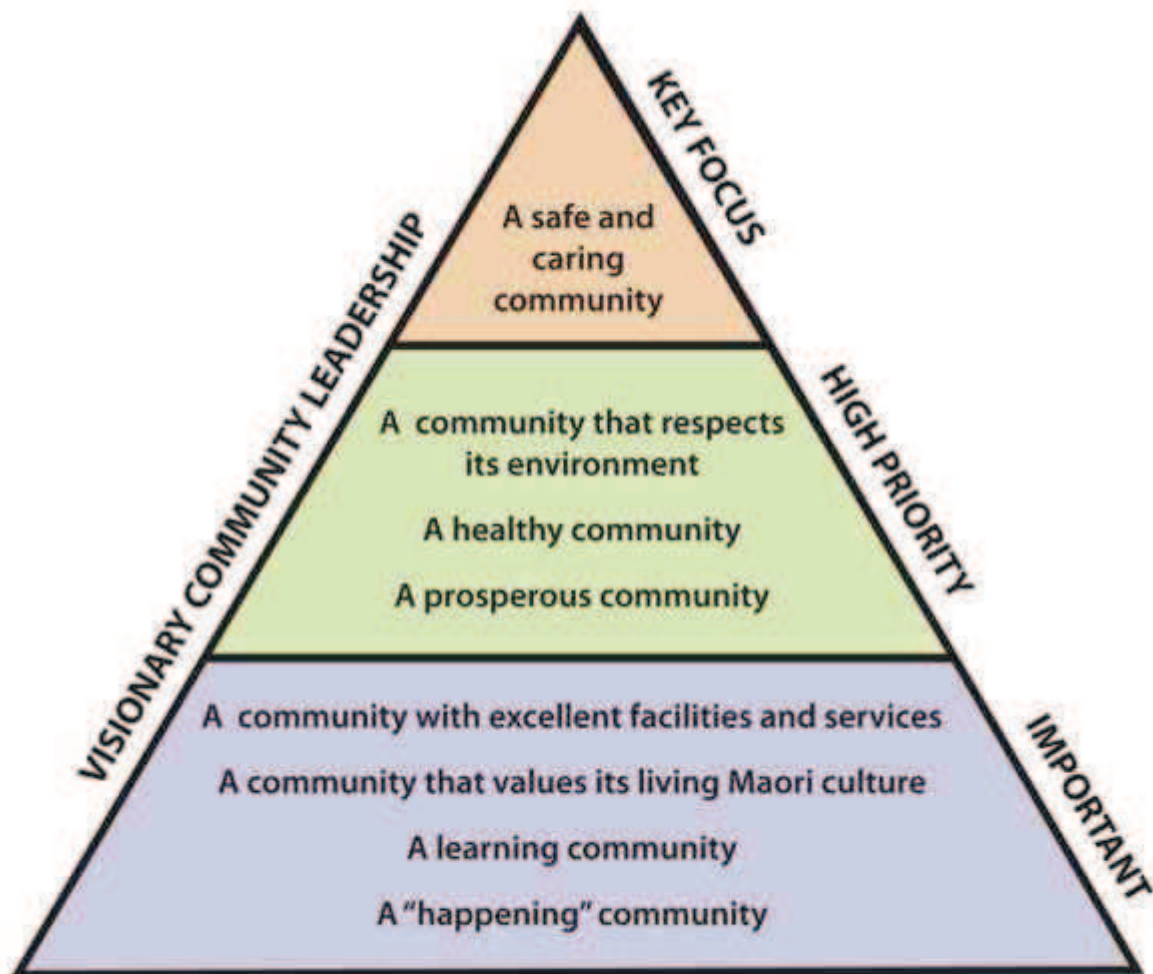


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction – Bright Future Rotorua

In 2003, Rotorua District Council initiated a 'Bright Future Rotorua' community planning process. Information collected through previous consultation was compiled by staff into a set of eight draft high-level statements which residents were asked to prioritise. More than 800 responses were received from a broad cross-section of people. The results showed that a safe and caring community was the most important outcome for Rotorua residents, followed by health, prosperity and respect for the environment (refer diagram below). Through a parallel process, key stakeholders interpreted the eight high-level outcomes into more specific outcome statements.

The 2003/04 set of community outcomes and priorities subsequently became the basis for further consultation during 2008. Proposed amendments were initially incorporated into the Community Outcomes on the basis of interim consultation, key stakeholder interviews and a stakeholder workshop. Wider feedback was then sought through a combination of face-to-face surveys, online surveys, self-return newspaper surveys and targeted focus group meetings. The 2008 Community Outcomes Review essentially reconfirmed the initial set of Community Outcomes and priorities. Minor changes included the addition of 'Visionary Community Leadership' as an overarching theme, along with the introduction of specific statements relating to sustainability, in the supporting detail of the Community Outcomes.



