relatively low, unique prices could be set initially for both biogenic methane and nitrous oxide for five years based on set criteria.
- It is proposed a price pathway for both biogenic methane and nitrous oxide would be set for five years, with a review after three years.
- The price of nitrous oxide would be capped for the first five years at a level that the sector would be no worse off than if the sector had entered the NZ ETS (Emissions Trading Scheme) at this point.
- Payments would be available to reward the uptake of incentives and eligible sequestration (removals).
- The NZ ETS would be reformed and interested parties incentivised to conduct science and research to include new categories of sequestration into the New Zealand Greenhouse Gas Inventory and NZ ETS.
- An interim approach would be taken for rewarding sequestration through a declaration-based system from 2025, followed by a transition to the NZ ETS. At

the minimum, sequestration from riparian plantings and from increases in carbon from indigenous forest linked to specific management interventions will be included from 2025.

- A sequestration strategy would be developed to determine the details of how sequestration is accounted for and rewarded within the pricing system.
- Revenue raised from the levy would be recycled back in the system, in line with a strategy outlining spending priorities to mitigate agricultural emissions and operate the system. The strategy would include operating costs, incentive and sequestration payments, and a dedicated fund for Māori landowners.
- Oversight of the pricing system would include the Climate Change Commission (the Commission) and an Oversight Board with representation from the agriculture sector and Māori.
- Implementation of the pricing system could involve agencies such as the Ministry for Primary Industries, Ministry for the Environment and Inland Revenue.
- Information requirements would be detailed in primary legislation and regulations.
- An interim, processor-level levy would be proposed only as a transitional step if the farm-level pricing system could not be operationalised by 2025.

The cabinet will make final decisions in early 2023. However, Infometrics projects that national direction on pricing agricultural emissions and other legislation aimed at regulating or reducing emissions from the agricultural sector could have the effect of reducing agriculture intensity, and encouraging forestry, with resultant reduction in on-farm and off-farm (e.g. dairy and meat processing) employment.

Energy Trilemma

As New Zealand transitions to a low carbon economy, policymakers, investors and consumers will play important roles in shaping what the future would look like, particularly post-Covid. Energy is at the heart of providing the raw power that is essential for making the global economy function. According to the World Energy Council, New Zealand is faring well in energy equity and environmental sustainability but not energy security (BusinessNZ Energy Council, 2022) . As central government seeks to tackle the three conflicting challenges of ensuring energy security, providing energy equity and enabling access to affordable clean energy, the Manawatū District will need to be strategically placed to partner with central government in proffering smart, albeit small, solutions.

Our district is well known for its food production and processing industries and accounts for up to 17.4% of the national economy. It is important for the district to position itself to adapt to energy transitions necessary for reducing carbon emissions. The district is well placed to drive and harness renewable energy technologies such as wind and solar but this will need to have corresponding solutions to even out supply peaks and troughs. Future solutions would need to tackle energy storage as it is an important element to security of energy supply.

Energy related projects often stimulate significant investment and can create jobs where there is a sound regulatory environment across the sector. As we strive to sell our goods and services to the rest of the world, increasingly low carbon energy will be an enabler of this new society by driving innovation, economic recovery and creating a positive image for New Zealand. The Ministry for Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is set to develop a cohesive and enduring energy strategy toward the end of 2024 that will enable decarbonisation and ensure coordinated efforts across the whole energy system (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2022).

Emissions Reductions in the Waste Sector

According to the Ministry for the Environment, New Zealand is one of the highest generators of waste per person in the world, and the amount of waste we create is increasing (Ministry for the Environment, 2021). In 2019, the waste sector contributed around 4 per cent of Aotearoa New Zealand's total greenhouse gas emissions and around 9 per cent of its biogenic methane emissions (Ministry for the Environment, 2021).

There is a global push for countries to take more responsibility for the waste they generate, which means that we need to reassess how we manage our waste domestically. We need to transition our thinking about waste away from the current 'take-make-dispose' system towards a low-waste, more circular economy.

The government has announced two key proposals to manage waste:

- a new Aotearoa New Zealand Waste Strategy to 2050 that includes priority areas and targets; and
- new waste legislation to replace the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 and the Litter Act 1979

How MDC is supporting the transition towards a low waste society

Council adopted its Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2022-2028 (WMMP) on 16 June 2022. This plan is to fulfil Council's statutory obligation under the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 to promote effective and efficient waste management and minimisation within the District. Council also has obligations under the Health Act 1956 to ensure that our waste management system adequately protects public health. The WMMP needs to demonstrate consideration of waste management and minimisation methods in a way that is consistent with the waste hierarchy.

Council has put forward a funding application to MfE to establish a food waste collection and processing facility located within the Resource Recovery Centre to achieve the following objectives:

- Enable region-wide biogenic methane emissions reduction by diverting at least 50 per cent of food waste from landfill by 2030
- Creating opportunities for a circular waste economy for all food waste produced in the lower north island within the Manawatū District.
- Providing a centrally located food waste processing solution for the lower north island that leverages off existing transport infrastructure.
- To diversify the local and national economy by building capability in the food reuse industry by July 2024.
- A circular processing mechanism created for Manawatū District Council trade waste streams.
- Collaboration and partnership between the public and private sector to avoid replication and achieve the required economies of scale for a viable commercial operation.

Council is progressing several actions to support the vision and goals identified in the WMMP, including three new kerbside collection services.

Council's 10 Year Plan 2024-2034 will include levels of service, performance measures and performance targets for waste minimisation and the provision of solid waste services. Performance against measures and targets will be reported through Council's annual reporting process.

Resource Recovery Centre

Council has significantly invested in the Resource Recovery Centre (RRC) to reduce waste and promote a circular economy. The RRC comprises a purpose built waste transfer station designed to sort waste for onward processing at the proposed bio-plant facility located within the RRC.

Council has a partnership agreement with Ecogas to process commercial organic waste. Food and trade waste will be channelled to the processing facility within the RRC and will generate bio-methane energy that can be used to power the facilities on site. The RRC also has a designated site for concrete and clean fill recovery which will increase diversion to landfill, recover building materials and generally reduce GHG emissions from traditional disposal methods. The various recovery sites provides economic opportunities for the District while reducing emissions and promoting sustainability.

Adaptation Efforts

The Ministry for the Environment released for consultation its draft National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Managed Retreat and Flood Insurance in May 2022. District solutions will need to be backed by close engagement with communities, recognising that pressure will likely increase on council to undertake more physical works to prevent flooding issues for example. Similar to the Emissions Reduction Plan, the National Adaptation Plan outlines a list of actions and outcomes that Council's ought to undertake and achieve to implement the national adaptation plan.

To mitigate the flood risk, the District's major infrastructure assets, including the Manawatū Wastewater Treatment Plant, have been located outside the area likely to be affected by a 0.5% AEP (1 in 200 year) flood event. A resilience plan (non-routine work to minimise the threat of road-closure) is in place and operational for roading infrastructure. This resilience plan focuses investment in structures maintenance and drainage to reduce the cost of emergency works.

Forward planning for maintenance and renewal budgets have factored in the effects of climate change. Council will be working to identify where current and future assets and level of service are at risk from the effects of climate change, including higher intensity rainfall, extended droughts and sea level rise. Council is improving the resilience of the three-waters networks through new works and renewals and by using resilient design materials and pipe-laying techniques. Lifelines and assets of strategic importance are prioritised for renewal over other assets of a similar age to increase resilience and reduce our risk profile.

Increased frequency and intensity of rainfall events results in infiltration and inflows that increase wastewater volumes to be treated. Programmes to address this, including leak detection and stormwater works, are underway.

The Manawatū District is well-placed in terms of water security (adequacy of supply into the future) but some rural communities are already experiencing water scarcity during prolonged periods of drought, which are anticipated to increase in frequency as a result of climate change. Water supply for firefighting is also an area of vulnerability for these communities. Council is working with relevant organisations including Fire and Emergency New Zealand, to help ensure these communities are well-positioned to meet foreseeable demands for both drinking and general/firefighting water supplies, taking into account the likely impacts of climate change. Under Council's future plans to extract more of Feilding's drinking water supply from groundwater, less pressure will be placed on the Ōroua River.

