

6. Summary

6.1 Success of process

The community outcomes consultation process has allowed the community opportunity to discuss and think about their goals and visions for the region. It has provided them with an avenue to give feedback on this to Council, who have collated the information and are in the process of feeding that information back to the community. The process has also allowed communities to start thinking about where we are in terms of achieving their objectives, and where effort is most needed.

Once identified however, these outcomes are not static, and Council are aware that as major projects are achieved, changes to the current outcomes, or additions to them may be identified by the community.

The process generated just over 570 individual feedback forms, a small number of group submissions, and input from schools for those aged under 15 years of age. Based on the latest census figures for Buller, we estimate around 6% of the population had a say on the consultation. In comparison to other consultations run by Council, the response is higher than usual. The first draft LTCCP generated 244 submissions in 2004.



Waitakere City Council estimated that a total of around 6000 people were engaged in their process, around 3.5% of their population. A range of techniques were used to obtain feedback.

Manakau City Council developed community outcomes based on research, and through utilising a reference group.

Wanganui District Council estimated that a total of around 1000 people participated in their process, around 2.3% of their population. Meetings were the main mechanism for gathering feedback.

Tauranga City Council report that over 5500 people had a say in their first round of consultation, around 5.5% of their population.

At the date of writing this report, Christchurch City Council announced they had only received 50 submissions on their draft outcomes, noting a strong lack of interest in their information sessions. (The consultation period had a further 10 days to run).

Voter turnout for the last general election was the lowest in the 45 years for which statistics have been kept, with 76.97% taking the opportunity to vote.

The process has attracted interest and support from some key organisations within the district. It has also helped establish some key-stakeholder communications that are ongoing.

The incentive prizes were successful in attracting additional interest in the process, and have received general community interest and support.

There was positive feedback from many participants who appreciated the opportunity to comment holistically on services and regional development.

6.2 Things to improve

In reviewing the process, we need to acknowledge that understanding of the community outcomes provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 still varies considerably, both within local government and within communities. While the potential gains of this process are generally recognised and acknowledged, an understanding of the roles and responsibilities is still not fully understood, and there is genuine difficulty (in both organisations and communities) of acknowledging the outcomes as community outcomes rather than those of local government.

We need to look at establishing a more rigorous process for the identification of key stakeholders. Once done, more effort needs to be put into communicating an understanding of the roles and responsibilities surrounding the Community Outcomes.

We need to obtain more buy-in from Councillors into the advocacy process. In order to ensure that people understand that the process is about themselves and their communities (not Council services), we need strong advocacy from community leaders and elected representatives.

We need more education within Council, so that staff also have a better understanding of the role of the Outcomes in their work and planning. This needs to be management led.

It may be worthwhile for Council to consider employing a professional survey writer to assist in the development of the next Community Outcome survey to ensure that the information obtained is of most use when gauging community progress.

6.3 Lessons learnt

The consultation process highlighted a number of areas where improvements could be made. These have been briefly listed below.

- *more early engagement/education with Council staff and elected members*
- *more buy in from Managers – change in culture from seeing this as one sections responsibility*
- *show the process from vision to action from the beginning*
- *more effort in identifying key stakeholders and incorporating them into the process early on*
- *utilise local newsletters etc more actively, and earlier in the process*
- *utilise media releases more actively, and earlier in the process*
- *prize draws do generate interest!*
- *ability to make comment on regional priorities for those not living or spending large amounts of time in the district is reduced (their feedback), so possibly re-assess costs/benefits of actively including out-of-district rate payers*
- *other people will access the flyer, if you only want feedback from Buller residents, restrict the prize draw accordingly*
- *the process needs to be seen to be actively led by elected members,*
- *tapping into existing community meetings works well, and feedback was positive, but needed to be done earlier and on a wider and more pro-active scale through the district*
- *fronting up at meetings is more likely to generate feedback than a flyer in the letter box*
- *people throw the flyer away, “I didn’t realise what it was”. Look at tapping into meetings etc prior to flyer being distributed, but have a copy to take to meetings*
- *have patience – stakeholders may need to see the process unfold or may require more information to visualise the process and its benefits, prior to committing - “it won’t happen over night”*
- *it is a big job - plan well in advance*