



Kōrero Mai

Tell us what you think

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

*Te Kaupapa here Manarau,
Tautika me te Kauawhi Hukihuki*

We've developed a draft Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Policy to guide us on how we can support and celebrate diversity, inclusion and equity in our work and everyday behaviour.

This policy is all about making sure everyone in our community feels safe to be themselves, so it's really important we get it right.

Now it's over to you to review the policy and join the conversation!



Submissions close
5pm Thursday, 5 December 2024

Find out more at
koreromai.whakatane.govt.nz/dei-policy





Background

In early 2024, Whakatāne District Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Whakatāne - Accessible and Inclusive Charitable Trust to enable a closer working relationship with, and improved understanding of, disabled people. As part of the MOU, the Council promised to undertake the development of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy.

We've now drafted the policy based on desktop research, first-hand experience and a valuable pre-engagement phase with a range of marginalised and minority groups.

What's happening now?

We want to know what you think about the proposed draft policy.

Our proposal

The policy outlines how we can ensure everyone can participate, with extra support for those facing barriers or discrimination. It is designed to ensure we engage with a diverse range of individuals and communities, include them in decision-making, and provide equitable opportunities for those who may have experienced discrimination and disadvantage. The policy aims to tackle systemic inequalities and level the playing field for marginalised groups, and will be essential for service delivery, community development and engaging with and supporting communities. It will enable us to support community-led projects and initiatives that add to the wellbeing of the people of the Whakatāne District, including iwi, hapū and whānau. It will also support organisations that contribute to wellbeing in our district and help achieve community outcomes and priorities.

The objectives of the policy are to:

- foster a sense of belonging for all our people.
- include marginalised and minority communities in the Whakatāne District in our decision-making.
- build and maintain quality relationships with our marginalised and minority communities.
- show empathy, compassion and respect to our marginalised and minority communities.
- encourage an environment where our marginalised and minority communities feel safe to be themselves.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy?

This policy is designed to guide Whakatane District Council on how we can enhance social cohesion through supporting diversity, inclusion and equity in our work and everyday behaviour.

It describes the Council's approach to enable all people to participate, and makes extra accommodations for those who face greater barriers to participation and are more likely to experience discrimination and bias.

Why do we need one?

This policy is important to ensure we are engaging with a diverse range of individuals and communities, including these individuals and groups in decision-making, and providing equitable opportunities for those who may have experienced discrimination and disadvantage.

It aims to tackle unfair disadvantages and systems that keep inequality in place for marginalised and minority groups. The goal is to 'level the playing field' and provide equal opportunities for everyone.

What does diversity mean?

Diversity is all about representing people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds.

It encompasses a sense of belonging, celebrating our identities, and awareness and appreciation of the intersectionality of people so that the people in our communities are represented.

What does equity mean?

Equity means fairness and justice in the distribution of resources, opportunities and privileges, taking into account the unique circumstances and needs of individuals or groups. It recognises that different individuals or groups may require different levels of support or accommodations to achieve a level playing field. Equity aims to address historical and systematic disadvantages and achieve equal opportunities.

What does inclusion mean?

Inclusion means the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised. This includes those who have physical or intellectual disabilities and members of other minority groups.

How has the policy been developed?

Early in 2024, the Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Whakatāne Accessible and Inclusive (WAI) group. As part of the MOU, the Council promised to undertake the development of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy.

Council staff have also researched our community demographics to inform the policy and supported qualitative research regarding our migrant and minority communities in the district.

Extensive pre-engagement with our communities was done over the past two years to better understand the needs of those that we rarely hear from, and to provide baseline information for the development of this policy.



Why is it the Council's responsibility to develop this policy?

Legislation currently states that local government must promote social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future.

I really like this draft policy, how do I let you know?

Great! There are several ways you can tell us what you think. Visit koreromai.whakatane.govt.nz and fill out the online form, submit a hard copy form to any of our Customer Services Centres, or speak to your Mayor and Councillors at a meeting on Thursday 5 December.

There are some parts I don't agree with, how do I let you know?

Fair enough! There are several ways you can tell us what you think. Visit koreromai.whakatane.govt.nz and fill out the online form, submit a hard copy form to any of our Customer Services Centres, or speak to your Mayor and Councillors at a meeting on Thursday 5 December.

What will happen when the policy is finalised?

We'll review the feedback from consultation and make necessary changes to the policy. Your Mayor and Councillors will agree to adopt the final version at a Council meeting in early 2025. We anticipate several action plans will be created once the final policy is in place.

Kōrero Mai Tell us what you think

We'd like your input on the draft Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy before we make any final decisions.

There are lots of ways to have your say!

- **Online:** koreromai.whakatane.govt.nz/dei-policy
- **Post:** Whakatāne District Council, 14 Commerce Street, Private Bag 1002, Whakatāne.
- **Email:** submissions@whakatane.govt.nz
- **Video:** koreromai.whakatane.govt.nz/dei-policy
- **Verbally:** at the Living Together Committee meeting on Thursday, 5 December. Please contact us by Thursday, 28 November if this is your preference.
- Or deliver your submission in person to any Council service centre or library.

Submissions close

5pm Thursday, 5 December 2024

What happens next? *E whai ake nei*

All feedback will be collated and then reviewed by the Mayor and Councillors. The final policy will reflect any changes, before being adopted by Council early 2025.

Consutation timeline