In light of the predicted increase in frequency and severity of storm events and extreme weather events due to climate change, Council has taken measures to ensure it has the financial means to respond to such events. These measures include investing in externally sourced insurance, while also maintaining a self-insurance reserve of $1 million, building resilience reserve funds over the life of the 10 Year Plan, and a self-imposed $5 million

debt cap buffer to ensure there is capacity to borrow if required. Over the life of the 10 Year Plan to 2030/31 Council plans to build resilience reserve funds to $8.2 million.

MDC has spent a total of $9,285,041 (an average of $1,547,507 per annum) on emergency works over the period of 2016/17 to 2021/22 (Jones, 2022) .
Council applies flood modelling data to consenting processes for future development. Land Use decisions must be consistent with the Regional Plan, which includes a requirement to avoid or mitigate the 0.5% Annual Exceedance Probability (1 in 200 year) flood. Council also considers natural hazard risk when identifying growth areas as part of the District Plan Review.

Guidance and direction is needed when it comes to coastal planning, managed retreat and where existing settlements are already exposed to significant natural hazard risks. It is noted that this workstream is core component of the Climate Adaption Bill and has requested through submissions to central government the need for tools, strategies, and national direction in this area.

Wetlands Project

MDC is constructing a wetlands project within the Resource Recovery Centre and in proximity to the wastewater treatment plant. Constructed wetlands (CWs) in recent years have proved their capability in the sanitation sector as an appropriate sanitation system in different contexts. CWs have over decades proved their ability to treat several types of wastewaters. Earthworks began in August 2022, involving the movement of approximately 30,000 cubic metres of soil and is almost complete. Next up we'll be building the inlet and outlet structures over summer followed by planting due to start around May.

The wetland will be planted with over 80,000 native plants specifically selected for their treatment properties. All the plants have been sourced and grown by MDC's Kawakawa Nursery and the Jobs for Nature team. The wetland has been designed to treat over 6 million litres (6000 m3) of wastewater per day and will take 3 days for the water to travel it's length. It is hoped that the wetland will create a diverse ecology mimicking naturally occurring wetlands as much as possible.

The access road in the middle of the wetland has also been constructed using recycled material from Central Demolition's concrete crushing operation which is within the RRC. This is an example of MDC's actions toward enabling a circular economy in line with national direction and global sustainability principles.

National Legislative Reform

There are a large number of reform and policy programmes underway concurrently, including:

- Three Waters Reform
- Resource Management Reform
- Future for Local Government Review
- Emergency Management System Reform
- Building Consent System review; and a
- review of Waste Legislation.

LGNZ (Local Government New Zealand) has expressed concern that Government is not looking at all reform programmes in a joined-up, holistic way. Government risks misalignment between reform programmes due to the scale and pace of the reforms.

Of particular concern is the relationship between the new resource management and three waters systems. There is potential for duplication of strategic planning, potential for gaps and lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities. Also of particular concern is the potential loss of local voice (Local Government New Zealand, 2022).

Three Waters Reforms (The "Affordable Water Reforms")

Government's proposal is to create ten new publicly-owned Water Services Entities (WSEs) that will deliver drinking water, wastewater and stormwater (the "three waters") services for communities. Government is proposing a staggered approach for the establishment of the WSEs from early 2025, with the transfer completed by 1 July 2026, at the latest (McAnulty, 2023). WSEs will be owned by local councils on behalf of the public, with entity borders based on existing regional council areas. The Manawatū District would be one of seven territorial authorities within the Manawatū-Whanganui WSE. Each WSE will be run by a professional board, with members appointed on competency and skill. Strategic oversight and direction will be provided by local representative groups, with every local council, as well as mana whenua, having representation.

On the 13th of April 2023, government announced changes to its Three Waters project, most notably, moving from a four entity to ten entity model, and pushing out the start date of 1 July 2024 by two years. The project was also rebranded as the "Affordable Water Reforms" (Palmer, 2023). Government says that the changes will mean that individual councils will have a bigger say over the water service entities, while retaining the separation from direct council control that will allow the entities to borrow larger sums (Palmer, 2023) . There have been no changes to the 50-50 co-governance policy, and the ownership model for the WSE's, through a shareholding structure, remains unchanged (Palmer, 2023).

Water Services Entities Bill and the Water Services Economic Efficiency and Consumer Protection Bill currently before Parliament will continue, largely unaffected by the changes. However, a new piece of legislation will be introduced and passed before this year's election to make the changes to the timeframe and number of entities (Palmer, 2023).

Water Services Entities Act 2022

The Water Services Entities Bill was the first piece of legislation introduced to parliament to enact these reforms. The Bill set out the ownership, governance, and accountability arrangements relating to the entities and provides for transitional arrangements for the delivery of services. The Bill included provisions for ongoing public ownership through making councils sole shareholders, and includes safeguards against future privatisation (Department of Internal Affairs, 2022).

MDC made a submission to the Finance and Expenditure Select Committee on the Water Services Entities Bill on 14 July 2022 and spoke to that submission on 29 August 2022. While MDC supports the need for reform, Council opposes to the four entity model, as it was proposed in the Water Services Entities Bill, for the following reasons:

- Loss of local decision-making. The removal of three-waters decision-making from local government will adversely impact on our ability to provide for our communities' social and economic wellbeing through growth and development. Council will not be able to work directly with customers to progress developments that involve decisions about three waters infrastructure.

- Based on the findings of three waters reform engagement carried out in September 2021 to inform Council's feedback to the Minister of Local Government on the Three Waters Reform Programme (letter dated 30 September 2021), the reforms are opposed by the vast majority of residents of the Manawatū (94% of respondents opposed, 4.5% in support and 1.5% undecided).

- The divorce of three waters decision-making from district planning, economic development planning and roading infrastructure planning.

- Lack of clarity about how customer-facing issues and matters will be resolved.

- The WSE model will mean that MDC and our community have limited to no say in how three waters services are delivered in the Manawatū.

- Lack of accountability by the WSE to the community that has paid for the three waters assets and the absence of obligations on the WSE to consider the affordability of their services to the end user.

- Ratepayers should not have to subsidize lesser performing Councils who have failed to invest in necessary infrastructure upgrades.

- The Department of Internal Affairs financial modelling for the Manawatū District, and the assumptions they are based on, are flawed. There is little, if anything, to be gained financially from MDC becoming part of Water Services Entity C. Stranded overheads remaining after the reforms will directly impact on rates.

- Lack of alignment with other reform processes, including the review in the Future for Local Government and the Resource Management reforms.

- Lack of consideration given to the number of community-owned rural water schemes operating within New Zealand and the impact that the new requirements will have on scheme providers and private water suppliers.

MDC requested that the Bill be withdrawn and replaced by an alternative model, such as proposed in the Community for Local Democracy's alternative 10-point Three Waters Reform Plan.

The Water Services Entities Act received royal assent on 14 December 2022. The Manawatū District Council is currently one of 21 territorial authorities within the Eastern-Central Water Services Entity (WSE). However, as outlined above, government now proposes to replace the four entity model contained in the Water Services Entities Act with a ten entity model based on current regional boundaries.

In addition the establishment of the WSEs, the Water Services Entities Act 2002 also sets out the provisions relating to representation, governance and accountability arrangements, as well as some powers for the transition period, referred to in the Act as the "establishment period" (Cooney Lees Morgan, 2023). Duties have been imposed on local government organisations to co-operate with the Department of Internal Affairs and WSEs during the establishment period, to facilitate the water services reform (Cooney Lees Morgan, 2023).

While the WSE is co-owned by the territorial authorities in its service area through the allocation and reallocation of shares, the Water Services Entities Act 2022 transfers the responsibility for the operation of three waters services away from Councils to the WSE.

Water Services Entities Legislation Bill

The Water Services Entities Bill is the second bill to give effect to the Three Waters Reform. This Bill covers powers, funding and pricing, links to land use planning, and amendments to the Local Government Act 2002.

MDC made a submission on the draft Bill on 10 February 2023. MDC's primary concerns with the draft Bill include:

- The potential financial impact of section 334 that allows a WSE to levy geographically averaged charges on the residents of the Manawatū District – meaning that residents may have to pay for upgrades in other communities (effectively paying twice)

- Alternative operators of mixed-use rural water supplies are required to prepare a transfer proposal and business plan and to pay all costs associated with an independent assessment of the transfer proposal and a referendum on the transfer proposal (if applicable) to have the operation of that scheme transferred back to them.