Rotorua Community Outcomes

TAFM Proposals

Important context for this 2010 update report is that there are forthcoming changes to the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002 around Community Outcomes identification, monitoring and reporting. In April 2009, a Cabinet Paper was tabled by the Local Government Minister for 'Improving Local Government Transparency, Accountability and Fiscal Management' (TAFM). The TAFM papers proposed a review of the LGA in accordance with key principles, including that councils should focus on 'core activities'. Subsequently, in October 2009 a decision was made to limit the definition of Community Outcomes to "those outcomes a local authority aims to achieve to maintain and improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of its district or region". Given that section 10 of the LGA defines the purpose of local government very broadly (ie, the four well-beings), it remains to be seen what practical effect this new definition will have on Community Outcome statements.

Cabinet further agreed to merge the Community Outcomes process into the Long-Term Plan (formerly known as the Long-Term Council Community Plan or LTCCP) and abolish the separate processes in sections 91 and 92 of the LGA. The Long-Term Plan will therefore be the primary vehicle for debating Community Outcomes. The Long-Term Plan will also be simplified and streamlined.

The TAFM papers note that councils may choose to co-ordinate community solutions regardless of whether or not they are legislatively prescribed to do so. The papers also suggest there is minimal risk that councils will reduce their current levels of collaboration with other stakeholders as a result of the proposed LGA amendments: "Although community outcomes may have provided extra impetus for partnership working, for many councils this was not new territory. Councils are capable of recognising for themselves when joint working would be beneficial and involving other organisations when this is considered to be an effective approach."

Taking into account the proposed LGA amendments, and the current uncertainty around how these will be implemented, the approach to this 2010 Data Update has been pragmatic and balanced. Data for existing indicators has been updated where available and additional data has been sourced for a number of new indicators that were proposed through Council's 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan. The data update has been undertaken solely as a 'desktop exercise'.

Monitoring Progress Towards Rotorua's Community Outcomes

During 2007 an initial baseline Data Analysis Report was compiled, presenting information on various indicators of Rotorua's high-level Community Outcomes. This current report presents a 2010 update of the earlier report, including data for an expanded set of indicators.

Throughout this report, trends are highlighted for indicators (eg, road traffic crashes) and general conclusions are made about underlying outcomes (eg, a safe and caring community). The report's purpose is to help inform decision-makers about community needs in the Rotorua District, to promote better co-ordination and application of community resources. The intention is to help guide Rotorua District communities on a journey towards more sustainable development.

Rotorua District Council has followed a robust process of identifying Community Outcomes and selecting indicators based on community relevance. Stakeholder workshops were held during 2004 to select a draft set of indicators, and available data was compiled from Council's social, economic, environmental and cultural monitoring programmes. Additional data was commissioned through a 2006 collaborative survey involving all local authorities in the Bay of Plenty Region as well as a separate 2007 survey for the Rotorua District. Key stakeholders and members of the public also had opportunities during the 2008 Community Outcomes Review to give feedback on the indicators set.

Key Results

Rotorua's progress indicators show that the District is progressing well on a number of fronts including:

- Improvements in various health indicators, including a long-term increase in life expectancy, reduced rates of heart disease (though still above the national standardised rate), reduced rate of low birth weight babies per 1,000 live births and reduced rate of avoidable hospitalisations per 100,000 population. These improvements are supported by local measures such as smoke-free facilities in Rotorua's urban areas.
- Recent drop in the rate of early school leaver exemptions.
- Reduced rates of school stand-downs and suspensions.
- Increased levels of educational attainment.
- Declining crime levels, though still above the national average.
- Long-term increases in community economic growth, including support for the development of Māori land.
- Substantial long-term reduction in levels of unemployment.
- Increasing support for migrants.
- Improving access for people with disabilities.
- Falling levels of waste to landfill per capita.
- Various measures to improve lakes water quality over the longer term, including protection of lake and stream margins and sewerage reticulation for lakeside settlements.
- Improvements to drinking water supply risk gradings, as assessed by the Ministry of Health.
- A relatively high and increasing rate of residents who speak Te Reo Māori.
- Increasing number of community and major events in Rotorua.

Areas we are not doing well as a District include:

- Housing became substantially less affordable over the period 2002/03 to 2006/07, although it has subsequently returned to 2004 levels (likely due to the effects of the economic recession).
- Home ownership rates have been declining since at least the early 1990s.
- Increased numbers of annual road traffic crashes and casualties (mostly minor) since the year 2000 due to issues such as poor observation, speeding, failure to give way and drink driving.
- Relatively high levels of reported criminal offending, despite improvements.
- Relatively poor perceptions of community safety and community spirit by local residents compared to other areas.
- Rates of cigarette smoking remain above the national average, despite a continuing decline.
- Poor oral health, with an average of 2.20 decayed, missing and filled teeth for 12-year olds compared to 1.42 for the national average.
- Continuing algal blooms on lakes Rotoehu, Rotoiti, Rotorua and Okaro.
- Increasing energy consumption and associated emissions of greenhouse gases.
- A recent drop in visitor numbers and other economic indicators as a result of the national recession. One indirect measure of this has been a recent drop in recycling volumes due to lower levels of construction activity and hence less concrete being recycled.

One area not covered well in this report is the extent to which the Rotorua community values its living Māori culture, due to the challenge of measuring and monitoring cultural well-being.