- Section 336 of the Bill empowers the Chief Executive of a WSE to authorise the local authority or authorities in its service area to collect charges on behalf of the SWE (i.e. compels local authorities to carry out the water services billing function).

- Uncertainties regarding territorial authorities role in the development of stormwater management plans.

- The impact of clause 27 on LTP (Long Term Plan) amendments to the 2021/31 long-term plans that have a water component.

Taituarā has advised that it is likely that this Bill will be enacted in May or June 2023.

Water Services Economic Efficiency and Consumer Protection Bill

The Water Services Economic Efficiency and Consumer Protection Bill gives effect to Government decisions to introduce economic and protection regulation for the three waters services.

MDC made a submission on the draft Bill on 10 February 2023. Our submission was in support of the submissions of Communities 4 Local Democracy (C4LD) and Taituarā.

Key points from the C4LD submission include:

- The Water Services Entities Act 2022 undermines the potential benefits of the Water Efficiency Bill. The profit ban means that WSEs cannot benefit or be rewarded for improving efficiency, innovating or reducing costs.
- Heavy-handed regulation has been shoe-horned into the Water Efficiency Bill to fix problems caused by the Water Services Entities Act 2022.
- The drafting of the Water Efficiency Bill would need to be significantly different if Government had not introduced legislation to amalgamate and create four WSEs. It is therefore unclear what would happen if the Water Services Entities Act is repealed following the General Election.
- Timeframes provided for transitional arrangements are overly ambitious.

The Taituarā submission supported the overall policy intent of the Bill but made recommendations to support the Bill to better achieve its stated objectives.

It is anticipated that the Water Services Economic Efficiency and Consumer Protection Bill will be enacted in May or June 2023.

Implications of the Three Waters Reforms for the LTP 2024-2034

Guidance from Taituarā is that councils must make the assumption that the three waters reforms will proceed according to the Government's intended plan. This includes the assumption that the Water Services Entities Legislation Bill and the Water Services Economic Efficiency and Consumer Protection Bills will be enacted in May or June 2023 and the transfer of three waters assets from councils to the Water Services Entities will occur as planned (Taituara, 2023).

However, the changes the Three Waters Project announced by Government on 13 April 2023 mean that the transfer of three water assets from the Manawatū District Council to the Manawatū-Whanganui WSE will occur sometime between early 2025 and 1 July 2026. The Department of Internal Affairs will develop a schedule of go-live dates, in consultation with councils and other groups (Hon. K McAnulty, Pers. Comm. 13/4/2023).

It is expected that those staff currently employed at MDC in three waters infrastructure will either have their employment transferred to the WSE, or will see a significant change in their roles and responsibilities. Our Mayor will have a seat on the regional representative group of the Manawatū-Whanganui WSE.

As noted above, the legislation requires MDC to co-operate with reasonable requests for information. In the course of meeting these requests, staff are engaging in service planning (such as preparing asset management plans) in much the same way as we would if three waters was remaining with council. MDC will be responsible for maintaining three waters assets up until the handover date to the WSE. This includes the preparation of an annual plan for 2023/24 (Taituara, 2023).

The base work on three waters services that is necessary for meting information requests from the Three Waters transition unit means will provide MDC with a basis to plan for these services, should the reforms not proceed (Taituara, 2023).

MDC will continue to be responsible for three waters service delivery in the first two years of the 2024-34 Long-term Plan. The draft budget for the 2024-34 Long-term Plan will not include any expenditure for three waters assets beyond the hand-over date to the WSE (1 July 2026 or earlier if advised by the Department of Internal Affairs). However, it will still be necessary for staff to develop 'what if' analysis for years three to ten of the 2024-34 Long-term Plan, should the three waters reforms not proceed (Taituara, 2023).

Resource Management Reform

The Government is proposing radical change to the resource management and planning system. The changes will shift how the natural and built environment is protected from an effects-management approach under the Resource Management Act (RMA), to an outcomes-driven approach under the Natural and Built Environments Act, Spatial Planning Act and Climate Adaptation Act. Submissions on the draft Natural and Built Environments Bill and the Spatial Planning Bill are currently being considered by the Environment Committee.

The reforms also aim to regionalise resource management plan-making. Plans are to be made by one regional planning committee made up of representatives from territorial authorities, unitary authorities, regional councils and iwi/hapū organisations. Regions have flexibility in determining the makeup of the regional planning committees, but they must have a minimum of six members, and a minimum of two mana whenua members. All Councils can be represented on the regional planning committee, but Councils will only have one seat each. LGNZ suggests representatives on RPCs should be elected members, given they have a democratic mandate to act on behalf of their communities. However, there would also be benefits in having members with expert knowledge of the planning system appointed to the RPC.

Committees will be responsible for developing:

- One Natural and Built Environment Plan (NBA plan) per region. These will replace existing regional policy statements, regional plans, and district plans developed by local authorities.

- One Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) per region. This is a 30+ year strategy that will provide integrated direction to resource management, infrastructure and financial planning. Plans will identify those areas that are suitable for development; need to be protected; require infrastructure; and/or are vulnerable to climate change effects and natural hazards (Local Government New Zealand, 2022). The RSSs (Regional Spatial Strategy) will translate national-level direction, including that provided through the National Planning Framework under the Natural and Built Environments Act (NBA) to a regional context.

Each region will have a host council that will be responsible for hosting the regional planning committee and its secretariat (Local Government New Zealand, 2022).

There is also provision for sub-committees under the new legislation, although their role and scope is yet to be detailed. Sub-committees may provide a way to enhance local voice but this will need to be balanced with objectives to make the system more efficient and less complex (Local Government New Zealand, 2022).

Other matters being considered are the need for a central government representative on each regional planning committee, and possibly, in time, a representative from the Water Service Entity to ensure alignment (Local Government New Zealand, 2022).

Each Council will provide input into regional planning committees through statements of community outcomes and statements of regional environmental outcomes. These statements will set out the issues, opportunities, and characteristics of a community that RSSs and NBA Plans must consider and give effect to. Each council

(as well as communities) will also have the opportunity to provide feedback on draft NBA plans and RSSs, and independent hearings panels will be utilised to help improve the quality of NBA plans (Local Government New Zealand, 2022).

Central Government will develop a National Planning Framework (NPF) that will consolidate existing national direction (including current National Policy Statements and National Environmental Standards) into a single document. The NPF will support RPCs to deliver outcomes and comply with limits and targets. The NPF will need to provide clear guidance to local government on how to manage competing outcomes and resolve conflicts between outcomes. However, it will also need to be flexible enough to provide for local variation. LGNZ is concerned that the NPF will be shared after the NBA has been introduced to the House. There needs to be alignment between the NPF and NBA (Local Government New Zealand, 2022).

Implications for MDC

MDC will continue to be responsible for consenting, compliance, monitoring and enforcement activities, that is, MDC will implement NBA plans and RSSs within the Manawatū District (Local Government New Zealand, 2022). Council will also need to resource its contribution to the regional planning committee. It is more difficult to anticipate how this compares to current resourcing demands for plan making under the Resource Management Act 1991, particularly as resourcing demands are likely to be higher for the host Council and those staff seconded to the secretariat role (Local Government New Zealand, 2022).

It is also not clear in the legislation who will resource Māori to participate in the new system. Local Government will be advocating for central government to provide financial support (Local Government New Zealand, 2022). However, we cannot rule out the possibility of some cost implications for Council.

LGNZ has raised concerns that Councils will be responsible for implementing NBA plans and RSSs over which they may have very little influence or input (Local Government New Zealand, 2022).
Transition to the new system is expected to happen in stages over a number of years. Councils will be advocating to central government for certainty on when they should stop undertaking plan changes to current plans and transition to the new system so that this can be factored into long term plans and work programmes.

Future for Local Government Review

On 23 April 2021 the Minister of Local Government established a review into the Future for Local Government. The purpose of the Review is "...to identify how our system of local democracy and governance needs to evolve over the next 30 years, to improve the wellbeing of New Zealand communities and the environment, and actively embody the Treaty partnership" (Department of Internal Affairs, 2022).

The scope of the review includes, but is not limited to:

- Roles, functions and partnerships;
- Representation and governance; and
- Funding and financing.

The draft report of the independent review panel was released for public feedback in October 2022. Submissions on the draft report close on 28 February 2023. The final report from the panel will be presented to the Minister in June 2023 (the Future for Local Government, 2022).

The panel has identified five "key shifts" that are required to many aspects of the local government system to maximise the wellbeing and resilience of communities now and into the future and strengthen local democratic decision-making. These five priorities are shown on the next page. (Future for Local Government Review Panel, 2022).

In addition, system design and stewardship are also under consideration (Future for Local Government Review Panel, 2022).

1

More Equitable Funding

To address the challenges facing local community wellbeing, reforming the funding system is key.

2

Genuine Partnership between CG/LG

We want a balanced and equitable relationship with Central Government.

This means recognition of our expertise, knowledge and skills in delivering the services our communities need.

3

Authentic Relationship with Hapū/Iwi/Māori

Building stronger relationships with iwi requires genuine interactions, effort, perseverance and trust.

We are committed to authentic partnering and working together.

4

Strengthened Local Democracy

Implementing the principles of localism is key to enabling communities to thrive.

It underpins the fundamentals of local democracy.

5

Stronger Focus on Wellbeing

Through local knowledge, focus and engagement, LG can provide support suited to our particular communities and enable their voices to be heard and actioned.

A one-size fits all approach doesn't work.

The draft report contains 29 recommendations and 16 questions. Council's submission on the draft report supports many of the proposed recommendations, but there are mixed views on others, particularly those recommendations that seek to impose new statutory obligations on councils. Many of the recommendations outlined in the Panel's report cannot be activated without a mandate or legislative reform.

It is most unlikely that the Government would make any substantive policy decisions in advance of the 2023 election (though commitments in manifestos may be made) (Taituara, 2023). Taituarā are not expecting policy decisions until mid-2024 at the earliest, and not expecting any legislation to start the Parliamentary process until early 2025 (Taituara, 2023). Taituarā advises councils to undertake some thinking about what a wellbeing focus means to their community 'on the ground' and what that might mean, but does not recommend that councils make any assumptions regarding functional change, new funding sources etc (Taituara, 2023).

Emergency Management System Reforms

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has established a Regulatory Framework Review Programme (also known as the "Trifecta") to bring together three projects that have significant alignment. The projects are:

- developing a new Emergency Management Act (the Act) that will replace the Civil Defence Emergency Act;
- review of the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan Order (the Plan Order) 2015 and the accompanying Guide to the National CDEM (Civil Defence and Emergency Management) Plan (the Guide) 2015; and
- development of the National Disaster Resilience Strategy (NDRS) Roadmap (National Emergency Management Agency, 2022).

The Programme is also aligned with the Emergency Management System Reform (EMSR) work programme based on the Government response to the Technical Advisory Group's recommendations Delivering better responses to natural disasters and other emergencies. The draft Emergency Management Bill is expected to be introduced to the House by the end of 2022 (National Emergency Management Agency, 2022).

Some of the proposals being considered have the effect of regionalising CDEM decision-making. MDC submitted against the proposal to regionalise CDEM out of concern that this will have the effect of removing local powers, removing flexibility, and distancing decisions from local knowledge (Graham, 2022).

Another issue that is proposed to be addressed through the draft bill is the lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities in an undeclared emergency. MDC is concerned that, due to the variable nature of emergency events, proposals to create national level response thresholds could be too prescriptive and may hinder local government's ability to be agile in the way it responds in any given emergency (Graham, 2022).

Building Consent System Review

The Government has commenced a review of the building consent system, as part of the Building System Reforms. The review is a key priority of the Government to support transformation of our housing market to unlock productivity growth and make houses more affordable.

The reforms are a comprehensive approach to lifting the performance of the building regulatory system, ensuring building work is done right the first time and providing fairer outcomes if things go wrong. The reforms seek to make improvements to the building regulatory system so that building work can be done more efficiently and buildings are safe, healthy and durable.

Outcomes of the review are pending. However, feedback on the original discussion document, potential changes include transfer of some building consent functions, including specific assurance functions, away from building consent authorities to other system participants.

Review of Waste Legislation

Government is proposing new and more comprehensive legislation on waste to replace the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 and the Litter Act 1979. This new legislation is needed to put in place the tools and arrangements that will deliver the new national waste strategy and ensure government makes good use of funds generated by the expanded waste disposal levy (Ministry for the Environment, 2021).

The Ministry for the Environment sought feedback on issues and options for the new waste legislation in November 2021 in conjunction with proposals for a new national waste strategy through its discussion document titled Te Kawe i te haepapa para / Taking responsibility for our waste. MDC's submission recommended the following proposed legislative changes:

- That the owner of a vehicle be responsible if litter is discarded from that vehicle and can be fined.
- That the fines for offences under the Litter Act (or the replacement legislation) be increased to reflect actual and responsible costs.
- That the Minister for the Environment take a larger role in the monitoring and compliance of waste management in general.
- That the current legislative requirements of Councils be streamlined, including making waste management and minimisation plans a component of long-term plans.
- The proposal to fast-track a national waste data and licensing system.

These proposed legislative changes will benefit Councils by making it easier and less expensive for Council's to undertake litter enforcement, and will make private waste providers more accountable for their waste data. MDC adopted its new Waste Management and Minimisation Plan in June 2022. Operational expenditure and level of service changes resulting from the adoption of the WMMP will be included in Council's Annual Plan 2023-24 and 10 Year Plan 2024-2034 as appropriate.

Section 50 of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 requires a territorial authority to review its waste management and minimisation plan at intervals of not more than 6 years. If changes to waste legislation make future Waste Management and Minimisation Plans a component of Long Term Plans that would mean that a review of the plan would need to be carried out every three years instead of every six years. However, rather than being a separate engagement, consultation and funding for waste initiatives would be carried out in conjunction with the Long Term Plan, with potential cost savings.

National Direction under the Resource Management Act 1991

There are several new or recent National Policy Statements and National Environmental Standards under the Resource Management Act 1991 that will impact on Council roles and responsibilities, including:

- National direction for essential freshwater
- National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land
- National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity
- National Policy Statement for Urban Development
- National Policy Statement for Plantation and Exotic Carbon Afforestation

Under the proposed new resource management system, existing national direction will be consolidated by the Ministry for the Environment into the new National Planning Framework (NPF). The NPF will set national environmental limits, targets and other provisions such as methods and rules that will guide those exercising functions and powers under the Natural and Built Environments Act (Planning Plus, 2022).

National Direction for Essential Freshwater

Essential Freshwater is part of a new national direction to protect and improve New Zealand's rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands. The Essential Freshwater package aims to:

- stop further degradation of our freshwater
- start making immediate improvements so water quality improves within five years
- Reverse past damage to bring our waterways and ecosystems to a healthy state within a generation (Ministry for the Environment and Ministry for Primary Industries, 2023).
- Current proposals in the Essential Freshwater package include:
- National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM), which replaced the NPS-FM 2017;
- National Environmental Standards (NES) for Freshwater, Sources of Drinking Water and Wastewater; and
- Section 360 regulations (stock exclusion requirements).

Beyond the current package of proposals, the Government is continuing to work on broader system reform, including water allocation.

The NPS-FM requires tangata whenua to be actively involved in freshwater management. The requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying the local approach to give effect to Te Mana o te Wai;
- Making or changing regional policy statements and regional and district plans so far as they relate to freshwater management;
- Implementing the NES; and
- Developing and implementing matauranga Māori and other monitoring.

The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) includes a requirement to manage freshwater in a way that gives effect to Te Mana o te Wai. The concept of Te Mana o te Wai was first introduced in the NPS-FM in 2014 and refers to the life-supporting capacity of freshwater. When managing freshwater, it sets a hierarchy for freshwater management that ensures the health and well-being of the water is protected and human health needs are provided for before enabling other uses of water (Ministry for the Environment and Ministry for Primary Industries, 2023), as follows:

1. first, the health and wellbeing of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems;

2. second, the health and needs of people (such as drinking water); and

3. third, the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing, now and in the future.

Implications of Te Mana o te Wai for Potable Water Abstractions

The requirement to give effect to Te Mana o te Wai is significant for potable water abstractions as previously potable water abstractions were prioritised above the health and wellbeing of water bodies. Not only does this change in hierarchy impact potable water, it also has huge implications for stormwater and wastewater discharges.

Implications of Te Mana o te Wai for Stormwater

Given that the aquatic health of waterways downstream of townships reduces due to stormwater, it is expected that council will be required to remove direct stormwater discharges from waterways (industrial and commercial will be prioritised) and all stormwater will require treatment. If treatment does not occur at the individual sites MDC will be required to put the treatment at the end of the pipe. Due to the increased volume at the end of the pipe compared to the source of contamination, treatment at the end of the pipe is more costly. Currently majority of our stormwater outfalls have no treatment.

Implications of Te Mana o te Wai for Wastewater

The health and wellbeing of waterway includes cultural concerns. Current feedback indicates than nothing less than zero discharge will be considered acceptable. MDC's current discharge regime will not be deemed appropriate.

Regional Council requirements under the NPS-FM 2020

Regional Councils must apply the hierarchy of obligations when implementing the NPS-FM 2020.

Regional Councils are required to develop long-term visions for freshwater through discussion with communities and tangata whenua. The National Objectives Framework (NOF) requires every regional council to:

- identify values for each freshwater management unit in its region;

- set target attribute states, and flows and levels for waterbodies;

- develop interventions (limits specified in rules, or action plans) to achieve target attribute states, flows, and levels;

- monitor water bodies and freshwater ecosystems; and

- take steps if deterioration is detected (Ministry for the Environment and Ministry for Primary Industries, 2023).

To assist Horizons Regional Council in revising the One Plan in response to the NPS-FM, Horizons is undertaking a series of public consultations. The first was its "long-

term visions for freshwater" engagement in May 2022. Horizons is using the feedback from this consultation to draft visions and environmental outcomes for freshwater.

MDC submitted feedback on Horizons second freshwater engagement titled "top spots" on 28 February 2023. This engagement sought community feedback on where people enjoy freshwater, criteria to determine which freshwater bodies are classified as "outstanding" and Horizons list of proposed Outstanding Water Bodies.

An external panel of experts will make recommendations on the outstanding water bodies for the region based on the final criteria developed from public and stakeholder feedback. A draft revision of the One Plan will be notified by the end of 2024 for public consultation (Horizons Regional Council, 2022). A final decision on Horizons Freshwater Plan Change is expected in 2025.

National Policy Statement – Highly Productive Land

The NPS-HPL came into force on 17 October 2022. The objective of the NPS-HPL is that highly productive land is protected for use in land-based primary production, both now and for future generations (Ministry for the Environment, 2022).

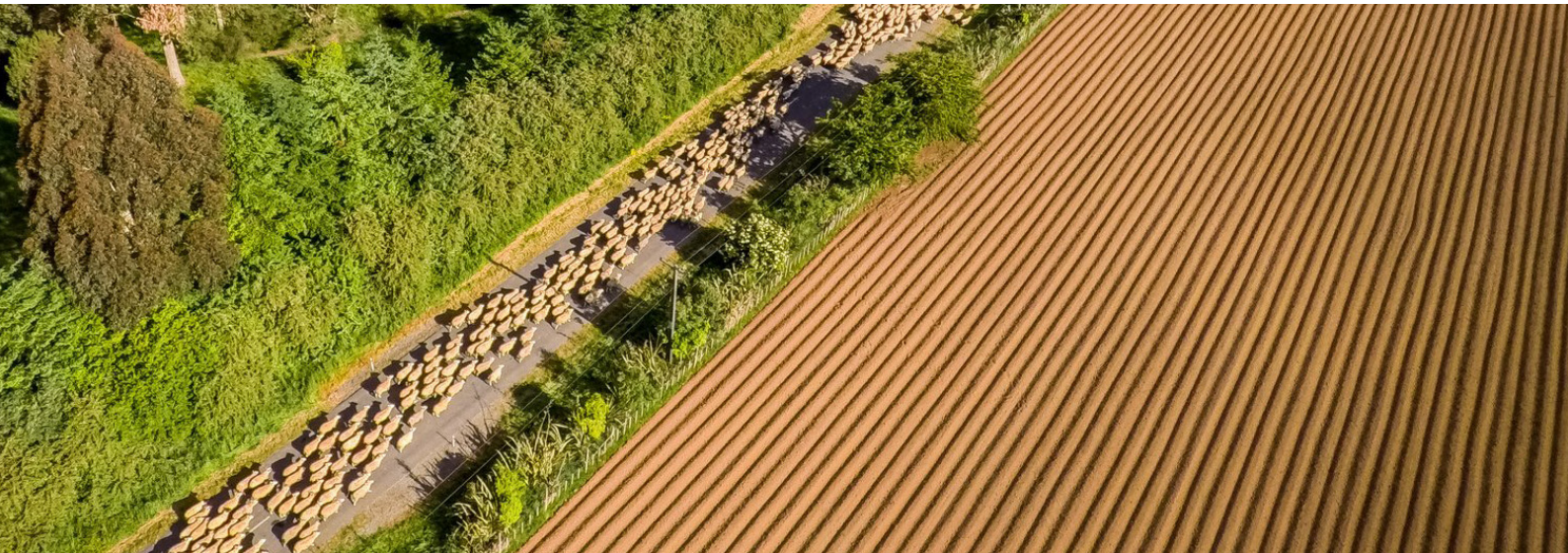
The definition of "highly productive land" refers to land that has been mapped in a regional policy statement in accordance with clause 3.4.
This clause refers to land that is:

1. a) in a general rural zone or rural production zone;
2. b) is predominately LUC (Land Use Capability) 1, 2 or 3 land; and
3. c) forms a large and geographically cohesive area.

Mapping is based on the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory LUC status, unless a regional council accepts any more detailed mapping that uses the LUC classification in the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory.

The NPS-HPL requires regional councils to notify a proposed regional policy statement that includes all the land in the region that is required by clause 3.45 to be mapped as highly productive land within three years, i.e. no later than 17 October 2025 (Ministry for the Environment, 2022).

Until such time as Horizons updates its regional policy statement, MDC must apply the NPS-HPL by taking highly productive land to mean land that is zoned general rural or rural production and LUC 1, 2, or 3 land, but is not identified for future urban development or subject to a Council initiated, or an adopted, notified plan change to rezone it from general rural or rural production to urban or rural lifestyle. Once Horizons adopts the regional policy statement that includes the maps of highly productive land, MDC will have a maximum of 6 months to identify the highly productive land in the district using maps that are



exactly equivalent to those in the regional policy statement.

The Manawatū District has an above-average representation of class 1 – 3 land. A report commissioned by Landcare Research in 2016 to inform the review of MDC's Rural Zone found that 5% of land within the District is LUC Class 1, 13% is LUC class 2, and 22% is LUC class 3 land. Given the extent of LUC Class 1, 2 and 3 land within the Manawatū District, the NPS-HPL will mean changes in land use planning. The NPS-HPL key policy directives are to avoid the use of highly productive land unless for land-based primary production. Subdivision is to be avoided unless an applicant can demonstrate that the overall productive capacity of the land is retained over the long term. MDC is also concerned that the NPS-HPL may limit the ability of new rural industries to be situated on highly productive land, that is, they may have to be located further away from primary production activities on land that is not LUC class 1, 2 or 3.

The NPS-HPL will impact on current resource consenting for new subdivision and land use activities in the interim. Moving forward, the District Plan must be updated to give effect to the NPS-HPL. Given the historical trend of lifestyle subdivision on Class 1, 2 and 2 land, Council is required to review future growth planning (linked into the NPS-Urban Development).

The NPS-HPL has the effect of prioritising urban intensification over expansion on highly productive land. Urban rezoning of highly productive land can now only be allowed for if:

- the urban rezoning is required to provide sufficient development capacity to meet demand for housing or business land to give effect to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020; and
- there are no other reasonably practicable and feasible options for providing at least sufficient development capacity within the same locality and market while achieving a well-functioning urban environment; and
- the environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits of rezoning outweigh the long-term environmental, social, cultural and economic costs associated with the loss of highly productive land for land-based primary production, taking into account both tangible and intangible values (Ministry for the Environment, 2022) .

National Policy Statement – Indigenous Biodiversity

MDC responded to the Government's National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB) exposure draft consultation which closed on July 21, 2022. The NPSIB is an essential part of New Zealand's response to biodiversity decline in Aotearoa and aims to protect, maintain and restore our indigenous biodiversity. MDC supports the intent of the NPS-IB (National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity) to protect and restore indigenous biodiversity but raised concerns regarding the difficulty and cost of implementing the NPS-IB. Unless central government is able to assist local government to fill current gaps in capacity, capability and funding, the implementation of the NPS-IB will be unaffordable and unachievable for MDC.

MDC also noted significant resource implications and reporting requirements on local authorities in implementing the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FW); and the formation of environment bottom lines as required as part of the future Natural and Built Environments legislation.

Further consideration is needed on how the new responsibilities placed on local authorities through the implementation of the NPS-IB and NPS-FW will be funded and resourced, and ensuring that these align with future system design under the RMA reform.

The NPSIB draft implementation projected that the final policy would be gazetted

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and the finalized implementation plan and guidelines released in late 2022 but this has not happened yet. Central government has also scheduled incentive pilots for early 2023 and MDC would need to be in a vantage position to benefit from incentives.

National Policy Statement – Urban Development

The National Policy Statement on Urban Development (the NPS-UD) came into effect on 20 August 2020. The NPS-UD recognises the national significance of:

- having well-functioning urban environments that enable all people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, and for their health and safety, now and into the future; and

- providing sufficient development capacity to meet the different needs of people and communities (Ministry for the Environment, 2023).

The objectives and high-level policies of the NPS-UD 2020 apply to all councils that have all or part of an urban environment within their district or region. However, some policies apply only to tier 1 or tier 2 councils.

The NPS-UD defines an "urban environment" as any area of land (regardless of size, and irrespective of local authority or statistical boundaries) that:

- is, or is intended to be, predominantly urban in character; and

- is, or is intended to be, part of a housing and labour market of at least 10,000 people.

The NPS-UD categorises urban environments as tier 1, 2 or 3, based on population size and growth rates. The most directive policies are targeted towards tier 1 and 2 urban environments as these are the largest and fastest growing urban centres (Ministry for the Environment, 2020). Feilding is a tier 3 "urban environment" for the purpose of the NPS-UD.

As a tier 3 local authority, Section 3.9.1 of the NPS-UD requires Council to monitor quarterly:

- the demand for dwellings;
- the supply of dwellings;
- prices of, and rents for, dwellings;
- housing affordability;
- the proportion of housing development capacity that has been realised:
    - in previously urbanised areas (such as through infill housing or redevelopment) and:
    - in previously undeveloped (i.e. greenfield) areas; and
- available data on business land.

The purpose of monitoring under the NPS-UD is to allow Council to make planning decisions informed by robust and frequently updated information about the District's development indicators. Council is also required under Section 3.9.3 of the NPS-UD to annually publish the results of its monitoring.

Horizons Regional Council's recently notified proposed Plan Change 3 (Urban Development) (PPC3) that gives effect to the requirements of the NPS-UD. MDC's submission on PPC3 was critical of the lack of clarity on how to resolve tensions between greenfield growth and intensification at the local level. MDC is hopeful that such tensions will be resolved through the Hearings process or as further national direction is released through the resource management reform process.

The Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act passed into law on 20 December 2021. This Act had the effect of bringing forward and strengthening the NPS-UD to increase housing supply in urban areas. This Act requires tier 1 councils and other tier 2 and 3 councils experiencing acute housing needs to apply medium density residential standards for specified urban areas that enable

people to develop up to three dwellings on each site, each being up to three storeys, without the need for resource consent (providing all other rules and standards in relevant plans have been complied with) (Ministry for the Environment, 2023). As a Tier 2 Council, Palmerston North City is required to prepare a Plan Change in line with these NPS-UD directions.

The current approach to urban growth planning in the Manawatū District is set out in the Feilding Framework Plan (2013). As a Tier 3 Council, Manawatu District is strongly encouraged to prepare a Future Development Strategy to look at urban growth options in the short, medium and long term. Council needs to commence this work in order to review the Feilding Framework Plan, complete it's District Plan Review and participate in future regional spatial planning.

National Direction for Plantation and Exotic Carbon Afforestation

The Government sees forestry as essential to New Zealand's climate change response. In 2020, forestry offset approximately 25 per cent of New Zealand's gross emissions. However, there are increasing concerns about the growth and extent of exotic forestry and its environmental, economic, social and cultural impacts on communities. These include land conversion from farming to exotic forestry. The National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry (NES-PF) aim to ensure that the right forest is planted in the right place, and managed in the right way (Ministry for the Environment and Ministry for Primary Industries, 2022).

From 1 January 2023, people with exotic and indigenous forest that meet the requirements of the permanent post-1989 forest category will be able to register in the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme. Rising prices for emissions units (NZUs) can be a significant incentive to establish exotic forests, particularly carbon forests.
In October to November 2022, the Ministry for the Environment and Ministry for Primary Industries sought feedback on proposals to extend the scope of the National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry (NES-PF) to include exotic carbon forests, and to better manage the environmental effects of exotic carbon forests. The key messages contained in Council's submission on this consultation were as follows:

1. The Manawatū District Council is concerned about the potential effects of land use change from food production to forestry. This is particularly of concern for MDC given that approximately 40% of the total land area of the Manawatū District is classified as LUC Class 1 – 3.

2. Plantation and exotic carbon forestry is considered to contribute little to social and cultural wellbeing.

3. MDC's District Plan does not currently allow Council to consider potential effects of new forestry (including social and cultural effects), expect in relation to effects on amenity values of afforestation in significant amenity features and outstanding natural features and landscapes. The District Plan is silent on exotic carbon forestry. MDC recommends that the NES-PF be amended to include both plantation and exotic carbon forestry, and a requirement to obtain resource consent from territorial authorities. In time, we hope to see controls over the location of new forestry be included within regional spatial plans under the new resource management framework.

4. If MDC's planners are to be decision-makers for new plantation and exotic carbon forests under the NES, our staff will need training and technical guidance, with funding from central government.

National Strategies and Plans

There are many national strategies and plans, the implementation of which will impact on Council and the Manawatū community. Examples include:

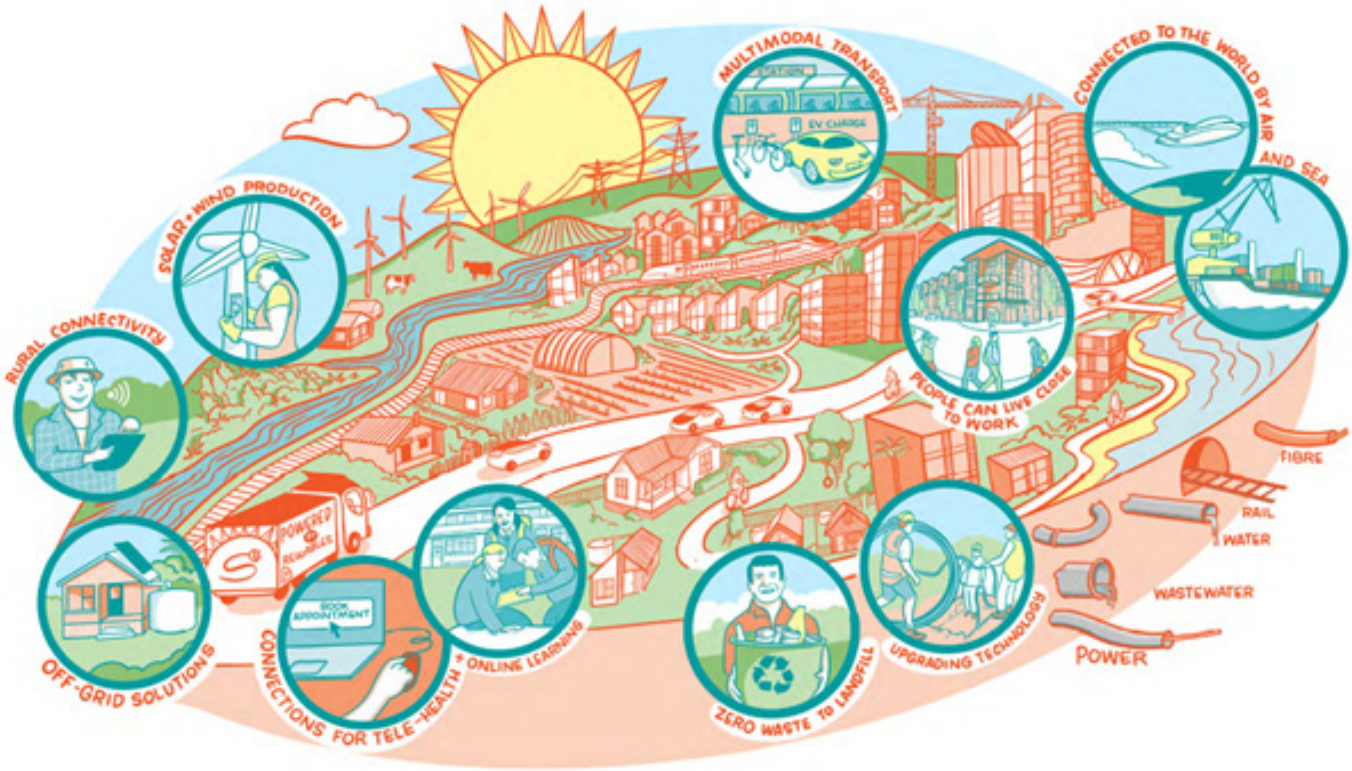
- New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy;
- New Zealand's first National Adaptation Plan and Emissions Reduction Plan, including proposals for pricing agricultural emissions (part of Government's climate change response);
- Road to Zero (New Zealand's road safety Strategy); and
- The National Waste Strategy.

New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy

Rautaki Hanganga o Aotearoa New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy 2022 – 2052 was published by the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission in 2022. The purpose of this strategy is to develop a strategic response to the challenges facing New Zealand's infrastructure, including climate change, technological change, congestion and natural hazard risk (New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, 2022).

This strategy is focused on five objectives to achieve a thriving New Zealand, as follows:

1. Enabling a net-zero carbon emissions Aotearoa through rapid development of clean energy and reducing the carbon emissions from infrastructure.
2. Supporting towns and regions to flourish through better physical and digital connectivity and freight and supply chains.
3. Building attractive and inclusive cities that respond to population growth, unaffordable housing and traffic congestion through better long-term planning, pricing and good public transport.
4. Strengthening resilience to shocks and stresses by taking a coordinated and planned approach to risks based on good-quality information.
5. Moving to a circular economy by setting a national direction for waste, managing pressure on landfills and waste-recovery infrastructure and developing a framework for the operation of waste-to-energy infrastructure (New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, 2022).



The proposals in the New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy link to other Government plans and reforms, including:

- Strengthening partnerships with, and opportunities for Māori across the infrastructure system
- Enabling a net-zero carbon emissions Aotearoa, including through decarbonizing existing infrastructure and assessing whole-of-life carbon emissions in all business cases.
- Improve efficiency and security of freight and the national supply chain
- Building attractive and inclusive cities
- Reform of the resource management system to:
- better enable timely development of clean energy generation
- give effect to national priorities and provide for a long-term, flexible approach to regional planning
- Identify and protect infrastructure corridors for the future
- Enable more housing and employment in the right places
- Provide for funding and financing tools that spread costs fairly over time.
- Increasing the resilience of critical infrastructure and improving infrastructure risk management.
- Moving to a circular economy
- Improving funding and financing of local infrastructure

Government will identify those recommendations in the strategy that they wish to progress, develop them into an action plan and assign them to the relevant organisations/departments for implementation. Delivery of the recommendations in the strategy will require a mix of policy development, regulation, investment and strategic priority setting (New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, 2022).

This strategy reinforces many of the legislative reforms that Government is currently progressing. The new policies, regulations and investments made by those organisations and department implementing the strategy will affect the way that Council plans for, funds, maintains and delivers new infrastructure.

National Adaption Plan, Managed Retreat and Flood Insurance

MDC responded to the Ministry for the Environment consultation on the draft National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Managed Retreat and Flood Insurance released in May 2022. The Manawatu District as highlighted earlier, is impacted by sea level rise, coastal erosion, extreme weather events, inland flooding and increased fire risks and national direction on managing these climate change impacts determines MDC's level of response. MDC supported the vision, purpose and goals of the draft NAP that aims to increase resilience and recognizes that climate change adaptation should be fair and low cost.

In its submission, MDC agreed with the draft NAP's statement that "local authorities are the government bodies that are closest to their communities and represent local views." MDC recognises its leading role in planning for and improving community resilience, addressing the impacts of climate change and integrating climate risk into current and future planning. This is evidenced by the broad range of examples of how MDC is already responding to climate change highlighted in this scan.

MDC highlighted the need to foremostly avoid risks rather than focus on response and recovery to climate change impacts. MDC supported a national hub that holds all available climate data and information, updated regularly, as it can enable all levels of government to be better prepared to avoid climate risks. MDC suggested that in accordance with the principles outlined in the Sendai Framework, Councils should be supported in claiming back costs to repair and build back better and should also be supported financially to appropriately fund emergency management to build community resilience and the resilience of other response agencies.

In terms of managed retreat, while generally supporting the proposed objectives and principles to guide the development of legislation for managed retreat, requested that Central Government take a leadership

role in relation to managed retreat and create clear policies and thresholds for local government to implement through plans and policies at the regional and local level. MDC did not recommend a policy approach of open-ended delegation to the local level; recognising the need for national, regional and local tools to ensure appropriate decision-making given the level of hazard risk in these situations.

MDC noted that legislation developed for managed retreat should enable Councils to develop, in consultation with affected communities, a sinking lid policy for land that is known to subject to natural hazards. This would mean no new buildings are able to be constructed on this land and no rebuilding of existing buildings. Such an approach to hazard avoidance would directly benefit these communities by reducing investment in hazard prone areas, thereby reducing future costs for relocation of buildings and assets when the policy response transitions to managed retreat.

MDC highlighted that over time, as a result of multiple climate hazards, public and private assets will become uninsurable. MDC considered that the most appropriate response to this risk would be a national disaster insurance scheme for properties that are rendered uninsurable. MDC acknowledged that the risk is somewhat addressed by the draft Natural Hazards Insurance Bill that signals central government's intention to replace the Earthquake Commission (EQC) with a Natural Hazards Commission. MDC however noted the need for alignment between the Natural Hazards Insurance Bill and legislation or policy responses to flood hazard insurance matters and the need for clear delineation between the roles and cover of the Natural Hazards Insurance Bill and flood insurance included within any other legislation or plans to avoid duplication or confusion.

Central Government Regulation of Public Transport

Government Policy Statement on Land Transport

The Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS) sets out how money from the National Land Transport Fund is allocated towards achieving the Government's transport priorities. The GPS sets out ranges of funding for activities such as public transport, state highway improvements, local and regional roads and road safety. Each GPS sets out the priorities for the following 10-year period and is reviewed and updated every three years (Te Manatu Waka Ministry of Transport, 2023).

The GPS 2021 identified four strategic priorities for land transport investment: preventing deaths and serious injuries, decarbonisation, better transport choices for New Zealanders as we move about our cities and regions, and improving freight connections. Investment over the life of the GPS 2021 is strongly driven by the four strategic priorities as well as four specific Government Commitments for GPS 2021 (Auckland Transport Alignment Project, Let's Get Wellington Moving, Road to Zero, and implementation of the New Zealand Rail Plan) (New Zealand Government, 2020).

Making public transport more available and/or accessible and increasing the share of travel by public transport are key focus areas within the strategic priority of "Better Travel Options" in the GPS 2021. Public transport also features within the strategic priority of "Climate Change."

The Ministry of Transport is currently developing the next GPS, which will set the Government's priorities for land transport for the period from 2024/25 to 2033/34. The Government has signalled the indicative transport priorities signed off by Cabinet last year will change in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle. The draft GPS has a greater focus on reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, as well as building greater resilience so our transport network can better withstand the increasing frequency on extreme weather events. The Ministry of Transport expects to begin consultation on the draft GPS 2024 in May 2023 (Te Manatu Waka Ministry of Transport, 2023).

Public Transport Decarbonisation

In January 2021, the Government announced its commitment to decarbonising the public transport bus fleet. By 2025, the Government will only allow zero-emission public transport buses to be purchased. This commitment targets complete decarbonisation of the public transport bus fleet by 2035 (Ministry of Transport, 2023).

In line with Central Government's decarbonisation targets, Objective 3 and Policy 3.2 of Horizons Regional Public Transport Plan 2022-32 seek to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality through decarbonising the public bus fleet. Horizons is proposing to adopt a phased approach to transitioning to a zero-emission fleet based on the re-tendering of contracts (or sooner if required by government) (Horizons transport officers and Horizons Passenger Transport Committee, 2021).

Public Transport Operating Model

The Land Transport Management (Regulation of Public Transport) Amendment Bill has been introduced to Parliament and is awaiting its first reading. This Bill establishes the Sustainable Public Transport Framework (SPTF) for the planning, procurement, and delivery of public transport services. This new framework will replace the Public Transport Operating Model (Parlimentary Counsel Office, 2023).

The new approach to public transport will:

- Support 'on-demand' public transport services
- Allow councils to own and operate services in house
- Improve pay and working conditions
- Deliver routes and services that reflect community needs
- Incentivise the decarbonisation of the fleet.

The SPTF will give local authorities more flexibility and control over how public transport is planned and delivered, including the option to own assets and operate services in house rather than outsourcing to an outside provider. This will make it easier to plan networks and services, to set fares and policies, and encourage innovation in how services are delivered (Wood, 2022).

The Bill establishes a requirement for regional councils and territorial authorities to prepare regional public transport plans in collaboration. This reinforces the existing requirement for regional councils and territorial authorities collaborate to deliver the regional public transport services and

infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of passengers (Parlimentary Counsel Office, 2023).

The Bill expands the definition of public transport to include unscheduled (on-demand) public transport services and shuttle services. This change will enable regional councils to provide any form of passenger transport service through any mode (other than air transport), whether delivered to a timetable or not. Regional Councils will also be able to procure, contract and deliver on-demand services separately to timetabled services, removing the requirement for every unit to be contracted on an exclusive basis (Parlimentary Counsel Office, 2023).

Together, these changes will help remove barriers to decarbonisation, and will clarify and improve the regulation and administration of some public transport services (Parlimentary Counsel Office, 2023).

Inter-regional Passenger Rail

The Transport and Infrastructure Committee or Parliament undertook an inquiry into the future of inter-regional passenger rail in New Zealand in October 2022 (New Zealand Parliament, 2022). MDC's submission on this inquiry was broadly in support of the direction of thinking to resuscitate, expand and improve the inter-regional passenger rail options in New Zealand. MDC also advocated for greater central government involvement in investigating and improving inter-regional passenger rail in New Zealand.

MDC's submission noted the Manawatū District's strategic position within New Zealand's rail transport network. The main trunk railway passes through Feilding and historic records suggest that Feilding had hoped to be the junction of the North Island Main Trunk and the Marton-New Plymouth line. Feilding was a stop for the first Auckland-Wellington express that ran on 14 February 1909. The Blue Streak and Northerner had stops in Feilding until the 1970s. However, by 2012, Feilding was closed to regular passenger trains with the replacement of the Overlander by the Northern Explorer, attributable to low passenger numbers.

While there is an appetite for low carbon emissions transport options, the reinstatement of passenger rail services to Feilding would require considerable central government investment and subsidisation if it is to be affordable for members of the community to use.

The Capital Connection is the primary passenger rail service in the region, travelling between Palmerston North and Wellington one per day on weekdays. While there are bus services to Palmerston North that travel past the railway station, there are no public transport services from the Palmerston North city centre to the train station, some three kilometres away. MDC suggested that either the Capital Connection could begin its route at the Feilding Railway Station, or central government funding is needed to improve existing rail links to connect with city centres to improve the convenience and attractiveness of rail transport.

According to recently released emissions profile data for the Manawatū-Whanganui region, emissions from transport, postal and warehousing in 2021 totalled 175 kilotonnes. MDC would like to see most of the freight currently transported on roads transferred to the rail network as this would contribute to national emissions reduction efforts.

Road to Zero – NZ road safety strategy

Road to Zero is Government's strategy to guide improvements in road safety in New Zealand over the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2029 (New Zealand Government, 2019). The Vision of the Strategy is "a New Zealand where no one is killed or seriously injured in road crashes" (New Zealand Government, 2019).

Road to Zero sets a target to reduce deaths and serious injuries on New Zealand's roads, streets, cycleways and footpaths by 40 percent over the next 10 years. Reaching that target would mean reducing annual road deaths to 227 and serious injuries to 1,680

by 2030 (Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2022).

There are five key focus areas under Road to Zero:

1. Infrastructure improvements and speed management.
2. Vehicle safety.
3. Work-related road safety.
4. Road user choices.
5. System management.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency has been reviewing speed limits on roads. Within the Manawatū-Whanganui Region, speed limit reviews have been completed on SH3 Napier Road, SH3 Whanganui to Westmere and engagement/consultation has closed for SH1/SH3 Bulls to Sanson, Ōtaki to Levin, SH56 Palmerston North to Ōpiki and SH1 Levin to Foxton (Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2022).

The Road to Zero Strategy acknowledges that there is a perception that reducing speeds in some areas won't save lives it will just take people longer to get anywhere. In response to this concern, the Road to Zero Strategy states that "When you factor in traffic lights, congestion, intersections and road quality, travel times don't vary as much as many people think. For example, when the speed limit on most of Saddle Road (a 14 km stretch near Woodville, New Zealand) was reduced from 100 to 60 km/h due to an increasing number of crashes, average travel times only increased by around 50 seconds (or less than 4 seconds per kilometre). In some instances, lower travel speeds can also deliver significant fuel savings" (Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2022).

Regional Road Safety Projects

Te Ahu a Tūranga: Manawatū-Tararua Highway

The Te Ahu a Tūranga: Manawatū-Tararua Highway project is due to start summer 2020/21 and is scheduled for completion by the end of 2024 (NZ Transport Agency, 2022) . It will provide cars with a safe, resilient and efficient route between Woodville and Ashurst (NZ Transport Agency, 2022).

During the construction period the gorge replacement project will divert a lot of both contractor and physical resource away from local roading projects. This means that MDC will need shift to maintenance of sealed roads towards cement stabilisation rather than thickening pavement due to the limited availability of gravel resource. Non-sealed roads will continue to be metaled.

Ōtaki to North of Levin Project

The Ōtaki to Levin highway, or the 'Ō2NL road,' is the northern-most section of the Wellington Northern Corridor project that includes Transmission Gully and the Kāpiti Expressway (RNZ, 2019). This project involves the construction of a new four-lane corridor from Ōtaki to north of Levin. It will improve safety and access, support economic growth, provide greater route resilience and better access to walking and cycling facilities (New Zealand Transport Agency, 2020).

Works on the SH57/Queen Street East roundabout were completed in October 2022 (Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2022). Funded through the NZ Upgrade Programme, the new 24 kilometre highway and shared walking and cycling path has an estimated project cost of $1.5b (including contingencies) (Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2022).n

SH1/SH3 Bulls to Sanson

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is reviewing speed limits and proposing safety improvements between Bulls and Sanson. This section of road is in the top 10% for deaths and serious injuries on state highways in New Zealand.

This project includes a three-armed rural roundabout, a shared use path, and the relocation of the weigh station to a new location off Pukenui Road.

The new roundabout will have separate lanes for vehicles turning left or right out Pukenui Road. Traffic volumes on Pukenui Road are

expected to increase over time as a result of the construction of a new Commercial Vehicle Safety Centre and developments at Ōhakea. The roundabout will serve to reduce traffic delays. Construction is scheduled for late 2022 (Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2022).

Consultation on the proposed improvements has now been completed and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is working to finalise designs (Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2022).

National Waste Strategy

The proposed vision for the new waste strategy is (Ministry for the Environment, 2021)

"A circular economy for Aotearoa New Zealand in 2050"

- We look after the plant's resources with care and responsibility.
- We respect and understand our inseparable connection with the environment
- A land where nothing is wasted.

The intent of the new National Waste Strategy is to help New Zealand transition from a linear 'take-make-dispose' system towards a circular consumption pattern and circular economy.

The strategy outlines what changes are needed to achieve the vision, over three broad stages. The first stage covers the period to 2030. Alongside the strategy, the Ministries are developing a long-term waste infrastructure plan to guide investment in resource recovery infrastructure for New Zealand. These two documents will inform the first action and investment plan that will set out the priorities and key actions needed in the short term (Ministry for the Environment, 2021).

The proposals within the National Waste Strategy closely link to the emissions reduction plan that is being development by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (Ministry for the Environment, 2021).

MDC is already investing in its waste infrastructure and in its resource recovery centre. Given the good alignment between Council priorities in waste management and minimisation, it is unlikely that this new strategy will have a significant impact on Council's long-term planning with respect to waste.

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